

**HAYS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2010**  
**JACOB'S WELL, CAMP JACOB EDUCATION CENTER**  
**101 WOODACRE DRIVE**  
**WIMBERLEY, TX 78676**

When David Baker saw the area years ago, he fell in love. Dancing Waters, he thought of it and formed a watershed in 1996 while renting the little house on the cliff above Jacob's Well to protect what he saw to be more aptly named Vanishing Waters. After many years of negotiating, there have been 120 acres purchased to expand the watershed and long gone is the trailer park with its septic tanks above the well. But the water wells pumping from it still remain and with the addition of 6,500 new ones in Wimberley, has put Jacob's Well spring in peril.

Distressed, David Baker, now Executive Director of the Wimberley Valley Watershed Association said of the situation, "I don't want it to become Jacob's Cave."



Although Jacob's Well no longer has a geyser, the unique 4-cavern aquifer entrance for the spring entices many divers.  
Photo by Linda Kees

In past years the spume of crystal clear, cool water gushing from Jacob's Well was described as rising 10 to 30 feet high above the creek. As late as 1924 the flow documented from the spring was 170 gallons per minute. During the drought of record in 1950's in Texas, the spring was flowing at 2.5 cubic feet per second. Jacob's Wellspring is the main source of water for Cypress Creek, which flows through Wimberley and into the Blanco River at Little Arkansas to provide significant recharge to the Edwards Aquifer downstream. During the drought of 2009, Jacob's Well almost dried up, flowing from only 0 to .5 cfs, depending on how much the Woodcreek community wells were pumping; as part of the Trinity Aquifer, it a general indicator of the health of other springs in the area. Testing at that time dated water flowing from the well at 2,000 years old. Water from the Middle Trinity dated between 9,000 to 10,000 years old and lower Trinity 35,000, a sure indicator that aquifer water is finite and not infinite as some argue.

It was at Jacob's Well that Jesus encountered the Samaritan. Baker could very well be the Samaritan for Jacob's Well. He oversees the new education center, which can be used for research, recreation and also an inn to be constructed for retreats along with a permanent camp. There are plans for two-mile long trails of which 3,000 feet have been constructed so far. Was the crystal clear spring tucked away in Wimberley's Valley named after Jacobs de Cordoba who found it in 1840 or after the man who came later to claim the land as his own and named the well after his son, Jacob? Whatever its namesake, Baker fully plans to restore the land around this extremely important piece of Hays County and protect its continuing contribution...preserving the Wimberley icon for the future and benefit of our children's children to come.

Chairman Kate Johnson called the meeting to order at 4:25 pm with twenty members and guests present. She announced the next meeting would be at Freeman Ranch, (which has now been changed to a different location.)

On Saturday, March 20, Wayne Osterman of Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio will lead a tour of Walker Creek sites where Capt. Jack Hays fought and also demonstrate five firearms from the Texas Revolution. The tour will start in Wimberley at 10:30 am. It will take about 1 hr to tour Walker Creek and Pitch Trail Crossing. He is very excited about taking us because we are the first non-military

group! Check your calendars and be sure to email Kate if you can go. Chairman Kate Johnson has won and will be presented with the John Ben Shepperd Award at the Texas Historical Commission Conference on Friday, April 23 at the evening dinner. She has ten rooms reserved for those HCHC members who can attend. The conference reservations will be paid, which includes the luncheon and all sessions. You pay room and gas to get there. Jim Cullen wrote a wonderful nomination for Kate, which includes this Synopsis:

“Hays County Historical Commission Chair Kate Johnson has a long and laudable record of vision, research, and support of a wide range of historical preservation activities in her home county. Most prominent among these activities this past year were her relentless campaign to educate the public about county namesake Jack C. Hays’ life and to initiate work on restoration of the 1870’s-era Hays County Jail. Johnson’s ambitious pursuit of these worthy goals were characteristic of her unswerving drive to get things-important things-done. These major projects were but the tip of an iceberg of Johnson-generated goals being enthusiastically implemented by her growing group of dedicated volunteers.”

The Historic Bridge workshop is held on Saturday, which is supposed to be very good and well worth attending. These members signed up for THC conference:

Thursday & Friday night: Linda Coker

Friday night only: Bonnie & Vic Eissler

Jim Cullen (has registered with 1 reserved room)

Shelley Henry

Lam & Jean Pthuss (have reserved a room)

Mary Giberson

*Acceptance of the January Minutes was tabled until our March meeting.*

Lone Man Rd project: Water came flowing fast down Lone Man Creek in the last big rain. Kate sees the need for a bench and interpretive sign on the road by the creek. It is one of the oldest roads in Hays County...in use when Hays was still part of Travis County. Neighbors of and people who own the property want to see more of a flow from Powder Horn Springs to Lone Man Creek. Is it possible dig out spring so more water could flow? Is it legal? What about an environmental study? What will the Trinity Aquifer Board have to say? Kate will call on those who know to find out.

