



CYPRESS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Established 2008

Issue 39

September, 2018

President's Column

by Jim Sigmund

In choosing a theme for our 2018 Annual Meeting, it was fitting that "Memories of Your Military Service" was picked. From the days of the Texas Revolution and the Civil War, the men and women of the Cypress–Fairbanks area have proudly served their country, and helped to provide us the freedoms we have today. Our display board of area veterans continues to grow as we add more photos all the time. The newspaper scrapbooks document a community proud of those who left for service, and also mourned those who did not return.

The folks back home also served in their own way, whether through food rationing, providing industrial goods, or through their simple encouragement of those who joined up. I recently heard a story that illustrated this perfectly.

When Frank Litt was in town for the Reunion in June, he pulled out a shiny metal disk that was perfectly smooth, with no writing or other markings on it, and asked me if I could tell what it was. After admitting that I had no idea, he told me:

"I returned to Cypress, TX in October of 1958, after completing all of my military training at Lackland AFB, TX and Lowery AFB, CO. Sometime during my 30 day furlough, on the way to the 525th Fighter Interceptor Squadron in Bitburg AB, Germany, Lillian Juergen gave me a silver dollar. We were drinking beer in Juergen Store at the bar and she called me down to the end and placed the silver coin in my hand and said. "This is for Good luck as long as you are in the military." She told me, "I have given one of these to each boy from Cypress that went into the service and when they are discharged, they are to return the coin and I put their name and dates of service on the coin."

What Lillian did not know at the time was that Frank would be career Air Force, not retiring until 1983. Frank told me, "And I still have Lillian's dollar and carry it to this day." Such a simple gesture that Lillian made that day, which meant so much to young Frankie Litt, and still does 60 years later.



Frank Litt shows the well-worn silver dollar given to him by Lillian Juergen in 1958.

CHS ANNUAL MEETING

"Memories of Your Military Service"

When: Saturday, October 6th

Time: 10:00am – 1:00pm

**Where: Juergen Hall, Cypress
Top Historic Park**

CHS Annual Meeting—"Memories of Your Military Service"

by Mary Bianche

CHS Annual Meeting is to be held Saturday, October 6, 2018 from 10:00 to 1:00 pm, in Juergen Hall. Following a short business meeting, we are asking our members who were in the military to share their experiences, war-related or in peace time. We also encourage spouses and family members to give your viewpoints of what was going on at the home front. Please come and join us in enjoying these stories and honoring our local veterans.

A light lunch of sandwiches, etc., desserts, drinks, will be served. Nothing is required of you, except to come. The more members who come, the more fun!



Glenn Weiman

1944

**Fairbanks-Cypress Boys
In War Far From Home**

The Last of the Gandy Dancers

by Robert Rivera

(With their fathers working for the T&NO Railroad in the '50's, CHS members Robert Rivera and John Alamanza spent their teenage years living at the Cypress Section #4 Camp, on the south side of the Hempstead Hwy at Mueschke Rd. Both graduated from Cy-Fair HS, Robert in '53 and John in '54. But Robert's family wasn't always at a permanent location. Below is a article Robert wrote for Gulf Coast Railroading, about living in railroad cars as an "Extra Gang")

"Living on the railroad box cars," or "Extra Gang," they were called. The first car was the water tank car; water for drinking and washing. Trains passing through would bring a full tank and take the empty. Next was the kitchen car and dining car. Then the next two or three cars were where the workers lived. The last car was the foreman's car, for him and his family.

These freight cars were well-insulated with cork. Summers were hot (just like today) and all you could do was slide the big heavy doors open, leaving the screen doors on the outside closed. All the cars were made with two kinds of doors. They also had small windows with screens.

The cars had kerosene lamps for lighting at night. When a fast train whizzed by, all the lamps blew out! The cars might be parked at towns like Navasota, Hearne, Calvert, Groesbeck, or Mexia. But sometimes they were parked between towns, with nothing to do. After supper the men shaved, played cards and dominoes and talked about home. Everybody looked forward to Friday (payday) and going home.

