

JCHC JOURNAL

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION VOLUME 2015, ISSUE 2

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Dear Members,
In this newsletter are several articles about funding critical to historic preservation and appreciation in our state. The state legislature could benefit from the insights of our members concerning these important issues. Please consider contacting your representatives about these programs which have benefitted so many regions of the state.

Thank you to our members for your time and service.

Theresa Goodness, JCHC Chair



Texas State Capitol

Photo Credit: [Texas Legislature Online](http://www.texaslegislature.com)

VOLUME 2015, ISSUE 2

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MARCH, 2015

Special points of interest:

- * Next Meeting.
- * Volunteer Hours.
- * Mini-museum
- * Texas Historic Preservation Tax Credit

EXPLORE TEXAS' HISTORY WITH THE THC'S NEW STATEWIDE TRAVEL GUIDE

AUSTIN, Texas — Experience the vastness and wonder of the Lone Star State with the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) new *Texas Heritage Travel Guide*. Encompassing all 10 Texas Heritage Trail Regions, the free statewide guide highlights historic destinations that tell the real stories of Texas. The guide is free and available for [download www.thc.state.tx.us/explore](http://www.thc.state.tx.us/explore). Credit: [THC website](http://www.thc.state.tx.us)

HISTORIC COURTHOUSE PRESERVATION FUNDING ENDANGERED

Preservation Texas is putting the word out about historic preservation budget considerations. According to their website, the Texas House Appropriations Committee is recommending \$0 for the Historic Courthouse Preservation Program administered by THC, which is requesting \$40 million for the program over the next biennium.

We can make an impact by contacting our representatives, the House Appropriations Committee members, and members of the Senate Finance Committee. This program has had an enormous economic impact across the state, including in Jefferson County which is the recipient of an emergency grant under the program for our courthouse restoration project underway currently. The grant is helping to cover the cost of a new fire alarm and suppression system.

Read more about ways to make a difference and talking points at the [Preservation Texas website](#).

JCHC MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS IN 2015

March 26, 2015	Noon	Museum of the Gulf Coast, 700 Procter St., Port Arthur, TX
May 28, 2015	Noon	Ben Rogers Regional Visitors Ctr., 5055 I-H 10 South, Beaumont, TX
July 23, 2015	Noon	Ben Rogers Regional Visitors Ctr., 5055 I-H 10 South, Beaumont, TX
September 24, 2015	Noon	Ben Rogers Regional Visitors Ctr., 5055 I-H 10 South, Beaumont, TX
November 19, 2015	Noon	Ben Rogers Regional Visitors Ctr., 5055 I-H 10 South, Beaumont, TX

VOLUNTEER HOURS AND MEMBERSHIP

Any work in the preservation or promotion of Jefferson County History may be counted toward your volunteer hours. JCHC meetings and travel time to and from meetings also count as volunteer hours. Members are reminded that at least 50 hours of volunteer work per year is required of each member.

(Emeritus members do not have to meet this requirement.) Also with the number of hours, JCHC needs a general description of work performed, for example: 3 Hours – Marker Survey.

If you have any questions, please call the office at 409-835-8701 or contact Linda via email at histcomm@co.jefferson.tx.us

PRESERVATION PARTNERS

Beaumont Heritage Society
Landmark Commission
Texas Historical Foundation
Beaumont Main Street
Museum of the Gulf Coast

MILDRED POWELL HALL IN MEMORIAM



The Commission honors the memory of another longstanding member who passed away last month. Mildred Hall was a staunch advocate of courthouse preservation and was instrumental in guarding the historical accuracy and quality of the 1980's Jefferson County Courthouse restoration. She wore the moniker "Dragon Lady" with pride, and would recount how this was the name given to her by some officials who didn't appreciate her tenacity in protecting our stately courthouse. We honor her memory and her accomplishments. Generations of county residents have her to thank for saving the historical integrity of their courthouse. Mildred's obituary is reprinted in part here:

Mildred Powell Hall, 93, of Beaumont, died Friday, February 27, 2015, at her home after a brief illness. She was born on September 13, 1921, in Orange, to Mary Bell Mulford Powell and Joseph S. Powell. The family moved to Beaumont when Mildred was two years old, and she always considered Beaumont her home. Mildred attended Beaumont schools, graduating from Beaumont High School in 1938. She attended Lamar Junior College and subsequently graduated from The University of Texas in 1942. Though she prepared for a teaching career, she sought other occupations as her service during

World War II. Mildred was employed at Neches Butane Products Company in Port Neches, a link in the manufacture of synthetic rubber for the war effort. On December 7, 1946, she married Willard James Hall after he returned to his home in Beaumont following service in the 20th Army Air Corps, 505th BG, Tinian, Mariana Islands, Pacific Theater. Willard and his brother, Phil Hall, formed Hall and Hall Real Estate which Willard managed until his death in 1994.

