

Salado Historical Society Newsletter



The Bell Ringer

www.SaladoHistoricalSociety.org

May 5, 2009

Notes/ Events:

- College Hill Clean-up, lead by Mayor Merle Stalcup, was held Saturday April 25th. Members of the Salado Historical Society assisted the Masons, Central Texas Area Museum, and others in cleaning up the debris and overgrown vegetation focusing on the west side (Main Street side) of the Salado College.
- Sterling Ambrose was in Salado on May 5th and invited the board to visit the Robertson Plantation.
- Remember the "Old Fashioned 4th of July Picnic"? The Salado Historical Society is hosting its annual picnic again this year. It is on July 4th at Salado Pace Park and starts at 6:30 PM
- Salado Founders Day Event October 23, 24, & 25

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Robertson Plantation "Reconnection" to Salado - by Joan Schrock

Sterling Ambrose, great-great grandson of Colonel Robertson, spoke to a group of 70-80 Saladoans on Monday evening, April 6 about the future of the Robertson Plantation. His key points were:

- He thanks the village for the attention and care given his mother and grandmother over the years.
- He wants to "reconnect" the Robertson Plantation and its descendants with the Village of Salado.
- His family wants to retain ownership and believes it is the only land grant property in Texas still owned by the descendents of the original owners.
- There is a treasure trove of artifacts and memorabilia that needs to be sorted, catalogued, transcribed and display/stored for posterity.
- A small portion of Colonel Robertson's papers has been transcribed and published by his 92 year old cousin and these papers can be found in the University of Texas at Arlington achieves.
- The house is well maintained and suitable for public view which the family seeks to accomplish in the short term.
- They need financial assistance to maintain and operate the property.
- He believes the house, servants quarters

and out buildings are now designated as a National Historic Site but seeks registration in Texas.

- Sterling speaks for the descendants, lives in Nashville and plans to visit the property at least monthly.
- He recently arranged a personal tour for Grant Teaff and is interested in doing so for others on a limited basis until a more structured program can be developed.
- He and his siblings are interested in taking steps to make the Robertson Plantation a tourist attraction in Salado.
- He solicits synergies and suggestions as to how best to proceed.



Sterling Ambrose

Information concerning the Plantation is being collected at: www.RobertsonPlantation.com .

Community leaders and most community organizations were represented at the meeting Monday evening at the Salado Civic Center.



In The Beginning (of the Society) By Doris Denman

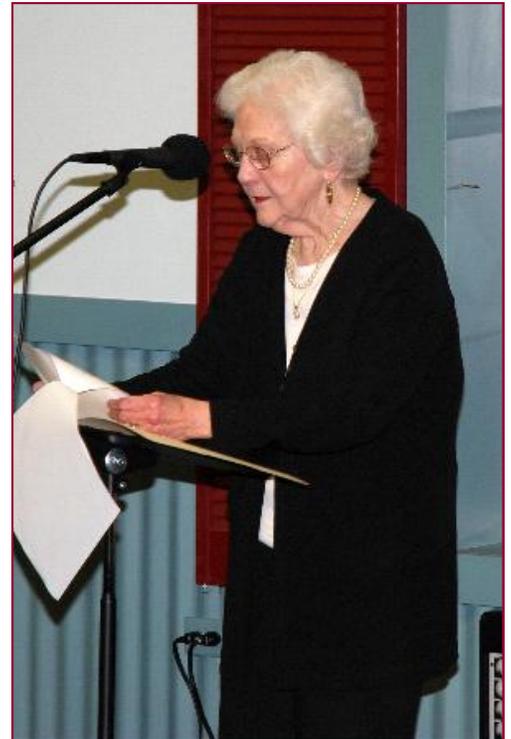
In 1979 Sydney Kuykendall, President of The Salado Chamber of Commerce Ladies Auxiliary, appointed a committee to research and form a historical group for Salado. There were eight of us who agreed to serve: Pat Barton, Doris Denman, Elvago Stewart, Ruth Howe, Kathryn Wilkes, J Jackie Simmons, Virginia Kennison and Thelma Fletcher.

