



# CYPRESS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Established 2008

ISSUE 20

DECEMBER, 2013

## Notes From the President *by Karen McGilvery*

As this year comes to an end, it is a good time to reflect on the Society's activities. During the first 11 months of the year, we have participated in many events, given tours and presentations to hundreds of people, and hosted numerous events in our building. Since our last newsletter, we have continued to be active in our community with a broad range of activities. In September, we gave a class on Cypress History for the Academy for Lifelong Learning at the Cy-Fair campus of Lone Star Community College. We also hosted a Business After Hours with the Cy-Fair Chamber of Commerce. The big event in October was our annual meeting. Attendees had the pleasure of hearing Bill Willits speak on local railroad history.

In addition to all of the presentations that CHS has given to groups in the community, we have also kept busy giving tours to visitors at Cypress Top Historic Park. Around 450 adults and 230 children were guided through the historic buildings in the park since last October. All of our activities, presentations, events, and tours are made possible by the many members who volunteer. The time and energy they give is priceless. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to making this past year such a successful and productive one. Keep up the good work and try and get others interested and involved in our organization.

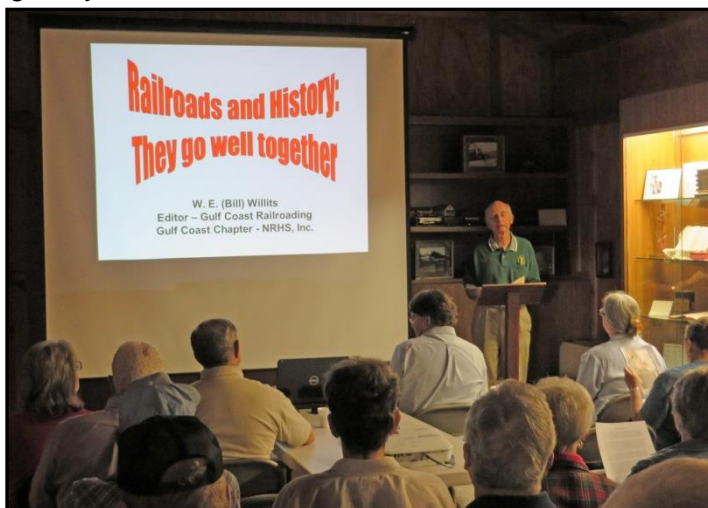
Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season and a great year in 2014.



*Members of the Cy-Fair Chamber of Commerce enjoy refreshments and the displays in the CHS Library during the Business After Hours event held September 25<sup>th</sup>.*

## Christmas Gift Ideas! *by Terri Sigmund*

HO, HO, HO. Who has been naughty or nice? Trying to think of what to get for that special someone for Christmas? We have the answer! Cypress Historical Society's 2014 Calendar is now available. The cost is \$15.00. You can stop by the office and pick one up, or contact us at the Library. In addition we have notecards in convenient gift boxes of 8 for \$10.00. Help yourself with your shopping, and help CHS at the same time!



*Guest speaker Bill Willits at the Annual Meeting on Oct 19<sup>th</sup>.*

**2014 CALENDAR**  
\$15.00

**POSTCARDS**  
\$1.00 EACH

**NOTECARDS**  
\$10/BOX OF 8

**T-SHIRTS**  
\$15.00

## **Academy of Lifetime Learning**

On September 16<sup>th</sup>, the Cypress Historical Society kicked off the Fall semester of the Cy-Fair Lone Star College "Academy of Lifetime Learning" program for seniors. Karen McGilvery, Donna McCarty, and Jane Ledbetter presented a class about the history of the Cypress area, and how life was different from today. It was "standing room only", with some of the attendees being new to the area, and many who were long-time residents. CHS is planning to teach another A.L.L. class in the Spring on "Researching Your Family History".



*Karen McGilvery and Donna McCarty present the History of the Cypress area to an eager A.L.L. crowd.*

## **Renew Your Membership for 2014**

It's time to renew your CHS Membership for 2014. Our annual dues remain the same as last year (Individual \$15/Year and Family \$25/Year.) Memberships are for the calendar year. New members who have joined since 10/1/2013 are automatically extended through the end of 2014, so you do not have to renew. Please make your renewal checks to "Cypress Historical Society", and mail them to The Cypress Historical Society, P.O. Box 2963, Cypress, Texas 77410. Your continued support of CHS is greatly appreciated!

