

Old Saltillo Cemetery Association Newsletter

12th Edition – June 17, 2018

Words From Our President

Hello and welcome to this 12th edition of the OSCA newsletter. We have received a number of inquiries about its timing, and we're pleased to deliver! As a reminder, between newsletters, we invite you to keep up with the Old Saltillo Cemetery and community events online at oldsalttillocemetery.com and/or [facebook.com/oldsalttillocemetery](https://www.facebook.com/oldsalttillocemetery). We have so much going on in Old Saltillo, the margins of these pages scarcely hold the details! *Take note of the article regarding the Old Saltillo United Methodist Church on Page 2.*

Plans are being finalized for the 2018 annual Old Saltillo Cemetery Association Business Meeting and Memorial Day program, to be held in the Old Saltillo United Methodist Church, on Sunday, July 15, 2018. The program will begin at 10:30 a.m. with opening comments from the Rev. Vic Casad, followed by a welcome from the OSCA Board and singing led by Mike Briley, with piano accompaniment by Lisa Lowery.

Following the traditional program opening and congregational signing, a brief business meeting of the Association will be conducted. The annual Business Meeting will consist of a report on the activities undertaken and work performed for the care of the cemetery during the past year, a financial report, and the election of three members for three-year terms to the Board of Directors.

Kelli McAfee Tarver will offer a special memorial tribute to those laid to rest in the Old Saltillo Cemetery since last Memorial Day. Family members of each person buried in the cemetery during the year are encouraged to attend and participate in honoring their loved one. Mr. John A. Sellers has accepted the Board's invitation to be our 2018 guest speaker. Please read more about Mr. Sellers in the Spotlight column of this newsletter.



Following the program, lunch will be served in the air-conditioned Kirby Memorial Center. For those who still prefer Memorial Day lunch outdoors, tables will be available under the shade of the church's large oak trees. Everyone is asked to bring the usual full meal with ample portions to be shared with others. The food will be arranged in buffet style with cups, plates, napkins, utensils, water and iced tea being furnished. See you July 15th!

Vivian Dennis-Monzingo, President

Spotlight: John A. Sellers

OSCA is pleased to introduce our featured speaker for the 2018 Memorial Day program, Mr. John A. Sellers.



John Sellers is a fifth generation native to Hopkins County, Texas. He graduated from Texas Tech University,

with a degree in advertising /public relations, and received his teaching certificate in history from Texas A&M, Commerce; He has been doing genealogical research since 1985. His favorite area of research is in the courthouse. He has visited courthouses in several southern states and has conducted extensive research in Texas and Louisiana.

He is an active member of the Hopkins County Genealogical Society and has served fifteen years on the executive board and as President, 1997-1998, 2017 to date. He was a speaker at the FGS National Conference in 1997 and 2004, and NGS in 1994. He has been the featured speaker for more than 60 all day seminars located in Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, New Mexico, and Oklahoma. John has given over 250 programs on genealogy and history. He was the featured speaker at the DRT Genealogical Conference at the Alamo in 2002, 2003 and 2011, and also the Louisiana Historical and Genealogical Seminar in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 2007 and 2011. He has been a faculty member for Angelina College Genealogy Conference, 1999-2014 in Lufkin and was featured instructor at the new Texas Institute of Genealogical Research, in 2017. He has completed Genealogy as a Profession, Advanced Methodology, and Advanced Library Research courses at the Institute of Genealogical and Historical Research, Samford University. John was a lecturer at the Institute of Genealogical Research, Samford University, 2009, 2010, 2014 and 2018. He has also compiled an addendum to the 1850 Census of Hopkins County.

John is an Assistant Vice President - Director of Marketing with City National Bank of Sulphur Springs. He is Mayor of Sulphur Springs and serving his third term on the City Council.

The OSCA Association is privileged to have John's extensive experience and perspective take center stage at this year's Memorial Day program. Welcome John, and thank you in advance for what is sure to be a special day for all attendees!

