

THE JOURNAL

TYRRELL HISTORICAL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION



CITY PARTNER

THLA remains as a faithful partner with the City of Beaumont. We look forward to sponsoring additional programs and educational opportunities and gifting the library with items needed for it to continue to grow.

"A LIBRARY OUTRANKS ANY OTHER ONE THING A COMMUNITY CAN DO TO BENEFIT ITS PEOPLE. IT IS A NEVER FAILING SPRING IN THE DESERT."
-ANDREW CARNEGIE

STAY UP TO DATE

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram to stay up to date on the latest events. You can also email us with ideas, newsletter submissions, comments or questions at thlabeaumont@gmail.com or by mail at P.O. Box 12563, Beaumont, TX 77726-2563

**SCAN THE QR CODE TO JOIN OR
RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP**



Be sure to ask a library staff member about volunteer opportunities. Library hours of operation are Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m. to 6:00p.m.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE BOARD

This newsletter spotlights board member Laurie Leister. Laurie is a Beaumont native, having been born and raised here. After graduating high school, she attended the University of Texas - Austin, where she received her Bachelor's degree with a concentration in historic preservation and architecture. After college she received a grant to work at the Old City Park in Dallas, but Beaumont inevitably called her home.

When Laurie returned, she began what became a 28 year career in Real Estate Appraising at her father's company. She achieved the astounding distinction of becoming one of only thirteen women in the country to have the MAI appraisal designation in 1986. "It was definitely a man's world at the time," said Leister. In addition to those accolades, she is also a licensed Real Estate Broker and State General Real Estate Appraiser on inactive status.

In 2020, Laurie returned to college at Lamar University to finish her MBA. In recent years, she worked for three years at the Jefferson County Clerk's Office as the Chief Deputy and the Interim County Clerk. Throughout the years, she's had her husband Curtis Leister by her side. Together they have five children, of which she is imminently proud.



Laurie is both a new and an old member of the board of THLA. Originally, she was part of the board roughly 15 years ago, but resigned due to timing conflicts with her children. Now she has returned as a member of our board once again. She is also a bit of a legacy. Laurie's mother was a founding member of the THLA, and that inspired Laurie to join. "I guess the love of history is in my genes." Her favorite resources to use at the Tyrrell are the city directories and the Sanborn Maps. In fact, her family donated the 1911 Beaumont Sanborn Map to the Tyrrell. Laurie is also currently helping the library on it's oral history project. She says that historic preservation has always interested her.

HERRING COE COLLECTION EXHIBIT



The Herring Coe Collection Exhibit, originally scheduled for Monday, July 28, 2025, has been rescheduled for Wednesday, August 20, 2025 from 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. at the Tyrrell Historical Library. Matchett Herring Coe was a Texas-born sculptor whose artwork is featured in various forms throughout Beaumont, the state of Texas and beyond. Coe was born July 22, 1907 in Loeb, Hardin County, to Burrell Columbus Coe and Ida Forbes Coe. Because his father worked in the lumber industry, the family moved around quite a bit eventually settling in Beaumont.

In the late 20s Coe worked for two companies where he developed his sculpting craft. His work is featured on many buildings throughout Beaumont, including the Jefferson County Courthouse, the U.S. Post Office and the Federal Building of Beaumont. Additionally, his work is featured on buildings across the state including the Houston City Hall, the Houston Zoo, the First Security National Bank and the Fondren Library at Rice University – Houston, TX. Other noteworthy sculptures include the memorial in honor of the children and school teachers killed in the New London School explosion in 1937. Aside from his commissioned work, Coe created many smaller pieces that depicted animals, the human form and architectural design. His style was heavily inspired by the Art Deco style of the time, though Coe often referred to his own style as “Art Coe.”

Article submitted by Linda Duhon-LaCour, Outreach Coordinator for the Tyrrell Historical Library and Beaumont Public Library System.

