

Historical Advisory Committee Meeting
September 12, 2023

Staff and Members present: Barbara Black, Louise Bodiford, Diane Lybbert, Mary Ann Spaun, Mary Slaney, Diana Waters. **Excused:** Pam O'Hearn, Jim Wadlow.

Barbara Black called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Agenda:

- 1. Russell-Boren Library Tour** – The Historical Advisory Committee members were given a tour of the library led by Barbara Black prior to the meeting. An inventory of the books by Charlsa Boren Bentley and Mark Bentley lists 586 books and 200 magazines in the library. The library contains books published from 1822-2012. Several books have signatures, names or notations from Martha Glenn Russell, Edwin Bartlett Lace, Harriet "Hattie" Lace, William Russell Lace, Martha George "Gigi" Lace, Charle Wade Boren and Louise Rae Boren. Books had been pulled from the shelves for members to see the variety of books in the library and observe signatures in the books. All books are listed in a data-based website giving a publication year, the author, title of the book, a current value and notes and location for each book in the Russell-Boren Library.

<https://cloud.collectorz.com/charlsa/books?t=7dc90dd2813e36acc763a00cfe9655937c7629f61a93a4586f3826351ae6d907>

https://www.burlesontx.com/1215/Russell-Farm-Art-Center?fbclid=IwAR1w4yIBM3OW_DcK0CS3_elicTSoaiSzF4eAEVGGtAfRWA2XQqtqwhOrB4

- 2. Request from Charlsa Boren Bentley for the Historical Advisory Committee** – for the Committee to help formulate a plan for how to put the knowledge from the inventory of the Russell-Boren library books to the best use.

Six questions were presented to the Committee:

#1 What would be most productive now? Members of the Historical Advisory Committee were unsure exactly what was needed in order for the library and books to be most productive now. The members are concerned about the preservation of the books as the library is not a climate-controlled environment. Suggestions were made to have display cases, for some of the book shelves to have protective covering, the rolltop desktop be fitted with a protective shield for display of books, acid free clear sleeves for books in frail condition.

#2 Who might be interested in what is in the library room? The library will be of interest to guests, scholars, graduate students doing research, historians, museums, libraries, colleges and universities.

#3 How could the library contents be used? Presentations to community civic clubs, the Burleson Heritage Foundation, schools about the book collection, with family history of family members that have signatures in the books.

#4 and #5 When docents take visitors through the house what types of questions (if any) are asked about the library room and its contents? What do docents tell visitors as they go through the room? Very little has been known about the library and the books in the past prior to the inventory. Guests asked few questions during a tour of the library. Guests are interested in the large dictionary, the certificates and the pictures of the descendants. Docents share with guests the books in the bookcase beside the west wall are from the 1800's and have been signed by Martha Russell and family members. Also, the descendants valued books due to the number of books found in the library.

#6 What is the best use for the books so that they're not just serving as "decorations"? The best use for the books would be to share special memories or stories of the descendants about the books, have books on display with an information card about the book and the person who signed the book. Sharing kept being suggested by the Committee members as a best use for the books. The books to be loaned for a temporary display at a library, for talks given by a farm representative or on loan for research. However, the desire for the books to remain in the library, not to be sold and not to be used as a "lending library," by the family needs to be honored. Perhaps, more answers for the best use of the books will come from the contacts Charlsa Bentley is making with several colleges, universities, libraries and book scholars.

The members of the Historical Advisory Committee are grateful for the opportunity of participation of a plan for the books of the Russell-Boren House Library. They would like to express appreciation to Charlsa and Mark Bentley for the hard work in compiling the inventory list of the books.

3. Dates for the Historical Advisory Committee and Russell Farm Events

October 24, 2023 – Historical Advisory Committee meeting at 9:00 A.M.

November 17, 2023 – Fall Festival 5:00 P.M.- 8:00 P.M. Please volunteer to help with the festival. Come 30 minutes prior to the event, register in the office, see a list by the sign-in sheet of ways you can help as a volunteer for the event, take a volunteer tag to wear, and locate the area in the kitchen for refreshments available to volunteers.

November 28, 2023 – Christmas Decoration of Russell-Boren House
10:00 A.M.- 2:00 P.M. or until the decorating is completed.

Barbara Black thanked the members for their time, effort and suggestions in addressing a plan for the Russell Farm Library. The meeting was adjourned at 10:06 A.M.

Submitted by Barbara Black Historical Advisory Chair