

HAYS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION



**Thursday, January 25, 2018
Hays County Courthouse
111 East San Antonio Street, Rm 101
San Marcos, Texas 78666**

The January 25, 2018, meeting of the Hays County Historical Commission (HCHC) was called to order at 6:07 p.m. by Chair Kate Johnson. A quorum was met as the following members were present—Delbert Bassett, Marie Bassett, Eric Beckers, Linda Coker, Luanne Cullen, Robert Frizzell, Mimi Gaitán, Eddie Gumbert, Dorothy Gumbert, Kate Johnson, Richard Kidd, Jo Landon, Jo Ann Lowe, SarahAnn Lowther, Cindy Meyer, Ralph Meyer, Henry Oles, Marian Oles, Trisha Randow, and Gina Rogers.

Announcements—Kate Johnson said that she and Gina Rogers attended the Texas Historical Commission (THC) event at Umlauf Gardens in Austin on January 20 and the Four Winns Ranch nomination was approved by the State Board of Review. A THC meeting was to be held on February 7 at the Four Winns Ranch to discuss the National Register of Historic Places nomination and contributing features of the ranch. Members of the HCHC were invited to attend, and because of limited space, a sign-up sheet was available for those interested in attending. Kate also said that the Circle House in Kyle with fan-like roof designed by Buck Winn was demolished recently which is a sad loss to those who treasure his works.

Kate requested that each committee chairman have a meeting each month this year in order for the members to be involved and interested in the activities and projects. She said that meetings can be held at the courthouse, the Kyle Depot, by email, or other locations but not at the monthly HCHC meetings sites as a courtesy to the hosts. After checking to see if the chairmen had keys to the courthouse, she would order keys for Delbert Bassett and Mimi Gaitán. When asked if any chairmen needed business cards, Mimi Gaitán said that she needed cards and Jo Landon said she needed another set.

Kate described the poor condition of the old Bismark filling station on Post Road in San Marcos and said that \$8,000-10,000 were needed to repair the collapsing column and to stabilize the structure. After discussion about its history, Kate said that she would like more information about the current owners in order to plan for the structure's future.

Kate also reminded members that it was the last day to be registered for the TSHA conference in San Marcos on March 8-10 and to let Luanne Cullen know if they were interested in attending.

1. **Vote on accepting minutes from December 7, 2017**—Delbert Bassett moved to accept the minutes; Jo Landon seconded the motion. Motion passed, and the minutes were approved.
2. **Historic Kyle Railroad Depot**—Trisha Randow reported that the depot’s hours changed at the beginning of the year from being open on Sunday afternoons to being open on Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The Christmas season was festive by including decorations installed by the county workers, the Lehman High School Theatre Group performing “Polar Express” and giving audience members packets of Snowball Soup (hot chocolate with mini-marshmallows), Santas (Jim Herbert and Willie Tenorio) listening to children’s wishes and giving them bookmarks, and Marie Bassett reading Christmas stories to the children.

On January 23 (National Pie Day), the City of Kyle used the Depot to host their ProclaPie Reception celebrating their new branding as the “Pie Capital of Texas.” The event included a pie-eating contest, games, and lots of pie.

The caboose project had continued to make progress. A Bobcat was moving fill dirt at the north end of the Depot to prepare the roadbed for the track. That event would be followed by laying the ties and nailing down the track in about the next two weeks. Then the caboose could be moved onto the track for its final resting location. Henry Oles believed that the caboose might be finished by May 2018.
3. **Old Hays County Jail Report**—Kate said that she and her committee had met with preservation architect firm, Hutson | Gallagher from Austin, Texas, on January 24 at the Old Jail. Tracy and Chris Hutson, the primary contacts, would be making a list of items that Kate and the committee would need to locate, such as previous CAD drawing from Emily Little, the exterior renovation architect. This project would have several phases including building bathrooms behind the jail separate from the building and returning the Old Wooden Jail to the grounds. Because installing elevators for ADA purposes would harm the historic structure, the upstairs rooms will be used as storage and office space. Kate said that \$613,000 had been raised so far and more funds should be available.
4. **Cemetery Committee Report**—Jo Landon reported that Minnie Nelson had informed her that Hays County would maintain the Antioch Cemetery but Jo was not certain if that maintenance would include the unfenced 1.7 acres. The County also said that a traffic light will be placed at Old Black Colony Road and Hwy. 1626 because of growth and increased traffic. Jo had visited Cementerio del Rio and said that it looked good. It has gate codes which protects it from casual traffic. The county also maintains this cemetery.

