



# CYPRESS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Established 2008

Issue 38

June, 2018

## **CHS Celebrates 10 Years!**

*by Mary Bianche*

Saturday, April 21, 2018, in Juergen's Hall, we had a grand ten years celebration for CHS as a historical and genealogy society. We want to extend our thanks to all who participated in making this event so successful. We have great members and they have worked diligently to make our society what it is today.

The attendance was great and the food outstanding. This area has to have the best cooks of any place in the U.S. and many of their recipes are in the cookbook we have published. If you haven't purchased one of these cookbooks, now is the time before we sell out. We were also presented a special award by Fred Collins, on behalf of Harris County Precinct 3 Commissioner Steve Radack, for service to the community.

Special appreciation is given to Elysce Garrison's group, the "Hey Lollies Square Dance Club". The Club's motto is "Friendship Set to Music", and has been in existence for 53 years. The dancing was entertaining and the group is a wonderful bunch of people. It is rumored, but I'm not sure, Jim Sigmund has signed on as a new dancer with the group. You may want to drop by to interview him. Special thanks is given to James and Dorothy Triechel for making sure all who entered were welcomed.

Contributions to the event were made by HEB, Tuckerton at Fry Road, Raising Cane, and Food Town. We were given many door prizes and want to thank everyone who contributed.

We are looking forward to seeing all of you at our annual meeting in October. However, you know you are welcome to any of the board meetings we have monthly. Stop in, and help us improve our programs.



**The "Hey Lollies" entertained with their square dancing routines.**

## **"Hands-on History" Camp**

*For CHS members Grades 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup>*

**When: Mon 6/25 thru Fri 6/29**

**Time: 9:00am - 2:30pm**

**Where: Cypress Top/Kleb Woods**

## **CHS and Precinct 3 to Host 2nd Annual "Hands-on History" Camp**

The Cypress Historical Society will once again be offering their "Hands-on History" Camp hosted by Cypress Top Historic Park and Kleb Woods Nature Center/Heritage Farm. The program will be offered the week of June 25th-29th from 9:00 am- 2:30 pm. Youngsters going into grades 4-6 are eligible for this unique experience. Campers will be exploring early crafts, blacksmithing, digging and exploring artifacts, interviewing seniors, creating family trees, interpreting photos, creating museum models and exhibits, viewing maps, discovering early schools, giving tours and preparing museum exhibits. They will be spending their time at Cypress Top Historic Park and at Kleb Woods Nature Center & Heritage Farm working with the Houston Archeological Society and local blacksmiths. The cost is free to CHS family members, or others may join CHS (\$25-Fam) to attend. If you have a child or grandchild who is interested, contact us immediately, as there are only a few spots left.



**Archeology dig at last year's History Camp!**



# THE HOUSTON CHRONICLE

SECTION C

HOUSTON, TEXAS, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1953

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## Cypress Gets New Phones

Except for fewer than half a dozen old-fashioned phones which hooked in to the long distance lines of the telephone company, Cypress residents have never had telephone service.

Wednesday, that era will be a thing of the past, when about 130 families will receive service from the new Twilight 3 exchange of the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company.

The homes will have local service among each other on the Twilight 3 exchange. For Houston calls, or calls to other exchanges, they must dial the operator.

Approximately 130 homes in the Barker and Addicks areas will switch over to dial service Tuesday morning. Two operators have manned a switchboard which services the old-type phones there.

The new dial system will be President and, like the Twilight exchange for Cypress, will be what the phone company calls a "seven-pull" type of service—dialing a number that includes two letters and five numbers.

The President exchange patrons will also have to dial the operator on Houston calls, and Houston patrons will have to dial the long distance operator for calls to either of the new exchanges.

**LAST CRANK**—Out in the Cypress area it will be "off with the old"—old-type magneto operated hand-cranked telephone—on Wednesday, and "on with the new" dial phones. J. A. Kitzman has had this old-type phone since March 13, 1929; he cranks the crank and the long-distance operator at Houston answers and places his call. After the changeover to dial operation Wednesday, Mr. Kitzman will have local service to about 130 other Cypress area phones, though Houston will still be a long-distance call. A similar change-over will take place Tuesday in the Barker-Addicks area, where there has been a local exchange serving about 130 families with old-type phones.

