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EAST TEXAS

C. K. CHAMBERLAIN

Loy J. Gilbert, president of the Smith County Historical Society and Survey Committee, reports the following accomplishments of his organization for the past twelve months:

A marker was placed in the Harris Creek Cemetery marking the burial place of Nicholas Wren, noted soldier and scout for the Army of the Republic of Texas.

Restored the curbing and cover, with proper markings, for the public well at the Starrville Townsite. Starrville was once the outstanding town and commercial center in Smith County.

The semi-annual publication of the *Chronicle* was continued. The fall and spring issues of the *Chronicle* for 1967-68, as in the past, contains interesting and informative facts concerning early Tyler and Smith County.

The Smith County Historical Society has held monthly meetings for the past year. The program for each meeting has centered on the history of the area around Tyler.

The Polk County Museum is on its way to becoming one of the better small museums in the state. There are some very definite needs such as a table, either wood-top or marble-top, that was used around the turn of the century. The museum is also attempting to find a kerosene lamp, not just a plain one, but a lamp that would have been in a lovely parlor around 1900. The museum could also use a what-not shelf. The Museum Committee is asking the people of Polk County to look in their attics for possible museum pieces.

Several members of the Survey Committee have recently given a program for The Professional Womens Club, in which the needs and hopes of the museum and the Survey Committee were stressed. The Polk County Museum Committee feels itself fortunate in that it has enjoyed the services of Miss Diana Files, Consultant for the State Survey Committee. Miss Files spent two days in Livingston, and in her opinion the museum has some excellent exhibits.

The Shelby County Historical Society publishes a newsletter each month and it is mailed to some 300 individuals. The newsletter for October 1968, among other stories, told of some of the problems of deciding on the location of the county seat. Both Center and Shelbyville wanted the courthouse and Shelbyville had an advantage in that the courthouse records were in a log building in that town; a building that was called the courthouse. The advantage that Center had was that the State Legislature had declared Center the county seat. The people of Center remembered the Regulator and Moderator feud of some forty years previous and did not want bloodshed. B. L. Parker and Sam Weaver made careful plans to move the records. They obtained an ox wagon and with the assistance of several faithful Negroes, left Center about dark one evening in August 1866. They were careful to select a time that was in the dark-of-the-moon and arrived in Shelbyville, some seven miles away from Center, in the dead of the

night. They quietly broke into the courthouse and loaded the records in the wagon and were well on the way back to Center before anyone in Shelbyville realized they had lost the records. The county records were carefully concealed in a small wooden building now on the site of Shelby County Courthouse.

For some nineteen years the county used temporary buildings for the courthouse. In 1885, the present structure was constructed at a cost of \$26,725.00. An Irishman by the name of J. J. E. Gibson was the contractor and the tall, many-spired building that he created looks more like a medieval castle than it does a courthouse. Many rather tough men were tried in Center and Gibson was thoughtful enough to construct an escape hatch for the judge. He did this by putting a small door and a narrow stairway directly behind the judge's bench so that when a trial was over, the judge might have an opportunity of being some distance away before the crowd would miss him. After the bad-men were disposed of, a panel was put across the little door and it has not been used for many years, and it may never have been used.



Shelby County Courthouse built in 1885.

Weldon Hart, head of the Texas Good Roads Association, and an authority on Texas Courthouses says that eleven Texas Courthouses now exist which were built in 1885 or earlier. Of these, however, nine have been extensively remodeled. The Shelby County Courthouse is among the oldest eleven courthouses in the state, and is among the five oldest courthouses in Texas in near original condition. The other four unremodeled courthouses are located in Lampasas, built in 1883; Albany, built in 1883; Weatherford, built in 1885; and Clarksville, built in 1885.

