

# Heritage Brazos

A publication of the Brazos Heritage Society



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## EVENTS

We've had a busy summer and fall. In July, of course, we put on our annual 4th of July in Heritage Park. It was very successful; we had a great turnout both in terms of exhibitors and guests. You can read more about it and see some photos on pages 6-7.

Our next event was the first weekend in October with Boonville Days. You can read more about the event on pages 8-9. Unfortunately, because we were somewhat short-handed for that booth, we didn't get any photos.

Finally, we did a day trip to Liendo Plantation's Civil War Re-enactment Weekend on Sunday, November 21. As always, members enjoyed viewing the pre-Civil War plantation house, the many display booths, and the afternoon re-enactment of what a Civil War battle might have looked like.

## PROJECTS

Brazos Heritage Society is currently involved with two preservation projects: the Turner-Peters Dog-Trot Cabin project (pp. 4-5, 8) that will form the center of the new Boonville Historic site and the restoration of Temple Freda, the area's first Jewish synagogue (p. 4)

## UPCOMING

Mark your calendars for Saturday, February 21, 2015 from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. for our BHS annual meeting. Our guest speaker will be from the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum. A reception will follow.

## FOR THE FUTURE

What I particularly wanted to cover in this issue is our future focus. The organization has a rich history spanning several decades. We've seen both

**President's Message**

**President's Message cont...**

ups and downs in terms of membership, community involvement, etc.

One thing that any organization must deal with as they reach maturity is maintaining relevance for the audience that they serve. Brazos Heritage Society is no different. Over the past few months, the Executive Committee has been discussing ways to increase our visibility and relevance within the community, as both have diminished over the years. Because of this diminishment, our resources are also less, forcing us to reassess what activities we can realistically support.

Our July 4th event is a foundational, and growing, opportunity for community outreach and one we fully plan to continue. Unfortunately, due to a variety of circumstances, we are not currently able to continue putting on our annual Tea or the Christmas Stroll. The Tea in particular is very cost- and labor-intensive to hold. While at times it has functioned as an effective fundraiser, in recent years it has not brought in enough money to justify the expense and time.

One thing that the Executive Committee did vote to continue was our Day Trips. For those who don't know, we organize group trips to area historical events such as the Camp Hearne Open House, Liendo Plantation's Civil War Re-Enactment, and the Museum of the American GI Open House. We are always on the lookout for additional trips/venues. Typically, members receive a discount on admission (if there is a charge to attend), or on food if the event itself is free. Typically, attendees meet at the event, gather long enough for either a meal or to hand out tickets, and then are free to explore the event on their own. These trips provide a benefit to members at a modest cost to the organization.

Obviously, our involvement in the two preservation projects mentioned earlier in my message fulfills our mandate for historic preservation and provides yet another opportunity to increase our visibility on top of our social events. Additionally, all of our events and projects let us network with not only the general public but with other organizations in the area that contribute to preserving local history. We will continue leveraging both of these to our fullest advantage. Specifically, networking with other organizations will allow us to effectively liaison with the public and direct them to the appropriate resource for their needs.

One area receiving far too little attention in the past few years has been our educational focus. While we once had a presence in the local school districts, that is no longer the case. Although we cannot do as much in terms of events as we once did, the advent of modern technology WILL allow us to bolster our educational presence at a minimal cost. To that end, one thing that came out of our Board discussions was a consensus that we increase our educational efforts via technology through our web page plus interactions on social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest.

If you look at our website, you'll see that we've already begun this process by posting information about the Tuner-Peters Dog-Trot Cabin project, including providing an opportunity to donate to the project through our website. If the Temple Freda page is not up by the time you receive this newsletter, it will be shortly after.

Furthermore, we plan to provide a variety of other resources on the website, such as genealogical links, historical links, etc. This project is underway and will be ongoing as we are able to pull together information. Sheila Fields (Secretary and Research Chair) will be assisting with this, as will our new member, Stephanie Snyder, who recently joined the Research committee.

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Long story short, our current circumstances in terms of membership numbers and involvement, as well as our finances, are requiring us to rethink where we focus our time and energy. Ultimately, this may not be a bad thing because it will let us re-balance our efforts. Additionally, a greater educational profile may very well increase our public visibility to the point that we gain members. AND, we hope that this focus will also position us to successfully compete for grant funding which will, in turn, increase our financial resources and allow us to return to providing social events at a later date.

