

3rd Quarter 2022

# Mansfield Historical Society

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## Letter from the President, Tom Leach

Hello Everyone,

We are approaching a busy time for the Historical Society. October 1st is Founders Day Festival at the Man House Museum. The Historical Society will have a table with a hands-on exhibit with old phones. We will have items for sale and a raffle for a Founders Day Basket which you will not want to miss out on. We are still in need of volunteers to help thru the day. If you can spare a little time, let Carol Cooper know your availability. Cooper202@sbcglobal.net You don't want to miss Founders Day and the additional demonstrators that have been added this year. Our Annual Meeting is Oct 13th which will be an exciting evening with good food from El Primos and a presentation on the Foster Dairies which have been sent to TCU for publication. We will also be discussing the moving and renovation of the Cook Cabin to the Man House Museum. I look forward to seeing everyone at the Annual Meeting. There is a lot in the planning and we need everyone to get involved during this exciting time. Find a friend and get involved with the Mansfield Historical Society.

Sincerely,

Tom Leach

## June 1982—June 2022 our 40th Anniversary of our non-profit status

ANNUAL MEMBER MEETING

## *Mansfield Historical Society*

YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13TH AT 6:30 PM**  
**MANSFIELD ISD – GREAT ROOM at 605 E Broad Street**

AUTHOR, **JACK CROWDER**, will talk about his experiences in transcribing the Foster Diaries, circa 1847 to 1882, and give us a final update on the publication.

DINNER IS PROVIDED BY EL PRIMOS, Todd Tonore, Owner

[There is no cost to the Mansfield Historical Society members. Donations will be accepted at the door. Please RSVP by Monday, October 10th. Reservations are limited to 40.](#)

RSVP to Carol Cook Cooper

by phone at 817-371-0201 or email Carol at [cooper202@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cooper202@sbcglobal.net)

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**Mansfield Women in the Military during WWII**by **Karen Leach**

Mansfield had at least three women of character in WW2. Those of us today may wonder how many people carried these three women in their hearts? We don't know what their thoughts were and how they managed their lives when the women were away. Let's think of them now, introducing:

**Willie Mae Farmer** 1907-2001. Willie one of ten children and her parents moved back to Mansfield in 1932. She enlisted as a WAC (Women's Army Core) on 11/12/1942 as an aviation cadet and was sent to Daytona Beach Florida for training. After her discharge she worked for 30 years for Trinity News as a bookkeeper. The 1950 census shows her as single living in Fort Worth. In 1963 she opened a boarding house for elderly women at 305 W Broad St. I have yet to find information if she became a pilot. If so, she would have been unable to fly in the same cockpit with men and also would have made less money. Her 30 years employment at Trinity shows her loyalty and long contribution. If she were alive today, I would ask her if she did become a pilot and if not, was she disappointed? Her dream shattered? If so, was she nervous the first time in the air and where did she fly to? I'd ask what was it like to be a woman aviation cadet among all those men? How did they treat her and how did she treat them?

**Josephine E Bennett** 1922-1957 a woman of color is our second person of interest. She enlisted as a private on 1/16/1943 and was a TEC 5 (Corporal) for the 106th. She was discharged on 1/25/1946. A TEC 5 had no leadership duties and performed high technical jobs. During WW 2 the races were segregated. People of color usually were in non-combat and had less opportunities than the white units. According to the 1930 census she lived with her grandmother, her father died in 1930. Josephine's only daughter died in 1940 at eleven months old. According to the 1940 census she lived in Fort Worth and had several jobs. So far, I could not find her in the 1950 census. She died of heart failure in the Dallas VA. If she were alive today, I would ask if the grief of the loss of her daughter was the reason she joined the military? Did she hope to rise above from the society to which she was born? What were her actual duties? What happened when she came back? In searching the Internet, I was unable to find any mention of her name in Military web sites. How sad.

**Fannie M Harrison** 1923-2002. Fannie was an Army nurse for the 97th and was stationed in Frankfurt Germany. She was admitted to the core on 7/1/1943. She worked in the reserves from 1960-1978 and retired as a colonel. She served in a number of places including working for several years as chief nurse at Carswell AFB She received a meritorious award for service from 1/1975-2/1978. The 1940 census shows her living in Mansfield. What a resume! Imaging being a 20-year-old army nurse in Germany! I wonder what her thoughts were when she arrived there. What was she feeling? Was she afraid, but willing and able to do her duty as a nurse? She had to have had great leadership qualities. Unfortunately, we have no written words from her about her life. Just think of the book that would make!

