NOTED TEXAS AUTHOR TO SPEAK AT
NOVEMBER 21 ACHS PROGRAM

Meeting will be at Bay Education Center at 6:30

You will not want to miss the upcoming program, “Murder and Mayhem, The Killing of the Choate Cousins in 1869.” Author Chuck Parsons of Seguin will present this intriguing story and its relation to the famous Taylor-Sutton Feud of 1869.

The Choate cousins are buried in the Rockport cemetery in two of its oldest graves. Unique graves are in the Rockport Cemetery.

This program will be at a new venue for ACHS, the new Bay Education Center, located at the Rockport Harbor near the entrance to the Beach Park. There is no admission for the program. Seating is limited, so plan to come early and enjoy refreshments.

Chuck Parsons is the author of 20 books on Texas history, many dealing with the frontier era of Texas, including work on gunfighters John Wesley Hardin and Clay Allison, and Texas Rangers John R. Hughes, N. O. Reynolds, and John B. Armstrong. He will have books available for sale and signing after the program.
FROM THE LAB: A message from the President . . . .

Thanks to all who came to Rob Sawyer’s great presentation on September 13th and to our fun Calendar Premiere on September 26th. You know how great the refreshments were at those events. Thanks to Norinne Holman and Marsha Hendrix for their organizational skills in pulling the refreshments together. Joining them in preparing the food and drink were Joan Bounds, Dolly Close, Gloria Davis, Ray McLester, Jo Anne Morgan, David Murrah, and Patsy Parr. Norinne Holman was the creator of the beautiful table setting at the Calendar Premiere.

Thanks to Tom White for the sound system at the Premiere. Special thanks are in order to Lisa Baer for the opportunity to celebrate the 2014 calendar in the beautiful and historic Estelle Stair Gallery. We truly have special people in the ACHS.

I spent the month of October traveling thru the South and into New England. As I saw photographic postcards enlarged and displayed in museums and other exhibits, I started to realize how important those postcards are to our history. Unlike photographs that had a limited number of printed copies, postcards were published, purchased by tourists and widely distributed to family and friends through the US Postal Service. Today they are found in family correspondence collections, and sold in antique stores and over the internet. One of the advantages to finding an old postcard is that the postmark can add an approximate date to the photograph. In my travels, I bought a postcard or two, but they are in my suitcase. I didn’t mail a single one! In our digital world, we send an email or text message—maybe even put something on Facebook. Where will those digital communications be in 100 years?

We have some wonderful postcards of Aransas County in the Aransas County Historical Society Digital Photograph Collection. We have postcards from the Simon Lee Sorenson family collection, the Gordon Stanley Postcard Collection, the Kam Wagert Postcard Collection and some others from individual collections. (Phil Albin scanned the Simon Lee Sorenson and Gordon Stanley collections, and Scott Wagert scanned the Kam Wagert Collection.)

One of the largest collections of postcards of the Coastal Bend belongs to Jim Moloney of Corpus Christi. A couple of years ago, Pat Rousseau asked me if I would like to scan the postcards of Aransas County from Mr. Moloney’s collection. He has around 300 Aransas County scenes. Thanks to Pat, these postcards are a fantastic addition to our digital collection.

Come see what I mean about the value of historic postcards on February 6, 2014 at 6:30 P.M. Jim Moloney will be the speaker at our annual Member’s Meeting. He will be telling us about his postcard collection, and then showing selected postcards from his Aransas County Collection. Audience participation in identifying and gathering details on the postcards will be encouraged. It will be great fun! This is a members only event, but new memberships and renewals will be accepted at the door.

Meanwhile, you will not want to miss the presentation on the Choate killings by Chuck Parsons on Thursday, November 21, at the Bay Education Center at 6:30 pm. This is our first time to have one of our programs there and we are looking forward to using that venue.

I’ll be looking forward to seeing you at the Lab on Wednesday afternoons.

---Janie Collier White

PHOTO CONTEST ATTRACTS OUTSTANDING ENTRIES

“The best submissions ever,” was the repeated phrase during the judging of the 2013 Historical Photo Contest sponsored by ACHS this past summer.

Donna Dickinson of Rockport won both first and second places in the 2013 Contest. The winning entries were announced at the Calendar Gala Premiere in September.