Johnson had good news and bad news on the Jack Hays Chapter of El Camino Real De Los Tejas. The bad news was she couldn’t find the \$ envelope. The good news is she finally found it and \$ is in the bank, so we should all start getting their newsletter. Lu Hickey presented Kate with her copy of El Camino real book from TxDOT. It contains information about Pecan Springs, which Kate wants us to see because it is a fabulous part of El Camino Real. The book also contains a history of the American Indians on the trail.

Al Lowman is selling part of his historical Texana collection of books - 1400 in all on March 4-6. Hays County Historical Commission is buying his Hays County books collection, which is quite valuable...all are first editions, each signed by the author. Eventually we will get our museum going and have a place for memorabilia. It will be nice to have a place for our books and DVDs. Now Kate is already thinking of second museum! Read on...the jail is already too small.

Treasurer LaMarr Petersen reported HCHC received the annual \$11,700 funding from Hays County Commissioners, but the bad news is it is not nearly enough for all the projects we have planned. So... another piece of paper was passed around and these members signed up for the Fundraising

Committee: Gary Rush

Richard Kidd

Shelley Henry  
LaMarr Petersen  
Linda Coker

Mary Giberson reported for the Historical Marker Committee in Betty Harrison's absence. She introduced two guests from the Antioch Community: Joan Limuel and Sam Harper. Joan attended the first through eighth grade Antioch School before it closed in 1961, when soon after it was removed, but where the HCHC marker will be placed. Joan was six the year it was built in 1948. Her uncles, the Revada's (her grandfather was a Spaniard) built the two-room building rock by rock. They had learned their trade from their father – a stonemason. Giberson displayed drawings by Joan, one of the remembrances of the school building and one of 'Juneteenth'. She also introduced her second visitor, Sam Harper, Jr., who is also Joan's son-in-law, a fifth generation Antioch family community member. KLRN-Austin TV will come to Joan's house for a film interview special that will air about the Antioch Community. Giberson has talked with THC Amanda Dyer about the HCHC application and reports everything has been received she needs for the Antioch community marker and she will call late spring or early summer when it is completed.

Bonnie Eissler delivered the Oral History Committee report. They have delivered copies of four Voices of Hays County DVDs as well as audiotapes of the unedited interviews to the public libraries in Hays County. They are still transferring their backlog of completed interviews to video and have public screenings. Although there are still seven more scheduled, steady progress is being made.

Ollie Giles' video is scheduled for February 28 at 4 pm at Jackson Chapel on Centre St. in San Marcos. Hers will be the sixth Voice of Hays County and the fifth DVD seen by the public so far. Others have included Ofelia Vasquez-Philo, Bob Barton & Moe Johnson, Bradley Davis and Gwen Smith.

February 4 we had a public screening of Gwen Smith's video at the Price Center in San Marcos, to which over a hundred people attended even though it was a cold and rainy day. Quite a few historical commission members were in attendance and everyone enjoyed the video. Many copies of her DVD as well as copies of other oral histories and the Jack Hays film were sold.

Bill Johnson of Wimberley will be the next 'voice' and they hope to have that screening sometime in March.

In order to catch up by the end of June, the committee will need to have two screenings every month for three months and they are not sure how realistic that is. They will also need to begin interviewing again as their list continues to grow.

Not much grass is growing, but Sam Harper is ready for us, reports Jim Cullen for the Cemetery committee. TxDot maps of Hays County have been received that identify and locate each cemetery or burial site documented through that agency's files and appear to be very accurate. One such site that is new to Jim is Oldham near Bear Creek 1826 The Cocke Cemetery Historic Texas Cemetery designation application will be submitted to THC shortly. Cemeterio del Rio had major tree removal performed by the county last fall. The owner of the surrounding access property put up a new gate and locked it around Christmas time. County Commissioner Debbie Ingalsbe contacted the owner and obtained the lock combination with the agreement that anyone with the combination will keep the gate closed and locked even while inside the cemetery. A lot of trees were lost or cleared. It is a different place. Maybe we can plant some new trees and landscape the area, which is about four acres. Cullen is anticipating a busy summer for the cemeteries.

Richard Kidd added to the Oral History report that Bradley Davis celebrated his 101 birthday and HCHC just completed his oral history in Dripping Springs. The web site chugging along, however we are going to lose our web master, Rob. He has a new job and does not have the time to devote to our

web site anymore. Does anyone know of someone who will take the job? Rob was charging for his time, turning in his bill to the county for payment. Have 3 histories loaded on the site, but have not put Capt. Jack on there or last histories. So far, 19,000 visitors have logged on.

Linda Coker, By-Law Committee chairman passed out a list of proposed changes to the by-laws as recommended by the committee.

Article IV; Section 1: delete Reporter from the listed officers of HCHC.

Article IV; Section 1: change to read; Each officer shall serve no more than 3 consecutive terms.

Article V; Section 1: change to read; The HCHC will meet the fourth Thursday of each month. Meetings can be changed by Chairman as needed. Meeting will take place in the Hays County courthouse or in other locations in the county as invited.

Article VI; Section 1: change to read; The chairman of each standing committee shall be appointed by the HCHC Chairman and shall serve no more than three consecutive terms.

Section 1: delete; Each standing committee chairman shall appoint a vice-chairman, who will also serve a single two-year term.

