



FRANKLIN COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Volume 24, Number 3, May/June 2019

Website: <http://www.fcha-online.org>

Date: Thursday, May 9th – Meal Provided

(Note Date Change)

Time: 6 p.m.

Program: MVIDS 7th Grade Civil War Journal Banquet

Place: Cultural Arts Building, 100 Rusk Street, Mt. Vernon

DUE TO SCHEDULING CONFLICTS WITH OUR FEATURED SPEAKER, THE MAY 6TH MEETING IS BEING MOVED TO THURSDAY, MAY 9TH, AT 6 P.M., AT THE CULTURAL ARTS CENTER.

A CATERED, BARBEQUE DINNER WILL BE PROVIDED.

THE PROGRAM FOR THE EVENING WILL BE FCHA'S ANNUAL CIVIL WAR JOURNAL BANQUET.

EVERY SPRING, SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS AT MT. VERNON MIDDLE SCHOOL ARE CHALLENGED TO KEEP A JOURNAL AS A FICTIONAL CHARACTER OF THEIR CHOOSING DURING THE CIVIL WAR. THEY MAY DECIDE TO BECOME A SOLDIER FOR THE UNION OR CONFEDERATE ARMY, A SPY, A PLANTATION OWNER, A NURSE/DOCTOR, AN ABOLITIONIST, OR ANY OTHER PERSON WHO COULD HAVE LIVED DURING THAT ERA AND DESCRIBE HOW THEIR DAILY LIFE WAS AFFECTED BY THE WAR.

ONCE THE TEN BEST JOURNALS ARE SELECTED BY THE SEVENTH GRADE TEACHERS, THEY ARE PASSED ON TO FCHA'S TEAM OF JUDGES. THE CIVIL WAR JOURNAL BANQUET HONORS THESE TEN FINALISTS AND THE TOP THREE WINNERS WILL BE ANNOUNCED.

FCHA WOULD LIKE TO THANK ROPER & WHITE, ATTORNEYS AT LAW, AND SCOTT HARVEY FOR SPONSORING THIS EVENT. YOUR GENEROSITY AND DEDICATION TO OUR EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH PROGRAMS ALLOWS US TO SHOWCASE THESE STUDENTS AND THEIR WORK.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR AN ENTERTAINING EVENING AND TO SHOW YOUR SUPPORT!

Wilkinson Library Donations

Donations have been made to the Wilkinson Texana Library at the Fire Station Museum during the past several months by a number of individuals.

Mount Vernon Music donated a copy of their publication "The Town Musicians: A musical adventure," written by Benesikt Brysern. This volume includes a CD to accompany the book and was the first volume published by the organization. A second book is being prepared.

Trilla Nordyke Pando donated two books by her father, author and journalist Lewis Nordyke. The two books are "Cattle Empire: The fabulous story of the 3,000,000 acre XIT;" the tale of the building of the Texas State Capitol Building, paid for by 10 counties in the Texas Panhandle, comprising some 3,000,000 acres, and "Great Roundup: The Story of Texas and Southwestern Cattlemen." This book tells the tale of the beginnings and history of the Texas and Southwestern Cattleraisers Association.

Tom Wilkinson III donated a number of volumes including "Roadside Flowers of Texas: Flowering Plants," by Mary Motz Wills and Howard S. Irwin; "Wanderer Springs," a novel by Robert Flynn; and "Touring Texas Towns, A Journey Through the Lone Star State," by James and Linda Jennings.

Also, "Courthouses of Texas: A guide to Texas Courthouses" by Mavis P. Kelsey, Sr., and Donald H. Dyal, and "The Texas Capitol: A History of the Lone Star Statehouse," were also given by Wilkinson.

"Texas Extra: A Newspaper History of the Lone Star State 1835-1935, from the Collection of Eric C. Caren," was given in memory of Charles K. and Lyde Devall, Mount Vernon Optic Herald and Kilgore News publishers by Robert Sterling Long.

Long also added to the art section of the Library with "Lone Star Impressions, Prints by Peregrine Press," and "Lagniappe: Works by Leticia Huckaby," published by the Tyler Museum of Art, and "Trenton Doyle Hancock, Epidemic," published by the Menil Collection, Houston, in honor of Betty Moody.