## Rotary Dial Telephones! The Next Big Thing?

by Jim Sigmund

It's getting hard to remember what life was like when we didn't have cell phones. But, can you remember when rotary dial telephones were new technology? Celeste Haltom brought us this article from 1953 that told about the upgrade of phone service in the area.

I guess "New Technology" is a relative thing. My kids cannot remember life without a computer or color television. The other day, I was telling my 6-year old granddaughter a story from my childhood. Her eyes got wide, and she innocently said, "Can I see the video?" It never dawned on her that everything isn't recorded on YouTube!

### THANKS TO OUR APR-JUN BENEFACTORS!

#### Donations:

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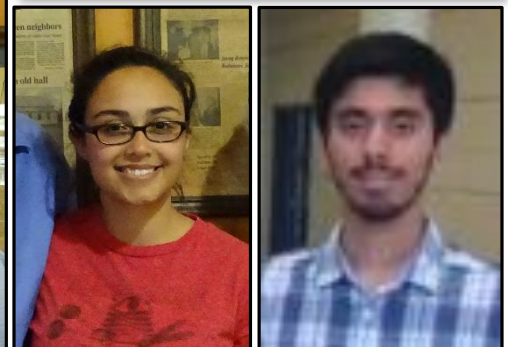
Rick & Donna Lemons

#### Lifetime Membership:

Chris Fonte



**Nate Jeffcoat, recipient of the 'Gene and Delphine Zaboroski Annual Scholarship' meets the Zaboroskis at the CHS 10-Year Celebration.**



**Other 2018 CHS Scholarship recipients: Erika Calles and Zakariah Qureshi**

## CHS Scholarships Awarded

by Jim Sigmund

CHS was proud to award the "Gene and Delphine Zaboroski Scholarship" to three local students who have demonstrated an interest in history, and service to their community. Nathan Jeffcoat, from Cypress Creek HS, did his Eagle Scout project and led the team on the Zahn Cemetery restoration project. Erika Calles, a Cy-Ranch alum and Prairie View A&M accounting major with a love of history, has volunteered in the CHS Library since 2014. Zakariah Qureshi from Cy-Ranch HS worked with the Cy-Fair Council for the Social Studies in the initial clean-up of the Zahn Cemetery. Congratulations to all three!



# CHS Genealogists Crack the Case of the Lost Purple Heart

by a grateful Jay Gavitt

The following is a recent story about the work that our genealogists do here at the Darlene Roth Library. About two months ago, CHS received a call from a Veterans group in Salem, MA. The gentleman said he was a volunteer and asked if I was related to an Olive Gavitt, who had passed away recently. I mentioned that I was, and he proceeded to tell me that they have a box containing a Purple Heart that had been issued to an Arnold Gavitt. I mentioned that I was a nephew of his, but his wife and children had all passed away. He said that they would send the box to me. I made a call to a cousin and brother, but was unable to get any information on any of Uncle Arnold's grandchildren. Everything was complicated by remarriages, additional children and the fact that everyone was deceased. After about three weeks, I had not received the package and decided that this must be a scam. I followed up that Monday by freezing my accounts at all the credit reporting agencies. The very day that I did this, that evening the package arrived. Fortunately, I volunteer at CHS. I described my dilemma to Beverly Richardson and she said that she would help. She introduced me to Ancestry.com and additional resources. She walked me through the various data bases and searched the more difficult ones for me. We were able to track the remarriage of my aunt and her children. The next day, Leticia Moran picked up where we had left off. We had come across a statement



