



# CYPRESS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Established 2008

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## **The President's Corner** by Jane Ledbetter

During its lifetime, Old Juergen's Hall in Cypress Top Historic Park has served many purposes. Early on, it rang with music and laughter as Cypress area residents gathered there for dances and other social gatherings. It was a place of respite from the daily grind of sweat and hard work to keep body and soul together.

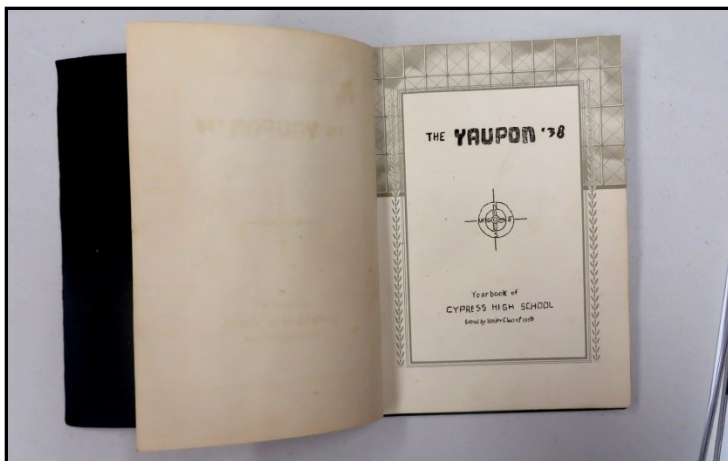
The Hall was built around 1900 but was severely damaged by the 1915 hurricane. It was rebuilt and enlarged, and again became a place of relaxation and fun for the local citizenry. The Hargrave's band played at Juergen's Hall in 1935: gents paid 40 cents admission, ladies were admitted free of charge.

Times do change, though, and the Hall changed as well: through the years it served as a hardware store, a feed store and a peanut storage site. Children learned to roller skate there as they maneuvered between the merchandise stored there. The Hall even served as a courtroom for Justice of the Peace Gene Zaboroski when he was elected to that office in 1967. Later, the Hall became the focal point of Cypress Top Historic Park, used for all kinds of gatherings such as reunions, birthday and anniversary celebrations, wedding receptions, etc.

If you have happened to pass by Cypress Top Park lately, you may have noticed a construction project going on east of Juergen's Hall. The Hall will soon be entering a new phase of its life: Harris County Precinct 3 is making modifications to the Hall so that it can be used as a County Community Center where more citizens can enjoy more and different activities more days of the week. Gatherings such as those mentioned above can still be held there and tours will also be conducted on Tuesdays. Also, the Cypress Historical Society Depot Building will still be open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. And, last but not least, the CHS Annual Picnic will still be held at Cypress Top. This year the date is Saturday, July 11th from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. - See you there!



**The new addition to Juergen Hall will have a small kitchen and indoor rest rooms!**



**An original copy of the 1938 Cypress High School Yearbook, donated to CHS by Kay Weiman.**

## **Have Yearbooks to Donate?**

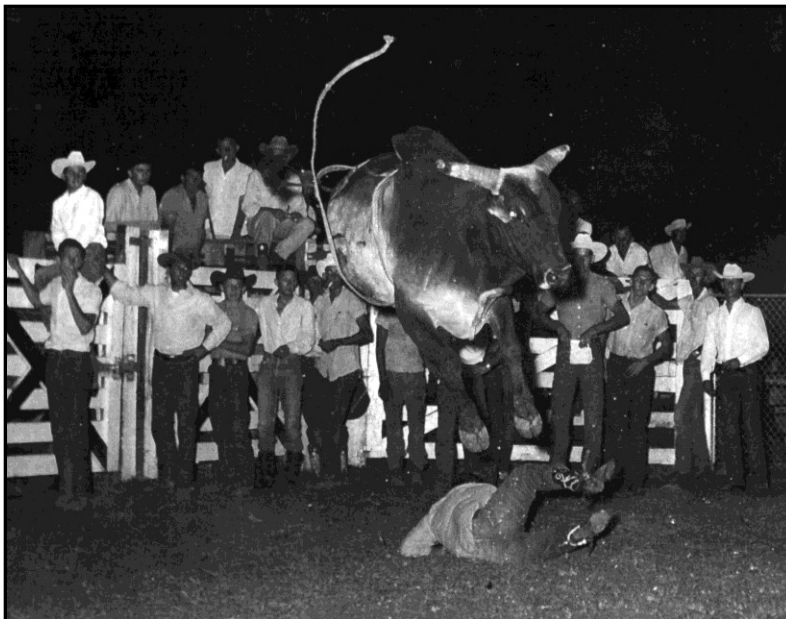
High school yearbooks have a tremendous amount of historical information, and are full of memories for those who attended the school. They further provide pictures of people at various ages, that can be used to help identify those same people in other photos. The Cypress Historical Society is building a collection of yearbooks in our Library, but we still need many more, especially the older ones. Currently we have Cy-Fair H.S. yearbooks for 1938, 1940, 1945, 1946, 1949 through 1954, 1956, 1958, 1959, and 1968. If you have any of the missing years that you would like to donate, please let us know. If you would like to keep the original, we can scan it, and return it to you.