The photo at left, “Cleaning Up the House after the 1919 Storm,” won first place as designated by the judges’ panel. The photo is one of 15 featured in the 2014 Historical Calendar. The judges for the contest were Bobby Jackson, Ed Hegen, and Pam Fulcher. Jackson, an award-winning history teacher, was especially impressed with the uniqueness and rarity of the submitted photos, especially one that depicted an old Fulton cistern. That image will be reproduced in the February Newsletter.

The Calendar is a major fundraising project for the ACHS. This year’s underwriters are Casterline Fish (continued on p. 5)
ACHS PLANS NEW COUNTY HISTORY
Volunteers needed to help with entries

The goal to produce a comprehensive pictorial history of Aransas County is under way.

ACHS is collecting stories of our county history with the ultimate goal of publishing a pictorial history of the county. We want to collect as many stories as possible, and we need your help. This is your opportunity to become a part of the permanent history of Aransas County.

We will be inviting families, businesses, organizations, and institutions to submit stories along with representative photographs. Guidelines are being developed in each area. Below are the suggested guidelines for non-profit organizations.

1. Eligible organizations include non-profit current and past organizations, such as churches, clubs, friends groups, fraternal organizations, etc. The organization must be based in Aransas County.

2. Please submit stories in electronic format, preferably Microsoft Word.

3. Stories should include “how, what, when, where, and why.” Stories should include when the organization was established, who were the founding members, who were some of the long-standing members, contributions made to the community, and information about current activity. If the organization no longer exists, please indicate when it was discontinued.

4. Quality photographs may be submitted with your entry. Please provide a high resolution digital copy, or allow us to scan your original. Deadline for your story is November 1, 2014.

Similar guidelines will be available for families and businesses. Submitted entries will be kept for research purposes in the History Files of the Aransas County Historical Society, and, depending upon the number of responses, may be selected to be included in a forthcoming book.

What we need right now is this:

1. Volunteers to help solicit and edit entries for businesses, organizations and family histories;
2. Suggestions of historic families, businesses, and organizations that should be included, and the name of a possible contact for each entity.

If you can help in any way, please contact Marsha Hendrix at marsha.hendrix@thc.state.tx.us or by phone at 361-729-0386, ext. 26.
NEW CALENDAR NOW AVAILABLE FOR PICK UP OR MAIL ORDER!
A great Christmas present for out-of-town family!

From the wonderful cover, featuring Jackie Shaw (white dress) in a childhood adventure with friends, to many other great photos, the 2014 Historical Calendar offers a fascinating glimpse of Aransas County history.

Printed for the first time on semi-gloss paper and carefully restored, the pictures depict some great rarities. All were selected from the outstanding slate of entries for the 1913 Photo Contest.

Be sure to pick up your copy before they are gone!

And, if you would like for us to mail them to you, or your list of addresses, send your list along with a check for $12 for each calendar to be mailed and we will get them out right away.

1914 Historical Calendar Order Form. Complete and return to ACHS, Box 702, Rockport, TX 78381.

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History Engraved: A Review of Aransas County’s Historical Signage

Aransas County’s history is well-documented in a somewhat permanent fashion, thanks in large part to a myriad of historical markers and signage erected during the past 77 years.

Since 1936, more than 60 signs have been erected by historical organizations, and, as a result, Aransas County has become one of the best historically documented counties in the state relative to its size and population.

The signs cover a myriad of topics, including historical events, churches, historical houses, notable individuals, businesses, and cemeteries.

Generally, there are three types of historical signs found in the county. The earliest are four Texas Centennial historical markers erected in 1936. These document a home site of James Power, George W. Fulton, and the establishment of Aransas County, and of Lamar.

The second and largest group of signs is those erected by the Aransas County Historical Commission (ACHC) under the guidance of the Texas Historical Commission (THC). According to the THC website, 46 of these historical markers are found in Aransas County. Of these, only four were erected prior to the establishment of the Aransas County Historical Society (ACHS) in 1985. After ACHS was created, which helped to support the work of the ACHC, 25 markers were erected from 1988 to 2000. Since 2000, an additional 13 markers have been placed by the ACHC.

The third type of historical signs was produced under an initiative that grew out of Aransas County’s 2009 Visionaries in Preservation (VIP) program. This work was facilitated by THC, ACHS, and ACHC. Thanks to funding from several sources, 14 local history signs were placed in Rockport and Fulton in 2011-2012.

