



CYPRESS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Established 2008

Issue 36

December, 2017

President's Column

by Jim Sigmund

On October 7th, 2017, the Cypress Historical Society held its 9th Annual Meeting in Juergen Hall. The Board of Directors presented a re-cap of the year and provided a summary of the programs and financials of the organization for the members. Our guest speakers were member Eric Briggs and his friend Rich Sandman, who are local relic hunters. Using metal detectors and a knowledge of local history, they unearth artifacts from the past. Their special interest in the Civil War period has helped to document Camp Cypress, a Confederate "Forge Depot" and the post-war march of Union General George Custer through the Cypress area. They have donated many of their finds to CHS, and the collection can be seen in the CHS Library.

At the November 18th meeting, the board members whose terms had expired all agreed to stay on for another 2-year term! The 2017 officers also agreed to serve in their roles, so we will have continuity to build on the success of this past year and make the Cypress Historical Society even better! Thanks to all of the board members for their commitment, and for the many other folks who dedicate their time to help keep CHS running.

I would like to wish a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of our members and friends, and look forward to a great year in 2018!



Relic hunters Rich Sandman and Eric Briggs displayed their amazing Civil War era artifacts from the Cypress area.



Jimmy Grimmatt and "Bugs" Threadgill do a little Christmas shopping by getting CHS Calendars and Cookbooks from Terri Sigmund and Levern Smith!

Christmas Shopping! by Levern Smith

The Cypress Historical Society has just the right gift for those "hard to shop for" on your list! We have memberships, 2018 calendars, caps, t-shirts and Cypress Cookin' Cookbooks. We will mail these items to wherever you choose with additional cost for shipping. Just place your order by December 17th, send a check to CHS and we will take care of the rest.

If you would like to send just a calendar the cost will be \$17.50 which includes shipping. Or just a membership for \$15.00 and we will send the recipient a card along with a note in it telling them who the gift is from. Or just a cookbook for \$20.50 which includes shipping. If you wish to pick up CHS items for Christmas gifts, the office will be open through December 21, 2017.

These are great ways to finish your shopping and help support the Cypress Historical Society!

Remembering Neal's Store

by Jim Sigmund (and Frank Litt)

It seems today that every Kroger supermarket has an HEB across the street. Multiple stores competing for business was true for "downtown" Cypress in the early 1900's also, as there were always two, sometimes three, stores in the short stretch along Hempstead Highway. Folks who grew up in Cypress remember the Neal's Store which sat on the southeast corner of Spring-Cypress and Hempstead Hwy. With the help of Frank Litt, whose family ran the Neal's store (and its predecessor, the Rumpel store), we have been able to piece together a pretty good time line for these businesses.

The story begins in October, 1906, where newspaper clippings show that Herman F. Rumpel (Frank's Great-Grandfather) resigned as the Section

Boss for the railroad. He applied for a liquor license in September 1907 and likely opened his General Store and Saloon at that time. Interestingly, Dr. Henry Noark closed his store (where the Humble Service Station is today) in October, 1907 and moved to Waller, no doubt avoiding the competition from both Juergen and Rumpel. With various partners (Sporn and Christen) Herman Rumpel operated the store and saloon until his death in 1914. When the Rumpel store closed in 1914, an enterprising J.A. Kitzmann decided to open a store just down the road! The Rumpel store building remained idle until 1929, until the death of E.F. Juergen left Cypress with only one general store again. This was an opportunity for Edgar M. Neal, the son-in-law of Herman Rumpel, to re-open the store as Neal's Store. Edgar became the Postmaster in 1937.

Edgar Neal (Frank's Grandfather) ran a General Store and Garage until 1943, when business was interrupted for a year or so, then it was taken over by his son, Roy E. (Sam) Neal (Frank's father). After WWII, Frank remembers:

"Dad quit working for the railroad and re-opened the General Store that had always been in the family . . . The day the store was ready to be stocked I remember Daddy drove up in Pa's pick-up with his two-horse trailer (red) in tow, loaded down with boxes and sacks of items to be marked and stocked. We all worked hard that week and the day he opened for business we had customers from all around the area. In those days all the people were farmers, dairymen, or railroad workers. There were only three businesses in Cypress: Neal's Store, Juergen's Store and Kitzmann's Café & Chevrolet dealership. Most everyone went to Tomball for haircuts, banking and the movies. Houston (town we called it) is where we went for serious shopping like clothes, furniture, and the like. If you needed a doctor we went to Waller and to Hempstead for the dentist and driver's license." -- Frank Litt



Photo courtesy of Frank Litt

Mary Alice Neal, in front of the "new" Neal's Store in 1950. The door on the left was the Cypress Post Office.



