

HAYS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION MINUTES UHLAND CITY HALL, FEBRUARY 28, 2008

There is nothing left these days to show of the fierce battle that took place on Plum Creek near Kyle along the El Camino Real de los Tejas. But residents of Uhland say arrowheads are plentiful in the area, so plentiful they are easily found lying on top of the ground. And when the wind blows through the old oak trees you can close your eyes and almost hear the horses snorting. The occasional car coming down the road sounds like hooves on gravel. They are the ghostly memories of the Battle at Plum Creek fought by Texans, Mexicans, and friendly Indians against the Comanche's on August 11, 1840. When the Texans and their friends, outnumbered four to one, won a decisive victory against a formidable enemy who was returning after sacking the town of Linnville.



Uhland City Hall was originally built and used as a school house for this farming community located along the historic El Camino Real, a road that later would be known as Old San Antonio Road. photo by Paul Keese

As if in celebration of the victory, 32 members and guests were present at 6:28 p.m. when Chairman Kate Johnson call the meeting to order. Uhland City Manager Diana Woods welcomed commission members and guests, saying that she was glad to have people present. She usually had “just the company of cows and goats”. Seems city hall was originally a school building, which opened in 1916 and going through some forgotten storage areas, she has found original schoolbooks complete with love notes. The old coal storage building still stands close by outside. The once thriving Uhland community was a big agricultural center for Hays and Caldwell Counties and the school was full of children. But all that is gone now, and people do surprise her when they come by.

Bob Flocke moved to accept the January 24, 2008 minutes electronically sent to all members. Jim Cullen seconded. The motion passed.

Chairman Johnson thanked several visitors for coming, including Mark Kennedy, Assistant District Attorney, Special Counsel and Andrew Samson from the Texas River Center who would make presentations. She also welcomed returning member, Mary Giberson to the commission. Add her email to your list: marygiberson@gmail.com) Johnson urged members who were planning to attend the Texas Historic Preservation Conference in Corpus Christi to make their room reservations while the less expensive rate was still available. Several members have.

Our finances are healthy according to LaMarr Petersen. HCHC fund balance Feb. 28, 2008 is \$17,219.06. The budget balance is \$8,081.13. Cemetery fund balance is \$7,934.28 and Jail Restoration fund total is \$8, 331.03. The complete report is on file.

Jim Cullen went with Dorothy and Ed Gumbert on a field trip to the Pierce Cemetery in Wimberley. It is a private cemetery that was discovered with one headstone, after the publication of the Cemetery Book and therefore, not included. The Burns family is making application for a historic designation for their old burial site containing 2 headstones, which was also not reported until after 1994. With dry and cooler weather, vegetation in all the cemeteries is at a minimum so they are all looking pretty good.

Mary Giberson voiced some concerns about the Buda cemetery. Seems the Baptist and Methodist churches need help in getting a non-profit designation for the Antioch Community Cemetery.

Richard Kidd was very pleased to announce 6300+ visits to the www.hayshistoricalcommission.com. News & Events is installed. Letter to a cow lady with a great intro by Jim Cullen is in the History section. He is working on a Book & Gift Shop page, complete with order form. The credit card application now sits on our attorney's desk for his approval. There was a standing ovation for Richard.

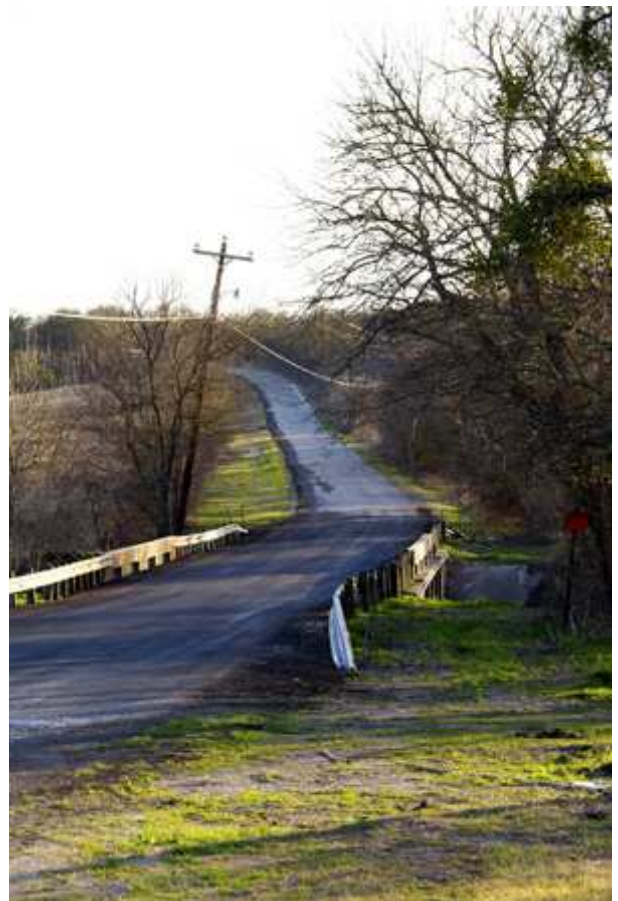
Bonnie Eissler reported oral histories are progressing just fine and moving to a subject in San Marcos. She remarked their first interviewee just turned 99 years old. Opelia Philo would like to go through the Uhland schoolbooks in search of photos of Hispanics who came to the area during 1910-15 to pick cotton and stayed. Although there were oral histories taken in San Marcos covering those years, photos were lost in subsequent floods of the San Marcos River. She has oral history from 3-4 families and wants to put it together with history of the smaller school started out further from Uhland for German families and was later used for Hispanic children.

