



CYPRESS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ISSUE 60

ESTABLISHED 2008
CYPRESS, TEXAS

MARCH 2024

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - MICHELLE CHRISTIE

As we embark on a new year, we reflect on the legacies that have shaped our society.

With heavy hearts, we mourn the passing of Marvin Weiman, a cherished benefactor whose contributions [railway safe and stepstool among the most visible] enriched our collection.

We also commemorate the 10th anniversary of Darline Roth's passing, whose dedication to Cypress genealogies laid the foundation for our library and museum.

Inspired by their commitment, we renew our resolve to honor their memory through our continued preservation and celebration of history.

CYPRESS CITY AND THE CIVIL WAR

by Eric Briggs

During the period of the Civil War, Texas was for the most part, untouched by any significant battles or skirmishes. With the exception of a few notable events, like the last battle of the war being fought in Texas, life remained relatively normal by most standards of the time. But we cannot say that Texas, and even our little suburb of Cypress was not touched by the Civil War. After all, not unlike most towns along major railroads, Houston, Cypress and Hempstead had Confederate camps of all kinds dotting the railway lines.

For the town of Cypress City, as it was called in the 1860's, we had our own Confederate camp called Camp Cypress. Camp Cypress was by all accounts a 'mustering and foraging camp'. These types of camps were locations meant to gather equipment, train troops and await orders. Farther down the tracks in Hempstead, there were 4 major Confederate camps all anchored by Camp Groce. At Camp Cypress, the conscript officer was local justice of the peace named John Peter Christen who had emigrated to the area from France.

Although not nearly as large as the camps in Hempstead, Camp Cypress was still recognized as an important station between Hempstead and Houston and also as being the home of one of the companies of the infamous 1st Texas Artillery.

While keeping the exact location of the camp

confidential for historical and archeological purposes, we can say that its general location was about a mile southeast of the current location of present day Juergens Hall.



The author and Rich Sandman with the Civil War era relics they unearthed and graciously donated to CHS



Tent Stakes

frequently had to camp for the night in the adjacent field until the next day.

So to give you a visual idea of this, imagine standing in the parking lot of Juergens Hall looking towards the south side of the railroad tracks and seeing several small white canvas tents set up with new freshly minted soldiers sitting around a campfire nervously awaiting what their future may hold in the face of battle. In fact, if you stood in the same spot and simply looked south towards mounds road, you would have seen nothing but fields and the trees that traced the route of Cypress Creek off in the distance. In contrast today, you would stand in that same parking lot and look towards those railroad tracks and see nothing but...

continued on page 2...

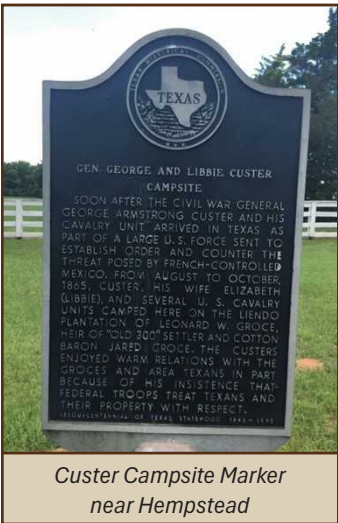
apartments. As always, nothing stays the same and time marches on.

Back in the 1860's there was not much to be seen in Cypress City, a few scattered buildings and a house dotted here or there. Cypress was once described as nothing more than a "wide spot in the road" but as small towns go, Cypress has hosted some extremely famous people in its day. The year 1865 was no exception.

After the signing of the surrender at Appomattox, General Grant issued orders to one of his most famous and successful generals to head to Texas and head up the reconstruction efforts. A young, brash, fearlessly gallant general named George Armstrong Custer. His orders were to assemble approximately 7000 troops and mounted cavalry and make his way to Austin.

The trip was long and arduous and plagued with illnesses like yellow fever, exhaustion and a little bit of mutiny from tired troops who just wanted to go home. Along for the trip in his massive caravan was his wife, Elizabeth Custer who wrote extensively about the trip.