Shelby County Judge V. V. Pate has appointed the Shelby County Historical Committee which is in charge of the historical marking and preservation programs in the county. The committee will serve from 1969 to 1971. The chairman

of the committee is J. B. Sanders of Center. Other members are J. T. Schillings, Mrs. Pete Dellinger, Mrs. Rex Payne, Mrs. Ray Kimbro, Mrs. Kenneth Rosenberger and Marlon Eakin.

The Shelby County Historical Society has conducted a very successful memorial fund drive for its museum. Money and museum pieces have been received.

The Tyler County Historical Survey Committee meets the third Saturday morning each month in the Civic Room of the Allan Shivers Museum. One of the projects of the committee is to make tours of different areas of the county. The members making the tours carry sack-lunches and the lunches add to the enjoyment of the tours. Early in 1968, a tour was made that covered a portion of the Dogwood Trail, and where champion sized dogwood and magnolia trees are located. This tour was made before the annual Tyler County Dogwood Festival was held. Other tours were held in the county during the year in which surrounding towns were visited for the purpose of locating places of historical interest and in an effort to create interest in the county historical program.

The Fort Teran Marker has been moved to Fort Teran Park, and several state markers have been received, but due to bad weather only the Bethel Baptist Church dedication has been carried out. Markers are being planned for the law office of Stephen P. West, now the home of Mrs. Bunkie Ford, and for the Woodville Academy-College. The survey of the Woodville Magnolia Cemetery has been completed and the report is filed in the Allan Shivers Library. Census reports for Tyler County for 1850, 1860, and 1870 have been received by the library. The Committee is searching for historical documents and for old homes which would be worthy of markers.

Monthly news letters were sent to the membership during the last few months of 1968 which gave the progress the Committee was making and its plans. Membership in the historical society in 1968 increased fifty-one percent over 1967.

Two delegates, with their expenses paid, were sent by the committee to the state convention, and other members attended at their own expense.

Two Angelina County organizations have been merged to create one of the newest historical research groups in central East Texas. They are the Angelina County Historical Association and the Lufkin Genealogical Society. The merger, which was effected early in 1969, resulted in creation of the Lufkin Genealogical and Historical Society, which has a membership of almost fifty.

Dick Huber is president of the Society; Frank Sheffield, vice-president; Cassie Holmes, secretary; and Woody Gann, Treasurer.

The Society meets on the first Monday of each month at Home Savings and Loan Association Building in Lufkin.

The organization is currently planning a one-day genealogical workshop for March 29 in Lufkin. Sheffield is chairman of the project. Past workshops con-

ducted by the Genealogical Society have been among the best-attended and most successful in East Texas.

Members of the County Historical Survey Committee are Dr. Gail Medford, L. T. Jordan, Ina Mae Townsend, Mrs. E. W. Leach, Woody Gann, John Wilkins, Herman Brown, Bob Bowman and Howard Walker. Woody Gann is the chairman.

A state historical marker has been placed near the Southern Paper Mills plant which pioneered the production of newsprint from southern pine trees nearly twenty-nine years ago.

"We are very grateful for the marker and for the committees' interest in Southland's history," said Southland president R. W. Wortham, Jr.

Dr. Gail Medford, chairman of the county committee during 1968, said the marker and its location will appear in the next edition of the "Guide to Official Historical Markers" and in tourist guides and on Texas maps.

The inscription on the marker reads:

"Southland Paper Mills, Inc. First plant to turn southern pines into newsprint, the mill here revolutionized the paper industry in the southern United States."

"Camden Texas" a color movie telling the story of an East Texas lumber mill company town was shown on February 3, 1969, in the auditorium of Home Savings and Loan Building. The movie was sponsored by the Lufkin Genealogical and Historical Society.

The film was produced by James Bryan of Lufkin while a student at U.C.L.A. and was financed by a grant from the American Film Institute. Mrs. Bryan, the former Kathie James of Lufkin, was the sound technician for the movie. Both Mr. and Mrs. Bryan are former students of Stephen F. Austin State College.