The Wilkinson Texana Library is a non-circulating research library located in the Fire Station Museum and is open on Saturdays from 10 am until 2 pm or by appointment.



Catalog of Lucas Johnson's Works Added to Wilkinson Texana Library

"The Art and Life of Lucas Johnson," mid-to-late 20th Century Texas artist, was the subject of a recent show held at the Moody Gallery in Houston and a copy of the catalog of his works was presented to the Franklin County Historical Association for inclusion in the Wilkinson Texana Library by his widow, Patricia Covo Johnson.

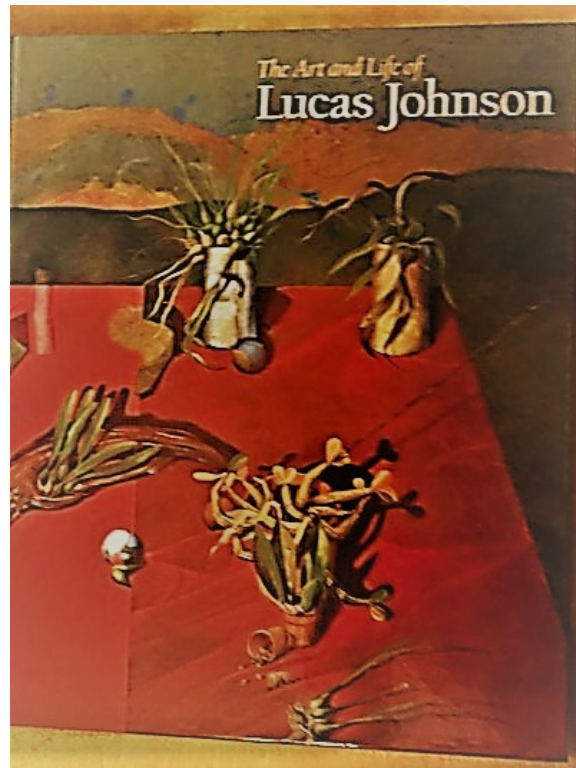
Speaking at a special program, Patty Lucas detailed how her husband's work was influenced by his time in Houston and Mexico during the mid-to-late twentieth century, and how his work was followed by Texas as well as Mexican artists in this very important period of art history. His "direct interaction with Mexico's artists and thinkers, provided a pivotal link between artists from both sides of the border," the introduction begins.

Johnson was influenced by many things, including Surrealism, and he produced works in pen and ink, as well as paintings in many media. His works are found in numerous museum collections in Texas and across the United States.

Walter Hopps, longtime director of the Menil Collection, Edmund Pillsbury, director of the Kimbell Museum in Fort Worth, and Johnson's wife provided the accompanying text to the volume. Mrs. Johnson was the former director of art galleries in Mexico and Texas, longtime arts critic for the Houston Chronicle and was twice nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in criticism.



Patricia Covo Johnson (Mrs. Lucas Johnson) gives an interesting and entertaining talk regarding the work of her husband, Lucas Johnson, on the occasion of a retrospective of his work in Houston at Moody Gallery.



This beautifully illustrated volume provides a look at an important Texas artist in a period in art history which changed the way we look at art.

Cherry Eagle Brand Icebox Pie

By Dorothy Winfield

1 can pie cherries, drained
1 carton Cool Whip
1 C chopped pecans
1 can Eagle Brand milk
¼ C. lemon juice
Few drops red food coloring

Mix and pour into graham cracker pie crust.
Refrigerate until serving time.



Charles and Dorothy
Winfield

Dorothy Tucker Winfield, born 1931, is the daughter of the Rev. Charles Andrew Tucker (1898-1983) and his wife, Annie Adele Fincher Tucker (1901-1985). Her father was a Presbyterian minister. Her parents retired to Mt. Vernon and both died here. Dorothy and her husband, Charles, moved to Mt. Vernon in 1973 from Celina; both were teachers and are active with the Retired Teachers Association. They have two children: Alan and Margaret, and four grandchildren. They attend First United Methodist Church.