On September 22, 1980, Doris Denman, Pat Barton, Elvago Stewart, and Pat Ashe attended a fact finding meeting in Georgetown called "Preservation of the 80's" put on by The Texas Historical Commission and The Texas Historical Foundation. They heard speakers on a number of topics concerning preserving documents & buildings and how to start a community historical society, get historical markers, in-

volve citizens and political leaders and how to start collecting and displaying data.

We had all the information and now we needed to organize so we called our first meeting at Kathryn Wilkes home, which was known at The Tyler House. There were eight of us that attended that meeting to plan the next steps .

I always carry a notebook so it was decided I would be secretary. Of course we had to decide on a name. Would it be a society, preservation, heritage or historic name. We decided on the name San Antonio had chosen , "Salado Historic Preservation Society". We then took up some money for an account for checks, mailbox,



Society Projects by Pat Barton



The Salado Historical Society has had many historical projects over the last 30 years.

The first was a fund raising project selling 15 cent postcards that was line drawings of old pictures of our village.

We continued with the first tour of homes in 1981 featuring historic houses, all private homes. This was very successful.

The first village project began in 1981 with the co-operation of The Texas Historical Commission to place historic buildings and archeological sites on the National Register of Historic Places. The first group listed was celebrated on July 4, 1983. To date there are 21 such markers in Salado: 4 Texas 1936, Centennial markers, 36 Texas Historical markers, and 12 Salado

Landmark awards all placed by the Society.

The Salado Historical Society stabilized the college ruins and celebrated this project on July 4, 1989.

We also built the Boles-Aiken cabin found on Center Circle and placed it behind The Salado Civic Center.

The Denman Cabin later was also moved to this site. The college and the cabin projects were overseen by The Texas Historical Commission.

Other projects have been the museum room at The Salado Civic Center, which was curated by The Bell County Museum, the historical tours and CDs, two historical pamphlets, log cabin maintenance, time capsule for the sesquicentennial, and architectural guidelines preceding the incorporation.

Founding Members Recognized

Where were you on February 23, 1979? Luckily for us, the ladies listed below were attending the organizational meeting of "The Conservation Society of Historic Salado."

Plaques of appreciation were presented to Pat Barton, Doris Denman, Ruth Howe, Virginia Kinnison Matthew, Jackie Simmons, Elva Jo Stewart, and Kathryn Wilkes. Tyler Fletcher represented his grandmother, Thelma Fletcher, whose award was given posthumously.

As our Society celebrates its 30th birthday, it is a great time to remember how much our village owes to their passion, hard work, and foresight! Pat and Doris continue to be very active in our Society.



Historical Society "Person of the Year" 2008



Jim Bienski and Beverly Turnbo

Charles Turnbo was named "2008 Person of the Year" by the Historical Society at the March 2nd Pot Luck Dinner. Beverly Turnbo accepted the award for her late husband and spoke briefly of his work, inspired by his love for Salado and its citizens.

President Jim Bienski described Charlie's many contributions to the Society and to the history of Salado in general. *Salado, Texas*

– *Frontier College Town*, Charlie's recent book about Salado College and the town that evolved from it, was highlighted.

Jim noted that as much as he admired Charlie's many accomplishments, he was even more impressed by the manner in which he achieved them. With a smile on his face, Charlie always offered encouragement to everyone.

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## Society Officers ..... and Directors

- President: Jim Bienski
- 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President: Dale Gore
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: Open
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President: Hulda Horton
- Secretary: Joan Schrock
- Treasurer: Bill Reynolds
- Past President: Dr. Wallace Davis

### 2009

Pat Barton  
Doris Denman  
Miriam Jordan  
Trish Stebbins

### 2010

Robert Blanton  
Kathryn Campbell  
LaVerne Gore  
Pete Stebbins

### 2011

Dave Broecker  
Hans Fields  
Nancy Kelsey  
Gary Schulz  
Bill Smith

## SALADO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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### New Historic Tour Signs

The Driving Tour of Historic Salado has been quite successful since its reintroduction on April 1, 2006. The recent tour was an upgrade of the old cassette tape tour that was rented for \$5. The popular CD version sells for \$7 (except SHS Members \$5).



