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East Texas News and Events

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EAST TEXAS NEWS AND NOTES

by Scott Sosebee

Once again the members of the East Texas Historical Association gathered in Nacogdoches for our annual Fall Meeting. Held September 24-26, members and guests were treated to a full and varied program, commendably orchestrated by Program Chair Milton Jordan and his fine committee of Dan Utley, Linda Hudson, Court Carney, Bernadette Pruitt, Bruce Glasrud, and Francis Galan. The Association saw many first time presenters in 2009, as well as grizzled veterans. In terms of participants, the 2009 Fall Meeting was the largest in our history, continuing a recent trend of expansion.

Awards are quite often the highlight of the Fall Meeting and 2009 brought us a galaxy of "stars" in that area. Mary Kelley-Scheer received the Ottis Lock "Educator of the Year" award for her outstanding accomplishments at Lamar University in Beaumont. Kyle Wilkison, of Collin College, collected the Ottis Lock "Book of the Year" prize for his important *Yeoman, Sharecroppers, and Socialists: Plain Folk Protest in Texas, 1870-1914*. L. Patrick Hughes of Austin Community College, and Jerry Hopkins of East Texas Baptist University received Ottis Lock Research grants during the Saturday Business Luncheon. The 2009 recipient of the Chamberlain Award for the year's best article in the *East Texas Historical Journal* went to Robert Shelton of Cleveland State University for his superbly written and researched "Built By The Irishman, The Negro, and the Mule: Labor Militancy Across the Color Line in Post-Reconstruction Texas."

Michael Hurd of the Texas Black History Preservation Project delivered the Luncheon Address on Saturday. His talk, "The Founding of Black Colleges in East Texas: Something From Nothing," reminded the audience of the vital importance these often struggling institutions of higher learning had within the too often neglected African American students in East Texas. Mr. Hurd's message resonated with our members and we appreciate his sharing of the story.

Mr. Jeff Guinn of Fort Worth delivered the 2009 Georgiana and Max Lale Lecture at the Baker Pattillo Student Center on the campus of Stephen F. Austin State University. Guinn's outstanding address, "Go Down Together: The True, Untold Story of Bonnie and Clyde" was adapted from his latest book of the same name. As Mr. Guinn pointed out, Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker are two of the most erroneously mythologized historical figures of Texas, but his fine research shows that most of their image was fabricated and exaggerated by a press hungry to sell newspapers during a raging economic depression. The reality was that these two, poor, "kids" from West Dallas turned to crime to escape a hopeless future, and for most of their brief careers they were not much more than small-time thieves. The usual large crowd in the Grand Ballroom enthusiastically responded to Guinn's talk.

Speaking of Association friend Jeff Guinn, he has graciously agreed to donate

his entire collection of the research he conducted for *Go Down Together*—notes, film, documents, and interviews—to the Association. Jeff's generous gift is not only magnanimous but also historically significant. The collection, after processing, will be housed in Stephen F. Austin State University's East Texas Research Center at the Ralph W. Steen Library and will be available for future research efforts.

The Association is pleased to announce its latest publication and the first offering in its Max and Cissy Lale East Texas Social and Cultural History Series, *Making East Texas, East Texas: Selections From the East Texas Historical Journal*, edited by Bruce Glasrud and Archie P. McDonald. The work, through representative articles from our *Journal*, examines the question of "what makes East Texas, East Texas (p.6)." The end result is a publication that aptly demonstrates the diversity, nuance, and texture of East Texas' unique heritage. It is available for purchase from our website (easttexashistorical.org) or by calling the office at 936-468-2407. All proceeds benefit the Association and, need I add, it makes a great gift.

Archie McDonald and Hardy Meredith have teamed up for an Arcadia Publishing work that should be of great interest to members, *Nacogdoches*, part of Arcadia's "Images of America" Series. It is a pictorial/text book that covers the history of the "Oldest Town in Texas" from its inception through the contemporary era. It is available at local retailers, online bookstores, or directly through Arcadia Publishing at www.arcadiapublishing.com or by calling 888-313-2665.

A recent development in East Texas is the establishment of an academic press at Stephen F. Austin State University. Headed by editor Kim Verhines, the new venture, SFA State University Press will publish fiction and non-fiction works that have a regional emphasis. Historical works will no doubt form a significant part of this new undertaking and the Association is at work on a close relationship with our host institution and its press. The first fruit of this new partnership is the current issue of the *Journal*, of which SFA State University Press helped design and print. Ms. Verhines enthusiastically asks for possible manuscript proposals, and she will also sell you a book or two as they become available. If you have any questions or proposals, please contact Kimberly Verhines at sfapress@sfasu.edu or 936-468-1078.

It is Spring Meeting time in February and, as most now know, this year the Association has planned an exciting and historic event. We will gather in Fort Worth at the Marriot Resort at Champion's Circle for a joint meeting with the West Texas Historical Association. At press time, program chair Tom Crum and his committee were busily preparing a fine program full of informative and innovative sessions, as well as historic tours, receptions, and other activities. Registration materials have been mailed to all members, or are available through our website (easttexashistorical.org), and by request at 936-468-2407. We would love to see a huge turnout for this special meeting. Please make plans to attend.

Once again the office asks you to update your e-mail information if you are not receiving the Association newsletter. A quarterly effort, the newsletter helps members stay up-to-date on Association news and happenings. If you have not yet

received a newsletter by e-mail, please call Deanna at 936-468-2407 and make sure we have a working address for you.

We encourage all to send information for inclusion in our News and Notes. If you have an item that you wish to appear, please send it to sosebeem@sfasu.edu or East Texas Historical Association, Box 6223, SFA Station, Nacogdoches, TX 75962-6223 For guaranteed inclusion in our next issue, all materials should be received no later than April 1, 2010.