The Marion County Historical Survey Committee, under the leadership of A. K. Payne, is planning for its major project this year, a marker for Robert Potter, first Secretary of the Navy for the Republic of Texas. He was given a large tract of land in the East end of Marion County for his services during the Texas Revolution. Each man who served Texas was given land. The site of Potter's home is on a hill known as Potter's Point, overlooking hauntingly beautiful Caddo Lake. There has been a great deal of interest in this site since the publication of the second edition of *Love Is a Wild Assault*.

Restoration of what is now part of the Jefferson Playhouse is in progress by the women of the Jessie Allen Wise Garden Club. The work is being done as a memorial to Mrs. Dan Lester, long a leader in the restoration movements in Jefferson and Texas.

The building on which the restoration activity has started was built originally as a family residence. In 1869 it was sold to the Sisters of Charity, who operated St. Mary's School and Hospital in the building. In 1873, The Sinai Hebrew Congregation of Beth-el purchased the property and built a synagogue. According to a newspaper account of August 15, 1879, "Reverend A. Subler, who has been

in charge of Temple Emanuel in Dallas, goes from that city to Jefferson, where there is a beautiful synagogue and a large, intelligent and wealthy Jewish congregation."

The Garden Club purchased the property in 1966, and intends to use the restored building as Pilgrimage Headquarters and as the start of a theater center for the area.

The Jefferson Historical Society and Museum, which originated as a small exhibit within the Carnegie Library, has in twenty years acquired a home that formerly served as a federal building and post office; tallied over 5,000 donations from interested persons throughout the Southwest; and gained recognition all over the country. A week-long open house ended January 31, 1969, and the museum boasts a membership of 350, almost half of whom live outside Jefferson.

The museum collection includes a fine arts gallery, Caddo Indian artifacts, an extensive gun display, many Civil War relics, original Sam Houston documents, and an early Texana exhibit featuring a country store, a blacksmith shop, and a loom and kitchen. Articles dating back to 1874 remind the visitor of Jefferson's role as one of the oldest towns in Texas—the site of the first commercial ice plant and home of the Kellyville plow.

Important among acquisitions of 1968 are two paintings from the Newhouse Galleries of New York: "Mrs. Graham Young and Child" by Sir Henry Raeborn and "Portrait of Anne North" by John Berridge. "Daniel and the Lions' Den," a copy of a painting from the school of Tintoretto which hangs in the London Museum, is a fine addition and is the most recent gift on display.

The museum on Austin Street is open daily from 9:30 A.M. to 5 P.M. Its president is Mrs. Jack Bullard.

The Bowie County Historical Survey Committee has made the Distinguished Service Award for five straight years, every year it has been offered. The committee has also made the Quota Busters Club each year.

The committee has in 1968 received and dedicated a marker for the First Disciples of Christ Church established in Texas; a marker for the R. M. Hubbard home in New Boston; a marker for the Harrison Chapel Cemetery; and a marker for the largest osage orange tree in Texas, a tree which is 153 years old. This tree is at DeKalb.

Mrs. A. A. Forester and her committee are rendering a splendid service to Bowie County.

In 1968, the Hunt County Historical Survey Committee observed History Appreciation Week, the second week in April, which included April 11, the 122nd Anniversary of the creation of Hunt County. The Committee also issued a Guide to Historic Sites where Texas Historic Markers have been placed.

Markers were dedicated during the year at: (1) East Texas State University, (2) the grave of Colonel Ben D. Martin, early Greenville mayor, Civil War Captain and member of the Texas Constitutional Convention, (3) site in Camp-

bell of old Henry and Emerson College, (4) grave of John L. Southall, Greenville law officer killed in the line of duty, and (4) the Village of Hoover's Gin and the home of the Fourth Sunday Singing Society.

Markers on hand soon to be dedicated are: (1) The Old Colony Line Road that traversed the north line of Mercer's Colony, (2) the site of the birthplace of General Claire Chennault, leader of the famous Flying Tigers of China, which is in Commerce, Texas, (3) Historic Building Medallion for the Bourland-Stevens-Samuell House in Greenville, part of it built in the 1850's and the remainder in 1883. This building is closely related to the basic history of Greenville.

