

MINUTES

HOOD COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

December 15, 2016 AGENDA

The Hood County Historical Commission (HCHC) met Thursday, December 15, 2016 at 5:00 PM at the Historic Hood County Courthouse in the first floor Treasurer's Office (HCHC Museum room), Granbury, TX 76048.

Call to Order at 5:00 PM

1. **Roll call to establish quorum.**

HCHC members attending Christy Massey, Becky Barnes, Charla Taylor, James Dickens, Don Grissom, Jewel Thompson, Becky Strain, Mary Sutton.

Volunteer: Vic Smith

Visitors attending: J.C. and Sylvia Campbell

2. **Consider approval of Minutes for HCHC meetings**

Minutes for the November 17, 2016 HCHC meeting were considered. Jewel Thompson made the motion to accept with correction of Sylvia Hickey's name on page two. Don Grissom seconded the motion. Motion passed.

3. **Treasurer's Report** (attached)

This item was tabled till the January 26,, 2017 meeting.

Old Business

1. **Consider and take appropriate action on any updates from**

Committees:

a. **Cemetery**

b. **Marker** (applications attached)

Historical marker report: Victor Smith reports that the applications and fees for the Rock Church Cemetery and Panter Branch School have been submitted and are on track for approval.

Charla Taylor made the motion to accept Vic Smith's Cemetery/Marker Chairman's report. Becki Barnes seconded the motion. Motion passed.

2. Update and take appropriate action regarding the 2016 Hood County Sesquicentennial.

Regarding T-shirts: The remaining shirts will be sold through the First National Bank branches in Hood County.

Regarding highway signs promoting the Sesquicentennial: These will be removed in the January/February 2017 time frame.

Regarding Games: Becki Barnes reports childrens games purchased for Sesquicentennial event were used at the event and are unrecoverable.

Hood County Purchasing has been informed and has no conflicting issues.

Plywood photo boards built for the event: The suggestion was made to give them to Lake Side Baptist Church.

Don Grissom made the motion to donate the photo boards to Lake Side Baptist Church. Charla Taylor seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Regarding the Sesquicentennial Queen and King contest: The carriage ride was cancelled because of the rain. There is no receipt for the carriage ride. The First National Bank of Granbury (who provided the \$500 to sponsor the event through Melinda Ray) has all money collected during the Queen and King contest, per the First National Bank's letter recorded and accepted in the November 17, 2016, HCHC meeting. The First National Bank has complete control of the Queen and King contest money, the Hood County Historical Commission is not involved.

New Business

1. Consider and take appropriate action concerning the proposed HCHC board members for 2017-2018 to be recommended to the Hood County Commissioner's Court.

The motion was made to present a list of the existing board members to the Hood County Commissioners Court for approval for the 2017-2018 term. Becki Barnes made the motion, Charla Taylor seconded the motion. Motion passed.

2. Closing remarks by Chairman and members.

J.C. Campbell suggested to contact the CVB to see if they would sell the books at that location.

The suggestion was made to sell the single prints at events on the square for \$1 apiece. Jewel Thompson made the motion for Don Grissom to check into venues for selling the single prints. Charla Taylor seconded the motion. Motion passed.

3. Consider & designate the date, time, & place of next meeting.

Next meeting will be January 26, 2017 at the same time and location.

Adjourn

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

SUBJECT MARKERS: 2017 Official Texas Historical Marker COVERSHEET

Complete the form and send to markerapplication@thc.texas.gov
Valid September 1, 2016 to November 15, 2016 **only**

APPROVAL BY COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION (required)

As chair or duly appointed marker chair, I certify the following:

The topic qualifies for an Official Texas Historical Marker according to marker policies on the THC website. Representatives of the CHC have met or talked with the potential marker sponsor and discussed the marker program policies as outlined on the THC website. The application has been filled out correctly. The narrative history and documentation have been reviewed for accuracy.

CHC comments or concerns about this application (required): The Hood County Historical Commission recommends the approval of this Application.

Name of CHC contact (chair or marker chair): Victor A. Smith, Chair, Marker Committee

Mailing address: 5111 Wedgefield Road **City, Zip:** Granbury, TX 76049

Daytime phone: 817-573-9132 **Email address:** smithvs@charter.net

CHECKLIST APPROVAL (required)

- The topic meets age requirements
- Most topics must date back at least 50 years
 - Historic events may be marked after 30 years
 - Individuals of historic significance may be marked or mentioned in marker text after they have been deceased 10 years
- The topic is eligible for a subject marker according to marker policies
- Permission of current property owner for marker placement has been obtained (page 6; unless marker will be placed on TxDOT right-of-way)

Sponsor Name: Julian Read and Sybil Swaim

Date: November 14, 2016

NOTICE: Incomplete applications will be returned to the CHC Chair or Marker Chair.

