



# FRANKLIN COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Volume 24, Number 1, January/February 2019

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

**Date:** January 7 - Pot Luck

**Time:** 6:00 p.m.

**Program:** Kerry Jones, U.S. National Park Service  
"The Life of Colonel H.C. Thruston"

**Place:** Cultural Arts Building, Mt. Vernon

**Hosts:** Beverly McPherson, B.F. Hicks, Robert Long, Steve Hammons

Kerry Jones, an Interpretation Park Guide at the Pea Ridge National Military Park in Arkansas, will be the speaker for the Franklin County Historical Association meeting, January 7, at 6 PM, to be held at the Cultural Arts Center in Mount Vernon. Jones will be discussing the Battle of Pea Ridge - where many soldiers from what is now Franklin County fought, and many died - and Colonel Henry Clay Thruston who was wounded at the Battle of Pea Ridge, before coming to Franklin County as a farmer, and living here the rest of his life.

Jones is a proud seventh generation Arkansan, with Scotts-Irish origins. As a boy, he would ramble over the Pea Ridge Battlefield with his grandfather, who instilled a love of history. Kerry attended Wichita State University with a double major in history and political science, and has a double major in academic history and public history in his graduate work.

He has served with the National Park Service at Pea Ridge, Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Park, Harry S. Truman National Historic Site, Vicksburg National Military Park, George Washington Carver National Monument, and the Buffalo National River.

A nationally certified Guide (C.I.G.), he also serves as a history professor at Northwest Arkansas Community College, and University of Arkansas at Fort Smith. He received a special award from the National Park Service for his research on Colonel Henry Clay Thruston of Franklin County, who fought at the Battle of Pea Ridge.

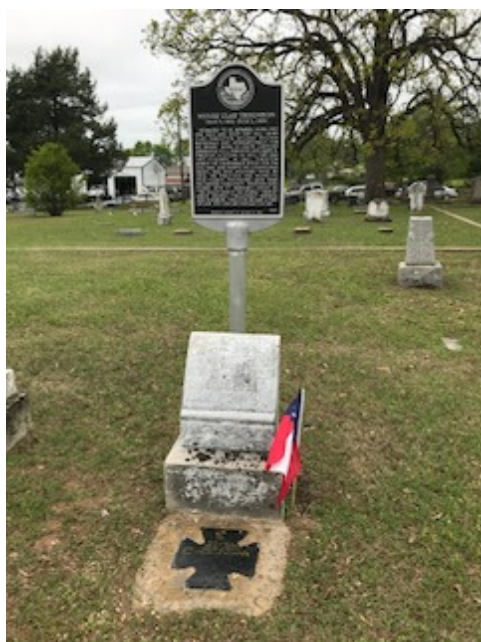
He is currently working on a book about the Battle of Pea Ridge and some of its characters and participants. He will be accompanied to the FCHA meeting by his wife, Holly.

Hosts for the first meeting of 2019 will be Beverly McPherson, B.F. Hicks, Robert Long, Steve Hammons.



Kerry Jones, Interpretation Park Guide, gives a tour of the General John Pemberton Headquarters' House at the Vicksburg National Military Park. Jones, who is now stationed at the Pea Ridge National Military Park in Arkansas, will be the guest speaker at the January 7 meeting of the Franklin County Historical Association. His program will discuss the Pea Ridge Park, Battle of Pea Ridge, and Franklin Countian Colonel Henry Clay Thruston, who was wounded at the Battle of Pea Ridge, but lived to come eventually to Franklin County.

Henry Clay Thruston, though born in Missouri, and traveling the world with the P. T. Barnum Circus, advertised as the "Tallest Man in the World," came to Franklin County, Texas and lived here the longest of anywhere during his life. His home is now the Bankhead Highway Information Center and adjoins the Dupree Park Nature Trail. In the photo below, Colonel Thruston is seen taking part in one of the Confederate Reunions he so enjoyed. He died following the last one in 1909 and was buried in the Edwards Cemetery in Mount Pleasant, near his friend, Colonel Riley Edwards, who gave Thruston a cemetery plot when Mrs. Thruston died. Colonel Thruston's body was buried in a special extra-large coffin which came from Texarkana. A Texas State Historical Association Marker was placed beside his grave. He was also honored by the Daughters of the Confederacy in special services last year.