Moving Day was a busy time. Someone would notify the foreman that the "Extra Gang will be moving" on a certain day, but the time was never right. The cook was also notified to be ready to secure things down so they wouldn't get broken. Most of the men went out to do their track work, but a couple of men would stay behind to help get ready for the move. Sometimes the "moving train" was early; there was no time to tie anything down. All you felt and heard was a jerk and a big BANG. If you were inside and not holding on

to something secure, you went sliding and falling down. If you were outside while they were hooking up on the mainline, you had to run and hop in any car, or stay behind as the train went rolling away. All the cars had steps on the ground to be able to walk up into them. On moving day, the steps and the outhouse were purposely left behind to be picked up later (maybe). Sometimes the men had washed their clothes and hung them on a fence; they stayed behind, too.

And that's the way it was in the Old Days!

Kroger Community Awards

by Becky Martin

This month is the time to let Kroger know that you would still like a percentage of your purchases returned to CHS in the form of a donation. Very few members participate yet we receive close to a \$100 a year with this program. We urge those that have yet to participate to sign up.

Kroger has recently upgraded their Community Rewards system, and as a result, our organization has a new account number. Therefore, when you renew online through your Kroger Rewards Card you will now need to enter the following account number: PM988. For those new to the program you can use either this new account number or by searching for Cypress Historical Society through the Community Rewards tab on the Kroger website.

(CHS Account Number : PM988)



Photo courtesy of Robert Rivera.

Cypress Section #4 track crew, about 1950. (looking west) (l to r): Orleans Ayers, Jose Alamanza, Sr., Melecio Rivera-Section Boss, James Banks, and Mr. Jefferson.



Robert Rivera in 1951, age 15, sitting on the back porch of the Cypress Section House #4.

2nd Annual Cypress Historical Society “Hands-On History” Camp

by Jay Gavitt

The Cypress Historical Society’s “Hands-On History” completed its second year. The Society offered the week-long summer camp for students in grades 4-6. The camp was hosted by Cypress Top Historic Park and Kleb Woods Nature Preserve and Heritage Farm. CHS members Jay Gavitt and Austin Smith along with CTHP Historian, Jim Wilson directed the program. The focus of the camp was to have students explore Cypress area’s past and create a museum exhibition and offer guided tours for their families and friends. This included exploring old photographs and maps to create models of Cypress Top in 1907 and the present. Campers visited Kleb Woods where they participated in an archeological dig with members of the Houston Archeological Society, worked with blacksmiths cold forging copper hooks and engaged in a nature walk with a naturalist. At CHS, the campers interviewed long-time residents and created their own family trees. They explored all the buildings at Cypress Top ca. 1907 and created models of the buildings. They were able to then compare their model with CTHP today. Campers identified “artifacts” and learned how each artifact tells a unique story. On the last day, campers acted as curators setting up exhibits and later interpreting them for family and friends. The guests were also treated to tour CTHP and its buildings guided by each camper.



Campers interview Helen Callender, who tells them that she began driving her Daddy’s tractor at age 5!



The 2018 Cypress Historical Society “Hands On” History campers, staff, and leaders.

CYPRESS HISTORICAL SOCIETY - 2017-2018 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

<i>Jim Sigmund</i>	<i>President</i>	<i>(281) 373-9052</i>	<i>jsigm@aol.com</i>
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“Hands-On History” Camp *(Continued)*



After finding a vintage Coke bottle, the class exercise becomes an official dig site for the Houston Archeological Society!



Blacksmith Dave Koenig teaches the campers to make a fish hook by an easy cold forging technique.

Special thanks to all those who made the second year a success for our young people. These included Jim Sigmund of CHS and Fred Collins of Precinct 3’s Cypress Top Historic Park and Kleb Woods. Thanks also to CHS members Joyce Kleb, Annie Hagler, Susan Lanier, Helen Callender; also Linda Rust-Martin of Kleb Woods, Jane Hippen of Juergen’s Hall Community Center, and Jackie Devine, who helped publicize the camp. Additional thanks go to the Kleb Woods naturalist Margot Herman, blacksmiths Dave Koenig, Jim Pulliam and members of the Houston Archeological Society: Sharon Menegas, Linda Gorski, Don Kekes, and Ashley Jones for their excellent programs at Kleb Woods. The campers were assisted during the week by Cypress Historical Society member and counselor Chris Fonte as well as junior docents Corinne Fonte and Maggie Nielsen.



