



Collin County Historical Commission  
7117 CR 166  
McKinney, TX 75071

Date: 02.25.21  
Zoom Meeting  
6:00 P.M.

Mary Kaye Adams, County Cruises  
Dave Cornette, Allen  
Candace Fountoulakis  
Joy Gough, Tax Abatement  
Linda Hess, Farmersville\*  
Donna Jenkins, Vice Chair  
Diann Jones, Anna\*  
Colin Kimball, McKinney  
Diane Miller, Melissa  
Paula Ross, Chair  
Jan Samuels, Public Relations  
Janet Stovall  
Jan Thatcher, Secretary/Treasurer  
Marianne Wells, State Markers, Cemeteries  
Nathan White  
Jane Yancey, Plano  
Brittany Yurkovitch  
Jennifer Rogers, Liaison\*  
Judy Florence, Liaison\*

\*Absent

**Call to Order: 6:00 p.m.**

**Note: Zoom meeting was cut short after approx. 40 minutes. A few members signed back on and continued with the rest of the meeting.**

**Public Comments:** Marianne Wells mentioned her daughter, Kathleen, is giving a lesson on conducting Zoom meetings. Contact Marianne if interested.

In lieu of the annual Sam Bass Day, the Allen Heritage Guild is hosting a Scavenger Hunt on February 27 from 1-3 p.m. Pre-registration is required. Participants will drive through the city of Allen to receive clues for each destination. Register online at the Allen Heritage Guild's website.

Brittany Yurkovitch is interested in any contribution members may have for the Weston Post, a quarterly paper she and her husband self-publish. An example Brittany would be interested in is the history of the Collin County Historical Commission and what it does. She would also be open to any suggestions for people or places within the County. Her goal is to educate all ages of Collin County.

**Reports from the THC Real Places Conference attendees:** The sessions most mentioned included “The Interpreting Churches in Texas” and the “Community Engagement in Historical Cemeteries.” The cemetery session gave Marianne Wells and Jan Samuels ideas to draw the community in to local cemeteries with suggestions of utilizing cemeteries as a park, using it for events and a place to observe nature in action with bird and butterfly watches. It also mentioned in the session to think of cemeteries as a place for volunteer groups to “adopt.” The “Virtual tour of the French Legation State Historic Site,” located in east Austin was greatly appreciated as was the “Wood Condition Assessment” and the “Preserving Historic Wood Structures” sessions.

Also mentioned was “Millennials and Beyond.” Brittany Yurkovitch enjoyed connecting with the younger generation. Interest was found in preservation among Millennials with the three people highlighted. It is refreshing to know the work of historical commissions and historical societies of today will continue.

There was an appreciation for the networking chat rooms available on the second day and the conclusion from all attendees was it was well organized, informative and very much worth the time.

**Minutes/Roll Call:** The minutes were approved with corrections. Total volunteer hours were 364. CCHC total was 301; other hours totaled 63.

**Treasurer’s Report:** Year to Date: With the Budget of \$49,900, a total of \$1412.50 has been spent, \$520 encumbered, leaving a balance of \$47,967.50. We are in balance with the County. The Treasurer’s Report was approved.

### **Committee Reports:**

**Grants:** The mandatory meeting on February 4, was conducted via Zoom with the help of the County IT department. Judy Moody, our County Liaison, joined Paula Ross and Jan Thatcher for the presentation. It was well attended with 18 different historic groups represented. The next phase is for the groups to send in applications before the deadline of Friday, March 26. There are no exceptions to this deadline. Once received, the Grant Committee will process the applications and determine funding for the projects presented.

**Film Preservation:** There was nothing to report at this time.

**County Cruises:** There was nothing to report at this time.

**Speakers Bureau:** Chair position is still open. There is nothing to report at this time.

**State Markers: Refinishing Markers:** There have been over 50 markers designated to be refinished. Is anyone interested in being part of a team to help out? It takes about 2.5 hours for

an experienced team. When all are refinished, pictures will be retaken to revise and update the State Marker book.