## **Mark Your Calendars!**

### **No CHS Board Mtg in December**

*Library will be Closed 12/24 through 1/1*

### **Jan 18 – CHS Board Mtg**

*(All Members welcome)*

Saturday, 9:00am at the Darline Roth Research Library, Cypress Top Historic Park

### **Feb 15 – CHS Board Mtg**

*(All Members welcome)*

Saturday, 9:00am at the Darline Roth Research Library, Cypress Top Historic Park

### **July 12 – 6<sup>th</sup> Annual CHS Picnic**

Saturday, 10:00am Cypress Top Historic Park



*The CHS "History of Cypress, Texas" class at the Lone Star College The Academy of Lifetime Learning program played to a packed crowd!*

**Cypress Historical Society**

**P.O. Box 2963**

**Cypress, Texas 77410**

**E-Mail: [cypresshistsociety@att.net](mailto:cypresshistsociety@att.net)**

**Darline Roth Research Library: 281-758-0083**

**Hours: Tue, Wed, Thur 9-4, & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sat 11-2**

## **EDUCATION . . .**

### **Another First for CHS**

*by Jay Gavitt*

The Texas Environmental Education Advisory Council (TEEAC) has approved our initial proposal for becoming a provider of teacher training. This will allow us to offer teacher workshops at the Cypress Historical Society building or at individual schools. Each workshop offered must include a detailed program description including competencies, workshop activities, and evaluation. The workshops will be designed around the Texas Essential Knowledge Skills (TEKS). This is a big step in providing professional development for area teachers. Jay Gavitt will be attending the annual TEEAC workshop in Austin. A special thanks to the staff at Kleb Woods for getting us started on this process.

We have also started distributing a CHS produced "Educational Resources for Teachers and Youth Leaders". This CD includes materials and activities designed to help young people explore local history and geography. Teachers are able to individualize these materials for use with their students. The disk contains Powerpoint files on "Examining artifacts" and "Clothing"; teacher readings on local history, along with copies of photographs that can be used with students. These have been distributed to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers at Fiest Elementary School and 7<sup>th</sup> grade teachers at Salyards Middle School. These have also been distributed to a couple of local scouting groups.



## **Fiest 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders Learn about Life in Early Cypress**

*by Jay Gavitt*

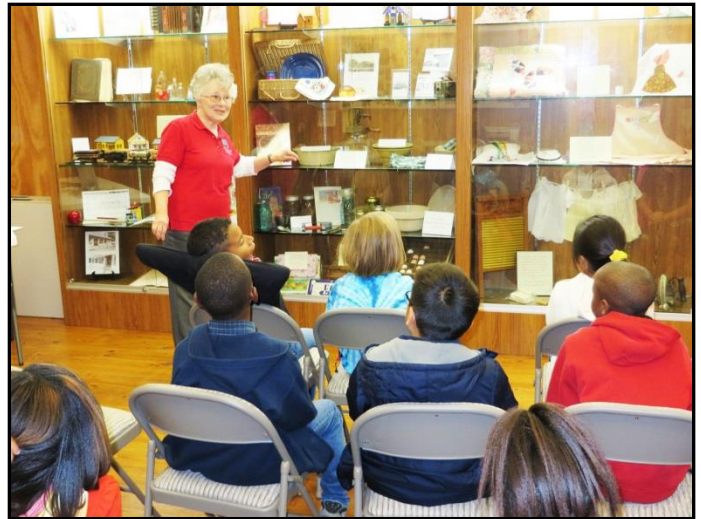
Third grade Fiest Elementary School students were hosted by CHS at the Cypress Top Historic Park on November 13th and 14th. The tour included over 130 students and staff over the two days. Students visited Juergen Hall, the Juergen House, the Store/Saloon, and the CHS Building. The teachers remarked that this was a wonderful hands-on experience for their students. The students were well prepared for the visit and had many questions about Cypress. The teachers were provided with activities and resources that they could use with their students after returning to the school. The students were treated to some new exhibits that were prepared by members in the CHS building. Due to the cold weather, the students were able to complete their visit by having their lunches in Juergen Hall. Many thanks to the CHS members who provided this unique learning experience for the Fiest students and staff.



