

HAYS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION WAY RANCH, JULY 24 2008

The Blanco River bends and turns as it snakes its way through the Blanco and Hays Counties. Steep cliffs and deep pools have been carved out of Edwards Plateau limestone by the river when with flooding rains, it becomes a raging torrent of water heading downstream to meet with the San Marcos River and then the Guadalupe and into the Gulf of Mexico. Peter Way built his ranch lodge atop a cliff on a bend in the river with a heart stopping, panoramic view. Chairman Kate Johnson called the meeting to order out on the deck off the lodge house with the magnificent view of the Texas Hill Country and the meandering Blanco River as a backdrop at 6:32 pm with 14 members present and several guests. Rainfall from the outer bands of hurricane Dolly continued to fall off and on giving the whole scenario an ethereal, misty quality of an artist's painting.

Peter Way's ranchland also includes home sites from 1852 to 1870, relics of people who passed through the area and lived there for a while. They were settlers who lived and farmed the area, raising cash crops for a living, who used an old Comanche trail that followed the Blanco River to the Colorado River, leading to the discovery of several artifacts during the construction of the lodge, including arrowheads. Indian carvings also discovered, have been preserved on the cliff facing the Blanco River under the deck.

HCHC will meet on AUGUST 28, 2008 at the Driftwood old store on the corner of CR 150/Elderhill Rd. at 6 pm. Catherine and Dan Winters, who have never open their home to visitors before, have invited commission members to view his celebrated photos. It will be a rare treat.

Incoming San Marcos Heritage Association President Maryanne Moore was introduced and invited to future meetings. "You may not be able to get rid of me," she quipped.

Bob Flocke moved to accept minutes from May. Jim Cullen seconded. The motion passed.

"This will be the trip of a lifetime," stated Chairman Johnson about the California trip. "It will be like going to Europe or South America." The thunder rolled as if to accentuate her words. We were encouraged to read the book written about the life of Jack Hays, who spent 13 years in Texas and finally 33 years in California before we start the journey. She has four books to loan out so get on her list for a summer read. The trip will begin on November 12 with a motor coach trip to San Antonio at 3:30 pm. to catch the train for California and end on November the 20 for a total cost of \$4,990.00. Payment is due in August except day off expenses in San Francisco and extra meals.

Betty Harrison reported two historical markers in the works; Goforth-Harris House on Comanche St in San Marcos and Butler Cemetery in Driftwood.

Bonnie Eissler said the Oral History committee is interviewing Mr. Wilson next week and Richard Kidd is incorporating photos with Ofelia Philo's history.



Michael Birch spoke to HCHC members about restoring the 500 acre Way Ranch.

Credit cards are a go on the web site according to Richard Kidd, albeit cumbersome to use. Pay Pal is more Internet customer friendly, but nixed by the county commissioners.



The Cemetery Committee has enjoyed some outings this summer in the Wimberley area; one during Memorial Day weekend at the Cruze and Hugo Cemeteries, another to the Wilson Cemetery for a tombstone rubbing of the one surviving stone and to the M.E. League tombstone salvaged from a recycling station and placed in a private yard. Linda, Bob, Jim and Luanne also visited Cheatham Cemetery in San Marcos and consider a clean up there.

*In June, Luther Wilburn showed Jim the York Creak Cemetery (ID by Kerbow-Hearn) in far southern Hays County; Holmes Cemetery, thought to be lost as well as a single unidentified gravesite on his property.

*In July, Texas Parks and Wildlife conservator Don Hudson picked up a badly broken (but beautiful) marble tombstone and is restoring it for eventual replacement at Coronado Cemetery.

*Dry conditions have kept us from a lot of labor this summer. Regular periodic upkeep continues at Coronado Cemetery (Goforth-Kyle) and Cocke Cemetery (Buda). Undergrowth and brush are being cleared from the old cast-iron fencing which surrounds the one-acre (+/-) site of Cocke. Sam Harper of Buda has been engaged on a part-time basis for yard maintenance.

Next week, Preservation Association President Lila Knight will hand a check to LaMarr Petersen for \$65,000 to place in the Old County Jail fund along with the \$65,000 matching funds from Hays County Commissioners to start the restoration process.

To enable the participation process in all communities in Hays County for HCHC members, each will report on activities of interest to the group from the locals they represent.

Marianne Moore reported the San Marcos Heritage Association completed a successful home tour in May. She displayed Christmas ornaments being sold to raise money for the upkeep of the house and other Heritage projects. Depicted are the Cock House and Fisher Hall, which was burned and razed in 2006. It gave us an idea for an HCHC project. As current Guild chairman, she invited all to attend the weekly lunch at the Cottage Kitchen in the Cock House Museum, served from 11:00-1:00. Proceeds benefit the Heritage Association. It was suggested that HCHC consider serving as a host of the luncheon next year. Shelley Henry will follow up on this.

Thunder rumbled again when Bob Flocke recounted the story of the Zack Wimberley house. "I'll leave if you don't build me a new house," said the wife to her husband. (Was the rumbling her grumbling or his?) HCHC could meet at the Silver Spoon then visit the home for a future meeting.



Kudos to Linda Coker for representing HCHC in the Wimberley July 4 parade in a red, Model A Ford pickup. Shelley Henry has lined up more parades for us: Kyle Fair & Music Festival Oct. 18 at 10 am.; Veterans' Day Parade in San Marcos Nov. 8 at 10 am. and Buda Fest Dec. 6 at 10 am.

View from the deck of Way Ranch lodge deck.

A facilitator has been hired for \$5,000 to direct a historical district designation for Uhland in order to speed things along.

The Niederwald Elementary School, El Camino floor mural is magnificent according to all who have seen it. It takes up the entire foyer area and is worth the trip for a look-see. It will be formally dedicated later. HCHC members will be invited to the ceremonies.

The Driftwood Improvement club met and decided they were "Too old and too tired for any more parades," according to Richard Kidd. So their Driftwood Heritage Day festivities in October will now just include dinner.

Chairman Johnson has been working with the Martin Church, which sits on a hill just off Goforth Road in the Goforth community east of IH35 on the national historic register.

Members were encouraged to look for a public location in which to install a mural painted for the old Pearl Brewery.

Then it was time for Michael Birch to recount how Peter Way is restoring his 500-acre ranchland to the way it was 100 or 150 years ago - full of native grasses supporting herds of deer and flocks of quail and wild turkey. 250 acres have been cleared of cedar (ashe juniper) by hand, bulldozer and skid steer. 200 native pecan trees have been planted and grafted with some success. The good news is one small spring, which had ceased, is now flowing "pretty good." The quail population has increased as well. Clearing and seeding will continue, leaving cedar breaks for bird and animal protection as well as other native tree and under story shrub cover.

This time it was our collective stomachs that rumbled. Dorothy Gumbert moved to adjourn with LaMarr Petersen seconding. Meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Keese, Recording Secretary