**State Marker applications:** The window for submitting applications is March 1-May 15.

**State Marker Narratives for 2022:** Narratives are due by October 1 for committee review and fact checking. The Date is posted on the website.

**Website:** Marianne Wells has been working with our County Liaison, Jennifer Rogers updating the CCHC web pages and are ready for final review with changes and additions. Please check to see if your areas are complete and correct. Jennifer has done a splendid job and has gotten approval to streamline some of the procedures for making changes, which translate into swifter updates for the future.

**Historic Cemeteries: *Horn Cemetery (McKinney):*** Candace Fountoulakis is in the process of gathering all the information for the Historic Texas Cemetery (HTC) designation.

***Kelly Cemetery (Anna):*** Jane Yancey and Marianne Wells visited the cemetery Wednesday, February 24, 2021, located north of Anna off of CR 336. There is a single marked grave located in a grove of trees near the site of William C McKinney's homestead. The name on the modern marker is Margaret Kelly, a twin who died at age seven in 1863 and was a great granddaughter of Collin McKinney. She would have known Collin and Betsy McKinney who died in 1861 and 1862, respectively. Commission members have been watching this site for several years. The entire property is being developed around it. The developers have cordoned off the site with a wire fence at least 10' high. Marianne and Jane were able to talk with the development supervisor who stated the project is two years behind schedule and assured Marianne and Jane that the cemetery will continue to be protected. Marianne noted the more modern headstone has fallen off its base since she and Jane had visited the site in 2019. Also, Marianne and Jane were informed of several unmarked graves which most likely were McKinney family slaves in the area.

***Kennedy Cemetery (Lowry Crossing):*** TxDOT is having a virtual open meeting over the next couple of weeks on two proposed routes for the extension of Spur 399 to US 380. One proposed extension will be north of the Fairview Soccer Fields which are northwest of the cemetery. A second extension may be closer to the cemetery on the east side. The cemetery contact is on the email list to receive updates from TxDOT. The cemetery is well marked on the TxDOT map, due to a descendant's work in receiving a Historic Texas Cemetery (HTC) designation in 2009.

***Lair Cemetery (Anna):*** Jane and Marianne visited Lair Cemetery also on Wednesday to confirm the length of the boundaries. Marianne should be able to submit the HTC application next month. Marianne and the rest of the committee, after extensive research, are now convinced there was never a deed registered, which has delayed the application from being submitted.

***Pecan Grove Cemetery (McKinney):*** The impetus for Marianne and Jane's visit Wednesday, was news of the Pecan Grove Board hiring a company to clean out all the brush and fallen trees in the Pauper's section of the cemetery. Work has begun. The company handles a lot of cleanup work in old cemeteries and knows to be on the lookout for fallen stones and old wooden grave markers.

In the original 1870 deed for Pecan Grove, there were two areas designated for charity graves: one for blacks and freedmen, the other for whites. The undergrowth is in most of those sections and extends into a newer charity section which was purchased in 1907. That area is correctly referred to as Potter's Field although for a few decades it was called Settlers Field causing confusion. It includes the area directly across from the maintenance building where mostly

Hispanics are buried. Some in the community have inaccurately referred to it as “Mexican Cemetery,” which has led to recent confusion about whether or not it is a separate cemetery and who owns it. The public records are easily accessed on both the appraisal district’s website and the County Clerk’s website for deed records.

Marianne has mentioned in previous CCHC meetings last year that a grandson of one of the people buried in the mostly Hispanic section has been working to clean it up. Most of the burials there are from the 1950’s and later. It is a difficult area to maintain because it really needs to be groomed by hand since there wasn’t a constant order of burials. Consequentially, cleaning it with heavy equipment could damage stones. Years ago, descendants kept it cleaned up. Most likely, because of the limited means of descendants, there are many unmarked graves in this area. Pecan Grove has stopped using this area for charity burial because of the possibility of disturbing unmarked graves.