Memorials & Honorariums

Donated By:

John Hicks
B. F. Hicks
Cindy Stutts
Richard & James Hamrick
FCHA Board

Donated By:

Cindy Stutts
Bob McFarland
Alexandra Eggen

In Memory Of:

Lou Haley McCorkle
Lou Haley McCorkle
James Stutts
Billie Hamrick
Montie Monzingo

In Honor Of:

Peggy Stutts
Educational Programs
BF Hicks

The Moffett Photography Collection – Rural Schools and County Servants

By B.F. Hicks

For a period covering roughly 1926 through 1946, Arthur C. Moffett served in public office in Franklin County. He was county judge. He and his wife both taught in rural schools. They reared three children. Well-loved citizens; their home still stands on Carthel Street.

In his capacity as county judge, Mr. Moffett held the office of county school superintendent and coordinated maintenance, budget, attendance and staffing for the rural schools in the county; there were at least 30 schools in the decades when he held office. He had general supervision under state law until schools were consolidated.

With the advent of the automobile and construction of better roads school children were able to attend schools in central locations. By the 1960s there were three schools operating in the county: Hagansport in the north; South Franklin to the south and the Mt. Vernon Schools in the county seat; Mt. Vernon School system. The smaller schools in the north and the south were consolidated into the Mt. Vernon School system and the Black School at Denton was closed with integration so that one school served most of the county. Today, some parts of Franklin County are under the Winnsboro and Rivercrest systems, but the great majority of students living in Franklin County attend school in Mt. Vernon.

But let's visit the 1930's. Mr. Moffett was county judge and school superintendent. He visited his schools; made pictures of buildings; pictures of faculty (often only two or three teachers) and made pictures of children at play. I grew up in Mt. Vernon and I was hired as attorney for the family in settling the estates of both Stella and Cleve Moffett. These photographs were essentially just snapshots; most are small Kodak type shots of that era. He placed them in a three ring binder but he had labeled most of the pictures with location and date; an invaluable action for those who have followed him. His daughters, Mary Moffett and Ellen Martin, knew I loved history and they gave me the album of photographs.

I've puzzled for years with how to share the snapshots. They are wonderful images; some almost a century old. Candid shots of our shared past.

We have shared photocopies of the pictures many times but with the launch of our new website we can load the photographs in a special "Moffett Rural Schools" series. Luiz Sifuentes, our webmaster, advises that he can have a special tab allowing users to scroll over and enter an identification. Hopefully, people will recognize their ancestors; there may still be a few students living from the series.

We have a table of contents listing all 173 photographs from the album. And, even better, we have an alphabetical index. Thus, if you check the index for "Birdsong" you then know that a "Birdsong" will be in photograph 68; scroll to photo 68 and check the photo to see if it is your family member or friend.

If you know that someone in your family attended the Friendship School, you can check the school group. If you recognize someone in a photograph, then post a note regarding identification. We can offer up this resource for our community. Until now I had held the album with a degree of frustration; you'll be proud of our website and what we can offer for research and the tool we will have available for coming generations to look back through this window to the past.

Mr. Moffett was a coin collector. When I am about 10 years old, he instills some interest in me in the hobby. He starts taking me to the Mt. Pleasant coin club monthly meetings (seems like it was second Monday night). For maybe 5 years he would come to my parents' house; pick me up and take me with him to the club meetings. My father was an extremely affable man. His friends were always anxious to help with "the boys" and I may have had the best deal. The oldest of three boys, I jumped at any

invitation to escape those younger boys at home. Charlie Brown hauled me off to summer camp for several years and he was always getting me involved in community service. And here's Mr. Moffett, a born teacher, taking me along to these very adult meetings of people of my grandparents' generation. Mr. Moffett was a great guy; he would be proud to have us identifying his pictures.

Arthur Cleveland Moffett was born August 31, 1895 and died August 25, 1985, a few days short of his 90th birthday. Stella Bacon Moffett died December 3, 1979. She was born August 7, 1896. Mr. Moffett served in the U.S. Army during World War I. They were salt of the earth.

Our FCHA chairman for membership and growth, Cynthia Loftis, pointed out the service we provide and interest we generate. We will make the photographs available for the public; no charge; check them out; print photographs that include your family or have an interest for you. As I said: Mr. Mofett would be proud.



Mr. A.C. Moffett

Ruth Loveless,
A.C. Moffett,
W.D. Williamson,
Jo Ben Burgin

Glade Springs School,
April 27, 1946

Jaggers Completes Court Records Restoration Project

Ellen Jaggers was appointed District Clerk for Franklin County in June 2005. Subsequently, she ran successfully for the office in the 2006, 2010, 2014 and 2018 election cycles, respectively. Since assuming the duties of the office, Jaggers has worked toward the preservation of the District Court records dating back to 1875.