Ryan T. Agee, Treasurer &
Newsletter Editor

Thank You, Barbara

The Board of Directors wishes to share that Barbara Conley Norris, Old Saltillo community native and current resident, has resigned her role on the OSCA Board of Directors after over 25 years of service. Barbara is the daughter of Raymon and Ovetta Carey Conley, the granddaughter of Walter and Myrtle Agee Conley, and the great-granddaughter of Daniel H. and Sarah Keelin Agee, one of the founding families of the Old Saltillo community. In fact, Barbara and husband Rex live on part of the original Agee tract, dating back to the 1860's.

Following her retirement as an elementary school teacher for the Daingerfield – Lone Star ISD, Barbara and Rex retired to the Old Saltillo community and completed a lovely renovation of her parents' home, in which they still reside. Barbara's proximity and natural fondness for the Old Saltillo Cemetery gave her an opportunity to join the Board of Directors, serving as Treasurer for several years and generally supporting various projects and initiatives of the cemetery.

Barbara cites family time as her reason for departing the Board, and what better cause is there? Barbara and Rex's son and daughter, Randy and Tammy, and grandchildren Jake, Riley and Jett are no doubt grateful to have a little more time quality with her!

Please join us (on Facebook, if you please) in thanking Barbara for her many years of service!

OSCA Board of Directors

Interments

Since last publication, the following individuals have been laid to rest in the Old Saltillo Cemetery:

Megan Rene Hayslip

January 20, 1990 – June 8, 2016

Paul Alan Dennis

May 22, 1988 – August 21, 2017

Christine Ann Dennis Skelly

November 14, 1948 – August 30, 2017

Kathryn Mae Rountree Conley

July 4, 1936 – December 18, 2017

Mattie Mae Tinsley Bell

August 27, 1924 – January 3, 2018

Benjamin David Gibbs

February 5, 1976 – February 28, 2018

James Richard Skelly

July 30, 1949 – March 16, 2018

Charles William "Dub" DeShazo

June 27, 1919 – April 1, 2018

Clovis Martin Mills

May 24, 1943 – April 4, 2018

Judith Marilyn Orren Owens

March 21, 1937 – April 17, 2018

"He spoke well who said that graves are the footprints of angels." Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Old Saltillo

United Methodist Church

If you have missed the Old Saltillo Cemetery Memorial Day programs in recent years, you'll want to make every effort to attend this year's program.

For almost 150 years, the Old Saltillo United Methodist Church has stood as the understated centerpiece of the Old Saltillo community, serving the spiritual and social needs of local residents by way of worship services, Sunday school, weddings, funerals, revivals, singing schools, community dinners and family reunions. From the early 1870's to the early 1900's, the original structure served as both school house and place of worship for the surrounding community. One of the church's longest-standing traditions has been hosting the annual Old Saltillo Cemetery Memorial Day program, for as far back as anyone can recall. In recent years, our 1920's era church building has been challenged both aesthetically and structurally with a failing foundation, sagging roof, brittle wiring, dilapidated interior, aging aluminum siding and various other ailments and afflictions.

In early 2018, the membership of the Old Saltillo United Methodist Church convened a church conference wherein they voted unanimously to undertake a comprehensive restoration of the historic 1920's era church building, with intentions of largely returning the interior and exterior of the building to its historic appearance, while ensuring a safe, functional and inviting structure for worship and fellowship by the church congregation, friends and neighbors. The restoration project commenced in May of this year, and is well underway. To date, the 1980's aluminum siding, windows, rotten floorboards, wall/ceiling coverings, aged lighting/wiring and failing shingles have been removed from the church. The foundation has been leveled and reinforced, and the roof, walls and ceiling structures have been reframed. Unrepairable sections of flooring have been replaced, new shingles have been installed; electrical wiring has been replaced. The front porch has been reconstructed, and the church steeple was repaired.



Less than 30 days from Memorial Day, contractors are making every effort to bring the project to completion in time for our program, and it's looking promising! For timely updates on the restoration project, please visit the church's Facebook page!

Ryan T. Agee, Treasurer &
Newsletter Editor

Leaving a Legacy...

