



FRANKLIN COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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OUR MISSION:
*"To Preserve our Natural
and Cultural Heritage"*

Hello, friends,

The past year has been one of the most challenging of our lifetime, having lost family and friends, and perhaps, even our businesses to COVID-19. On behalf of FCHA, I would like to express my deepest gratitude for your continued membership and support during this devastating pandemic. I am in awe of the number of membership renewals we have received. We appreciate each and every one of you!

Summer is here and brings with it a new season of hope and renewal. All you have to do is take a walk through Dupree Park Nature trail to see proof. Warm weather and spring rains have made the 58-acre trails lush with wildflowers and butterflies. Take the family out for a stroll after work and enjoy a picnic supper at the Lowry Pavilion.

The next time you're in town, drive by the Cotton Belt Depot on Holbrook Street and check out the newly-restored farm implements on display! Ken McDonald brought the pieces back to life with their original bright colors. Stop by and see how many you can identify and what they were used for on a farm.

As mentioned in our March newsletter, we have added new technology, featuring kiosks and touch screen TVs in our Cotton Belt and Fire Station museums, all loaded with new and fun information about our exhibits. Unfortunately, our Fire Station elevator gave up the good fight and is no longer working. We are in the process of having it replaced and we anticipate reopening soon.

Good news! We will resume our membership meetings on Monday, September 6, 2021, (Labor Day) at 6 p.m., with a special program by Shellie O'Neal at the Mount Vernon Music Hall. More details about the program can be found on the last page of the newsletter.

Please bookmark our website, fchatx.com, to stay abreast of all the latest FCHA news and announcements. You will also find historical photos, exhibit information and places to visit in Mount Vernon.



Currently, my office hours at the Parchman House are Tuesday and Thursday from 8 a.m. until noon. You may also contact me at 903-537-4760 any time and leave a voicemail. I would be happy to return your call!

Thank you again for your commitment to FCHA. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Gail Reed

2021 Harris & Irene St. Clair Endowment Awards

The Harris and Irene St. Clair Endowment awards were presented at the Cotton Belt Museum on Tuesday, April 13, 2020, by committee chairperson, Mary Lou Mowery.

The Endowment was established in 2008 by Jimmy St. Clair in honor of his parents. Since then, over \$250,000 has been awarded to help fund various non-profit organizations in Franklin County. Per endowment guidelines, distribution must go to support the following needs and causes in Mount Vernon and Franklin County: children's causes, humanitarian adult needs, cultural support of the quality of life (art and music), and enhancement of the general quality of life in Franklin County.

This year, a total of \$17,000 was divided among nine non-profit organizations which included Alamo Mission Museum, Franklin County Arts Alliance, Franklin County Genealogy Society, Franklin County Historical Association, Friends of the Library, Mount Vernon Cares, Holly Wilcox/Pure Hope Ranch and Mount Vernon Music. Representatives from each of these groups expressed their earnest appreciation for the awards.

Congratulations to all the recipients and our deepest gratitude to Mr. Jimmy St. Clair for continuing to support Mount Vernon and its organizations.



Mary Lou Mowery presents Mark Miller with the St. Clair award for Mount Vernon Music. The organization has developed outreach programs with in-school concerts, instructional clinics for middle and high school students, and Musical Lifeline concerts for residents of long-term care facilities. Their annual Children's Concert is always a highlight of the season, engaging young listeners in Mount Vernon with the magic of classical music and storytelling.



Office Manager Gail Reed accepts award for FCHA from Jerald Mowery. Operating four museum facilities and a 58-acre walking trail, FCHA seeks to preserve and share the rich heritage of our community. The St. Clair scholarship enables the organization to keep the doors open to these facilities and offer various programs and exhibits reflecting Franklin County's past. In a typical year, FCHA will welcome over 3,000 visitors per year.



Jill Lowry represents Mount Vernon Cares in accepting the 2020 award from Mary Lou Mowery. This enrichment program benefits approximately 70 at-risk students of Mount Vernon Junior High and High School. The organization provides a community mentor for these students weekly. They are provided with a \$50 Brookshires gift card each month to learn to shop wisely for nutritious food. Their goal is to educate, encourage and enrich the lives of these students to make positive life choices.