Photo courtesy of Margaret Kitzmann

The Rumpel Store and Saloon, sometime between 1908 and 1914.

Walter Fry 1913			
Jan 25 Beer		35	
Feb 29 Tobacco		30	
Mar 31 Cloth		45	
Apr 5 Tobacco 25 Beer 5		30	
May 16 Tobacco 25 Mds 15		40	
26 Beer		25	
27 Beer 10 Beer 15		35	
24 Beer 25 - 10 - 15		50	
Apr 13 Mds		20	
Apr 19 Beer		30	
May 1 Beer 15 Beer 10 Beer 15		40	
May 18 Paid Cash		370	35
224 Mds			
May 24 Mds		25	
June 1 Mds		50	
June 14 Beer & Tobacco		35	
July 4 Tobacco		35	
July 4 Beer 15 Tobacco 10		25	
Aug 15 Beer		20	
Aug 24 Tobacco		25	

You can see the 1913 ledger book of the Rumpel Store (donated by Marsha Carlevaro) at the CHS Library.

Neal's Store (Continued)

About 1948, Sam Neal opened a Liquor store in the corner of his Feed Store, because the law did not allow you to sell beer and liquor under the same roof. Then, around 1950, Frank recalls that his Dad built and moved into a new store:

"The old store was jacked up and a moving company moved it west, as close to Spring Cypress Road as the law would allow. Then the new store was built east of the old store and west of the feed house. The post office was in the old store and a new post office was built in the new store . . . Ralph Edworthy was the builder of the new store. It had gondolas (shelves) on the floor and attic fans for cooling. Shelves lined the walls, the meat market was larger with new extra coolers and a second meat block, and he also purchased an electric meat saw. It had four large 5'X10' plate glass windows in front, and a large checkout counter with a door access to the post office behind the counter. The porch was three steps high off the ground and a ramp was built so you could walk to the feed house on the same level. A ladies room was built in the back room behind the bar with access from the left side of the store. The men's room was on the left side of the feed store. Between the store and feed house on the inside of the ramp was a 25 gal bulk oil tank and a 50 gal bulk tank of kerosene. (Coal oil if you couldn't afford kerosene) The worst thing about the new store was it held twice as much stock! Now we not only sold groceries, meat, beer, feeds, fertilizer and gas & oils, but in the new store he added dry goods, bolts of cloth, shoes, rubber boots, gloves, straw hats, TVs and appliances. We were really a general store! . . . After the new store was built, the old store was torn down and all the lumber and materials were used to build Melvin & Hazel Free's home." -- Frank Litt

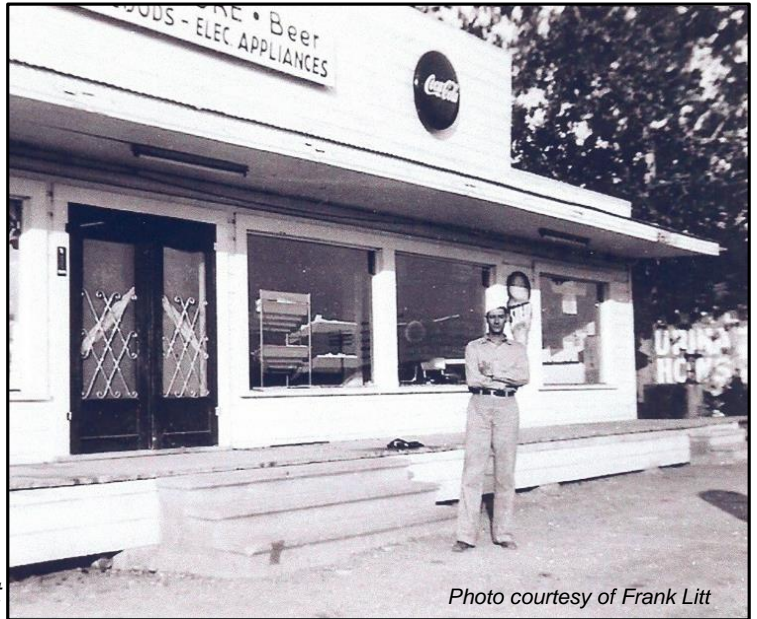


Photo courtesy of Frank Litt

Another view of Neal's Store. The man is Robert Higgins who was the brother-in-law of Sam Neal, and worked at the store.

