



CYPRESS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Established 2008

Issue 47

September, 2020

Living on the School Ground

by J. LeRoy Schlechte CFHS Class of '54

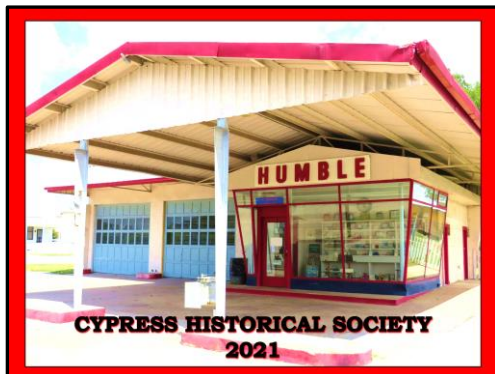
What's it like living on the school ground? Why live on the school ground at all? Let's start with a little background. My dad, Edwin Schlechte, was the maintenance man at Cy-Fair for some 22 years (i.e., 1946 – 1968). I'm sure that some of you "old timers" still fondly remember Mr. Schlechte, a truly kindhearted gentleman. In about 1949, someone, perhaps the superintendent or a school board member, decided it would be advantageous to have the maintenance man live adjacent to the school (e.g., we lived in Rose Hill Community at the time). I'm sure the biggest reasons were to have someone available to unlock and lock doors for after-school and night activities, and to keep an eye on school property, especially on weekends. The venue would be the old Lieder farm house, which the school owned, and had converted into four apartments (i.e., the "Teacherage"), with three apartments downstairs, and one up.



The Schlechte home (the old Lieder house) on the Cy-Fair High School property. Photo taken in October, 1960.

For the Schlechte family, there was a lot of advantages. For starters, we didn't have to make the drive back and forth from Rose Hill (over a rough, shelled road) daily (including summers), and sometimes on Saturday. This allowed us to be at school early, doing janitorial work, while dad drove a bus. Not that we enjoyed doing the work! The same held true for after school, as the whole family was involved in maintaining the buildings. A big advantage for me was being able to also participate in band, and at one point in time various sports. Gosh, the band hall and football field were practically in our back yard, with the gymnasium close by. And, in the summer, the FFA rodeo pen was right across the road from the house, allowing Dad to operate the concession stand for years, and we helped. Another plus for my brother and me, both interested in repairing and rebuilding automobiles, was that we had the school bus garage close to the house, and Petrzekas' Garage at the corner of Telge Road and Hempstead Highway (US 290). There we learned a lot of things, some of which we probably shouldn't have!

Granted, we basically lived in a "fish bowl" and didn't really have any close neighbors, and at times we were almost too convenient (e.g., like when someone left their books or jacket, etc. up at school). But, overall, I think that I generally liked living on the school ground, and might be able to share a few more details at a later date.



Just one of the great pictures this year!

CHS 2021 Calendars are Available!

by Terri Sigmund

Since 2010, CHS has been making calendars as our annual fundraiser. Each year we wonder if this year's calendar will be as good as last year's? And you know what? It is! This year's pictures have some great "classics" as well as some modern day photos. I am sure you will love it!

The Library currently has "Covid hours", so if you would like to purchase a calendar, you can mail in a note with a check for \$17.50 (\$15.00 + \$2.50 postage), stop by the office on Tuesday or Thursday morning and pick one up for \$15.00, or order one through the website. Help us to remain financially stable and enjoy the wonderful historic pictures! (Call Terri 281-373-9052 with questions)

The Italians of Fairbanks

by Annie Airola Hagler

My father, Battista Airola (or "Poppa" as we called him), was born on October 7, 1889 in the village of Germagnano in northern Italy. His family was living in Coassolo, Italy when he turned 22, and decided to come to the United States. He would accompany his sister ("Auntie"), Catherina Airola (26 yrs old), who was coming to meet her future husband, Pete Marietta. Pete was also from Coassolo, but had come to America as early in 1902, and he told Battista that there were plenty of jobs in Texas for people who were willing to work hard. Poppa and Auntie arrived in at Ellis island in New York on May 24, 1912. Just five days later, Pete and Catherina Marietta were married.

They went to Thurber, Texas, where Poppa worked in the coal mines for the Texas and Pacific Coal Company. Also in Thurber was Thomas Francone from Coassolo, who was married to Marie Airola (probably a distant cousin). After several years in Thurber, Poppa, Pete Marietta, and Thomas Francone bought land in Fairbanks (Gum Island), site unseen.

They arrived in Fairbanks in 1918, where Poppa helped Auntie and Pete Marietta build a house and barn. In 1921, he left for California, where he worked on the highway in the Redwood Forest. After 3 or 4 years, he came back to Fairbanks, Texas. Then, in 1925, he left out of Galveston to return to Italy.

While back in Coassolo, he met Mama, Teresa Savant. They were married on April 10, 1927. On August 14, 1927, they set sail back to the U.S. and the land he bought in Fairbanks.



Poppa working in the Redwood Forest of California.



The wedding of Battista Airola and Teresa Savant (center front), in Coassolo, Italy in 1927. Family, friends, music and plenty of wine!

