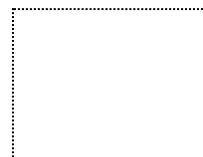


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ACHS NEWSLETTER

Volume 13 Issue 3 & 4

February 2018

ACHS ANNUAL MEETING TO CELEBRATE SURVIVAL OF HARVEY AND QUIRKY QUOTES

Tuesday, February 20, 6:30 pm at the
Fulton Mansion Education Center

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ACHS Officers & Trustees
 (year term expires)

Cheryl Livingston, President (2019)

Marsha Hendrix, Vice Pres. (2020)

Janie White, Treasurer (2019)

David J. Murrach, Acting Sec. (2019)

Ernest Camehl (2018)

John Jackson (2020)

Jo Ann Morgan (2019)

Pam Stranahan (2018)

Jeanie Schindler (2018)

Joan Truelove (2018)

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

David J. Murrach

Like all other volunteer organizations in the area, the Aransas County Historical Society is struggling to overcome the impact of Hurricane Harvey. The storm, among other things, caused the temporary loss of our Lab, cancellation of most of our fall programs, and delayed publication of the calendar and newsletter.

But what Harvey did not do was destroy our collections and spirit. Thanks to the sturdy construction of the old Rockport School, our collections fared well, although are currently inaccessible due to school priorities.

We will celebrate survival with a short business meeting and light-hearted program at the ACHS Annual Meeting, Tuesday, February 20, at the Fulton Mansion Visitor Center at 6:30 pm.

Our program is entitled, **“Everything is True, Except the Parts I Made Up: Quirky Quotes from the Past.”**

Come prepared to share your favorite quote and other funny things that you know.

The meeting is free and for members only. It would be a good time to pay dues if yours are due, or to come and join the Society. See you on the 20th!



ACHS President Cheryl Livingston shows the three winning photos from the 2017 Photo Contest, all included in the new 2018 Historical Calendar. Also pictured is Travis Smith, whose brother Charlie submitted the second-place winner. Photo courtesy Veronika Camehl.

HARVEY DELAYS CALENDAR

The 2018 ACHS Historical Calendar got published, in spite of Harvey.

On August 23, 2017, we had our usual Wednesday gathering at the ACHS Lab. Norinne Holman, Jean Schindler, Joan Truelove, and I were planning to have our last proofreading meeting for the 2018 Calendar early the next week. (CONTINUED ON P. 6)

FROM THE LAB: A message from the President

I'm writing this message on January 25, 2018 which is the five-month anniversary of our encounter with Hurricane Harvey. That week began on Monday, August 21, 2017, when the total solar eclipse had everyone excited. It seems like the entire country was happy that day. Big fun. But, before the week was over, Aransas County would experience its own historic event--up close and personal. Harvey knocked us down, but not out. We got back up and tackled the multitude of tasks ahead.

There's no need to share the devastating statistics here. Our community has changed in countless ways. In one way or another we're all still coping with the aftermath of this powerful event.

The Aransas County Historical Society is dealing with both primary and secondary impacts. First, we had to cancel our fall slate of programs due to the recovery effort, but, thanks to **Janie White** and the Calendar Committee, we did get to hold the annual calendar premiere event in mid-November.

Second, our home, the solid, sturdy Rockport School, built in 1935, suffered minor damage, amazingly far less damage than any other school building in town. Although the ACHS Lab experienced small water leaks, our collection of photos and research files fared well as did our computers, equipment and furniture.

But, shortly after the storm, the Aransas County Independent School District determined that, due to severe damage to its Central Office, it needed the Rockport School to house several displaced ACISD administrative employees, including our space. Thus, our collections have been moved into storage and are not accessible at this point. As you read this we have no information regarding when we will have a home again. Hopefully we'll know more in the upcoming weeks.

We do owe a debt of gratitude to **Mary Anders** and other ACISD employees who did an excellent job of watching over our room and respecting the historical treasures that resided there. Thanks a sp to **Janie White** for taking some important files and materials to her home before the storm. It was a huge relief to see everything in good shape.