Sam Neal closed his store in 1958, the same year Frank Litt joined the Air Force. Frank's mother had a beauty shop built in the south east corner of the store that she ran until she moved to Livingston, TX. The rest of the store was leased to an antique dealer.

If you have memories or photos of Neal's Store, please send them to us at the CHS Library.



Jay Gavitt and members of the Houston Archeological Society sift for artifacts at the Kleb Woods dig.

Education Program Updates by Jay Gavitt

The Cy-Fair Council for the Social Studies and students helped CHS members clean the Zahn Cemetery. Boy Scout Nate Jeffcoat will be continuing the work at the Zahn Cemetery at the beginning of next year as his Eagle Scout project.

CHS presented two programs for the Hockley Community center in Oct. and Nov. These included "Between two Creeks" and "Building with Cardboard". Future programs will be set up for early 2018. CHS members also participated in Kleb Woods' Digging Old Stuff program. They provided tours of the Kleb farmhouse and CHS member Chris Fonte provided activities for children visiting the house.

CHS members also took part with the Houston Archeological Society in the first public dig at Kleb Woods.

This is an ongoing project to uncover outer buildings on the site. If you know of any young people who would like to be involved in future digs, have them contact Jay at CHS. Girl Scouts from Black Elementary School have started working on their "My History is Texas History" badge. This program continues to be a highlight of the CHS Educational Programs. They visited the CHS and Cypress Top on December 2nd.

The Teacher workshops are being scheduled for 2018. These include the new 2018 Teacher Resources. Contact Jay Gavitt at CHS if you know a school (public or private) that might want to book the workshop.

CFCSS Teachers and CHS Help To Clean Up the Zahn Cemetery

by Jay Gavitt

A group of teachers, students, community members and CHS members spent a Saturday morning at the Zahn Cemetery on K-Z Road along Little Cypress Creek. They were engaged in a cleanup project to clear the overgrowth and restore tombstones damaged by the recent flooding. The project was suggested by William Bozic, President of the Cy-Fair Council for the Social Studies (CFCSS) as a community service project. They asked the CHS to set them up a cemetery that they could work at. Jim Sigmund, Jay Gavitt, and Jimmy Grimmert organized the project with the Zahns. CHS provided an earlier workshop at the Darline Roth Library for a CFCSS meeting. This included a discussion of the project along with presentations on "Photos to take when visiting a cemetery" and a history of the Zahn Cemetery. The teachers were joined later in the month at the Zahn Cemetery by CHS members Jimmy Grimmert, Jay Gavitt, and Chris Fonte. CFISD member Lana Burns was joined by some of her Cy-Ranch students, Zakariah Qureshi and Samantha Weekes. A good portion was cleared and some of the older stones were up righted and cleaned. The program was digitally recorded by Austin Smith, a former CHS Scholarship recipient. A second phase of the cleanup and repair will be coordinated as an Eagle Scout project with Nate Jeffcoat.



Hurricane Harvey left the Zahn Cemetery with toppled stones and overgrown vegetation.



The crew fixes the large, double head stone of Heinrich Meyer and Emilie Zahn Meyer



The Clean-Up Crew: (Back) Drew Dean, William Bozic, Jay Gavitt, (Front) Lana Burns, Zakariah Qureshi, Chris Fonte, Jimmy Grimmert, Samantha Weeks and her Mother.

Mark Your Calendars!

Jan 20 – CHS Board Mtg

(All Members welcome)

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

Feb 17 – CHS Board Mtg

(All Members welcome)

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

SAVE THE DATE!