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The Airola house on Emmott Road in Fairbanks, photo taken in 1951.



The Airola Family in 1947. Front row: Mama (Teresa), Margaret, and Poppa (Battista). Back row: John, Joe, Mary, and Annie.

On their 27 acres on Fairbanks-No Houston Rd (near Emmott Rd.), Battista and Teresa Airola built a home with the help of their neighbors, the Mariettas and Francones.

Poppa and Mama started a dairy, and began to raise a garden, and kids! They kept their dairy until oil was found on our property in the early 1940's (Fairbanks Oil Field). Poppa sold his dairy cows to Donald Christen, who walked the cows down Hempstead Highway to his property. Poppa then raised ranch cattle and continued his work in the garden.

We lived off the land, with cows, chickens, his garden, ducks, grapes (he also made wine!), pecan trees, fig trees, pears, peaches, and mulberry trees. With the milk, Mama made butter, cottage cheese, and buttermilk. She also canned tomatoes, beans, fruit and made jelly.

We lost my sister, Margaret, at just 15 years old, from polio. My brothers and sister and I graduated from Cy-Fair High School. We were proud to serve our school, our community, and our country, as our parents taught us.

Today, I still live on a small piece of that original land that Poppa bought in Fairbanks. As a volunteer for the Cypress Historical Society, I am helping to document and preserve the memories of growing up in the Fairbanks area.

Tin Hall Attracts World Famous Talent in 1935

The Peters Brothers were a famous "Accordion Troupe" which toured the United States in 1935. While this card was not dated, a newspaper advertisement on October 17, 1935 in Lockhart, Texas displayed an almost identical advertisement. When I checked the date of November 2nd, it was in fact a Saturday!

Since this was big name entertainment, it would cost you two bits to get in, and even the children had to pay! The Britannica defines Vaudeville as "a farce with music"!



**Peters
Tyroler
from
Germany**

World's Famous
Concertina
Accordeon Troupe

Tin Hall
CYPRESS HALL, Cypress Texas

— SATURDAY November 2 —

Musical Vaudeville starts 8:15

Dance at 9:00

ADMISSION: — Children 10c; Adults 25c

Found in a collection of photographs and memories from Bernice Steinhagen Froehlich. The pencil addition of "Tin Hall" was on the original.

CHS Joins the Texas Historical Commission Webinars

by Jay Gavitt

The CHS joined online webinars hosted by the Texas Historical Commission. These webinars focused on a variety of topics. Each session was conducted by a guest presenter and was accompanied by a PowerPoint along with a number of resource handouts. The final section of the presentation included a Question and Answer session with the participants. These topics included:

- "Best Practices for the Nonprofit World" – this program focused on historical societies as well as museums. It was interesting that the CHS could be used as a example of what should be done. CHS meets all the suggested requirements of an excellent nonprofit.
- "Going Local: Creating Local History Workshops Your Visitors Won't Forget" – this was a five part online series that taught the fundamental skills and concepts needed to understand how to incorporate local history stories into exhibits. This all-encompassing program looked at planning, design and construction of exhibits using text, images, and artifacts in meaningful ways. This will be of use as we interpret local history at our own exhibit hall.
- "Building a Collaborative Online Archive" and "How to Develop Effective Social Media Content to Engage Your Visitors" – these two sessions were extremely useful as we look to the future. We have seen in the past couple of years a decrease in school trips/visits and a drastic change recently in how to bring local history to senior centers and nursing homes. Jay Gavitt will be presenting our "Early Cypress History" program online to the members of Cypress/Fairbanks Rotary Club. This program was originally developed by Jim Sigmund and has been presented in person to schools and senior groups. This will be a good test to this new virtual delivery for CHS programs as we look to the future.

All of these webinars, and others, have been archived and are available to anyone through the Texas Historical Commission at www.thc.texas.gov/museum-services.

Mark Your Calendars!

*Subject to change.
Check Website for the latest.*

(No September Meeting)

Sep 19 – CHS Annual Member Event - - - Cancelled - - -

Oct 17 – CHS Board Mtg

(All Members welcome)

Saturday, 9:00am at the CHS Library
Cypress Top Historic Park

Nov 21–CHS Board Mtg-Elections

(All Members welcome)

Saturday, 9:00am at the CHS Library
Cypress Top Historic Park

WOODROSES FOR THE LADIES AT OUR BIG OPENING, SATURDAY!

It's a pioneer American custom -- extending gifts as a token of good will, like a handshake among friends. We would like for you and your family to drop in on the GRAND OPENING of our new service station under the Humble sign, Highway 290, Saturday to receive a small gift we have for you. It's our way of saying, "Hello -- we're pleased to see you."

Sincerely yours,
Clarence Juergen
C. H. Juergen

Wood Roses

by Jim Sigmund

On January 5, 1957, Clarence Juergen opened the brand new Humble Gas Station, which is still in its original location in the Cypress Top Historic Park. It is a great example of a bolt-together metal design building that Humble could disassemble and move, as new freeways in the 1950's caused many small towns to be by-passed.