President Linda Hammond represents Franklin County Arts Alliance. Their mission is to provide artistic experiences to audiences of all ages, social and economic backgrounds. They are committed to excellence in FCAA productions, workshops and children's educational programs. Their goal is to make programs accessible and enriching for the residents of Franklin County and the surrounding areas.



Ann Burnett and Jacque Miller represent the Alamo Mission Museum in accepting the St. Clair award. Their mission to draw people near and far to an atmosphere of community celebration and family fun, all centered around an educational appreciation of the arts and Texas heritage. The museum now boasts over a dozen buildings, including the "Alamo" building, the food hut, Bonnie and Clyde Barracks, the McGee Schoolhouse, blacksmith cabin, SeaLife Center, Little Red Barn, Jailhouse, Wagon Barn, Native American, Cowboy buildings.



Accepting the St. Clair award for Friends of the Franklin County Library is President Susan Bass. Their group offers school age children and homeschool children the opportunity to participate in projects built on their formal schooling. Marvelous Mondays targets elementary and intermediate school age children, but everyone is invited and younger siblings join in as well. Their summer enrichment programs are always well attended. Additionally, FCL offers the community a variety of exciting and educational experiences for both children and



President Jana Capps represents the Franklin County Genealogical Society and this organization has been part of the community since 1997 in the Parchman Building and the old Crescent Drug Store Building. Their mission is to provide resources to trace families back as far as the paper trail will allow. Their research library is open six days a week and completely staffed by volunteer. FCGS regularly has many out-of-town visitors who come in to do research on their families.



Holly Wilcox is a Girl Scout working on her Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest medal a Girl Scout can achieve. To attain this goal, she partnered with the , a nonprofit located in Mount Vernon, Texas, which is dedicated towards restoring survivors of sex trafficking. To help them reach their goal, Holly's nature trails will provide opportunities for Eco-Therapy and Nature-Therapy. The funds from the St. Clair scholarship will be used to pay for the printing of the educational graphic panels she designed onto high-quality, long lasting materials that can withstand weather.

It's Official—You Lived in the Best of Times

Contributed by Nancy Miller

Special group born between 1930-1946.

Today, they range in ages from 75 to 90. Are you, or do you know someone “still here”?

Interesting facts for you:

- *You are the smallest group of children born since the early 1900s.
- *You are the last generation, climbing out of the Depression, who can remember the winds of war and the impact of a world at war which rattled the structure of our daily lives for years.
- *You are the last to remember ration books for everything from gas to sugar to shoes to stoves.
- *You saved tin foil and poured fat into tin cans.
- *You saw cars up on blocks because tires weren't available.
- *You can remember milk being delivered to your house early in the morning and placed in the “milk box” on the porch.
- *You are the last to see the gold stars in the front windows of grieving neighbors whose sons died in the War.
- *You saw the “boys” home from the war, build their little houses.
- *You are the last generation who spent childhood without television; instead, you imagined what you heard on the radio.
- *With no TV until the 50s, you spent your childhood “playing outside”.
- *There was no little league. There was no city playground for kids.
- *The lack of television in your early years meant that you had little real understanding of what the world was like.
- *On Saturday afternoons, the movies gave you newsreels sandwiched in between westerns and cartoons.
- *Telephones were one to a house, often shared (party lines) and hung on the wall in the kitchen (no cares about privacy).
- *Typewriters were driven by pounding fingers, throwing the carriage and changing the ribbon.
- *INTERNET and GOOGLE were words that did not exist.
- *Newspapers and magazines were written for adults and the news was broadcast on our radio in the evening. As you grew up, the country was exploding with growth.
- *The government gave returning veterans the means to get an education and spurred colleges to grow. Loans fanned a housing boom.
- *Pent up demand coupled with new installment payment plans opened many factories for work.
- *New highways would bring jobs and mobility.
- *The veterans joined civic clubs and became active in politics.
- *The radio network expanded from three stations to thousands.
- *Your parents were suddenly free from the confines of the Depression and the war, and they threw themselves into exploring opportunities they had never imagined.
- *You weren't neglected, but you weren't today's all-consuming family focus. They were glad you played by yourselves until the street lights came on. They were busy discovering the post war world.
- *You entered a world of overflowing plenty and opportunity; a world where you were welcomed, enjoyed yourselves and felt secure in your future though depression poverty was deeply remembered.
- *Polio was a crippler.
- *You came of age in the 50s and 60s. You are the last generation to experience an interlude when there were no threats to our homeland. The Second World War was over and the cold war, terrorism, global warming, and perpetual economic insecurity had yet to haunt life with unease.
- *Only your generation can remember both a time of great war, and a time when our world was secure and full of bright promise and plenty. You grew up at the best possible time, a time when the world was getting better.
- *You are “the last ones.” More than 99% of you are either retired or deceased, and you feel privileged to have “lived in the best of times!”