Its only Orange when Flashed

The only problem we've had with the tour is the age of the original plywood signs. They were really showing their age. Pete Stebbins redesigned a new sign and Robert Blanton and Hans Fields installed them. We hope you like the new signs that are color and image coordinated with other historic signs of the Society.

## Salado Historical Society Memberships

Family - \$20 per year Friend - \$50

Patron - \$250 Lifetime Member - \$1000

Name \_\_\_\_\_

St. Address. \_\_\_\_\_

City / State \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail 1: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to:  
 Salado Historical Society  
 P.O. Box 251  
 Salado, Texas 76571

Membership is now at 126—Goal is 185—Please Help!

## An interview with Jim Bienski, President

### What is the mission of the Salado Historical Society?

To understand, preserve and share the history of our wonderful village." Whenever we consider a potential project, our first step is to determine if it helps us fulfill this mission.

### All Society members received a questionnaire earlier this year. What was that all about?

Our board wanted to involve as many Society members as possible in the 2009 planning process. A questionnaire containing our list of ongoing and proposed new activities was sent to all members. They were asked to rate each activity as to its importance in achieving our mission and to indicate their interest in supporting it. Comments and additional new project ideas were also encouraged.

### What were the results?

We were delighted to learn that almost all respondents agreed with our list of activities. In fact, a typical remark was, "I had no idea the Historical Society was involved in so many worthwhile projects!" Many also volunteered to help. New suggestions included increasing communication about our activities, involving more of the general membership in projects, and emphasizing history in our programs (Pot Luck Dinner, Chili Supper, and 4<sup>th</sup> of July Picnic).

### How does the Society plan to incorporate this input?

We are already acting on these suggestions. This new quarterly newsletter, our website ([www.saladohistoricalsociety.com](http://www.saladohistoricalsociety.com)), *Village Voice* articles (four so far this year!) and email announcements are being used to publicize our many activities and invite participation. Our March Pot Luck Dinner emphasized Salado's founding and the early days of our Historical Society. Our most recent program, "Exciting Plans for Robertson Home", presented by Mr. Sterling Ambrose had an audience of about 80 attendees and focused on working with the entire Village.

### What has been your most rewarding experience so far?

It is a pleasure to work with so many passionate, energetic members of the Society on an almost daily basis. If forced to choose only one experience, it would definitely be the Pot Luck Dinner. We had the honor of recognizing the founding members of the Historical Society and naming Charlie Turnbo as our "2008 Person of the Year." Presenting the award to Beverly Turnbo was a very special experience that I will always remember.

### What is the biggest opportunity for the Historical Society this year?

Enthusiastically supporting the Robertson family's efforts to share their history and plantation home. Colonel Elijah Sterling Clack Robertson (1820-1879) was a Texas pioneer, patriot, soldier, jurist, and one of the founders of Salado College. His rare antebellum plantation complex, completed in 1860,

includes a house, servants quarters, land, family cemetery and stables. Salado was established around this wonderful home, continuously owned by the Robertson family for six generations. We have the unique opportunity and responsibility to help ensure that its future is as exciting as its past.

### In your opinion, what is the Society's biggest challenge? How can it be addressed?

My top concern is that only a few extremely busy people are supporting our Society's many projects. Although participation from the general membership is increasing, most of the work is still highly concentrated within our Board. We continue to reach out to the community and actively recruit volunteers for both leadership and support roles.

### Can you tell us a little about your family?

Having grown up in Central Texas, we jumped at the chance to move here from Katy, Texas almost 4 years ago. I am a business consultant with Oracle Corporation. Ann was a high school U. S. history teacher. In our "spare" time, we continue to restore our version of "This Old House." We have two terrific daughters and sons-in-law. The older is an attorney in Manhattan. The younger lives in Houston where she is in her third year at University of Texas Medical School.