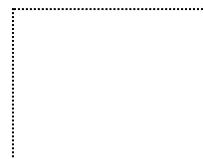


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ACHS NEWSLETTER

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NOVEMBER MEETING TO FEATURE EARLY SETTLER STORY AND CALENDAR PREMIERE

Program to be Thursday, November 14, 6:30 pm at Fulton Mansion

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(year term expires)

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NEWSLETTER EDITOR

David J. Murrah

A first-person account of a family's journey to Texas with the Powers Colony on Copano Bay in 1834 will be the featured program at ACHS's fall meeting on November 14.

Keith Petrus, an author and newspaper editor from Port Aransas, will present a talk entitled, "Gold Beneath the Trees"

It is the story of Tom Hart and family who left Ireland in 1834 with high hopes of beginning a new life in Texas. Instead, they found tragedy and hardship. Their story of perseverance, against all odds, is told through the eyes of Tom's daughter, Rosalie Hart-Priour.

ACHS will also premiere its 2020 Calendar of Historical Photographs and announce the winners of the 2019 Photo Contest. Calendars will be available for purchase before and after the program.

The program is free and open to the public and includes light refreshments.



The story of Rosalie Hart-Priour and her move to Texas with her family in 1834 is one of the most dramatic accounts of survival on the Texas frontier during the period of Mexican Texas and the Revolution in the 1830s and '40s. The setting is that of the Powers Colony on Copano Bay. The speaker for the ACHS program on Thursday, November 14, is Keith Petrus who is a great-great grandson of Rosalie Hart Priour. Photo courtesy Keith Petrus.

FROM THE LAB: A message from the President

Greetings from your ACHS President.

Looking back, the Society has had quite a productive and late summer. As you know, the two-night performance of the Guy Clark Tribute in August was a huge success, and then, our most recent program, “Remembering the 1919 Storm on its 100th Anniversary,” attracted an overflow crowd and set an attendance record for one of our regular public programs.

It was held on Saturday morning, September 14, at the exact time that the huge storm of 1919 struck Rockport a hundred years before. The event was collaboration between the Maritime Museum and your Aransas County Historical Society. The program featured David Murrah and Janie White’s slide show production of historical photos coupled with Bobby Jackson’s reenactment of his great grandfather E. H. Norvell, who with his wife and family survived the storm. It was such a great program.

The Museum recorded 165 attendees. Veronika Camehl took photos and Ty Husak videoed this important program. You can watch it at our website, aransas-countyhistoricalsociety.org.

I recently got a Facebook reminder of what was our largest crowd ever before the 1919 storm program. Back on October 27, 2016, ACHS hosted a program titled **Boats to Build, A Celebration of Guy Clark and his life in Rockport**. Tamara Saviano introduced her new book, *Without Getting Killed or Caught The Life and Music of Guy Clark*. Time flies as they say, and it was a lovely surprise to see this pop up as a Facebook memory.



This is just part of the great crowd that attended the ACHS and Maritime Museum’s program on the 1919 Hurricane on the 100th anniversary of the storm. Featured speaker Bobby Jackson presented an reenactment of this great-grandparents’ experience living through the storm.

Photo courtesy Veronika Camehl.

At that event, Joe Specht of Abilene, a renowned Texas music historian, assisted Tamara in her presentation and he was back in Rockport for the Guy Clark program in August and helped us as a volunteer.

The premiere of the **2020 Historic Photos Calendar** will be on November 14 at the Fulton Mansion History and Education Center from **5 p.m. until 6:30 p.m.** **Calendars will be sold before and after the program described in the following paragraph.**

“Gold Beneath the Trees” A first person account of a family’s journey to Texas with the Powers Colony on Copano Bay is our next program on Thursday, November 14, at 6:30 p.m. at the Fulton Mansion History and Education Center. Keith Petrus is the presenter.

Ty Husak, our website and social media expert, continues to video and edit our programs, and then posts them on our website with links to YouTube for viewers to enjoy.

One last thing: members of ACHS gather weekly at Estelle Stair Gallery every Wednesday from 2:00-4:00 p.m. for the remainder of 2019. Please drop by (back entrance on Water Street) and join us for informal discussion and fun. The repairs to the Rockport School will not be complete until mid or late 2020. Stay tuned for more information about this topic and where we’ll be meeting in 2020.