The work of cleaning up the other charity areas should be completed in the next few weeks. Very few headstones and no early burial records make this area questionable for use. One headstone from 1884 was not in the 1975 County Cemetery inscription book although it has been documented by Find a Grave. The cemetery manager told Marianne he spent months when first arriving at Pecan Grove in 1988, cleaning out the entire area, placing large posts where there were grave depressions so the sites would not be lost after being filled in. Marianne has encouraged the cemetery board to have a survey done of the entire cemetery. Once completed, Marianne will compile the information for a Historic Texas Cemetery (HTC) designation and will file the survey with the designation in the deed records.

**Ross Cemetery (McKinney):** The HTC designation should be finalized in April. Marianne would like to interview Miss Flo Henry to see what information can be gleaned for a historic marker if Miss Flo and the board wish to apply. Interestingly enough, Miss Flo Henry’s great-grandparents are buried in Pecan Grove, at the edge of the white section and the more recent Hispanic section. Her great-grandfather died in 1892, three years before the Ross trustees purchased land for their own cemetery. It does not appear to be any other graves in close proximity.

**County Markers:** Paula Ross has planned for six markers with four hopefully completed this year. Among those being researched are the Black School in Allen and Halltown.

**Historic Assets Survey (HAS):** Donna Jenkins received a letter from Emily’s House (Plano), formerly known as the Wall-Robins House established in 1898. The letter wished the house to be placed on the Historic Assets Survey and would like any information about the house. IF ANYONE HAS INFORMATION ON THE HOUSE, PLEASE SHARE WITH DONNA.

Joy Gough continues to work on adding some of the older churches in the County to HAS. Joy also is correcting GPS coordinates on the HAS map that are not accurate.

Donna has typed information and applications for 21 entries that have County Markers but were not added to HAS at the time the County Markers were established.

**Educational Programs:** Jan Samuels is currently in discussion with committee members and has possibilities with potential. Under consideration are the Collin McKinney Amazing Race, a Cemetery Scavenger Hunt, and an essay contest. Jan hopes to make a decision in the coming week and begin preparation immediately.

Donna Jenkins continues to discuss with Collin College professor, Dr. Pam Gaiter about the Wylie Campus Service-Learning Project. This program is geared for young adults in high school and college. A Zoom meeting is scheduled from 1:00-2:00 p.m., on Tuesday, March 2, 2021. Information will be shared first with the faculty, then with the students for the fall semester 2021.

**Communications:** Chair position is open.

**Public Relations:** Jan Samuels recently received her second Covid-19 vaccination and plans to make contact with Chambers of Commerce, libraries, hotels/motels for distribution of CCHC Brochures. Education Committee plans will be sent to Collin County newspaper and magazines.

**Tax Abatement:** There is nothing to report at this time.

**Oral Histories:** There is nothing to report at this time.

**Workshops:** Since Collin County is celebrating 175 years in 2021, Nathan White suggests a workshop to honor this birthday and sharing the history of Collin County with those that live within the County. Nathan would also like to see a proclamation acknowledging the occasion.

**Preservation Celebration:** Anna Area Historical Society, last year before Covid, was willing to host and is willing to host this year, dependent upon the County allowing groups to gather. Jan Thatcher will contact the Anna Historical Society to find a month agreeable to all for the celebration. It was mentioned to have a virtual Preservation Celebration. Jan feels it wouldn't have the impact nor the reach of the volunteer community the CCHC tries to honor.

**Awards:** A virtual awards Zoom meeting was suggested if a physical Preservation Celebration could not be arranged. Jan Thatcher is in favor of waiting until an "in person" gathering could be arranged for the acknowledgement. Because of Covid-19, activities within the County have been minimal.

**Adjourn: 6:56 p.m.**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Jan Thatcher, Secretary**