

10-2012

## Editor's Note

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### Recommended Citation

(2012) "Editor's Note," *East Texas Historical Journal*: Vol. 50: Iss. 2, Article 6.

Available at: <http://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/ethj/vol50/iss2/6>

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## **EDITOR'S NOTE: HAPPY BIRTHDAY EAST TEXAS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION!**

During a recent class, while discussing 1960s Texas and the effects of the counter-culture, a student asked, "Were you a hippie in the 1960s?" With as much indignation as I could muster I replied, "A hippie! Just how old do you think I am?" "Oh, pretty old, at least thirty, maybe thirty-five." Well, obviously this young man has a problem with deciphering age (notice I did not correct his assessment of my age), as well as a serious impediment to understanding historical chronology and probably simple math as well, but the larger point is that to some—particularly the young—turning fifty is synonymous with "being old." As lovers of history that milestone has a very different connotation for us; it is barely "getting started," a mere lad in the great expanse of historical time. Thus the East Texas Historical Association is a young organization.

Oh but what a fifty years it has been! When F.I. Tucker, F. Lee Lawrence, Ralph Steen, and C.K. Chamberlain revived the East Texas Historical Association in 1962 on the campus of Stephen F. Austin State University perhaps even they did not realize what it would become, which through the information I can find is the largest regional historical association in the United States. That is something we can be proud of and is a testament to those who founded it and those who led it through the years. Dr. Chamberlain guided the Association through its early years, and like a doting parent he provided a good foundation. The charter members, some of who remain faithful members today, dedicated their service and enthusiasm to create a truly strong organization that would grow to become a fixture within the historical community in Texas.

Co-founders Lawrence and Tucker would serve as the first two presidents of the Association, and would be followed by Seth Walton and Bob Glover, setting a tradition of alternating lay and professional historians in that office. The membership would grow rapidly in those first years to well over four hundred by 1963. A large part of that escalation was no doubt attributable to the great reverence for the past in Texas in general and East Texas particularly, but credit should also go to the ardor for the Association of those first members who recruited their friends, neighbors, and col-

leagues to join and help make the Association a vital source for preserving and chronicling the region's heritage.

Chamberlain led and nurtured the Association through its initial years, but in 1971 he decided the time had come to hand the reins to a younger generation. Chamberlain tapped Archie P. McDonald, a young Civil War and southern professor at the university, to become the second executive director/editor. Dr. McDonald would hold that title until 2008, a period when the Association truly established itself as a premier organization. The membership grew to over six hundred, we decided to meet twice a year—something unique that other such groups do not do—and the Association grew more diverse and vibrant. The Association's stature reached great heights during this period; as a graduate student out on the vast plains of West Texas I certainly knew that one of the organizations you definitely wanted to be a part of was the East Texas Historical Association. It was known as a very reputable and professional group, but also one that was inviting to lay historians, students, and anyone who had an interest in the history of Texas. I always looked forward to coming to Nacogdoches every September, a place where I made many friends, people who made their distant regional cousin feel very welcome.

Today the Association continues its vibrancy and vitality. A new generation, helped along by the previous one, has picked up the mantle and our Association remains strong. A large part of our success has always been the excellence of the *East Texas Historical Journal*. It has gained a reputation as a first rate source of research and scholarship, a tribute to Drs. Chamberlain and McDonald who established its traditions. In honor of that sterling heritage, this issue of the *Journal* will be a testament to its past. It will reprint "representative" articles from each decade of the Association. I have consciously taken a very "orthodox" approach to the re-publication; each article will appear exactly as it did in the original, with no alterations or editing—no adherence to current styles, no adjustments of language or intent.

While Dr. McDonald will make a more detailed remembrance of the *Journal* in his piece, what I discovered in going through all the back issues of the *Journal* was amazing. I knew what our members have always understood: the Association's signature effort is a first-class publication, indicative of the membership and the scholars who have contributed pieces through the years. What astounded me was the sheer quantity of superior articles. Our *Journal* has published work by three Texas Medal of the Arts

winners, six Texas Institute of Letters awardees, and eleven winners of either the Fehrenbach Award for Best Book from the Texas Historical Commission, or the Outstanding Book on Texas History Award from the Texas State Historical Association—a quite impressive list by any standard. It also presented too numerous to count pieces of original research that have become the seminal authority on the topics within the historical discipline. We are the leading Texas publication on African American history, have dealt with Spanish colonial heritage as has no other publication, and began to offer insights and research into women's history much earlier than many other historical journals. The *East Texas Historical Journal* is certainly something in which we can take great pride.

I hope that you enjoy the glimpse into the past this issue will give you. I should also mention the cover of this issue. Many of you will recognize it as the original cover of the Journal, a pencil sketch by iconic Texas artist Jose Cisneros, a work commissioned for the Association by founder F. Lee Lawrence.

Happy Fiftieth birthday East Texas Historical Association, and let's begin to move toward another dynamic fifty years!

M. Scott Sosebee