



CYPRESS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Established 2008

Issue 51

September, 2021

Blast From the Past!

by Mary Bianche

Cypress Historical Society annual member event will be Saturday, September 18, 2021, beginning at 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. After a year of isolation, let's get together to have fun and games and visiting with good friends. Light lunch with hamburger and trimmings, and chips and drinks. There will be a raffle with items worth over \$300.00. Dress for an era period or not, but come and join us for an enjoyable time.

CHS Opens for Young People

by Jay Gavitt

Although our "Hand-On History" Summer Camp was postponed for this year, Cypress Top Historic Park and the Cypress Historical Society are open now for visitations. Two groups visited with us during July. The first group was a group of girls and their parents picnicking at CTHP. A few youngsters dropped by and were invited in to see CHS. They were quickly followed by the entire group. The spirited group had many questions. They decided to see how butter was made using the tabletop churn. We traced the path of the milk from the cow to the butter mold. Everyone seemed to enjoy their experience with us.

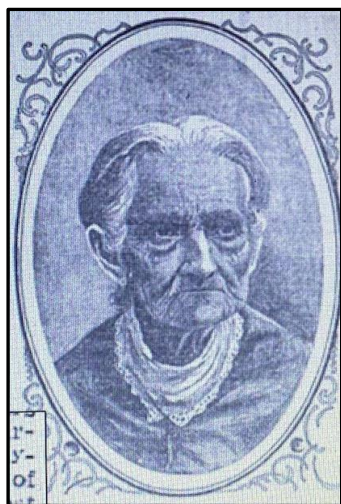
The second group was a guided tour for the "Reach Higher" campers and staff. The 21 youngsters, ages 8-12 years, were divided into smaller groups for their tour. They toured the Juergen Store and House, the Humble gas station, Blondie Kerr's apartment, and the Mill. Cypress Historical Society members Chris Fonte and Jay Gavitt and Precinct 3-Cypress Top Historic Park's Sierra Ridley helped with the tour. The campers ended their tour with a CHS visit. Here they engaged in a number of "hands-on" experiences using a number of artifacts from our collection.



A young visitor to the CHS Library is fascinated to try out the vintage hand-crank butter churn!



The "Reach Higher" campers look on, as Jay Gavitt explains how the cash register works in the Juergen Store.



Rebecca Caroline Burnett Lee, in 1900, in the Houston Daily Post

Matthew Burnett's daughter describes early Native American encounters in early Cypress

by Jay Gavitt

Rebecca Caroline Burnett Lee was interviewed by the Houston Daily Post in 1900. She was the daughter of Matthew Burnett, who was one of the first settlers to the Cypress area, receiving land as a member of Stephen Austin's colony. He moved to Texas in 1831 from Arkansas (part of the Carolinas) with his wife Sarah (Sally) Simmons and 4 children. The youngest was 1 year-old, Rebecca Caroline.

The following describes stories taken from that interview. Rebecca indicated that they had settled along Cypress Creek, about 24 miles from Houston. She went on to mention that the only white neighbors were the Roberts and McCurley (i.e. Abe Roberts and Sam McCarley) families living along Spring Creek, some 12 miles away. These families were also members of the Austin Colony.

Rebecca mentioned that when her father and mother moved to the Cypress Creek area, they soon formed a "fast and true friendship" with a tribe of Bedias Indians who had "located their little wigwam town around and near my father's place". Their chief's name was Francisco. She mentions the abundance of game in the area which was a draw for the Indians.

Rebecca remembers that their relationship with tribe was always friendly, but told a story of the only time the Bedias became angry. One evening, some Indian children were climbing trees and stealing peaches from "Big Foot" Wallace's orchard. He was a noted Indian fighter and caught a few of the children and gave them a "switching". Francisco and some of the older tribe members were enraged at this treatment. A small group started out for Wallace's place. Wallace found out they were coming to his place, and sent the women and children away. There was only Wallace and an older sickly man who remained in the house. "As the Indians broke down the door and attacked, they were met by the lone Indian fighter along with barrage of chairs, cups, saucers, bottles hurled at them'. Wallace was pinned against the wall, when he hit Chief Francisco with a bottle and broke all his front teeth. Eventually the Indians left the house, everyone of them hurt, some seriously". The older sickly man had been stabbed to death. "From that time on the Indians dreaded the name of Wallace."

