



# CYPRESS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Established 2008*

ISSUE 8

NOVEMBER, 2010

## President's Column

*by Terri Sigmund*

It is hard to believe this is the last "President's message" for me. I have enjoyed my time serving as President. The Board Members are a wonderful group of folks who are dedicated to the success of CHS and preserving history in Cypress. The membership comes out to celebrate Cypress and to support CHS as well. As I said at the annual meeting earlier this month, we have no shortage of great ideas and things we would like to do - what we need is more folks to help us to do it all. Please take a moment to consider helping us, even in what you might think is a small way.

This past year brought many new folks out to help us. To mention just a few, we got great pictures from Marvin, registration help from Dorothy and Laverne, Tammy helped with signing folks in at a Lone Star Library event, Tito and Ashley with food at the picnic. The list just goes on. So you see, there is a place for all of you. Just tell us what you like to do.

As for me, I may not be on the board this next year, but the calendar fundraiser is my baby, and a permanent home for CHS is the big project I am dedicating myself to. I don't have a lot of free time, as I am a full time student, but I can parcel out time here and there for CHS when it fits in my schedule - and I bet you can too. So take a moment and think about what you can do to preserve and present the history of Cypress to others. You will be amazed at the friends you will meet and the things we can do!



*Children can make beautiful ornaments to decorate the Cypress Top tree, donated by the Cypress Historical Society!*

## Christmas . . . That Magical Time of the Year!

*by Jane Ledbetter*

Perhaps one of the biggest thrills of the Christmas season is to take the time to watch the faces of children as they participate in such old-time activities as making red and green chains from construction paper, stringing popcorn garlands and making other simple decorations for hanging on the Christmas tree in Juergen's Hall at Cypress Top Historic Park. The look of awe and anticipation on each child's face as his/her own handmade ornament is hung on the tree is something to behold.

This year's tree decorating event at Cypress-Top will take place on December 9, 2010, from 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. The atmosphere of the evening will be enhanced by the sweet strains of seasonal music provided by the North Harris County Dulcimer Society. Do bring your favorite child-friendly holiday finger food (cookies, bar cookies, cupcakes, etc.)

This event is free to the public and you are welcome to bring a new, unwrapped toy for Toys for Tots.

## GET YOUR 2011 CHS CALENDAR!



**Only \$15.00**

**+\$3.00 (If Mailed)**

Contact Terri Sigmund  
(281) 373-9052 or JSigm@aol.com

## Looking To The Future

by Terri Sigmund

The CHS Board of Directors met to set out goals to guide us for the future. We assessed the needs of the membership, the community and our mission statement, and finally developed four main goals. You will see the goals on the opposite page. Once the goals were approved by the board, an Advisory Committee was put together to help give CHS ideas on how to achieve our goals. The Advisory Committee for this project were: Allan Davis, John Carlevaro, Gary Gray, Gene Zaboroski, and Trevia Wooster Beverly. They met with members of the CHS board to develop a plan. As you will see, all our goals end up at a similar place - we need a home. Several ideas of a home were discussed, but the perfect home, we decided, was at Cypress Top Park. We have decided to pursue that direction first. The advisory committee suggested we conduct a membership drive, and a petition signing effort, to show support from the community for CHS. Both are underway right now. Our hope is to meet with Commissioner Radack to discuss the building of a research library and program building at Cypress Top.

