

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

real places telling real stories

The following project descriptions are taken from County Historical Commission (CHC) Annual Reports for the 2014 year of service.

From Webb CHC's Annual Report: The Webb CHC began an active public outreach campaign in 2014 to promote historic preservation awareness and involvement. The CHC chose to partner with Laredo Main Street's Farmers Market to accomplish this goal. The first phase consisted of sponsoring a table at the local farmers market. At the market, we offered a local history photo exhibit, free public information materials on various historic preservation topics, and a children's local history activity sheet and coloring page. This effort was widely supported by our membership. This was a very successful endeavor and also helped find new CHC volunteers.

From the Montgomery CHC Annual Report: The Montgomery CHC organized its first annual History Road Rally, which was held in the city of Montgomery on January 25th in conjunction with the city's celebration of the 175th anniversary of the Texas State Flag. Twelve teams representing three counties enjoyed following clues about county and state historical events and persons, while driving around Montgomery for this two-hour history scavenger hunt. The teams returned for free pizza and drinks while their answer sheets were judged. Each participant received a souvenir History Road Warrior button. The three winning teams received trophies and \$25 gift cards courtesy of our sponsors. The event involved about ten members of our CHC Youth Advisory Board and about eight of our CHC members.

From Atascosa CHC's Annual Report: One of our largest events in 2014 was the dedication of two official Texas Historical Markers. The San Antonio, Uvalde and Gulf Railroad and North Pleasanton marker histories are closely related. The markers were placed side by side by the local Texas Department of Transportation office. Invitations were sent to former railroad employees and residents of North Pleasanton. Visitors came from 100 miles to the west and 125 miles to the coast. Former employees, as well as their families, attended the dedication. Atascosa CHC assisted in event planning and 16 appointees were on hand to help the day of the event.

From Bee CHC's Annual Report: In August 2014, the Bee CHC was asked to work with Bill Clough, a reporter for the Beeville Bee-Picayune, on a video narrative [about historic cemeteries]. The project involved researching, preparing a script, selecting the speakers, discussing the project with landowners, and gaining permission to go on the land and film. The CHC had previously worked on a brochure that inventoried 70 cemeteries in Bee County. The video narratives that were produced are accessible to readers throughout the county and state. The CHC has decided to keep up this project and add to the list of cemeteries to draw awareness to the preservation of each one.

From Burleson CHC's Annual Report: The Burleson CHC provided activities for Burleson County Heritage Week and Archeology Week. During each of these weeks, the county museum was open for extended hours. A special lecture was held during Archeology Week and an archeologist was at the museum to review artifacts brought in by citizens. Heritage Week provided an opportunity for students and citizens to submit photos of their special or significant places in the county. CHC appointees displayed these photos in the courthouse for the week. Fifth-graders visited the museum and courthouse during Heritage Week. Citizens and visitors attended the events and museum during the observation of the weeks. For some it was the first time they visited the county museum or thought of themselves as a part of county history.

From Calhoun CHC's Annual Report: The Lavaca Artillery Battery Silhouette reflects Major Shea's defense of Lavaca against Federal Steamers on October 31, 1862. The Calhoun CHC researched the original battery location, which spurred a request for a steel silhouette design by Brian Norwood of New Mexico to emphasize the historical bombardment. The CHC purchased the Silhouette with help from the Trull Foundation and the city provided the location and installation. Sixteen CHC appointees researched, designed, assisted with transportation, and coordinated the program for this project. About eighty people attended the transfer dedication.

From Cameron CHC's Annual Report: The Cameron CHC's Civil War Sesquicentennial Committee (CWSC) has expanded our interaction with the public. Since 2011, the committee has held 8 symposiums, hosted a commencement event, produced 3 brochures, initiated several educational videos, and hosted more than 180 people for a symposium. The CWSC's mission is to remember all men and woman of Texas and the nation for their service during the American Civil War. This mission is one that has helped further the education and understanding of this war.

From Carson CHC's Annual Report: Our Carson CHC has two ongoing oral history projects. One project focuses on our veterans and the other focuses on our older Carson County citizens. CHC appointees work as interviewers and reach out to veterans and citizens in our county. We feel it is important to preserve our history through interviews with our veterans and record what they have gone through during each of the conflicts associated with our country. Both oral history projects are important, so that future generations will know more about our rich county history.



