

Calhoun County Historical Commission

Regular Meeting of April 9, 2013: 6:30-8:00

at Calhoun County Public Library

200 W. Mahan, Port Lavaca, Texas

Minutes of the Secretary

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Mary Belle Meitzen at 6:30 p.m.

Invocation:

The invocation was given by John Meitzen.

Pledges to the Flags:

John Kassner, Sergeant-at-Arms/Parliamentarian, led the pledges to the United States and Texas flags.

Quorum:

John Kassner certified that there was a quorum present. Those in attendance were as follows:

Joe D. Brett	John Foester	Steve Koch	Tommy Schulte
Margaret Charnetski	Betty Hicks	John Meitzen	Phil Thomae
Michael Clay	Carla Jones	Mary Belle Meitzen	Sue Thomae
Peggy Dobbins	John Kassner	Gary Ralston	Florene Windham

Approval of the Minutes of March 19, 2013:

Secretary Sue Thomae stated that the minutes of the March 19, 2013, meeting were posted on the CCHC website, along with the report of the Marker Committee as presented on March 19. There were no additions or corrections and the minutes were accepted as posted.

Approval of the Treasurer's Report:

Treasurer Phil Thomae stated that the treasurer's report was posted on the

CCHC website and reflected no activity for the period from the March 19th to the April 9th meeting. The treasurer's report was accepted as posted.

Reports of Standing Committees:

Marker Committee: John Foester, Chair, reported that the committee had met on April 3rd. Foester reported that the committee discussed with guest Sue Traylor the possibility of a marker for her house at 207 Commerce; to that end, John Foester submitted a newspaper article provided by Traylor containing pictures of the house, before and after renovation, to Bob Brinkman at the THC in order to determine the eligibility of the house for a marker. Another potential marker considered by the committee is one for Kamey, but that discussion was deferred because Ed Wagner was not present.

Also, the committee selected the following for potential markers:

(a) Battle of Norris's Bridge, 1860's time period, with Gary Ralston writing the narrative, (b) Mission Refugio, 1790s time period, with Robert Loflin writing the narrative, © German immigration through Karlshafen, the 1840s, with John Foester writing the narrative.

In addition, Foester reported that the Seadrift marker, presently located at 109 W. Broadway, will be relocated to 201 South Main at the Museum/Visitor Center/Train Depot.

The full committee report is posted along with the April 9, 2013, minutes on the CCHC website.

Cemetery Committee:

John Kassner, Chair, reported that Committee members Jody Brett, Gary Ralston, and Kassner met on April 5th, with Commissioner Kenny Finster to assess the grounds at the Stiernberg Cemetery. The Committee will assist Mr. Finster by cleaning headstones and helping locate a missing headstone.

The first project for the Cemetery Committee will be Little Mary's grave and its renovation. The Committee met with Dana Perez who has done the preliminary work on restoring the site. Kassner stated that he has approval from TxDOT for the restoration and the work would begin with a work-day scheduled for April 20th. The plan is to build a pad of alternating layers of rock, sand, and weed prevention fabric, an approach that will be suitable and cost-effective.

Chairman Kassner reported that he had bought Orvus, D/2, and epoxy, all of which are necessary to clean and repair the gravestones/headstones in the cemeteries. The full report is posted on the CCHC website along with the minutes.

Museum Committee:

There was no report.

CCHC Website:

Gary Ralston, Chair, reported that he had added 3 pages to the cemetery preservation page, including pictures of the Steirnberg Cemetery and a picture of Little Mary's grave from Google Earth. He also reported that there had been 189 visits to the site and 958 page views. In addition, Wikipaedia has requested use of the CCHC pictures of the 1942 hurricane in Port Lavaca, for which use Wikipaedia would give credit and link back to the CCHC website. Ralston noted that the pictures in question were provided by Howard and Francis Hartzog.

Indianola Map Diorama:

Steve Koch reported that he had discussions with Ronda Cummins, Coastal and Marine Agent of the Calhoun County Extension Office and Sea Grant, who is in charge of the kiosks at the beach. Cummins offered the CCHC the use of the kiosk, which is approximately 4'x8' at the Crabbing Bridge, specifically the one on the bay side. Koch accepted on behalf of the CCHC and has already begun to refurbish the kiosk by cleaning and painting it.

