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APRIL 2004

www.bchm.org Your Monthly Museum Newsletter

Register now for Museum's 2004 Youth Summer Archaeology Program

Get your hands dirty as a participant in the Brazoria County Historical Museum's *Youth Summer Archaeology Program*.

Beginning on Monday, June 14, and ending on Friday, June 18, the five-day, hands-on archaeology program will last each day from 8 a.m. until noon and will cost \$50 per child to attend (a discount will be given to museum members).

Open to children between 11 and 14 years of age, this program will teach participants how professionals survey a historical site, record where and what artifacts are found, and what those artifacts say about the people that once used them.

Class participants will spend three days at the Brazoria County Historical Museum learning about basic excavation techniques.

The fourth day will be spent at an archaeological site, and the last day will be spent participating in an actual archaeological dig. Students will take part in a full-scale excavation and assist a professional in identifying and interpreting artifacts uncovered during the excavation.

Participants will receive printed course materials and daily snacks. Parents/Guardians are responsible for the transportation of the participants to the Museum and to the archaeological and excavation sites.

For more information or to register, contact Ace Filipp at the Brazoria County Historical Museum by telephone at 979/864-1208 or via e-mail at programs@bchm.org. The minimum enrollment for each class is 10 students.

Classes with fewer students may be canceled. A full refund will be made if the class is canceled. Maximum enrollment is 20 students.



Use the registration form on Museum Page 2 to sign up for the Archaeology Program.

Texas History Essay Contest winners

On March 18, the Brazoria County Historical Museum and the Varner-Hogg State Historical Site hosted its *Fifth Annual Texas History Essay Contest and Banquet*.

This year's theme focused on Texas Politicians. The Museum and Varner-Hogg had a wonderful response to this year's essay contest and were very pleased with the quality of the essays that were received.

Each student who participated in the contest received a certificate of recognition for his/her participation, and the top three essay winners received a medal, a certificate, and a U.S. Savings Bond.

The 2004 *Texas History Essay Contest* winners are: Dylan Valusek (1st Place), Christopher Haynes (2nd Place), and Ashlee Karg (3rd Place).

Congratulations to our winners! We're printing in full the essay written by Dylan Valusek, the 1st Place winner; we hope you enjoy it as much as we did!

A special thanks goes out

to Ellen Pedisich and Toni Rhoden, who served as the judges for the contest.

Barbara Jordan Justice for All

By DYLAN VALUSEK

Barbara Jordan was born in the Fifth Ward in Houston, Texas, on February 21, 1936. No one would have thought that she would become one of the most admired African American women in the United States.

Being born during the Great Depression, she suffered economic hardship and struggled

to overcome many obstacles of the times. Barbara's parents taught her that discipline, dignity, and education were the keys to success.

She never forgot this and carried it with her through out her life. Barbara Jordan help to pave the way for Black African American Women in Texas. She started college in 1952 at Texas Southern University in Houston, in a time that higher education was still segregated. Her speaking skills brought her to the top of the T-S-U debate team. This skill would benefit her through out her life. She

(See Museum Page 2)



Mark Your Calendars



The LONESTAR BLUEGRASS BAND

Brazoria County Historical Museum presents The Lonestar Bluegrass Band on Friday, May 21, at 7 p.m. The performance will be held on the front lawn of the Museum, so bring your blankets and lawn chairs, and have a toe-tapping good time. Free and open to the public. For more information, call (979) 864-1208 or email to programs@bchm.org.

Prison Farms of Brazoria County: This exhibit will open Friday, May 21. Free and open to the public during regular Museum business hours.

The Adriance Library and Research Center

By JAMIE MURRAY

I received a letter in February from a person named Mary Elizabeth, who enjoys reading articles about historical homes and sites in Brazoria County.

She wrote that she has noticed that a number of historical homes are now for sale and hopes that the buyers will appreciate the history of the homes and preserve that history. Mary Elizabeth suggested that we feature historic homes in our future newsletters to "help educate the public of their importance and thus, help promote the pres-

ervation of their history."