Willard and Mildred were active and contributing members of the Beaumont community for all of their lives. They were charter members of Trinity United Methodist Church where Mildred was the first president of the WSCS. She was president of the Junior League of Beaumont and through that organization, became interested in historic preservation; and was a founding member of the Beaumont Heritage Society where she served as president during the restoration of the John J. French House. Mildred was a member of the Jefferson County Historical Commission for over twenty years, and in the 1980's led the effort to preserve the Jefferson County Courthouse, after which the County Commissioners declared "Mildred Hall Day" in recognition of her successful efforts. As a result of that experience, she helped develop a public-private partnership with the City of Beaumont to restore the Tyrrell Historical Library and form the Tyrrell Historical Library Association. When it became apparent that the Jefferson Theater was threatened with demolition, she joined the effort of the Jefferson Theater Preservation Society to achieve the restoration and reopening of the Jefferson. She especially supported Beaumont Main Street and enjoyed serving on that board.

Mildred received public recognition for her restoration efforts in numerous ways, including the Medal of Honor from the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Jefferson Award granted through the Beaumont Enterprise, and in 1997 she was presented the Beaumont Preservation Award. While continuing her interest in historic preservation, she also found time for other endeavors such as membership in Athena Investors and the Own-A-Book Club where she gave numerous book reviews. Mildred's first interest was with her husband, Willard, and their three children. Her greatest joy in later years was spending time at the beach house built by Willard, surrounded by her six grandchildren.

Mildred is survived by, Willard James Hall, Jr. and his wife, Caryn, of Beaumont and J. Clint Hall and his wife, Cheryl, of Clear Lake; daughter, Laurie Hall Leister and her husband, Curtis W. Leister, of Beaumont; grandchildren, Willard James Hall III, Curtis Joseph Leister, David Powell Leister, Elizabeth Grace Leister, Katherine Eugenia Leister, and William Hall Leister; and sister-in-law, Mavis Powell of Dallas. She is preceded in death by her loving husband; sister, Virgia May Powell; and brothers, Joe M. and G. Lane Powell.

PALO PINTO COUNTY ON TOUR

A LAND A RIVER A PEOPLE

*Rio Roca Chapel on the Brazos



© Walter Jennings, Architect

Love's Retreat



Information and tickets available at
 Mineral Wells Area Chamber of Commerce
 940-325-2557
 Possum Kingdom Chamber of Commerce
 888-779-8330
 and each tour location on tour day.

You may start your tour at any of
 the locations and proceed as you wish.

Worth Ranch



Young at Hart Ranch



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| First Financial Bank | |

Old Belding Ranch House



*Rio Roca Chapel on the Brazos will be open from 10 AM to 2 PM ONLY

At left is our bi-annual self-paced **Palo Pinto County on Tour** brochure for Saturday April 25th.

We have a proud heritage of historic culture in our ranches and museum with forefather's such as Bigfoot Wallace, Charles Goodnight and James Loving with many of our pioneer ranches still preserved.

We have a pre-tour for our volunteers to preview on 4/18 at 9AM starting at the Museum (one block south of the courthouse) with lunch at Mary's Cafe in Strawn (home of world famous chicken-fried-steak), if you can't make the 4/25 main event!

Please consider this your VIP invitation.