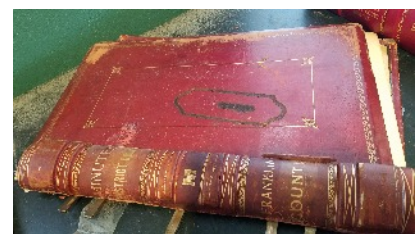
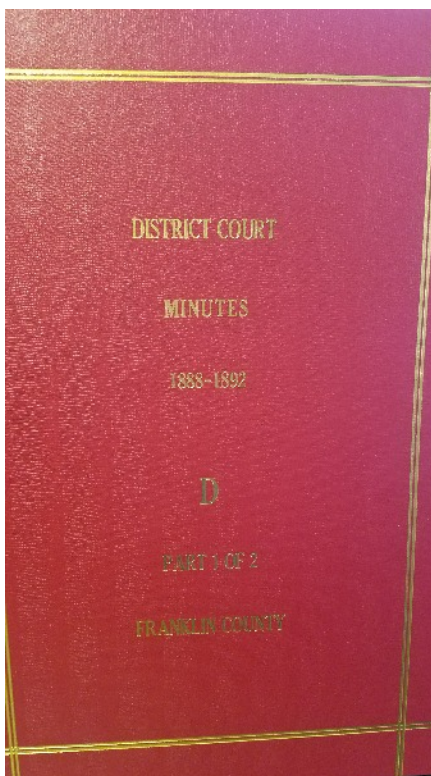
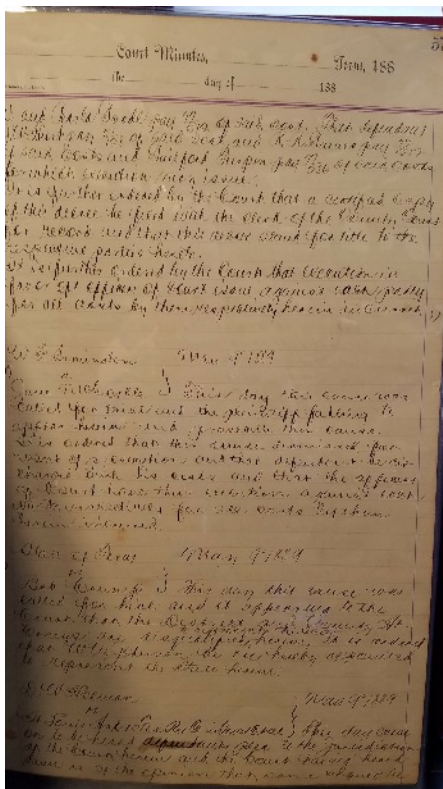
In 2009, she began the project with the scanning of all the case records from 1875 to 1987. After much research, Jaggers selected Dimension of Tyler, Texas, who provided a \$20,000.00 proposal to provide the services. She presented the information to the Commissioner Court and was granted the authority to proceed with the project. Approximately 252,000 pages were scanned to a database which is used today to perform indexed searches of the records. This project was paid for by the District Court records management fee that is collected as a cost of court on civil, family, and certain criminal cases.

Also, in 2009, the 81st Legislature enacted Senate Bill 1685, which created a District Court Records Technology Fee for the District Clerks in Texas to collect in addition to the Records Management fee. This fee started out as not more than \$10.00 per case filing and decreases to not more than \$5.00 effective September 1, 2019, according to the bill. In order to collect this fee, Ms. Jaggers has to prepare an annual written plan that describes the intent of the restoration.

In October, 2018, Jaggers entered into a contract with Scott-Merriman and Sutterfield Technologies to perform the complete restoration of fifteen of the District Court minute books that are permanent records of the courts. The restoration includes new binders, de-acidification sleeves and encapsulation for each page in the respective books. A digital image of each page is also included as part of the proposal.

On Friday, April 12, 2019, the completed books were delivered to Ms. Jaggers. They are kept in the records room off the District Courtroom and available for anyone to view.

Jaggers stated, "I am very pleased with the work performed and that our history is preserved for future generations to have access to such wonderful information about our county."



