

# JCHC JOURNAL

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION VOLUME 2015, ISSUE 6

## CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Dear Members,  
 Railroads have been a driving force in the economic development of this county since the 1800's. An 1862 map of Jefferson County shows the Texas and New Orleans Railroad passing through the Noah Tevis survey on its way across the Neches River.



Neches River Lift Bridge  
 Photo Credit: TxDOT Neches River Bridge Study Brochure

The current Kansas City Southern Railroad lift bridge across the Neches was built in 1941 and estimates of costs to add another track range from 120 to 240 million dollars depending on the site location and height of the crossing.

Thank you to our members for your time and service in preserving our history.

Theresa Goodness, JCHC Chair

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### NOVEMBER, 2015

#### Special points of interest:

- \* Jefferson County Fast Facts
- \* Beaumont Landmark Commission
- \* Port Arthur Landmark Commission

## JEFFERSON COUNTY FAST FACTS

**5/31/1837**

Date the Jefferson County Commissioners granted the first petition for a ferry across the Sabine River. R. Ballue posted a \$1000 surety bond and was allowed to charge .50 to ferry a man and horse across and .25 for a foot passenger.

**1886**

Year of the first commercial rice crop grown in Jefferson County on 200 acres near Beaumont by Edgar Carruthers, Louis Bordages, and Daniel Wingate.

**April, 1831**

Date of first Mexican land grant in what would become Jefferson County granted to Thomas F. McKinney in the area of present day Port Neches. McKinney operated several steamboats on Sabine Lake.

## JCHC TIDBITS

- THC has notified the JCHC that the marker application and all required materials have been received from St. Paul United Methodist Church in Port Arthur. They will be contacting us soon to notify the church for the \$100 application fee, due by December 11, 2015.
- Paul Prosperie, Don Smart and Bruce Hamilton attended the Liberty County Cemetery Workshop on Saturday, September 26, 2015.
- Linda McMahan, Ramon Hutchinson and Ron Ellington attended the East Texas Historical Association Fall Meeting October 8 – 10, 2015 at Stephen F. Austin University in Nacogdoches. They attended the Black History Breakfast and a session on Reclaiming Cherokee County Cemeteries. This included information on the characteristics and traditions of maintaining historic cemeteries and efforts of locating lost cemeteries. They also learned about the Texas African American Historical Cemetery Preservation Society. This is an association that does research and records Texas African American Cemetery History. The JCHC has recently applied for membership in this organization.

## JCHC MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS IN 2015

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.

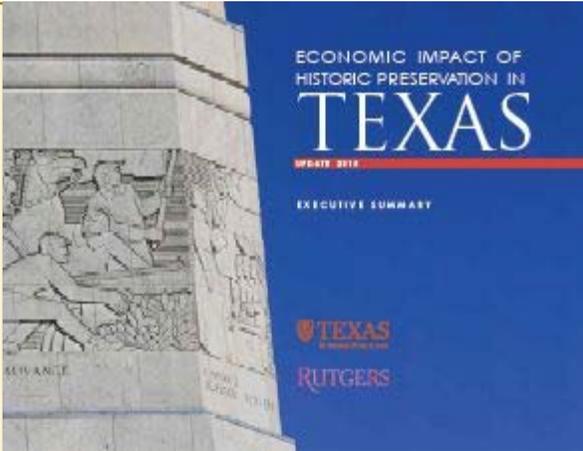
Also with the number of hours, JCHC needs a general description of work performed, for example: 3 Hours – Marker Survey.

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

### PRESERVATION PARTNERS

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

## SEVEN WAYS HISTORIC PRESERVATION MAKES A BIG ECONOMIC IMPACT IN TEXAS



AUSTIN, Texas —A recent University of Texas and Rutgers University [economic impact study](#) (PDF) revealed some surprising facts about the significant benefits of historic preservation efforts in the Lone Star State.

The study contained seven key conclusions:

1. Tourists love historic districts and preserved or restored sites. More than 10 percent of Texas travel is heritage related, with \$2.26 billion in annual visitor spending related to history-based tourism.
2. Historic preservation supports tens of thousands of Texas jobs. Heritage tourism supports 54,000 jobs in Texas; historic preservation supports 79,000 jobs (2013 numbers).
3. Historic building rehabilitation rebuilds communities. Private and public institutions in Texas invest a total of \$772 million in historic preservation projects, making a significant economic impact in communities across Texas.
4. Historic county courthouses make great economic sense. Since 2000, \$251 million in grants across 91 counties through the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program has created 9,600 jobs and added \$651 million in state gross domestic product. It has also revitalized downtown areas in large and small communities.
5. Texas Main Street communities make good business sense. Since 1981, participating cities in the Texas Main Street program have made an average annual contribution of \$310 million to state GDP. Cumulative reinvestment in Main Street areas has totaled more than \$5.2 billion since 1981. Currently, 89 cities participate in the program.
6. Historic properties attract significant reinvestment. Every dollar from federal and state incentive programs triggers \$4–\$5 of private sector investment, spurring \$1.78 billion in private-sector rehabilitations, and creating 35,000 in-state jobs and more than \$2.4 billion in Texas GDP.
7. 700 Texas history museums bring economic vitality to communities. Museum organizations in Texas spend \$93 million annually, not including capital expenditures, and each attracts thousands of visitors every year.