Shelley Henry reported the Kyle Eagle and Free Press both covered the BonTon historical marker presentation. Opportunities for HCHC sales are Cinco de Mayo and the Heritage Association Tour the first weekend in May.

Attorney Mark Kennedy assured us, "We are going to get this one done." He was referring to the deed to the old county jailhouse and he has another ADA helping. A draft of the document deeding the easement of the property to the county for restoration, rehabilitation and preservation has been drawn up. He would like our comments and suggestions. Your email addresses have been forwarded to him. If you do not receive a copy, please email him at mark.kennedy@co.hays.tx.us. Easement is where property condition is set. Easement blankets the whole property while the county holds the deed to the property. Kennedy needs feedback from the commission as to how the property is going to be used, etc. He would like us to review the preservation easement, as it is set forth presently.

It was time to dim the lights and watch a video from 1999 on El Camino Real, narrated by Jim Swift. It was the brainchild of Al Lowman who wanted to pipe it in all the hotel/motel rooms in San Marcos, according to Lila Knight. "That never happened, of course, but what resulted was a pretty darn good video," she quipped. The old road swales are still evident from the air, which are a tangible thread to our past even as the road changes day by day.

It was a great introduction for Andrew Samson who has just been appointed as Director for El Camino Real De Los Tejas Association. He reminded us that the state of Texas has long ignored historic sites, leaving it to individual citizens and organizations to preserve them. Even the highly developed Santa Fe Trail would have not happened without citizens organized to support the preservation. The newly appointed association members for El Camino Real are hoping to have representatives from Mexico join them and are busy promoting a working budget with the help of Congressman Rodriguez. Soon they will elect a permanent board and interface with the Texas Park Service. The association also wants to provide a forum for towns that want to be on the trail and other issues as they arrive. "This is not the Trans-Texas



Evidence of the old trail, El Camino Real, which became a narrow road from Mexico to Shreveport, LA is visible from the air, where swales can still be

Corridor,” laughed Samson. The trail will mark historic sites with interpretive material, guiding travelers from one point to another. And as the trail becomes part of the Texas Parks system, it becomes more protected. Themes can be developed about historic travelers. The trail will have common signage for a more cohesive interpretation. “It’s a cool deal – something to be proud of,” he said. Association memberships are \$20 Individual/\$30 family payable to El Camino Real NHT Association, PO Box 2220, San Marcos, TX 7866. That will get you insider information about what is going on, a voice and a way to help. He also invited HCHC to meet in the beautifully restored Aquarena Hotel.

Visitor Bob Lyons whose great, grandfather picked up property on El Camino Real in 1927 is one who would like to be a part of the economic development of historic places and wants his property on the trail for civic benefit. He still finds artifacts on top of the ground and is looking for the treasure that Santa Anna supposedly hid in a culvert by the roadside. Judging by the video made from the air, he has his work cut out for him.

Diana Woods, sensing the meeting was coming to a close, was reluctant to say goodbye, exhorting everyone to tour the building that some in town wanted to tear down. She was gently led away to the buffet table as she again thanked everyone for coming by. “Don’t be a stranger,” were her parting words as she passed through the doorway. LaMarr Petersen moved to adjourn and Linda Coker seconded as we all followed at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Keese, Recording Secretary

seen and on the ground, here at Plum Creek crossing, where the winding trail was widened a tad and paved. photo by Linda Keese



This plaque marks the spot along Plum Creek and El Camino Real where settlers exacted their revenge from the raiding Comanches. Locals report of still finding arrowheads in the area. photo by Linda Keese