



CYPRESS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Established 2008

Issue 54

June, 2022

News From Home ... On the Other Side of the World!

by Jim Sigmund

We all experience amazing coincidences from time to time. CHS Member and Cy-Fair H.S. Class of '53 alumni, Robert Rivera, had one of these recently. On April 10th, he was talking with his neighbor about their years in the service, where Robert served in Korea. They each brought out their old photos to look at. Among Robert's photos, was an old newspaper article in The Stars & Stripes military newspaper, with a picture of Robert sitting in a Jeep, reading the Cy-Fair Reporter school newspaper. His classmates had sent it to him, so he was able to hear about his friends and have a taste of home in that far away place.

As Robert looked down on the clipped out newspaper photo, he noticed that he wrote the date on the top . . . April 10th, 1955!



Rivera takes time out in Korea to read the "Cy-Fair Reporter."

Alumni Serviceman Recalls School Days

Robert Rivera reads about the school and his friends in the Cy-Fair Reporter while sitting in a Jeep overseas in Korea in 1955. The photo was snapped by a buddy, and submitted to the newspaper.



Robert Rivera was seen on Channel 2 News as the Vets gathered for their trip.

On May 13 & 14th, 2022, Robert joined a group of 18 other Veterans on a trip to Washington, D.C as part of "Honor Flight Houston". They visited the "Walls" where the names of the men lost in WWII, Korea, and Vietnam are printed. They also had the opportunity to visit the Lincoln Memorial and other famous buildings.

Each Veteran was given a quilt made by the "Quilts Of Valor" committee. It was a trip of a lifetime, free of charge! The trip was generously sponsored by Schumberger Oil & Gas, Honor Flight Houston, Southwest Airlines, and Houston Airports.

**Save
The
Date!**

Cypress Historical Society Fall Member Event

**October 15, 2022
At the CHS Library**

**Guest Speaker:
Eric Briggs**

***"Evidence of
Historic Sites in
the Cypress Area"***

Part II. A Traveler's Description of Cypress in 1859

by Sonia Dupré, Ph.D

I found an interesting article from the *Chicago Journal* that was re-published in September 17, 1856 by the *Weekly Telegraph* newspaper from Houston describing the recent boom of "Railroad Villages" that are born around the train's routes. It notes that typically, these villages are born with a Depot, Post Office, and a Blacksmith shop. "By and by, houses get to be an epidemic...and they have a Justice, and a Doctor, and a young Lawyer. That's a pretty beginning."

Soon, a young sophomore arrives in the train, the Squire and the doctor show him the town and he gets the teaching job. Shortly, an individual who has more room than he needs opens the new "Hotel," where the lawyer argues with the store-keeper nightly." The tavern-keeper takes a State map and determines that the depot is the seat of the county. They work to elect it, and they get it. "Now, the village is a town..., is a city, and they are not villagers, they are now citizens. "And all this is accomplished through the agency of rail-roads within the space of two or three years."

Three years later, on June 8, 1859, the same newspaper, the *Weekly Telegraph*, published in the Editor correspondence section, under the subtitle *Rambles through Harris County-No. III* a description of Cypress city at that time. The writer, who signed only as "B.", describes the area watered by Big and Little Cypress. His first remark is that he is "glad to notice that Cypress City had not experienced that utter annihilation predicted to all the Railroad Depots, but Cypress is putting a name among the permanent towns of Harris County which are now six" (railroad to Cypress was completed in July 1856) .

The writer informs that Cypress City has "thirteen families-some half a dozen stores or trading houses, two hotels-one receiving or forwarding house, one physician, one clergyman, one school teacher. The legal profession is not represented, showing that litigation is at a discount among the inhabitants of Cypress." There is only one public building - a school house. The citizens are "quite intelligent, enterprising, social and hospitable with a good deal of valuable reading." They had plans to soon organize the Union Sunday School. The traveler also noticed "there is little dissipation or loafing". Cypress has only one preacher who devotes most of his ministerial work to "regions beyond." The citizens talked about their desire to "have preaching more frequently".

In his tour down Big Cypress, the writer observes the manifestations of "thrift and prosperity". Within a few years, the population has increased and "the growing crop is in prosperous conditions and sanguine hopes are entertained of an abundant yield". Soil is producing better than it was predicted. All they need is "the erection of a cotton gin to encourage the cultivation of cotton". He adds that the entire "Cypress valley is now one continuous settlement of industrious and enterprising citizens" whose citizens enjoy the abundance of timber, productive soil, and excellent grazing privileges". Livestock raising is considerable. This area displays a successful bond of the individuals: the American, German, French and Irish nations all are being represented and "living together in peace, harmony and prosperity, all sending their children to the same school, all worshipping in the same church, all claiming to be Texans—good and true!"

