

Heritage Brazos

A publication of the Brazos Heritage Society



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ANNUAL MEETING

The big news for this issue is our 2016 Annual Meeting, scheduled for Saturday, February 20, 2016 at 3 p.m. in the Brazos Center. All of our subscribers should have received the flyer announcing this event. I hope that you will take a few hours to join us, as we have two good speakers lined up. I plan to keep the business meeting afterwards as brief as possible, followed by a reception.

Fortuitously, last November Randy Hilliard and I took a day trip to Houston to the Sixth Annual Houston History Book Fair & Symposium, held at the beautiful and historical Houston Public Library. Among the many authors we met and heard from were Mr. Andy Hall, author and blogger who pens "Dead Confederates: A Civil War Era Blog" (<http://deadconfederates.com/>), Dr. Paul Spellman, award-winning author of *Old 300: Gone to Texas*, and Mr. Steven Gonzales, Executive Director of the El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail Association (<http://www.elcaminorealdestejas.org/>). Not only did we thoroughly enjoy the day, but we also came away from the event intent on inviting Mr. Gonzales and Dr. Spellman to speak at the upcoming annual meeting. (I also hope to invite Mr. Hall at a later time to share his Civil War expertise.)

I was particularly interested in what Mr. Gonzales had to share because as most of you know, a section of El Camino Real de los Tejas follows Old San Antonio Rd. (OSR), the northern border of Brazos County. The trail association is currently in the process of developing new signage along the route, to augment the wonderful job done by the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution back in the 1920s; this project should reach our area in the relatively near future. Brazos County's very own Henry Mayo is the Vice President for the organization. Given the current project, plus the interest I've heard from local residents regarding the trail remains located out near Lake Bryan, we felt that Mr. Gonzales would be a timely and relevant speaker. Randy and I very much enjoyed his presentation down in Houston and we hope that you will, too.

President's Message

While Dr. Spellman's presentation at the book symposium was actually for his new book *Until I Come Home: Love Letters From the War, 1918-1919*, which sounds fascinating, I knew him from his book *Old 300: Gone to Texas* that I am currently reading as part of larger research we're doing into the history of Texas and Brazos County. When Randy and I first started looking into secondary historical resources, I was surprised to find less information than expected on Texas' founding pioneers, at least as a group. So I was quite pleased to come across Dr. Spellman's book, and even more pleased at how interesting it is. I can tell you from experience that Dr. Spellman is also an engaging speaker.

PROJECTS

Even as we've been planning for our annual meeting, we've also been hard at work on projects in between. I'm pleased to report that the Turner-Peters Dogtrot Cabin project is now mostly completed and open to the public by appointment. While the walk-through gate at the Boonville Cemetery is unlocked, allowing people to visit on their own schedule, a guided tour of the cabin and site requires contacting either BHS or the Sons of the Republic of Texas in order to secure a docent. Randy attended the open house back in early October. His photos are available on Flickr (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/137641976@N05/>). One added attraction at the open house was the presence of Mrs. Margaret Van Bavel, author of *The Birth and Death of Boonville*, and one of the forces behind developing the Boonville Historic Site where the cabin is located. I was sorry that I didn't get to attend so I could meet her in person.

Since our last newsletter, the Temple Freda project has taken a big step forward. The engineering company completed their initial report, giving us an idea of what is needed to stabilize the building, which will be considered Phase I out of 5 phases. We are currently working with the Friends of Temple Freda to get funding for this phase, including applying for two grants. Additionally, members of the group are beginning to reach out to community members and to multiple Jewish organizations to gain further support for the project. Brazos Heritage Society is still looking for donations from those who are interested in restoring Bryan's first synagogue. You can donate via the Temple Freda page on our website through PayPal, or send a check to our postal box, made out to Brazos Heritage Society with a note that the check is for Temple Freda. I'll have more information about the project available at the annual meeting, and I'll keep you updated in future editions of our newsletter as the project progresses.