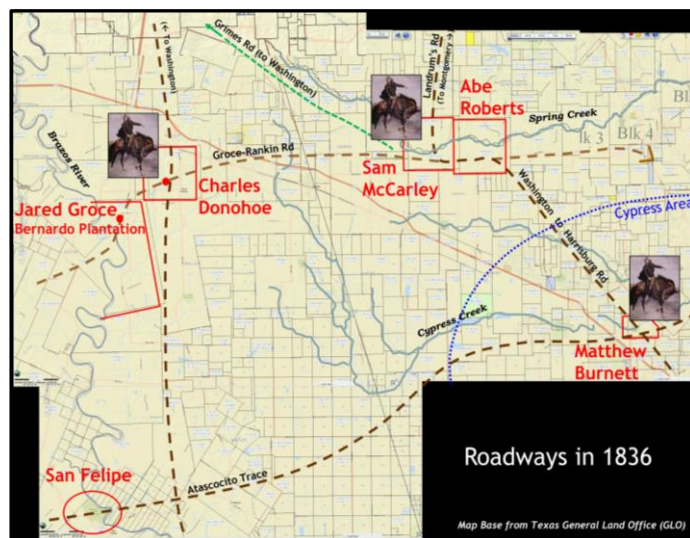
A second story concerned the threat to the Burnetts by Comanche warriors. "One day, we saw Francisco coming towards us on a run. No sooner had he got into the yard than a great number of Comanche Indians rode up." Rebecca described the Indians as scantily dressed riding bareback on horses. The chief asked Francisco where the man of the house was. Francisco told him that he was away fighting the Mexicans and that he was watching the family. He added that Burnett was a good man and he was here to defend the family. The Comanche chief was enraged and an argument started between the chief and Francisco. Francisco was standing by the gate and the chief was threatening to come in. Rebecca and the others ran to the woods, but her mother and older brother remained with Francisco. Two of the warriors were allowed to grind their knives. Meanwhile, Rebecca and her siblings returned for fear that their mother might be scalped or taken away. As the Comanches were ready to take the place, Francisco gave a "war hoop". At that point, Bedias warriors came running from all directions. The Comanches seeing they were outnumbered "lashed their horses and in a few seconds a cloud of dust bid the demons from our view.

Rebecca was married to Hiram E. Lee in 1849 and he died 1891. Rebecca Caroline lived until 1926.

While this interview was done in 1900 and appeared in a local newspaper, it shows the importance of using our senior citizens and older family members to share their past with us. Today, this has become quite easy to record these stories using our phones and share them with others over the internet. Feel free to share your Cypress area stories with us at the Cypress Historical Society.

Sources:

- (1) "Burnett Family", Cypress Historical Society's Darlene Roth Genealogical Library
- (2) "Reminiscences of Early Days in Texas", Houston Daily Post, April 15, 1900, Cypress Historical Society.



Cy-Fair Alums from '43-'59 Hold Class Reunion

by Jim Sigmund

On June 19th, the Cy-Fair High School Classes of 1943-1959 met at Juergen Hall to greet their classmates. A record crowd of 128 shared a lunch catered by Spring Creek BBQ and swapped stories of their school days. The group was not able to meet the last two years, so there was a lot to catch up on! The Cypress Historical Society provided a slide show of old yearbook photos, and brought over scrapbooks and other memories to look at. Harris County Pct 3 park workers opened the Juergen Store for tours. Beautiful wood-crafted items made and donated by Arthur Moehr were among items that were raffled off. It was a great day!



Front Row: Charlie Parker '50, Thelma Backen Dopslauf '43, Jay Lauersdorf '48, and Miller Beal '49, Second Row: Elroy Hirsch '50, and Marvin Weiman '45.