## 2019 FCHA Membership Programs and Events

January, May, July, September—programs begin with a pot-luck meal

### January 7—6 :00 p.m.

Kerry Jones of the U. S. National Park Service – The Life of Col. H.C. Thruston  
Cultural Arts Center, Mt. Vernon  
Hosts: Beverly McPherson, B.F. Hicks, Robert Long, Steve Hammons,  
Pot Luck

### March 4 – 6:00 p.m.

Shellie O’Neal – “This Is My Story – The Life of Fanny J. Crosby”  
Mt. Vernon Music Hall  
Hosts: Joel & Laurie Dihle, B.F. Hicks, Frankie Cooper and Ken Greer  
Refreshments provided

March/April – TBD – Night at Museum

May – TBD – School Field Trips Grades 1, 2 and 3 – sponsored by FCHA

### May 6—6:00 p.m.

Keith Kridler -  
Cultural Arts Center  
Hosts: Cynthia Loftis and John Bradberry, Karen Smith, Linda and Tim Philhower, Randy Cates, Scott Harvey  
Pot Luck

### May—6:00 p.m.

Civil War Journals Banquet – Honoring Students and Families for Excellence in History; Special event; all active members of FCHA are invited; must RSVP; Venue - TBD

### July 1—6:00 p.m.

Preston Ware with the Oklahoma Historical Society – American Music up to the Civil War  
Community Center, Hagansport, Texas  
Hosts: Norm & Carol Horn, Bob & Donna McFarland, Lisa Lowry, Paul and Victoria Fletcher  
Pot Luck

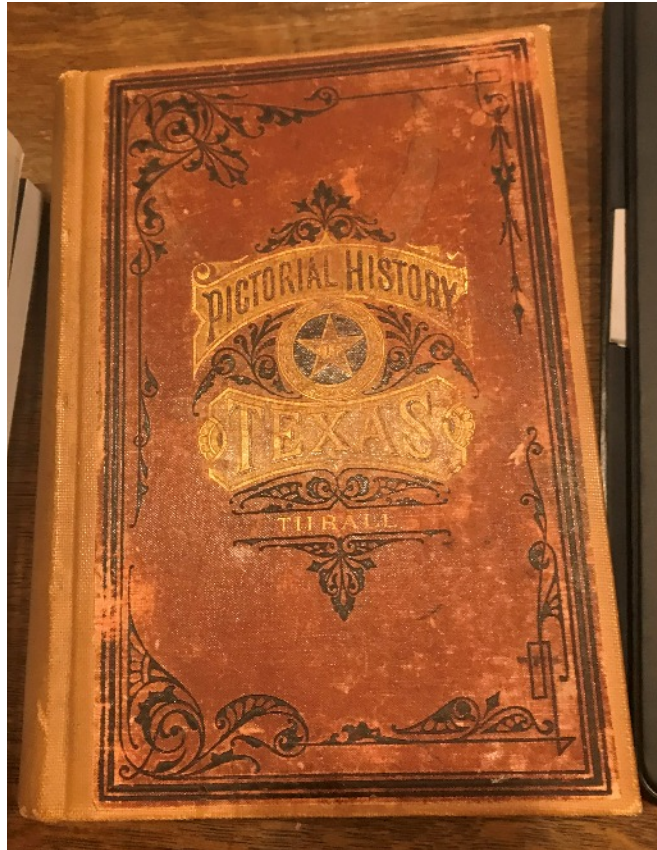
### Sept. 2—6:00 p.m.

Paul Benson - TBA  
Masonic Lodge, Mt. Vernon  
Hosts: Lillie and Nathan Reves, Jerald and Mary Lou Mowery, Jeanne Pamplin, B.F. Hicks  
Pot Luck

Oct. 12 – CountryFest / Paper Quilts Exhibit

### Nov. 4—6:00 p.m.

Robert S. Long  
Railroad Depot – Franklin County, Texas: Our Artists and Their Work  
Hosts: Pat and Sid Hudson, B.F. Hicks, Gail Reed, Jason and Alyssa Burton  
Refreshments Provided



### Texana Library Reopening

Tom Wilkinson III cut the ribbon November 10, officially reopening the Wilkinson Texana Library at the Fire Station Museum.