4TH OF JULY

Before you know, it will also be time for the 2016 4th of July in Heritage Park. We are currently seeking sponsors, silent auction donors, and non-profit exhibitors for the event. We need volunteers to work the event itself. Please email me at brazos.heritage@gmail.com if you are interested in assisting with any of these efforts. Even if you aren't able to sponsor or exhibit, I hope that you will attend and bring your family/friends/neighbors as well. My goal is to bring in even more wonderful exhibitors this year to round out the flag ceremony, music, and children's parade. Looking out across Heritage Park and seeing members of community, young and old, enjoying the event makes all the hard work that goes into it worthwhile.

FUTURE

Finally, we are constantly keeping our eyes open for any new opportunities to serve our members and supporters. As I mentioned, I hope to invite Andy Hall to come speak at a later date, and we're actively hunting for other potential resources that we can share. One possible presentation that has come up during several discussions is doing another symposium for historic home restoration. If anyone has any ideas of possible resources, please contact me as I would love to be able to provide that kind of valuable information to the community sometime this year.

We continue to explore ways to gain extra funding for the organization, in order to expand what we can offer our members and the community – whether more presentations, additional restoration projects, or further educational resources.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Finally, if you are a newsletter subscriber but not a member, I would like to encourage you to formally join the Brazos Heritage Society. Memberships are as low as \$10/individual or \$15/family. Even as we look for additional funding, your memberships make a difference in our ability to offer events and take on projects. The more members we have, the more we are able to do for both our membership and our community. We are only as strong as our membership, and we truly value your support and your ideas.

Until next time.

Stephanie Hilliard, President

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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/brazosheritagesociety?ref=hl> (Facebook)

Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/137641976@N05/>

Twitter: @BrazosHeritage (<https://twitter.com/BrazosHeritage>)

Pinterest: <http://www.pinterest.com/brazosheritage/>

Google+: <https://plus.google.com/+BrazosheritageOrg/posts>

2015 Boonville Days

On Saturday, October 10, 2015 the Brazos Heritage Society joined a number of other exhibitors at the Brazos Center for the annual Boonville Days event celebrating the pioneer history of the Brazos Valley.

One of our biggest draws for visitors is the butter churning. My appreciation to Nathalie Hilliard for sharing the art of making homemade butter in a quart jar! While it is not a difficult process, it does take a while and can get tiring. But both young and old love watching the process of turning cream into creamy butter. Eating homemade butter, in several flavors such as sea salt or honey, is even better than the process.

I want to thank Dr. Lou Hodges for once again allowing us to use a number of antique kitchen implements as part of our display, including a real butter churn. Dr. Hodges also provided some of his homemade jelly to go with our buttered crackers.

As always, we shared our Brazos County timeline that shows events in the county up to 1900 in context of other events in the United States. For this year, I hope to add a second timeline that takes the history up through the mid-20th century. We also had print-outs available with information about the Turner-Peters Dogtrot Cabin project, and Temple Freda. Quite a few guests took handouts with them.

We added a few more books to our antique school book portion of the exhibit, including one that was originally printed sometime around 1839. If you really think about it, that book was in use by a child, or children, who were born before the Mexican-American War! Our nation was less than 100 years old at the time.

Sheila Fields, Secretary and Research Chair, brought back her model of Boonville. This tabletop display, made out of pretzels and other common items by one of her elementary classes, never fails to capture the imaginations of both adults and children. There's just something about viewing the structures and layout of a long-gone place...while realizing that it represents the history of your own area...that puts the "wow" into history for people. Sheila spent time this past summer on a little historical remodeling herself as she renovated the village, which was starting to show some wear and tear after all these years. According to her, it should be good for another 20 years now!

We interacted with a steady stream of visitors throughout the day. It is always wonderful to share our educational and preservation efforts with local people, helping them learn about and appreciate our rich history.

I hope everyone will join us for the next Boonville Days in fall 2016.