Apr 21 – CHS Annual Event

(Members & their Families welcome)

Juergen Hall, Cypress Top Historic Park

Cypress Historical Society

P.O. Box 2963

Cypress, Texas 77410

E-Mail: cypresshistsociety@att.net

Darline Roth Research Library: 281-758-0083

Hours: Tue, Wed, Thur 9 - 4, & 3rd Sat 11 – 2

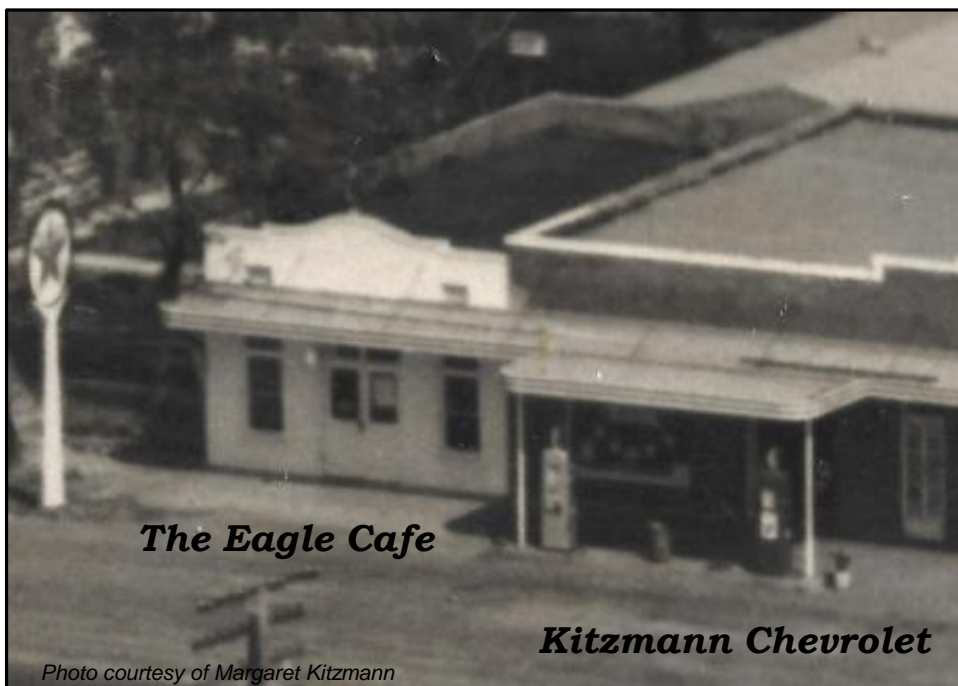
The Darline Roth Research Library will be closed Dec 22nd through January 1st. We will reopen on Tuesday, January 2nd

The Eagle Café . . . “The Rest of the Story”!

by Jim Sigmund

Thanks to all who responded to my questions about the Eagle Café in the last newsletter. The Dun & Bradstreet directories first show J.A Kitzmann running a restaurant in March of 1935, so that may be the year it was built. Here are a few things we learned:

- Margaret Kobs Kitzmann told us, “*The Eagle Café was attached to the Chevrolet place, and had a metal eagle on top of the building . . . It had a horseshoe shaped bar with stools for seating . . . I do not know when it was first built, but the door from the Chevrolet building was there in 1944 . . . The blue building was added to accommodate those who could not find a counter or table seat . . . Queenie was one of the leasees of the Café in 50s or 60s . . . Queenie was a dear, and we all loved her when she was running the café. When there was a space in time between leasees, Mrs. (Della) Kitzmann cooked, and if rushed at lunch time, I waitressed.*”
- Beverly Smith Roulston Schawe (Class of '54) wrote: “*The café connected to the Kitzmann's Garage provided an after school job for me to earn money for our senior trip to Bandera. It contained a long, horseshoe counter with stools for seating. There were family tables (2) in the front corners by the windows on each side. If memory serves, Mrs. John A. Kitzmann ran the café until retiring. It was leased out to various people after that. I worked for Cherry family there. The blue building shown in same picture is a later addition.*”
- As a hungry teenager, Frank Litt (Class of '56) remembers going down the street to the Café for lunch. They featured a 35-cent “All You Can Eat” lunch, with a piece of pie for another nickel!



The Eagle Cafe

Kitzmann Chevrolet

Photo courtesy of Margaret Kitzmann

The Eagle café was on the west end of the Kitzmann Chevrolet building. These buildings sat where Driver's Auto Repair is today, at Fry Rd. and Hempstead Hwy.

THANKS TO OUR OCT-DEC BENEFACTORS!

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The Kroger Company
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Mary Bianche
Hobert & Levern Smith

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