

MARY KEMP, Parker Co. cemetery saver, Co. historian

THE SHAW-KEMP OPEN HOUSE welcomes visitors on Sat....in April...

Mr. Shaw built many cabins (one in log cabin village in fw...now gristmill; plus another bldg.).

--reads Almanac to check weather and checks how bluebonnets growing before announces date...sets in Jan...

...2013 had 1,000...with fewer, easier to view and visit with guests..."kind of a blessing"...people enjoyed it more...once had 3-4,000 visitors...caretaker w/ place 40 years (they helped him get green card, learn Eng., get Am citizenship)...takes 150 vols (some re-enact Mayberry characters...we have jail and people like to put him in there and let him out...but still lose some stuff....many of vols sick or dead...now 1-5 not all day...didn't have bluebonnets this year 'cause of drought....usu have 20 acres...all dead...

--located below Nebo Mt. 12 mi from courthouse on way to Granbury...came up in december but no rain so died...

...bluebonnets and history have brought in the folks...rained out only once...bluebonnets absent only a few times...but should come back...

At 85 beginning to weaken...

--twice 'head person' in weatherford...

--people call her "Miss Mary"...

--her family came in 1905...Mr Shaw came in 1854...she lives in duplex and business partner 89 yr old Leon Tanner lives in other half...has book of his father's diary will send...rich people hired him to ride train and rep them for cattle shipping....most interesting book we've done; first one we did.

--since 1980 involved in co. hist comm...even as kid int. in hist...child of Shaw, Mollie, born and married in cabin, moved across rd...I lived near her (dad sharecropped for her dad)...Mamaw Staggs we called her...I thought she was my relative...she had daughter Miss Justine, was 4-H leader in Spring Creek comnty (born 1927...it was Nebo Valley community...had school just north of our house...but school closed)...my sis got involved and I went even though too young...Miss Justine taught me to cook, about hist, got me to keep notebook on history...some one stole my book so couldn't get 4-H college scholarship...I'll never forget what she taught me....real grandmother told stories of WWI...never saw doc...made our medicine out of garden (Harriett Carnes)...was youngest of area...old-timers helped me learn abt hist...

--our family was close-knit, along with sense of comnty...helped instill a love of history...all within shadow of Nebo Mt...when kid couldn't go up there 'cause of snakes...family were squatters at first...still have 220 acres...

--one of Doyle Marshall's book talks about Indian legend of Nebo Mt. Indian capture (chapter 6 is the story I contributed)...where Mamaw Staggs later lived...1863 several

teenagers of Mt Nebo gathered at home to make sorghum...two cousins (boy & girl) ¼ mi from where I was born...went toward Brazos River to get another ox...several mounted Indians wanted cattle to take off...captured kids to keep 'em quiet; took 'em up Nebo Mt. and spent nite...didn't bother 'em...then captured some stock and saved on mt...then early next day...(Shaw's sons had hidden when saw Indians but didn't know had kids)...Indians and two kids later caught by soldiers out West.

(Have state marker for Shaw house)

--interested in Weatherford, Parker Co, and TX hist...have cabinets full of material,...enuff for 20 more books...but eyesight is failing...2001 formed Nebo Valley press and have done 5 books and two reprints...Did reprint of booklet sent to attract people to Parker Co called "Facts in a Nutshell"...all proceeds go to Abandoned Cemetery Assn of Parker Co., plus other local causes....selling to make charity money...given up to \$30,000 away.

--can go on at great length about local people and their lives...

--husband was coon hunter...'58 started Tx Butane Co.,still owned by family...then could go anywhere and hunt 'cause wanted coons gone...was hunting on poor farm of county one time...he laid head down on 'rock' which turned out to be tombstone...he got determined to clean up poor farm cemetery...I found old records on poor farm with names (41 graves)...used our money and donations to clean it up, add road, fence it...got hist marker (first marker and first cemetery...done in 1986)...poor farm still has buildings falling down...

--next year...cemetery where Mr. Shaw buried was next proj...told too many rattlers...we cleaned it up...13 members of Shaws...got donations...Tanners great-grandfather = Shaw...

--did 3-4 more cemeteries...lawyer in town convinced me to form Assn 501c3 non-profit to protect us...get calls from all over SW and US asking about relatives who died in Co...

--was coordinator, now still on board...now have cleaned 65 abandoned co. cemeteries and maintain them...get lots of thanks...all but 5-6 on private property...

--back when cemeteries were created were on creeks on someone's farmland...some maintained by landowners, but we will help...vs. law to destroy cemetery but it does happen...

Legacy: all projects connected...I wouldn't have legacy w/o volunteers and family who worked with me (daughter/son still doing co. hist when asked)...

-cost 15,000 to 20,000 per year to keep assn. going

--ran propane co. for 40+ years; kept doll collection there

--sold dolls to help fund cemetery project and other projects...

--love 4-H, Spring Creek and Baker communities, won Texas Beautiful honors, hist honors...

--When people praise me, I say it's not one person...it's all of us, the volunteers and my family, together getting the job done.

--Hope have made impression on grandkids ==who call me 'Maw' or 'Great Maw'...they say she's full of history...

--Shaw-Kemp is free so requires vols...doing cemeteries w/ vol work...

Leon Tanner in Burma for 2 years...one of few volunteers who came back...will share story if asked...when took mules on mt to front lines...took 3 weeks to get 'em up...he came up with idea of putting mules in parachutes...didn't work...killed mule...people still sometimes say heehaw when saw him...reputation and blame went to him...

CONTACTED DAN UTLEY RE: WWI LEGACY INTERVIEW...