Heritage Society Announcements

Treasurer's Report, Dena Kahan

Currently, our bank account stands at \$21,721.27. Of that amount, \$13,691.94 represents donations for Temple Freda, either for window restoration or for the initial Sparks Engineering report. That leaves the organization with a total of \$8,029.33.

Membership Report, Shirley DuPriest

We have a total of 27 paid members. Of those, 15 are family memberships, 6 are Heritage Club memberships and 6 are individual memberships.

A Note on Memberships

The Brazos Heritage Society offers several membership levels. Individual/Student is \$10/year, Family is \$15/year, and Heritage Club is \$100/year. Additionally, we offer a Business membership for \$75/year; this membership level includes a plaque suitable for hanging in your organization's reception area to let your clients know that you support our community organization.

Sponsorships

We are also interested in partnering with local businesses/individuals who would be willing to help sponsor events/projects. Sponsors will be recognized as part of any advertising for the event/project. Sponsorships are a critical resource to help us expand our community outreach efforts.

New Committees

As you can see from our masthead, we have added several new committees as part of our effort to provide better service to our members and the community. The *Newsletter Committee*, headed up by Stephanie Snyder, is constantly working to not only get out the newsletter, but also to improve our overall communications effort.

Shirley DuPriest, our new Chair of the *Membership Committee*, is working hard to send out timely membership renewal reminders, and provide any other member support needed.

Our newest committee is our *Community Relations* committee. Mr. Randy Haynes, a founding member of the Brazos Heritage Society, who has also held a number of offices in the past, has graciously agreed to help us with community outreach efforts. Not only are we working on raising the overall profile of the Brazos Heritage Society in the community, but we are also looking for better ways to serve as a community liaison for historic preservation and education, and to partner with other local organizations on projects and education efforts.

February in History...

Brazos County



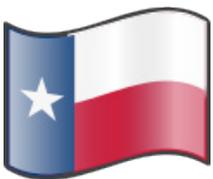
February 1866:

"Freedmen's schools open in Boonville and Millican." **February**

1868: "Stephen Curtis, an African American, elected as a delegate to the State

Constitutional Convention." **February 1, 1871:** "The Daily State Journal reports: The Washington (D.C.) Chronicle informs us that H.A. Moore, one of the proprietors of the Brazos Eagle, has been appointed postmaster for Bryan, Texas. Those who are in a position to know, say that this is a good appointment, and one that will give general satisfaction to the people of Brazos Co." (<http://www.brazosgenealogy.org/data/time3.htm>)

Texas



February 24 "Birthday

- Admiral Chester Nimitz (1885-1966) was born in Fredericksburg, Texas. He commanded Allied naval,

land and air forces in the South Pacific during World War II, and signed the Japanese surrender document on September 2, 1945." (<http://www.historyplace.com/specials/calendar/february.htm>)

The National Museum of the Pacific War is located in Admiral Nimitz's hometown. You can find out more about Admiral Nimitz and the Pacific War by visiting

the museum's website at <http://www.pacificwarmuseum.org/> or stopping by the museum as part of a trip to historic Fredericksburg.

United States



February 1, 2003

- "Sixteen minutes before it was scheduled to land, the Space Shuttle

Columbia broke apart in flight over west Texas, killing all seven crew members. The accident may have resulted from damage caused during liftoff when a piece of insulating foam from the external fuel tank broke off, piercing a hole in the shuttle's left wing that allowed hot gases to penetrate the wing upon re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere. This was the second space shuttle lost in flight. In January 1986, Challenger exploded during liftoff." (<http://www.historyplace.com/specials/calendar/february.htm>)

February 2, 1848 - "The war between the U.S. and Mexico ended with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. In exchange for \$15 million, the U.S. acquired the areas encompassing parts or all of present day California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, and Texas. The treaty was ratified on March 10, 1848." (<http://www.historyplace.com/specials/calendar/february.htm>)