

**Milam County Historical Commission  
San Gabriel Baptist Church, San Gabriel  
December 9, 2019 – 10:00 AM**

- 1. Call to Order - Welcome/Volunteer Hours**
- 2. Pledge to the U.S. and Texas State Flags**
- 3. Recognition of Hosts and Guest(s)**
- 4. Welcome new members Jane Schwarz and Joan Wise**
- 5. Approval of the October 14, 2019 Minutes**
- 6. Treasurer's Report – John Pruett**
- 7. Committee Reports**
  - a. **Archaeology Month** – Randy Billingsley
  - b. **Bridge Committee** - Jack Brooks
  - c. **Cemetery Committee** - Jack Brooks
    1. Holly will merge the Milam County Cemetery Facebook pages with the MCHC Facebook Page
  - d. **CLG** – Brenda Pruett
    1. CLG grants - The Committee did not receive information on the potential sites in Cameron in time to apply for a grant.
    2. The CLG Committee plans to refinish markers this fall.
    3. National Register Nomination – Lynn, Sergio, Melinda and Steven Gonzales met with Greg Smith of THC. The nomination has been submitted to the THC Board of Review which meets January 11<sup>th</sup> In Brownsville.
    4. The MCHC needs to vote on concurrence with the nomination.  
[https://www.thc.texas.gov/public/upload/preserve/national\\_register/draft\\_nominations/TX%20and%20LA%2C%20Camino%20Real%20ode%20los%20Tejas%20MPDF.pd](https://www.thc.texas.gov/public/upload/preserve/national_register/draft_nominations/TX%20and%20LA%2C%20Camino%20Real%20ode%20los%20Tejas%20MPDF.pd)
    5. Joyce Conner is exploring the possibility of renting a van in which for several could travel to Brownsville. We would depart on Friday and return Saturday evening. Let Lynn know if you are interested in attending the Board hearing.
  - d. **El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail** – John Pruett
    - a. Report of November 14<sup>th</sup> MTC meeting
    - b. The next MTC meeting will be January 2nd at 10:30 am.
    - c. Report on ELCAT Annual Meeting and tour October 11-12 in Milam County.
  - e. **Heritage Tourism** – Joan Ratliff
    1. Milam County Economic Summit for heritage tourism and historic preservation held November 20, 2019.
    2. County Judge has visited with the owners of Sugarloaf about acquiring it for the County.
  - f. **Marker Committee** – Lynn Young
    1. Holly cleaned the area around the marker in Gause.
  - g. **Preservation Grant Fund** – Holly Jentsch
    1. Thorndale has contributed \$1,000 for the PGF
    2. Applications are available at Rainbow Courts in Rockdale and the County Judge's Office in Cameron.
  - h. **Public Relations** – Beth Brooks
    1. Meetings have been promoted via newspaper and Facebook.
  - i. **Other Committees**
- 8. Old Business:**
  - a. Courthouse – Lynn  
The Courthouse repairs are almost complete. The four clocks on the cupola have been repaired and the scales of justice have been returned to Lady Liberty's hands.
  - b. The revised MCHC website is currently in progress.

- c. Other Old Business
  - 1. Consider moving MCHC meetings to the first Mondays of the even months to avoid a conflict with the Commissioner's Court.

**9. New Business:**

- a. Consider electing Dr. Lucile Estell as a Member Emeritus
- b. Alcoa is donating a large crucible to the City of Rockdale. They have offered a second one if we are interested.
- c. Other New Business

**10. Announcements:**

- a. Our sympathy is with the family of Susie Samson Piper, Member Emeritus
- b. We regret the resignation of Denice Doss
- c. Registration is Open for the THC Real Places Conference January 29-31 in Austin.  
<https://web.cvent.com/event/4c8adf82-83fe-4c3f-aab8-e0b99e78e289/summary>
- d. Preservation Texas Cultural Landscapes Symposium Feb. 23-26 in Waco  
<https://texasculturallandscapes.org/>
- e. Future meeting dates:
  - o February 3, 2020
  - o April 6, 2020
  - o June 1, 2020
  - o August 3, 2020
  - o October 5, 2020
  - o December 7, 2020
- f. MCHC will host the First Friday Coffee on October 2nd

**11. History of San Gabriel Baptist Church – Zane and Eunice Stigall**

**12. Adjourn meeting**

Milam County Historical Commission is an appointed arm of the Milam County Government and is subject to the Open Meetings Act.

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Milam County Historical Commission  
San Gabriel Baptist Church, Thorndale, Texas  
December 9, 2019 – 10:00 AM

**Call to Order.** The meeting of the Milam County Historical Commission was called to order at 10:02 am by Chairperson Lynn Young at the San Gabriel Baptist Church in the community of San Gabriel near Thorndale, Texas, on December 9, 2019.

**Welcome/Volunteer Hours.** Chairperson Young welcomed members and visitors and began circulating the list for recording volunteer hours.