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

SUBJECT MARKERS: 2017 Official Texas Historical Marker SPONSORSHIP APPLICATION

This form constitutes a request for the Texas Historical Commission (THC) to consider approval of an Official Texas Historical Marker for the topic noted in this application. The THC will review the request and make its determination based on rules and procedures of the program. Filing of the application for sponsorship is for the purpose of providing basic information to be used in the evaluation process. The final determination of eligibility and approval for a state marker will be made by the THC. This form is to be used for subject marker requests only. Please see separate forms for either Historic Texas Cemeteries or Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks (buildings and structures).

Proposed marker topic (Official title will be determined by the THC): Panter Branch School

County: Hood

Town (nearest town in same county on current state highway map): Tolar

Street address of marker site or directions from town noted above: 4101 Hill City

Highway, FM 56. Location is about 3.5 miles South from the junction of US 377 and FM 56 in Tolar.

Texas State Representative Name: Representative Jim Lloyd Keffer

District #: 60

Texas State Senator Name: Senator Brian Birdwell

District #: 22

Marker Coordinates:

If you know the location coordinates of the proposed marker site, enter them in one of the formats below:

UTM Zone Easting Northing

Lat: 32.34488 N Long: 97.89092 W (deg, min, sec or decimal degrees)

Otherwise, give a precise verbal description here (e.g. northwest corner of 3rd and Elm, or FM 1411, 2.6 miles east of McWhorter Creek):

Will the marker be placed at the actual site of the topic being marked? Yes No

If the answer is no, provide the distance and directions to the actual location from the marker (i.e. 100 yards east). **Request that it be placed on the ROW in front of structure, but not to obstruct gate.**

SUBJECT MARKERS

Purpose

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Subject markers are educational in nature and reveal aspects of local history important to a community or region. These markers honor topics such as schools, communities, businesses, events and individuals. Subject markers are placed at sites that have historical associations with the topics, but no legal restriction is placed on the use of the property or site, although the THC must be notified if the marker is ever to be relocated.

Criteria

1. **Age:** Most topics marked with subject markers must date back at least 50 years, although historic events may be marked after 30 years, and individuals of historic importance may be marked, or may be mentioned in a historical marker text, after they have been deceased 10 years. The THC may waive age requirements for topics of overwhelming state or national importance, although exceptions are rarely granted and the burden of proof for all claims and documentation is the responsibility of the narrative author.
- 2.
3. **Historical significance:** A topic is considered to have historical significance if it had influence, effect or impact on the course of history or cultural development; age alone does not determine significance.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Any individual, group or county historical commission (CHC) may apply to the THC to request an Official Texas Historical Marker for what it deems a worthy topic. Only complete marker applications that contain all the required elements can be accepted or processed by the THC. For subject markers, the required elements are sponsorship application form, narrative history and documentation.

- Completed applications must be duly reviewed, verified and approved by the CHC in the county in which the marker will be placed.
- The sponsorship application form, narrative history and documentation must be in the form of Microsoft Word or Word-compatible documents and submitted by email attachments to the THC no later than November 15, 2016. Paper copies of applications, whether mailed or delivered in person, cannot be accepted in lieu of the electronic version. THC email accepts mail no larger than 10 MB. You may split the application and materials into separate emails. Please note this in the email subject line.
- Required font style and type size are a Times variant and 12-point.
- Narrative histories must be typed in a double-spaced (or 1.5-spaced) format and include separate sections on context, overview and significance.
- The narrative history must include documentation in the form of reference notes, which can be either footnotes or endnotes. Documentation associated with applications should be broad-based and demonstrate a survey of available resources, both primary and secondary.
- **The CHC or Marker Chair will forward the application and narrative history to markerapplication@thc.texas.gov.**
- Upon notification of the successful preliminary review of required elements by the THC, a non-refundable application fee of \$100 is required. Please send payment with

the invoice which THC provides. Payment of the application fee does not guarantee approval of the historical marker.

- A copy or scan of proof of current ownership is required to verify the property owner information listed on the application (page 6). Both items are due by December 9, 2016 unless the marker will be placed on a TxDOT right-of-way. You may access this information through county appraisal or tax records.

Once marker applications have passed preliminary review and the application fee and signed proof of property ownership have been received by THC, the application will be scored to determine whether the marker will be submitted to the Commissioners of the THC for final approval.

SCORING CRITERIA

- (1) 5 pts. max. Age;
- (2) 10 pts. max. Historical Significance/Architectural Significance;
- (3) 10 pts. max. State of Repair/Integrity;
- (4) 10 pts. max. Diversity of topic for addressing gaps in historical marker program;
- (5) 15 pts. max. Value of topic as an undertold or untold aspect of Texas history;
- (6) 10 pts. max. Endangerment level of property, site or topic;
- (7) 10 pts. max. Available documentation and resources;
- (8) 10 pts. max. Diversity among this group of candidates;
- (9) 5 pts. max. Relevance to other commission programs; and
- (10) 15 pts. max. Relevance to the commission's current thematic priorities.