(L to R) Joyce Zaboroski Kleb '52, Marvin Osgood '56, Alan Parker '55, Robert Adam '55.



Robbie Roberts Horne '58 and Frances Rambin Hendrick '58



Annie Airola Hagler '51, Shelly Hancock '58, Mary Airola Smith '56



The "youngsters" at the Reunion were the Class of 1959! First Row: Carol Hargrave Dobbs, Deloris Brown Kirk, Judy Hebert Gilliam, Beverly Henry Sempe, and Mildred Huffmeister Moye, Second Row: Tommy Norris, Donna Durr Hyatt, Barbara Stevens Smith, Richard Tandy, James Smith, and James Treichel, Back Row: Martha Fenske Huebner, Joe Daniels, Charles Cates, Arthur Moehr, Wendell Linton, and Findley Leland West.

Mark Your Calendars!

Subject to change.

Check Website for the latest.

Sep 18 – CHS Member Event

"Blast From The Past"

Saturday, 10-2 Juergen Hall
Cypress Top Historic Park

Oct 16 – CHS Board Mtg

(All Members welcome)

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

Nov 20 – CHS Board Mtg

Board of Directors Elections

(All Members welcome)

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

Living on the School Grounds, Part 4

by J. LeRoy Schlechte, CFHS Class of '54

The writing of this follow-up article is being done primarily at the prompting of my younger sister, Evelyn (Schlechte) Johnston, CFHS Class of '57. In the last article (i.e., "Part 3"), I mentioned cleaning up after the Friday night rodeo on Saturday mornings. She reminded me that there was an advantage to cleaning up under the bleachers, as we would occasionally find money that fell from people's pockets. The same was true for the area around the concession stand, as we sometimes found coins in the loose dirt. No pavement!

She also suggested that I share a little about how we entertained ourselves when not working, as we had no TV (of course), or even a telephone. For older brother Bob and myself, I guess the big thing was piddling on cars. Advice was nearby, with the school bus garage (& mechanic) near our house, and Petrzelka's Garage up on the nearby corner. We even totally rebuilt a worn-out Model A Ford coupe, using parts ordered from the Sears & Roebuck and J. C. Whitney catalogs. We even did a couple of engine "swaps" on later model Ford sedans.



Young LeRoy Schlechte proudly displays his home-made motorbike, powered by a motor from an old wash machine!



Do you remember the old "clamp-on" roller skates? They are pretty different than the fancy in-line skates sold today!

She mentioned the motorbike that Bob and I built, with some off-site welding help. I've included a picture, taken in front of the school bus barn. This was a grossly under-powered, stubborn contraption, using a small engine salvaged from an old washing machine. Other parts came from various sources. It really didn't get ridden very much, but it was fun to build.

Bicycling was a much bigger sport for us kids, as it has been down through the decades. With very little pavement nearby, we did have an advantage; a nice wide paved walkway connecting the high school building with the "new" elementary school building. Other neighboring kids would occasionally join us. I do recall some rather obvious skid marks remaining on the pavement!

Roller skating was also big for Evelyn and me. These would be the clamp-on, metal-wheeled "sidewalk" skates. Again, the paved walkway was a nice "school-ground" feature. I do recall one weekend when Evelyn and I skated from one side of Brenham to the other, while visiting grandparents. I think that I also recall a bruised knee or two along the way.

That's it for now. Let me know if there might be some other 50's topic that I might attempt to address.