***Gene Zaboroski and daughter, Becky Martin, answer questions about growing up in the Juergen house.***



***Always looking for a younger dance partner, Joyce Kleb shows the children what the Juergen Hall was used for.***



***Jane Ledbetter shows that many of the items we buy in the store today were made by the early Cypress families.***



***Jay Gavitt challenges the children to tell him why the ceiling of the Store on the bar side is a dark brown.***



***Erline Schoenfeldt demonstrates how to make a phone call . . . before there were cell phones!***



## Growing Up in Fairbanks

*By Beverly Sommermeyer Richardson*

My father's family came to America in 1851 from Germany and settled in Industry, Austin County, Texas. My grandfather, William August Sommermeyer was the first Texas-born in the family. My father Willard Alvin Sommermeyer, born 1912, was the second generation born in Texas.

His parents, Lydia and William Sommermeyer moved to Fairbanks, Texas in 1920. They bought a dairy farm, about 100 acres, just south of Hwy 290. They had 7 children, my father being the oldest. He went to work on a neighboring dairy farm owned by the Fischer Family. He was only 12 years of age. He worked for the Fischers until he was 18 years old when he lost his right leg in a farming accident. He recovered and went on to work at his father's shop: Fairbanks Mop and Broom.

Willard married my mother, Robbie Palmore in 1937 in Houston. With a young family he knew they would need a home of their own. He heard that Warren Petroleum Fields was clearing land for their camp just off Wirt Road (now Windfern Road).

So my father went to talk to the camp foreman. He asked what they were going to do with the trees that had been cut down. The camp foreman said that they were going to burn them. He asked if he could have the trees and the camp foreman said, "Take all you want."



***Willard's brother, Presley, stands by their father's Fairbanks Broom & Mop Co. truck (early 1930's).***



***The little house on Sommermeyer St.***



***The Sommermeyer Family in 1953 : (Back) Emma, Alvina, Willard Sr. & Robbie (Front) Beverly, Willard Jr.***

So my father went to a friend and neighbor, Mr. B.F. Adams, who owned a saw mill in Fairbanks. He hoped to see if they could work out a deal. Mr. Adams said he would cut one for one, (meaning one tree for you and one for me). My father called on family & friends to help to gather the logs and take them to the mill.

In 1940, he started to plan the house he was going to build. During this time, WWII started and many of the men went into the service. My dad was not able to serve, so he went to work at the ship yard to help the cause. Working all week, he didn't have much time to build on the house. It took longer than he planned, but by 1944 the family moved in.

The house was ultimately a little two story house. At first, there was only the bottom floor. There was a kitchen, dining room, living room, a bedroom for my parents, a limited bathroom, and a sunroom for all of the kids. We took our baths in a big washtub in the kitchen. Daddy built shelves all around the top of the kitchen for all the jars of canned goods from the garden. We had a wood stove for the first years in the house.

My mother had the most beautiful garden in the front yard. She started all of her flowers from seeds she ordered or seeds from friends' plants. In her garden, she would have snap dragons, zinnia, daisies, bachelor buttons, and more.

In 1946, the youngest of 4 children was born. We lived across the pecan orchard from my grandparents. The pecan orchard was planted in 1920. It was a great place to play as a child. My mother could see us from one side of the orchard, and our grandmother could see us from the other side. We spent time playing games like red rover, tag & baseball. In the evening, after supper, we would go outside.

*(Continued on next page)*



**The Sommermeyer family in 1973: (Back) Robbie, Emma, & Willard Jr. (Middle) Willard Sr. & Alvina (Front) Beverly & Walter.**

*(Continued from previous page)*

Mother would bring a quilt for us to play on as she and Dad would talk about the day.

On Sunday morning, we would go to Fairbanks Methodist Church. It was about a half mile from our house. We could hear the church bell ringing at home for the call to worship. My sisters and brother were 9, 7 and 5 years older than I. Weather permitting, we would walk to church. If we heard the bell ringing on the way, we would run so we would not be late.

On Christmas Eve, we would all walk across the orchard to my grandparents' house. All the cousins would come. My grandmother would play Christmas carols on the piano and sing "O Tannenbaum" in German. Each of the children would receive a brown bag with pecans, apples, oranges, and peppermint sticks.

## CHS Library News

*By Jim Sigmund*

The Darline Roth Research Library has been a busy place over the last couple months:

- Helen Callender and Darline Roth have found missing pages from our St John Church records, and are incorporating them into our genealogies.
- New member Lisa Watkins is researching her ancestor, Christian F. Duer, who was the owner of the original Rosehill Plantation on Spring Creek, and the namesake for the Rosehill Community.
- Celeste Haltom donated a copy of "The Groschke Family from Bear Creek", and more of her family records, written in German.
- Helen Callender donated a stack of the old Farmer's Almanacs, and obtained a copy of a title abstract over properties along Fenske Rd.
- Marvin Weiman always finds unique items for the museum, and has donated some old history books, and a butter mold for our display case.
- Jane Ledbetter, Beverly Richardson and JoAnn Hirsch continue to update our museum displays.
- Pictures of Cypress area Vets keep coming in!