SPONSORSHIP PAYMENT INFORMATION

Prospective sponsors please note the following:

- Payment must be received in full within 45 days of the official approval notice and be accompanied by the THC payment form. The THC is unable to process partial payments or to delay payment due to processing procedures of the sponsor. Applications not paid in the time frame required may, at the sole discretion of the THC, be cancelled or postponed.
- Payment does not constitute ownership of a marker; Official Texas Historical Markers are the property of the State of Texas.
- If, at any time during the marker process, sponsorship is withdrawn, a refund can be processed, but the THC will retain the application fee of \$100.
- The Official Texas Historical Marker Program provides no means of recognizing sponsors through marker text, incising or supplemental plaques.

Marker sponsor (may be individual or organization): **Julian Read & Sybil Swaim**

Contact person (if applicable): **Julian Read**

Mailing address: 3702 Balcones Drive City, State, Zip: Austin, TX 78731

Phone: 512-459-0825 **Email address:** julian.read@cohnwolfe.com

SHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS

If the proposed marker site is on TxDOT right-of-way, the marker will be shipped directly to the district highway engineer for placement, with consultation from the CHC. If the marker will go on property other than TxDOT right-of-way, provide information in the space below. In order to facilitate marker delivery, residence addresses, post office box numbers and rural route numbers are not permitted. To avoid additional shipping charges or delays, use a business street address (open 8 a.m.—5 p.m., Monday through Friday). **THC is not responsible for additional shipping charges if multiple delivery attempts are made.**

Name:

Street address: City, zip:

Daytime phone: Email:

TYPE AND SIZE OF SUBJECT MARKER

The sponsor/CHC prefers the following size marker:

- 27" x 42" subject marker with post (\$1800)
- 27" x 42" subject marker without post* (\$1600)
- 18" x 28" subject marker with post (\$1100)
- 18" x 28" subject marker without post* (\$1100)

*For a subject marker without post, indicate to what surface material it will be mounted:

- wood masonry metal other (specify)

*For markers without posts, the CHC must receive prior approval from the THC for the planned placement. Such prior approval is based on the following:

- Submittal of a detailed plan for where the marker will be mounted, including the surface to which it will be placed (masonry, metal, wood); and
- A statement of why a marker with a post is not feasible or preferred.

RECORDS RETENTION BY CHC:

The CHC must retain hard copies of the application, as well as an online version, at least for the duration of the marker process. The THC is not responsible for lost applications, incomplete applications or applications not properly filed according to the program requirements. For additional information about any aspect of the Official Texas Historical Marker Program, visit the Markers page on the THC website

<http://www.thc.texas.gov/preserve/projects-and-programs/state-historical-markers>.

SUBJECT MARKERS:

PERMISSION OF PROPERTY OWNER FOR MARKER PLACEMENT

Please fill out this attachment, print and sign. Proof of current property ownership is also required and may be found at the county appraisal or tax office. Return both items to our offices via email, fax or mail by December 9, 2016.

Proposed marker topic: Panter Branch School

County: Hood

Will the marker be placed on right-of-way maintained by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)?

Yes No

If the answer is yes, the THC will secure the necessary permission from TxDOT, and no other information is required. If the answer is no, please provide the following information for the person or group who owns the property.

Property owner:

Address: **City, State, Zip:**

Phone: **Email address:**

I, _____, certify that I am the legal owner or authorized representative of the property owner noted herein, and further certify that I have read the information regarding Official Texas Historical Markers and that I voluntarily seek the marker for the property described herein, and proof of ownership is attached to this form. I further certify that I will comply with the policies and procedures of the Official Texas Historical Marker Program.

Signature: _____

NOTE: The property owner will not receive copies of correspondence from the THC. All procedural correspondence (notice of receipt, requests for additional information, inscription, shipping notice, etc.) will be sent by email to the CHC representative, who is encouraged to share the information with all interested parties as necessary.

Texas Historical Commission
History Programs Division
P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711-2276
Phone 512/463-5853
history@thc.texas.gov



Panter Branch School, Hood County, Texas

I CONTEXT

The Panter Branch School (also spelled Painter Branch) was an early and typical example of elementary and secondary schools established across rural Texas in the late 1800s. Located on the Edwards Plateau in Hood County, it was 9 miles from the county seat in Granbury and 3 miles from the nearest high school in Tolar. Students walked to and from school-- up to 4 miles distance. Classes were held from 9 to 4.

The Fort Worth and Rio Grande railroad came to Hood County in 1887. That brought rapid population growth, and with it came increasing demand for more schools. The importance of education to early day settlers is evidenced by a 1934 map that shows a remarkable total of 36 school districts across the county in the depth of the Great Depression.

II. OVERVIEW

Panter Branch School (District No. 7) was in operation by 1898¹ on a 25-acre plot of land on Hill City Highway (FM 56) three miles south of Tolar. Some neighbors suggested that the name was derived from reports of panther sightings nearby. Thomas D. (Dwain) Nix, a member of a longtime Hood County family, now owns the property that the school occupied. His father purchased the land from heirs of his neighbor T. J. Davis in 1952. Nix says that Davis was well known in the area for having supplied water that was piped from his place to serve the school. Outhouses behind the school were the only rest rooms.² The school's pupils were primarily children of undereducated farmers drawn to the area's rich sandy loam lying beneath virgin timberland that they cleared and cultivated.