Cypress Historical Society

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Cypress, Texas 77410

E-Mail: cypresshistsociety@att.net

Darline Roth Research Library: 281-758-0083

Tuesdays 9am-4pm and Thursdays 9am-Noon

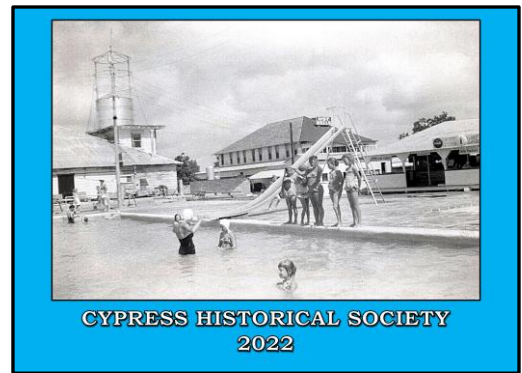
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CHS Library News

by Jim Sigmund

- The 2022 CHS Calendars will be available mid-September!
- Cherry Moehr Barr donated a large collection of local photos, post cards, vintage collectibles and old stamps. You will see two of her photos from Hot Wells in the 2022 CHS Calendar!
- Check out the cover of the newsletter for the updated version of our CHS Logo! The logo was originally hand-drawn by calligrapher Gudrun Sundquist in 2008. The new digital version was created by Forrest Kruger. Thanks to Gudrun and Forrest for contributing their artistic talents to CHS!
- In our last Newsletter, our article on the Seidel Store incorrectly reported that Emil Dossman was the Election Judge. It should have been Emil Seidel.
- Arthur Moehr from the Cy-Fair H.S. Class of 1959 attended the Reunion on June 19th, and brought a stack of late 1950's Cy-Fair Reporters and a hand-drawn Bobcat Purr from 1952 to put on display for his classmates. Afterwards, Arthur donated them to CHS! These are a significant addition to our growing collection of this school newspaper. We are currently scanning these, and hope to make them available in a format similar to our scrapbook. Arthur is also one of newest Lifetime CHS members!
- Mary Weiman Mabry and her husband came into town to donate an old-fashion school house desk, and a number of class photos from the 1960's and other school memorabilia.
- The Cypress Historical Society is beginning to take nominations to serve on their Board of Directors for 2022-23 (two-year term). Elections will be at the November Board Meeting on 11/20/2021, and all members are welcome to attend. If you are interested in serving on the Board, or just want to find out more about what the job entails, contact CHS President, Michelle Christie. (mtchristie65@gmail.com)



Be sure to stop by pick up your 2022 CHS Historical Calendar! It's still only \$15.00! (add \$2.50 if mailed)



Donated to CHS by Arthur Moehr

At the End of the Track

by Robert (Bob) Rivera

After reading Mike Harris' article on motorcars in the March Gulf Coast Railroading, it got me to thinking about the ones my dad used. Mode S ("Standard" series motorcar), I think.

Every morning dad and the men would load the motor cars and a small (push car, they called it) for the tools. Number one item to go on was the water barrel.

We came to Cypress in 1948 from Ennis, Texas. The section house was one and a quarter miles from Cypress, and we didn't own a car. On Saturday morning, one of the workers would go to the store (there were two then); other men and dad would ride with them. Sometimes if mom needed something for supper, and dad was working close to the house, he would go to the store. I would ask dad if I could go. Of course, that was against the company rules. But yes . . . I would climb on behind dad. He would step on a pedal, push a lever forward, and away we would go. At the store I would grab what was needed. Dad would stay on the motorcar and watch that no train was coming. Then we would rush back.

There was a tool shed for the motorcar and tools, but the push-car they simply turned upside down, wheels locked. Dad's working area was from the house East to where the high school is (Telge Road), and west halfway to Hockley.

When we lived in the boxcars - extra gang, they called them, the boxcars were put on a side track. At night, the motor car and the push-cart were up against the end boxcar with chains on the wheels and chained to the boxcar, with tarps covering them.

At the "End of the Track". -- Bob Rivera

(Copied with permission from "Gulf Coast Railroading", Vol 59, No 5, May 2021. Bob Rivera's father was track foreman in the Cypress area northwest of Houston during the late 1940's and early 1950's on the T&NO/Southern Pacific.)

THANKS TO OUR JUL-SEP BENEFACTORS!

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*In Memory of Billie Stieghan
LeRoy Schlechte
As thanks to Jim & Terri Sigmund*

Lifetime Membership:

Carol Hargrave Dobbs
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Cypress Historical Society
P.O. Box 2963
Cypress, Texas 77410

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