Mary Elizabeth, I could not agree more! You have hit upon a subject that is close to my heart. Historic preservation is always on my mind, and you have no doubt heard me fuss in print about old buildings that have been torn down. In recent years, I also have been noticing that many older homes and other similar structures are being restored.

The ones I am aware of are located primarily in Angleton because that is where I live and work and where I spend most of my time, but I have a feeling that same process

is being repeated in every community across the county. People are realizing the worth and charm of the old buildings, and they are doing something about it.

You will be pleased to know, Mary Elizabeth, that a number of visitors to the Library in recent years have come because they have purchased an old house or other building and are interested in finding out more about it. This is an encouraging sign.

In general, I think that most of those who embark on a building restoration project

do so because of their interest in history and their appreciation for the old structure. While they may not fully grasp just what they are getting into in the realm of time, effort, and expense, they probably bought the building because they love it and have a vision of the way it will look when it is restored.

The old building becomes a life-long project. Every time one starts to fix something on an old structure, at least three other things are found that need to be repaired first. Whatever figure someone may have had in his mind to spend for a particular repair job always ends up costing three times (or more) the amount projected.

I know that "old house people" can identify with this, but they also know the satisfaction that comes with stepping back to view the results when the restoration begins to show. So much of what is needed early on in an

old house restoration does not show at all--like leveling, electrical, and plumbing work. Actually seeing some results is very rewarding.

The need to recognize the efforts of people in the county who have restored old structures has been on my mind a lot lately, especially since the Texas Historical Commission denied the application of Mary and Robert Smith for a historical marker on the old Whistler Hotel last year.

The Smiths restored it beautifully, following the State's guidelines, but their request

moved in order to save them. I will report later if the THC responds to her suggestion.

I would like to see some recognition on the local level for people who have successfully restored old structures in the county. I will begin this process by spotlighting examples of restoration projects in the Angleton area in future articles of the newsletter. Then I will depend on readers like Mary Elizabeth to tell us about similar successes in other areas of Brazoria County.

Thank you, Mary Elizabeth, for your words of support, and for encouraging me to act on an idea that I have been mulling over in my mind for some time. It is one thing to complain loudly, as I am known

to do, about buildings that have been destroyed.

A more proactive approach will be to publicly thank people who have made an effort to save the old buildings of Brazoria County. This does not mean that I will stop complaining loudly about the destruction of old buildings (like the brick cottage on Arcola Street that served for many years as a parsonage for the First Methodist Church).

It does mean, however, that those who have worked hard, like Robert and Mary Smith, to save an old structure, will get a public pat on the back. They will realize that someone has noticed and appreciates all their efforts to keep the old buildings alive for the rest of us to enjoy.

"People are realizing the worth and charm of the old buildings, and they are doing something about it."

Texas History Essay Contest

(Continued from Museum Page 1)

went on to become a lawyer and open her on Law practice in Houston, Texas.

Barbara Jordan lived through segregation and the pre civil rights era. She knew what racism was and how it would affect people. Again this did not stop her. Barbara strived to do important work for Texas and our Country. She became the first African American since Reconstruction to serve in the Texas Senate and then as the first African American woman from the South to serve the U.S. House of Representatives.

She sponsored bills that helped the poor, the disadvantaged, and people of color. She sponsored legislation to broaden the Voting Rights act of 1965. It was to help cover Mexican Americans in Texas and other southwestern states and to extend the law's authority to those states where minorities had been denied the right to vote or had had their right restricted by unfair registration practices, such as literacy test. In 1974 Barbara Jordan was known for the keynote speech she gave at the Watergate hearings.

The Watergate hearings were over the impeachment of Nixon. Barbara Jordan said, "My faith in the Constitution is whole, it is complete, it is total. I am not going to sit here and be an idle spectator to the diminution, the subversion, the destruction of the Constitution." All these accomplishments in Barbara Jordan's life have helped the people of Texas. She fought for social justice and equality for all people. Not just for the wealthy and well known.