Representatives from the City of Mount Vernon, the Chamber of Commerce, Mount Vernon Main Street, the board and volunteers from the Franklin County Historical Association were all in attendance.

For the past two years, volunteers have been sorting and cataloging the holdings of the Library, making it more accessible and user friendly. The Library, which is for research, is divided into subject sections, including ranches, Texas nature, political figures, fiction, and other topics.

Wilkinson had originally given money and his father, Judge Tom Wilkinson Jr.'s, books, and many other donors had added to the holdings through the years.

Librarian Robert Sterling Long thanks all those who had worked with the Library through the years, including Elease Hubbell and Mary Lou Mowery, former librarians, and Kathy Shelton and Karen Rhoades, who volunteered many hundreds of hours inputting data and physically placing the books.

Wilkinson thanked all those who had worked to accomplish this task and presented the last of his father's Texana collection - *Pictorial History of Texas* by the Rev. Homer S. Thrall, a first edition published in 1879 - in honor of Long's work. Wilkinson noted that the book had been used so much, it had been rebound.

The Wilkinson Texana Library is open on Saturdays from 10 am until 2 pm when FCHA volunteers are at the Fire Station Museum.

## **Six Texas Authors Speak, Sign Books as Part of Library Reopening**

**By Robert S. Long**

November 10, as a part of the reopening of the Wilkinson Texana Library at the Fire Station Museum in Mount Vernon, six Texas authors spoke and visited with those attending, signing books as they discussed their writings.

Ray Loyd Johnson, longtime member of the Franklin County Historical Association, and author of *Reflective Rays*, was the first speaker for the day. Johnson talked about gathering his information, tales he heard as a boy in his father's barber shop, growing up in Mount Vernon, and how he came to write the book.

He explained Charles Shafer had urged him to write, and Jeanie Pamplin had helped him to organize the materials. Johnson explained that his roots in Franklin County ran deep, and he was anxious to keep the stories from being lost. Many friends came by during the day to visit with him and have him sign books.

Dr. Charles Hamilton from Northeast Texas Community College discussed his book about the films of Clint Eastwood, and how he had worked with writers from around the world in putting the book together. He also discussed his experiences leading up to the writing of this book and his teaching at NTCC and other colleges. The background of the films detailed prompted interesting questions from those in attendance.

Professor Michael Morris from Eastfield College in Dallas read from his books of poetry, and talked about his inspirations. Many of Morris' works were based on his life experiences, as well as his ramblings through the woods and fields on his nature walks. He has been a professor at Eastfield for many years after teaching and completing degrees at Texas A&M-Commerce.

Mary Brooke Casad detailed the writing of her children's book series about Bluebonnet, the adventurous little armadillo. Casad first became entranced with the creatures as a girl going to camp in the Texas Hill Country. Bluebonnet has traveled all over Texas, including the Dallas State Fair, NASA, the Texas Capitol in Austin, and many other Texas locations. She has spoken to the FCHA before, and members hope Bluebonnet visits Mount Vernon in the future.

Gail Reed, FCHA office manager, and Helen Myers talked about their collaboration in writing adult fiction, how they work together, and the future of their partnering in writing. Ms. Myers explained how she had written about 51 books through the years. They had people coming from around Texas to get copies of their books signed.

Professor Charles Shafer, who grew up in Winfield, was the closing speaker for the symposium. Author of *The View from the Chinaberry Tree*, Shafer talked about how he started writing stories, capturing his childhood and youth in a simpler time in Winfield, and found he had more than enough for one, and now, two books, as well as making an audio version of the book. He continues to tell stories for his family and for the world.

All the authors graciously signed and inscribed volumes during the day for the many guests. At the conclusion of the day's activities, everyone ate Mexican food and continued talking which lasted for several hours.