OUR SOLEMN PURPOSE

The purpose of the Tyrrell Historical Library Association as stated in the Articles of Incorporation is “to support the restoration of the Tyrrell Historical Library, to promote the development of its collections, and to encourage the use and enjoyment of the library by the public for research and education.” THLA is blessed to receive a generous yearly donation from the Chambers Foundation, the Carol Tyrrell Kyle Foundation, and membership dues and donations which are used in various ways to honor the stated purpose of the organization. Let’s review some of those ways.

The physical building which houses the library collections is in constant need of attention. THLA observes and reports needed repairs or upkeep to the City of Beaumont and with the Library staff, oversees the completion of work that needs to be done. This has recently included repair of stained-glass windows that were damaged by vandalism, the restoration of some display cabinets donated to the Library, the installation of several cameras focused on the building for security reasons and attention to A/C problems and roof leaks that are critical to preserve the books and furnishings in the building.

We promote the collection development of the Library by providing pieces of equipment such as a Bookeye4 scanner including laptops and software for scanning large items, pull-down screens to be installed to show slides and videos in a professional way, microphones and recorders to go out and gather the stories of Beaumont residents which are important to the history of our city, as well as covering the cost of the maintenance contracts and digital storage capabilities needed to house all of this information. We also support the collection development through partnering with the City on payroll for a full time archivist and part time assistants to help the staff. The archivist, Sarah Grimm, the outreach program coordinator, Linda Duhon-Lacour, and assistants, Heather Thomas, Jessica Joosten and Marilyn Tennissen are so appreciated for all that they do to enhance the whole Library experience. We are so fortunate to have each of them.

Most recently we have been pleased to assist the Library by donating more than \$5000 to complete the grant for restoration and digitalization of 50 years’ worth of KFDM video tapes. This collection will be immensely popular not only for research but also for the enjoyment of the public. The desire to complete this project has been high on the list of the Library staff for quite a while.

Lastly, the enjoyment by the public for research and education is a very important reason for the existence of the THLA for more than 38 years. We have branched out a great deal in this area. The Library provides unequalled access to online genealogy research with subscriptions to Ancestry.com and Heritage Hub.com freely available to the public on the Tyrrell computers. Also there are many, many books at your fingertips in the Tyrrell Library to look up records from every state in the country.

We support the continuing education of the Tyrrell staff by paying for their training, either online or in person. Because of some of this training, the staff is working diligently with the schools, both public and private, to make students aware of genealogy and the history of our area. In addition to these resources, the THLA helps by encouraging great speakers and programs which are open to the public. The programs are well attended and we are pleased to provide simple refreshments for the attendees and honorariums to the speakers as needed. This makes for a very pleasant experience for all and encourages the continuation of wonderful programs. Bill Grace and David Greer, as well as the rest of the staff handle the planning, promotion and presentation for each program.

This is just a short report of the work of THLA in the background of our precious Tyrrell Historical Library. The dues and donations that are submitted each year are budgeted with the love of the Tyrrell and outreach to the public in mind. Be proud of what you are contributing to for the betterment of the City of Beaumont. Take time to visit the Tyrrell and encourage your friends and family to do the same.

Article submitted by Jan Droptini - THLA Treasurer

IN THE INTEREST OF PRESERVATION

The Beaumont Heritage society is a preservation partner of the THLA, and they are working on a fascinating project in conjunction with the Center for History and Culture of Southeast Texas and the Upper Gulf Coast.

The Beaumont Heritage Society is honored to host Agatha Babino: A Narrative of the Formerly Enslaved, a compelling traveling exhibit that explores the life of Agatha Babino, a formerly enslaved woman living in Southeast Texas. The exhibit will run from August 7 through October 3, 2025, and will be available for viewing in Heritage Hall on the grounds of the John Jay French Museum (3025 French Road, Beaumont, TX 77706).

