Steve Radack, Commissioner
Harris County Precinct 3
Cypress Top Historic Park
August 2019

While there is no national holiday in August, it is a historically significant month. The Greatest Generation fought the final battles of World War II in August 1945, and the world witnessed the only two atomic bombs ever used in battle that same month. We should all take time to study history. With that thought in mind, Commissioner Radack and the staff invite you to come tour the museums at Cypress Top Historic Park and witness what life was like during the early and mid-20th century.

There were several special tours in July at Cypress Top as well as a good number of drop-in visitors. The Cypress Historical Society (CHS) held its Annual Children’s Summer Camp in late June, which we are able to share with you this month.

Above, the entire summer camp crew except for the organizer and principle instructor, Jay Gavitt. Photo by Jay Gavitt.

At left, Jay Gavitt tells the camp kids some interesting stories about various artifacts.
At right, a recreation of Cypress Top in 1907. Photos by Fred Collins.

During the camp, the kids did a wide array of activities and projects. They learned to be interpretive docents for the old general store at Cypress Top as well as for the Juergen House. On one day, they visited Kleb Woods Nature Preserve and participated in a Houston Archeology Society dig. While at Kleb, they also tried their hand at blacksmithing and visited the
historic windmill in the forest. Back at Cypress Top, they recreated the town of Cypress Top based on a 1907 photograph. Another day they worked out some basic genealogy for their family. Friday was graduation day and they gave their parents, grandparents and families tours of the store and house. The kids showed off their projects from the past week, and concluded another great summer camp led by Jay Gavitt.

The July Cypress Top Historic Bus Trip visited the San Jacinto Battleground and the Lone Star Flight Museum. The trip departed from Cypress Top Historic Park at 8:00 a.m. and traveled to the San Jacinto Battleground little more than an hour away. Fred Collins, Director of Cypress Top Historic Park, explained how the various troops arrived and set up on the battlefield, and how action was limited and avoided on the afternoon of April 20 and the next morning. Finally, General Sam Houston ordered his troops to assemble and prepare for battle about 2 p.m. on April 21. The soldiers took their positions across the mile-wide tall grass plain, which was to be the battlefield. Then each unit commander encouraged the men with a speech. Sam Houston rode down the line, listened to each speech, and threw in a few of his own. About 4 p.m., the troops, hidden by the tall grass, and the cavalry, hidden by a grove of trees, moved up to within 40 to 200 yards of the enemy line before they were spotted and the Texans opened fire. The actual battle before the Mexicans fled in chaos only lasted 18 minutes.

The Seniors visited the Texas Army campground and saw where Lamar’s Cavalry, Burleson’s Troops, and the other units camped. These camps, as well as the location of the famous “Twin Sisters” canons, were marked with granite markers. San Jacinto veterans identified the sites about sixty years after the battle.
After touring the battlefield and listening to the stories surrounding the battle and its aftermath, the Seniors then went inside the Monument to look at the exhibits. Some rode the elevator to the observation deck near the top of the 570 foot tall Monument. Some spent both time and money in the gift shop.

At left, the Seniors climb the many steps to the monument. At right, two Seniors intently study the artifacts and descriptions. Photos by Jim Pulliam.

After lunch, the Seniors traveled to Ellington Airport, home of the Texas National Guard Air Force. There they visited the Lone Star Flight Museum. Formerly in Galveston Texas, the facility was severely damaged by Hurricane Ike in 2008. Subsequently, the Museum moved to Ellington Field into a wonderful 38 million dollar facility. Ironically, its grand opening in 2016 was delayed by Hurricane Harvey. The beautiful Museum features more than 24 historic aircraft, including many World War II veteran planes. These planes are exquisitely kept and most are flight worthy. Several are available for personal rental flights. Well-trained and motivated docents led the Seniors on a tour of the facilities. In addition to the historic planes, there are many hands-on, interactive exhibits and displays. The Texas Aviation Hall of Fame is in the facility as well. The Seniors thoroughly enjoyed their time in the air-conditioned hangars and exhibits.

At left, one Senior’s lunch plate. Photo by Jim Pulliam. At right, the group enjoys a hearty seafood lunch near the Monument. Photo by Fred Collins.
At left, the Seniors enter the Lone Star Flight Museum. At right, “Here’s your sign.” Photos by Jim Pulliam.

At left, a Senior tries hang gliding with help from an instructor. At right, the docent covers air traffic control and weather. Photos by Jim Pulliam.

At left, map showing Texas air training bases. At right, the docent tells about the storied Thunderbird. Photos by Jim Pulliam.
Signing Up for Senior History Bus Trips (Must be at least 50 years old to go on these trips)

Spaces are still available for the August 9 trip to the McLennan County Courthouse, “Branding the Brazos” Statue, and Armstrong Browning Library in Waco, as well as the September 20 and October 4 trips with destinations to be determined. Sign up for future trips by emailing cypresstop@pct3.hctx.net 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, our staff and volunteers 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. 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 August and September calendars can be found on the Precinct 3 web site, [www.pct3.com](http://www.pct3.com), under Activity Calendars.