So, that was the *bad* news - which is really a mixed bag of both limitations and opportunities.

The *good* news is that the Brazos Heritage Society recently received a donation from Hochheim Prairie Insurance Branch #219, a farm mutual insurance company that has been serving Texans since 1892.\* They recently sent us a check in the amount of \$800! It was a very pleasant surprise and will provide some much-needed cash to help us keep moving forward. I am deeply grateful for their support and want to express my gratitude to President Dwight Miller, in particular, for this windfall.

Ultimately, continuing as a successful organization in the 21st century will require us to shift our paradigm in certain areas of operation. However, as I promised in my initial President's Letter, any changes made in function or focus will always seek to honor both the original purpose of the Brazos Heritage Society, its rich history, and the hard work of all the members - and leaders - who came before our current team.

BHS does not consist of just its Executive Committee. We depend on our members for their support, their enthusiasm, and their ideas. I am always open to questions, ideas, and even criticism. Hopefully, we will manage your organization in such a way that criticism will be few and far between! Either way, please take the opportunity to dialogue with us and let us know your thoughts and ideas.

Sometime early next year, I hope to develop a survey that will give us a more formal avenue for member input. I'll keep you posted on this project.

In the meantime, you can reach me by email at [brazos.heritage@gmail.com](mailto:brazos.heritage@gmail.com) or by phone at 979-777-4924. You can call or text me at that number. I'm also always happy to make time to meet in person if needed or if you would just like to chat.

(\*Disclosure: I am a board member for Branch #219. However, I was not directly involved in the final decision to donate to the Brazos Heritage Society, nor did I determine the amount of that donation.)

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**Website:** [brazosheritage.org](http://brazosheritage.org)

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

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

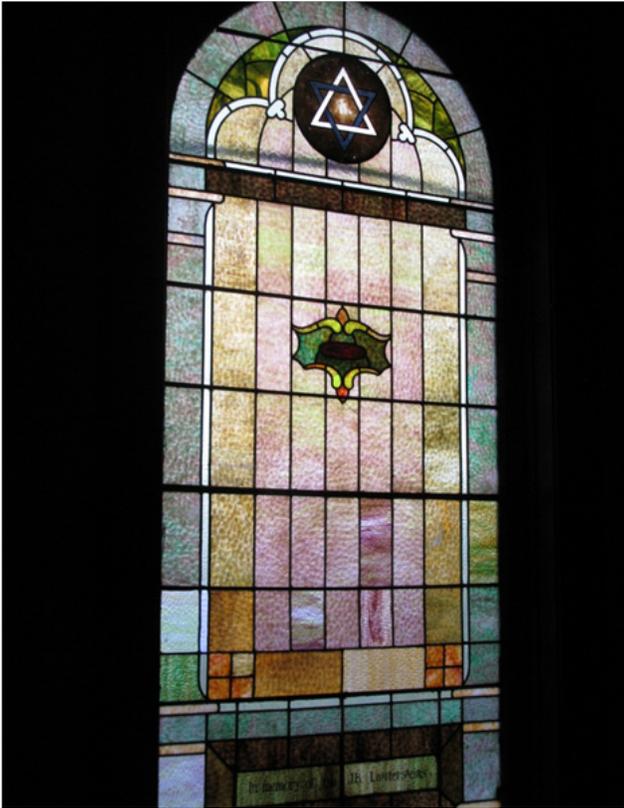
**Pinterest:** <http://www.pinterest.com/brazosheritage/>

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

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## PROJECTS

### *Temple Freda*



We received an email from Lindsey Guindi at the City of Bryan letting us know that the Temple Freda Project is moving forward. A few days ago, the crew began removing the synagogue's beautiful stained glass windows. The windows will be restored by Foster Stained Glass.([fosterstainedglass.com](http://fosterstainedglass.com)). Donors are still needed to adopt windows to help defray the cost of the restoration. Adoptions cost \$3,500 per window. We can also use donations of any denomination for general repairs.

We will continue to keep you apprised of progress on this project.

The Temple Freda restoration is a joint effort between the Friends of Temple Freda and the Brazos Heritage Society. When the project is complete, the property will be used as a venue for community events.