Photos depict the restoration of records from original handwritten, deteriorating volumes, to now-permanent binders available to everyone for viewing.

Night at the Museum

The day began with threatening weather, but by the afternoon the sun made its appearance and so did the crowds. Approximately 150-200 people attended the annual Night at the Museum where fifth and sixth grade students portrayed figures from Franklin County's historic past. Nineteen students participated this year with their exhibits on display in the Cotton Belt Depot and Fire Station Museum.

Judges from Red River Historical Society admitted to having a difficult time choosing winners this year with so many elaborate exhibits and animated characters telling their stories. Ultimately, decisions were made and the students selected for the top prizes were: First Place, and winner of \$250.00, Kaleigh Copeland as Dean Teague; Second Place, \$200.00, Reese Conlon as Minnie Green; Third Place, \$150.00, Marissa Bankhead as Agnes Burns; and People's Choice, \$100, Emmi Jordan as Jean Jordan.

Special thanks to Northeast Texas Land Titles for sponsoring this event and thank you, MVISD fifth and sixth grade students and teachers for helping to keep our local history alive!



Night at the Museum Winners:

First Place, and winner of \$250.00, Kaleigh Copeland as Dean Teague;

Second Place, \$200.00, Reese Conlon as Minnie Green;

Third Place, \$150.00, Marissa Bankhead as Agnes Burns;

People's Choice, \$100, Emmi Jordan as Jean Jordan.



Kaleigh Copeland
as Dean Teague
(Top)



Reese Conlon as
Minnie Green
(Bottom)



Marissa Bankhead as Agnes Burns (Top)

Night at the Museum Participants (Below)



The 1894 Railroad Depot – Mt. Vernon, Texas

The St. Louis Arkansas & Texas Railroad Company surveyed a line through Mt. Vernon in 1886. The railroad's charter was amended to allow construction of a line from Mt. Pleasant to Sherman. Right-of-way was purchased along an east-west line just south of and running parallel with Mt. Vernon's Main Street.

Deeds dating in early 1887 show the acquisition including a long section just east of Holbrook Street purchased from the Rountree family passing through the middle of the Rountree farm. The property passing south of Mt. Vernon's downtown was purchased from J.R. Turner.

Construction passed through Mt. Vernon in 1887. By the end of 1887, the line was completed for service into Mt. Vernon on standard gauge. Within 20 years the railroad was commonly known as the St. Louis Southwestern RR Co., Cotton Belt Route.

Other railroad charters included Mt. Vernon although none reached the town. The East Line & Red River was chartered on March 22, 1871 to construct a line from Jefferson to Sherman via Avinger, Hughes Springs, Mt. Pleasant, Mt. Vernon and Sulphur Springs. The charter was amended several times over the next six years with the line eventually passing through Daingerfield, Pittsburg, and Winnsboro enroute to Sulphur Springs. The Tyler TAP Railroad projected a line to Mt. Vernon but that charter was amended to pass from Gilmer to Mt. Pleasant and to Texarkana. The Sulphur Springs & Mt. Pleasant was chartered in 1886 but no construction was ever commenced. Another line, the Quitman & Great Northern was chartered in 1908 but there was no construction and the charter lapsed.

Rail service through Mt. Vernon was instituted in 1888 and it became possible to ride passenger trains to Fort Worth in the west and Texarkana in the east, with stops along the routes. Connecting railroads provided service on across most of America. There must have been a depot given the advertisements for Mt. Vernon as a freight stop but by 1894, the substantial depot which remains today was constructed.

The bay window faced to the south (building located on the north side of the tracks). The year was 1894; the United States Supreme Court had just confirmed the "separate but equal doctrine" for separation of the races and a white waiting room was placed on the west end of the depot building; with the colored (the terms used at the time) waiting room between the office and the freight room.

The building is pretty much the "cookie cutter" plan used for Cotton Belt depots across the south and many depots exist across Texas with the same floor plan and generally share the yellow paint with brown trim scheme which is exhibited in Mt. Vernon. The interior colors in Mt. Vernon are matched to wood scrapings and the building was restored to meet the standards imposed for restoration with federal funds for historical restoration and preservation projects.

