Author, entrepreneur, and investor Jim Moloney of Corpus Christi will be the featured speaker for the Annual Meeting of ACHS on Thursday, February 6, at the Fulton Mansion’s Education & History Center, at 6:30 pm.

An avid collector of historic postcards, Moloney will show slides of Rockport postcards he has found through the years. Moloney is a past recipient of the Dan Kilgore Local History Award from the Nueces County Historical Society. He is the publisher and co-author with Murphy Givens of 1919-The Storm and Corpus Christi - A History and his Nueces Press has also published A Soldier’s Life, the autobiography of Daniel P. Whiting, Great Tales from the History of South Texas and Recollections of Other Days.

A brief business meeting will include election of new board members for the Society.

This is an event for members and their guests. Memberships will be sold at the door, and anyone who joins or renews at the $30 family rate will receive the historic 2014 ACHS Calendar for free.
FROM THE LAB: A message from the President . . . . .

It’s really hard for me to believe that 2013 is now a part of history. I want to take this opportunity to thank our wonderful Board of Trustees. Marsha Hendrix has served as Vice-President this year; Norinne Holman as Secretary; Patsy Parr as Treasurer; Dolly Hart Close as Membership Committee Chair; David Murrah as editor of the newsletter; Ray McLester as technology specialist; Joan Bounds as membership database specialist, Janet Taylor as liaison to the Aransas County Historical Commission, and Pam Wheat Stranahan as liaison with the Friends of the History Center for Aransas County. Each has done a wonderful job. Thank you!

Wednesday afternoons at the Lab have been wonderful in 2013. Thanks to all of you who come and keep it so lively. Visitors who are looking for information are lucky to have such a knowledgeable group to help them. Thanks to Jo Ann Morgan and Joan Bounds who make sure we don’t go hungry. We have had a wonderful time with our members and visitors that drop in.

We have really been lucky to have Ray McLester working on our Digital Photograph Collection in 2013. He scanned all the photographs that were entered in the Photo Contest, and he worked on every one that was in the 2014 Calendar. He comes almost every Wednesday, and scans any photographs that are brought in. He has also done an excellent job of restoration on many of them. On top of that he created our new web page and maintains it.

And we are all lucky to have David Murrah who creates this magnificent newsletter. Getting people to submit content in a timely manner is a difficult job. He also creates the ads that are in the Pilot and all of the postcards you receive to remind you of our events.

Thanks to all of you who support the Aransas County Historical Society! We wouldn’t be here without you. Happy 2014!

---Janie Collier White

2014 CALENDAR FEATURES RARE PHOTOGRAPHS

One of the rarest photos to emerge from the ACHS Photo Contest was this depiction of the Marian packing house cistern in Fulton, c. 1920s.

Submitted by Donna Dickinson, the photo won second place in the 2013 contest and is featured in the 2014 ACHS Historical Calendar.

The 2014 Calendar is our best ever and is available for purchase for $10 at local merchants or from ACHS. Or, you can get one for free by joining ACHS or renewing your membership at the $30 family level, as long as supplies last. Send your check for $30 to ACHS, Box 702, Rockport, TX 78381, and we will send you a calendar by return mail.
One Hundred Years Ago

Rockport in 1914

by
Janie White

[Editor’s note: This is the first in a series of article on Rockport in 1914. Utilizing a Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, dated January 1914, as well has family history material, ACHS member and president Janie White gives this fascinating description of the waterfront and downtown area of the Rockport of a hundred years ago. In the next issue, she will cover Rockport businesses in 1914.]

Rockport in 1914 was drawing near the end of its “Grand Hotel” era, and it had not yet experienced the devastating hurricanes of 1916 and 1919. According to the 1914 Sanborn Map, its population was 1,500, or about 15 percent of its estimated 10,000 today. According to an article in the Galveston Daily News of Tuesday, September 1, 1914, Aransas County had an area of 295 square miles. Rockport, the county seat, had a “ship canal” that gave the city a “water connection” with Port Aransas and the docks at Harbor Island. The federal government had improved the jetties at the pass and provided another deep-water port for Texas at Harbor Island. The San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railroad served Rockport and large quantities of gulf fish were shipped from Rockport annually.