### *Turner-Peters Dogtrot Cabin*

As many of you probably already know, a project is underway to relocate the Turner-Peters Dogtrot Cabin off of TMPA property in Grimes County to its new home on land adjacent to the Boonville Cemetery, fronting Boonville Rd. in Bryan. In between, the cabin will be carefully restored by Heritage Restoration in Waco.

Recently, Mr. Mervin Peters forwarded a write-up on the cabin to us. We've taken the liberty of reproducing his write-up here in its entirety, as his intimate knowledge of the project does it far more justice than anything we could write:

We have learned what we are relocating is a house but we still prefer to call it a cabin. A cabin generally had earthen floors and a house raised plank floors. There were other more subtle differences but this is the main one. We still like for it to be a cabin. Thanks to the Texas Municipal Power Agency's (TMPA)



generous donation of the cabin on February 24, 2014 and their tender loving care for some twenty-five years, this cabin will become a great Texas History education venue, an attractive tourist attraction and a visible salute to our early years. The cabin is in excellent condition, one of the best in the wild found in recent years. The Texas Historical Commission release TMPA to make this donation on February 21 and on February 25 at the regular meeting of the Brazos County Commissioners Court's unanimous approval was given to the placement of the cabin in the Park subject only to completion of the restoration and other planned improvements.

In March the long awaited time of disassembly of the 1856 Turner-Peters Dogtrot began and at the end of four grueling days for the workers, the unusable parts had been separated into a burn pile and the remainder neatly assemble, banded into numerous bundles of like items, wall logs, roof rafters, floor joists, flooring, etc., separated into two large trailer loads and hauled to Heritage Restoration in Waco for treatment and reassembly adding in replacement logs and lumber as needed.



In early June the first load of replacement red cedar logs was delivered to Heritage Restoration and a second load is expected before the end of the month. The original logs were red cedar so this will allow the newly refurbished cabin to remain all red cedar logs from the Central Texas area.

It is anticipated that the restoration work will be completed and the foundation prepared for the cabin to return to Boonville Heritage Park on property adjoining Boonville Cemetery and fronting Boonville Road by late July. While the cemetery property was acquired by Brazos County when created in 1842, this piece of property was not acquired until 1890 and was never used as a burial ground. Margaret van Bavel first brought to public attention this separate tract of land and together with her husband Cornelius, W.T. McDonald, J. Milton Nance, Mary Bess Young other interested local individuals a Living History Museum was proposed. This cabin will be the first building in bringing their vision and dream to reality some thirty to thirty-five years later.

The William Joel Bryan Chapter #14 of the Sons of the Republic of Texas has adopted the project and is providing most of the leadership and support together with Stephanie Sale, a descendant of the Turner family that owned the cabin from 1861 to 1937. Various Turner family members lived there most of those years. A Peters owned it from 1937 to 1989 when it was sold to TMPA but none ever lived in the house.

**continued on page 8**

## Events: Fourth of July Celebration a Great Success

Our 28th Annual 4th of July in Heritage Park turned out very well. First, we could not have asked for better weather. Plenty of cloud cover kept us cooler than normal for early July, if a little humid, but without rain to dampen guests' enthusiasm for the day. Our best guess, based on the sale of drinks and popcorn puts the crowd around 250 for the day!

The Sojourners did a wonderful job with the flag raising ceremony and Proud Country played their usual great mix of patriotic and popular songs.

This year, I led off the celebration with some announcements, including a reminder that we can thank our United States military for gaining—and keeping—the nation that we celebrate on July 4th. I then presented a plaque to our Past President, Dan Beto, expressing the gratitude of the Brazos Heritage Society for not only his term as President in 2013-2014 but especially for the amazing job he did maintaining our blog for several years.

Children lined up behind our very own patriotically garbed Sheila Fields to ride/march/skate around the park with their bikes, scooters, wagons, and even pets! I want to thank all the kids for joining us, and their parents who are usually the ones doing such a great job of decorating the various means of transportation that their children

use for the parade. Given that the 4th of July in Heritage Park started as a neighborhood celebration with Eastside families, I love to see that tradition of family participation continuing several generations later. Later in the event, the kids enjoyed games led by Cathy and Alice Cox while Samantha and Natasha Gray did a brisk business of face painting throughout the event.

Last year, 9 exhibitors put up booths. This year, 13 joined us!

