

**CHC Projects from the 2012 year of service—excerpts taken from CHC Annual Reports.**

The following project descriptions demonstrate CHC educational efforts toward adults and students.

**BREWSTER COUNTY** THE "HISTORY FAIR PROGRAM" ESTABLISHED BY THE TEXAS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION DIRECTED TOWARD THE JUNIOR HISTORIANIS SPONSORED AND FINANCED BY THE BREWSTER COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION AND THE BREWSTER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT. THIS PROGRAM PROVIDES THE YOUTH WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOPE THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF LOCAL OR NATIONAL SUBJECTS. THE STUDENTS CAN SELECT A SUBJECT ON THE LOCAL AREA OF INTEREST. THIS START WILL HELP START A DESIRE FOR THE STUDING OF LOCAL HISTORIC PLACES, EVENTS OR PERSONS. THE RESEARCH OF THE SUBJECT WILL HELP START THE PROCESS FOR CONTINUED INTEREST IN PRESERVATION OF OUR HISTORIC PAST. THE PROGRAM OF THE BREWSTER COUNTY HISTORIC COMMISSION IN COLLECTION OF SOURCES NAMES ON "HOW COME IT CALLED THAT".CAN AND WILL ASSIST FUTURE STUDENT DATA BASES ON INFORMATION THAT IS FAST BECOMING LOST WITH EACH PASSING GENERATION. BCHC HAS FUNDED THIS PROJECT FOR LOCAL COST FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS, THE ATTENDANCE ANTICIPATED FOR YEAR 2013 IS APPROXIMATELY 350 STUDENTS FROM ABOUT 14 REGIONAL SCHOOLS.

The **El Paso CHC** has been working to expand our influence on current and future members by including these people in the planning process for our Board. We are expanding the knowledge of our CHC with projects such as the heritage treatment of Gate B6 at El Paso Airport's Southwest Terminal by displaying historic painting of El Paso as well as photos of Old El Paso and a 40" TV monitor spooling video's and pictures of our community through the ages. We are also expanding our involvement to include work on the Missions and Presidio as well as the communities that surround them. Our CHC is actively attempting to augment the local ordinances regarding historic properties and their handling. Our weekly radio show has expanded its outreach to an international audience by using web simulcast. By booking our CHC members on the program, their excitement is ignited and has resulted in more interest in membership and/or assistance with our CHC.

**Erath CHC** hosts a Cultural History Essay Contest for all 7th graders in the county. This gives students the opportunity to research their families' history in Erath County and perhaps learn something they did not know about their heritage. We give cash rewards to the first three places, and publish a picture in the local papers so hopefully will encourage more to take part.

The **Franklin CHC** and the Franklin County Historical Association hosted the first annual Night at the Museum event. Local 5th & 6th graders had the opportunity to research a key figure from Franklin County history and design a related costume and display. The CHC arranged a community event so that students could display their work in two local museums. The public interacted with the students as they portrayed their chosen historical figure. Out of town judges awarded three cash prizes based on performance, knowledge, and backdrop development. The student who had the most votes from attendees was given an award, too.

This event was a great success with more than 150 attendees, most of whom would not normally visit the museums. The organizations were able to pursue potential members from attendees and students' parents, as well as the descendants of the historical figures portrayed by the students. It was a great opportunity to work with the school and involve young people in preserving and celebrating local history.

In 2012, the **Houston County Historical Commission (HCHC)** continued its efforts to partner with other entities by continuing its association with Doctor Perky Beisel, Associate Professor at Stephen F. Austin University and the Mission State Park. We re-engaged our relationship with the Houston County Museum and began a new partnership with Crockett Public Library. Six individual brochures were developed that included pictures, narratives and a map that provided self-guided tours. Four of the brochures had QR codes provided by Stephen F. Austin University which also allowed the use of "smart" phones to narrate the tour of historic communities and events.

The **Jeff Davis CHC** embarked on a new project in 2012 to increase area residents and tourists' awareness of the history of the county. In so doing the commission decided to erect historical wayside exhibits (similar to those on the grounds at Fort Davis NHS) in both the towns of Fort Davis and Valentine. Three sites were selected – two in Fort Davis and one in Valentine. The commission began with researching information and touring Valentine for a possible site. All agreed that in front of the new Public Library in Valentine would be a good spot for a marker. The person in charge of the library was contacted and readily consented to having a wayside exhibit placed in front of the building. This project is only in its infancy, but progress has been made. On October 13th, the commission sponsored a County Historic Preservation Day in conjunction with the Valentine High School Reunion and Homecoming on October 13, 2012. School-exes were encouraged to share their memories/reminiscences/ recollections and photographs of growing up and living in Valentine. The county graciously allowed us to set up in the community building in Valentine. A number of people came by to share their stories and photographs and to learn more about the history of the town. It was a very successful day. Some of the photographs scanned will be incorporated into a new wayside.

The **Matagorda CHC** has provided history fieldtrips for local schools for several years. Van Vleck ISD once again requested assistance from the Matagorda CHC to coordinate history fieldtrips for their 7th and 8th graders. The CHC had distributed their DVD presentation, Matagorda County For Kids, to all Matagorda County school districts in 2010 and 2011. This presentation was used to prepare students for the fieldtrips.

CHC appointees assisted in planning the fieldtrips and served as docents in the four towns where the students visited. In 2012, they added a cultural field trip for the 6th graders who were studying world history. CHC appointees coordinated a fieldtrip to Palacios where the students learned more about the local Vietnamese community. The trip also included a visit to view the final construction of, La Petite Belle, the half-scale replica of LaSalle's ship, La Belle. Having retired teachers in their group has made the Matagorda CHC more attentive in providing supplemental history education to the young people in their county.

