

JCHC JOURNAL

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION VOLUME 2017, ISSUE 1

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Dear Members,

The United States declared War on Germany on April 6, 1917, and entered what has been called the Great War and the War to End all Wars. As we enter the Centennial commemoration period for WWI, we hope to learn stories of veterans and those on the home front who assisted in the war effort. The Museum of the Gulf Coast is gathering information for a fall of 2017 exhibit called "No Man's Land" about East Texas African-Americans in WWI. If you have any information please contact Sarah Bellian, Museum of the Gulf Coast curator.

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

Theresa Goodness, JCHC Chair



Postcard from the Front

Photo Credit: worldwar1centennial.org

VOLUME 2017, ISSUE 1

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JANUARY, 2017

Special points of interest:

- * Jefferson County Fast Facts
- * 1893 Jefferson County Courthouse etching

JEFFERSON COUNTY FAST FACTS

5/12/1917

Date of resignation letter of M.J. Graham, County Engineer, who volunteered to serve his country in its hour of need in World War I.

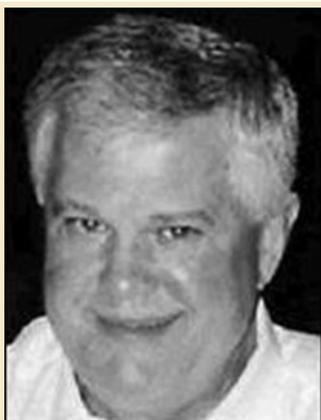
\$25,000

Amount of Liberty Loan bonds purchased by the county in June, 1917, "to assist our government in combatting the ruthless and inhumane warfare of the Central Powers".

\$1.00

Cost per day to pay Hotel Dieu for the care of paupers and county charity patients. Amount was increased in June, 1917, from .75 cents per day due to the high cost of food supplies during WWI.

JEF CHAISON RUSSELL, III, IN MEMORIAM



Former JCHC member Jef Russell passed away December 31, 2016, after suffering a heart attack. He was a seventh generation Texan and a descendant of County Judge Jef Chaison who served from 1890 –1892.

Jef was a former director of the Beaumont Convention Bureau, and a frequent volunteer at the Ben Rogers Visitor Center. Recently he completed his memoirs entitled Dearwood which will be available later this year on Amazon.

Jef had a love for our county’s history and wanted to share it with the world. He was a tireless advocate for our area, and will be sorely missed.

JCHC MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS IN 2017

January 18, 2017	Noon	JCHC Conference Room, Third Floor 1149 Pearl Street, Beaumont, TX
March 15, 2017	Noon	JCHC Conference Room, Third Floor 1149 Pearl Street, Beaumont, TX
May 17, 2017	Noon	JCHC Conference Room, Third Floor 1149 Pearl Street, Beaumont, TX
July 19, 2017	Noon	JCHC Conference Room, Third Floor 1149 Pearl Street, Beaumont, TX
September 20, 2017	Noon	JCHC Conference Room, Third Floor 1149 Pearl Street, Beaumont, TX
November 15, 2017	Noon	JCHC Conference Room, Third Floor 1149 Pearl Street, 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

PRESERVATION PARTNERS

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

SPINDLETOP'S 116TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION AND DRILLERS REUNION

BY PAUL PROSPERIE

The Spindletop Driller's Reunion, commemorating the 116th anniversary of the Lucas gusher was held on a chilly, but beautiful, first Saturday of the new year. Festivities included reenactments galore; Historical Commission members Mike McGreevy and Don Smart participated in both gusher reenactments and a few shoot 'em up performances by the Big Thicket Outlaws through the day. Additional events involved parlor games for kids, tearoom etiquette taught by the Ladies Temperance Union, and a lunchtime serenade by the Harmony Exporters Barbershop Chorus. Another popular item of the day was the Golden Triangle Quilt Guild's exhibit in the Caroline Room. On display were many quilts from different eras and vintage sewing machines, some dating back to 1858.



Spindletop-Gladys City Replica Oil Rig
Photo Credit: Paul Prosperie

Overall, everyone, including the performers, volunteers, and staff of the Spindletop/Gladys City Boomtown Museum, did a great job at putting on this fun-filled family event. Photos and videos can be seen at their Facebook page: www.facebook.com/GladysCity



Big Thicket Outlaws
Photo Credit: Paul Prosperie



Replica Spindletop Gusher
Blows
Photo Credit: Paul Prosperie



Gunfight Reenactment by
Big Thicket Outlaws
Photo Credit: Paul Prosperie

JCHC TIDBITS

- Coordinator Linda McMahan expresses her thanks for everyone getting their Volunteer Hours in on time. This information is included in annual reports to Jefferson County Commissioners Court and the Texas Historical Commission.
- Special thanks go to Soutex Surveyors & Engineers for their recently donated work verifying and updating the survey of the Sarah McGaffey Cemetery, located north of Highway 87 and west of Sabine Pass. The original survey was done by this firm in August, 2002. This information will assist the JCHC in maintaining the records for the cemetery. The JCHC is comfortable with the knowledge that the cemetery is still accurately defined by the original or re-set property corner monuments, despite the fences that were moved off of the original westerly and northerly boundary lines of the cemetery to give the appearance that it is larger than it actually is.
- The JCHC library has many interesting and informative books on Jefferson County and Texas history. Please feel free to check out books from the library. An inventory is available on our website at: [JCHC Library Inventory](#)