The world today would be blessed if we would have been able to have an account of the lives of these three women written in their own hand. Which teaches us something, unless these stories are recorded, they will be lost forever.

**FOUNDERS' DAY—SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2022**

The Mansfield Historical Society will be there, with free balloons, a telephone display including 2 tin cans and a string, and a **huge Founders' Day basket full of items** from the artisans and local shops. Raffle tickets for the basket are \$5 each or 5 tickets for \$20. All proceeds go to the Mansfield Historical Society.

Admission is free. Go to the City web page for parking lots nearby and handicap parking. Tours of the Man House Museum, demonstrations by leather workers, quilters, soap makers, a potter, etc. will also be free.

604 W. Broad Street, Mansfield

Looking Back..... SEPTEMBER 1942 by Barbara Berry

When the Methodist preacher and his wife left for Fort Worth on that late fall morning in 1942, they never suspected what surprise would greet them upon their return to Mansfield that afternoon. Rev. Sidney Wayne Reynolds had been appointed to Mansfield Methodist Church at Annual Conference in July 1942. He had previously pastored the Methodist Church at Lake Worth northwest of Fort Worth for three years.

World War II was raging in Europe and the Pacific. Gasoline rationing was spreading across the United States. The couple was making the trip to Fort Worth so the preacher's wife, Jane, could see her dentist. They would stop on the way to see her mother in south Fort Worth. Rev. Reynolds, a student at Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, had no classes that Friday so he was able to drive his wife to her appointment.

After a full day in Fort Worth, Wayne and Jane were eager to get back to Mansfield and eat an early dinner. As they approached the town, they saw smoke hovering across the late afternoon skies. They stopped at the filling station at the corner of Main and the Old Waxahachie Highway to buy ice. Because of energy conservation during World War II, no refrigeration was available at the parsonage.

They saw a lot of cars up the street in the direction of the church. Rev. Reynolds asked the attendant, "What are all these people doing out there?" The attendant replied, "The Methodist Church just burned down." Rev. Reynolds responded, "But I am the pastor of that church." Very quickly, the attendant said, "You mean you *were* the pastor there."

When they reached the church site, there was no church – just a lot of people standing around and gaping at a small brick foundation set back from the street. Where the bell tower had stood, only the church bell was seen. It had dropped straight down and rested where the front door had been.

Everyone was talking at once telling how Seeton's Washateria had caught fire first and then spread to the house in front of it. The afternoon winds had picked up and flaming embers spread to the houses in the neighborhood. While homeowners were on their roofs with garden hoses, someone noticed the church roof was on fire.

They reported that Clara Edna (Tad) Nifong, wife of the local physician, H.D. Nifong, saw her beautiful church on fire. With a rush of adrenalin, she ran into the building and single-handedly carried the large oak pulpit, which was loaded with hymnals, out the door and onto the church grounds near the parsonage. Before anyone could stop her, she rushed back into the burning building and, with the help of an unidentified man, picked up one end of the upright piano. They were halfway to the door when part of the roof fell onto the ivory keys, and the piano burst into flames. Mrs. Nifong and the man vacated the church to safety.

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## Looking Back...September 1942 by Barbara Berry

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As darkness began to settle across the town, the preacher looked around and asked the people, "Where are we going to meet Sunday?" Some of the members of the Presbyterian Church which had recently disbanded offered their vacant church building. Wayne shouted to the crowd, "May I have your attention. As soon as it gets light tomorrow, get dressed for work, bring your tools and meet at the Presbyterian Church. We are going to clean up the place where we will worship on Sunday."

The next morning people came, not only from the Methodist Church but from all the churches in Mansfield. Many were from the Boy Scout troop that Rev. Reynolds had started in July. They spent all day working, preparing a place for Sunday services.

The pastor called a special meeting of prayer on Wednesday evening, September 30, 1942. It was his 28<sup>th</sup> birthday. He announced that he was withdrawing from seminary for a year to devote all of his time to being a construction worker for the rebuilding of the church. His father had been in construction so he was familiar with such matters. He advised that there would be only one salaried man on the job, an experienced carpenter named Pinkney Oliver.

He told the crowd he was aware that supplies were limited and scarce due to the war. However, his brother owned a lumber yard and mill in White Oak near Longview in east Texas. They would need manpower to haul lumber from there to Mansfield. All metal was going to the war effort, but the owner of the local hardware store said that he had some barrels of nails and that he would give them to the church.