**Milam CHC:** The partnership that was the biggest complement to our CHC efforts was our partnership with the El Camino Real de los Tejas National Trail Association. Both groups are interested in recognition of the National Trail in Texas and in Milam County. Both of our groups are committed to preserving the history and sites on the National Trail. MCHC has helped the ECR National Trail Association plan the signage for the first NPS signs that have been planned and will be placed in Milam County in 2013. The MCHC provided grants for the signage, were on the planning board for the dedication event and were hosts for the dedication that took place on October, 2012 at Apache Pass near Rockdale. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison unveiled the first sign and spoke about the history of the ECR Trail, several THC and NPS dignitaries attended and spoke at the event. Fifteen of our members helped with this event. Planning included contacting the county schools to invite the administrations, teachers and students to the historic event, getting seating and decorations for the event and planning the program. Students from four school districts attended and the band from Thorndale played the National Anthem. Many citizens from around the county and surrounding communities attended. The event was a big success and citizens, students and teachers remarked that they enjoyed being present at this dedication. The teachers said that they thought being present at a historic event would make the history more meaningful for students.

**Montague CHC** strives to expand and share an awareness and appreciation of the colorful history of Montague County. We continue to sell our publications of county history to the public at our museum and at county festivals. We have begun to reach our county's youth with our bringing the county's history into our schools with a power point presentation. This year we attended the Bowie High School where all students were shown this presentation. We continue to sponsor our "Rolling History" tours and have found the public waits for our next tour. We

have divided our county into quadrants in order to highlight the variety of stories and places of interest from people, buildings and cemeteries unique to each area. Written evaluations are requested by participants following the tour. Our "History Roundtable Forums" have been well attended again this year. We hold them throughout the county in order to reach as many people as possible and to bring different stories to those attending. These are always well attended with many repeat participants. Our newest CHC members were selected from these participants. Members are expected to participate in all commission activities unless major conflicts exist. The well attended "Rolling History Tours" have proven to be the most popular. Participants become acquainted with historically significant places within the county. A booklet is compiled which gives further insight into the sites along the tour. Local residents living along the route are asked to give short presentations; some on the buses, others at a stop in the tour. This also creates a greater awareness by the residents as to the historical importance to their area while building pride in their involvement. These nuggets of history by those who live in the area enhances the degree and quality of information included in these tours. Three of these tours have been sponsored by the MCHC.

**From Nueces CHC:** Voices of South Texas Bayview Cemetery Walk/Reenactment Project is in its 3rd year now on the Saturday of Veteran's Day weekend and has become a vital asset to connecting our current population to our colorful past. This year we had a retired Texas Parks and Wildlife Buffalo Soldier depicting the 9th Cavalry interred at Old Bayview. He had stories and artifacts he shared with the public. We had just under 300 folks attend, and 22 storytellers. Two of our commission members Bill Havelka and Jim Rome demonstrated headstone cleaning and care. Genealogical groups were invited to participate as re-enactors (UDC, DAR, DRT, and Colonial Dames of the 17th C. ) and to share knowledge about researching family lineage. Veterans Band was present with special music of the period. Those buried include soldiers of the Republic of Texas, War with Mexico (1848), War Between the States Civil War), Spanish American War, Buffalo Soldiers, victims of yellow fever (children, doctors, and caregivers), early settlers of Corpus Christi, State dignitaries, and regional celebrities of the past, and deaths of natural causes. The "Voices of South Texas: Old Bayview Cemetery Comes Alive" project involves the majority of NCHC members, Sons of the Confederacy members, United Daughters of the Confederacy, Boy Scout Troops, the Corpus Christi Parks and Recreation Department, Landmark Commission members, and the Daughters of the Republic of Texas. Participants research the lives of twenty plus individuals buried here and assist us with our Bayview Cemetery walks, this year held only in November. Funding from Humanities Texas helped us to advertise the events and prepare handouts for visitors where participants dressed in character and told about their life as they stood by their gravesite. The events yielded a further desire by community members to understand more about a cemetery that holds the some of the oldest military burials West of the Mississippi and needs our help in preserving the history and restoring broken head stones. One of our goals is the restoration of broken headstones. These outreach events have inspired leading members of the community to form a group to see how

we can partner together to preserve this site. Designated as an historic cemetery in 2011, Bayview is becoming more widely known because of our annual event.

**Travis CHC** has been fortunate to have the continued support of the Commissioners Court and County staff during 2012. The Court has worked with us to provide matching funds for the continuation of our resource survey projects; County staff has provided support in such areas as budgetary assistance, website management and report printing. We have also worked with the County Archivist to help with the annual celebration of Travis County History Day. CHC members, who are also Archeology Stewards, have been important in tracking local archeological projects and for promoting our involvement in the new Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead Project. Through CHC members, we have been involved with cemetery preservation efforts, specifically with Oakwood Cemetery in Austin. We have participated in County Heritage Day at Oakwood in 2012 and plan to expand our presence there in the future. Our longstanding County essay program has recently been refocused from elementary and middle schools to Austin Community College campuses. This program continues to create a new awareness of county history among ACC students by requiring them to develop projects on topics related to Travis County history and to present their work for review by other students and the public. The goal of this program is to develop new student interest in county history and to encourage them to share their discoveries with family and friends in the community.