A Child's Memories of World War II Tony's Story – Part 2

By Kay Howell

AUTHOR'S NOTE: In the March/April 2021 newsletter you read of Randy, a mean little boy who broke open the head of Kay's boy doll because he wanted the open and shut eyes. Kay's mother retrieved the eyes and bundled them up with the pieces of Tony's broken head. Nancy Deberry volunteered to take them to her grandfather, a retired Navy captain, who made ship models and could fix the doll. We continue the story with Kay sitting alone on the front porch and contemplating what had just happened.

My tears slowed down somewhat, but I remained sitting on the front porch. A soft rustle caused me to look up, and I saw Little Jesse peeking around a big tree in the front yard. He walked around the tree and started toward me when he realized I had seen him.

"Did you see Randy break my doll?" I asked. The tears were flowing again.

Little Jesse sat down beside me and gently patted my hand.

"I just don't understand why he would do such a mean thing. I drew a deep, quavering breath. "My Sunday School teacher said some people are just mean. Do you think that's true?"

Little Jesse brushed a tear off my cheek and then clasped his hands between his knees. He seemed to be studying the toes of his shoes intently.

"Mommy told me to pull up the weeds in the flowerbed. I'd better get back to work so she won't get mad at me again."

I walked around the corner of the house and sat down near the place I had left earlier. Little Jesse watched for a moment and then sat down beside me and began pulling weeds. I moved the weed bucket to a spot between us so he could reach it, and we worked in silence.

Little Jesse lived with his mother, Anya, in the house diagonally across the street from Mother and me. Before I learned his name I called him the little boy with the high hair because it lay on his head in big soft black curls. He and I were about the same age and size, and I thought he was the prettiest little boy I had ever seen. His skin was soft and smooth, without freckles or blemishes of any kind. He had rosy cheeks, a little mouth that looked like a red rosebud, and big brown eyes fringed with thick curly lashes.

It was his eyes that made him so unique. Sometimes there was a flash of happiness and a hint of a smile, like when I pointed out the sparrows building their nest or praised his ability to color and stay within the lines. But immediately the smile would fade and his eyes would again glisten with unshed tears as his face reflected untold sadness. I say "untold" because Little Jesse never spoke. Not a word, not a sound, ever. He didn't even nod or shake his head.

Once I asked Mother why Little Jesse didn't talk. Her answer was that his mother never discussed it. Mother said she knew he could hear because he would look at her when she called his name. Perhaps, she reasoned, it was because he didn't speak English. He and his mother had come here from Puerto Rico where the people spoke Spanish. His father, like all the other young men in our little town, had been drafted.

Anya did not socialize with the young women in the neighborhood very much, mainly because of her difficulty speaking English. That didn't stop Mother from befriending her, however, when she found out Anya had a sewing machine. The two of them managed to communicate in spite of Anya's limited English and Mother's even more limited Spanish. (She said she studied Spanish in high school.) Eventually Mother got an old dog-eared book on Spanish grammar from somewhere. They tried to teach each other, but my memory is they spent more time giggling like school girls than studying. I hung around and learned to count to ten in Spanish, though.

With both of us working it didn't take long to finish weeding the flowerbed. I carried the bucket to the back of the house, and Little Jesse and I washed our hands under the faucet there. Mother appeared at the back door and helped us dry our hands on the clean towel she was carrying.

Little Jesse dried his hands and turned to run across the street to his own home.

"Bye," I called after him. "Thank you for helping me."

Of course he didn't answer. He just kept running.