Credit: [Texas Historical Commission website](#)

## MAGNOLIA CEMETERY TOUR

Paul Prosperie and Jimmy Sparks, arranged a walking/driving tour of Beaumont's historic Magnolia Cemetery on Monday, October 19, 2015. Some of the highlights of the tour included visiting the final resting place of over twenty of Beaumont's most prominent citizens.

Some of the graves have elaborate monuments such as that of Jeanette Caterina Stengele, a German native who became a naturalized U. S. citizen in 1898. Other notable citizens buried at Magnolia Cemetery are Florence Stratton, also known as Susie Spindletop, Beaumont news reporter; Confederate soldiers, James A. Tiner, George P. Abney and Lewis Andrew Smith; William E. Patterson, Deputy City Marshall killed by a gunshot inflicted by Pattillo Higgins of Spindletop fame, who was later acquitted; Ruth and Florence Chambers, who bequeathed their home to become the Chambers House Museum; and Robert Kidd, who lived to be 116, and is said to have farmed his land until nearly the age of 100.

Many thanks to Paul and Jimmy for the tour and the informative program.

Magnolia Cemetery Tour  
Photo Credit: Paul Prosperie



Magnolia Cemetery Tour  
Photo Credit: Paul Prosperie

## BEAUMONT LANDMARK COMMISSION

Beaumont Landmark Commission meetings are held the second Monday at 3:30 p.m. in Council Chambers, located on the 1st floor of City Hall, 801 Main Street, Beaumont, TX. Meetings are open to the public.

The latest agenda from the October 12, 2015, meeting is posted [here](#).

Ramona Hutchison is JCHC's representative on the commission.

## PORT ARTHUR LANDMARK COMMISSION

Port Arthur Landmark Commission meetings are held in Council Chambers, located on the fifth floor of City Hall, Council Chambers, Fifth Floor, 444 Fourth Street, Port Arthur, TX. Meetings are open to the public. The latest agenda from the August 13, 2015, meeting is posted [here](#). Les McMahan is JCHC's representative on the commission.

On October 20, 2015, Kristen Brown, Certified Local Government Coordinator with the Community Heritage Development Division of the Texas Historical Commission, visited with the City of Port Arthur Planning Staff and the Historical Landmark Commission regarding the Certified Local Government Program and how it relates to the Landmark Commission.

## EAST TEXAS PRESERVATION NEWS

### PRESS RELEASE

The Tyler County Courthouse, built in 1891 as a redbrick structure and the third courthouse built on the courthouse square, has recently been listed on the National Register of Historic Places in America. The National Register is the official listing of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation.

On Monday, November 9, 2015, at 10:00 a.m., Commissioners Court will unveil a plaque on the north side of the courthouse noting the prestigious placement of the courthouse on the National Register.

The Courthouse is located at 100 East Bluff Street in Woodville, Texas. The public is cordially invited to attend this momentous occasion.

## AREA MUSEUM UPCOMING EVENTS

### Museum of the Gulf Coast

September 5—January 24, 2016

Crocodylian Scratchboards by John Agnew  
Scratchboards of alligators and their relatives



Museum of the Gulf Coast  
Photo Credit: museumofthegulfcoast.org



Chambers House  
Photo Credit: chambershouse.org

### Fifty Years of Service Exhibit

When: September 1 - November 14, 2015

The Chambers and their families have a rich history of service. Here, we focus on the period from the Spanish-American War through World War II. From Homer's service in the Army to Florence and Ruth's many volunteer hours with the Red Cross, come hear their stories, told through artifacts, photographs, and letters.

Credit: [Chambers House Museum website](#)

### McFaddin Ward House

Holiday Open House

December 12, 2015 , 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Make the McFaddin-Ward House your home for the holidays and join us to enjoy a simpler, more peaceful Christmastime. Tour the first floor of the museum (with the halls fully decked), try your hand at Christmas activities, and sample traditional Christmas cookies and punch while you relax and listen to music of the season.

The event is free and open to everyone.

Credit: [McFaddin-Ward House Museum website](#)



McFaddin Ward House  
Photo Credit: mcfaddin-ward.org

**JEFFERSON  
COUNTY  
HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION**

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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/)

Elisha O. Brewer Cemetery  
located off Amoco Road  
Photo Credit: Paul  
Prosperie



Jefferson County Historical Commission

Executive Board 2015 - 2017

Chairman, Theresa Goodness

1st Vice-Chairman, Les McMahan

2nd Vice-Chairman, Paul Prosperie

Secretary/Treasurer, Linda McMahan

Immediate Past Chairman, Ron Ellington

## NECHES RIVER BRIDGE STUDY

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is proposing rail improvements for the Neches River Bridge in the City of Beaumont, Texas. The proposed project would improve rail operations through the Beaumont area by providing a second rail crossing of the Neches River. The project would support and enhance industrial facilities utilizing rail, marine and highway services in the Beaumont region.

Credit: [Neches River Bridge Study Brochure](#)

Neches River Crossing Build Alternatives  
Photo Credit: TxDOT Neches River Bridge  
Study Brochure