The school had two rooms, 42 pupils and two teachers. Some Teacher Reports from the 1930s provide a picture of a spartan existence during the Depression. Teachers were paid from \$60 to \$95 a month.³ The same documents show a unanimous "no" on the question whether

they had adequate facilities for instructional needs. Some of their modest requests included more library books, a dictionary, and better blackboards. The husband and wife team of Tony and Grace Morrison shared the teaching duties for several years. He taught grades K-8 and she taught grades K-4. At one point in 1932, they simultaneously taught eight separate children of the J.C. Swaim family, one of the largest in Hood County.⁴

One of the family, Joe Horace Swaim, became a prominent community leader in serving as a Hood County Commissioner for 24 years. His cousin Julian Otis Read attended the first grade at Panter before his parents James Otis Read and Tillie Naomi Swaim Read moved to Fort Worth. He became a well-known public relations advisor to Texas Governor John B. Connally in the 1960s. He gave the first press briefing on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and critical of Governor Connally in Dallas on November 22, 1963.⁵

Bud Gifford, a classmate of Joe Swaim, recalls that the Swaim were one of only two families' in the area that owned a peanut thrashing machine. As important as was education, it sometimes took second place to harvesting crops in the field. Panter Branch and other schools usually closed their doors for two or three weeks in the fall so that family members could help pick cotton, thrash peanuts or cut feed. Recess play at Panter took several forms, including softball, Mumblety-peg and playing on the seesaws. Gifford recalls a pastime where participants take turns to sweep grass and soil by hands across a sled to simulate a thrashing machine.⁶ The dreaded Boll Weevil beetle devastated cotton crops in the 1930s.

At age 93, Aunita Norman still has sharp memories of her school days. She was only four years old when she got the task of walking to school with her older brother every day because her parents were afraid for him to go alone. "My biggest worry was jumping the creek (Panter Branch) just in front of the school" she recalled. "It was hard to keep from getting a foot wet". Ms. Norman's favorite game was "Wolf over the River" a form of tag wherein facing rows of students take turns trying to run back and forth between the lines without being caught by the

“wolf” in the middle. She also remembers the Red Rover, Red Rover game. The most hilarious moment recalled was the day that Ms. Norman’s sister came running frantically from the outhouses behind the school screaming that there was a cow in one of the toilets. Sure enough, a stray had wandered from a pasture next door and caught its leg in one of the stalls. It took two men to extract the cow and send her back home.⁷

By 1946, Panter Branch was nearing the end of its life. The Granbury newspaper advertised a Public Auction of “Teacherage, Lunch Room, Garage and other property”⁸ at the school on St. Valentine’s Day. Panter # 7 was consolidated with the Tolar Independent School District, effective September 1 of 1949. After closure of the school, its structure took on a new life. It became a community center for various activities, including meetings, celebrations and other special events. In that new role, it often was referred to as Panter Branch Hall. As more and more young people moved to the city, its usage dwindled. But the structure is still standing in 2017 as a testament to education in early Texas.

CITATIONS

1. *Texas Teacher’s Daily Register, for Graded and Ungraded Schools*, Form K; Panter School, November 21, 1898.
2. Telephone interview with Thomas Dwain Nix, by Julian Read, Austin, Texas, August 2016
3. *Texas Teacher’s Daily Register for Public Schools*, Form M191; for the years of 1932-1936, Panter Branch School, District No. 7, County of Hood, State of Texas.
4. *Texas Teacher’s Daily Register for Public Schools*, Form M191; For the Year 1932-1933, Panter Branch School, District No. 7, County of Hood, State of Texas.
5. Reminiscences of Julian Read, Austin, Texas, October 2016
6. Telephone Interview with Bud Gifford, by Julian Read, Austin, Texas, September 2016
7. Telephone Interview with Aunita Norman, by Julian Read, Austin, Texas, October 2016
8. Advertisement in Hood County News & Tablet, February 28, 1946

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

**HISTORIC TEXAS CEMETERY MARKERS:
2017 Official Texas Historical Marker
COVERSHEET**

Complete the form and send to markerapplication@thc.texas.gov
Valid September 1, 2016 to November 15, 2016 **only**

APPROVAL BY COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION (required)

As chair or duly appointed marker chair, I certify the following:

The topic qualifies for an Official Texas Historical Marker according to marker policies on the THC website. Representatives of the CHC have met or talked with the potential marker sponsor and discussed the marker program policies as outlined on the THC website. The application has been filled out correctly. The narrative history and documentation have been reviewed for accuracy.

CHC comments or concerns about this application (required): The Hood County Historical Commission reconments the approval of this application.