Koch asked the members to think of uses for the kiosk. He proposes buying plexiglas to preserve any materials posted. Koch also said that he had plans to have a picture made of the Indianola diorama presently displayed at Indianola made to the dimensions necessary for the kiosk, along with posting the logo of the CCHC. Koch also cautioned that the kiosk should not become just a bulletin board.

George Fred Rhodes Historical Materials Project:

Debbie Stovall, who is working on analysis of the material from the George Fred Rhodes archives of historical material, was unable to attend and give a status report of her work.

Junior Historians:

Margaret Charnetski, Chair, reported on the progress of the Junior Historians program which will be revived in the 2013-2014 school year.

Charnetski reviewed for the members the origin of the program in 2005 and the three initial projects undertaken by the 3rd graders in the school district. Local history is the emphasis in the 3rd grade in Calhoun County Independent School District so the program was instituted in that grade throughout the county. Those projects were as follows: (a) First, all 3rd graders participated in recording in pictures the status of Calhoun County in 2005-2006, pictures which were then displayed in the Half Moon Reef Lighthouse and which became property of the museum. (b) The second project was to depict the history of their own school, which at the time comprised 5 schools, now down to 4. © The third project was the traveling trunks, each one exploring a facet of Calhoun County life, such as fishing, agriculture, industry, etc. Each traveling trunk contained artifacts and activities for use in exploring the history of Calhoun County.

Each year the 3rd graders participated in a history fair in May to display their products. Awards were also presented at the fairs, which have been held in various places, such as the high school cafeteria.

For the resumption of the program in 2013-2014, Charnetski and her committee have planned the following: (a) Field trips in October and November will be taken on tours of government offices and areas on the county those 3rd graders normally don't visit. Buses will be provided by CCISD. (b) A year-long project will feature the role of different cultures in the history of Calhoun County, the product for which would be a diorama for each culture displayed in the museum. Charnetski noted that the CCHC would work closely with the Cultures and Cuisine Committee of the Port Lavaca Main Street Inc. to produce these dioramas. Plans call for the highlighting of the individual school's particular projects at the museum in order to increase public awareness and participation.

Also, Charnetski said that the Junior Historians would be participating in six 2-hour workshops in archaeology on 6 designated Saturdays. The Texas Archeological Society will assist in this endeavor. Charnetski stated that the Junior Historians program would collaborate with committees of the CCHC, specifically the Archeology Committee, the Texas Archeology Month Committee, and the History Appreciation Committee in activities related to the archaeology workshops. There is also a need for materials for these workshops.

Charnetski then made the recommendation that the CCHC pay \$1500 as stipends to the 4 teachers and 1 coordinator needed for the Junior Historians program; that breaks down to \$250 per teacher and \$500 to the coordinator. These stipends are necessary since the teachers involved work many hours after school and on weekends to make the program successful. Members discussed the mechanics of supporting the Junior Historians including the interlocal agreement which is still in force. Members approved on a voice vote the recommendation since the CCHC has budgeted money already for the Junior Historians program.

Review of THC Committee Organization and CCHC Committees:

Mary Belle Meitzen, Chair, reviewed the role of committees in the operation of a historical commission and reviewed the committees, their members and chairs, for the 2013-2014 term of the CCHC. Meitzen urged members to join the committee of their choice.

Projects for the Future:

Members were asked to brainstorm potential projects for the CCHC. The following were proposed:

- Cannon for Bayfront Park
- Oral histories, specifically interviews with Bernice Cook on the Steirnberg Cemetery, Azile Bonneau and Patsy Walker on Seadrift
- Silhouettes on the beach like the one of the camels now on display at Indianola
- Identify World War II sites at the beach, at Olivia, of the USO

- Locate the hospital at Indianola
- Brochures for tourists on Calhoun County
- Work with Tina Crow and the Chamber of Commerce in featuring Calhoun County in publications such as Texas Parks and Wildlife
- Work with Ronda Cummins in the use of her radio loop
- Gaining access to the Gladney/Riser cemetery for restoration, cleaning, since the land is owned privately and access has not been granted
- Exploring the topic of the Kitchens family estate and the cisterns thereon, as well as the artesian well located in the area

Next Meeting:

CCHC Chair Meitzen announced that the May 14th regular meeting would be in the library at Calhoun High School because the meeting room of the public library would be used on that date for the Scholastic Book Fair.

Adjournment:

Steve Koch moved the meeting adjourn with John Foester seconding. The motion was approved on a voice vote and the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



**Sue Thomae, Secretary
Calhoun County Historical Commission**