## It's Rodeo Time!

by Jane Ledbetter

Spurs jingle-jangling, horses whinnying, bulls bellowing, calves bawling, people calling out greetings to one another - those are sounds I remember as I think of the old Cy-Fair Rodeos. The Ag boys, under Mr. Arnold's watchful eyes, put the rodeos on every Friday night during the summers of the 1950's, '60's, '70's and later. People from miles and miles around would attend the rodeos, some as contestants, others as spectators.

The rodeo arena was originally located on the north side of the Cy-Fair High School-Cypress Elementary School complex. High school Ag teacher Forrest Arnold began the rodeo back in 1944 to provide entertainment for area families on Friday nights. He started out with a few goats for roping, and then gradually added calves for roping, barrel racing for



**Cy-Fair Rodeo: "The thrill of victory, and the agony of the feet!"**

women and girls, and other rodeo events such as bronc and bull riding. Eventually the rodeo arena, bleachers, concession stands, etc. had to be moved from the original site to a site on the east side of Telge Road where there was more room. (Some people said the school needed the original rodeo site for more school facilities; others would tell you there was not enough room at the original site for all the pick-up/horse trailer rigs, plus spectators, to park.)

One of the teachers at Cy-Fair remarked that he believed the summer rodeos was one of the reasons that there are no juvenile delinquents at Cy-Fair.

*Cy-Fair Reporter - September 12, 1958*

The rodeos were the chief source of income for the FFA chapter as well as being good entertainment for area families. In fact, it has been said that the rodeos were so popular that churches planning to have Vacation Bible School closing programs on Friday nights might very well have to schedule their programs differently because no one would come; everybody would be going to the Cypress Rodeo!

## CHS attends TEEAC Conference in Austin

by Jay and Diane Gavitt

The Cypress Historical Society will continue to offer workshops for teachers in cooperation with the Texas Education Agency for 2015. Members attended the annual Texas Environmental Advisory Committee in Austin. This year's focus was on student writing skills. These writing skills are an important component of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) in all subject areas. Presentations were made by Victoria Young, Director of STAAR and TEKS Assessments Reading, Writing, and Social Studies; Chris Delejs, Manager of Social Studies and Reading as well as statewide coordinators in science, mathematics, and teacher certification. In reviewing programs offered by museums, historical parks, nature preserves and other parks, the state has highlighted programs such as ours for providing teachers and students with experiences that are unique, memorable, and TEKS driven. The CHS school tours of Cypress Top and our in-school student presentations have offered students these experiences. Our teacher workshops and resources allow teachers to provide both unique and memorable experiences while examining local history.

## Mark Your Calendars!

### Mar 21 – CHS Board Mtg (& Picnic Planning Mtg)

*(All Members welcome)* Saturday

- Board Meeting at 9:00am
- Picnic Planning Mtg at 10:30am

Darline Roth Research Library  
Cypress Top Historic Park

### Apr 18 – CHS Board Mtg

*(All Members welcome)* Saturday, 9:00am at the

Darline Roth Research Library  
Cypress Top Historic Park

### May 2 – CHS Booth at Bridgeland Nature Fest

Contact the Library if you would like to help in the CHS booth.

