

1st QTR 2021

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Letter from the President, Johnny Bratton

Hi everyone, since our last newsletter many important events have occurred, some bad and some good. I should have taken both of the recommended Covid vaccines by middle of May and hopefully you all have accomplished that also. The Mansfield Historic Preservation Board has met a few more times getting ready for a big day at the Man Museum. Several people are touring it now, one of our cherished pieces of history. We are looking forward to an eventual Veterans Park off East Broad Street and Magnolia Street which will include a monument or two that stood in front of old city hall on southeast corner of Broad Street and Main Street.

The last newsletter included part of a 1972 event that forever changed Mansfield mail delivery. Yes, prior to 1972, Mansfield did not have mail delivery businesses or homes in and around downtown. Only rural residents had that privilege. All the businesses and citizens within Mansfield proper could only receive their mail by renting a post office box. That year Charlie Joe Nichols, postmaster, hired two city carriers. The first was yours truly, Johnny Bratton, and later Ed Morelock, who had been a city carrier in Burleson. We mostly walked delivering letters, magazines and packages to nearly 800 homes and businesses each day. You know back then there was no UPS, FedEx and numerous others.

Historical Society Board plans to digitalize all Mansfield's newspapers

Until December 2019, Mansfield had the oldest continually operated newspaper in the county. It has had many owners and many names over the years. The current owner is the McClatchy Corp, owner of the *Fort Worth Star Telegram* and *The Mansfield News Mirror* until it closed in 2019.

The Mansfield Historical Society has played an active roll in trying to preserve as many issues as possible. We have newspapers stuck in every "nook and cranny" in the McKnight Building. The MHS Board recently approved the project. An inventory has been completed by Edna and Marilyn. Raymond Meeks, atty. sent a letter to the owners to get a release for the digitalization process.

The city library owns microfilm rolls of News Mirrors from the 1930's to 2019, with the exception of most of 1940 and 1950 editions. The Society owns bound editions from 1960 to 1999. They also own a few bound issues for 1945 -1949, 1951, and May, 1908 (loose edition with the graduation program for the Male & Female College).

Raymond said our proposed agreement will be with Ancestry. We plan to move forward as soon as possible to have the papers available to the public. It will be a tremendous value to genealogists, students, and researchers.

Inside this issue:

President's Letter	Pg 1
Newspaper project	Pg 1
Women's Division	Pg 2
Fossils	Pg 3
1908 program	Pg 4
Founder's Day	Pg 4
Dr. Cook's cabin	Pg 5

Women's Division of the Chamber of Commerce

An interview with Carol Parrish by Marilyn Gerloff

A recent phone call to Carol, who now lives in Florida, reminded her of the years she was the president. She said "It started in 1986 or 1987 with Santa in the big gazebo at the private school on Walnut Creek Drive and Debbie Lane. Jean Perry, Chamber of Commerce manager, was in charge and asked if I would help her. The next year, we positioned Santa (Swede Nyberg, Rodeo City Tires) and Mrs. Clause (Jean Perry) in the hallway of the building that used to be Lee's Supermarket on Broad Street. My insurance office and the Chamber Office shared the hallway. The next year Sandra Thompson and I thought a prize should be given to the business with the best Christmas decorations. A bus full of Senior Citizens from the Sr. Center volunteered to be the judges. They awarded the best decorated business in Mansfield to a business located outside Mansfield City limits. That fiasco led us in another direction the following year. Sandra and I began the Christmas parade. During this time the Women's Division bought Christmas lights for light posts downtown at the Main and Broad Streets where the police station and jail were. The City staff became involved because they had to remove the lights and store them for us. The event continued to grow. WalMart owner, Sam Walton, began his personal project to help "small town America" so he donated a huge Christmas tree to the Women's Division for the City. It required a "cherry picker" and was placed in front of City Hall for several years. The parade kept growing. All year, people from inside and outside of Mansfield called the Chamber for information or entry in the parade. It had become a big event. It stopped when Main Street had to be torn up to build the new road with raised brick flower beds. All agreed that it was too dangerous for children and older folks to navigate the torn-up road to see the parade." It was about ten years later that the City reorganized the Christmas Parade.



Past Presidents of the Women's Division of the Chamber of Commerce are: (back row left) Dee Davey, Marilyn Gerloff, Carol Parish, Lucretia Mills, Jacquelyn Taylor, DVM, seated left: Jean Perry Hughes, and Edna Turner Phillips.

The monthly luncheon and program was held to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the Womens' Division of the Chamber of Commerce in the summer of 2000. The WDC of C dissolved in 2011. Realtor, Lynn Multi was the last president and her fundraiser was Table Scapes that was a very popular event.

The Microscopic Fossils in Mansfield, TX.

As was stated in the previous newsletter, the land we now call Mansfield was under a vast ocean (called the Western Interior Seaway) for millions and millions of years during the Upper Cretaceous period. At the shoreline, the water level advanced and retreated. There is evidence that the bottom part of the water column of this epicontinental seaway was not well oxygenated during that time. Nevertheless, the upper part of the water column was well aerated and rich with pelagic fauna, that is, with sea creatures of all sorts swimming here and there.