A week went by, and Randy had not come around to bother us. Little Jesse and I were playing in the front yard.

"Look! An ant found the bread crumbs. See?"

Little Jesse was sitting on the ground beside me. He leaned forward slightly to look where I was pointing.

"There's another ant. Watch, now. See how they're tapping each other on their heads with their feelers.

Mommy says that's the way they talk."

Little Jesse sat without moving, seemingly totally absorbed as he watched the ants form a trail between the nest they had built next to the roots of a nearby tree and the crumbs I had scattered on the ground.

Mother and Anya were working on some sort of project with the sewing machine. Through the screen door I could hear them talking and laughing, and then the phone rang.

A few minutes later Mother walked across the yard toward me. "Mr. Deberry invited us to tea at his house this afternoon. Little Jesse and Anya are invited, too. They are going home now to get ready, and we will do the same."

Mother washed my face, combed my hair, and helped me put on my favorite Sunday dress. While she was getting ready she gave me stern instructions about being a lady, use my napkin, and don't spill anything.

We sat on the couch and listened to the radio while we waited for Little Jesse and his mother to return. Well, Mother listened to the radio. I was deep in thought. It had been a week since Nancy Deberry took my doll Tony to her grandfather to fix his head after Randy broke it. Tony was my favorite doll, and I missed talking to him.

I gave an almost inaudible sigh and squirmed a little. Maybe Mr. Deberry invited us to his house because he had fixed Tony. Or maybe he was going to give me a new doll instead. A new doll would be nice, but I really wanted Tony back. I started kicking the couch with the back of my shoe until Mother put her hand on my knee and told me to stop.

Anya called to us from the front porch, and Mother and I joined her there. She was wearing a nice colorful dress, and Little Jesse was very handsome in his white shirt, tiny bowtie, and long pants. The four of us walked down the road toward Mr. Deberry's house.

The first thing I saw when we climbed the steps to the big front porch was a child-sized table with two chairs. Mr. Deberry was sitting in his favorite rocking chair, and Nancy and her mother were sitting near him. Mattie, Mr. Deberry's housekeeper, led Little Jesse and me to the two little chairs while Mother and Anya sat down in two chairs near us. I took one bite of the cookie Mattie gave me and decided I liked tea parties. The lemonade was good, too.

Finally Mr. Deberry picked up a large box and placed it across his knees. "Missy Kay, I have something for you. Would you like to see what it is?"

Of course I did. I walked across the porch and stood in front of Mr. Deberry. The box had a big red bow on it. With his help I removed the lid and pushed the tissue paper away to look inside.

It was a doll, a boy doll. He was wearing the drab green uniform with brass buttons of a soldier. It was my beloved Tony, but he was different. "Tony, I whispered, "are you okay?" There was no answer. Tony rested quietly in his box, his eyes tightly shut.

"He has recovered from the wounds he received from the enemy," Mr. Deberry said. "See the medal on his chest? That's a purple heart. He was a brave warrior, and now he's ready to go home. Pick him up and show him to everyone."

I looked closely at Tony's head. There was a faint line—a scar—that ran diagonally from his hairline, across his nose, and under his ear. It was the place where his head had broken open when Randy James had hit him with a brick. I picked up Tony, and his eyes opened. They were the same blue eyes, but they were dead, lifeless. Again I whispered to him. "Please talk to me," I pleaded. There was no answer. A great sadness clutched my heart. My friend in the denim overalls and checkered shirt was gone. I turned and held him up for Mother and Anya to see.

Suddenly there was a high-pitched scream. It was Little Jesse. "Papa," he screamed, "Papa." Anya rushed to her son and held him as he reached toward me. Tears were running down his face as he screamed words I didn't understand.

I looked at Mr. Deberry. "He thinks your doll looks like his father," he replied to my unspoken question. "He's saying he has been good and not cried like his father told him when he left."

It was not a difficult decision. I hugged Tony one last time. "Goodbye, Tony," I said. For a split second his eyes sparkled. I thought I heard him say, "It's good." Then I gave him to Little Jesse.