Article VII; Section 1: delete; The activities of the HCHC will be reported after each meeting in the newspapers.

*Jim Cullen moved to approve the proposed changes, Mary Giberson seconded. There was no discussion. The motion passed.*

Linda Coker reported that County employee appreciation would actually be for one month instead of one week this year. However, HCHC will only participate in the barbeque lunch on April 14 and countywide organizations represented by their tents on another day, on the courthouse lawn. HCHC was very well received last year, garnering the most comments on a questionnaire handed to all county employees who attended. It will be either April 13 or 20.

At the luncheon last year, Johnson brought her chuck wagon and photos. Want to use it again, but we need some help with that display on April 14. The courthouse is on the Heritage Tour. We need docents for that tour, which is held the first weekend in May. She is doing a pamphlet on courthouse including some interesting tidbits such as... under the trap door, under the courthouse floor, people found a game table with cards. She is going to make a road trip of other renovated courthouses to see how they dealt with integrating new safety rules with older buildings to make them less noticeable. "The Heritage Association has wonderful photos of old courthouse," added Richard Kidd. Two lists were passed around for help on each day for the courthouse. Make note all of you who signed up to help:

Barbeque Lunch on April 14:

Jim Cullen (Although it may be too early to some to say if available.) SarahAnn Lowther  
Mary Ann Mattis

Courthouse Square: April 13 or 20

Gary Rush (April 20)

Jim Cullen (at this point either date)

Shelley Henry (need to check calendar)

Mary Ann Mattis (need to check calendar)

Lu Hickey

Johnson reminded all of us about the luncheons every Friday at the Cock House from 11 am to 1 pm. Different organizations in the area cook and serve, with the proceeds funding the upkeep of the

historical building and other projects in the community.

*Survey now done. Next part is put out the bid. Right LaMarr? Right. Takes a while.*

Old Hays County Jail: After the January meeting with the architect and tour of the Old Hays County Jail it is evident to all that the structure is tall, but small. Kate would like to use it as a type of interpretive museum and highlight the fact it was a family type jail. Everyone knew everyone. The sheriff's wife made all the meals for prisoners and law enforcement. We have some history on HCHC web site written by Jim Cullen about the old jail. There is also a book on Texas county jails that include the Hays old jail. Now we need photos and bios of all county sheriffs to include and hang on the walls.

For those who signed up for the Fundraising Committee: Salt Lick in Driftwood has offered the use of their pavilion and will furnish everything for a Hays County Jail restoration event. No date has been set, but we are looking at sometime in the fall. We also need to look for locations in Dripping Springs, maybe Shelley Henry can look a places and times also in Kyle, San Marcos and Buda. October might be a good month. Tee shirts are ordered LaMarr: "Did you jump through the hoops?" Kate swears she did, so HCHC is on the county commissioners agenda for 9th and tee shirts can be ordered after then along with the bags, which will be given out along with a poster of the courthouse as well as a tee shirt to every one who buys a ticket to the event.

Along the same line, Linda Coker thinks the bands that play at the Western Swing festival in San Marcos held at the Hays County Courthouse the middle weekend in May are a hoot and we should participate. No... not as a band, but Main Street representative Kelley Franks is excited to give us a tent area for the Old Hays County Jail restoration fundraiser. Linda thinks it is a really cool event and well worth our time to participate. So make note again for all of you who signed up for this committee:

Gary Rush

Richard Kidd

Shelley Henry

LaMarr Petersen

Linda Coker

Buck Winn project: Richard Kidd is researching paintings and sculpture left by Buck Winn who had a Wimberley studio for a documentary. He died in 1979 and there has been no book or collection of his work made. There seems to be 12-15 major items in existence with some in great shape... some not so much. Richard would like to do an oral history with people who knew and worked with him, also showing some of his work. He needs help tracking down Winn's murals on buildings. Once all the information is gathered, HCHC can fund the project made on the order of a PBS special. Pete Anderson is very knowledgeable about the Aquarena Springs water lilies sculpture and can give us details about it.

Johnson announced that we would go forward on the County Road 226 marker beautification project as Bob Lyons is going to take out the old fence and put in a new one. HCHC has paid for the first half of the beautification project.

Linda Keese envisions an interactive map on our web site for two target groups in Hays County: visitors and residents...and a foldout map. The maps would have one-liner short descriptions of scenic or historic highlights for each segment and some representative photos. They would first show Hays County as it relates to the State of Texas and then Hays close-up. Richard Kidd just rolled his eyes. She has maps showing early Indian activity, De Cordova's map, Texas during the Republic, cattle trails, 1846 by Fr. Keenen, Elberfeld, and 1936 (updated 1940) TXDOT.

Chairman Johnson adjourned the business segment of the meeting at 5:25 pm and then introduced David Baker, Executive Director of the Wimberley Valley Watershed Association who gave members and guests an overview of Jacob's Well and then led them down a trail to the actual site. The caterer looked askance at us as we left before hors d'oeuvres. We assured her we would be hungry enough to eat both appetizer and main meal after the hike! Of course we did...dessert, too.

Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Keese, Recording Secretary