**Pledge to the U.S. and Texas State Flags.** The pledges were led by Chairperson Young and recited by members and guests.

**Recognition of Hosts and Guest(s).** Jessie Cooperwood from Gause and members from the host church were introduced. Eunice Stigall led the introduction of guests and hosts from San Gabriel Baptist Church. They included Dorothy Brand, Pat Campbell, Pastor Tim Cheatham, Nancy Green, and Cindy McDaniels.

**Recognition of New Members.** Chairperson Young welcomed new members Jane Schwarz of Thorndale and Joan Wise of Cameron.

**Approval of the October 14, 2019 Minutes.** The minutes were distributed prior to the meeting. Geri Burnett made a motion, seconded by Jack Brooks to approve the minutes as distributed. The motion carried.

**Treasurer's Report.** John Pruettt gave the Treasurer's report. On October 1, 2019, the general fund beginning balance was \$19,494.84. Revenues were \$36.08; and, disbursements were \$300.38; this resulted in an ending balance on October 31, 2019 of \$19,230.54, of which \$4,000 is identified as dedicated funds for Rosenwald School.

On October 1, 2019, the MCHC Preservation Fund beginning balance was \$11,165.35; interest revenue income was \$22.75; this resulted in an ending balance on October 31, 2019, of \$11,188.10 of which \$2,648.25 is available.

On November 1, 2019, the general fund beginning balance was \$19,230.54. Revenues were \$154.98; there were no disbursements during this period resulting in an ending balance of \$19,385.52 of which \$4,000 is identified as dedicated funds for Rosenwald School.

On October 1, 2019, the MCHC Preservation Fund beginning balance was \$11,188.10. Revenue from interest income was \$20.20 and a City of Thorndale donation of \$1,000 resulting in an ending balance on November 30, 2019, of \$12,208.30. The Thorndale donation was orally reported because it was not available at the time the distributed report for November was made.

A motion to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented was made by Mary Neely and seconded by Elaine Baumann. The motion carried.

### **Committee Reports**

**Archaeology Month.** In Randy Billingsley's absence, Geri Burnett reported that the Archaeology Month presentations which she and Randy give to Milam County 4<sup>th</sup> graders were completed ending with Cameron ISD. All ISDs in Milam County excepting Buckholts participated. Efforts to secure a date in Buckholts were not successful. Also, a similar presentation was made during the month to patrons of the Rockdale Library.

**Bridge Committee.** Jack Brooks reported that the celebration arrangements for Bridge Park are not yet known. He also reported that he had received an inquiry from Don Izzo concerning the Black Bridge on the FM road on the way to Calvert. Mr. Izzo is writing a book: Brazos Valley Almond Road. Jack will try to get a copy of the book for the Rockdale Library when it becomes available.

**Cemetery Committee.** Jack Brooks reported that the Black Bridge named for August Black is also near the Black Cemetery. He has also given a talk with the Cameron History Club about the 235 cemeteries in Milam County and shared some of the experiences he has had investigating them.

The Texas Headstone Cemetery Project has contacted Holly Bonorden Jentsch for more pictures of various cemeteries. Lynn and Holly will work the details of arrangements with them.

Holly reported that she will merge the Milam County Cemetery Facebook pages with the MCHC Facebook Page in the next several weeks.

Holly contacted Alcoa regarding the cemeteries on the property. There is a possibility the historical cemetery surveys will be donated to MCHC.

**CLG.** Brenda Pruettt reported that the MCHC map at the parking lot in Gause was removed because it was incorrect and rotten. She also shared that the Committee did not receive information on the potential sites in Cameron in time to apply for a CLG grant for a historical resources survey. Cameron folks are still interested and Geri Burnett and John Pruettt will be meeting with Melanie Reed of the Cameron Chamber. Brenda announced that the CLG Committee plans to refinish markers this fall.

**National Register Nomination.** Lynn reported that Sergio, Melinda and Steven Gonzales met with Greg Smith of Texas Historical Commission. The nomination has been submitted to the THC Board of Review which meets

January 11 In Brownsville. The solicitation of letters of support by various government officials are being made. Anyone wishing to write can find more information at:

[https://www.thc.texas.gov/public/upload/preserve/national\\_register/draft\\_nominations/TX%20and%20LA%2C%20Camino%20Real%20de%20los%20Tejas%20MPDF.pdf](https://www.thc.texas.gov/public/upload/preserve/national_register/draft_nominations/TX%20and%20LA%2C%20Camino%20Real%20de%20los%20Tejas%20MPDF.pdf)

Geri Burnett made a motion that the MCHC officially endorse the nomination. The motion was seconded by Beth Brooks and carried.

Joyce Conner is exploring the possibility of renting a van in which for several could travel to Brownsville. We would depart on Friday and return Saturday evening. Members were encouraged to notify Lynn know if he or she is interested in attending the Board hearing.