Name of CHC contact (chair or marker chair): Victor A. Smith, Chair, Marker and Cemetery Committees

Mailing address: 5111 Wedgefield Road City, Zip: Granbury, TX 76049

Daytime phone: 817-573-9132 817-559-3024 Cell **Email address:** smithvs@charter.net

CHECKLIST APPROVAL (required)

The cemetery has been designated as a Historic Texas Cemetery (HTC)

- Year designation filed in county records: 2016

- Historic Texas Cemetery designation number: HD-C030

(Ex. AT-C023; Number may be found on Exhibit A of the HTC designation)

A narrative history is included (only if an interpretive plaque is desired – a narrative is not required if purchasing a name & date plaque)

Permission of cemetery administrator or landowner granting permission for marker placement has been obtained (page 6)

Sponsor Name: Rock Church Cemetery Association

Date: 11/14/2016

NOTICE: Incomplete applications will be returned to the CHC Chair or Marker Chair.

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

HISTORIC TEXAS CEMETERY MARKERS: 2017 Official Texas Historical Marker SPONSORSHIP APPLICATION

This form constitutes a request for the Texas Historical Commission (THC) to consider approval of an Official Texas Historical Marker for a cemetery noted in this application. The THC will review the request and make its determination based on rules and procedures of the program. Filing of the application for sponsorship is for the purpose of providing basic information to be used in the evaluation process. The final determination of eligibility and approval for a state marker will be made by the THC. This form is to be used for Historic Texas Cemetery marker requests only. Use this form if (1) you already completed the HTC designation and (2) you want to apply for a historical marker for the cemetery. Please see separate forms for either Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks (buildings and structures) or subject markers.

NOTE: A final Historic Texas Cemetery (HTC) designation is a prerequisite for HTC markers. Information regarding the HTC designation can be found on the THC website: (<http://www.thc.texas.gov/preserve/projects-and-programs/cemetery-preservation/historic-texas-cemetery-designation>).

Marker title (must be exactly as listed in the HTC designation): Rock Church Cemetery

County: Hood

Town (nearest town in same county on state highway map): Tolar

Street address of marker site or directions from town noted above: 6101 Rock Church Road. From junction of US 377 and Rock Church Road, FM 2870, in Tolar, south on Rock Church Road 6.8 miles. Cemetery is on the left. The junction of Loftin Road, CR-223, is on the left.

Texas State Representative Name: Representative Jim Lloyd Keffer
District #: 60

Texas State Senator Name: Senator Brian Birdwell
District #: 22

NOTE: Historic Texas Cemetery markers must be placed at the cemetery being marked. They cannot be placed on right-of-way maintained by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT).

HISTORIC TEXAS CEMETERY MARKERS

Purpose

Historic Texas Cemetery markers are only for use in burial grounds previously designated as an HTC. These markers recognize the historical significance of a cemetery and, with the use of interpretive plaques, provide background on associated communities, families, events and

customs. HTC markers must be placed at the cemetery, but since cemeteries are protected under other existing laws, placement of a marker establishes no restrictions on the property.

Criteria

1. **HTC designation:** All steps of the HTC designation process must be completed by the time of application for the HTC marker.
2. **Historical/cultural significance:** Completion of the HTC designation does not ensure approval for an HTC marker; it is only a prerequisite. The application for an HTC marker with an interpretive plaque must include the same type of detailed history required for other markers. In addition to Context, Overview and Significance sections, it must also include a description of the physical site, cemetery setting, and significant landscape features or noteworthy burial markers and funeral practices.

Special Considerations for HTC markers:

- HTC medallions can only be placed with a previously-awarded THC subject marker that provides interpretation for the cemetery.
- The narrative history component is not required if the sponsorship application is for an HTC medallion or for an HTC medallion with name and date plaque. It is required, however, for all other HTC markers. In all cases, though, a complete, current sponsorship application is required.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Any individual, group or county historical commission (CHC) may apply to the THC to request an Official Texas Historical Marker for what it deems a worthy topic. Only complete marker applications that contain all the required elements can be accepted or processed by the THC. For HTC markers with interpretive plaques, the required elements are sponsorship application, narrative history and documentation.

- Completed applications must be duly reviewed, verified and approved by the CHC in the county in which the marker will be placed.
- The sponsorship application, narrative history and documentation must be in the form of Microsoft Word or Word-compatible documents and submitted by email attachments to the THC no later than November 15, 2016. Paper copies of applications, whether mailed or delivered in person, cannot be accepted in lieu of the electronic version. THC email accepts mail no larger than 10 MB so the application and supplemental materials may need to be sent in multiple emails. Please note this in the subject line of the email.
- Required font style and type size are a Times variant and 12-point.
- Narrative histories must be typed in a double-spaced (or 1.5-spaced) format and include separate sections on context, overview and significance.
- The narrative history must include documentation in the form of reference notes, which can be either footnotes or endnotes. Documentation associated with applications should be broad-based and demonstrate a survey of available resources, both primary and secondary.
- **The CHC or Marker Chair will forward the application and narrative history to markerapplication@thc.texas.gov.**
- Upon notification of the successful preliminary review of required elements by the THC, a non-refundable application fee of \$100 is required. Please send payment with

the invoice which THC provides. Payment of the application fee does not guarantee approval of the historical marker.