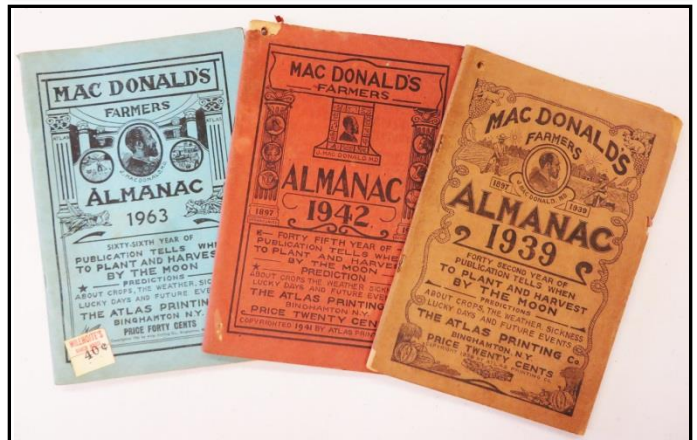
*Note: The Library will be Closed 12/24 through 1/1*

## 2014 Board of Directors Elections

Elections were held for the 2014 Board of Directors at the November meeting. Congratulations to Beverly Richardson, Becky Martin, Celeste Haltom and Terri Sigmund. They have been elected to serve a 2-year term. The remainder of the Board consists of Jane Ledbetter, Erline Schoenfeldt, Marsha Dugger, Joyce Kleb, and Rodney Sprenger. Thanks to Karen McGilvery and Donna McCarty for their past and continued service to CHS.

### **THANKS TO OUR OCT - DEC BENEFACTORS!**

Sandy McFadyen - In Memory of Sonny Schoenfeldt	
Annie Hagler	Marvin Weiman
Celeste Haltom	Helen Callender
Mark & Jean Froehlich	Brown & Gay Engineers, Inc
Raymond Walker	Cecilia Karngba



**The Farmer's Almanac is a unique blend of planting times and anecdotal wisdom. Check out these vintage issues!**

*by Terri Sigmund*

## 2014 CHS Board of Directors

<i>Jane Ledbetter</i>	<i>President</i>	<i>(281) 255-9297</i>	<i>janel_54@att.net</i>
<i>Beverly Richardson</i>	<i>Vice-President</i>	<i>(281) 246-4632</i>	<i>beverlyjsr@att.net</i>
<i>Terri Sigmund</i>	<i>Secretary</i>	<i>(281) 373-9052</i>	<i>jsigm@aol.com</i>
<i>Becky Martin</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>(281) 376-5054</i>	<i>bmartin115@gmail.com</i>
<i>Marsha Dugger</i>	<i>Director</i>	<i>(281) 213-4489</i>	<i>marsh4649@yahoo.com</i>
<i>Celeste Haltom</i>	<i>Director</i>	<i>(281) 373-0502</i>	<i>celestehaltom@gmail.com</i>
<i>Joyce Kleb</i>	<i>Director</i>	<i>(281) 894-1662</i>	<i>jtk1951@sbcglobal.net</i>
<i>Erline Schoenfeldt</i>	<i>Director</i>	<i>(281) 255-2769</i>	<i>(none)</i>
<i>Rodney Sprenger</i>	<i>Director</i>	<i>(281) 955-5208</i>	<i>rodneymttu@aol.com</i>

Cypress Historical Society  
P.O. Box 2963  
Cypress, Texas 77410

**CYPRESS HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2014 MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

**TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP**

Individual (\$15)	_____	Sustaining (\$50)	_____
Family (\$25)	_____	Sponsor (\$100)	_____
Business (\$30)	_____	Corporate Sponsor (\$250)	_____
		Donation	_____

\* CHS is a 501(c)3 Non-Profit Corp.

**Make check payable to:** Cypress Historical Society

**Mail check and membership form to:**

**CHS-Becky Martin, P.O. Box 2963, Cypress, Texas 77410**

**Questions? Please contact Jane Ledbetter at 281-758-0083**

*www.cypresshistoricalsociety.com*