In the 1998 restoration of the building, numbers of tickets were found with cancelation stamps dated in 1894 from Mt. Vernon, Texas. Some of these tickets are framed under glass on display in the depot. The Hamrick construction crew pulled tickets and freight receipts out of cracks between floor boards where they had been preserved since falling a century before. And, even better preserved, were some ticket stubs found in the den of a packrat in the attic; brought down in a bucket by Richard Hamrick who realized the value of his find.

Several photographs of the Depot located along the tracks are on display within the restored depot.

Passenger train service began with one train in each direction daily. By the early 1900's there were two passenger trains in each direction. In the late 1920's three passenger trains in each direction were running daily. One of these trains was named the Lone Star Limited, the premier service offered to Dallas and St. Louis.

By late 1929, the rapid deterioration of finances in the country led to the suspension of the Long Star Limited service. Service was reduced to two passenger trains daily in each direction and this continued until 1952 when schedules were restricted with one train per day. Regular passenger service was discontinued in April 1956 and the last passenger service through Mt. Vernon ended in 1958.

A freight agent remained on duty until mid-1969 when the station and depot was closed. The station had provided telegraph service through 1945. After the end of World War II the telegraph service was abolished. The Depot office has period furnishings including a telegraphy desk and unit dating from the 1930's. The railroad station-master's desk is from the Clarksville Railroad Depot and was given to the Mt. Vernon facility by Rudy and Lou Ledeen in 1998.

The Depot had no interior plumbing; water buckets are appropriately placed in the two waiting rooms and would have been utilized by the public with the dippers provided for each bucket. The rooms were heated by wood-burning stoves which fed into flues. The flues are of unusual construction with wood frames supporting brick flues to allow placement and operation of the stoves.

After 1969 the Bill Campbell family purchased the depot and moved it to a perpendicular location (forming a "T" running north from the tracks) about a block west of Kaufman Street. The building remained on railroad right-of-way and was under a lease with the Campbell family.

After Bill Campbell's death his son, Billy Campbell, gave the depot to the Franklin County Historical Association in 1990. In 1992 the Historical Association purchased the quarter-acre at the intersection of Scott Street and Kaufman Street from the Railroad Company and had the building moved to its present location.

Betty Klein, Virgie Beth Hughes, and Jean Jordan came forward and provided funds to protect the building, paying for movers and foundation work, a new roof, painting and some interior restoration.

The Railroad was unwilling to leave the building on right-of-way and today we have the original "track" side of the building facing South Kaufman Street. In 1997 the St. Louis Southwestern Railway Company (by now controlled by Union Pacific with offices in San Francisco) offered to sell the remainder of the entire block along Kaufman Street from the right-of way and the historical association raised the money and purchased the present grounds.

A 1998 federal restoration grant matched by the local historical association allowed for approval of a \$184,000.00 project allowing the addition of an adjacent building for restrooms, and complete restoration of the depot. Richard Hamrick of Mt. Vernon was successful bidder for the project and the grand opening was held in 1999 with an open house on December 31 that year.

When the Campbell Family purchased the building and moved it from its original location, they removed 24 feet on the west end of the freight room and two sets of loading ramps. The roof line was shortened so and the building is not as long as it was in the decades while in use for rail service. The Campbell family used the building for a retail feed store.

The historical association restored the depot as acquired and left the roof line in place. Early pictures do show the freight room with double loading ramps and doors extending well beyond the present structure (which has only loading ramps and doors on each side and at the end of the freight room).

In 2017 and 2018, Jimmy St. Clair and Franklin County funded installation of a model train exhibit in the white waiting room with buildings installed in the exhibit which are copies of buildings in Mt. Vernon in the year 1958, the last year of any passenger service passing through Mt. Vernon.

Jerald and Mary Lou Mowery spear-headed a team of volunteers spending thousands of hours in painting figures and buildings for the exhibit and preparing exhibits in the other rooms in the building. Cynthia Loftis, another volunteer, coordinated creation of exhibits in the freight room which reflect the history of the town and the relation of the depot and transportation.

As a result of flooding east of Plano in 1989, the main line to Dallas/Fort Worth remains broken and remains unrepaired. Under former Franklin County Judge Paul Lovier the railroad remains a viable source for commercial transportation across Northeast Texas and children can still see daily Blacklands Railroad Train Engines and Freight Cars making runs along the tracks which remain in continuous use after a century.