We watched as Little Jesse sat down on the floor, hugged the doll, and talked. When the tears subsided and the talk slowed down, his mother pulled him into her arms. She talked to him quietly in Spanish and then looked at Mr. Deberry. "He say he not talk because he afraid if he open his mouth he cry, and his papa told him do not cry."

I walked over to Little Jesse and touched his hand. "It's okay to cry when you talk to Tony. He understands, and he wants to stay with you. He'll make you feel better."

Anya said something to Little Jesse in Spanish. He leaned toward me and whispered, "Thank you."

"You're welcome," I whispered back.

From somewhere Mother produced a handkerchief and wiped her eyes before speaking. "Mr. Deberry, thank you for the tea party and...everything. It's time for us to go home now." She walked across the porch and shook Mr. Deberry's hand, said goodbye to Nancy and her mother, and held my hand while we walked down the porch steps. Anya said goodbye, and she and Little Jesse followed us.

Nobody spoke while we trudged home. There was a lot to think about.

When we reached our front yard, Little Jesse shifted Tony to his left arm and walked up to me. "I like you," he said. He put his right arm around my shoulders and kissed me on the cheek.

Now it was my turn to be speechless. I put both arms around him and gave him a big hug. He looked surprised. He walked away from me, but stopped to turn around and wave.

My first tea party. My first boyfriend. My first kiss.

What a day.

Biography of James Titus (1775-1843) Frontiersman, Planter & Statesman

By his third-great-grandson, O. Lynn Titus

James Titus was born into a family of achievers in a time of ever-present danger on a frontier teeming with hostilities. The edge of the wilderness was a magnet for road agents, bandits, killers and hostile native tribes.

James was born in the circumstances to Rachel Matthews Bowen Titus and her husband Ebenezer on December 10, 1775. The place was Botetourt County, Virginia, which was nestled in the Appalachian Mountains.

Rachel's brother, George Matthews was a Revolutionary War notable and was twice elected Georgia's Governor during the latter 18th century.

During the mid-1770s a group of associates known as the Transylvania Company purchased a large tract of the frontier from the Cherokee Nation. This included much of today's west-central portion of Tennessee. However, during that era it was a part of North Carolina. Ebenezer Titus migrated to the newly-purchased location arriving near the big salt springs on the Cumberland River. A fortress was erected and named Fort Nashborough after Revolutionary War veteran General Francis Nash.

The western portion of the state of North Carolina had not yet been carved out to form the state of Tennessee. Being located far from the seat of government in North Carolina, the pioneers recognized a need for self-government. Richard Henderson drew up the Cumberland Compact. All the adult males (about 250 men) signed the document.

The remainder of Ebenezer's family arrived to settle the area about 1782-83. It was still a hostile environment. Twelve men were chosen to govern the new area; Ebenezer Titus was one of them.

Young James grew up here and married in 1795 to Rebecca Buchanan. This union produced five children. Rebecca died in early 1818. Later in that same year James married Nancy Holmes Edmondson. They had seven children including my 2nd great-grandfather, Andrew Jackson Titus.

In 1809, another acquisition of land from Indians prompted James to move his family into the Mississippi Territory. They located in Madison County where he served on its first jury in October, 1810. In 1812, he became a member of the Mississippi Territory Legislature. In 1816-1817, he was president of the Legislature. The residents of the Territory asked for statehood within the Union. In December, 1816, James Titus wrote a letter to his friend Major General Andrew Jackson asking him to use his political influence to gain recognition of statehood for the Territory. In late summer 1817, the national Congress recognized Mississippi as the 20th state.

The populace of the eastern half of the Mississippi Territory wished Territorial Legislation for itself. In late 1817, the Alabama Territory was created. The James Titus home in Madison County lay within the newly created political region. William Wyatt Bibb was nominated as the first governor of the Territory by President James Monroe. Three men were selected to serve in the Territorial Senate. One resigned and one died leaving James Titus as the sole senator for the opening session on January 19, 1818, at St. Stephens (Alabama Territory).

When the proceedings opened that morning in the Senate Chamber of the Douglas Hotel, Senator Titus took to the task with studied formality. He rendered the opening prayer. He then proceeded to strike the gavel and elected himself President of the Council. He formed committees of which he was the sole member. He approved or disapproved bills sent from the House. He then sent them by Secretary or Sergeant of Arms to Governor Bibb for adoption. This first session closed its proceedings after 26 days. There was a 2nd session in November of 1818, but Titus did not serve alone in that capacity. However, Senator James Titus goes down as the only "one man senate" in the history of the United States and its territories. Alabama became the 22nd state in December, 1819.