Examples included a great number of rather strange looking fishes, now extinct. Sharks were also abundant, as were turtles, and also now extinct one foot long marine lizards. Of the invertebrates living at the bottom of the inhospitable sea, a few are found today as fossils. These clam-like bivalves are called inoceramids. They survived for a long time until they went extinct at the end of the Cretaceous (about 65 million years ago, alongside dinosaurs, ammonites, flying reptiles called pterosaurs, etc.)

The inoceramid clams will be the subject of another article since they produced pearls in the Cretaceous. Pearls are not abundant but have been found fossilized here in Mansfield.

The topic for today is the countless microfossils called Foraminifera ('forams') that were floating in the upper water column during Upper Cretaceous times (that is about 90 million years ago). In the oceans of today there are a great number of microorganisms (part of the plankton) floating around taken by the currents sometimes for long distances. The 'forams' are single-celled organisms that have the appearance of an amoeba but with a test (a shell). When they live floating around they are called planktic and when they live at the bottom of the ocean, attached to rocks or on top of other organisms, they are called benthic.

When these amoeba-like organisms disintegrated, the tiny shells (they are about the size of a tenth of a grain of sand) fell to the bottom of the ocean in great quantities. With the passage of time they accumulated on the ocean floor. It is important to point out that although many species are extinct, many are still alive and form part of the plankton of today's oceans.

If we go fossil hunting here in Mansfield, we can find ancient sediments in several outcrops (underneath top soil). These sediments are from the Cretaceous Period (about 90 million years ago). If they are on public land, one can collect some of this material. A plastic bag able to hold a pound in weight should suffice. The material is taken to the lab (it can also be done at home). The sediments are allowed to soak in a bucket of water with some Calgon detergent to help disintegrate the sediment. One can also add some hydrogen peroxide to remove organic material still around. In a few days we sieve the sediment through a paleontological sieve. These are very fine sieves (about 63 microns aperture). The recovered residue is put in an oven to dry overnight or one can just leave it at room temperature for a couple of days so that all humidity evaporates. Then a very small amount of this sediment is placed under a microscope (a stereoscope that has about 10X- 30X magnification) and there they are: microfossils everywhere! These tiny creatures were present alongside all the fish, sharks, turtles, ammonites, and clams that lived in those days.

Microfossils are the subject of study of a discipline called Micropaleontology and there are many kinds. The ones we are dealing with here are -- as previously stated -- called foraminifera. They are called 'forams' among paleontologists. They are not only of outstanding beauty and diversity, but they have tremendous application in petroleum exploration and environmental studies.

It turns out that the microfossils found here in Mansfield in the sediments are very well preserved. They are simply beautiful under the microscope. We infer that the water column was dysoxic or even anoxic during the Cretaceous time here in Mansfield because all the 'forams' found are planktic (they lived floating on the upper part of the water column), no benthic ones have been recovered.

[Continued on page 4 .](#)

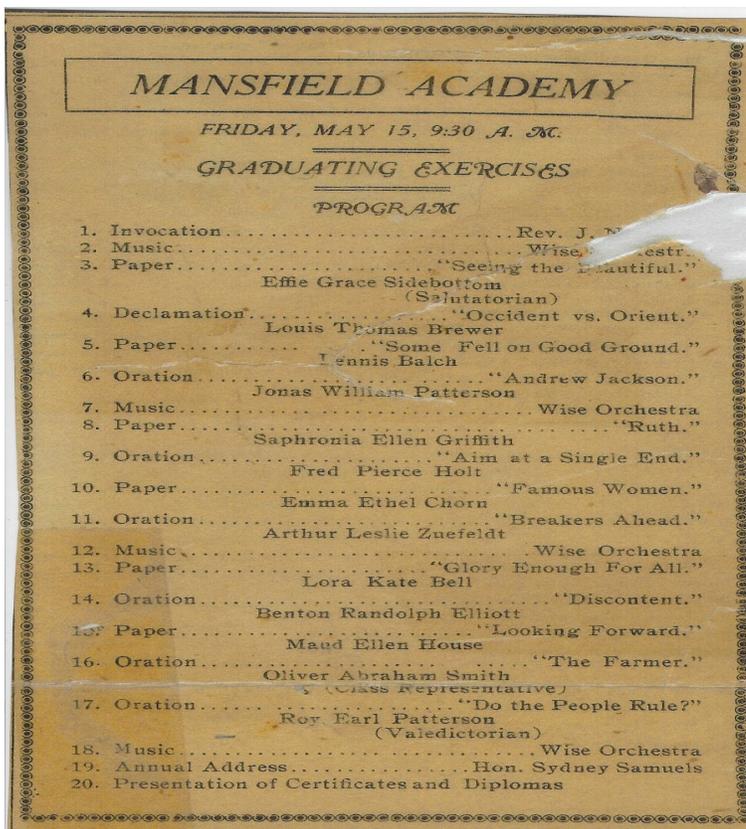
Virginia Friedman, member of Mansfield Historical Society and Paleontologist

Continued from page 3

Here is a link to a European Research group based in Germany that studies foraminifera. I had a chance to participate in this project some years ago: <https://foraminifera.eu/mapcret.php>. Click on the flag on top of Texas (DFW area) and you will see 12 images of the forams found here in Mansfield. The images were taken with a scanning electron microscope (SEM) of the forams that I collected here in Mansfield.