Cordially,
 Kim Brimer,
 817-991-8698
 Chair, Palo Pinto County Historical Commission

A LAND A RIVER A PEOPLE

Palo Pinto County Historical Commission

~ Presents ~

Palo Pinto County ON TOUR

Johnson League Ranch

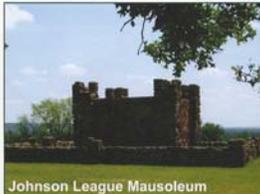


A Self-Paced
 Historical
 & Wildflower
 Driving Tour

Old Jail Museum



Saturday
 April 25, 2015
 9 AM - 4 PM*



Johnson League Mausoleum

*Rio Roca Chapel on the Brazos will be open from 10 AM to 2 PM ONLY



First Christian Church



Adult - \$15 • Child 6 to 15 - \$5 • Child under 6 - Free



www.palopintohistory.com

COLD WAR ORAL HISTORY WORKSHOP

William McWhorter, the Military Sites and Oral History program coordinator for the Texas Historical Commission (THC) will be co-hosting a free oral history training workshops in Port Arthur on Saturday morning, March 28 at the Museum of the Gulf Coast. He has extended an invitation to the Jefferson County Historical Commission members to attend the Saturday workshop (9am-noon) if any are free and interested in the training. All we have to do is email Mr. McWhorter to RSVP.

William.McWhorter@thc.state.tx.us

Background:

The workshop will highlight the real places telling the real stories of Texas' involvement in the Cold War, including the home front perspective. The workshop is designed for people to learn how to conduct, record, and transcribe oral histories, including hands-on training with digital and video recording equipment. The workshop series When the Lone Star State Met the Iron Curtain: Recollections of Texas in the Cold War, is built on the foundation of the THC's national award-winning Texas in World War II Initiative. This project endeavors to preserve the service and sacrifices of Texans during the Cold War. Funding for the workshop series was made possible through the generous support of The Summerlee Foundation of Dallas, which also helped support the THC's Texas in World War II Initiative's oral history workshop series in 2004.

TEXAS HISTORIC COURTHOUSE PRESERVATION

Download a great publication from THC on the work they are doing to preserve historic courthouses around the state: [Courthouse Cornerstones](#)

The publication has some beautiful pictures of restorations and hard facts on the economic impact such restorations have had on these communities and across the state. Our own Jefferson County is depicted on a map showing the emergency grant funds received for installing a new fire alarm and suppression system in the historic courthouse.

PROPOSED LEGISLATION

The Travis County Historical Commission Chair shared the below proposed bill which would allow administrative hearings on contested marker issues. His concern was two-fold, as this could lead to lots of legal wrangling and might circumvent the historical commissions who do all the hard work of researching marker applications.

By: AAHoward H.B.A No. A3819

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the appeal of certain determinations by the Texas

Historical Commission regarding the content of historical markers.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. AASection 442.006, Government Code, is amended by

adding Subsection (i) to read as follows:

(i) AAA determination by the commission relating to the accuracy of the text of a historical marker that has been fabricated and installed may be appealed. An appeal is a contested case under Chapter 2001.

SECTION 2. AAThis Act takes effect September 1, 2015 .

APPLY NOW FOR THE TEXAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION TAX CREDIT

AUSTIN, Texas —

Property owners, developers, and businesses have a powerful new financial tool to aid in the rehabilitation of historic properties.

State tax credits worth 25 percent of the eligible rehabilitation costs are available for eligible income-producing projects, with a project minimum of \$5,000 and no project maximum. In the absence of a state income tax, the credit is applied against a business' franchise tax liability. The state credits can be sold or transferred to other investors.

Additionally, projects may qualify for long-established federal tax credits worth an additional 20 percent, potentially generating enormous savings for historic property renovation.

“We’re thrilled to offer these tax credits to projects across Texas,” says Sharon Fleming, director of the Texas Historical Commission’s Architecture Division. “They are great tools for entrepreneurs to expand or launch an exciting business while supporting historic preservation and sustainable architecture.”

Eligible property owners must demonstrate that their rehabilitation efforts meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. Eligible properties include those listed on the National Register of Historic Places or designated as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark or State Antiquities Landmark.

For more information about the Texas Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program, visit www.thc.state.tx.us/taxcredits.

Credit: [Texas Historical Commission website](http://www.thc.state.tx.us)



Hotel Beaumont Ballroom

Photo Credit: Theresa Goodness

TEXAS HERITAGE TRAILS PROGRAM

Dear County Historical Commissioners,

Most of you are familiar with the Texas Heritage Trails Program at the THC, we work with locals to promote preservation and heritage tourism in all 254 Counties of the state. Our efforts increase the visitation and revenue to historic sites and bring much needed tax dollars through tourism to counties both rural and urban.