Through the years of her life we see a roll model of a caring person. As a hero for the underdog, she worked hard to teach people and to get them involved to bring about positive changes in their communities wherever they lived. During her 17 year teaching career at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs many under graduates would flock to her lectures to learn about social justice and equality. This in itself was a show of how people were drawn to her opinion on civil rights and the law.

Barbara Friedholm spoke at the Barbara Jordan Memorial service and said, "So why was B.J. "as she was know by her friends, "so admired? So loved? Because she spoke to the highest good in us all-she taught us to know our own hearts and minds, and to travel the high roads.. She believed that each of us can actually change the world, and her investment in us gave the confidence that we really could." Barbara Jordan died on January 17, 1996. I will end with a statement Barbara Jordan made during the Keynote Address at the Democratic National Convention on July 12, 1976. She said, "A spirit of harmony will survive in American only if each of us remembers... When bitterness and self-interest seem to prevail, that we share a common destiny."

for a marker was denied because the building had been moved from its original site. This was a case where the building was saved only by moving it. It would have crumbled where it stood if the previous owner had not offered it for sale to be moved and if the Smiths had not purchased it.

To my way of thinking, the denial of a marker for the Whistler Hotel was counterproductive to the state Historical Commission's mission of encouraging historic preservation.

Brazoria County Historical Commission Chairman Marie Beth Jones, penned a request to the THC, asking that a new category of markers be created to recognize the restoration of buildings that must be

SIGN-UP TODAY! 2004 Youth Summer Archaeology Program Registration Form

Name of Student: _____ Age: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip Code: _____

Parent/Guardian's

Name: _____

Home Telephone: () _____ Work Telephone: () _____

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100 East Cedar Street, Angleton, Texas 77515**

Cemetery Committee Report

By JAMIE MURRAY

Twenty members gathered at the Museum on March 27 to hear a presentation by Woodrow Jones of Hockley, Texas.

Mr. Jones organized a group called Project R.E.S.P.E.C.T. in 1995, to identify historic African-American cemeteries and to work with communities to restore and to protect these properties. He is especially interested in Olivewood Cemetery in Houston, Old Washington Cemetery at Washington-on-the-Brazos, and a historic cemetery in Gonzales. Mr. Jones is convinced that respect for these and other cemeteries and the history they represent must be developed at the community level. By cleaning up some large cemeteries, he intends to identify procedures and funding sources, and to generate interest in the concept of restoring old cemeteries. Both Olivewood and Old Washington cemeteries date to the 1860s, while the cemetery at Gonzales was there as early as 1834.

Mr. Jones worked toward the passage of a bill that permits a not-for-profit organization to petition the courts, present a plan, and take possession of an abandoned cemetery in order to preserve it. This is of special interest to our local cemetery committee because not-for-profit status has recently been applied for and approved. Eventually, this newly formed Texas Historical Cemetery Guardianship Association will be able to acquire ownership of abandoned cemeteries in Brazoria County and become responsible for their care.

Woodrow Jones also is involved with Prairie View A & M's Texas Institute for History and Culture, which was organized to work with local groups like Project R.E.S.P.E.C.T. and "bring them into the university environment." A professor at Prairie View A & M supervises 60 graduate students who are working with Mr. Jones on projects such as the restoration of the historic cemetery at Wallace, Texas.

Like all organizations with a mission statement and a job to accomplish, Project R.E.S.P.E.C.T. needs volunteers. Some members of the Brazoria County Historical Museum Cemetery Committee have offered to assist with the clean up of Old Washington Cemetery at Washington-on-the-Brazos. Bill Fletcher scheduled a workday there on Saturday, April 3. Members Dee Chance and Charles Kruse are going with Bill to begin the clean-up effort there. It is hoped that local volunteers under the leadership of Washington County Genealogical Society member Mary Whigham will also be there on April 3 to lend a hand.

(See Museum Page 4)

April's Mystery Photo

In February, former Brazoria County resident David Pomeroy sent us a copy of a photograph he had found in his research on Pasadena. It came from the San Jacinto College Lee Davis Library.