Home Depot set up a booth for the second year in the row with a craft for the kids. We also shared space with the A&M Garden Club, the American Red Cross, the Bluebonnet Streetrodders, Brazos Spinners and Weavers Guild, Daughters of the American Revolution, Habitat for Humanity, Museum of the American GI, The Brazos Bluebonnet Quilt Guild, and The Brazos Valley Museum of Natural History. I was particularly excited that three new exhibitors joined us whose organization provides direct support for our veterans: Brazos Valley Veterans, The American Legion Earl Graham Post #159



Auxiliary, and The James C. Taylor Association.

Thanks to the generosity of a number of sponsors, KORA joined us for a two-hour live broadcast from the event. I would personally like to thank our sponsors for making this possible: Annette and Mervin Peters, Florence and Bookman Peters, Henry Mayo, Nat and Dan Hilliard, Fran (Lamb) Hooks, Beverly and Homer Myers, Caroline and Tom McDonald, John and Keith Halsell, Sheila Fields, and Cat Herrin. Fran Hooks coordinated with KORA on radio spots ahead of time as well as interviews day of.

I also want to thank the Arts Council of the Brazos Valley for arranging two different radio "appearances" for yours truly to advertise ahead of the big day.

Last but not least, our silent auction did quite well. We made over \$700 with bids on items from Academy, Baylor Athletic Department, Benjamin Knox, Beverly Myers, Brazos Glassworks, our very own Brazos Valley Bombers, Cavender's Boot City, the Dallas Stars (Hockey), Disneyland California, FC Dallas (Soccer), Gene and Jerry Jones Family Charities (Dallas Cowboys), Kwik-Kar Oil & Lube, Helen Wise, Jim.n.i, Lady Camo, Southern Grace,

Texas Rose Boutique, and The Chocolate Factory. While the 4th of July is not a fundraising event, proceeds from our silent auction do help offset the cost of putting on the event.

Additionally, we had a number of overall event sponsors who also helped offset the cost of the 4th: Boy Scouts of America Troop 383 St. Joseph Catholic Church, Dent Magic, Saint-Gobain NorPro, The Downtown Bryan Association, and The Farm Patch. While some of our event sponsors were new this year, we also had supporters such as Dent Magic, The Farm Patch, and Saint-Gobain Norpro who have faithfully supported our event for many years.

I would like to add my personal appreciation for my Executive Committee and other volunteers who made this event possible. First, the tireless efforts of our Event Chair, Randy Hilliard, made this one of the best Independence Day celebrations

in our 28-year history. That isn't just coming from me—I heard this from several people. As always, we couldn't do this without Isabel McPartlin, Beverly Myers, Sheila Fields, and Tom McDonald. We also received volunteer support from Nat Hilliard, Ulie Smith, Maxine Miskimen, Cathy and Alice Cox, Samantha and Natasha Gray, and the Scouts and leaders of Troop 383.

If I missed thanking anyone for their help with this event, please chalk it up to my memory and not to lack of gratitude! Everyone who lent a hand for even the smallest task was a valuable part of making this day possible for our community.

We've wrapped up nearly all the necessary after-action items for the event, but rest assured we are already looking toward next year!



## Projects: Turner-Peters Dogtrot Cabin cont...

The cabin, consists of two cribs approximately twenty foot square each and separated by a ten foot "dogtrot". Additionally it has porches both front and back. It will be 90%+ original and in first class shape when done and should have at least another one hundred and sixty years of use and enjoyment.

The Brazos Valley Master Gardener Association has graciously accepted responsibility for planning an early Texas yard to be installed around the cabin and will identify sources for appropriate materials specified in their plan.

Heritage Restoration expects to complete their work on the cabin in Waco in late July and begin re-erecting it at Boonville at that time or early August. Another month or two will be required to add the fireplace, roof, floors, porches, lofts and ADA entry. With the assistance of the Director and Curator at the Star of Texas Museum we have a furnishing plan and have acquired substantially all that is required for a typical period furnished two crib cabin.

Fund raising to date has gone well but as always additional support is needed to cover all of the bases. The cabin should be substantially finished and mostly furnished sometime this fall and we will continue to enhance it and the surroundings over time. We likely will have an official dedication in March 2015.

## Events: Boonville Days

On Saturday, October 4 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.

First of all, I want to thank Randy Hilliard (Event Chair), Randy Haynes (member), Courtney Hilliard, and Natasha Gray for their help with the booth. A conflicting engagement kept me from attending and many of our other members were also unavailable. If it were not for Randy and his team, Brazos Heritage Society would not have been represented this year.