The full text of the official Texas Historical markers can be found at the THC website, http://atlas.thc.state.tx.us/shell-county.htm.

The most recent of the THC markers is that at the Woods-Jackson House, recently unveiled by homeowner Dean Wix (left) and Aransas County Judge C. H. “Bert” Mills. See related story on p. 6.

Located on Fulton Beach Road in Fulton, this marker on the Fulton packing industry is one of 14 markers placed in Rockport and Fulton under the auspices of the Visionaries in Preservation program.

One of the most unique historical markers is at the gravesite of Texas Revolutionary War soldier John Fagan, a survivor of the 1836 Goliad Massacre. As Irish immigrant, Fagan died in 1860.

Historical signage is an ongoing process. If you are interested in obtaining a historical marker for your property or organization, you should review the guidelines at the THC website, http://www.thc.state.tx.us/preserve/projects-and-programs/state-historical-markers/apply-historical-marker, and then contact the chair of the Aransas County Historical Commission, Greg Harlan, at grantwriter@sbcglobal.net.

———David Murrah

( PHOTO CONTEST, continued from p. 2)


Janie White, r., gives third place award to Sally Windrop for her entry depicting the women’s softball team in the early 1950s.
CHRISTMAS TOUR TO BENEFIT FRIENDS OF HISTORY CENTER

Friends of the History Center are making plans for the 6th Annual Christmas Tour of Historic Homes which will be held on Saturday and Sunday, December 7-8.

The tour includes seven venues, including five private homes. In Rockport are the Hoopes House (1889); Bruhl-Paul-Johnson House (1870s); Brundrett- Murray House (1903); and Picton-Pulliam House (1889); In Fulton, Kenney-Compton House (1920s); Rozzell-York House (1946); and the Fulton Schoolhouse Museum (1886).

All homes will be decorated for the holiday season with docents in vintage dress to provide narratives about local history.

Tickets will be $15 per adult or $25 for two; children 6-12 free. The tour is not recommended for children younger than 6 years old. Tickets may be purchased online at www.aransashistorycenter.org (PayPal), at the Rockport - Fulton Chamber of Commerce, or at the door of any home on the Tour (check or cash only).

If you would like to volunteer to be a docent, contact Francine Coxwell at FCoxwell@navyarmyceu.com. Vintage costumes are available for loan during the Tour dates.

The tour proceeds will benefit the History Center for Aransas County.

—Pam Stranahan

Aransas County Historical Commission

MARKER UNVEILED AT WOODS-JACKSON HOUSE, 701 N. MAGNOLIA

The Aransas County Historical Commission officially unveiled its latest marker for the Woods-Jackson House on October 11.

Located at 701 N. Magnolia in old Rockport, the house, currently owned by the Wix family, is now officially designated as a Recorded Texas Historical Landmark by the State of Texas. The two story Victorian-Queen Ann house has front, rear and side facing gables, spindle-work ornamentation, three matching stained glass windows, and a semi-wraparound covered porch supported by columns.

Greg Harlan, newly elected Chair of the Aransas County Historical Commission, welcomed everyone to the event. Rev. Charles Schuler, minister to both the Wix and Jackson families, gave the invocation. The marker was unveiled by County Judge C.H. "Burt" Mills and house owner Dean Wix.

Sandy Garrison, who is the chair of the ACHC marker Committee, gave a brief history for the crowd of about 50 people. The house was built in 1910 by Tobias Wood, whose family ranched on San Jose Island. Ownership of the house was later transferred to his brother Will and his wife Alpha Kennedy Wood, then to the S.B. Russell family 1922, who then sold it in 1923, to Irene and S.F. Jackson who owned and operated Jackson Seafood Company. The house remained in the Jackson family for 51 years.

Franklin Wix and Marvine Davis Wix became owners of the house in 1974 after Franklin retired from the Air Force. Marvine served 27 years as County Treasurer and had been looking forward to receiving an historical marker for her home before her death in 2011.

Numerous members of the Wix and Jackson families shared their memories of the house, including offering a special tribute to Marvine Wix by family, friends and courthouse workers.

After the presentation, current owner Dean Wix graciously opened the house to the public.

—Janet Taylor