Here's what we do know. We're here! You will continue to receive newsletters, and hopefully more of them than before with feature articles and photos. We'll also continue to offer programs as we can. With our collection in storage and no without a place to meet, we won't have Wednesday afternoon Lab hours or our popular photo presentations and discussion in the near future, but hopefully, things will get back to normal soon. The officers and trustees have met at the Fulton Mansion and the public Library. Thanks to **Marsha Hendrix** and Aransas County for sharing their spaces.

Another casualty of the storm was the loss of our wonderful Secretary **Joan Truelove**, who resigned to concentrate on rebuilding her home. A big thank you for all she

did for our organization and we're looking forward to seeing more of her soon. Immediate past president **David Murrah** volunteered to be acting Secretary. Thank you, David.

Like us, many organizations in town have a tough time finding places to meet and hold programs. But we have learned that patience, flexibility and the ability to adapt to our new circumstances is the new normal. Watch *the Rockport Pilot* and your mailbox for announcements regarding upcoming programs and activities.

In this newsletter, you will find information about the 2018 Calendar, membership, upcoming events and other information. Thanks for your patience as we forge ahead.

Here is contact information for the Officers. Don't hesitate to reach out if you have questions, comments or suggestions.

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Janie White jc-white@swbell.net
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David Murrah davidmurrah@sbcglobal.net
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—Cheryl Livingston

A NOTE FROM THE ACHS CEMETERY COMMITTEE

One of our most active committees, thanks to the dedicated work of Norinne Holman, is the Cemetery Committee. Its files are among our collection's largest, and includes extensive information on the cemeteries of Aransas County. They contain records of burials, location of burials and in many instances, the obituary for the deceased.

A devoted member of this committee, Norinne works tirelessly to keep our files up to date. These files will be available to anyone for research, once we have recovered from Harvey and are able to re-open our reading room.

---Jo Ann Morgan

ACHS extends a warm welcome to these new members!

Allison Close
Ty & Donna Husak
Richard Lamb

THIRTY YEARS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE: A HISTORY OF THE ROCKPORT COMPUTER USERS' GROUP

by Phil Albin and Ron Braun

[EDITORS NOTE: In cooperation with the South Texas Historical Association, several local historical groups are sponsoring a symposium on April 7 to commemorate the centennial of the end of World War I. The program will be held at the Fulton Mansion Visitor and Education Center. Speakers will relate stories of regional involvement in the war. The program will start at 9:00 AM, serve a box lunch and conclude around 3:00 PM. Speakers include Doug Kubecik, Paul Spellman, Phil Barnes, Hannah Hawes and Mark Robins. Co-hosts of the event are ACHS, the Aransas County Historical Commission, Fulton Mansion State Historic Site, Friends of the History Center, the Texas Maritime Museum, and Daughters of the Republic of Texas. To make a reservation, contact Carroll Brincefield brincefieldc@gmail.com or 361 798-4280 with the South Texas Historical Association. The event is free.

Part One of the article below provides background information on the war and how it affected Texas and Aransas County. Part Two will appear in our March Newsletter.]

World War I had a major impact on the character and economy of Aransas County. The war brought a major shipbuilding industry to the area along with hundreds of workers and contributed to changing the future of the county. This year, 2018, marks the centennial for the end of the Great War (1914-1918).

It was supposed to be "the war that will end war." Its end came on November 11 at eleven o'clock in 1918. It is commemorated by groups and web sites across the state.

While other conflicts have gotten more attention, we live in an America shaped by World War I. The conflict forced the USA into international affairs, and to this day, Americans take responsibility for global relief efforts; they challenge restrictions on free speech; they assist veterans with Post Traumatic PTSD; and memorialize heroes for their efforts.

Americans were involved in relief efforts from the opening days of the European conflict in 1914. Numerous immigrant communities were concerned for their relatives in Europe and they initiated relief efforts. Nearly \$6 billion in relief went to Europe which was the first time U.S. citizens took on responsibility as global citizens (Keene, J.D., "Understanding and Interpreting the American Experience in World War I," *AALSH History News*, Summer 2017).

