Commissioner Steve Radack and his staff wish you a Happy Thanksgiving and a wonderful holiday season. The cooler weather has made it feel more like the rapidly approaching holiday season. Thanksgiving traditions go back to the Pilgrims in 1621 and to George Washington’s declaring a “Day of Thanksgiving” in 1777. However, our current holiday tradition dates back to a federal law passed in 1942. This fixed the 4th Thursday of November as a “Day of Thanksgiving,” now officially Thanksgiving Day. We hope you make a bit of blessed family history of your own this Thanksgiving Day.

We had one special tour this month at Cypress Top Historic Park. It was one of Precinct Three’s “On the Road” trips from Bayland Community Center. The Seniors enjoyed the store and service station and enjoyed reminiscing about their youth and recalling stories of their parents. The store and its artifacts are treasures every Senior enjoys.

The October 26th Senior History Bus Trip visited New Braunfels and Gruene. The Seniors visited Ferdinand Jakob Lindheimer’s home in New Braunfels. Lindheimer and the home were immortalized by Ferdinand Von Roemer when he published his book, Roemer's Texas 1845 to 1847 (With Particular Reference to German Immigration and the Physical Appearance of the Country: Described Through Personal Observation, in 1849 after Roemer’s return to Germany. Roemer, who became known as the “Father of Texas Geology,” described Lindheimer and his home in great detail. He had great respect for Lindheimer, not only as a Botanist, but also as a pioneer who aided his fellow German immigrants in many ways.

Located on the same site that Roemer visited, the home the Seniors toured is a much larger and newer home built by Lindheimer in 1852. It is a timber-framed house in the saltbox style, where the roof at the back of the house slopes lower than the roof at the front. Stucco covers the Fachwerk totally on three sides, but leaves it exposed in the back of the house. In addition to a tour of the home, the New Braunfels Conservation Society arranged for a Master Gardener to provide us with a tour of the beautiful gardens behind and beside the house.

In the house, conservancy guides led the group from room to room and described the furnishings and exhibits in each room. The parlor today serves as a lobby with a picture of Lindheimer in his later years. Above it is his sword. In the far corner in the photo below are three small watercolors. These were painted in the 1880s by one of Lindheimer’s sons-in-law. He painted the pictures of the house and gardens during a visit. These early paintings have guided the conservancy in restoring the house. Also in the room was an old hump-lid trunk. It is fastened together with wood pegs instead of nails. Trunks like this one are what the German immigrants used in packing their belongings when they came to America in the 1840s. The room has many other artifacts on display as well. The kitchen is large and roomy, especially by 1852 standards. It is fully furnished with a wood-burning stove, tableware and many other objects that made the Seniors spend considerable time there.
Another small room is dedicated to Lindheimer’s days as a Botanist. During the late 1830s and early 1840s, Lindheimer collected botanic specimens in Texas for Dr. Asa Gray of Harvard University. Over a period of thirteen years, Lindheimer collected fifteen hundred species in the south Texas area. Lindheimer began a friendship with fellow botanical enthusiast John O. Meusebach, who appointed Lindheimer Director of a New Braunfels Botanical Garden. After resigning as Commissioner-General of the Adelsverein, Meusebach moved from New Braunfels to some acreage he had bought at Comanche Springs in Bexar County believed to be in the vicinity of current-day Camp Bullis. Lindheimer and Meusebach made botanical collections at Comanche Spring, with Lindheimer’s 1849 collections bearing the Comanche Spring place tag. After Meusebach retired to Loyal Valley north of Fredericksburg, Lindheimer was a frequent visitor there. He and Meusebach exchanged botanical specimens for evaluation. Lindheimer is known today as the “Father of Texas Botany,” with over 20 species and one genus bearing his name.

In 1852, Lindheimer became the editor of the Die Neu Braunfels Zeitung, a German/English bilingual newspaper and published it out of his home for the next two decades, converting the rear of his house into a print shop. This newspaper
continued to be published as a bilingual newspaper through 1957. Through several mergers, the paper is still published today. There are also examples of the Lindheimer newspaper and other print memorabilia in the home.

At left, the typeset rack for the newspaper. At right, an example of the 1872 publication. Photos by Jim Pulliam.

Following the tour, the group had lunch at a restaurant on the Guadalupe River in an old Gristmill building. This rather famous restaurant has over 7000 ratings on Google Maps. It’s rare for any place to have more than a few hundred and most don’t have that many. The Seniors ate lunch in an outdoor section above the Guadalupe River in the shade of oak trees. The food was excellent and the seniors left well pleased with their lunch.

Following lunch, the Seniors walked around old town Gruene and visited the famous Gruene Hall which is about on par with the Grand Ole Opry, in Texas terms. Several Seniors spent most of their free time in an exceptional antique store in old town Gruene and returned home with newly acquired treasures.
Signing Up for Senior History Bus Trips (Must be at least 50 years old to go on these trips)

There is now a waitlist for the November 16 trip to the Sam Houston Home and Museum in Huntsville and the Fanthorp Inn in Anderson. You may now sign up for the December 14 trip to Columbus to visit the historic Tait House and other historic sites in Columbus. 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 7:00 a.m. to dusk. The buildings are open Tuesdays through Thursdays from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. Formal tours of the museum complex led by CHS 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 to give you an impromptu tour of any of the buildings. **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, offering many activities and classes for all ages. Please check the Precinct Three website at [www.pct3.com](http://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 November and December calendars can be found on the Precinct 3 web site. [www.pct3.com](http://www.pct3.com) There is a link from the park web page as well.