Since, all the forams found were planktic, inoceramid clams (and sometimes their companion oyster-like organisms called *Pseudoperma* sp.). It is not known exactly why or how the inoceramids lived at the bottom of the ocean but some studies have suggested that they lived in symbiotic association with certain algae (zooxanthellae) that help them to survive in dysoxic environments. The importance of these inoceramids is not only that they are very useful in stratigraphy but they produced pearls sometimes of considerable size and this will be the topic next time.

Virginia Friedman
Paleontologist



The *Mansfield Sun* edition dated May 22, 1908, printed the Mansfield Academy graduation program on the front page. This is one of many local newspaper clippings and entire newspaper editions are stored in the Historical Society offices. There are articles from *The Mansfield Mirror* and the *Mansfield Sun* dating to 1934. We are missing most of 1937 to 1944, 1950, 1952, and 2002 to 2004. If you have any of these editions, please contact the Historical Society. Call 817-473-4250 or email us at mansfieldhistoricalsociety@outlook.com

Mark your calendars!

A Founder's Day celebration will be held Saturday, August 28th at the Man House Museum. The event will have several historical artisans and demonstrations in period dress performing activities from the 1800s. There will also be historical games, food trucks, and tours of the house. The event will be free and last from 10 am - 4 pm.

Jessica Baber, museum curator

Our long time member, Mike Leyman, made a nice donation to the Historical Society last quarter to help us cover the cost of reprinting the Walking Tour brochures. We have reprinted 2 of the 4 tour brochures at Ann Smith wrote for the society many years ago. Since the first printing, a few buildings have been renovated, a few are gone, and more information has come forth on a few buildings and homes. THANK YOU, MIKE!

MHS Board and members invited to Carol's playhouse

Not every 5th Grade girl has an 1800's log cabin for a playhouse. But when Carol Cook Cooper was in the 5th grade at Erma Nash Elementary school, she saw an old log cabin being hauled down Broad Street. Little did she know, it was going to her house. Carol said her father and mother, Dr. Cook and Avena, built the roof. A porch was added and a mock water well was built at the edge of the porch. Dr. Cook contracted to have the chimney made with large rocks. There are a few pieces of furniture and a pair of antique andirons that are partially hid in the dust. The floor is not safe and there are no doors. But the original logs, they say, are still in fair condition. As we gathered around the chimney, Carol shared her fond memories of playing in her "playhouse".

The cabin is known as the Ray Log Cabin from Kennedale. The City of Kennedale inherited the cabin, but had no funds set aside to move it. Word got around town and soon to Mansfield. When Dr. Percy Cook heard about it, he bought it from the City of Kennedale and moved it to his backyard on Broad Street where it stands today after 50+ years. The City of Mansfield bought Dr. Cook's land and house and cleared the lot for a future fire station, but the cabin was left. At some point, the cabin will have to be moved. Now that the Man House museum is complete, the next phase will be the information center to be completed this year. Future plans for the Man House museum include a barn and Dr. Cook's cabin and at least one more log cabin. We were told funds will not be available for a few years.

Mansfield Historical Society members, Tom and Karen Leach, took a special interest in moving and preserving the cabin. The rain and heat are causing deterioration. They fear the logs may deteriorate too much to be moved later. They also have a special interest in open hearth cooking demonstrations in the log cabin. The Man House does not have a kitchen; and Tom said it will add to the early living demonstrations that are planned. Tour groups, especially children, can gather around to watch how food was prepared in the pioneer days. Karen Leach is among the few people in Texas officially approved to do hearth cooking demonstrations. Tom made a formal request for the Historical Society to consider paying for the cabin to be moved and set up near the Man House. A proposal was obtained by city staff that included taking the cabin apart and laying a cement base for the logs to be reassembled. The Historical Society President, Johnny Bratton, called upon the board members to meet at the site to take a close look at the cabin, and listen to Tom Leach and Art Wright, City Planning Department. Mansfield Historical Society attendees included: Johnny Bratton, President, Linda Leddy, Dale Seeton, Edna Phillips, Marilyn and Mickey Gerloff, Raymond Meeks, Carol Cook Cooper, Janell Prince, Mark Walker, Tom and Karen Leach, and Marty Thomas. Connie McGough from the Historic Preservation Committee, Jessica Baber, museum curator, and Art Wright with the City also attended. Johnny said the Historical Society Board will meet soon to consider the proposal.



Left: to right: Edna Phillips, Mark Walker, and Carol Cooper

Bottom left: Dale Seeton, Johnny Bratton, Raymond Meeks



The Ray cabin from Kennedale, was brought to Mansfield by Dr. Cook where it rested for 50+ years on E. Broad St. The city now owns it and has future plans to move it to the Man House Museum on W. Broad St.



Mansfield Historical Society

Open: 10am -4pm Tues-Sat

102 N. Main Street

Mezzanine level

Mansfield, TX 76063