The war introduced restrictions Americans had never experienced. Civil liberties were threatened by the Espionage Act and the Sedition Act. These laws punished speaking out against the draft and the war. Along with legislation, a propaganda campaign promoted the war effort with sale of liberty bonds, conservation of food and reporting suspicious activities. These efforts, while described as voluntary, often became coercive. Americans of German descent often were targeted. "Flag-kissing" was demanded of those who seemed reluctant to participate in patriotic events or whose heritage related to the enemies in that conflict



("Texas in World War I," *Texas Heritage*, Vol. 2, 2015).

American troops were engaged in fighting for a year and a half. During that time U.S. casualties were greater than the later wars in Korea or Vietnam. The experience was intense for troops who suffered artillery bombardments and gas attacks. Many men brought the war home with them. Today we define this as PTSD.

Sometimes WWI is called the forgotten war as other conflicts have taken center stage. Immediately following the first World War, memorials were dedicated to honor the fallen by naming stadiums, libraries schools, and bridges. At the national

level, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was installed to honor those who went missing in action.

Texans who served in World War I numbered more than 200,000 and over 5,000 died in service. The war forced an industrialization effort at home where thousands labored in shipbuilding, timber and agriculture. San Antonio and Fort Worth became important centers of aviation, a new facet of warfare made famous by the Red Baron. The Royal Flying Corps of Canada brought their training program to Texas. Air fields (28) were developed and eight universities provided ground training. At the end of the war in 1918 the US Army Air Service was well-established ("The Texans Are Ready," *THC Medallion Spring 2017*).

In 1916 Camp Scurry was established as a 200-acre National Guard training camp near Corpus Christi. The site was made ready in a week with shell-topped roads, infrastructure and tents for more than 3,000 troops. At College Station, military instruction for students at A & M College was increased to ten hours per week. The College was designated a training base for U.S. Army's Signal Corps. More than 2,200 Aggies served in the war, with 55 making the ultimate sacrifice. Camp Logan located in Houston's Memorial Park was the site of a riot due to racial tensions between white workmen and African American guardsmen. Martial law was declared to quell the violence in August 1917. Training sites in the Tropical Trail region are Fort McIntosh in Laredo and Fort Brown in Brownsville.

The *USS Texas* is the last remaining battleship that participated in both World War I and World War II. It was the first to mount anti-aircraft guns in 1916. You may visit this dreadnought-style ship by making reservation at tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/battleship-Texas. At Camp John Wise, two miles north of San Antonio, the Army Balloon Corps trained aviators and support staff. Balloons were deployed for aerial surveillance and intelligence gathering. Balloon observers could spot an individual from five miles away, a vehicle within 10 miles and a train as far away as 30 miles. The 43rd Balloon Company supported troops at the battle of St. Mihiel and in the Meuse-Argonne offense (Murtha, Pamela. "Lighter than Air," *Texas Heritage* Vol.2, 2015).

TO BE CONTINUED IN MARCH NEWSLETTER

ARANSAS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION (CHC)

The CHC will replace historical markers that were lost in Hurricane Harvey. Only 3 of the 53 markers in the count were affected: Frandolig Island, SAAP Railroad and Port Bay Hunting and Fishing Club. New markers will be coming from the foundry for the Fulton VFD and Lamar VFD. The Aransas County Commissioners' Court also appointed three new members to ACHC: Sherri Collins, Sandy Garrison and Pat Rousseau. Officers for 2018 will be Pam Stranahan, chair; Mike Greer, vice-chair; Linda Haynes, secretary and Carol Thompson, treasurer.

CONNIE HAGAR COTTAGE SANCTUARY

A clean-up day was held on January 20 to remove debris from the gardens and pull weeds that crept into flower beds



over the winter. More serious pruning will be done on February 17 when danger of frost is past. Regular work days will take place on the third Saturday of each month to replant and maintain the butterfly and hummingbird gardens. Master gardener Pam Larson is leading the effort. The Sanctuary is the

site of the home of Connie Hagar who first recorded important observations about local bird populations in the 1930s and 40s. This site is part of Aransas Pathways. Current officers for Friends of Connie Hagar are Glenn Gomez, president, Becky Stapleton, Vice president, Mary Lessor, secretary and Rachel Diaz, treasurer.

