

HAYS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION



Thursday, July 23, 2015
The Narrows
1873 Conservancy Trace
Blanco, Texas 78606

Before the July 23, 2015, meeting of the Hays County Historical Commission, HCHC members and their guests were invited by hosts Eddie and Dorothy Gumbert to explore the Blanco River and the land formations of the Narrows. At 6:43 p.m., Chairman Kate Johnson called the meeting to order. A quorum was met as the following members were present: Diana Baker, Delbert Bassett, Marie Bassett, Eric Beckers, Sue Cohen, Linda Coker, Jim Cullen, Luanne Cullen, Robert Frizzell, Eddie Gumbert, Dorothy Gumbert, Shelley Henry, Carmen Imel, Kate Johnson, Richard Kidd, Jo Landon, SarahAnn Lowther, Jerry Moore, Karen Moore, Trisha Randow, Ralph Randow, and Ofelia Vásquez-Philo. Seventeen guests also attended.

1. **Announcements**—Kate Johnson announced that the next HCHC meeting would be held on August 27, 2015, hopefully at the Old Kyle Depot. She also reminded everyone of the upcoming workshop “Improving Education & Outreach” at the Bullock Museum on September 21, 2015. Registration would open on August 1 so those interested needed to let her know in order for HCHC to pay the registration fees. Kate also mentioned that TXDOT, the Texas Historical Commission (THC), and the Historic Bridge Foundation would conduct four open houses for the Historic Metal Truss Planning Project for pre-1945 metal truss bridges that are still in vehicular service. Information as to the project and open houses would be sent to members through email. Kate thanked Dorothy and Eddie Gumbert for hosting the members and providing guides to the Narrows.
2. **Vote on accepting minutes from May 20, 2015**—Delbert Bassett moved to accept the minutes, and Carmen Imel seconded the motion. Motion passed.
3. **Courthouse Committee Report**—Linda Coker reported that the “Passport to San Marcos” on August 21 and the “Parents’ Wine Walk” on September 18 would be held at the courthouse and volunteers would be needed. She also mentioned that

THC was launching mobile apps along the IH 35 corridor to help travelers locate historical markers. She had been contacted by the founder of the Rice University Historical Society who is researching the Hofheinz family and found photos and information (including the Coronal Institute and Chautauqua newspaper) that he would send. Also, CASA had moved into the second floor of the courthouse and would be using the HCHC meeting room.

4. **Flowers, Shrubs & Trees Report**—Delbert Bassett said that one of the committee members, Eric Beckers, noted that about 20 botanists traveled throughout Texas and had collected and documented various plants as part of their research program. This committee would like to determine which of the researchers came through Hays County and use their documentation to determine the location of some of the plant collections, visit sites to determine if those plant species still exist in that area, and possibly install appropriate markers. He also described the concern of losing plants to development and hoped that a smartphone app might be developed to guide visitors to the sites of native plants. He also had checked on the Auction Oak in Kyle and noted that the cracks seemed to be getting larger but that the tree still looked healthy.
5. **Cemetery Committee Report**—Jo Landon reported that the Historic Texas Cemeteries (HTC) designation was approved for the Kyle Family Pioneer Cemetery and the marker process would be completed. Minnie Harper called about the progress at the Antioch Cemetery. The Eagle Scout had marked trees and other plants with red flags for removal and had started repairing the fence. Hector Cemetery was cleaned the prior weekend with the help of family and commission members. Louann Fleming, the caretaker for the cemetery, also worked and appreciated the extra help. Cementerio del Rio sustained much damage during the May floods--fencing was down, headstones were broken or toppled, and debris covered the ground. Linda Coker had spoken with Judge Bert Cobb, and he said that FEMA was to help with the cleanup assistance. At last visit, the fence was repaired and a large Woodmen of the World headstone was reset; however, high grass and weeds still covered the grounds.
6. **Oral History Committee Report**—Sue Cohen thanked Diana Baker for converting the cassettes to DVDs which will be accessible to everyone at the courthouse. A studio had been established at the back of the H.C. Kyle Building on the courthouse square. With that setup, several people can be scheduled for interviews in a day. Several interviews had been completed, such as Bobby Kinser, George Gilbert, Ralph Randow, and Ed and Marguerite Thompson. An upcoming project included researching the San Marcos downtown square to document what businesses were located in the buildings and interviewing family members of those business owners.
7. **Hispanic Committee Report**—Ofelia Vásquez-Philo said that Dr. Ana Juarez, associate professor of anthropology at Texas State University, was also interested in the repairs at Cementerio del Rio. Also Centro Cultural Hispano de San

Marcos had continued to stay busy with its summer programs, including exercise and art classes as well as the Little Engineers program. The San Marcos school district was providing lunch for all of the students.

8. **Historical Marker Committee Report**—Marie Bassett thanked Betty Harrison for providing the report at the May meeting while she was in Scotland. Application forms for the 2016 historical markers are available on the THC website, thc.state.tx.us, with detailed instructions. The applications must be approved and submitted by the county historical commission chair or marker chair. The application period is from September 1 to November 15, 2015. Each year extra consideration is given to specific subjects. This year they are Hispanic Heritage; Women’s History; and Recorded Texas Historical Landmarks (RTHL). We already have one application in the works —for the Zach House (Wimberley-Hughes) in Wimberley. Lila Knight is assisting Claire Billingsley with the application. It appears that the historical markers in Wimberley did not suffer during the disastrous floods. However she was informed that the granite 1936 marker beside the Texaco station, approaching San Marcos from the north, was on its side. She contacted Victor Vargas, of TXDOT, who assured her it would be reset. She thanked Charlie Willis for signing up for the THC webinar earlier this month. She was unable to attend, but Charlie forwarded her the recording he received the next day. She had watched it and forwarded it to all the members of the marker committee. Kate also mentioned that a new marker had been erected at Highway 80 and the Old Bastrop Highway. Marie asked all members to let her know of any markers in need of cleaning or repairs.
9. **Cultural Arts at the Government Center**—Linda Coker said that the deadline had changed for the art exhibit because of the May floods. Submissions were being sought for a new display in August.
10. **Kyle Depot Museum**—Kate said that the Kyle Depot and Museum was slated to open at the end of August or beginning of September. Some items had been back ordered which caused the opening to be delayed. She was hoping that the next HCHC meeting could be held there. Richard Kidd thanked everyone who assisted on July 11 in recreating the scene of the town auction for Kyle that was held in 1880 by the International & Great Northern Railroad. Two hundred acres had been purchased next to the track that was running from Austin to San Antonio, and Kyle was created in a day from that auction. He said that all principal scenes had been completed including those of a Pullman car, a steam engine, and the auction. The HCHC filmed this documentary to tell the city’s story to all visitors in the waiting room of the restored Kyle Depot.
11. **Adjourn:** Eddie Gumbert moved that the meeting adjourn; Carmen Imel seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m. Supper followed.
Respectfully submitted,
Luanne P. Cullen, HCHC Secretary
(Photos courtesy of Jim Cullen)