James Titus lost his second wife, Nancy, on October 25, 1822. He moved back to Tennessee in his plantation home near Germantown. By this time he had married his wife's sister, Rebecca Edmondson.

In the early 1930s, James, along with his son, Andrew Jackson Titus, were part of the relocation of the Choctaw Nation to Indian Territory. They visited Texas soil for the first time during this expedition.

A few years after aiding in the moving of the Chickasaw Nation, James settled in the Republic of Texas near his son Andrew Jackson Titus on the Red River northeast from present-day DeKalb, Texas. Andrew Jackson Titus settled on the land in 1837, and his father joined him in 1839; they established their title through recognition by the Congress of the Republic.

These were hostile political times in East Texas. A period of hostilities based in taxes and governmental control opened the decade of the 1840s with the ongoing Regulator-Moderator War. In March, 1842, Senator Robert Potter was killed at his home on Soda Lake (now Caddo Lake) by a rival faction. James Titus was elected to replace Potter in the 6th Republic of Texas Congress. He was reelected to the 7th Congress, but died November of 1843, during the Congressional term. His illness was sudden and death was unexpected. He had written a letter to his friend, Sam Houston, 19 days before his death and the letter remains in the state archives. Houston was the President of the Republic at that time and James had told him he wished to visit him that winter. He was truly an iconic man who carried on his family's legacy of public service. His son, Andrew Jackson Titus, was recognized as a pioneer leader and the newly-recognized Texas State Legislature named Titus County for A. J. when it was carved out of Red River County in 1846. A. J. Titus died in 1855. Father, son, and numerous family members are buried on the land first settled by the Titus family land in Red River County at the Savannah Cemetery, south of English and northeast of DeKalb.

Editor's Notes: James Titus is the father of Andrew Jackson Titus. Father and son and numerous relatives settle in Red River County as set out in the biographical commentary. When Titus County was created in 1846, the county was named in honor of Andrew Jackson Titus. Franklin County will be carved out of Titus County in 1875. The Titus family members are buried in their home county, as set forth in the biographical notes submitted by their descendant.

Cranberry Orange Shortbread Cookies From Lauren Herman

1/2 C dried cranberries
2-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp. almond extract
3/4 C sugar
1 C butter, cubed
1-2 tbs. fresh orange juice (optional)
Additional sugar to coat cookies before baking, if desired
Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside.



Combine cranberries and 1/4 cup of sugar in a food processor and process just until the cranberries are broken down into smaller pieces. Set aside. Combine flour and remaining sugar in a large bowl. Use pastry cutter to cut in butter. You want very fine crumbs. Stir in extract, cranberries and sugar mixture, orange zest and orange juice (optional). Use your hands to knead dough until it comes together and forms a ball. Work the dough until it comes together. If the dough is still crumbly, add orange juice, one tablespoon at a time until the dough comes together. Shape dough into a log about two inches in a diameter and wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for two hours or up to 72 hours. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Cut slices of cookie dough about 1/4 inch thick. Place about a half a cup of sugar in a bowl and coat the cookie slices with sugar. Place the cookies on a baking sheet and bake for 12-15 minutes or just until the cookies are set. Do not over bake. I pull mine at 12 minutes. Let cookies cool for several minutes on a baking sheet before removing to cooling rack. Let cook completely. Store in airtight container for 3 days or freeze for up to 3 months.

Lauren Herman's father was a Navy pilot and the family moved every two years. They lived mainly in the eastern states until her high school years where she graduated from Woodrow Wilson High in Long Beach, California. Afterwards, they moved to Washington, D.C., where Lauren's father had received an assignment at the Pentagon. Lauren worked as a flight attendant for Eastern Airlines and was based in Miami and then Washington, D.C. After five years with Eastern, Lauren married Bill Herman and moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico. Bill worked for a sawmill company for twenty years and during that time they lived in Kanab, Utah, where Lauren worked for Farmers Insurance. Later, they transferred to Scottsdale, Arizona, where she volunteered with Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts. After their children graduated from school, the couple moved back to Albuquerque where Lauren became a realtor with Caldwell Banker before retiring to Lake Cypress Springs. Lauren and Bill love living on the lake and being close to their daughter and grandchild in Dallas.