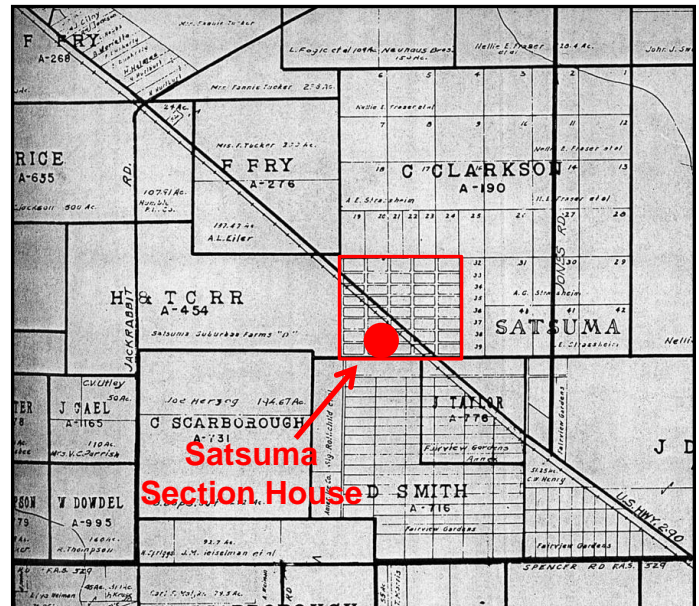
Our request from you is to take the time to read our goals. If you might know of a way we can achieve them, we would love your ideas and help. Help us to push membership, there is a form on this newsletter. Help us to keep the momentum going and growing. Talk about us to your friends everywhere. It is exciting to see how folks are happy to hear the history of Cypress is being preserved. Thanks for your support in the past and we appreciate and look forward to it in the future.

## Do You Remember . . . by Jane Ledbetter

I am thinking about a little area east of Cypress on Old Highway 290, south of the railroad tracks, known as Satsuma when I was growing up. I remember Humble Oil Company had a large number of storage tanks there and one could not help noticing a certain odor hanging in the air as they traveled past. Do you also remember this?

The Handbook Of Texas says that this area was once known as Ashford; it was also called Thompson Switch at one point. In 1910 J. T. Thompson, president of the Satsuma Land Company, platted a town site there and named it "Satsuma" for the satsuma orange groves that were planned. (He must not have known that the winter temperatures in this area can drop below freezing quite often, certainly not conducive to raising satsuma oranges.) A developer bought the site in 1913, re-platted the town, and sold tracts over the next several years. A post office was established there in 1909 but was discontinued in 1914. Stanolind Oil and Gas Company discovered oil in the area in 1936, and at some point in time, the storage tanks mentioned above were built.

Also, Satsuma was a shipping point on the railroad for a while, L.C. Sebek built a service station, there were some oil company camp houses and a few other houses scattered about, but Satsuma never did develop as a town. Finally, with the change of the Highway 290 configuration and the construction of modern shopping areas, all vestiges of Satsuma seem to have disappeared from sight. What do you remember about Satsuma? Please share your memories with me at email [janel\\_54@att.net](mailto:janel_54@att.net) or telephone 281-255-9297.



**Plat Map (circa 1940's) showing the location of planned community of Satsuma. Today, this area is near the West Road exit and the metro Park & Ride.**



**Still standing today, the Satsuma R.R. Section House, now used as a spooky attraction for the Phobia Haunted House.**

**Cypress Historical Society - Goals of the Organization**

- **To provide a local source of genealogy and area history information, for current and past residents to research their family histories.**
  - Ideally, this would be a research library when residents could come to use shared research materials, and be guided by CHS Members experienced in genealogy research.
  - The location should be central to Cypress, and easily accessible to elderly and handicapped individuals.
- **To provide a place where local artifacts and pictures can be donated by residents, and be displayed and accessible by others in the community to see, enjoy, and learn from.**
  - Ideally, this would be a museum housed at the same location as the research library.
  - To complement the existing collections at Cypress Park and Kleb Woods Nature Center
    - There is some concern that family items donated to the County Parks may someday become part of a larger Harris County collection, and not be available locally.
    - Families wishing to donate to CHS may take a tax deduction.
- **To support the continued operation of Harris County Precinct 3 Cypress Top Historic Park**
  - By providing docents for tours of the parks, members to help with continued restoration and maintenance.
  - To place, on loan, artifacts that have been donated to CHS at Cypress Top for the public to enjoy.
- **Increase our presence in the Cypress area community, to further our mission of educating and promoting the history of the area, and the family histories of the residents.**
  - To bring Cypress History to local organizations through presentations that can be presented where ever the need.
  - To work with other historical organizations to preserve the history of Harris County and Texas.
  - To provide a public meeting place for CHS Members to conduct business and have educational seminars for residents.
  - To conduct an annual picnic at Cypress Top Park for the members and invited guests.
  - To increase our membership by 15% each year.
  - To develop a Scholarship Fund to reach out to Cypress area youth.