In 2000, Landon Ramsay gave the columns which had graced the front façade of the bank (now the library building on the square). In 2005, the Cecil Martin family (Pat Martin Wright and her brother Glenn Martin) gave an antique log cabin (corn crib) which is on the grounds. The John M. Hicks family gave their grandfather's cane mill and ribbon cane has been crushed and syrup boiled down on the grounds in sporadic seasons since 2000.

In November 2018, the entire commercial district of Mt. Vernon was named to the National Register of Historic Places and the Railroad Depot is a highlight among the buildings within the bounds of the Historic District.

Call 903-537-4760 to arrange a tour. Come experience the nature of an earlier Texas with a visit to Mt. Vernon.

The research for this article is based in an article and program presented by Charles E. Harris, Railroad Historian of Longview, Texas.



Spring Tours at Museums

The days are warmer and brighter, and wildflowers add pops of color to the landscape, signaling springtime is here.

And just like that, the tour season for FCHA has begun.

Recently, approximately fifty members of the Texas Corvette Club visited our museums. Each spring, the group selects an area to visit and this year they chose Northeast Texas. Hailing from all over the state, members traveled from as far away as Corpus Christi, Weatherford, Austin and Houston.

We hope that we'll be on their touring schedule again soon!

A few days later, we welcomed fifteen gentlemen to the Meredith exhibit who, along with Don Meredith, were members of the Phi Delta Theta Fraternity. As the men moved to each of the displays, they recalled many stories of Don and their college days at SMU. Local members of the fraternity who were part of the group included Tom Ramsay, Lanny Ramsay, Mike Edwards and Greg Carr.

The following week, FCHA hosted forty-seven students and eight chaperones from the Mennonite School in Emory. These bright-eyed children listened intently to the docents give historical accounts of the many exhibits at the Fire Station, Cotton Belt Depot and Civil War-era Thruston House.

The group finished out the day by enjoying sack lunches at the Lowry Pavilion and taking walking tours of Dupree Park.

We love sharing the rich history that each of our facilities has to offer!

If you or your group would like to schedule a tour of our museums, call 903-537-4760 to make an appointment.



Corvette Club Cars fill the Museum Parking Lot.



Students from the Mennonite School visited the Fire Station Museum (Top), the Railroad Depot (Middle), and the Thruston House.



Meredith Art Exhibit on Display

When Don and Susan Meredith determined to make Mt. Vernon the main repository of his sports memorabilia, few of us realized that Don was also a painter. Between 2000 and 2005, Don and Susan shipped many cartons of material and on October 13, 2006, with Don and Susan Meredith present, the FCHA president J.D. Baumgardner welcomed the public to the first viewing of the downstairs of the Fire Station Museum and the Meredith Exhibit. The Meredith exhibit remains open and welcoming.

At the time the artifacts came in, Don Meredith asked if we would like to have some of his painting. Most people knew that he had acted (starting in high school and continuing with drama studies in college on top of his sports career). People knew that he liked to sing. The art was a bit of a surprise. We hold about 150 paintings from the Meredith home. Of these, about 25 are oil paintings by Don Meredith and another 15 are by Susan.

Son Michael says that his father always liked art and would sketch on pads (and not just in a quarterback's playbook fashion).

Don became good friends with Dinah Shore. We have one of her cookbooks. We'll have to firm up the next inquiry: Did they cook together? In any event, we understand that they would spend time as friends will, palettes at the ready; painting. The evidence for this is tangible. We have hung all of the works by Don and Susan in the upstairs of the Fire Station. The show will remain up through September 30, 2019. Please call our offices and schedule a time to see the exhibit or come any Saturday from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Brochures with lists of the works and the artist are available in the museum and a catalog of the show and photographs from the exhibit are available on our website.

In the elevator foyer, we have five paintings from the Meredith home in Santa Fe including one original work by Dinah Shore.

Michael Meredith has weighed in with his personal take on his father's artistic bent. We advised Michael of the new show. He responds:

The last time I sat with Dad we talked about a painting. It was a piece that hung on the wall at the foot of his bed in Santa Fe and it seemed to bring him a lot of comfort. When I realized how much it meant to him, and what a sense of serenity it seemed to bring, I took a closer look. The first thing I recognized was the gazebo. I couldn't place it, but I knew that I had seen that gazebo before. The other was the mountain range, which I knew from my childhood in New Mexico.