News Release

Texas Historical Commission Honors FCHA

Texas Historical Commission is pleased to announce that the Franklin County Historical Commission (CHC) has earned a Distinguished Service Award (DSA) for the 2020 year of service. While all CHC efforts are valued, DSAs acknowledge above average CHC performance based on a statewide analysis of CHC annual report documentation. Our agency received 175 CHC reports for 2020 and approved 84 awards, quite an accomplishment given that the current pandemic limited public programming for all CHCs.

Congratulations to this year's Distinguished Service Award winners! The past year has been challenging for a variety of reason, yet CHC appointees continue to find ways to serve.



**Thank you Franklin County and City of
Mount Vernon for continuing to
support FCHA!**

**Your donations help keep our
museums open!**

Refurbished Antique Farm Machinery

Stop by the Cotton Belt Depot and see the newly refurbished farm machinery from a time gone by. Many were built by such well-known companies as John Deere, Allis-Chalmers and Farmall.

Restoring of the equipment in front of depot was completed some months back. Kelly Stretcher had been concerned over protection for the equipment and donated funds to erect a structure on the west side of the depot. He paid for the structure in memory of his father (Frank Stretcher) and in honor of his mother (Fannie Stretcher) and we have a brass plaque noting the donation.

Kelly has now sent funds to pay for paint to paint the remaining equipment which is housed under the Stretcher Awning. The final equipment includes a real array of early excavation equipment. Before mechanization, horses or mules were used to pull relatively small devices designed to dredge up dirt. We have a couple of scoops (would pull up probably 2 bushels of earth at a max). Frank Hicks said that a scoop was very dangerous; you had to be careful and not let it flip back on you, and it was hard on a mule and the man directing the effort. Go check out a scoop under the Stretcher Awning. There is a slip (apparently a slight improvement over a scoop). And then there is a fresno - which is a wide box-like excavator that was pulled by a team of two horses. We have some photographs of early work crews using scoops and fresnos digging out roadbeds before the invention of the internal combustion engine.



Work continues as Ken McDonald and son, Shawn, give more antique implements new life by restoring them to their original paint colors, pictured above and left.

Memorials & Honorariums

<u>Donated By:</u>	<u>In Memory Of:</u>
Ann Mahaffey	Robert Long
Anne Evetts	Robert Long
Nancy Bolduc	Robert Long
Chock & Marcy Yates	Robert Long
Charles & Annette Rutherford	Robert Long
Cynthia Loftis	Robert Long
Darwin & Connie McGill	Robert Long
Diane Hill	Robert Long
Edythe Harvey	Robert Long
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Paul & Victoria Fletcher	Robert Long
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Sid & Pat Hudson	Robert Long
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Charles & Annette Rutherford	J.D. & Iris Baumgardner
Cynthia Loftis	J.D. Baumgardner
Darwin & Connie McGill	J.D. Baumgardner
Paul & Victoria Fletcher	J.D. & Iris Baumgardner
Sid & Pat Hudson	J.D. & Iris Baumgardner
James Moyers	J.D. Baumgardner
Jerry & Eleese Hubbell	J.D. & Iris Baumgardner
John Hicks	J.D. & Iris Baumgardner
Kay Frazier	J.D. Baumgardner
Michael & Joan Breard	J.D. Baumgardner
Charles & Judy Shafer	J.D. Baumgardner
Vivian Monzingo	J.D. & Iris Baumgardner
Dale Jordan	Paul Lovier
Dr. Dorothy Brooks	Penn & Brooks Families
Edythe Harvey	Craig Harvey
Gary & Mary Ann Davis	Nations Family
John Hicks	Tim Burns
Karen Smith	Jack Hicks
Linda Moses	Howard & Lou Cargile

Richard & Sarah Hamrick
Sue Ann Harper

J.D. Hamrick
R.M. Harper

Donated By:

Beverly Kelley
Jim & Karen Borders
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Dan & Myna Hoke
James Tatum
Sally Burnett
Mike & Linda Swanson
B. F. Hicks

In Honor Of:

B.F. Hicks
B.F. Hicks
B.F. Hicks
B.F. Hicks
B.F. Hicks
B.F. Hicks
Mary Lou Mowery
Mary Lou Mowery



Franklin County Historical Association co-sponsored Franklin County Library's Summer Reading Program picnic by providing funding and Dupree Park Trail Guide coloring books and crayons to the children.