The trustees decided to borrow \$10,000 from the Board of Church Extension for the rebuilding process, but when the letter of commitment came, the pastor was out of town. The trustees met and read the letter and decided not to borrow when they learned they would be personally liable for any monies not repaid. When the pastor returned and found out their decision, he talked and prayed with them. "Where's our faith?" he asked. The trustees reconsidered and signed the note.

It took almost a year to rebuild the church but the floors had not yet been sanded and varnished. On the last day before the church was to be occupied, the preacher's wife entered the sanctuary and heard two women conversing. She could not see anyone but on closer inspection she saw Clara Nifong and another church member, Ruby Tipps, down under the pews varnishing the hardwood floors.

Furnishings were paid for as they arrived; however, the church could not afford new pews right away so they borrowed pews from St. Paul's Methodist Church, a "little church out in the country which was almost dead." The only pew left from the burned church was one that someone had put on the front porch of the parsonage. When the St. Paul trustees gave permission to allow Mansfield to borrow their pews, it gave new hope to the members and revitalized the little country church.

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Looking Back....September 1942

by Barbara Berry

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Construction took ten months, and finally in August of 1943, the congregation met to worship in their new building. Cost of construction totaled only \$45,000 thanks to volunteer labor and donated materials. In September of that year all indebtedness was cleared and the Trustees did not have to assume any personal liability.

Meanwhile, plans were underway for a new parsonage because the one next door to the church was about to fall down. Mrs. E.A. Rosier, who lived across the street from the church, invited the pastor and his wife to move into her spare room. They accepted the invitation, moved in, stored their furniture in the garage and cooked their meals in the kitchen of the new church.

On June 10, 1945, the church hosted a Dedication and Homecoming. It was an all-day affair beginning with church school at 10:00 a.m. followed by worship service at 11:00 a.m. and a 3:00 p.m. Historical Program with dinner on the ground in between. The dedication service began at 5:00 p.m. with a message by Bishop A. Frank Smith. Immediately following the service, a reception was held for Bishop Smith and Dr. W. W. Ward, District Superintendent, who assisted in the service. Two former pastors, Rev. Ed Barcus and Rev. J. Fred Patterson, spoke at the earlier services on that day. Rev. S.A. Barnes, former district superintendent, also took part in the dedication service.

The church retained all the left-over lumber from the church and used it to begin construction on the new parsonage. At Annual Conference in July 1945, Rev. Reynolds was appointed pastor of Grapevine Methodist Church and Rev. W.K. Gordon was appointed to the Mansfield Church. The new parsonage was not finished until October 1945 so the new parsonage family lived in the Fellowship Hall of the church for two or three months.

At the church's Dedication Service on June 10, 1945, Bishop Smith – along with church members – gave credit to Rev. Wayne Reynolds, the pastor, for his energy and foresight in the planning and construction of the new church. His untiring efforts along with those of the Building Committee and the entire community strengthened the church in its Christian faith.

*Barbara Lewie Berry*©

*August 31, 2022*

Note: Information contained in this article is from an oral interview on March 30, 1996, with Jane Reynolds Temple, wife of the former pastor, and who also was my late husband's aunt. Part of this article appeared first in *The History of Mansfield, Texas – Mid-1800-1965* in the chapter on "Churches" authored by Barbara Lewie Berry.

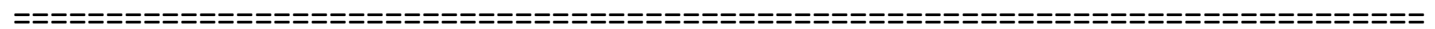
**MEMBER NEWS**

Our board member, **Edna Phillips**, fractured her hip and is in recovery at The Highlands in Mansfield. Cards and visitors are pouring in. She is in good spirits as always and expects to return home soon.

Long time Life Time member, **Dee Davey**, renewed with a Family Life Time Membership for her and husband, Don Mahan. She said she thought she paid about \$50 for her lifetime 30 + years ago. Thank you, Dee.

Another Life Time member, **Mike Leyman**, continues to support the Historical Society in so many ways. He initiated the donation of our Annual Meeting dinner from El Primos, owned by Todd Tonore. And, Mike will sponsor the balloons for our Founders' Day table.

Our Life Time member **Richard (Dick) Littell** passed on June 18, 2022. Dick was born in New York City on December 7, 1927. He served in the U.S. Navy, followed by a long career in Criminal Justice. He served as Deputy Chief of Nassau County Police Department. He and Virginia moved to Mansfield where he served as a City Councilman for many years.