The photograph had been thought to be a hotel in Pasadena, but closer inspection revealed pale white writing across the front of the photo. The name of the hotel was unmistakably the *Columbia Hotel*. The name of the proprietor was also readable as *Mrs. Roberts*, but her initials are less clear -- *L.H.* or perhaps *L.R.*

It is possible that this hotel was in Columbia, Texas, but the only hotels bearing the name *Columbia* were not necessarily

located there. Local historians Ron Livingston and Marie Beth Jones were contacted and asked if they had ever heard of the Columbia Hotel in East (or West) Columbia.

Marie Beth reported having seen an old ledger book from a hotel by that name in the storage area of the Brazoria County Clerk's Office. Ron also recalled seeing an old hotel register book there some time ago, but he remembered it as the register of a hotel owned by Henry Stevenson Brown. We have contacted the County Clerk's Office to inquire about the whereabouts of this old ledger, and so far it has not been found.

Ron also found a passage in Carry Nation's autobiog-

raphy with the line, "I was in Columbia one day and stopped at the Old Columbia Hotel, owned by the Messrs. Park, two bachelors."

Carry went on to say that the hotel was run by a Mrs. Ballenger and that after Mrs. Ballenger left, Mr. Park had called Carry and asked her to come manage the hotel. This reference does establish that there was a hotel with the name Columbia in (East) Columbia and that the owners hired women to manage it. We are still trying to discover whether a Mrs. Roberts ever managed this hotel in Columbia. If we can link Mrs. Roberts to the hotel in Columbia, Texas, then we will know that this photograph is relevant to Brazoria County.

The Director of the Lee Davis Library in Pasadena has been contacted concerning permission to add the image to the Museum's historic photo collection if we do conclude that it is a Brazoria County photo.

Anyone who has information about the *Columbia Hotel*, or about Mrs. L.H. (or L.R.) Roberts, is asked to contact Jamie Murray in the Museum Library.

If you know whether this is a photo of the *Columbia Hotel*, please call the museum.



Many thanks to the businesses that are making this newsletter possible

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The Windows Book and Gift Shoppe

By ROSEMARY DUKE

Spring has sprung, and the Texas wildflowers are spectacular this year! If you never have had the opportunity to experience the magnificent Texas Wildflowers, then this is the year you should plan a weekend trip. The abundance of wildflowers this year is the result of exceptional plant habitats and the proper weather this winter. Texas is famous for its Bluebonnets and over 5,000 species of flowering native plants. The Indians wove fascinating folklore about the Bluebonnets, but they are not the only flower that the Indians told tales about. They also told stories about the Indian Paintbrush.

The legend goes that a young Indian named *Little Gopher* could paint beautiful images of people on buckskin. One night he has a dream in which he sees delicately soft white buckskin

painted with the beautiful colors of the evening sunset. *Little Gopher* for days tries his hardest to capture nature's beauty, but is never satisfied with the results. Several nights later, in still another dream, a voice tells him to take his white buckskin to the hillside, where he normally watches the sun set. Once there, he finds paintbrushes in varying colors of scarlet to orange, cream, yellow and purples, all variations of the

sunset, sticking out of the ground. He sets to work using the paintbrushes to create the most beautiful sunset anyone in the tribe has ever seen on the soft, white buckskin. The next day, on the hillside where he left the paintbrushes, were beautiful wildflowers, which now bloom every year in Texas, New Mexico and Wyoming. These flowers have brightly colored tips of the petal-like bracts that look as if they have been dipped in a

brilliant paint.

During May and June be sure to see the spectacular fields with the red and orange Indian blankets. Hosts of brilliant yellow flowers thrive during summer's hottest months. Then in September, we see the elegant Queen Anne's Lace, followed by golden rod and purple gayfeather. Even though the price of gas is high this year, do not neglect to take a trip to see the beauty and the diversity

of nature's landscape treasures right here in Southeast Texas!

Remember, members of the Museum will receive a 10% discount on most items in the Windows Book & Gift Shoppe.

The store accepts MasterCard and Visa and will ship anywhere in the U.S. for you. Store hours are Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. and on Saturday from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m.