The Hunt County Historical Society under the leadership of Dr. W. E. Sawyer, president, heard the following speakers during the year: March 3, 1968, Dr. Gideon T. James, Assistant Professor of Earth Sciences at East Texas State University on "Prehistoric Hunt County"; June 2, 1968, Dr. E. B. Carne, Vice President of LTV Electrosystems, Hunt County's largest employer, related the history of the great plant at Majors Field in Greenville; Sept. 8, 1968, General Hal C. Horton, pioneer Greenville lawyer, merrily entertained the group with "Some Interesting Legal Cases" in Hunt County's history; Dec. 5, 1968, Dr. Ralph Goodwin of East Texas State University talked on Indians of the Southwest and "Righting a Century of Dishonor to the Redman." At the meeting on June 2, 1968, officers for the Society were re-elected for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1968, as follows: Dr. W. E. Sawyer, President; Dr. Fletcher Warren and General Hal C. Horton, vice-presidents; Mrs. Ed M. Jones, Secretary; Mrs. Norine P. Morris, Treasurer; W. Walworth Harrison, Curator and Correspondent.

Professor and Mrs. Reese Kennedy have remodeled a very interesting old house in Nacogdoches. Professor Kennedy teaches art at Stephen F. Austin State College and Mrs. Kennedy is also an artist. The front of the building is a half block off Main Street, and indirectly faces Church Street, and the back faces on Pilar Street.

The building was built in 1898 on a lot that E. A. Blount deeded to W. Y. Bailey and wife on February 16, 1898. Other owners of the property have been E. C. Branch, N. D. Naman, and S. B. Hayter. On February 19, 1942, S. B. Hayter and wife conveyed the property to a daughter and the property was purchased by the Kennedys in October 1967. The old building had been for sale for so long that the faded 'For Sale' sign could hardly be read, and according to the Kennedys, the only occupants of the top two floors were hordes of mud-daubers and spiders.

The building has been used for many purposes; a buggy shop, a cigar factory, a newspaper plant, a laundry, a florist shop, a music studio, and a print shop. The Baker Printing Company occupied the first floor for thirty-five years and moved from the building in 1967.

The Kennedys will use part of the first floor for a studio-workshop. The other part of the first floor will be part of an art gallery. The second floor also houses an art gallery, and the kitchen and dining room for the family. The third floor has been made into rooms for the family.



GALLERY 107
(When Purchased)



GALLERY 107
(As Building appears now)

Both the building as purchased and as it is today are taken from pen and ink drawing by Professor Kennedy.

The building, now known as Gallery 107, is one of the few art galleries in East Texas and appears to belong in New Orleans rather than Nacogdoches.

The old fashioned brick structure is somewhat of a split-level construction. The front entrance is from Church Street and is by a flight of stairs to the second floor. The third floor, because of the split-level construction at one place joins the second floor. As a newspaper reporter wrote, "except for the view it seems more like Fifth Avenue than an alley in East Texas."

When the building was opened many people, out of curiosity, visited the gallery to see what could be done with an old building.

The Kennedys with an abundance of imagination and what they say was a scarcity of money and know-how have made the old place into a comfortable home, an attractive art gallery, and a convenient studio-workshop.

The gallery is open to the public each afternoon except Monday.

The Annual Convention of the Texas Old Missions and Forts Restoration Association will be held Saturday, March 8, 1969, at Menard, Texas. A visit to Old Fort McKevitt will be a part of the day.

The Texas State Historical Association will hold its seventy-third meeting May 8-10 at the Driskill Hotel in Austin. This will probably be the last meeting in this historic building, as the hotel management has announced plans "to demolish the structure and put up a new one." With only a few exceptions, the Society has held its annual meetings in the Driskill.