Cypress was not annihilated by the railroad. After 166 years, it still exists and still is part of Harris County. Our present-day Cypress has gone through many changes; as June 2022, the area is divided by Highway 290, which was built adjacent to the old Hempstead Road; many of the roads have kept the old names but are now wider. Furthermore, our Cypress Historical Society is located in the grounds of the Cypress Top Historic Park, the place that, in 1856, originally had the depot, hotels, stores and other buildings. Cypress now has many stores and shopping malls, numerous hotels, highly equipped hospitals, many churches, countless professional office buildings, elementary and higher education institutions and libraries, public utilities, and many more services for their 202,936 residents.

Mark Your Calendars!

June 1 – CHS Board Mtg

Board of Directors Elections

(All Members welcome)

Wednesday, 1:00am, CHS Library
Cypress Top Historic Park

June 11 – Cy-Fair H.S. Reunion

Classes of 1941-1960

Saturday, 10-2, Juergen Hall
Cypress Top Historic Park

July 6 – CHS Board Mtg

Board of Directors Elections

(All Members welcome)

Wednesday, 1:00am, CHS Library
Cypress Top Historic Park

“Living on the School Grounds, Part 5”: Cars!

By LeRoy Schlechte, CFHS Class of '54

When I was going to HS (at Cy-Fair) back in the 50's, not too many guys had their own car. It was not unusual, however, for families to have two cars, a “nice” (or Sunday) car, and a second (or “work” car). Pickup trucks were totally utility vehicles (and rather basic), so that only farmers and ranchers had such. So if a guy (or perhaps a gal) needed to use a car, it was probably the “work” car. Perhaps if he had a heavy date on Saturday night, he got to use the “nice” car.

One exception was my best friend, Harold “Pete” Scholz. With six or seven older brothers, there always seemed to be cars around to use (all Fords, but I'll get to that later). One of our favorites was a 1939 or '40 Lincoln Zephyr sedan, lovingly nicknamed “the Heifer.” The original Lincoln V-12 had worn out, so somebody installed a very used Ford Flathead V-8, along with dual “Smittys.” Grossly under-powered, but impressive, and very loud. There's an incident about my mom getting thrown out during a bit of wild driving. Fortunately she wasn't hurt, and I'll leave the rest of the story for another time.

Back then (and I'm sure some of the old timers out there will back me up), there were “Ford families” and “Chevy families.” Really don't know how they got that way, but there was definitely a rivalry. Gosh, I really don't know what sort of people drove Plymouths or Dodges, or whatever. Only the “rich” drove Buicks, Lincolns, Chryslers, Packards, etc., which we were not. The Scholzs were a Ford family, of course, as were the Schlechtes. In fact, my first car, which I purchased while in college, was a used '50 Ford Tudor, bought from one of Pete's older brothers. I've included an old photo (vintage 1956) of the Schlechte Fords, parked in front of our house, with images of Cy-Fair elementary in the background. Pictured are big brother Bob's '53 hardtop, my '50, Dad's '47 and brother Bob's old '40, which he hadn't sold yet. Also pictured is my '50 about a year or so later, after it had been mildly customized. The color was lavender (!); the inspiration was the '55 Mercedes 300SL.

When it came to performance, Fords definitely had the edge with their V8 engine. Gee, I never heard of anyone souping up a Chevy, although there were hopped-up Chevy/GMC 6-cylinder engines available for stock car racing, etc. All that changed in 1955 however, with the introduction of the Chevy small-block V8. All of a sudden the tables were turned, and our flatheads were out of date. Even today, restored or

customized '55, '56 and '57 Chevy hardtops are some of the most sought-after classic cars on the market.

But wait, I've used up all of my space. I'll save other “car stories” for another time. In the meantime, “Keep on Trucking!”



LeRoy's 1950 Ford Tudor, in 1957, after it had been mildly customized with a touch of a '55 Mercedes 300SL. The color was lavender!



The Schlechte family Fords in 1956: (r to l) Bob's '53 hardtop, LeRoy's '50, Dad's '47 and Bob's old '40, which he hadn't sold yet.

Cypress Historical Society

P.O. Box 2963

Cypress, Texas 77410

E-Mail: cypresshistsociety@att.net

Darline Roth Research Library:

281-758-0083

Tue 9am-4pm, Wed & Thu 9am-Noon

Fairbanks' Eleanor Shobert Recognized by Local DAR Chapter

by Sharon Miller

On March 24, 2022, in honor of Women's History Month, the Elisha Roberts Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR) celebrated the accomplishments of Mrs. Eleanor Harding Shobert. A certificate and medal were presented to Michelle Christie, President of the Cypress Historical Society, to be exhibited with Mrs. Shobert's portrait and biography currently on display in the Darlene Roth Library.