From Comal CHC's Annual Report: All of our Comal CHC members participate in historical marker research and dedications. Two of our CCHC members attended a marker restoration workshop and then conducted a workshop for CCHC members on how to restore markers. This was a hands-on workshop and so far, four markers have been completely restored.

From El Paso CHC's Annual Report: During 2014, the El Paso CHC established a committee to evaluate the CHC's successes and failures over the years, and to establish a formal list of sub-committees with respective goals. From that, we developed a list of 8 committees and have started to formalize tasks to firm up leadership and participation in our work. Additionally, we are reaching out to the public sector to utilize talents available throughout El Paso County.

From Erath CHC's Annual Report: Last spring, we hosted our first dedication for a Texas Treasure Business Award winner at the Warnock Hardware Store in Bluff Dale. The CHC worked with the Texas Historical Commission to nominate the business for the award. We had a huge crowd at the dedication, which included our state representative who spoke during the program and presented the award to the Warnock family. The owner of the store told us that the publicity associated with the event and the award medallion placed on the front window has brought many visitors to the business, which adds to the economy of the store and the town. We plan on recognizing other businesses in our county.

From Franklin CHC's Annual Report: In order to further promote nature/heritage tourism, in the spring of 2014, the Franklin CHC/Franklin County Historical Association partnership sponsored the Prairies and Pineywoods Bird Festival. The weekend event provided opportunities to bird watch in historic cemeteries, state recognized virgin prairie, and in the yards of some beautiful local historic homes with some of the state's leading experts serving as guides. We brought over 80 people into our community and museum facilities from all over the state and a few from out of state.

From Jeff Davis CHC's Annual Report: During 2014, the Jeff Davis CHC continued to collect photographs and memorabilia of Valentine, Texas for preservation and educational purposes. In pursuit of this goal, the CHC became aware of a large, rich collection of photos and papers belonging to the James Mayfield family. Contact was made with the Mayfield family and, after several telephone calls and a personal meeting, the CHC accepted over 250 items with the understanding that the CHC would find a permanent home for the collection. In December, the collection (with the approval of the Mayfield family) was donated to the archives of the Big Bend at Sul Ross State University.



From Kendall CHC's Annual Report: On June 8th, 2014, Kendall CHC commemorated the 170th anniversary of the 1844 Battle of Walker's Creek that took place near present day Sisterdale. The CHC rented the historic Sisterdale Dancehall, and filled the anniversary day with family activities and entertainment. *Courage, Colts & Comanches*, a painting by Bill Scheidt, was unveiled by the CHC. Presentations were given by Frank Graves, a Colt expert; Michael Cox, a noted Texas Ranger researcher; and S.C. Gwynne, author of the book, *Empire of the Summer Moon*. Each gave their perspective on the significance of this battle that changed the culture and control of the American West. Over 1,000 people attended the day-long event, which required support from KCHC appointees, their family and friends.

From Liberty CHC's Annual Report: The Liberty CHC sponsored its second annual historic cemetery tour, "Whispers From the Past....Tales and Tours," in the Liberty Catholic Cemetery. Our CHC volunteers researched and authored scripts for approximately 10 resident ghosts in the cemetery. Other CHC volunteers served as docents, worked on logistics, and sold tickets. Our volunteer reenactors in period costume delighted the crowds with tales of how they came to reside in this part of Liberty County. We asked for a \$10 donation for tour admission. Approximately 400 people attended the two-day tour. This tour is a popular avenue for promoting history and heritage tourism in Liberty County! Funds raised will be used for historic preservation projects in our county.

From Lubbock CHC's Annual Report: Lubbock CHC increased public presence through various media. LCHC began publishing an electronic quarterly newsletter with primary distribution to elected officials and senior management of county and city government. CHC appointees shared the newsletter with groups, including professional associations, civic organizations, church groups, and friends. Launched in 2013, the Historic Lubbock County Facebook page provided a December 8th post of Texas Tech's band playing at the Christmas parade in 1949, which had 22,256 likes and was shared 236 times.

