Commissioner Steve Radack and his staff wish you a Happy New Year. As historians, the New Year gives us cause to look back 100 years and see what historically significant events occurred in 1919. Texas was the first state to ratify the 19th Amendment, which gave the right for women to vote in National Elections. 1919 was the year that Prohibition was passed. It was also the year that the worst pandemic in world history, the Great Influenza Epidemic, would end and begin to fade into history. Let's hope this year brings contributions that will be of positive historical importance.

In case you missed the wonderful Christmas decorations at Cypress Top, we wanted to share the completed windows at Juergen Store. They are painted each year by a volunteer, Gudrun Sundquist, in the tradition common during the middle of the 20th century. We appreciate her thoughtful gift every year.

The Senior History Bus Trip in December went to Columbus. They visited a number of historic buildings and landmarks, starting with the historic Tait House.
The house was built by Dr. Charles W. Tait in 1856, and has been occupied continually by him or his direct descendants ever since. Today it is occupied and cared for by Rita Tait Jackson and her husband, Ed. Rita had volunteers stationed in each of the first-floor rooms. These volunteers were well-versed in the history of the house, the family, and the furnishings. The artifacts in the house were owned and utilized by previous Tait family members, and include a beautiful dress that is also in a portrait painted in the 19th century.

The Tait House is an ongoing archeological site. Many of the archeological findings are displayed in several rooms in the cellar. Sharon Menegaz, a member of the Houston Archeological Society, was on hand to talk about the historical excavations around the house on the Columbus town lot. The Tait family also has a 600-acre ranch on the Colorado River that has a prehistoric archeological site. Mrs. Menegaz explained the importance of the site and the excavation process. Findings from the property indicate the area was utilized as a more or less permanent site as early as 5000 years ago. Artifacts are present continually through time until the Tait family began settlement in the historic era.
Following the tour of the Tait home, the seniors had a leisurely lunch at Los Cabos Mexican Grill. Lunch portions were generous, and several folks left with “doggie bags.” After lunch, the group visited the Columbus Chamber of Commerce, housed on the first floor of the 1886 Stafford Opera House. Folks were given a history of the building, including its use as a bank, a Chevrolet dealership, and an upstairs theatre. The seniors then went upstairs to the actual theatre and stage area where they could admire the refurbishing of the original stage. The area serves as a dinner theatre several times a year. The hard wood floor is original and had been once used as a roller skating rink. Imagine the noise that was transmitted to the offices on the first floor!

The next stop was in the War Memorial Building, a former brick water tower converted to a museum. It is a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark and is dedicated to Colorado County veterans of all wars.
The Dilue Rose Harris House and the Alley Family Log Cabin were the next sites visited. At age 11, Dilue Rose and her family were among the Texans involved in the Runaway Scrape during the Texas War of Independence. Decades later, she wrote an account of her experiences fleeing the Mexican army. The Dilue Rose Harris Museum preserves the historic home she and her husband built in 1858, and where they raised their nine children.

The Alley Cabin was built by Abraham Alley who was one of Stephen F. Austin’s original “Old 300” settlers. His first home burned in the spring of 1836 when settlers fled during the Runaway Scrape. Later in 1836 he returned and built this oak log cabin. It is a well-preserved, pre-statehood, square-notch pioneer log home. This style of architecture is known as the Texas Colonial Period.

Before returning to Cypress Top Historic Park, the bus made a quick stop at the largest Live Oak in Texas. An interesting feature of the tree is the way some branches are held up. Three substantial steel posts offer support for the weight of its larger branches.

The largest live oak in Texas with its steel supports. Photo by Jim Pulliam.

**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 January 25 trip to Galveston to visit the Bishop's Palace, the Garten Verein, and the Menard House, the February 15 trip to Wharton to visit the Wharton County Courthouse, the Wharton County Historical Museum and the Matagorda Bay Nuclear Plant, and the March 15 trip to Goliad to visit the Goliad County Courthouse and the Mission Espiritu Santo. You may add your name to the waitlist for these trips.

Sign up for future trips by emailing cypressstop@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 January and February 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.