According to the Sanborn map, Rockport’s principal streets were paved with shell and its public lights were incandescent electric. The volunteer fire department had 25 members who utilized a 100-gallon chemical engine that was kept at 324 Magnolia Street. Fires were reported by telephone and volunteer firemen were alerted to a fire by a bell over the fire station. The fire limits ordinance covered only from North St. to Market St. and from Magnolia to Aransas Bay, but were not enforced.

The map shows that the area around the railroad tracks was a busy one. The Purcell Light Company, which generated power using a coal gas engine, was located beside the spur tracks along Ann and North streets. The Bell Ice Company, which had a 15-ton ice machine, was located on the northwest corner of Mimoso and Ann (with a spur track along Ann). The Charles G. Johnson Lumber Yard was located on the south side of North St. where the main track curved from Ann to North St. (formerly Railroad St.). The San Antonio & Aransas Pass Railroad depot, surrounded by a wooden platform, was located where it still remains today, with the main track to the north. Wells Fargo, & Company Express was just to the west of the depot. There were several other warehouses located along the tracks.

On the waterfront, Miller Brothers fish packing house, with an office and a warehouse to the west, was located just to the north of the railroad tracks with its own pier extending into the bay. To the south, the railroad pier with railroad tracks on it extended into the bay. On the south side of the tracks, the map indicates another fish and oyster packing facility. This facility included a pier, a “fish and oyster packing room,” a “cold storage” area and what appears to be a 1-1/2 story office. No name is given for this facility.

The waterfront along Water Street consisted of the three piers mentioned above and four others. A pier extended from Main Street, probably the pavilion wharf. To the south of the Pavilion was the Sorenson Wharf, which had a small building at the end. There were wooden rails along one side of the Sorenson Wharf for guiding a flat wooden cart that was used to carry supplies to the ships tied up at the end of the pier extended out into Aransas Bay to accommodate deep draft boats. A set of wooden rails ran along the pier to keep carts from falling off. It served both as a terminus for ferry service as well as freight. Customers of the Sorenson store would also load their merchandise directly onto their boats. This photo dates from about 1914.

The Sorenson Wharf extended out into Aransas Bay to accommodate deep draft boats. A set of wooden rails ran along the pier to keep carts from falling off. It served both as a terminus for ferry service as well as freight. Customers of the Sorenson store would also load their merchandise directly onto their boats. This photo dates from about 1914.
Rockport in 1914 (continued from Page 3)

wharf. (Note: the information on the Sorenson Wharf comes from Sorenson family history and not the Sanborn maps.) The map indicates another pier just to the north of the intersection of Water and Market, but is not named. It is pictured in the postcard image on the front page of this Newsletter. The southernmost pier was the pier for the Bay Side Inn on South Water Street.

The Public buildings listed in the index to the map included the following: the public school—between Laurel (formerly called School Street) and Nopal streets with Church Street to the east; the County Court House and Jail, where the current Aransas County Court House is located; and the Post Office, positioned in the middle of the block on the north side of North Street between Austin, to the east, and Magnolia, to the west. City Hall is not shown on this map.

The map also identified six churches in 1914 Rockport: the Catholic Church, on the corner of Cornwall and Church; the Episcopal Church, on the northeast corner of the block between North and Wharf with Live Oak to the east; the First Baptist Church, on the northern half of the block between Market and Bay with Live Oak to the East; the First Methodist Episcopal Church, South, on northeast corner of Bay and Live Oak; the First Presbyterian Church, on the northeast corner of Market and Magnolia; and the Second Baptist Church, at

It’s not too late to get your 2014 Historical Calendar!

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Enclosed is address list____. Enclosed is check for $__________ for _______calendars @ $12 each.

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The “Prop.”, or proprietor listed on this sign was David Rockport Scrivner. He owned fish houses in Fulton and Rockport, and served for 47 years as County Treasurer. Gordon Stanley found this photo while in Maine in 2009.

Magnolia and Liberty.

More articles on Rockport in 1914 will follow. Meanwhile, Aransas County history is not complete without you, the reader. If you can add to (or correct) this information, please visit the ACHS Lab any Wednesday afternoon between 2 and 4 pm.
Preserving History: What’s Going On in Aransas County

History is alive and well in Aransas County, thanks to several historically-minded organizations and hundreds of volunteers. Boosted in recent years by the extensive studies in the 2009 Visionaries in Preservation program, current historical activity includes ongoing efforts to save historic houses, revitalize a historic downtown area, create a new history venue, document and restore cemeteries, produce county histories, and preserve documents and photographs that reflect our local history.