TOUR OF HISTORIC HOMES

Held in early December, this year's tour was a big success in spite of Harvey. "Best Tour Yet!" was the declaration of one tour visitor as she exited the Barnard home on Magnolia Street. The general sentiment was of rekindled memories and new ideas for decorating during a holiday season. During the Tour over 100 docents in vintage dress from the Tour wardrobe guided visitors through the venues in historic Rockport and Fulton. A compilation of zip codes from visitors revealed that approximately 50% were from Rockport; 20% from Texas-nearby; 20% Texas-distant; and 10% winter Texans who are very happy to be in town. Total visitors plus docents for two days was almost 400! The Tour Committee voted to grant the 2017 proceeds to the History Center.

STROLL THRU ROCKPORT

Now in its second year, the Stroll Thru Rockport will be held Saturday, March 24 at 9 - 12:00. A two or four mile route will take walkers by numerous historic sites where docents in vintage dress will relate stories about the homes and historic occupants. This event is being coordinated by Healthy South Texas/AgriLife and history groups in Aransas County.

DAUGHTERS of THE REPUBLIC (DRT)

DRT meets on the fourth Tuesday of every month at 4:30 PM in the Fulton Schoolhouse Museum. These meetings are open to the public and feature short programs on Texas

history. Light refreshments are served. To qualify to be a registered Daughter at the state level, one must document ancestors living in Texas during the Republic times (1836-45). Associate members may join at the local level to actively participate. DRT members serve as docents at the Museum on weekends.

GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

This group meets on the fourth Monday of each month at 3:00 PM at the Fulton Schoolhouse Museum. Programs feature workshops to aid in research, hints to solve problems and encouragement in searching for one's ancestors. Its meetings are free and open to the public.

FRIENDS OF THE HISTORY CENTER

Upcoming events at the History Center include the following:

Feb. 17 at 10:00 am: Re-opening of Foodways: Culinary Traditions of Aransas County, with an added feature: "Debris Creations" by Live Oak and Fulton Learning Center Gifted and Talented Students. March: two programs will be held on Sunday afternoons at 2:00 pm. Date to be announced:

1. Vietnamese Cuisine presented by Leah Oliva and Dr. Sam Vong, UT professor;
2. Karey Swartwout - "Samphire, Mesquite beans, Dewberries, Sea salt & Cocktails, GLOW.

Saturday, April 7, "Salute to Aransas County Military" - Opening 10 am featuring Navy Jr. ROTC, ACHS Theatre, Band, Choir and Art Students.

CALENDAR DELAYED (CONTINUED FROM P. 1)

(We had a lot of fun at these lunchtime meetings. Usually we would have sandwiches from Apple Dumpling.) I was planning to have the calendar at the printers by the end of the following week.

However, by the time we parted that afternoon, we were talking instead about evacuation plans. And, Harvey came and went--and changed our lives.

However, got the calendar to the printer in November and ACHS staged its Calendar Premiere on November 16 at the newly renovated Heritage Place, what once was St. Peter's Episcopal Church. Thirty-three people attended and it was wonderful to get to visit with everyone.

This year's calendar has a change in format. Instead of having significant dates on the calendar itself, we added a sidebar so that more information about history could be included for each month. Each event in that sidebar is backed up with a source (book or newspaper article, etc.). If you find information that you think would contribute to the history in the sidebar, you can send it to me by email (jc-white@swbell.net) or mail it to the ACHS at: P.O. Box 702, Rockport, TX 78381. Just be sure to send the source. If it's a newspaper article, send a copy of the article with the name of the newspaper and the date. If it's from a book, send the page numbers plus the information about the book in the following format: Author, *Title* (Where published: Publisher, Year published).

Don't forget to look for photos to enter in the 2018 Photo Contest. Details will be announced at our annual meeting in February.

—Janie Collier White