**Arnold and Dot Gavitt with their children David and Barbara. (All are deceased)**



**The "Lost" Purple Heart**

that one of the great-grandchildren had played basketball at Stanford in the 1990s and had an Italian last name. Leticia started from where we had left off and with some information that my cousin had given me. Before long, Leticia had found the names of all three of Uncle Arnold's grandchildren. She found two on Facebook and the address of the third through a business. I was able to contact one through Facebook. The next week, Beverly created a number of charts that showed how Uncle Arnold and we were all related. We scanned additional family photos of their grandfather and grandmother, along with their mother as a little girl. We placed all these on disks for the sisters. I sent all the materials along with the Purple Heart to Uncle Arnold's great-grand daughter. I found out later that the Purple Heart had made its way from my Aunt Dot (Arnold's widow) through her second marriage to those children. Handed down again and not knowing what to do with it ...they turned it over to the local veterans in Salem, MA. The case of the lost Purple Heart was solved by great work of the CHS genealogists. If you need any cases solved just call on Beverly, Leticia, Helen, Mary and Jim...they get the job done.

## CYPRESS HISTORICAL SOCIETY - 2017-2018 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## Who were the Dowdells?

by Leticia Moran

As you drive around Cypress you may have seen a sign for Dowdell Cemetery, or Dowdell Woods or a William Dowdell Dr., west of Eldridge Road. You may have seen a Dowdell Road in Spring just north of HWY 99. There is even a mention of a Dowdell Settlement in Liberty County. Ever wonder who were the Dowdell's?

I have been researching the Dowdell family for many months and have determined that they were early settlers of this area. The Dowdell family, Edward and Elizabeth arrived in the area of Cypress around 1848 from Louisiana, along with their 9 children. Their first appearance in Texas historical records is in 1850 in the US Census and local property records. Only the youngest child was born in Texas in 1848.

Their descendants are from three of these 10 children, William W., Malcolm M. and Drucilla. Malcolm M. married Martha Simmons in 1851 and they too had 10 children. By middle 1870's they had relocated to Liberty County and most of their descendants lived, married, died and are buried in Liberty County. While there is no information to tie this large family to what is known as the Dowdell Settlement in Liberty County, it appears most likely that it was as a result of Malcolm and Martha relocating to that area.

Siblings, William and Drucilla, and their descendants are the ones that married into other early Cypress settlers and into families from the surrounding areas. William, who was the oldest child, married Nancy Ann Burns in 1852 in Cypress. Their second son, David Hamilton, married Emily Garrett and together they had 6 children. The oldest of which was William David Dowdell who married Mary Hirsch. William and Nancy's second child, Kelly Franklin Dowdell, married Azemie Boudreaux in 1914 and moved to Spring. Their fourth child married Arnold Valentine Kohrman in 1912. It is probable that Dowdell Woods and William Dowdell Dr. are named after either William W. or William David. Dowdell Road runs northwest, almost parallel to Boudreaux road in Spring. It is probable that this is where Kelly Franklin and Azemie settled.

Drucilla, born in 1833 in Louisiana married Thomas Perry in the mid 1860's. Thomas and Drucilla were early landowners of what is now known as the Perry Cemetery. When they sold their land in 1886 to Christian and Caroline Rumpel, they stipulated that the existing graveyard be preserved.

While several of the Dowdell family are buried in Dowdell Cemetery, located in the Ravensway Subdivision, many of their descendants are also buried in Perry Cemetery to include the Hargrave, Park, Perry, Prunier and West family members. If you want to know more about this family or have any information to add, please contact me at [leticia1moran@yahoo.com](mailto:leticia1moran@yahoo.com) or through the CHS Library.

	AGE	M/F	PLACE OF BIRTH
669 Edward R. Dowdell	55	m	La
Elizabeth	45	f	La
William W.	30	m	La
James Jeff Dowdell	22	m	La
Malcolm M.	20	m	"
Shuman M.	18	m	"
Drucilla	16	f	"
Drucilla	10	f	"
John P. D.	8	m	"
Walter R.	6	m	"
Thos. R.	4	m	"
Elizabeth	2	f	Texas

1850 U.S. Census in the Cypress area.



"Texas Our Texas" basket donated by CHS for the auction at the Rosehill Social BBQ.