When I asked where the painting was set, Dad smiled and said, "That's my hometown, son. That's the square in Mt. Vernon." He had taken the square and painted it into the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

For me, an artist's interpretation is what makes their work unique. Instead of showing us the world as they see it, they show us the world as they choose to see it. This allows us to see something through a different lens and perhaps even gives us a peek into the artist's soul.

Some of the paintings in this show remind me of places and moments from my past, wonderful times and great stories that I'll pass on to my kids when they grow older.

But mostly they remind me of what it felt like to just sit with Dad in a quiet room. To see things through his eyes, the way he wanted them to be seen. And to better understand what he cherished the most.



THE DON
& SUSAN
MEREDITH
ART
EXHIBIT

On Display Now Through
September 30th

At the Second
Floor Art Gallery
Fire Station
Museum

THE QUESTION OF THE YEAR

By Bob Cowser

Standing before the class as their teacher
that afternoon in late spring, I would have known
without a clock that it was the hour after lunch.

The odor of onions from the breath
of a girl on the front row,
the distinctive aroma of a taco shell
from a young man's exhaling,
and the heavy lids on the eyes of several
gathered in the room that day told me
what time it was.

After I delivered one of Housman's poems,
a man seated near my desk spoke.

"How do you read a poem?"

His face was guileless;
he was no heckler out for sport.

The question hung in the humid air
an impressive length of time, time enough for feet
to shuffle and eyes to gaze at open books
on the arms of the chairs.

What kind of gravity allowed the question
to undulate before us until
it finally dropped?

No other question as heavy
came that semester.

A Fishing Trip with Family and Friends

About or near the end of the 1940's, we had been living in a community some years when another family moved in to the white house on a hill about one-half mile down the road from our house. My mother soon visited with the mother of the family who recently moved in, and our two families later organized a fishing trip to a creek in the area, to get better acquainted.

So, one morning within the following early summertime my dad hitched up our two farm horses to the family wagon, and our family piled in to the wagon with a picnic lunch that my mother had carefully packed for the outing, along with the necessary fishing gear. My dad guided the farm horses down the road to the east to the white house on the hill of the family who had recently moved there. The new family met us on their front porch of the house that included the mother and dad; a daughter of about thirteen, and a son about twelve and another son about my age of nine.

So, after the new family with their picnic lunch was loaded in to the wagon, my dad guided the farm horses to the east, for about another half mile to a county road to the left, and we then traveled another mile or so to the creek, where Dad hitched the horses to a big oak tree and we walked with the picnic lunches and blankets to sit and lay on, further in to the woods and the creek in which we would fish for the rest of the day.

Then, after getting us situated at the creek, Dad and the other dad walked on further through the woods to the railroad that passed through the area, to fish in the large, deep pond that they knew about at a railroad bridge over the creek.

Meanwhile, until lunchtime and for the rest of the day, the new kids, and my brother and I enjoyed swinging on the many large grapevines hanging from the large oak trees of the woods.

We all got together again at noontime for a picnic which was greatly enjoyed by all. This was followed by the two dads and the older of the other dad's two sons returning to fish at the railroad pond.

About the middle of the afternoon, the usual passenger train traveling toward the east, passed with the woods being filled with the loud whistle of the steam engine, and the "clankety-clank" of the steel-wheels on the "jointed" rails.

At the end of the day the two dads returned with each bearing a "string of fish".

EPILOGUE: Mom and Dad were Leta Lois (Mattingly) and Roger Joe Banks, and Little Brother was Zack.

The "Community" was known as "Gray Rock" which is located to the southeast of Mount Vernon in Franklin County, Texas, along what is known as "Interstate Highway 30".

The horse-drawn wagon was towed by a spotted gelding named Banjo and a brown gelding by the name of Johnny.

The new neighbor family, who had recently moved to the Gray Rock Community, was Mildred (May) and Jack Stone with children: Virginia, Jimmy Jack and Tommy.

The "creek" was Ripley Creek which flows across about the middle of the Franklin County, from south of Mount Vernon, and eastward to an entry of Titus County, Texas.

And, that night our family was treated to a fine dinner of fresh grilled fish, fried potatoes and hot cornbread and butter.

Ralph K. Banks, Austin, Texas