From Marion CHC's Annual Report: To provide an entertaining and educational look at some of the fascinating elements of Marion County's past, the Marion CHC held a Hooked on History program that was open to the public. It featured four CHC appointees giving 15-minute presentations on topics from the county's historic past. Presentations used Microsoft PowerPoint slideshows featuring photographs and video to bring the topics to life for the audience.



From Matagorda CHC's Annual Report: Our CHC initiated a new project for 2014, Matagorda Mavericks, which celebrated the cattlemen, cattlemen and the rich ranching heritage of the county. The effort was made to take living history to our residents and visitors, both youth and adults. The event, held at the Matagorda County Museum, included ranching exhibits, corn grinding, re-enactors, a book signing, western sculpting, roping, and more. The highlight of the event was the branding project in which participants were asked to bring their branding irons. The owner of the brand filled out a form and the brand was burned into a 7"x7" piece of wood. Eighty brands were recorded and will be displayed at the Matagorda County Museum. The event drew approximately 300 people to the courthouse square, which also benefited businesses and restaurants located on the square.

From Mill's CHC Annual Report: Improvements in 2014 reflect the growth of our appointees. The MCHC History Room on the 3rd floor of the Courthouse provides meeting space, hook-ups for the recently-purchased computer and printer as well as physical storage for publications and files. Ninety percent of appointees now use computers and other electronic devices on a regular basis. Minutes of meetings and financial reports are computer generated and distributed to appointees. The CHC annual report is no longer filled in by hand [but completed electronically]. All members have attended Open Meetings Act and Freedom of Information Act training. The Mills CHC is definitely moving forward.

From Montague CHC's Annual Report: In the past, we have sponsored Roundtable Forums and Rolling History Tours. This year we sponsored a book review of *Empire of the Summer Moon*, which focuses on the Comanche Nation and especially Chief Quanna Parker. The speaker was a member of the Parker Family who gave insight into Chief Parker by way of personal stories and memorabilia. Over 100 people attended the Saturday morning program. Following the presentation, many asked about the topic for the next event. Montague CHC appointees were excited with the success of the program and have already been planning the next event.

From Swisher CHC's Annual Report: The Swisher CHC marked 22 rural school sites in Swisher County. We worked with the Tulia High School welding class and the Texas Plains Trail on this project. We are now working on an effort to recognize 100 year-old family farms in the county.

From Tom Green CHC's Annual Report: The Tom Green CHC worked with newly elected Judge Stephen Floyd and County Commissioners, Rick Bacon, Aubrey deCordova, Ralph Hoelscher, and Bill Ford, to inform them of the services the TGCHC can provide to the court.



From Van Zandt CHC's Annual Report: We hosted the Hillcrest Historic Cemetery walk. The CHC partnered with Canton Main Street to plan the walk in conjunction with a Main Street event. Another walk was also planned in conjunction with a family reunion held at the cemetery.

From Wheeler CHC's Annual Report: With the help received from the Texas Historical Commission historical marker staff, we are on target to get all of the eligible cemeteries in Wheeler County designated as historical cemeteries. This was one of our first goals as a CHC.

From Runnels CHC's Annual Report: The Runnels CHC received the R. C. Crane Excellence in Heritage Award at the West Texas Historical Association conference in Odessa. The award honors an outstanding organization for its work in preserving the history and legacy of West Texas. Award-winning organizations exemplify the spirit of grass-roots citizen historians that accomplish great things with scant resources.

From Galveston CHC's Annual Report: The Galveston CHC is a participant in the Jane Long Festival held yearly in October at the Fort Travis Seashore Park in Bolivar. The CHC arranges with the Galveston County Parks Department for the bunkers and batteries of the old fort to be open to the public. The CHC provides volunteers to take people on a tour of the facilities and explain the historical significance of the structures and the effort to preserve their continued existence. This festival draws a crowd of about 1,200 persons.

From Pecos CHC's Annual Report: We open two of the three historic properties we manage three times a year for local tourism events including the Old Fort Days sponsored by the Fort Stockton Historical Society. We hope to receive funding for a docent to open these buildings several days each week. This year we will use them to make presentations to our Texas Treasure Business award winners, of which we have one already and several more in the works.

