



# CYPRESS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Established 2008*

Issue 48

December, 2020

## Living on the School Grounds, Part 2 (My FFA Experience!)

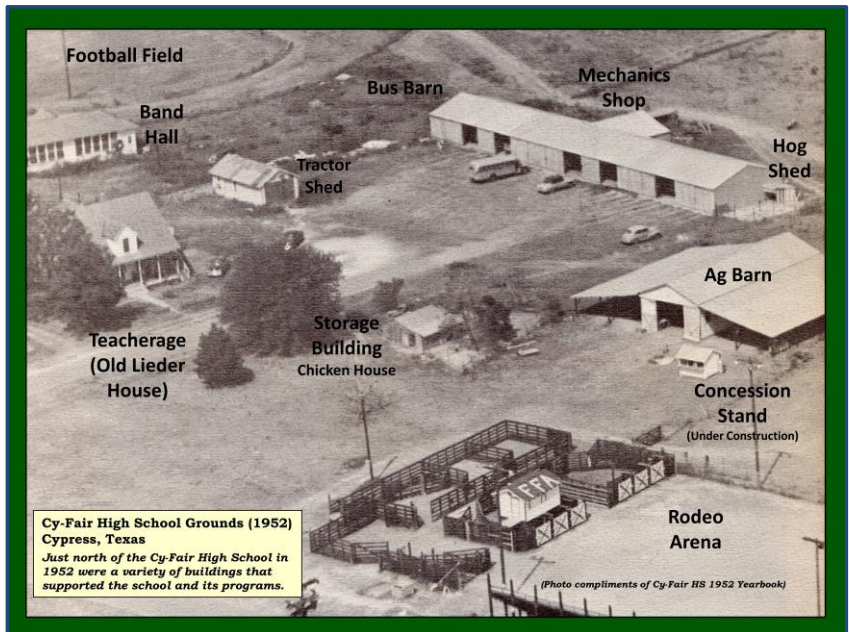
*by J. LeRoy Schlechte, CFHS Class of '54*

In the mid-50's, during the period of time when the Schlechtes lived on the school grounds, the entire surrounding area was a farming community. Farming here is being defined as rice farming, ranching and a few dairy farms about. I think that almost all of the high school boys enrolled in Vocational Agriculture (i.e., "VA"), and belonged to the FFA. Seems like all of the girls took Home Economics (or "Homemaking"). As a part of taking VA, each of us was expected (or required?) to have a project. This was a challenge for the Schlechte boys, living on the school grounds. Reference is called to the 1952 aerial photo of the school property north of the main school buildings. As stated previously, we lived in the "Teacherage," or the old Lieder farm house, converted into four apartments. I recall Dad and my older brother Robert converting part of the old storage building between the house and the rodeo pens into a chicken house. Here, Robert raised fryers. We also stored our family car in the same building.

When it came my turn, we somehow decided that I would raise pigs. Again, Dad and us boys built a hog shed and pen adjacent to the "Bus Barn." Strangely enough, I personally don't recall anyone complaining about a pig pen on the school grounds; perhaps they did. Once big brother left home I switched to chickens. We used an old kerosene "brooder" to keep the baby chicks warm, which Dad never really trusted. So the family car was left outside. I recall one morning, before school, looking over toward the building, and seeing it ablaze! The old brooder had somehow caught on fire. That was the end of that project, and probably also the end of the entire storage building (e.g., that I don't recall). If I had any other "Ag projects," I do not recall that either.

There were other opportunities nearby to become involved in the rural lifestyle. The "Ag Barn" shown in the photo, in addition to housing the Ag Department's farm equipment, was also the venue for the annual local FFA livestock show for a period. Seems like most of us guys got involved, perhaps for extra credit. In addition, we had the "Rodeo Arena" on the school grounds (e.g., later relocated to across Telge Road). Again, I recall some of us guys being involved in staging the rodeo every Friday evening during the summer months. Shucks, we even helped the folks up at "Fields Store Community" (north of Hockley) stage their annual Fourth of July rodeo, but that's another story.

And there you have my short "farming story." When you don't live on a farm or ranch, like the Schlechte family, you learn to improvise. And then you look back some 65 years later with fond recollections, conveniently forgetting the downsides.