- A signed form is required to show approval of marker placement by the cemetery administrator or landowner. This is due via email, fax or mail before December 9, 2016.

Once marker applications have passed preliminary review and the application fee and signed proof of cemetery administrator approval have been received by THC, the application will be scored to determine whether the marker will be submitted to the Commissioners of the THC for final approval.

SCORING CRITERIA

- (1) 5 pts. max. Age;
- (2) 10 pts. max. Historical Significance/Architectural Significance;
- (3) 10 pts. max. State of Repair/Integrity;
- (4) 10 pts. max. Diversity of topic for addressing gaps in historical marker program;
- (5) 15 pts. max. Value of topic as an untold or untold aspect of Texas history;
- (6) 10 pts. max. Endangerment level of property, site or topic;
- (7) 10 pts. max. Available documentation and resources;
- (8) 10 pts. max. Diversity among this group of candidates;
- (9) 5 pts. max. Relevance to other commission programs; and
- (10) 15 pts. max. Relevance to the commission's current thematic priorities.

SPONSORSHIP PAYMENT INFORMATION

Prospective sponsors please note the following:

- Payment must be received in full within 45 days of the official approval notice and must be accompanied by the THC payment form. The THC is unable to process partial payments or to delay payment due to processing procedures of the sponsor. Applications not paid in the time frame required may, at the sole discretion of the THC, be cancelled or postponed.
- Payment does not constitute ownership of a marker; Historic Texas Cemetery markers and other Official Texas Historical Markers are the property of the State of Texas.
- If, at any time during the marker process, sponsorship is withdrawn, a refund can be processed, but the THC will retain the application fee of \$100.
- The Official Texas Historical Marker Program provides no means of recognizing sponsors through marker texts, incising or supplemental plaques.

Marker sponsor (may be individual or organization): **Rock Church Cemetery Association**

Contact person (if applicable): **Joy Mooney**

Mailing address: 1105 East Boynton St. **City, Zip:** Hamilton, TX 76531-1602

Email address (required): **joyl.monney@gmail** **Phone:** 254-386-5338

SHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS

In order to facilitate marker delivery, residence addresses, post office box numbers and rural route numbers are not permitted. To avoid additional shipping charges or delays, use a business street address (open 8 a.m.—5 p.m., Monday through Friday). **THC is not responsible for additional shipping charges if multiple delivery attempts are made.**

Name: Joy Mooney

Street address: 1105 East Boynton St. City, Zip: Hamilton, TX 76531-1602

Daytime phone (required): Hamilton, TX 76531-1602 Email (required): joyl.monney@gmail

TYPE AND SIZE OF HISTORIC TEXAS CEMETERY MARKERS

The sponsor/CHC prefers the following size marker:

- 27" x 42" HTC marker with post (\$1800)
- 27" x 42" HTC marker without post* (\$1600)
- 18" x 28" HTC marker with post (\$1100)
- 18" x 28" HTC marker without post* (\$1100)
- HTC medallion (only for cemeteries with existing Official Texas Historical Marker) – (\$300 for surface, \$330 for existing post)
check **internal diameter of marker post: 2 3/4" 3 1/2"
- HTC medallion and name and date plaque, with post (\$650)
- HTC medallion and name and date plaque, without post (\$650)

*For an HTC marker without post, indicate to what surface material it will be mounted:
 wood masonry metal other (specify)

RECORDS RETENTION BY CHC: The CHC must retain hard copies of the application as well as an online version, at least for the duration of the marker process. The THC is not responsible for lost applications, for incomplete applications or for applications not properly filed according to the program requirements. For additional information about any aspect of the Official Texas Historical Marker Program, visit the Markers page on the THC website (<http://www.thc.texas.gov/preserve/projects-and-programs/state-historical-markers>).

Rock Church Cemetery

I. Context

Location--Rock Church Cemetery is located ten miles southwest of Tolar, Texas, on Farm Road 2475, on the Hood and Erath County line. The actual address for the cemetery is 6101 Rock Church Road. To access the cemetery from the junction of US 377 and Rock Church Road (FM 2870) in Tolar, one should travel south on Rock Church Road for 6.9 miles. The cemetery is found on the left.