You are all in the Texas Forest Trail Region. The Forest Trail currently has 58 individual partners and provides educational, marketing and promotional support to cities, counties, chambers, visitors centers, economic development groups, historical sites and attractions across our 35-county region. We make an impact in East Texas - I've attached our FY14 annual report which includes summaries of our efforts and testimonials from our partners. I am writing you today, because we need your help to save the Texas Heritage Trails.

Last week, the House Appropriations Subcommittee recommended \$0 for the Program. The full House Appropriations Committee did not allocate funds for the Program, but did move the request to Article XI where it can still be considered. Sadly, the Heritage Trails do not have a "champion" legislator pushing the program and the likelihood of our request moving from Article XI - fully-funded is slim.

But, it is not too late. The Senate Finance Committee has yet to make final decisions, and members of the committee need to hear from you. Full funding can be recommended for the Program in the Senate version of the state budget. And, house members can fund the Program within Article XI.

A failure to fund the Heritage Trails means that years of award-winning promotion, education and assistance with rural economic development through heritage tourism will come to an end — as soon as August 2015. We need to make it clear that since this Program MAKES money for Texas, instead of costing money, the Texas Heritage Trails Program should be fully funded.

I am asking you to reach out to the Senate Finance Committee to fund our valuable program. Please pass on this information to your fellow commissioners and friends of historic preservation.

Texas Heritage Trails Program:

- Is the state's only coordinated statewide resource for heritage tourism;
- Is a coalition of ten organizations under the direction of the Texas Historical Commission, each with an independent board and staff, that implements heritage tourism strategies from the local to the state level;
- Increases visitation & revenue to historic sites by 13.9%, roughly \$310 million annually on less than a \$2 million program investment;
- Is a nationally award-winning program; and

Involves hundreds of volunteers drawn from businesses, chambers of commerce, economic development offices, visitor bureaus, cities, counties, county historical commissions, museum docents and staff, and community activists.

We have been in similar situations in the past and your calls and emails have made the difference! Please take time to let the Senate Finance Committee know the value of this program!

Please follow this [link](#) to our website for all the information that we need to pass on to the Senate Finance Committee! Emails, sample messages and supportive statistics are provided. You don't have to be from the Senate District of the committee members to contact them. Thank you so much for your support.

Marty Prince, Executive Director

Texas Forest Trail Region

202 E. Pilar Street, Nacogdoches, TX 75961

office: 936-560-3699 cell: 936-553-2498 info@texasforesttrail.com www.texasforesttrail.com

AREA MUSEUM UPCOMING EVENTS

Museum of the Gulf Coast



April 6 – May 25, 2015 - Alert Today, Alive Tomorrow: Living With the Atomic Bomb, 1945-1965

Exhibit showcases the atomic paranoia of the 1950s. Will be paired with a film series.



Museum of the Gulf Coast

Photo Credit: museumofthegulfcoast.org



Chambers House

Photo Credit: chambershouse.org

Visit the Beaumont Heritage Society's Facebook Page:

[Beaumont Heritage Society - Beaumont, TX - History Museum, Historical Place | Facebook](#)

McFaddin Ward House

Spring Picnic

April 30 @ 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Celebrate the warmer days with a picnic on the grounds of the McFaddin-Ward House. Have dinner and enjoy live music on the lawn, and enjoy free tours of the house, as well. The picnic will also kick off our neighborhood walking tour, which will run through the following two weekends. More details to come! Please call (409) 832-1906 for more details.



McFaddin Ward House

Photo Credit: mcfaddin-ward.org

**JEFFERSON
COUNTY
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION**

1149 Pearl Street
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Tel: 409-835-8701

E-mail:

histcomm@co.jefferson.tx.us
Linda McMahan, Coordinator



*To preserve and
promote history within
the County.*

We're on the web!

[http://co.jefferson.tx.us/
Historical_Commission/](http://co.jefferson.tx.us/Historical_Commission/)

Lincoln Burial Park
Clean-up
Photo Credit:
Paul Prosperie



Jefferson County Historical Commission

Executive Board 2015 - 2017

Chairman, Theresa Goodness

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2nd Vice-Chairman, Paul Prosperie

Secretary/Treasurer, Linda McMahan

Immediate Past Chairman, Ron Ellington

**JCHC MINI-MUSEUM
MARCH, 2015**

The mini-museum will not
host an exhibit until after the
first floor courthouse
restoration is completed.