**The 1952 Cy-Fair Bobcat Yearbook photo show the area behind the high school. The Hog Shed at the end of the Bus Barn was LeRoy's. You can also see this picture in the CHS 2021 historical calendar!**

## CHS LIBRARY HOLIDAY HOURS

**Closed Dec 19th through Jan 4<sup>th</sup>  
Will reopen Jan 5th**

## A Makeover at Cypress Top Historic Park

*(Edited by Jay Gavitt from Linda Martin Rust's article for the CTHP Newsletter)*

Recently, Cypress Historical Society members joined with other volunteers to give Cypress Top Historic Park a sprucing up. The volunteers were supervised park employees including CHS member Linda Martin Rust. Other park employees were joined by a dozen volunteers, as they worked on three major projects. The first was to repaint the tree trunks in the park. Many times visitors to the park ask why the tree trunks are "white". In the past, trees were painted with a mixture of paint and lye to prevent insect infestation. Recent paintings of the trees have been done without the use of lye. This still maintains the historical significance of the "white" trunks. Working on the tree-painting crew was Cypress Historical Society member Mark Froehlich. CHS member, Jay Gavitt helped coat the farm machinery with a rust preventative. This machinery included the old tractor, the road grader and several pieces of farm equipment. This has been done over the years and helps maintain them in their original state. The final project was devoted to the Grist Mill/Pump House. Over the past couple of years, CHS member Jim Pulliam has been working on restoring the wooden siding on this building in the Park. With the added volunteers, they were able to complete the batten work on the siding and coat the entire Grist Mill/Pump House with a coating of linseed oil. When you get a chance, come and visit us at newly refurbished Cypress Top Historical Park!



**Jim Pulliam replaces wood siding on the Grist Mill/Pump House.**



**Jay Gavitt gives a coat of rust preventative on the old tractor.**

**Closed**  
**12/18-12/4**

### **Cypress Historical Society**

P.O. Box 2963  
Cypress, Texas 77410

E-Mail: [cypresshistsociety@att.net](mailto:cypresshistsociety@att.net)

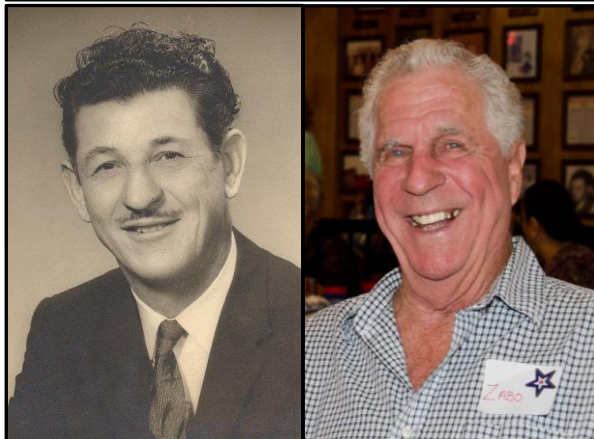
**Darline Roth Research Library: 281-758-0083**

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

## CHS presents "Early History of Cypress" for the local Rotarians

*by Jay Gavitt*

CHS presented a program for the Cypress Fairbanks Rotary Club. The program focused on the Early History of Cypress created by Jim Sigmund and presented by Jay Gavitt. The "Creeks, Roads and Railroads" was the program showing the importance of Cypress, Little Cypress, Willow and Spring creeks



**Past Cypress-Fairbanks Rotarians:**  
**"Uncle" Clarence Juergen and Gene Zaboroski**

in the early development of the Cypress area. Recent information on Dimond Knoll has been added to the development of early and later Spanish roads such as the Atascocita Trace. Early roads in Cypress were joined by the Texas and Central Railroad. The meeting was well attended in person at Carl's BBQ as well as via ZOOM. The Cypress Fairbanks Rotary Club was started in 1970, and is celebrating their 50th Anniversary this year. They will be celebrating at Juergen Hall and CHS will be offering tours of both the Juergen store and house. In talking with some of the older members, I learned that both Clarence Juergen and CHS member Gene Zaboroski had been longtime members of Rotary Club. As I was perusing the displays at Carl's, I came upon an early Phenix Dairy bottle. It reminded me of the Phenix Dairy display of items belonging to Martin Hoehmann at our library. These were donated by Celeste Haltom. The meeting was most interesting, as I walked away with a greater understanding of the Rotary Club and fabulous pictures of that Phenix Dairy bottle.