Upon approaching Houston, Custer led his troops north to Cold Spring in order to prevent his men from getting drunk and disorderly in Houston, which at the time was dense with saloons and brothels. He then made his way from Cold Spring down to Cypress ending up almost exactly at the location of Camp Cypress.



Custer Campsite Marker near Hempstead

Custer made it a point to camp at almost every Confederate camp along the way. He knew there would be supplies and water for his men and horses. He also knew that peace making was his top priority and these camps were a good place to start making that peace.

On September 20th 1865, Custer and his troops set up camp in Cypress. His camp stretched from close to Cypress Creek all the way along the railroad

tracks almost all the way to present day House and Hahl road. During their short stay, Custer and his wife Elizabeth visited the local businesses to try and buy or barter for supplies and to do a limited amount of public relations by letting people know that their mission was to keep the peace and prevent lawlessness which was an active threat in Texas at the time. Although his layover in Cypress was only two days, it made quite an impression.



George and Liddie Custer, newlyweds in 1864

On September 22nd at 4am, upon hearing reveille bugles, they all pulled up their stakes and began to make their way west, following the railroad tracks to their next stop in Hempstead. It was such a spectacle that the Houston newspapers wrote a short article about their trip through Cypress.

As you can imagine, 7000 tattered, weary, war torn troops can leave behind a lot of bits and pieces. Everything from buttons, dropped bullets, buckles, hat pins, gun parts and every other piece of worn out gear you can imagine was dropped and left behind during their short stay in Cypress as well as every other location they camped at.

Much of this Cypress history is recorded for us to read and experience in our minds eye. But for local history enthusiasts like myself, actually holding the tattered small pieces of that story in my hands, brings it to life, many people are the same way. During our search for Camp Cypress and the tracks of the Union troops, we were fortunate enough to find countless relics of these Civil War movements in our little town. If you would like to experience them in person for yourself, I highly recommend you visit the Cypress Historical Society and view the display of items that we discovered and donated for the public to see.

Just remember, history is right under your feet. All you have to do is look for it.

THANKS TO OUR BENEFACTORS
(SEP-MAR)

\$ # & "

- John Alamanza
- Leroy & Joyce Schlecte
- Sandra & Stacy Davis
- Dan & Becky Martin
- Glyn Wilborg
- Bobby Barrett
- Colleen Moreno
- Shirley Milton
- Henry Steinhagen
- D "N" L Services

"# ! %

- Mary Airola Smith
- Anna M. Hagler
- Donald M. Clanton

\$ # % " "
(%# \$ (%

FAMILY HISTORY

THE ADAM FAMILY - GROCERIES, MAIL, AND CFISD

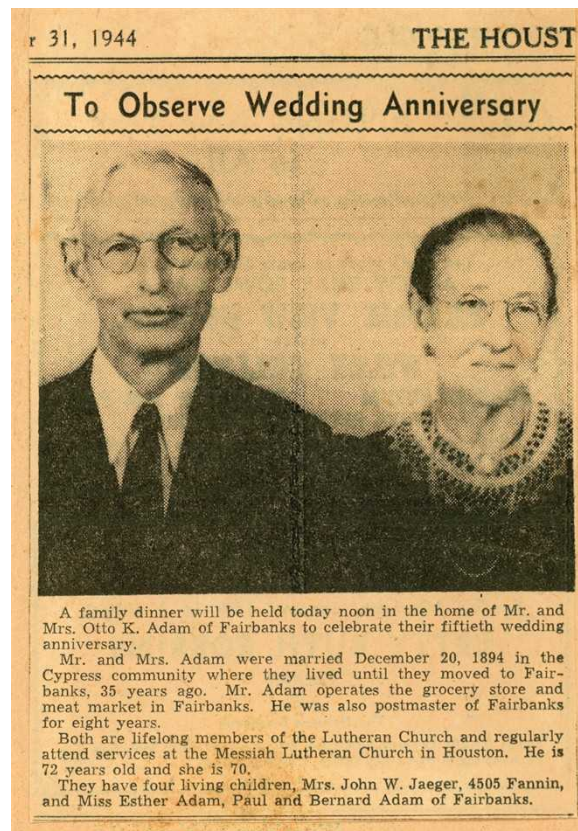
In 1908, Otto Adam and his wife August [née Kitzmann], opened a grocery and post office in Fairbanks. He was a German immigrant who came to Cypress to run a farm, then moved to Fairbanks to open the store. Our board member, Beverly Richardson, recalls going with her family to this store on multiple occasions - but she was never allowed to go inside, due to it also being a saloon!