### May 16 – CHS Board Mtg

*(All Members welcome)* Saturday, 9:00am at the

Darline Roth Research Library  
Cypress Top Historic Park

### Save The Date!

### July 11 – 7<sup>th</sup> Annual "Old Fashioned" Picnic

*(All Members and Guests welcome)*

Saturday, at Cypress Top Historic Park

# “The Meridian Highway and The Old Hempstead Highway”

by Jay Gavitt

The Cypress Historical Society is taking part in the Texas Historical Commission’s Meridian Highway Project. You’re probably asking yourself “What has Cypress got to do with the Meridian Highway?” Part of the highway ran along our own Hempstead Highway past Cypress Top. The THC describes the Meridian Highway as the historic major, north-south highway in Texas since the early 1910s. It was originally conceived by the International Meridian Association in 1911 and stretched from Canada to Mexico. It extended through the nation’s mid-section and the expansive Great Plains region including approximately 800 miles passing through Texas. The Meridian Highway included a major lateral branch from Waco to Galveston following SH6/US 290 along the Hempstead Highway. Cypress Top Historic Park is located along this branch of the Meridian Highway and offers one of the best locations to see buildings spanning the entire time period of the Meridian Highway.

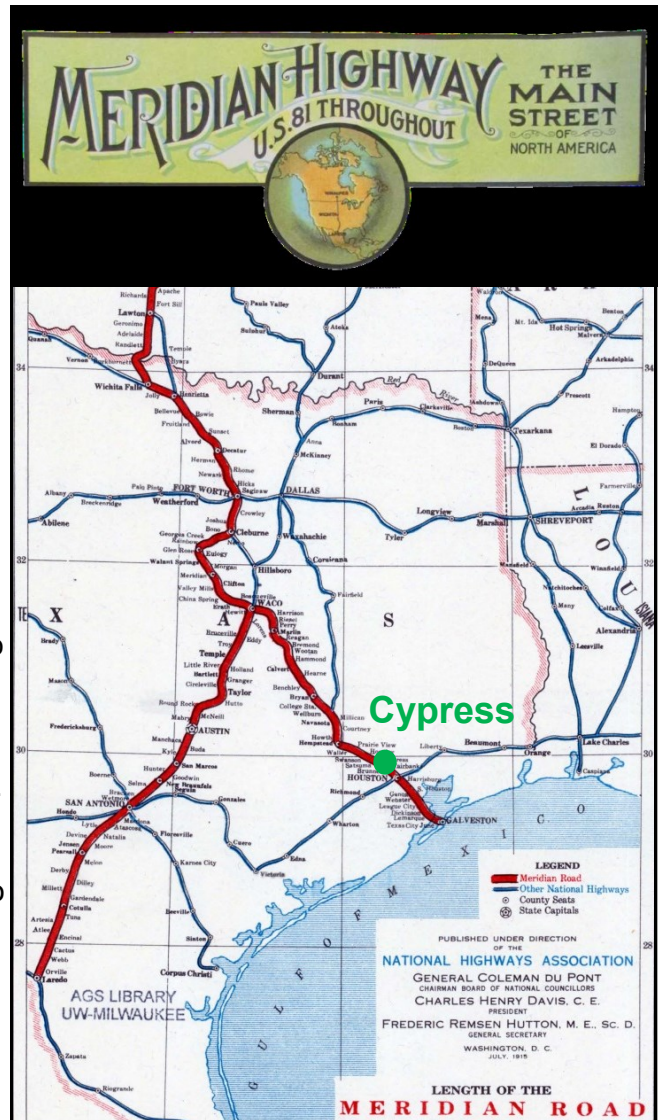
The Texas Historical Commission is undertaking a two-year study to document the history of the Meridian Highway. The project will result in a written history of the Texas section of the Meridian Highway and a survey of the Texas Meridian route, including associated historic resources: auto repair garages, gas stations, diners, tourist camps, auto courts, motels, road markers, paving, and traffic signs.

The Cypress Historical Society has worked on the project by providing THC with a file of old pictures taken from our annual calendars published each year. We have provided a map identifying the locations and dates of each

picture showing its location along the Hempstead Highway. In addition to the pictures, we included digital copies of the ENCO and Exxon maps along with the site plan for the expansion of the highway at Cypress in 1928. This expansion forced the moving of some of the buildings in order to widen the Hempstead Highway. Cypress Top Historic Park has a number of the original buildings that existed in the early 1900’s, and the “Cypress” historical marker tells the story of this important community along the Hempstead Highway portion of the Meridian Highway. For additional information on this project, see the Meridian Highway Project at The Texas Historical Commission’s website: <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/preserve/projects-and-programs/historic-texas-highways/meridian-highway>.