Because of the flurry of recent activity, there has been some confusion as to what the different organizations are doing. Perhaps the following information about the mission of each organization will be helpful.

The Aransas County Historical Commission (ACHC) is an appointed commission mandated by Chapter 318 of Vernon’s Texas Civil Statue and serves as an arm of the county government under the auspices of the Aransas County Commissioners’ Court. The ACHC’s mission is to preserve and protect the county’s cultural resources consistent with the statewide preservation plan of the Texas Historical Commission. The ACHC nominates sites for Texas historical markers, celebrates the dedication of these markers, nominates homes for the Windstorm Exemption Program and coordinates other historic preservation events. For more information, see its web site, www.aransascountytx.gov/historiccomm/.

The Aransas County Historical Society (ACHS) is a non-profit membership organization dedicated to collecting and preserving Aransas county history. ACHS maintains a research facility, the History Lab, at the historic Rockport School on Live Oak, which is open Wednesdays from 2:00 to 4:00 pm for those who want to do historical research or learn about the history of Aransas County. It publishes a quarterly newsletter, produces and sells an annual Calendar of Historical Photographs, provides public programs, maintains a small library as well as a collection of artifacts, oral histories, and photographs. ACHS also sponsors ongoing cemetery information. See its website at www.aransashistory.org

The Friends of the History Center for Aransas County (the History Center) is a new membership organization that will assume management and custodial responsibility for a historic structure that will soon open this spring as The History Center, a venue for exhibiting Aransas County heritage, to be located in the restored Bruhl-Paul-Johnson house at 801 E. Cedar in Rockport. The Center will provide space for displays, workshops, meetings and gatherings. Visitors will discover and appreciate our rich heritage and hopefully will be motivated to be better custodians of that which we hold in trust. See its web site at www.aransashistorycenter.org.

The Rockport Heritage District Association (RHDA) is an organization of businesses and individuals committed to the promotion, enhancement and historic preservation of the downtown Rockport area. Established in 1993 as the Rockport Downtown Merchants Association, it became the RHDA in 2005 when the City of Rockport formally designated a 450-acre Heritage District. Since that time, RHDA has worked closely with the City of Rockport, community volunteers, and civic organizations to revitalize downtown Rockport as a walkable "pedestrian friendly" community gathering place.

Several other organizations which promote specific historical themes and/or venues include the Texas Maritime Museum, the Fulton Mansion State Historic Site, the Tour of Historic Homes, the Genealogical Society of Aransas County, and the Fulton Schoolhouse Museum which is sponsored by the local chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas. In addition, several cemetery associations work to preserve their sites.

It takes all of these organizations to carry on the work of preserving our rich history. Preservation is a cooperative effort. Our communities are enriched in many ways when state, local and federal government, private nonprofit groups, foundations, businesses, schools and individuals all work together toward the goal of preserving our historical and cultural resources.

--Pam Stranahan and David Murrah
DRT Chapter Plans Dedication of County’s Oldest Gravestone

On March 17 at 5 pm, the Stenson-Simpson Chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas will host a dedication of the newly restored gravestone of Patrick T. O’Conner at the Lamar Cemetery.

The DRT raised over $600 to restore the stone. O’Conner, who was a bookkeeper for Lamar founder James Byrnes, died in 1854 and was the first buried in the Lamar Cemetery.

The ceremony will be open to the public.

—Jackie Shaw

HISTORY NEWS YOU CAN USE

400 BRAVED COLD WEATHER FOR CHRISTMAS TOUR

Sincere thanks to the many folks who served as docents for the Christmas Tour of Historic Homes. Seven venues were on the Tour that featured homes from the 1880s to the 1950s.

Despite freezing temperatures over 400 people braved the weather on Saturday and Sunday, December 7-8, to view the homes and docents who welcomed them in vintage dress.

Proceeds will benefit the History Center for Aransas County at 801 E. Cedar St. Plans are underway for the Tour in December 2014. Different homes are featured each year.

—Pam Stranahan

Need an extra calendar?

Join ACHS or renew your dues at the $30 family level at the Annual Meeting on February 6 and receive FREE the beautiful 2014 ACHS Historical Calendar!

Offer valid for Annual Meeting, as long as supplies last!