What's in a Name . . .

## Skinner Road

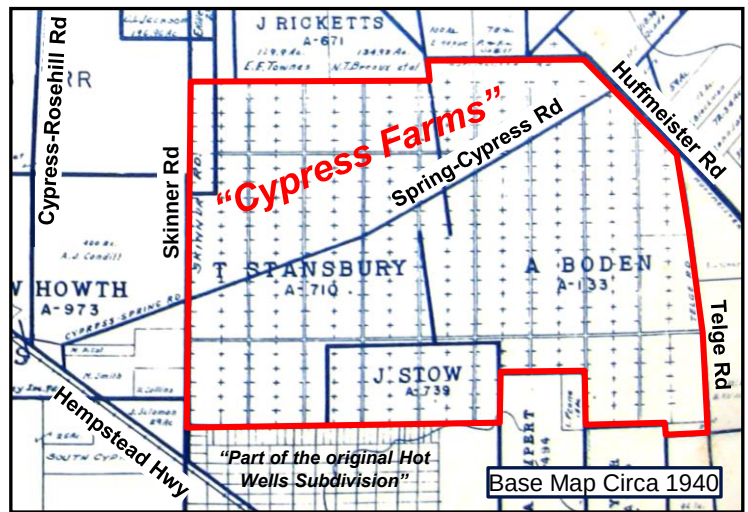
by Jim Sigmund

Years ago, when I first started researching Cypress History, I found an Internet bulletin board where people were discussing local history. One writer, who "grew up in Cypress" was telling the others about the area. When asked about the origin of the name for Skinner Road, he told the others that "it was named after an old Muleskinner who lived there". Now, I am a city boy, and I was shocked at such a profession of skinning perfectly good work animals! It was only recently that I realized that a "muleskinner" is a person who drives mules on a wagon, like a teamster.

If it is on the Internet, it must be true! Well, not this time. While researching Hot Wells, I ran across the name Dwight H. Skinner, a real estate man, promoting his land at the same time as the Hot Wells owners. D.H. Skinner and his wife, Catharine came from Iowa to Houston about 1900. In the 1900 Census he was listed as a "stockman", but in 1910 as a "real estate" investor. He was living in Cypress in 1904 when tragedy struck. His fifth child was born in August, and just 3 weeks later, his wife died. In December of 1904, his barn was totally destroyed by fire and he lost all of his feed and farm implements. Nothing was insured. Still, he carried on with his 5 children, and eventually bought up about 2300 acres in Cypress. In 1911, he formed the Cypress Farms Company, and marketed the land in 5 acre tracts.

At this time, people began to move out of the crowded city of Houston, and look for rural tracts to farm or raise cattle. Real estate investors started the concept of the "Demonstration Farm", where a tract of land was planted to show people how good the soil was, and to entice them to buy the nearby land. In the summer of 1911, the Harris County Commissioners voted to have the County sponsor a demonstration farm, with the goal of making the rural lands more desirable, and increasing the tax base. About seven locations were offered to the County as a site for a farm, including an 182-acre tract by D.H. Skinner. In order to entice the commissioners to pick his site, he offered the land for free, \$1000 cash, and to build a road from the existing Washington county shell road (now Hempstead Highway), to his demonstration farm. The road he built along the west side of his property became Skinner Road.

In the end, the County picked a different site for their demonstration farm. Skinner continued to sell small tracts of his land, but the bulk of it did not sell. He died in 1919. Sometime in the early 1920's, it became the ranch of Joseph W. Baker (the son of early Houston settler George F. Baker). The land remained in the Baker family until it was bought for large housing developments, including the large Coles Crossing and Western Trails.



**The original land holdings of Dwight H. Skinner, which was marketed as "Cypress Farms". Most of this same land became the Joseph W. Baker Ranch in the 1920's.**

### The Houston Post - Aug 2, 1911

#### **Land and \$1000 Offered.**

The Honorable Board of County Commissioners of Harris County, Texas, Houston, Texas.