Mystery Item serves as bridge from horse to car (carriage)

This month's item is kind of a tricky artifact. It is one of those items that served to bridge historic eras. It is a great example of trying to convert and then use an older piece of equipment with a new technology.

The item is an E&J (Edmond & Jones) cowl light patented in 1908.

These lamps were used on early automobiles and were a holdover from the horse and buggy days.

Not surprisingly, many aspects of these early vehi-

cles were copied from their animal-powered predecessors, hence the name horseless carriage. Many early attempts at automobile manufacturing were nothing more than a carriage with a motor and some type of drive (usually belt or chain) system added. This particular lamp belonged on a Ford Model T. These side or cowl lights were brass with nickel-plating and were marked "Made by E&J, Detroit, Mich.". The earlier model used was Model 466, which was replaced in late 1911 by the Model 666.



The early Model T was a four-cylinder, four-cycle, engine-driven vehicle capable of producing 20 horsepower.

The car weighed 1200 pounds and cost \$850 factory-ordered from Detroit, Mich. The two-sided oil lamps were standard equipment



and were installed directly below the windshield.

No one got the correct

answer, but many people identified this as a carriage lamp, and since the Model T was a type of carriage, those

names were placed in the drawing. Congratulations to Peter Alef of Portland, Ore., who is the winner of the \$10 gift certificate for the

Windows Book Shoppe, located on the first floor of the Brazoria County Historical Museum.

Cemetery Committee Report

(Continued from Museum, Page 3)

The regular monthly business meeting followed Mr. Jones' presentation. David Roberts reported that the cemetery database is temporarily down because his son, who provided the space for it on his server, has sold his equipment. A plan has been worked out with the Museum so that the cemetery database can once again be available to researchers in a few months. In the interim, David's son will provide a small server on a temporary basis.

Bill Fletcher will select a date for the marker dedication at Sandy Point Cemetery. Although the mausoleum is essentially finished, a great deal of work still needs to be done at Sandy Point before the dedication. Bill has scheduled a workday there on Saturday, April 17. Instead of a meeting at the Museum in April, members will meet at Sandy Point Cemetery to assist with clean up activities. On April 17, Bill will tie a yellow ribbon on the gate if the path to the cemetery is judged to be too wet to proceed.

The name and date plaque for Sandy Point has been ordered from the Texas Historical Commission, but has not yet been received. Since we already have the historic cemetery medallion, it will not be necessary to wait for the name plaque in order to schedule the dedication.

The next meeting of the Cemetery Committee at the Museum is scheduled for Saturday, May 8, at 10 a.m. in the Museum auditorium. Anyone who is interested in this committee and its projects is invited to attend. Attendance at monthly meetings is not required. Volunteers can assist with research, recording, and cemetery clean up by contacting Jamie Murray in the Museum Library.

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Joyce McHam
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Program Coordinator

Michael Bailey
Curator

Jamie Murray
Information Services Coordinator

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How to reach The Museum

(979) 864-1208

(281) 756-1208

(979) 388-1208

Local County Courthouse

number, ext. 1208

Are you a member of the museum?

If not, then join the Brazoria County Historical Museum today! No matter which level you choose, your involvement is indispensable. Membership dues provide vital support for continuing research, collections preservation, exhibit development, and educational and entertaining programs for children and adults. In addition, membership contributions are tax deductible according to IRS rules. What better way to begin the new year than by becoming a supporting member of your County Museum. A heart-felt thanks to our renewing members and a warm welcome to our new members. You help to make the Brazoria County Historical Museum the county treasure that it is.

RECENT RENEWALS

El Empresario

ConocoPhillips, Sweeny

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Mr. & Mrs. A. G. Snelgrove, Lake Jackson

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El Tejano

David Bell, Spring

Larry Buehler, Angleton

Mrs. S. F. Edquist, Lake Jackson

Linda Haynes, Pearland

Harriet Hems, Lake Jackson

Marie Beth Jones, Angleton

Barbara Lenamon, Pearland

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Carolyn Allinson, Lake Jackson

Cathy Buettner, Lake Jackson

Isabel Evans, Lake Jackson

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Martha Munson, Angleton

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