As always, the butter churning was a big draw for guests. Everyone loved watching us turn cream to butter. They loved eating it even more! While we make our butter in a mason jar, thanks to Dr. Lou Hodges we also had a real butter churn on exhibit, along with other antique kitchen implements.

We also exhibited our Brazos County timeline that shows events in the county up to 1900 in context of other events in the United States. In addition, this year we added a write up and photos for both the Turner-Peters Dog-Trot Cabin and Temple Freda project, also featured in this newsletter.

We added in some antique school books, showing the types of textbooks the average student might use over several years of their education. Thanks to Randy Haynes, we also had some original Jewish prayer books from Temple Freda.

Finally, Sheila Fields (Secretary) brought her wonderful model of Boonville, created years ago by one of her elementary classes. This model, while showing a bit of wear and tear after 20 years, never fails

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to intrigue visitors, young and old.

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.

We've already signed up for next year's Boonville Days, which will be held on Saturday, October 10, 2015. Hope to see everyone there!

## Heritage Society Announcements

### *Treasurer's Report*

Currently, our Certificate of Deposit at Prosperity Bank is valued at \$8,416.01 and our checking account has a balance of \$2,022.97, for a total of \$10,438.98. Our membership stands at 38 member units in the Society: 8 individual members (\$10.00), 18 family members (\$15.00), and 7 heritage members (\$100.00). For more detailed information about the Society's financial condition, please do not hesitate to contact me at 979-229-9414 or by email at mycobra@suddenlink.net.

**Beverly Myers, Treasurer**

### *Annual Dues*

One of my goals as President is to research multiple sources of revenue to expand our ability to fulfill our mission. However, as always we do rely on member dues to help us fulfill our mission.

If your membership has lapsed, I encourage you to renew your involvement with us. In this edition I've highlighted several great projects, and we're always hard at work looking for new opportunities to preserve the rich history of our area.

We now offer multiple ways to renew your membership. First, you can print off the membership form on our website at [brazosheritage.org](http://brazosheritage.org) and mail it, along with your check, to P.O. Box 1776, Bryan, Texas 77806. You can also renew using your credit card on our website at <http://brazosheritage.org/become-member/>.

For any questions, or to pay with your credit card by phone, you can call me at 979-777-4924.

**Stephanie Hilliard, President**

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## November in History...

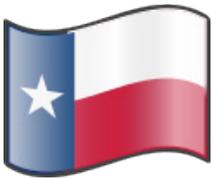
### Brazos County



**November 13, 1831** - Robert Millican and his family arrive from Missouri and settle three miles south of present-day Millican.

The Millicans become the first permanent settlers in what would later be Brazos County (<http://www.brazosgenealogy.org/data/time1.htm>).

### Texas



**November 25, 1850** – Peter Hansborough Bell, 3rd Governor for the State of Texas, signs the

Compromise of 1850. This document establishes that Texas will give up its long-standing claim to land covering more than half of New Mexico, a third of Colorado, a corner of Kansas, the panhandle of Oklahoma, and a bit of Wyoming. In exchange, the United States assumes \$10 million in debt owed by the old Republic of Texas; the 29th State was allowed to keep its public lands (<http://www.texasalmanac.com/topics/history/timeline/annexation-and-statehood>).

In spite of this major land deal, Texas remains the largest state in the United States until Alaska achieves statehood in 1948. Texas is still the largest state in the lower 48.

### United States



**November 6, 1860** - Abraham Lincoln is elected the 16th President of the United States. The

next month, South Carolina officially secedes from the Union, intensifying already simmering tensions that a few months later would precipitate the Civil War. This bloody conflict cost over 700,000 American casualties (<http://civilwarhome.com/casualties.htm>), more than all other wars combined – from the American Revolution to Vietnam.

### International

**November 4, 1942** - "During World War II, British troops led by Bernard Montgomery defeated the Germans under Erwin Rommel at El Alamein after a twelve-day battle." (<http://www.historyplace.com/specials/calendar/november.htm>).

Many of these troops were subsequently sent to POW camps in the United States. One of these POW camps is Camp Hearne in Hearne, Texas. Check out their link at <http://camphearne.com/> for information about the camp's history and the current museum. They also hold an open house every October.