

Hays County Historical Commission
Freeman Ranch, Texas State University
Thursday, June 24, 2010

Meeting was called to order at 6:10 pm by Chairman Kate Johnson with members Linda Coker, Jim Cullen, Bonnie Eissler, Robert Frizzell, Mary Giberson, Dorothy Gumbert, Betty Harrison, Shelley Henry, Linda Keese, Richard Kidd, SarahAnn Lowther, Marianne Moore, LaMarr Petersen, Ofelia Vasques Philo, Gary Rush and thirteen guests present. Member Mary Mattis has resigned from the commission.



Assistant Ranch Manager Chris Thomas gave an overview of Freeman Ranch with 4200 acres remaining of the original ranch Harry left to the university in 1983 on which 80 head of cattle are run and 667 acres are leased. TX State uses the ranch for research and teaching through biology and geology classes there during year. The anthropology department oversees the body farm. Children with cancer come from all over the US for a real rodeo held just for them, along with a trail ride. It is the 4th biggest ranch in Hays County and has events every week, including



weddings. Biggest deer shot on the ranch is hanging over the living room fireplace.

In the 1942 built ranch house, Ofelia (who grew up on the ranch) remembers two side rooms; one full of bunk beds for friends and hunters that could sleep 8-10 people and the other a game room for guests. The bust of longhorn, Panfilo hangs on the wall in the game room. He was 28 years old when he had to be put down and was king of the ranch. If he was standing in front of a gate, you would open it for him.



Linda Coker moved to accept March 25 minutes, Dorothy Gumbert seconded. Motion passed.

Bonnie Eissler reported the Oral History Committee had been pretty busy with 3 DVD screenings the last three months: April – Ray Wilson at Driftwood Community Center. June 4 – Minnie & Winnie Harper from Antioch Colony in Buda at Driftwood. June 19 in Dripping Springs William Burrell Cochran at the Senior Activity Center. More than 80 attended one event and 40 the other two. Cecil Clark will be the next history, which might be at the library in Buda.

Committee will meet soon to review our list of people to interview and discuss priorities. We will also be seeking a volunteer to help with set-up and tear down at screenings.

Richard Kidd said HCHC has begun an oral history DVD on the level of Capt. Jack

Hays for Buck Winn. Robert, Bonnie and Richard have been working on it and two weeks ago started shooting interviews. We are filming people who either knew Buck, worked with Buck or were relatives of Buck and have eight interviews so far. We have identified ten of his projects still in existence around the southwest. Passed around a book with blk & wht photos of his work. Buck who? Died 1979 Fund raising for project is extremely important. Eventually it could be aired on PBS.

Announcements: National Trust Historic Preservation Conference will be held October 27-30 in Austin. Registration online. There is no money for reimbursement.

Wimberley July 5 parade: HCHC is Grand Marshall. Anyone who wants on or in the stagecoach, contact Kate. Parade starts at 10 am.

All travel expenses will be reimbursed next year. Keep your mileage (50c), hotel, meal, and registration expenses.

Old Hays County Jail Restoration: George Wilcox our liaison for Clayton, Levy & Little Architects. At the 3-bid meeting on July 7, Wilcox and Kate to go over the contract and make sure all issues are covered. Shelley Henry is planning a September 8 dinner and auction at the Salt Lick. Kate asked each HCHC member to pick up five silent auction items for the event or one large, live auction item.

Richard Kidd reports the website logged 21,000 visits. He is adding another dozen old photos to the front page rotation and doing with the photo page, turning it into voices of Hays County and playing ten of them.

Scenic Byways: Linda Keese has all the maps and roads designated...just has to pick the best one to highlight for Hays County.

Historical Markers: Betty Harrison reported San Pedro Cemetery medallion has been received by John Carrillo. Order for approved Lane House marker in Wimberley has been sent to the foundry. Antioch marker in in final stages of approval. Mary Giberson met with a young man from Buda who wants to landscape the marker site for his Eagle Scout project. Mary reported there was \$4,000 left in Old Town Buda fund for plants and benches. The Jacob's Well marker is not in the editing phase, but should be soon.

November 1, 2010 is the deadline for new marker season.

Cemetery Committee: Jim Cullen reported Coronado and Cocke Cemeteries have been cleaned nicely by Gene Bagwell's company. Cemeterio del Rio may be soon surrounded by a county park complex. Ofelia and Jim met with County Commissioner Debbie Ingalsbe to be briefed on plans. She assured them if the land becomes part of a park,

appropriate permanent fencing will be erected and permanent road work will be done for access to the cemetery. Byrd Owen-Payne Cemetery off Hunter Road has been cleaned by Richard Gomez, making the site ready for a visit from four descendant family members from Dripping Springs and Montana.

Cheatham Cemetery had a late May visit from family members. The one-time resident family on the property – the Hohenbergs – regard their area as a separate cemetery from the older Cheatham grounds. The sites adjoin, but are divided by a section of fence. A recent Hays High School graduate video-taped the eldest family member at the site.

An Eagle Scout will be landscaping the grave of the first Eagle Scout west of the Mississippi in the San Marcos Cemetery for his scout project reported Linda Coker.

Kate Johnson introduced SarahAnn Lotham as our new treasurer. We are low on all funds. Need to use our \$5,000 for National Registration. We will table this action for our August meeting.

Linda Coker reported a 30 inch photo of Jack Hays has been retouched and is hanging with a bronze plaque in the Hays County Court House. Heritage weekend went very well. Couple came to celebrate their 66th wedding anniversary and got the grand tour. Western Swing Festival had a good response. Sold 12-13 tee shirts.

Archeology Workshop: October is Archeology month. On October 17, 1998 Dee Ann Story was going to lead a tour of all the historic archeological sites in Wimberley. Well, that was day of the famous 500 year flood in Hays County. We are going to reschedule that with her. Kate would like to also plan two burnt rock mitten tours – one along Lone Man Creek. More in August.

Historical notes from San Marcos by Marianne Moore: Work has begun on reconstruction of Veramendi Plaza, including new sidewalks and brickwork. A salad trio will be served at the Cottage Kitchen Friday, June 25(tomorrow) for the final luncheon before it closes for the summer.

Ofelia's memories: The beautiful landscaping around the ranch house is gone that Ofelia used to hand water. Everything else is just as it was. She is amazed at how well it has all lasted. All kinds of trophy animal heads used to hang on the walls. Chico Solis was the mechanic. Lee Scott, the cook and wife Mami lived on the ranch. Ofelia's father was the foreman and Frank Alexander the manager Even after she married, she returned to help with the plants and Mami in the kitchen. She would walk the half a mile from her house down to the ranch house. Those were happy times for her. The Freeman's, who lived in San Antonio, would come to the ranch on weekends when they would have big parties. Her house was torn down and Chris' house built on that site. Nearby, Ofelia

remembers two tombstones and stories about a little boy, about five years old, walking around. She doesn't remember the ghost of a little boy, but she has seen unexplainable bright lights and noises. There is a big old tree where all of a sudden a bright light will shine down. Ofelia's father was asleep on the veranda one night when the sound of a horse galloping woke him. Someone dismounted from the horse and came over to pick up his foot by the toe and then drop it. When he fully awoke, there was no one there!



Supper is ready. Shelley Henry moved to adjourn. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:07 pm. Next meeting will be in August.

Submitted for corrections/additions,
Linda Keese, Recording Secretary