In the mid 1850s, early pioneer families—the Caraways, Joneses, Pates, and Cowans--settled in the Rock Church area of Hood County in the Paluxy River Valley.¹ Other early families were Jacksons, Osborns, Bakers, and Tinnins. The rich river land was a drawing card for these early families migrating south from Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama. Some of the land was Spanish grant land that has now been passed on to descendants from the grantees.²

One of the founding fathers of the Rock Church Community was Jesse Caraway, who arrived in Texas in 1859.³ While growing up in Tennessee, his family had been a neighbor to Texas hero, Davy Crockett. After settling in the fertile area of the Paluxy River Valley, Caraway raised stock and farmed the rich fields. He also was a member of a minute company protecting the frontier.³ Being civic minded, Caraway was supportive of the welfare of the community. He allowed members of the community, who worked collectively, to build a two-story cut stone structure on his land in 1871-72.⁴ At a time when most buildings were log cabins, this was a remarkable building. This rock building was the center of the community and the source of the community's name. In a deed dated May 22, 1875, Jesse Caraway deeded five acres of land, including the rock building, to the Methodist Episcopal Church South. He stipulated that the lower floor of the stone building be used for a church for all Christian denominations for a period of five years from the deed's date, and after that time the Methodist Episcopal Church South would have control. He also stipulated that both floors of the rock building should be used for a literary school, and the upstairs was designated to be used for a Masonic Lodge, as well.⁵ As in all communities, the need for a cemetery soon arose, and the land donated by Jesse Caraway was further utilized by the community for a cemetery. The first burial in the Rock Church Cemetery was for Sarah Brooks

(wife of Zachariah Brooks), who died on May 30, 1873. Her tombstone, which was once marked with “THE 1ST PUT HERE,”⁶ gives testimony to the cemetery’s beginning.

Paluxy Masonic Lodge Number 393 that met in the rock building was dedicated in 1874.⁷ In 1890, Emma Wood Caraway (daughter-in-law of Jesse Caraway) sold another five and one half acres to the church for the purpose of extending the cemetery.⁸ The Rock Church Cemetery not only served as a burial ground for the Rock Church Community but also for nearby communities.

In 1906, a wooden church structure was built not far from the cemetery.⁹ Although a clapboard structure, the new building retained the name Rock Church. It has also been known by the name of Marvin Chapel. The church was active as a Methodist Church until the 1970’s, at which time attendance declined, and the Methodist Church ceased assigning a minister to the Rock Church circuit. In 2001, The United Methodist Church of the Central Texas Conference deeded the wooden building, the land on which it rests, and the land where the cemetery is located to the Rock Church Cemetery Association, the group who maintains and cares for the cemetery.¹⁰

The cemetery today is completely fenced and covers an area of 8.9 acres. Approximately 700 graves of earlier residents, their descendants, and others fill the cemetery. Noteworthy burials include veterans of the Civil War (North and South), World War I, World War II, the Korean conflict, and the Viet Nam War. Among the veterans interred here is 1st Lt. David E. Yates (b. April 28, 1947; d. July 13, 1969), Viet Nam War veteran, who received several combat medals for bravery—the Silver Star, Bronze Star, Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster, Combat Infantryman’s Badge, and the National Order of South Viet Nam Gallantry Cross with Palms.¹¹ Other cemetery grave markers give evidence of settlers’ involvement with fraternal organizations—Woodmen of the World, the Masons, Shriners, and Order of the Eastern Star. Additional markers focus on relationships of those buried —“mother,” “father,” “son,” or daughter.” Perhaps this is a testimony to the importance of family ties in the Rock Church Community.

Today, the cemetery remains a focal point of the community and is a drawing card for many who once lived in the community or who have family ties with those who lived here. The cemetery itself is reflective of difficult times and adversities endured by the community’s pioneers. These early folks were confronted with illness,

death, hostile Indians, and premature loss of offspring. Vegetation in and around the cemetery includes oak and cedar trees, along with grass. Although there is a small amount of curbing, curbs are no longer permitted inside the cemetery because curbs make mowing and cleaning difficult. Monuments, old and modern, mark many of the graves. Others are marked by plain, unmarked stones. Some unfilled graves are marked and await interment of those who will someday need a final resting place. The cemetery is active today. For burial, a plot must be purchased from the Rock Church Cemetery Association. No restrictions are placed on who can be interred here. In 1972, Mrs. Philip Price and Mrs. T.B. Cawyer of Stephenville, Texas, inventoried the cemetery, and their list of burials can be found online at Granbury Depot.com.

II. Overview

The Rock Church Community has largely been an agricultural area of farmers and ranchers. A respected farmer and stock raiser from the area who is interred in the Rock Church Cemetery was George E. Jackson (b. April 23, 1849, d. December 11, 1923). Mr. Jackson bred Jersey and Berkshire hogs, graded shorthorn cattle, and Clydesdale horses.¹² Not all farmers and ranchers were successful. It is said that the community's growth was impeded because the community was located on a direct Indian route to Comanche Peak.¹³ Comanche Peak was a double mesa, which was a lookout and ceremonial site for the Indians, especially Comanches.¹⁴ Original homes were small log cabins that were replaced by larger homes as families expanded and as more space was needed. The center of the community was the church and school. The church served the area until the 1970s. The school was first opened in the early 1870s. It sometimes dealt with as many as 100 students. Students attended the "one-room school" in grades one through eight. On completing grade eight, many students continued their education in nearby Tolar or Bluff Dale. Rock Church students formed teams of basketball and baseball and competed against area schools. The peaceful out-of-doors was a pleasant refuge for students at recess time. No cafeterias existed; students brought very simple lunches usually packed in syrup buckets. The school closed in the 1930s.