The following tribute immortalizes Mrs. Shobert on the NSDAR website:

"Eleanor Harding Shobert, affectionately known as 'Miss Eleanor' and 'Grandmaw of Fairbanks', was Postmaster of Fairbanks from 1919 to 1962."

The most prominent and poignant memory of Miss Eleanor was her community service during World War II. Western Union would call with War Department casualty notices for the Fairbanks area and Miss Eleanor would personally deliver the news "for such messages must be delivered in person".

Among her many other extraordinary accomplishments she:

- Served as Fairbanks Methodist Church pianist for 30 years
- Delivered babies when the Houston doctor was late
- Served on the executive committee of the Houston-Harris County Red Cross
- Was the Librarian for the Fairbanks Branch of the Houston Public Library

To learn more about Mrs. Eleanor Harding Shobert visit the Darlene Roth Library and see our Fairbanks community binders.



"What's Your Story?" Workshops Offered Again by Popular Demand !

by Jay Gavitt

Ever wonder how you can get your family stories to your children and grandchildren? The "What's Your Story?" workshops, conducted by CHS member Jackie Devine, met each Thursday in April from 10:00 to 12:00. The first hour was devoted to those of us just starting. The second hour was for those a little longer in the process. I found it useful to stay for both sessions. The initial workshops met for 4 weeks at the Cypress Historical Society. These workshops were so popular, that they were extended for an additional month. They will again be offered to the public, free of charge, from June 2 through June 23. Having participated in the series of Jackie's workshops, we explored tips on collecting family history; preserving photos; and organizing and recording our stories. The activities center around jumpstarting on our stories and memoir writing. Some of us were just starting and these workshops helped us in starting to think about our family stories. We began to write about individual stories in the form a memoir. The great things about Jackie's workshops are that she is able to assist you at any stage in the process that you are at. If you're stuck, as I was, she provides you with examples to help you. Jackie's experiences as an author, editor, writing coach, and publishing coach are very apparent in the help she provided all attendees. We hope to see you in June. If interested contact Jackie at: jackie.devine@comcast.net

Early History of the Cypress Area

The “*Early History of Cypress: 1831-1910*” talk was presented by Jim Sigmund at Kleb Woods on May 12th (Precinct 4 History Discussion Group) and at the CHS Library on May 19th (Precinct 3 History Discussion Group). Jim shared some of the latest findings on the origins of the Cypress community, and how it was settled even before the Texas Revolution at the junction of two of the earliest roads in the area. The arrival of the railroad in 1856 confirmed it as one of the most important towns northwest of Houston.



Jim Sigmund shares our latest Cypress area research.

In Memory of Jay Gavitt

by Jim Sigmund

All of us at the Cypress Historical Society were shocked and saddened by the sudden passing of one of our most active volunteers. Jay Gavitt joined in 2013, and has been a library worker and the coordinator of our Educational programs. As a retired history teacher and school administrator, Jay's passion was making history hands-on and relatable to students of all ages. He loved working with school and Scout groups, giving tours at Cypress Top Park and Kleb Woods, and maintaining the CHS artifacts collections. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife, Diane, and all of his family, who have joined him in being so supportive of the Cypress Historical Society.



Jay Gavitt loved to teach kids through building models and showing artifacts. Rather than “telling” them facts, he would ask questions, let them hold and study the artifacts, and discover the answers for themselves.



Our Cy-Fair Schools display has grown through recent donations and the creative talents of CHS volunteer and Cy-Fair Class of '89 Stacie McKay.

THANKS TO OUR APR-JUN BENEFACTORS!

Donations:

John & Virginia Alamanza
Don & Deborah Clanton
Kim Farr
The Kroger Company
James & Dorothy Treichel

Lifetime Membership:

Mary Beckendorf
Kim Farr
Conrad Zahn

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

CYPRESS HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2022 MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name(s) _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

Individual (\$15) _____

Sponsor (\$100) _____

Family (\$25) _____

Corporate Sponsor (\$250) _____

Business (\$30) _____

LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP

Lifetime Individual (\$150) _____ Lifetime Family (\$250) _____

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 us at 281-758-0083 (Library)
www.cypresshistoricalsociety.com

FOR OFFICE USE:

Check #/Amt _____

Treasurer _____

Letter/Card _____

Spreadsheet _____