The highlight of the “Hands On History” camp is the Friday visit by the families, where the campers become the docents, and present the area history and artifacts to the visitors.

Mark Your Calendars!

Sept 15th – CHS Board Mtg

(All Members welcome)

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

October 6th – CHS Annual Meeting

“Memories of Your Military Service”

(All Members, Families, & Guests welcome)

Juergen Hall, Cypress Top Historic Park
Lite Lunch Served

Nov 17th – CHS Board Mtg

(All Members welcome)

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

(No CHS Meeting in December)

CHS Scholarship Fund

by Terri Sigmund

In 2014, \$10,000 was donated to start the Gene and Delphine Zaboroski Scholarship. Since that time, CHS has awarded 10 scholarships totaling \$9,000. We have had financial support from the members over the past five years, but we have awarded more monies than we have taken in to replenish the fund.

We would like to remind you as the year-end approaches, CHS is a 501C3 organization and all donations are tax deductible. So if you find yourself looking for a worthy cause to donate to – look no further! You can send your donation in to CHS, or you can include it with your membership renewal (mark it “Scholarship Fund”).

Library News

by Jim Sigmund

Through the generosity of our members, our collection of Cypress-Fairbanks area history and artifacts keeps growing:

- Floyd Telschow brought us a “Ladies bowling ball” and bowling pin from the White Oak Gun Club. Both are heavy and well-worn!
- Frank Litt brought us branding irons from Edgar Neal and Melvin Free, a cattle de-horner, and ear tagger. These have been great additions to our Ranch-life display case. Frank also donated letters and photos from his grandmother, Hannah Rumpel Neal, and an incredible post card collection (over 100 cards!) of hers from the early 1900’s. Post cards were the Snapchat of the early 1900’s!
- Our Cy-Fair HS Yearbook collection is still missing ‘60, ‘63, ‘64, ‘66, and all of the ‘69-’81 books. We have scanned versions of ‘55-’59 and ‘68, but would like to have a hard copy of these years for the library also. If you have yearbooks you could donate, or let us scan, please contact us. We only have one Cougar Yearbook from Tomball HS (1943), so any others would be a great addition to the Library.



Most of Hannah Rumpel's post cards were sent around 1908 when she was just 16. Embossed images and custom glitter writing were popular.

THANKS TO OUR JUL-SEP BENEFACTORS!

Donations:

John & Virginia
Alamanza
The Kroger Company

Scholarship:

Marj Andreo

Lifetime Membership:

Tevan Kleb



From the White Oak Gun Club!

- Celeste Haltom recently brought us a couple of Cypress Creek Tribune newspapers from 1972 and 1973. If you have any pre-1980 local newspapers, we would love to add them to the Library.
- We are working on the 2019 “10th Anniversary” Cypress Historical Society Calendar, and hope to have it ready by the Annual Meeting on October 6th!
- The CHS Library recently had two computer monitors stop working on us. We replaced one, but still need another. If you have an old monitor to donate, let us know.

Cy-Fair H.S. Class of ‘38-’57 Holds Class Reunion

by Jim Sigmund

On June 16th, the alumni from Cy-Fair High School Classes of 1938 through 1957 gathered for their Annual Reunion at Juergen Hall. The festivities were coordinated by J.L. Sebek (‘53) and 93 people were in attendance. Carl’s Barbecue catered the event, and the Reunion Committee provided an assortment of homemade desserts. The Cypress Historical Society provided some entertainment by displaying scrapbooks and history binders, and presented a slideshow of photos of the students taken from old yearbooks and newspapers!



Class photo time! (l to r): Charles Phillips, Charles Stansell, W.C. Duncan, Bobby Macdonald, Mary Airola Smith, Ron Bloecher, Arlene Swonke Chapman, Frankie Litt, Joyce Crane Davis, Raylene Cherry McDonald, Marvin Osgood, Garnett Hegar Thomas, Beverly Jones Lively, and Bob Sampson.

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

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

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ADDITIONAL DONATION (CHS is a 501(c)3 Non-Profit Corp)

General Fund _____ Scholarship Fund _____

Make check to: Cypress Historical Society

Mail to: CHS Membership, P.O. Box 2963, Cypress, TX 77410

Questions? Please contact Jane Ledbetter at 281-758-0083
www.cypresshistoricalsociety.com

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