A homecoming is held each year in the little wooden church building on the second Sunday of October.

Descendants of early pioneers return to celebrate their heritage, to sustain interest in the cemetery, and to

contribute toward the upkeep of the cemetery and wooden church building. Returning descendants gather inside the little church for songs and worship and for sharing reminiscences of earlier days. Afterwards, attendees gather outside the church for a potluck lunch. Many of those present also tour the cemetery grounds and pay homage to ancestors interred there. Continued interest in the history of the area and support of the cemetery are evidenced by the growing number of attendees each year and by their yearning for the old stories. More and more members of the younger generations are attending the homecomings and are showing enthusiasm and interest in the area.

Today, the cemetery is well maintained by the Rock Church Cemetery Association. It is regularly cleaned by workers hired with the contributions from homecoming attendees. For burial, a plot must be purchased from the Rock Church Cemetery Association. No restrictions are placed on who can be buried here.

The Methodists discontinued services in the nearby wooden church in the 1970s. The rock building is now a private residence, having been sold in 1972.¹⁵ Nondenominational church services are currently being held in the wooden structure.

III. Significance

The cemetery, along with the nearby clapboard building, is the heart of the Rock Church Community. It is a monument to the devout, hard working pioneers who settled this community. Among noteworthy individuals who are buried in the cemetery are several generations of the Larned family, who owned the Larned Mill, Larned Grocery, and Larned Drug Store at the nearby community of Paluxy. Col. Benjamin F. Larned, father of Frederick Sylvester Larned, was a Pay Master General in the Union Army during the Civil War. Fort Larned and then later the city of Larned, Kansas were named after Benjamin. Frederick Sylvester Larned (b. July 21, 1803, d. Nov. 89, 1914) is interred in the Rock Church Cemetery, along with his grandson, Walter Andrew Larned (b. Dec. 28, 1988, d. January 7, 1959). Walter Andrew was an earlier resident of the community, and he served as County and District Clerk in Hood County in the 1950s. Founding fathers of the community are also among those interred in the cemetery—Jesse Caraway (b. July 11; 1817, d. May 18, 1891) and also Lorenzo

Dow Wood (b. April 16, 1805; d. Dec. 07, 1889), who was instrumental in early building in the community. Also, interred here is former teacher, James T. Williams (b.1845, d. 1910).

Interest from the descendants of those interred here keeps the cemetery and area viable, and the church is also the site of an occasional wedding or funeral. Continued interest in the cemetery and love of the Rock Church area are evidenced by the large gatherings that take place at the annual homecomings and in the level of maintenance and care extended to the cemetery.

The population of the area is sparse, and the cemetery is located on a rural road. A historical marker would help to generate respect for the cemetery and for those who have been interred here. There was a time when the cemetery was vandalized, and the Cemetery Association has tried to be vigilant in seeing that the cemetery and little wooden church are revered and preserved.

IV. Documentation

Notes

¹ Martha Watson, "Rock Church Community: Vestiges of a Pioneer Past," *Granbury! Magazine* (January/February, 1984), accessed November 12, 2016, <http://www.granburydepot.org>.

²Sue Seibert, "Keeping the Past Alive at Rock Church," *North Texas Star: Supplement to the Mineral Wells Index*, November, 2005.

³ Hood County Genealogical Society, "Jesse Caraway," from *History of Texas*, 1896, accessed November 11, 2016, <http://www.granburydepot.org>.

⁴*Handbook of Texas Online*, Kristi Strickland, "Rock Church, TX," accessed November 12, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hrr54>.

⁵ Hood County Deed Book, vol. A, pp. 382-383, January 18, 1876, Office of the Hood County Clerk, Granbury, Texas.

⁶Janet Saltsgiver, "Rock Church History," *Hood County Genealogical Society Newsletter*, Vol. 13, No. 3; November, 1935, p. 35, accessed November 12, 2016, <http://www.granburydepot.org>.

⁷Watson, 1984.

⁸ Hood County Deed Records, vol. N, p. 279, October 24, 1890, Office of the Hood County Clerk, Granbury, Texas.

⁹ *Handbook of Texas Online*.

¹⁰Hood County Deed Records, vol. 1779, pp.27-31, October 3, 2001, Office of the Hood County Clerk, Granbury, Texas.

¹¹Virginia Hale, "War Veterans Buried at Rock Church Cemetery, accessed November 11, 2016, <http://www.granburydepot.org>..

¹²"George E. Jackson:1849-1923," from *History of Texas, 1896* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Co.), accessed November 12, 2016, <http://www.granburydepot.org>.

¹³ *Handbook of Texas Online*.

¹⁴ Watson, 1984.

¹⁵ Hood County Deed Records, vol. 192, pp. 372-373, November 21, 1972, Office of the Hood County Clerk, Granbury, Texas.