**State Highway 6 was one of the many routes that were connected to make up the Meridian Highway.**



**The map of the Meridian Highway in Texas shows the main route from Wichita Falls to Laredo, and the Waco to Galveston branch which follows the Hempstead Highway past Cypress. (Photos courtesy of the Texas Historical Commission.)**

## **2015 CHS Board of Directors**

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## **Second Group of Fiest Elementary 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders Visit**

*by Jim Sigmund*

Unseasonably cold and wet weather on this past November 5<sup>th</sup> cause the rescheduling of a Cypress Top Park tour for the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class from Fiest Elementary School in Copperfield. But, the enthusiastic group of students got their chance to visit the Park on December 17<sup>th</sup>. Close to 90 children got a chance to see the historic buildings, and learn about what life was like before i-phones and streaming movies to their high-definition televisions!



***The kids had so much fun they didn't know they were learning!***



***Linda Martin-Rust teaches a few dance steps to the hesitant 3<sup>rd</sup> grade boys.***



***Joyce Davis tells the children about the Humble Gas Station.***

## **CHS Presents Another Workshop for Seventh Grade Teachers**

*by Jay Gavitt*

The Cypress Historical Society continues to present workshops to history teachers. The Smith Middle School Texas History teachers were introduced to the resources available from the Cypress Historical Society and Cypress Top Historic Park. The Smith workshop included 7<sup>th</sup> grade teachers: Samantha Nuber and Cara Agundez along with social studies coordinator Holly Netterville and CHS' Jay Gavitt. The workshop focused on the use of our teacher's resource disk. The disk contains articles about local history, photographs from our collection, along with ways in which the students can examine these resources to explore early life in the Cypress area. The final segment of the workshop focused on the examination of artifacts from the collections of the historical society and Cypress Top Historical Park. At the conclusion of the workshop, teachers were asked how we might be able to help them in their classes. The teachers requested additional information on immigration, along with primary sources that students might examine. We were able to provide the school the articles on German, Polish, Czech and Irish immigration along with an early German immigrant's letter for students to examine. If any members would like us to present this workshop to schools in their area, please notify us at 281-758-0083 or [cypresshistsociety@att.net](mailto:cypresshistsociety@att.net).



***(l to r) CHS Education Co-ordinator Jay Gavitt, with Smith Elementary's Samantha Nuber, Holly Netterville, and Cara Agundez.***

**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**

## **CHS Library News**

*by Jim Sigmund*

We had a visit last month from Dennis Cranston who works with the Houston Area Live Steamers (HALS), a group of model train builders and enthusiasts that operate out of Zube Park in Hockley. They offer scale-model train rides to the public at their facility. He was excited to see our calendar cover of the Sunbeam train, and said their group was soon getting a model of the Sunbeam for Zube Park. We look forward to collaborating with HALS in future events. Check them out at: <http://www.hals.org/>.

Also meeting with us was Dennis Fox, a 29 year veteran with the Cy-Fair Volunteer Fire Department, and a historian for the CFVFD. He had many pictures that we did not have, as well as historic Run Sheets, including the Hot Wells Hotel fire in '59! We shared the pictures and newspaper articles that we had for the department's history. Annie Hagler served on the Women's Auxiliary in late 50s and had a few stories to tell!



*(l to r) Surprise visitors Kay Weiman and Beverly Kruse Smith, with CHS President Jane Ledbetter.*

## **Gifts To The CHS Library**

*by Jane Ledbetter*

Former Cy-Fair High School students Beverly Kruse Smith and Kay Weiman visited Cypress Top recently. Beverly brought us nine Kruse Family Scrapbooks to scan, and Kay donated a Yaupon Yearbook (1938), vintage books, and five old Autograph Books dated 1933 through 1940. These are precious treasures; we feel honored to receive them and want to take this opportunity to thank both Kay and Beverly.

Collecting autographs and small bits of verse, personal messages, and poems from one's friends and classmates was popular as far back as the early 15th century in the Dutch and Germanic cultures. The collection books, known as autograph books, were sometimes very ornate; others simply contained loose sheets of paper bound together in notebooks. Either way, they often became treasured keepsakes.

German immigrants brought the autograph book tradition to America in the late 19th century. Gradually autograph books were replaced by high school and college yearbooks in which classmates simply signed their names near their pictures or on a special autograph page and expressed wishes for a happy and prosperous life.

### **THANKS TO OUR DECEMBER – MARCH BENEFACTORS!**

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Silvia Woods



*The autograph books, donated by Kay Weiman, belonged to her mother, Inez Grisbee (Cy-Fair H.S. Class of 1940).*

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

CYPRESS HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2015 MEMBERSHIP FORM

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ADDITIONAL DONATION

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

General Fund \_\_\_\_\_

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Make check to: Cypress Historical Society

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