Commissioner Steve Radack and the staff of Cypress Top Historic Park hope you have a safe and enjoyable summer. Please come and visit Cypress Top or one of the more than 65 other Precinct Three Parks.

We had two special tours this past month. On May 12, Jay Gavitt of the Cypress Historical Society provided fourteen visitors from Reach Unlimited a fascinating tour of the site. This special needs group viewed five of the historic buildings, where early days of Cypress were brought to life for them. On May 23, Jay was also on hand to assist with a group of homeschoolers. The young ladies in this group were thrilled to see the sewing notions department at Juergen’s Store since they are members of a sewing group. Both groups were enthusiastic and made sure we knew they would be making a return visit.

Cypress Top Historic Park will be hosting the Cypress Historical Society’s Hands-on-History Summer Camp the week of June 26 through June 30. The program runs Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 2:30 PM and is designed for youngsters going into grades 4 and 5. Activities include cabin building, blacksmithing, archaeological dig demonstrations, historic building tours, how to assemble a family tree and learning how to be a museum docent. To register, please visit the Cypress Historical Society website at www.cypresshistoricalsociety.com. Registration is limited to 18 campers.

The senior history bus trip in May visited Waco, Texas. The group’s first stop was the Waco Mammoth National Monument. This new National Park Service site has preserved an extraordinary event that occurred many thousands of years ago when a herd of prehistoric giant elephants were trapped in a Brazos River flood and buried. The same circumstances have occurred at least three times at the site, each time a thousand or more years apart. At least 15 giant Columbian Mammoths are buried there. The seniors stood below a life size painting while listening to the interpreter tell the mammoth’s story. Then they toured the site and looked closely at several of the fossilized creatures. Also discovered were the fossilized remains of a giant camel and sabretooth tiger.
Following their visit to the mammoth site, the seniors went to lunch at a local restaurant which overlooks the Brazos River below the historic Waco Bridge. The group then explored the Texas Ranger Museum. There they were guided on a tour of the museum after which some seniors watched a video while other chose to wander about the museum and look at exhibits more closely. The array of objects and the many ranger stories are as diverse as Texas.
A few Texas Rangers were bigger than life and even legend. One such ranger was Frank Hamer. He was retired from the rangers but was hired by the Superintendent of the Texas Prison System to track Bonnie and Clyde after they had broken a friend out of a Texas prison. Hamer with a few close associates tracked them for 102 days before they ambushed Bonnie and Clyde on a country road in Louisiana. The museum displays several guns of both the outlaws as well as the lawmen that took part in that famous shoot out.

Another interesting bit of ranger lore is their badges. Texas rangers did not have official badges before 1938 when they became part of the Texas Department of Public Safety. Rangers often had their own badges made, often from silver Pesos or other large silver coins. A few rangers had gold badges made. As time went by, it became practice to make them out of a 1940 era Mexican Cap Peso. The reverse side of the badge would still have the name Estados Unidos de Mexico remaining from the coin. That was a tribute to the fact that the Texas Rangers were founded by Stephen F Austin in 1823 under Mexican law.

At left, memorabilia from Bonnie and Clyde who were killed by a famous Texas Ranger. At right, part of the badge exhibit. Photos by Jim Pulliam.

Signing Up for Senior History Bus Trips (Must be at least 50 years old to go on these trips)

Future trips: **June 16**, Austin: Bob Bullock State History Museum, and **July 21**, Houston: Houston Museum of Natural Science to see the Mapping Texas: From Frontier to the Lone Star State exhibit, **August 4** to the Museum of the Gulf Coast in Port Arthur. You may sign up for future trips by emailing cypresstop@pct3.com or calling (281) 357-5324. You may only sign up yourself plus one friend/spouse. No multiple reservations. **You will get a confirmation e-mail a week before the trip if you have a seat.**

Cypress Top Historic Park is open seven days a week from dawn to dusk. The buildings are only open on Tuesdays from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. Formal tours of the museum complex led by staff or volunteers begin from Juergen’s Store at 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. each Tuesday. However, we are happy to have you visit the store anytime while we are there on Tuesdays. **Group (6 or more) tours may be booked Tuesdays through Saturdays between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.** Group tours are subject to staff availability, so we recommend you make reservations at least one month in advance. The park and museum buildings are open to all and, as with all events offered at Cypress Top Historic Park, **admissions and tours are free.**

Juergen’s Hall is a community center. It offers many activities and classes for all ages. Please check the Precinct Three website at www.pct3.com for hours of operation and offerings of Juergen’s Hall Community Center.

Members of the Cypress Historical Society are in the Cypress Train Depot (bright yellow building) at Cypress Top Historic Park every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and also on the third Saturday of the month from noon to 3 p.m. They have a great deal of genealogy information on most early Cypress area families. Drop in and visit them when you are in the area.

The June and July calendars can be found on the website. There is a link from the park web page or you can look under the Community Center events calendar. The website is www.pct3.com