## CHS Supports the Rosehill Social Club

The Cypress Historical Society has always been proud to support the Rosehill Social Club by donating an item to be included in their silent auction at their annual BBQ. All of the funds raised by the Club go to helping families in need from the local community. This year's event was held on May 20<sup>th</sup> at the VFW Hall in Tomball.

CHS members Levern Smith, Tammy Sherrill, and Beverly Richardson put together a beautiful "Texas Our Texas" basket to be auctioned. The basket included a host of CHS items including two CHS T-shirts, a Hat, a Cookbook, CHS Koozies, a 2018 Historical Calendar, and a Family Membership. Also added were Texas kitchen towels and hot pads, and a colorful quilted Texas blanket, hand-made and donated by Tammy Sherrill!

**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**



## Library News

by Jim Sigmund

The CHS Library continues to be a busy place and our collection of Cypress and Fairbanks history keeps growing:

- Susan (North) Lanier has recently retired, and is helping out CHS on Thursday mornings.
- In the last newsletter, I mistakenly reported that Ernest Matzke ('57) donated yearbooks, but it was his brother Edward Matzke ('60). Edward has forgiven the error, and has continued to bring more photos and memorabilia. He donated his Cy-Fair High School Band jacket and blanket, and photos of the band's trip to the Battle of Flowers Band Festival in San Antonio in 1957 (where they won!), and their 1958 trip to Mardi Gras, where Cy-Fair was the 1<sup>st</sup> Band in the 1<sup>st</sup> parade!
- We had a visit from Maxine Weiman Owens and her niece, Janell Weiman Blue. Janell is a professional genealogist and president of the Mount Vernon Historical Society in Virginia. Janell flew back a week later to attend our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and look at our records. She is working on the Borgstedt, Koepke, Weiman, Hillendahl, Sauer, and Prunier families.
- Celeste Haltom brought us two antique tools from her Hohmann family that we weren't sure of their use. After asking around and doing a Google search, we were able to identify them as a blacksmith drift punch for making holes, and a crimping iron for hair crimping and curling. After you know, they seem obvious!
- Terri and I were invited to talk about the Cypress Historical Society at the Groschke/Schultz Family Reunion which was held at New Kentucky Park on May 6th. We learned a lot about the history of the Bear Creek-Addicks area before the reservoir was built. Andi Stahman Burden showed work from her Master's Thesis in 2004 where she identified the location of early structures and family homes that were moved or abandoned in 1947. I was also surprised to hear that the Bear Creek Gun Club was first located off Patterson Road, before the more familiar spot on SH6 and South Mayde Creek.
- Speaking of Gun Clubs, Dan Worrall's book shows that the White Oak Gun Club was originally located just east of Antoine Rd and US 290. Most people remember a later location off West Little York and Vogel Creek. If you remember anything about the earlier location, let us know.



Susan Lanier (left) has joined the Thursday team in the Library, helping Annie Hagler identify folks in photographs.



Antique tools from the Hohmann family

### Mark Your Calendars!

#### **June 16th– Cy-Fair HS '38-'57 Reunion**

(Cy-Fair Classes of 1938 to 1957)

Saturday, 10:00am-3:00pm

Juergen Hall, Cypress Top Historic Park

RSVP to J.L. Sebek or Jim Sigmund

#### **June 23<sup>rd</sup> – CHS Board Mtg**

(All Members welcome)

Saturday, 9:00am at Darline Roth Library

Cypress Top Historic Park

#### **July 21<sup>st</sup> – CHS Board Mtg**

(All Members welcome)

Saturday, 9:00am at Darline Roth Library

Cypress Top Historic Park

#### **October 8<sup>th</sup> – CHS Annual Meeting**

(All Members & Guests welcome)

Juergen Hall, Cypress Top Historic Park



Edward Matzke's Cy-Fair High School band jacket and monogrammed Bobcat blanket. Edward played French horn.

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

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