**El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail.** John Pruet reported on the various activities and accomplishments. The November 14 MTC meeting focused on the accomplishments of the first year of existence and the establishment of bylaws. Our MTC is the first local chapter to be functioning. The next MTC meeting will be January 2nd at 10:30 am at the Library in Rockdale.

John also reported on ELCAT Annual Meeting and tour October 11-12 in Milam County. Feedback from participants was that the committee hosting was certainly a success. The meeting featured presentations by well-known experts, a drone demonstration, and a tour that included tourist attractions, historical facts and oral history commentary. There was a great cooperative effort by several Milam county entities including the Master Naturalists and Rockdale ISD. There was also an exhibit of photographs along the El Camino Real by Chris Talbot in the Milam County Historical Museum.

**Heritage Tourism.** Joan Ratliff reported that the Milam County Economic Summit for heritage tourism and historic preservation was held November 20, 2019, at the Little River Event Center. The county budget next year will include \$20,000 for Heritage Tourism. Dr. Estelle shared her appreciation for the support this effort is receiving from Judge Young. Among the discussion was the historical significance of the Crazy Crystals in Thorndale.

Lynn shared that she and County Judge Young have visited with the owners of Sugarloaf about acquiring it for the County.

**Marker Committee.** Lynn Young reported that Holly cleaned the area around the marker in Gause. It is on TxDot property but there has been a lack of resources to maintain. Also, the San Gabriel Christian Church is applying for a replacement marker. Their marker was damaged and needs to be repaired/replaced because of the April, 2019 tornado that struck San Gabriel.

**Preservation Grant Fund.** Holly Jentsch shared that the City of Thorndale has contributed \$1,000 for the Preservation Grant Fund. Applications for grants are available at Rainbow Courts in Rockdale and the County Judge's Office in Cameron. Lynn shared that she is in discussion with the director of the Cameron Museum concerning any repeated grant extensions.

**Public Relations.** Beth Brooks shared that our meetings have been and continue to be promoted via County newspapers and Facebook.

#### **Other Committees**

**Hospitality.** Geri Burnett shared the signup sheet for refreshments at meetings. Jack Brooks announced that he is accepting volunteers for meeting sites.

#### **Old Business:**

**Courthouse Repairs.** Lynn Young reported that the Courthouse repairs are almost complete and include the work funded by the THC's matching grant. The four clocks on the cupola have been repaired and the scales of justice have been returned to Lady Liberty's hands. The County has also approved Stan Graves to come annually to assess historical maintenance needs.

**Website Revision.** Lynn Young shared that the revised MCHC website is currently in progress.

**Meeting Times.** In a previous meeting we discussed changing our regularly scheduled meeting time. Jack Brooks moved that we change our meeting to be the first Monday of the even months to avoid a conflict with the Commissioner's Court. The motion was seconded by Brenda Pruett and carried.

**Rosenwald School Preservation Fund.** Geri Burnett shared the history of the effort to preserve the Rosenwald School. Property disputes have delayed preservation efforts for several years. Representative from the THC, National Park Service, and our MCHC (Geri Burnett and Dr. Estell) have visited the site to confirm the condition. The consensus of these representatives visiting the site and the MCHC members present at this meeting agreed that there is no realistic possibility to preserve the site as it currently exists and that the funds set aside for its preservation. Chairperson Young will share this decision with the appropriate County officials so that the funds can be returned to the County for redistribution.

**New Business:**

**Member Emeritus.** Lynn Young shared the requirements for designating Member Emeritus status and the appropriateness of making this designation apply to Dr. Lucile Estell. In a motion made by Geri Burnett, seconded by Elaine Baumann, and unanimously approved the Milam County Historical Commission elected Dr. Lucile Estell to be Member Emeritus. Dr. Estell's contributions and expertise are very much respected and appreciated.

**Donation** from Alcoa is donating a large crucible to the City of Rockdale. They have offered a second one if we are interested. Lynn will talk to the City of Cameron.

**Announcements:**

Our sympathy is with the family of Susie Samson Piper, Member Emeritus

We regret the membership resignation of Denice Doss.

Registration is Open for the THC Real Places Conference January 29-31 in Austin.

<https://web.cvent.com/event/4c8adf82-83fe-4c3f-aab8-e0b99e78e289/summary>

Preservation Texas Cultural Landscapes Symposium Feb. 23-26 in Waco

<https://texasculturlandscapes.org/>

**Future meeting dates:**

February 3, 2020

April 6, 2020

June 1, 2020

August 3, 2020

October 5, 2020

December 7, 2020

Lynn inquired about a contact for Little River Baptist Church as a possible future meeting place.

MCHC will host the First Friday Coffee on October 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Elissa Roberts mentioned efforts to place memorials for each branch of service in the Veterans Park in Rockdale.

**Program:**

History of San Gabriel Baptist Church was presented by Pat Campbell and Eunice Stigall and refreshments served by the attending members of the Church.

**Adjournment.**

The meeting was adjourned following the presentation.

Respectfully submitted,

Eunice Stigall, Secretary