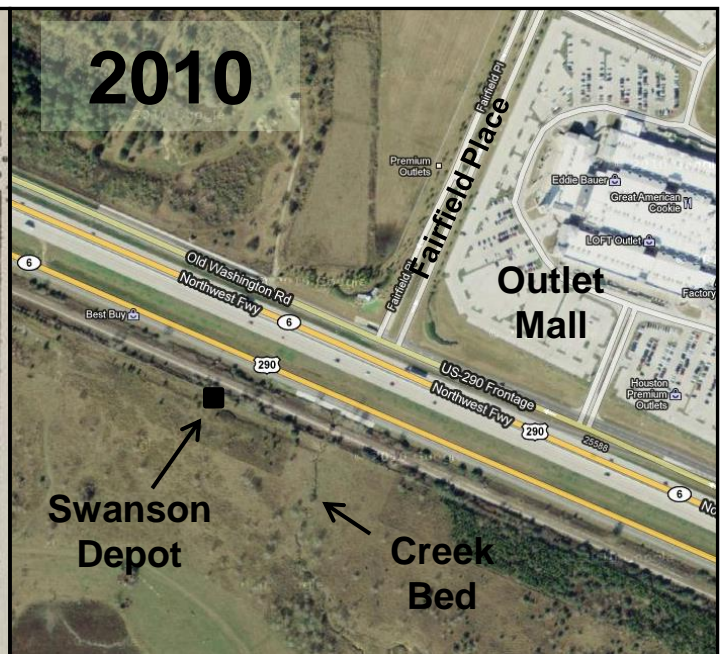
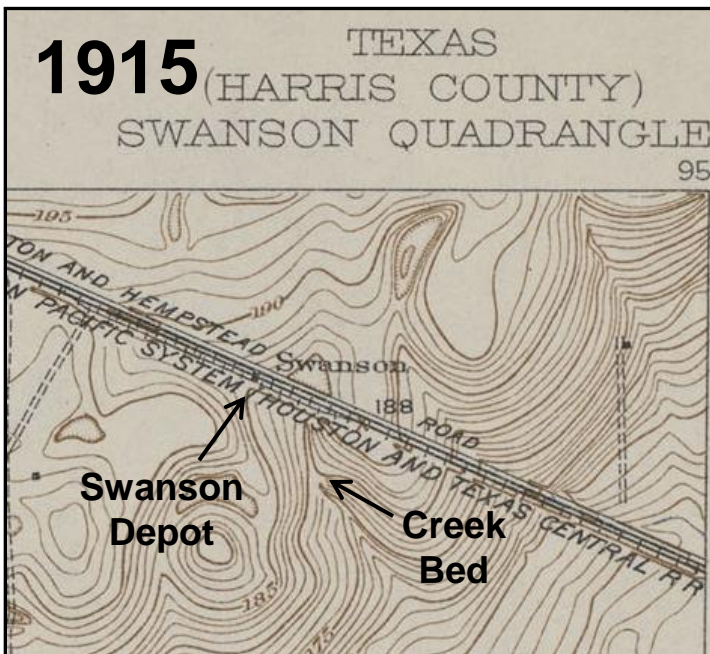
**Swanson Station?**

*by Jim Sigmund*

One of the things that makes History so interesting to me is that, no matter how much you think you know about an area, there are always new surprises. One of those surprises came as I was looking through 1912 City Directory, and found a list of train depots along the Houston and Texas Central Railroad . . . there was a Swanson depot between Cypress and Hockley! It was probably named after Robert E. L. Swanson, who shows up as a Clerk for the Railroad (in Houston) in the 1910 and 1920 Census. Does anyone know more about it?

Stations and Distances North of Houston on Main Line H. & T. C. R. R.			
	Miles		Miles
Houston	0	Bryan	100
Chaney Junction	3	Benchley	108
Eureka	6	Sutton	115
Fairbanks	13	Hearne	121
Satsuma	19	Calvert	129
Cypress	26	Hammond	137
→ Swanson	31	Wootan	140
Hockley	36	Bremond	143
Waller	41	Denny	148
Prairie View	46	Kosse	153
Hempstead	51	Thornton	161
Howth	56	Groesbeeck	170

1912 City Directory of Houston – Morrison & Fourmy



Comparison of the USGS Topographic Map from 1915, showing the location of Swanson Station, to a Google Maps view from today.