Houston, Texas, July 29, 1911.—Gentlemen: I am handing you herewith a proposition with regard to the demonstration farm as follows:

I own near Cypress, about twenty-three miles northwest of the city, 182 acres of land in the Stowe survey which is known as the old Burkhardt place. This is a very fine piece of land with a diversity of soils, and I think would be ideal for demonstration purposes. There is a fine crop now growing on the place—corn, cotton and potatoes. Along the west side there is a dry creek with heavy, black land on each side; the balance of the land is a light sandy soil, such as the greater part of this county consists of. There are two large shallows on the land. I mention these because a demonstration farm in this county should have one or more ponds so as to find out what they can be utilized for.

The land lies about one-half mile from the Washington county shell road, one of the best roads in Harris county, and I herewith submit the following proposition, to-wit:

I will give the land, together with the improvements, \$1000 in cash, and will shell a road from the present county shell road into the land. That part of the county needs a demonstration farm more than any other.

There is a fair set of buildings on the land, consisting of a four or five-room house, three fair barns, etc.

I hope you will give this your very careful and able consideration, as I believe it would be greatly to the interest of the majority of the agricultural interests of this county to locate in that vicinity.

In connection with the above it will probably be well to mention that this piece of land joins the Houston Hot Wells property on the north.

(Signed) Dwight H. Skinner.



## **America the Beautiful**

by Mary Bianche

The American Revolution began in 1775, lasted eight years, ending in 1783. The Declaration of Independence was written in 1776, declaring independence from the British Empire. After time, seeing the new government was in turmoil, a group of men realized that a document was needed to control what was going on among the colonies, thus began drafting the Constitution of the United States of America. The Constitution was based upon the English government, however; details were added which were strictly American. These items created the three branches of government the Executive, Legislative, and Justice which would act to check and balance each other. The creators left open the ability to add amendments.

The U.S. Constitution was adopted by the Philadelphia Convention on September 17, 1787. Actually, a Republic was created, not a democracy. As one can see, this is what has kept America stabilized through the years. The Bill of Rights was added in 1789, proposing 12 amendments to the Constitution, 10 were ratified, among these, the freedom of speech, press, religion, and assembly.

Asked if we had a Republic or Monarchy, Benjamin Franklin made the remark, "a Republic, if you can keep it". The Constitution is over 200 years old, and has created the greatest country in the world, the words resonate, "Can we keep it"?



Items available for purchase through CHS.

## **Christmas Gift Ideas!**

HO, HO, HO. Who has been naughty or nice? Trying to think of what to get for that special someone for Christmas? We have the answer! The Cypress Historical Society has items for sale that make great Christmas presents. Stop in the CHS Library from 9-4 on 12/15 or 12/17 to make your purchases, or send us a check for the cost of the items and postage (\$2.50 per item), and we will mail them out to you!

## **Mark Your Calendars!**

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

### **(No December Meeting)**

### **Jan 16 – CHS Board Mtg**

*(All Members welcome)*

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

### **Feb 20 – CHS Board Mtg**

*(All Members welcome)*

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

### **(SAVE THE DATES)**

### **Jun 19 – Cy-Fair HS Reunion**

**(Class of 1945-1959)**

Saturday, Juergen Hall  
Cypress Top Historic Park

### **Sep 18 – CHS Member Event**

Saturday, Juergen Hall  
Cypress Top Historic Park

|                            |                  |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| <b>CHS T-Shirt</b>         | <b>\$15</b>      |
| <b>CHS Polo Shirt</b>      | <b>\$26</b>      |
| <b>CHS/Cypress Hat</b>     | <b>\$15</b>      |
| <b>Cookbook</b>            | <b>\$20</b>      |
| <b>2021 Calendar</b>       | <b>\$15</b>      |
| <b>Past Calendars</b>      | <b>\$10</b>      |
| <b>Note Cards/Box of 8</b> | <b>\$10</b>      |
| <b>Gift Membership</b>     | <b>\$15/\$25</b> |