**Prehistoric flying reptiles over Mansfield**

by Virginia Friedman

Sixteen years ago, In 2006, an amateur paleontologist by the name of Lance Hall was fossil hunting in a new construction site at the intersection of Hwy 360, Broad and Holland St. near where today stands a McDonald's. On a sunny, lucky day he found what appeared to be scattered bones and a large toothed jaw. He got very excited since he knew immediately that his find might represent something new to science. Lance, who has collected fossils in the Mansfield, Rendon, Kennedale area for many years, gathered the remains with great care and expertise. He then contacted paleontologist Timothy Myers at SMU in Dallas. The bones recovered were a rather complete lower jaw of a new species of pterosaur – a flying reptile. It was discovered in the geological formation known as the Eagle Ford Group in the Cenomanian stage of the Late Cretaceous, about 96 million years old. The new specimen was scientifically described and named *Artiodactylous halli* after the discoverer Lance Hall. The new specimen belongs to the Ornithocheiridae within the suborder Pterodactyloidea and represents a toothed pterosaur.

Pterosaurs, it is believed, soared over the shallow Cretaceous seas and coastlines, much like pelicans do today, hunting for fish under the blue skies of Mansfield, TX. These very strange first appeared in the skies contemporaneous to the appearance of the first dinosaurs during the Triassic Period of the Geologic time scale (230 million years ago). Pterosaurs are classified into two suborders: the Rhamphorhynchoidea and the Pterodactyloidea. They were the first vertebrates to achieve powered flight. Only three vertebrates have ever evolved into flying animals: pterosaurs, birds and bats.

The Pterosaurs evolved in very different sizes. The smallest were not bigger than a crow and the biggest had a wingspan the size of a small airplane. They were rather bizarre creatures. The fossil record shows that they possessed a pair of furry wings. Some sported toothed beaks and crests on their heads and the most primitive had long tails. Their bones were hollow and very thinly built. They appeared to be fish eaters since the remains have been found mostly near coastlines or in lacustrine deposits. Pterosaur tracks have been found and, very rarely, even pterosaur eggs. Today, there are about 200 species of pterosaurs known to paleontologists.

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Their remains have been found on all continents except Antarctica. During the Jurassic Period the pterosaurs continued to evolve and, as we can see from the fossil record, new forms appeared. They still remained quite weird and lived alongside dinosaurs like *Stegosaurus*, *Brachiosaurus*, and *Allosaurus*. The pterosaurs, as flying reptiles, ruled the skies at the same time that the dinosaurs ruled the land.

After the Triassic Period came the Cretaceous. These are the times of the famous Tyrannosaurus rex. It was also during this time that an asteroid hit the earth (Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula) creating an ecologic disaster without precedent killing off the dinosaurs, pterosaurs, many animals at sea, etc. Our lineage (mammals) as well as others like birds and crocodiles managed to escape the devastation created by such a celestial impact. It was during the Cretaceous that the pterosaurs reached gigantic proportions, like Quetzalcoatlus whose remains were discovered in Big Bend National Park in the 1970's. It had a wingspan of 35 to 40 feet. More further reading:

Myers, Timothy S. 2010. A new ornithocheirid pterosaur from the Upper Cretaceous (Cenomanian – Turonian) Eagle Ford Group of Texas. *Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology* 30 (1) 280-287.

Please contact writer at [friedmanhvj@aol.com](mailto:friedmanhvj@aol.com) if you would like a copy of that article.

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#### MUSEUM EVENTS by Jessica Baber, curator

Our next exhibit will be ***Women, Aviation, and WWII***. It is a traveling exhibit that honors the women who served our country during WWII, overseas and on the Homefront. Visit the exhibit between October 14—November 30.

Our winter exhibit will be about quilts. More details be included in the next newsletter.

FOUNDER'S DAY, Saturday, October 1st, between 10 AM and 4 PM. Admission is free.

**Participants include:** Blacksmith, Candle maker, antique pistol display, a potter, leather worker, story teller, soap maker, quilting, Quill writing, Food Trucks, food preservation, Historical Society's telephone display, Garden Club plant sale, and music by **Buttermilk Junction** and **Mac & Diane**. This will be held on grounds of the Man House Museum at 604 W Broad Street.

**Mansfield Historical Society**

**Open: 10am -4pm Tues-Sat**

**102 N. Main Street**

**Mezzanine level**

**Mansfield, TX 76063**