## **2011 CHS CALENDAR!**

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It's that time again! CHS is selling 11x17 wall calendars. Each month has a picture from the old days of the Cypress area. The photos are sure to bring back fond memories, as well as spawn new questions about just how Cypress grew. This is our only fundraiser, so we can really use your support. Last year we sold 350 calendars, we hope for 500 this year!

If you are interested in ordering calendars please call Terri Sigmund or go online and print out an order form. They make great gifts for friends, clients, kids at college, or family that has moved away. The list is endless. A special thanks to Jimmy Grimmett who has already sold 25 calendars! Don't waste a minute . . . get your Christmas shopping done early. If you missed out on last year's calendar, and would love to have that one for the pictures, you can order that one, too.

## **IN REMEMBRANCE**

*In the short time the Cypress Historic Society has been in existence, we have lost several of our members. At this time we are remembering three sisters from an old Cypress pioneer family who left us in a very short period of time this summer: Frances Berry passed away on June 12, Ramona Bang on August 1, and Ruby Kowis on August 9. These ladies were daughters of Joel and Martha Schmidt and were raised on Barker Cypress Road about 2-½ miles south of U.S. 290. They graduated from Cy-Fair High School and spent much of the remainder of their lives in the Cypress area. The three of them were always willing and ready to share pictures and memories of "the old days" with us. We appreciated them so much and truly miss them.*

## **IMPROVEMENTS AT CYPRESS TOP**

*by Jane Ledbetter*

It is a real treat these days to be driving on Old Highway 290 and suddenly see the glistening white metal roofs on several of the buildings in Cypress Top Park. Not only are there new roofs on some of the buildings, but many needed repairs have been made and some of the buildings are sporting new coats of paint.

Our thanks go to Commissioner Steve Radack and several crews of dedicated county workers for their efforts in maintaining and beautifying Cypress Top Historic Park!



## Continuing To Learn!

by Jane Ledbetter

Have you heard about the Academy for Lifelong Learning? This is a program offered through the Lone Star College System to provide useful classes and seminars, social activities, skills development and opportunities for personal growth for empty nesters and active senior citizens. The Cypress Historical Society was asked to make a presentation to over 50 members of this group on August 4, 2010. This proved to be a learning experience for both the Academy for Lifelong Learning group and those involved in the presentation: Karen McGilvery, Tammy Andrews and me.

Many of the people in the audience had Cypress addresses, but did not have much knowledge about Cypress history; most did not know of the existence of Cypress Top Historic Park. Our presentation was titled, "Becoming Aware of History in Your Own Back Yard." As we shared with the audience our knowledge of Cypress and its beginnings, some of them were able to share with us tidbits of information they had gleaned over their years of living in the Cypress area. It was a great day of learning for all of us! We were thrilled when, a week or two later, a group of those same people came out to Cypress Top for a tour and we were able to continue some of our previous discussions from the presentation at Lone Star College.

## CHS MEMBERSHIP GROWS!

Thanks to everyone who is helping with our Membership Drive. It is exciting to have so many new people joining!

Just a Reminder . . .our Memberships run on the calendar year, except that new members joining after October 1, 2010 are granted a 15-month membership (or though the end of the 2011). Current members will receive a Renewal Reminder mailed to them in January. Membership dues will remain the same for 2011. Of course, we are a 501(c)3 non-profit corp, and donations are always welcome!



(from left: ) Claire Gunnels and Jo Tubbs from Lone Star College, and CHS Members Tammy Andrews, Karen McGilvery, and Jane Ledbetter



CHS presents the history of Cypress to a packed house at the Academy of Lifetime Learning at Lone Star College Library!

Cypress Historical Society  
19518 Lutheran Cemetary Rd.  
Cypress, Texas 77433

CYPRESS HISTORICAL SOCIETY 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:

Becky Martin, 11911 Waterford Estates Ct., Tomball, TX 77377-2714

Questions? Please contact Jane Ledbetter at 281-255-9297

[www.cypresshistoricalsociety.com](http://www.cypresshistoricalsociety.com)