## **CYPRESS HISTORICAL SOCIETY - 2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>Michelle Christie</i>  | <i>President</i>      | <i>(832) 264-0885</i> | <i>mtchristie65@gmail.com</i>  |
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## 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 (Class of '57) sent us another package of memories from his home in California. Included was various programs from Cy-Fair H.S. including one from the 1957 Dickinson Jaycees Boys Basketball Tournament. The Bobcat team was successful through the entire bracket, but lost the Championship game to Aldine!
- Marvin and Lottie Weiman are sorting through some things, and that has been a great deal for CHS! Marvin has brought in some Weiman family photos for us to scan, an old hay hook, and some books from the 1950's. There were also some family genealogy records done by Roberta Kruse in 1983, and sent to Lottie. These records include Weiman, Prunier, Kruse, Thompson, Matzke and others from the Thompson Community and the FM 529 area. They are invaluable.
- Joanne Green from the Kohrville Community Association stopped in the CHS Library for a visit. Joanna is a historian for the KCA, and a member of the Solomon family. Her great grandfather, Milledge "Bud" Soloman bought 29 acres on the NW corner of Hempstead and Skinner roads, where several generations of the family lived.
- Don't forget that CHS has items that make great Christmas presents, including T-Shirts, Hats, Notecards, our "A Taste of Cypress Home Cookin" Cookbook, and the CHS 2021 Historical Calendar!

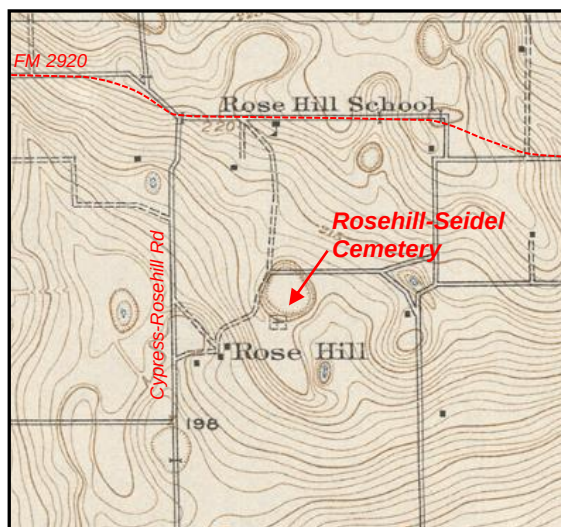


*Marvin Weiman donated this hay hook, and this picture of Milton Backen on his hay wagon. I guess Milton was determined not to make two trips!*

## Rosehill Park

by Jim Sigmund

The Rosehill community has always been a vibrant settlement, beginning with the Duer "Rose" Plantation in the 1850's, and the congregations of Salem Lutheran Church and Rosehill Methodist Church. Numerous families ran stores and saw mills in the area over time. From 1885 to 1905, Rosehill was designated a post office and Dr. Jacob F.W. Metzler built a thriving business center near the Rosehill-Seidel Cemetery that was referred to as Rosehill Park. In "Brautigam Descendants & Allied Families", Margie L. Walter writes that Rosehill Park had a cotton gin, general store, saloon, the post office, Dr. Metzler's office, a dancehall, and a bowling alley! When Dr. Metzler moved to the new town of Tomball in 1908, Gus Seidel took over the store, and the post office was moved to Hufsmith. But surprisingly, we know little about these businesses and do not have any photos. If you can help, let us know!



**Rosehill Topographic Map - 1916**

## **THANKS TO OUR SEP-DEC BENEFACTORS!**

### **Donations:**

John Airola  
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### **Scholarship:**

John Airola  
Nancy Andrews  
Terri & Jim Sigmund

### **Lifetime Membership:**

Annie Hagler

## **Renew Your Membership**

If you haven't already done so, it's time to renew your membership for 2021. Our memberships run for the calendar year. New members who join after October 1<sup>st</sup> are credited through the next year. Check your mailing label - If the date next to your name is 12/31/2020, then it is time to renew. If it has a later date, or "Lifetime", then you are already a member for 2021. Thanks for your continued support!

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

CYPRESS HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2021 MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

Individual (\$15) \_\_\_\_\_

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LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP

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General Fund \_\_\_\_\_ Scholarship Fund \_\_\_\_\_

Make check to: Cypress Historical Society

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

Questions? Please contact us at 281-758-0083 (Library)

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

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