Otto and August celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary, New Year's Eve 1944, with a big party put on by their children, and newspaper articles honoring their family.

Otto and August's son Bernard went on to be on the Board of CFISD for 24 years, and is one of the key players responsible for the district NOT splitting in two in 1953. He had a vision for a unified Cypress and Fairbanks community, that vision was certainly a good one.



Adam Grocery, Fairbanks, 1908



NEWS & EVENTS

BAY AREA COMMUNITY CENTER SENIOR BUS TRIP

In early March, we hosted a baker's dozen seniors from the Bay Area Community Center Senior Bus Trip. Harris County Precinct 2 coordinates multiple senior trips every month, we're so pleased that one of them was a trip to our lovely historic park.

As Michelle was showing them the photos of Trail Riders coming through Cypress through the years, one of the ladies mentioned that she'd actually done the HLS&R Trail Ride once herself.

The rapid growth of the Cypress area - with suburban sprawl crowding out farms and ranches and dance halls isn't unlike the rapid growth in the Bay Area. We all shared the appreciation for both the modernity we enjoy and those who came before and made it possible.

They also had lunch afterward at Black Bear Diner, but I'd like to think the park tour was the true highlight!



LET US KNOW ABOUT

- Upcoming reunions
- Social events
- Tour requests
- Presentation requests

STUDENTS FROM SECOND BAPTIST CAME FOR A TOUR

In late January, two lovely young ladies, Kylee and Olivia, students at Second Baptist, came with their mothers and younger siblings to tour Cypress Top Historic Park. This was a school project for them, learning about local history, taking notes, and then having to write a report.

Their families, and most of their friends, are new to the Cypress area, and think of it mostly as the NW suburbs of Houston. Our rich immigrant, small town, dairy and farmland history was a bit of a surprise to them, and one that lit up their bright and curious minds.

Becky Martin was here when they arrived, so they were able to meet a descendant of the donors of the park - making the direct connection to history even more personal.

Though our old buildings and artifacts seem to come from so far in the past, being able to put these "old things"

directly in the day to day lives of real people can really increase the impact on the young. After all, it's the young who so need to learn the value of our history.

The girls, their moms, and their siblings were such a delight. We so enjoy sharing our library, museum, and the park properties with those who are interested and curious. We hope to be able to provide a tour for the elementary school that the younger siblings attend!



SAVE THE DATE

Rosehill Social Club
Annual Fundraiser
Sunday after Mother's Day
May 19, 2024

LIBRARY & MUSEUM

PLANS, WE HAVE THEM



CHS has a large and growing list of projects we aim to complete. I wanted to take a moment to share a few things with you so you know what we're up to in that yellow building, and if you want to help....please do!

We're blessed to have a large collection of library and museum items, our donors and volunteers have been so generous over the years. We now realize that we have a "challenge of success" - we need to deploy a more sophisticated and flexible system to manage these collections.

With data management we will be able to better know what we have, be

able to combine disparate sources of information, be able to provide information to our members and others more effectively, and better tell the story of the development of the Cypress area.

We have deployed

Microsoft Office on all of the computers, file centralization is underway, enabling easier access, backups, and reduction of duplication.

We'll put all of our old newsletters on our website so you will be able to browse the archives.

In the real, non-computer

world, we want to spruce up our display cases, highlight new items. Other museums rotate their collections to keep things fresh, we want to do a bit of that, too!

Working with the County on maintenance of the Historic Park buildings and furnishings is a HUGE part of our goals for this year.

We also want to improve our outreach, bring more people to the park to

learn and appreciate, fine tune our tour process, add docents.

It's a big list! Ideas welcomed!