A Spring Herald: The Field Sparrow

By: *Matt White*

One night recently a loud clap of thunder woke me up. It was the kind of jolt that came as a big surprise, because I hadn't known it was going to storm. Yet, as often happens in mid-March, the warm and cool air masses were struggling for supremacy in the skies overhead. I tossed and turned until daylight, only half asleep, listening to the sound of the rain beating against the window and the wind blowing through the pecan trees in the backyard.

In the morning, the dark rain clouds moved on to the east and bright sunshine took its place. Suddenly, after months of cold, dreary weather, the world was bright again. Although the calendar was in disagreement, overnight it seemed as though spring had arrived. The rain-cleansed air was fresher than usual and was filled with melodious music of the Chickadees and Titmice and the boisterous synthetic – sounding songs of the Cardinals. After breakfast I donned rubber boots and set out to walk across the pasture and down to the creek to see what birds were moving about.

Wading across the shallow creek filled to overflowing, I headed toward the back 40, an old pasture that has become somewhat grown-up in recent years. Before I even made my way through the woods along the creek, I heard the unmistakable song of the Field Sparrow. The bird's clearly whistled notes began slowly and then rapidly increased as they tapered off – a song that reminds some of a ball being bounced. It is a song that always excites me, because unlike the other birds that nest on our property, this one is much less common. I first heard from there about five years ago, and since then they have returned every year to the same small thicket.

In East Texas, a more appropriate name might be the Old Field Sparrow, because they prefer to build their nest in old fields where small trees are invading. They are so dependent on these young trees that are not yet full grown that someday, when the trees become too tall, and look more like those in the woods, they will move on.

Throughout the winter a few Field Sparrows visit the bird feeders my wife keeps filled by our kitchen window. Here, from the comforts of home, it is easy to study their pink bills and admire their tan coloration. I do not know if the birds that come to our feeder are the same birds that nest on our property, though I rather doubt it. Field Sparrows nest over a large area of the eastern United States and in the fall, many of them migrate into East Texas to spend the winter where snow is less frequent. The birds at our feeder may have nested in Minnesota, while the ones that spend the summer here may have passed the winter in Mexico.

Using a tall cedar tree as cover, I quietly approached the thicket and the song of the Field Sparrow. I stopped about 30 yards away and cautiously peered around the tree and watched the bird as he threw his head back and then let loose his loud love song. He was perched about 20 feet high in a skinny cedar elm tree. After a few more songs, he flew away and shortly repeated the performance from another tree. In this way, the male was hoping to attract a female, while clearly marking the boundary of his territory to rival males.

Several times I have considered clearing that little thicket, so that it will not choke out the grasses. When I hear this beautiful song, though, I think I will let it remain a bit longer, while it serves as home for the Field Sparrow.





Change is coming!

Watch for new historical home signs to be erected in the coming weeks as we replace these existing tired and weather-worn signs with new ones. So far, we have identified over 80 throughout Franklin County. It will be quite an undertaking, but we look forward to seeing new signs in front of our beautiful historical homes.

LABOR DAY

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Our membership meetings are back!

Join us Monday, September 6th at 6 p.m. at the Mount Vernon Music Hall for a fun, patriotic evening!

FCHA will provide sandwiches, cookies, and beverages.



“God Bless America: A WWII Radio Hour” celebrates our nation’s beloved anthems. In this 58-minute play, Shellie O’Neal portrays Sally Brennan, a WWII radio personality, who sings our nation’s favorite anthems (and radio commercials of the era) and discusses the anthems’ histories and the people and ideas that helped shape our great country. You don’t want to miss this program; free for all members AND bring your family and friends.



You won’t want to miss this one!