Through historical documents, photographs, and powerful storytelling, the exhibit highlights Babino's lived experiences - from her early life in bondage to her resilience and contributions in freedom. As a rare firsthand narrative from a formerly enslaved Black woman, her story offers valuable insight into a complex past and is an opportunity for meaningful reflection and learning. The exhibit is designed to be engaging and educational for audiences of all ages.

Exhibit viewing is open to the public during regular John Jay French Museum hours: Tuesday–Friday from 9 a.m.–4 p.m. and Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Admission is included with the museum's regular tour fee of \$5 per person for ages 4 and older. As part of the Museums for All initiative, admission is free for up to four visitors per group with a SNAP benefit card and a valid ID.

The exhibit will open with a free public reception on Thursday, August 7, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the John Jay French Museum. Guests are invited to enjoy refreshments and a Q&A with Dionne Babineaux, Director of the Museum of Undertold Texas History and the exhibit's creator, moderated by scholar and filmmaker Gordon S. Williams, who will speak on the historical and cultural significance of Babino's narrative. This special program is generously sponsored by The Center for History and Culture of Southeast Texas and the Upper Gulf Coast.

In addition, a community program related to the exhibit will be held at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church in Beaumont on Saturday, September 13, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. This event will offer expanded conversations and programming centered on local Black history and cultural heritage.

The Beaumont Heritage Society extends its deepest thanks to the Museum of Undertold Texas History for bringing this exhibit to Southeast Texas. We also gratefully acknowledge our grantors, the Foundation for Southeast Texas and the Southeast Texas Arts Council, for their support.

For more information, please visit www.beaumontheritage.org or call 409-898-0348.

Article submitted by the Beaumont Heritage Society via a press release.

WHAT'S COMING UP AT THL

FILM PROJECT

The Tyrrell Historical Library staff is continuing the process of digitizing its Audio Visual collections. The Audio Visual collection consists of video cassettes and reels with footage related to the history of Beaumont. Our largest collection is the KFDM News Film Collection that encompassed 618 video tapes. Those tapes are now in the process of being reviewed and indexed. Soon, the collection will be made available for viewing on the Tyrrell YouTube page along with an index to aid the searching of history content.

This project is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services [IMLS] and the Texas State Library and Archives Commission [TSLAC] [Grant #LS-256843-OLS-24].*[2024]



ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

The Tyrrell Historical Library is developing an Oral History program to document stories about the history of Beaumont and community members from the past and present. The Oral History program should be operational sometime in September. Once completed, the Oral History interviews will be posted to the THL YouTube site.

GENEALOGY READING ROOM CLOSURE

The Genealogy Reading Room of the Tyrrell Historical Library will be temporarily closed to the public for cleaning and restoration. Once the work is completed, the reopening of the room will be posted on the THL Facebook and Instagram pages, Beaumont Public Library System Newsletter and the Tyrrell Historical Library Association Newsletter. We appreciate the patience of the public as the work progresses.

SAVE THE DATE

Next board meeting:
July 22, 2025 @ 4:00 p.m.



Tyrrell Historical Library Association

Visit us at <https://www.thlabeaumont.org> • Email us at thlabeaumont@gmail.com

January is Annual Membership Month!

The Tyrrell Historical Library Association was founded in 1987 to help preserve and restore the Tyrrell Historical Library. Today, through members' dues and donations, the THLA provides the Tyrrell with things it needs over and above what the city can furnish. The library is open Monday–Friday, 9:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. in the heart of downtown Beaumont. Tyrrell Historical Library is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark. Admission to the Tyrrell Historical Library remains free. Patrons can visit the library for hand-on research or use the digital portal online to directly access collections or documents and photographs.

Become a member today! Please include your email address to receive our newsletter that will allow you to follow the success of exciting growth and preservation projects. Connect with us online or we can mail you information.

☐

Mail Me the Newsletter!

☐

Email Me the Newsletter!

Tyrrell Historical Library Association Membership Plans

☐

Individual \$25

☐

Family \$50

☐

Patron \$100

Contributions, memorials, and honorariums are always welcome.

Name _____

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City, State, Zip _____

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