How You Can Help CHS

- Write an article for the newsletter
- Choose us on Kroger Community Rewards
- Become a Member
- Volunteer with us we will find a place for your gifts and talents

ITEMS FOR SALE

- Calendars \$15
- Hats \$10
- Polo shirts \$20
- T-shirts \$10
- Cookbook \$20
- Postcards \$1
- Memberships Individual \$20/yr Family \$30/yr



WHAT'S NEW AT THE LIBRARY & MUSEUM

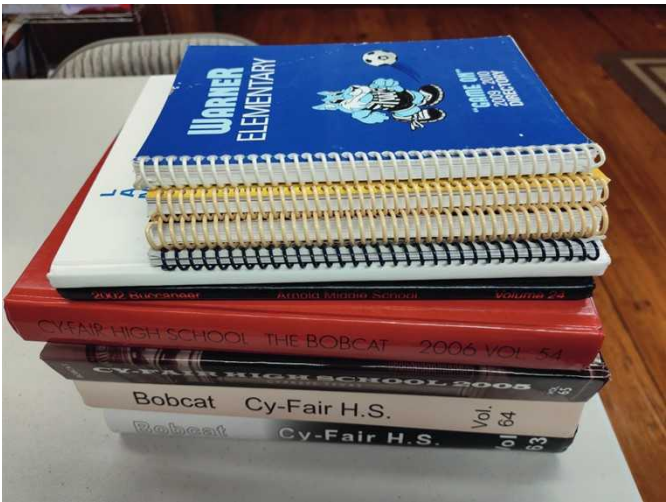
Stacie McKay donated a batch of genealogical reference books which are already on the shelves and available for use.

New volunteer Denise Zopfi - who has been doing GREAT work on our family history binders - brought a nice stack of yearbooks and directories from Cy-Fair High School, Warner Elementary, and Arnold Middle. These items are also up on the shelves and available for your perusal.

Speaking of the family history binders, that major project is nearing completion. Thanks to the hard work of Michelle, Beverly, Denise and others our library will soon have binders for the founding families - color coded by generation - with genealogical information, photos, and memories sorted, labeled and protected.

Did I say "nearing completion"? Well, you know nothing is ever truly complete - this will complete phase one. Then it's on to consolidation, rearrangement, clarification, and cross-referencing!

An historian's work is never done!



AREA HISTORY

WILLIS WOOD CEMETERY HISTORICAL MARKER DEDICATION

Willis Wood Cemetery is now officially an Historic Texas Cemetery. The Historic Marker was unveiled at a lovely ceremony hosted by the Kohnville Community Association.

This cemetery is the resting place of several African American families who came to this area of Texas in search of freedom and opportunity.



The ceremony was led by Joanne Green, longtime friend of CHS and President of the KCA, as well as other descendants of the Solomon and Wood families.

Joanne and the KCA have worked for years to get and keep this cemetery in great condition, and to get the official recognition and protection it so deserves. Congratulations and job well done to all at the KCA!



(! " ## # \$ " \$(

Founded 2008

Our mission is to discover, educate, promote, collect, preserve and make available to the public, historical documents and artifacts of the Cypress area.

" " "(%# %

at Cypress Top Historic Park
26026 Hempstead Rd
Cypress, TX 77429-7321
Phone: 281-758-0083

% " #

TUESDAY 9am-4pm
THURSDAY 9am-Noon
FRIDAY 9am-Noon

" " \$ "#

President-Michelle Christie
Vice-President-Leslie Price
Secretary-Stacie McKay
Treasurer-Becky Martin
Barbara Fisk-Dorr
Celeste Haltom
Beverly Richardson
Erline Schoenfeldt

" \$ #

1pm, first Friday every month
all are welcome

" ##

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

\$

Cypresshistoricalsociety.com

' # \$ \$ "

Editor-Leslie Price
news@cypresshistoricalsociety.com



CYPRESSHISTORICALSOCIETY.COM



WHO WE ARE

The Cypress Historical Society [CHS], a 501(c)3 organization, was founded in March 2008.

Our mission is to make the rich, colorful history of the Cypress area known to the current residents of Cypress and the public in general

WHAT WE DO

We preserve local artifacts, conduct genealogical research of the settling families, assist the public with their own family history research, offer history presentations, assist the County with tours of Cypress Top Park, and more.

MEMBERSHIP

\$20/yr individual
\$30/yr family