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION NEWS

- A state-wide World War I Centennial planning conference will be held February 3, 2017, at the Texas Military Forces Museum located at Camp Mabry in Austin. The goal of the conference is to help local communities and organizations initiate or refine plans to commemorate the role of Texas and Texans at the start of American involvement in the war. Check out the [Texas World War I Centennial Commemoration](#) website for more information.
- The Texas Historical Commission has a webpage [Looking Back on 2016](#) showcasing some of the most significant events in historic preservation in 2016, including their first ever heritage travel conference, Real Places 2016, the Governor's Award for Historic Preservation to the Texas Land Title Association in recognition of its important contributions to Courthouse preservation, and the 35th anniversary of the Texas Main Street Program.

AREA MUSEUM UPCOMING EVENTS



January 21 - April 28, 2017

ELECTRICITY created by the Benjamin Franklin Institute is a series of 16 hands on experiments that will be sure to delight and amaze children and adults alike.

Credit: [Museum of the Gulf Coast website](http://MuseumoftheGulfCoast.org)



Museum of the Gulf Coast
Photo Credit: museumofthegulfcoast.org



John Jay French House Museum
Photo Credit: Theresa Goodness

The John Jay French House Museum

Heritage Happy Hour February 16 @ 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm Spindletop-Gladys City

Join us in the saloon at the Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum and sidle up to the bar for craft beer selections provided by Giglio Distributing Company! Wine and non-alcoholic beverages will also be available. Heritage Happy Hour is always FREE to Beaumont Heritage Society members and \$10.00 for non-members, ages 21+. The museum began as a Bicentennial project of the Lucas Gusher Monument Commission to commemorate the discovery of oil at the Spindletop Hill salt dome in Beaumont.

Credit: [John Jay French House Museum website](http://JohnJayFrenchHouseMuseum.org)

McFaddin-Ward House Museum

January 12 @ 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm at House Visitor Center
They Pointed Them East First

The history of driving cattle from Texas to faraway markets is well known and documented. Driving them EAST, however has been largely ignored. The practice began as early as 1779, and the trail from South Texas to New Orleans came right through the southern coastal region of the state! Could they have mingled with W.P.H. McFaddin's own herd?

Join us as historian Paul Noack begins our 2017 Lecture Series with his talk entitled "Cowboys and Cattle Trails: South Texas to New Orleans". Credit: [McFaddin Ward House Museum website](http://McFaddinWardHouseMuseum.org)



Chambers House Museum
Photo Credit: [Chambers House Museum website](http://ChambersHouseMuseum.org)

**JEFFERSON
COUNTY
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION**

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Linda McMahan, Coordinator

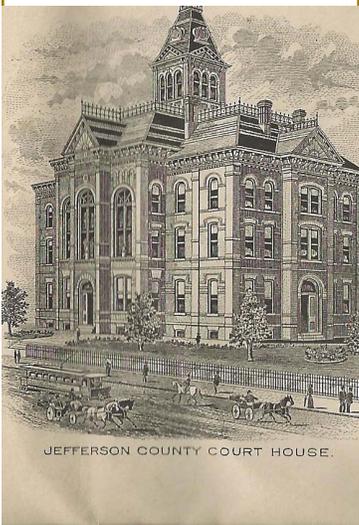


*To preserve and
promote history within
the County.*

We're on the web!
[http://co.jefferson.tx.us/
Historical_Commission/](http://co.jefferson.tx.us/Historical_Commission/)

1893 Jefferson County
Courthouse etching on
envelope

Photo Credit:: County
Clerk records



Jefferson County Historical Commission

Executive Board 2016 - 2017

Chairman, Theresa Goodness

1st Vice-Chairman, Les McMahan

2nd Vice-Chairman, Paul Prosperie

Secretary/Treasurer, Linda McMahan

Brenda Jackson

REMEMBER THE ALAMO STATE HOLIDAY PROPOSED

To: Publishers of Texas Newspapers
Subject: Remember the Alamo Holiday
From: Marshall Doke, Chairman, Texas Scottish Rite History Committee

The Texas Scottish Rite Masons, with the support of Governor Greg Abbott, prominent historical organizations such as the Texas Historical Foundation, and civic leaders across the state, are seeking to formally pay homage to the defenders of the Alamo who gave their lives in the fight for Texas independence.

In March of last year, Governor Abbott issued a proclamation of March 6th as Alamo Memorial Day in honor of the defenders who died in its defense from February 23rd to March 6th of 1836 .

On December 22, 2016 State Representative Jason Villalba of Dallas introduced [House Bill 724](#) to have March 6th recognized as the 9th official state holiday designated *Remember the Alamo Day*. As history officials and prominent leaders, I am requesting your help getting the word out to the good citizens of your communities to ensure the bill will be supported by elected officials in every corner of our state.

Respectfully,

Marshall J. Doke, Jr.
Chairman, Texas Scottish Rite History Committee
mduke@gardere.com