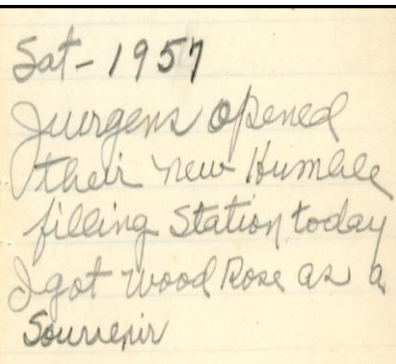
As an Opening Day promotion, He handled out "wood roses for the ladies". His neighbor, Hannah Neal, even wrote about this event in her diary! But, in the entire Cypress Top collection, we have never found one of these roses. We have even wondered if they were really made of wood, or maybe a variety of live rose.

If you have one of these roses among your family memories, we would like to get a photograph of one to put on display along with Clarence's letter.

Letter sent out by Clarence Juergen to promote the Grand Opening!



Humble Gas Station - January 5, 1957



Hannah Neal's diary entry.

CHS Library News

by Jim Sigmund

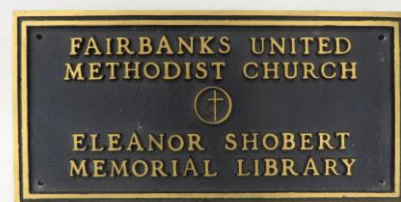
The CHS Darline Roth Research Library is back open with limited hours until Covid-19 is under control. We are there on Tuesday and Thursday from 9-Noon. We ask visitors to wear masks, and we will limit the amount of people in the Library at one time. Check the CHS Website for updates and changes.

- Robert Benbow sent us the May 29, 1957 and Sept 9, 1957 editions of the Cy-Fair Reporter. The Reporter was the High School newspaper published bi-weekly. We have some issues after the 1970's, but not earlier. If you have any among your school memories, we would love to scan them.
- Sandra Dillon and Alex Davis donated Cy-Fair Yearbooks from 2009, 2010, and 2011. We are always grateful to get school yearbooks.
- Our dear friend, Margaret Kobs Kitzmann passed away in February, 2020. Margaret was a CHS Charter member and contributed many photos and stories over the years. Her niece, Linda Schellenberg has donated some great photos that were found while going through Margaret's house. We are so thankful to Linda for saving these important pieces of Cypress history, and sharing them with us
- The Fairbanks United Methodist Church closed its doors after over a hundred years of ministry to the community. With sad hearts, long-time members watched as parts of their Church were sold off in a garage sale. A metal plaque from the Church Library was saved by Annie Hagler and donated to CHS. The library was dedicated to Eleanor Shobert, a beloved member of the Church and of Fairbanks.
- Relic Hunter, Eric Briggs, has located a house foundation, old well, and artifacts from the late 1800's on the construction site south of Hempstead road, about where Skinner Road will go through. It was on property owned by Henry and Dorothea Hartman until 1898. Voting Precinct records also indicate that there was a "Hartmann School" in that time period, though the specific location was unknown.

THANKS TO OUR JUL-SEP BENEFACTORS!

Donations:

John & Virginia Alamanza
Bobby & Geraldine Barrett
Barbara Schletzbaum



*The plaque for the little library in
Fairbanks United Methodist Church.*

Cy-Fair Reporter—Sept, 1957

Enrollment Soars To 300

The enrollment for Cy-Fair High School is estimated at an excess of 300.

Mr. Less Moore, counselor of the high school, stated, "90 per cent of the students have completed enrollment."

Approximately 140 students have enrolled from Arnold and Dean Junior High Schools. Transferred into the Cypress-Fairbanks School Districts are 20 new students.

The Cy-Fair Reporter, the Cy-Fair High School newspaper, was donated by Robert Benbow from the Class of 1956.

"My, How You've Grown!"

by Jim Sigmund

I could not help but marvel at the headline found in the 1957 Cy-Fair High School newspaper, talking about the soaring enrollment! Three hundred was a big number for the rural community of Cy-Fair. Who would have imagined that the school district would continue to grow to the third largest in Texas, behind only Houston ISD and Dallas ISD. The CFISD website gives these enrollment figures for 2019: Cy-Fair High School was at 3,327, more than 10 times the amount in 1957! But, if you add in the other 11 high schools, the numbers are 36,582 (a 100 times more!) I could add in the Middle Schools at 27,289 and the Elementary Schools at 53,411 but I would have to get my calculator. This must be what they meant by the "New Math"!

CHS Annual Scholarship

by Becky Martin

CHS is again offering the Gene and Delphine Zaboroski scholarship to a deserving student next April. If you have a child or grandchild graduating from a Cypress Fairbanks ISD high school or is a recent graduate from a district school and attending college, urge them to visit our website for the details and forms to be submitted.

Cypress Historical Society

P.O. Box 2963
Cypress, Texas 77410

E-Mail: cypresshistsociety@att.net

Darline Roth Research Library: 281-758-0083

Hours Until Further Notice: Tuesdays and Thursdays 9am - Noon

Cypress Historical Society
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General Fund _____

Scholarship Fund _____

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