Top Left: Authors meet and prepare to sign books

Top Right: Mary Brooke Casad explains the genesis of Bluebonnet, the Adventurous Armadillo.

Middle Left: Helen Myers and Gail Reed detail their writing partnership.

Middle Right: Professor Charles Shafer gives the final talk about growing up in the town of Winfield.

Dr. Charles Hamilton discusses his book about Clint Eastwood

Michael Morris from Eastfield College reads from his poetry and explains his work.

## 2018 Tour of Homes

Exquisite architecture, beautiful furnishings, and gracious hospitality—all part of Mount Vernon’s 2018 Tour of Homes Christmas Past and Present held on Sunday, December 9th. Host homes included the Rutherford-Heywood-Hague House, owned by Craig and Pam Greenberg, the Parchman-Johnson House, owned by Tim and Teresia Wims. Two craftsman-style new construction homes in the 1841 Village Historic District, built by The Ostertag Group and Two Pines Construction were also featured. In addition to Mount Vernon House Assisted Living serving as “headquarters” to the event, visitors enjoyed photos and artwork on display at the Cotton Belt Depot.

Sponsored by Butler-Century 21 Real Estate, Mount Vernon House Assisted Living, Mount Vernon Family Dentistry, Northeast Texas Land Titles and Two Pines Construction, First National Bank and Texas American Bank, this intimate tour experience allowed guests to look “behind the doors” at historic homes as well as new construction bungalows.

At the Mount Vernon House Assisted Living, the first stop on the tour, visitors were greeted by Santa Claus and Miss Mount Vernon royalty. In the dining room, guests could buy tickets for the tour, enjoy refreshments and were treated to beautiful Christmas melodies by professional harpist, Megan McCulloch Li.

The historic Rutherford-Heywood-Hague house and Parchman-Johnson house showcased detailed turn-of-the-century architecture that has been preserved by previous and current owners. Old transom doors and ornately carved fire places were just some of the unique features that adorned these hundred-year-old structures.

In the 1841 Village Historic District, The Ostertag Group and Two Pines Construction built new homes in keeping with the bungalow-styles of the neighborhood. These two gorgeous new houses reflect the perfect balance of historic themed construction mixed with a touch of modern design.

All decked out in holiday décor, The Cotton Belt Depot welcomed visitors with a model train exhibit, a silent auction, hot cocoa and sweet treats. LaDarius Daniels, also known as Low D, entertained with soulful saxophone music.

Each location offered sweet and savory delectable appetizers prepared by Chefs Oscar Cruz and Jose Sepulveda. FCHA would like to thank our tour home owners and sponsors for making this year’s event a success. Beautifully decorated homes, fabulous entertainment and mouth-watering food—the 2018 Tour of Homes was definitely a delight to the senses!



Harpist Megan McCulloch Li performs at Mount Vernon House Assisted Living



Top Left: Jason & Alyssa Burton, Two Pines Construction, new home, 1841 The Village

Top Right: LaDarius Daniels "Low D" plays saxophone at Cotton Belt Depot

Middle Left: Santa and Buffy Hymer at the Mount Vernon House Assisted Living

Middle Right: Tim & Teresia Wims, owners of Parchman-Johnson House

Bottom Left: Greg & Shannon Ostertag, The Ostertag Group, new home construction, 1841 The Village





Ava Wallace, son, Cody, and other visitors tour the Wims home.