—Cheryl Livingston

ONLINE AND SOCIAL MEDIA REPORT by Ty Husak

The ACHS website is continually updated as we have new events and more information available to post online. One of our latest additions is a link to the YouTube video from the program: “1919 Hurricane 100th Anniversary” including the excellent presentation by Bobby Jackson. To find it, go to our website,

achs1985.org, or aransascountyhistoricalsociety.org. From there, you will find the link to the ACHS YouTube Channel, on which we currently have 18 videos available. Click on “Presentation Videos” in the More Places to Explore menu for a page with descriptions and links.

Make sure you subscribe to the channel for updates on new videos as they become available. Links to these videos are also available on the website.

You can also join or renew your membership in ACHS online at our website.

While you are there, you may want to look under the “New Places to Explore” menu on the home page, click on “Aransas County History Interviews,” and you will find 76 digital audio copies of oral history interview recordings from the ACHS Archives.

If you are on Facebook, make sure you like and follow our ACHS Facebook page so that you can be notified when we post anything new as well as any new events added to the calendar. You can find it by searching for “Aransas County Historical Society” or you can enter this link into your web browser: <https://www.facebook.com/AransasCountyHistoricalSociety/>.



1919 STORM PROGRAM ATTRACTS RECORD CROWD

On Sunday, September 14, 1919, a major hurricane struck the Texas coast more than two hundred miles below where it was projected to hit. As a result, the Rockport community was caught by surprise as heavy rain and wind turned into a rising surge as the Category 4 storm plowed ashore that evening. More than a thousand people lost their lives, many of whom lived on North Beach at Corpus Christi.

On Saturday, September 14, 2019, ACHS, in partnership with the Texas Maritime Museum, memorialized the storm with a special presentation entitled, "The 'Worst Storm in History:' Remembering the 1919 Storm on its 100th Anniversary." An overflow crowd packed into the Museum to see a slide presentation produced by David Murrah, Janie White, and Phil Albin, along with a re-enactment of the events of the storm by Bobby Jackson.

Much of Rockport and Aransas Pass were destroyed. A ten-foot tidal surge decimated downtown Rockport, wrecking the La Playa, the Bayside Inn, Bailey's Pavilion and other tourist landmarks. In Rockport, eleven people were lost, including five who drowned when their boat capsized on Austin Street.

The storm had long term economic effects on Aransas County. It temporarily destroyed the tourist industry and brought to an end the county's chance to get a deep water port.



Bobby Jackson, a well-noted Texas history teacher, did a masterful job re-enacting the role of his great-grandfather E. H. Norvell during the 1919 hurricane. Mr. Norvell and his wife Irene had moved to Rockport in 1888 where he came extension agent for the San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railroad. Norvell was largely responsible for promoting tourism and helping to develop Rockport as a summer resort. Photo by Veronka Camehl.



Rusty Day (R), who with his wife Jennifer own and operate the Angel Rose B&B in Rockport, relates stories from families who took refuge in what was then the Bracht house in 1919 during the height of the storm. David Murrah, who produced the slide show for the program, is at left. Photo by Veronika Camehl.



Irene and E. H. Norvell, great-grandparents of Bobby Jackson. Photo from John Jackson, **Taking the Tide: My Family's Ebb and Flow in Rockport, Texas**

Welcome New Member!

We extend a warm welcome to our newest member, Susan Flenniken!

Thank you for your support of the Aransas County Historical Society!



The Angel Rose B&B, like the Fulton Mansion and the Aransas County Courthouse, served as a place of refuge for many people during the 1919 hurricane. The storm produced an-eight foot surge that flooded downtown Rockport and nearby neighborhoods, sending families to seek shelter. As many as eleven may have died in the storm, including five who drowned when their boat capsized on Austin Street. Photo from www.angelrosebb.com.

CEMETERY ASSOCIATION RECEIVES GRANT FROM FOUNDATION

The Rockport Cemetery Association (RCA) recently received a grant from the Margaret Sue Rust Foundation that will partially fund repairs to monuments that were damaged during Hurricane Harvey. These funds are needed to restore the cemetery grounds because some burial plots are no longer maintained by absent families.

A survey in early 2019 defined 183 monuments that require various treatments to bring them back to prior condition as they were before Hurricane Harvey.

Estimates for repairs are approximately \$73,000. Since Hurricane Harvey, RCA has spent \$122,164 for clean-up and disposal of debris hauled away privately.

Repair of cemetery monuments is of the essence. Markers have fallen, been broken and are leaning in precarious positions. It is critical that private individuals do not attempt to rectify the damage and unknowingly cause more damage or injury to themselves.

You can contribute to the cemetery restoration project. Donations can be sent to the Rockport Cemetery Association, 2611 Highway 35 North, Rockport TX 78382. The Association is a non-profit organization and your contribution will be acknowledged as donation to a 501(c)3.