The James-Duran-Alba cemetery is now recorded as a Historic Texas Cemetery. The application was submitted in September 2017, and was completed in January, 2018. Jo had sent a message to Dave McGlamery about a THC designation for the Middlebrooks Cemetery but had not received a reply. Jo asked members for suggestions on which cemeteries the committee should consider for THC designation and any other projects for them. Kate suggested the Butler Cemetery on the Zimmerman Ranch for consideration.
5. **Historical Marker Committee Report**—Marie Bassett said that we failed in our bid for undertold-story funding for the Antioch Cemetery. Of 91 applicants, 15 were accepted. THC suggested that we try again in 2018. THC had sent the inscription text for the Stringtown marker, and the marker committee was in the process of editing it. As soon as the committee and the Kissing Tree team are

satisfied with the wording, Marie will sign off on it. It should then take about six weeks before the foundry has the marker ready for shipping.

- Horticulture Committee**—Delbert Bassett reported that there is a variety of agarita, *Mahonia swaseyi*, along Dead Man's Creek, and he hoped that the Horticulture Committee members could take a field trip to locate them. Eric Beckers suggested that those trips would be better in late winter while the agarita's green leaves could be more easily seen against surrounding dead foliage.

Delbert also stated that future committee outings would evaluate the health of our historic trees, such as the Kissing Oak in San Marcos, the Kyle Auction Oak, and the Kyle Hanging Oak.

Linda Coker asked about saving the palm trees in front of the old Frost Building on Guadalupe Street in San Marcos which was the site of the old Post Office. Eric Beckers suggested that if they were slated for removal, perhaps they could be moved. Mimi Gaitán offered to check the information she received from the Texas Chapter International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) workshop she attended last year for information about a palm tree group who might be able to provide advice. Delbert said he too would follow up to learn more about the intended fate of the palm trees by the new owners of the Frost Building.

- Hispanic History Committee Report**—Mimi Gaitán said that she was still missing HCHC member and former Hispanic History Committee Chairman, Ofelia Vásquez-Philo, who died on November 1, 2017. Mimi provided updates on several ongoing projects. The Cuauhtémoc Hall marker project lost momentum due to no and slow communication after her attendance at a monthly meeting when several members expressed concerns about the ramifications of a historical marker designation.

The Memorial Highway Designation for the late San Marcos Police Officer Alfonso Rodriguez was derailed when San Marcos Police Officer Copeland was killed. The resolution submitted for the Alfonso Rodriguez designation was scheduled for consideration by the San Marcos City Council during the November meeting. Mimi notified the Texas Department of Transportation representative and Congressman Lloyd Doggett's staff of the status.

Mimi had spoken with the staff at Centro Cultural Hispano de San Marcos about receiving updates from the Centro.

Maria Rocha, Executive Director of the Indigenous Cultures Institute, informed Mimi that plans for reburial of five sets of remains were on hold. When the private reburial takes place, several tribes will be invited to the ceremony which will be officiated by Dr. Mario Garza. Mimi also said that there is a Native American degree program at TxState.

The Hays County Matlachines participated in the 2017 Austin Diocese celebration of La Virgen de Guadalupe. The host parish was St. Cruz in Buda, Texas. The St. John the Evangelist Matlachines from San Marcos were designated to help host the other Danzantes Aztecas/Aztec Dancers and Matlachines groups within the Diocese jurisdiction. Mimi also welcomed Gina Rogers, the new member of HCHC, to the committee.

- Courthouse Committee Report**—Linda Coker said that the Christmas lighting ceremony in November drew the largest crowd ever with over 400 people attending. She would like for the courthouse museum to be open on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month to coincide with "Art Squared" when more people visit the square.

Linda described the quest by the Indigenous Culture Institute headed by Dr. Mario Garza to have a portion of land by the Aquarena Springs (or Sacred Springs) designated as a World Heritage Site because of its history as a continually inhabited site.

Linda also displayed an old book, *Old Mountain City* by Bonnie Carpenter, which was sent to us from Weatherford College.

Courthouse renovation master plans are being made with Clint Garza, Executive Director of Countywide Operations, to apply for THC grant funds. Clint spoke briefly to the members about the plans which include restoring the courtroom to its previous configuration as a two-story room with the current third-floor courtroom becoming the balcony to the new courtroom on the second floor. The exterior windows are scheduled for restoration this spring, and the bright lighting throughout the courthouse will be replaced with softer lights.

The family of Dorothy Schwartz donated several boxes of papers and other materials to the Courthouse Museum.

Linda also reported that Judge Bert Cobb had a successful transplant and is exceeding the doctors' expectations in his recovery.

Adjourn—Delbert Bassett moved that the meeting adjourn; Dorothy Gumbert seconded the motion. The motion passed, and the meeting adjourned at 7:11 p.m. Supper followed.

Respectfully submitted,
Luanne P. Cullen, HCHC Secretary
(Photos courtesy of Luanne Cullen)