Craig & Pam Greenberg, owners of Rutherford-Heywood-Hague House

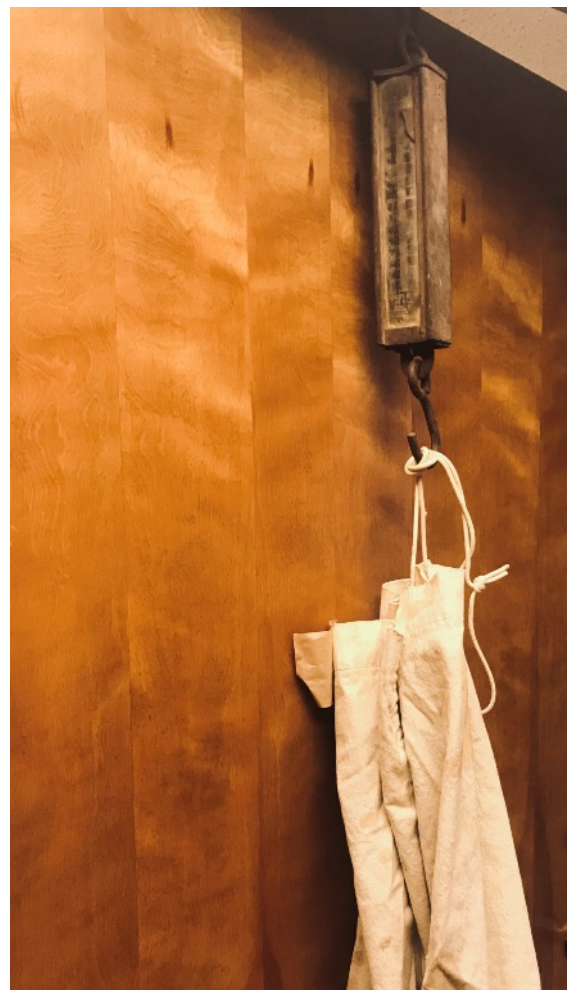
### **Cotton Scale Donated**

Mike and Janet Jordan gifted FCHA with an antique brass cotton scale from the estate of Jack Gillis, Janet's father. The yellowed and rusty object weighs up to 150 pounds of cotton and is a stark reminder of the labor-intensive work that went into producing the crop in the days before modern equipment. At the end of a hard day of picking in the fields, a bag full of cotton would be attached to the hook on one end of the scale so its contents could be weighed.

Cotton is deeply woven into the cultural and economic fabric of Texas and our state has consistently led the nation in cotton production, but planting and harvesting this crop wasn't always an easy task. Mike Jordan recalled how picking cotton was hot, back-breaking and tedious work that often left pickers' hands cut and swollen from the sharp edges of the bolls.

We are excited about making plans to use the scale donated by the Jordan family as part of an exhibit in the Cotton Belt Depot.

Thank you, Mike and Janet Jordan for remembering FCHA with your donation!



## Trick or Treat at the Cotton Belt Depot

No tricks, but lots of treats and family fun at the Depot's record-breaking Halloween event with approximately 1,000 visitors attending. The weather was perfect and costume-clad children and adults of all ages stood in line to see the model train exhibit, 1800s telegraph, the balloon lady, and oh yes—to get candy!

Many thanks to Brookshires of Mount Vernon who sponsored FCHA's Halloween night by donating \$300 worth of candy for the little ghosts and goblins who came by. Just as any good dentist would do, Dr. Jonathan Burrows and staff handed out toothbrushes, fruit, and spider rings as an alternative to all those sweet treats.

Free balloon animals fashioned by Diana Shelton were a special delight. The model train exhibit is always a favorite. The Cotton Belt Depot is always a popular stop on Halloween!



Top Left: Record-breaking crowd lines up at Depot  
Top Right: Witches Karen Smith and Pat Hudson hand out candy.  
Bottom Left: Four-year-old Super Hero Easton Reed at Depot  
Bottom Right: Dr. Burrows and staff offer alternatives to sweet treats

## Strawberry Parfait Pie

By Janet Jordan

Dissolve 1 package strawberry Jello in 1 cup hot water.

Add ½ cup cold water; stir.

Add 1 pint vanilla ice cream.  
Stir until melted.

Chill mixture until it begins to thicken, about 20-30 minutes.

Gently fold in 1 cup sliced strawberries.

Pour into baked pie shell.

Chill until firm (20-25 minutes).

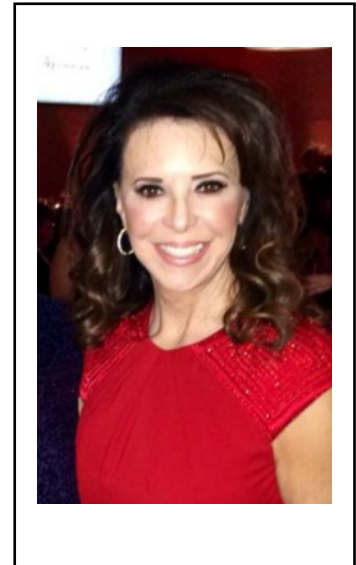
Trim with whipped cream.