The RCA has successfully managed the primary burial grounds for Aransas County since its reorganization in 1937. It has working relationship with the funeral homes and historical associations in the county. On-going maintenance, sales of burial plots and arrangements for interments are regularly handled by the Rockport Cemetery Association. Current officers include President - Michael Hynes; Secretary - Janie White; Treasurer - Kathryn Albin; Board members - John Kelly, Jo Ann Morgan, Mary Sherman, Patsy Parr and Patrick Hynes; Superintendent - Norm Gibson; Maintenance - Linda Gibson.



ARANSAS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The Aransas County Historical Commission (ACHC) was asked to review TxDOT plans for the demolition of the Copano Bay bridge and pier and send comments. The bridge was completed in 1931 as state highway 57. A parallel bridge was constructed in 1967. At that time the bascule and several spans were removed and the remaining structure used as a fishing pier. It closed in August 2017 after collapse of two spans and inspection deemed it unsafe.

Because the bridge is a historic property action by TxDOT will trigger Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (review and determination of non-eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places) before they can obtain a permit to demolish.

The ACHC in a special meeting voted to support



demolition due to the unsafe condition of the structure. They did however ask that TxDOT consider mitigation that might include detailed documentation of bridge/pier; archiving the resulting report; donating some stone work or railing to the History Center; creating signage about the bridge, the Hug the Coast Highway and the fishing pier as a popular attraction; and include the bridge in a TxDOT online map about historic bridges.

HISTORY CENTER FOR ARANSAS COUNTY

On Saturday and Sunday, December 7-8, the History Center will host - "Vintage Holiday," an extravaganza celebrating Aransas County traditions, and customs of the past and present. We are decking the halls with fond memories. Join us for the grand opening when refreshments will be served both days.

The History Center is located at 801 E. Cedar Street, and its hours are Monday and Friday 10 AM -2 PM; Saturday 10 AM-4 PM; Sunday 1-4 PM.

For membership, volunteer information, and other activities: call 361-727-9214 or visit <http://www.hcfriends.net/>.

Other upcoming events are listed in the Dates to Remember below.

ROCKPORT-FULTON TOUR OF HISTORIC HOMES

The 12th annual Rockport-Fulton Tour of Historic Homes will be held December 7 & 8, from 11 - 3. The time was changed as several folks were getting home after dark. The homes on the tour this year are (Fulton): Papasan (1965) at 111 N. 3rd St. and Wagnon (1950) at 205 Cactus; and (Rockport): Brundrett (1953) at 1053 Allen St., Freeman-Collins (1915) at 918 N. Austin, and Frazier (1910) at 505 S. Church.

The two homes in Fulton are right across from and adjacent to the Fulton Post Office so visitors can easily park and walk between the houses.

The Brundrett house is the boyhood home of county surveyor Jerry Brundrett and was built by his father and grandfather. Dr. John Freeman wrote a book [A Childhood by the Sea](#) about his years spent in Rockport at 918 N. Austin.

Docents will be dressed in clothing appropriate to the year the houses were built. Tickets are \$15 for one or \$25 for two, and may be purchased at the Chamber, or the tour website,

www.aransashistorycenter.org or any house during the tour. If you would like to be a docent, please contact Barbara Gurtner at (361) 463-1606.

—submitted by Kam Wagert, Tour Chair

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

ARANSAS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Thurs. November 14—6:30 PM
Calendar Premiere and public program, "Gold Under the Trees," Fulton Mansion Education & History Center.

HISTORY CENTER FOR ARANSAS COUNTY

Sun. November 3, 2 PM - Key Allegro: Island Development II with Gordon Stanley

Sat. November 9, 10 -12 - Plant Exchange

Sun. November 17, 2 PM - Seashells by the Seashore days.

BAYVIEW CEMETERY, Corpus Christi

Sat. Nov. 9, 10 AM - 2 PM Voices of South Texas

TROPICAL TRAIL (THC) EVENT

Tues. Nov. 19, 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM in Zapata, TX

Info - nancydeviney@yahoo.com

ARANSAS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Wed. Dec. 11, 5:15 P M Regular meeting Aquarium Educ. Center

GEOARCHEOLOGY

Feb. 15-16 TAS Academy (workshop) Museum of the Coastal Bend, Victoria

www.txarch.org

A membership in the Aransas County Historical Society makes a great gift!

Only \$20 for individual or \$30 for family. Send recipient's name and address to us along with a check, payable to ACHS, and we will do the rest.

ACHS, BOX 702. ROCKPORT, TX 78381