With heavy hearts, we acknowledge the passing of fellow Board Member, Christine Dennis Skelly. Below, an excerpt of Chris' obituary from the website of the Sam B. Harvey Funeral Home:



"Christine Ann Dennis Skelly, age 68, of Saltillo, passed away in the late morning hours of Wednesday, August 30, 2017 at Kindred Central Hospital in Dallas, with her beloved family by her side. Christine was born on November 14, 1948 in Westbrook, Minnesota to Aubrey Morris and Ardys Naomi Nelsen Dennis, she survives.

Christine was an active genealogist. She was a member of the Franklin County Genealogical Society and the Hopkins County Genealogical Society and she served as the historian for the Old Saltillo Cemetery Association Board of Directors. Christine was excellent with genealogy and history – she remembered more in her head than she ever wrote down. She was a homemaker who took pride in tending to the needs of her husband and daughter."

In addition to her mother, Ardys, Chris was survived by her husband, James (Jim) Skelly and daughter, Megan Elizabeth Skelly, of Saltillo; one brother, Nelsen E. Dennis, and wife Kathleen, of Saltillo; three nieces and two nephews; and an expansive network of friends and extended family. Chris was preceded in death by one sister, Rebecca Templeton. Sadly, less than 8 months after her own passing, Chris' husband and best friend of 44 years, Jim, passed away on March 16, 2018.

A descendant of an early family of the community, Chris found particular interest in the history of the Old Saltillo Cemetery and served in various capacities over her 30+ year tenure on its Board of Directors. Chris was a source of inspiration and information in all matters concerning the cemetery. Notably, Chris spent countless hours traversing the cemetery with her neighbor and friend, Dollie Pearl Armstrong, who conveyed to Chris her own knowledge and affection for the cemetery.

Several years ago, Chris delivered the keynote speech at an Old Saltillo Cemetery Memorial Day program, in which she recounted the origins of the community, church and cemetery; enclosed herein for your interest and reading pleasure. Please note that we make no representation of her sources, which no doubt include an array of current and former residents and other local and virtual resources.

Chris Skelly leaves a legacy of service and community preservation for all to admire. Her many contributions to the Old Saltillo Cemetery leave an indelible impression on the Association, particularly her fellow Board Members, who remember Chris warmly:

Lou Briley Daniel noted, *"Her knowledge of Franklin Co. and Hopkins Co. genealogy added to our information about Old Saltillo history."*

"Her knowledge of the cemetery and church have been a tremendous asset to us," said Randy Agee.

Johnny McAfee remembered, *"Chris was a straight shooter, who could be depended on to keep our cemetery records."*

"Her service to the Old Saltillo Cemetery was very special and helpful," says Kenneth Patrick.

Nat Paul Gibbs shares, *"I didn't know Chris before joining the OSCA board, but I found her very talented and enjoyed serving with her."*

"Webster's describes a historian as a student or writer of history, a compiler... Chris was a true historian of the Old Saltillo Cemetery, the families interred, their history, plot locations etc, a researched knowledge that will never be duplicated. We miss her efforts and endless contributions to the OSC legacy." Darwin McGill [past OSCA Vice President]

OSCA Board of Directors

Noteworthy...

- As two Board of Director positions have been vacated since our last annual business meeting, the Board of Directors convened twice via called meetings to elect successors to the unexpired terms of Chris Dennis Skelly and Barbara Conley Norris. Lucas Dennis was elected to serve the balance of Chris' term (2016-2019), and Kathy Whitten Patterson was elected to serve the balance of Barbara's term (2017-2020).

- We once again thank those who have made donations to the Association earmarked for floral bouquets at unattended graves. We have worked for many years to ensure that no graves are forgotten or left bare at Memorial Day. While investment options leave Association earnings too limited to support the entirety of this cause, we greatly appreciate donations of labor and private funds to keep our cemetery "in bloom"!

- As always, your financial support is essential to keeping the Old Saltillo Cemetery grounds in pristine condition. In memory / honor of your friends, family and loved ones, consider a donation to the [Old Saltillo Cemetery Association](#), at P.O. Box 123, Saltillo, TX 75478. Donations are tax deductible.

Trapper Pace, OSCA Webmaster &
Contributing Columnist