Janet Gillis Jordan is the daughter of Jack Gillis and Ruth Plunkett Gillis (both deceased) of Sulphur Springs.

She married Mike Jordan of Mt. Vernon, Texas, in 1971. Mike Jordan is the son of Joe Jack Jordan and Jean Williams Jordan (both deceased) of Mt. Vernon, Texas.

Mike and Janet Jordan live on Hwy. 37 South in Mt. Vernon.

They are members of the First United Methodist Church and have two children, Josh Jordan and Julianne Jordan Evans.



## Memorials & Honorariums

### Donated By:

Helen R. Myers

Gail Reed

### In Honor Of:

Gail Reed

B.F. Hicks & Robert Long

### Donated By:

David & Debbie Norman

Ruth Averitt

### In Memory Of:

Ric & Sharon Elliott

Joe Averitt

## Spotlight on Volunteers



At this very special season of giving thanks, FCHA would like to express our deepest gratitude to all of our hard-working volunteers. Their tireless dedication to preserving and promoting Franklin County's historic past through special events, exhibits, properties and educational outreach is remarkable. Without you, FCHA would not be the vibrant organization we all enjoy.

Our volunteers at the Fire Station Museum include Ken Greer, Frankie Cooper, Kathy Shelton, Karen Rhoades, Cindy Stutts, John Hicks, Paul and Victoria Fletcher, Sandy Tower, Elaine Thomas, Ruby Neely, Laurie Dihle, Norm and Carol Horn and Richard Hamrick.

Many thanks to our sponsors Dr. Jonathan Burrows and Brookshires at our Halloween Trick or Treat at the Depot, including volunteers Karen Smith, chairman, B. F. Hicks, Pat Hudson, Larry Coleman, Kelly Briley, Neil and Carol Ann Scott, Cheryl Divin, Cynthia Loftis, John Bradberry, Lisa Lowry, Joel and Laurie Dihle, Glen and Dianna Shelton, Michelle Lawler and Debbi Plemmons.

At other events, Dr. Jean and Marie LaTortue, Jerald and Mary Lou Mowery, Robert Long, Lillie Bush-Reves, Scott Harvey, Jenny Dennis, Jason Weakley, Chock and Marcy Yates, Beverly McPherson, Steve Hammons, Lauren Herman, Tommie Smith, Jason and Alyssa Burton.

Thank you once again for your service to our organization! If you would like to volunteer a few hours of your time, please call 903-537-4760 for more information. We would love to have you as part of our team!



**Happy New Year!**

**January is the official start of our 2019 Membership Year.**

**Thank you to those who have already renewed early.  
If you haven't renewed yet, please renew soon.**

**We depend on your support!  
A membership application is enclosed.**

**Thank You!**

**2019**  
**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**  
**Franklin County Historical Association**  
**P. O. Box 289**  
**Mount Vernon, TX 75457**  
**903-537-4760**

Memberships are based on the calendar year.  
Members joining mid-year will receive all publications for that year.

Name _____	Class of Membership & Dues:
Address _____	Individual—\$15.00
City, State, Zip _____	Family—\$25.00
Phone: _____	Patron—\$50.00
Email: _____	Sponsor—\$100.00

**I would like to receive my newsletter via email. Check here.** \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate your membership class and mail your dues check to:

FCFA, P.O. Box 289, Mt. Vernon, TX 75457

**2019 DUES**

Please fill in the above contact information. Circle membership class.

Dues for 2019 (Includes subscription to bi-monthly newsletter)      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Special tax deductible contribution for operations and maintenance:      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Special contributions may be designated as memorials or honorariums. Please list the name of the person memorialized or honored, and the name and address of the receipt for notice of your donation:

In Memory/In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

Notice to: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

We need volunteers! Could you work an occasional four-hour shift at one of our museums or a few hours in the office? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes, call me to schedule. Phone # \_\_\_\_\_