Marker research guide for
HISTORIC INDIVIDUALS

The Texas Historical Commission (THC) created this guide to help county historical commissions and marker sponsors develop a strong application for an individual as a topic for a historical marker. It is a guide in researching and preparing the narrative history.

Narrative history: This is the key element to any marker application and the vehicle through which historical context and significance are demonstrated and proven. The narrative history is essentially a research paper that includes four key components — **context, overview, significance and documentation**. A sample is included.

- **CONTEXT:** The historical context represents a broader set of facts or circumstances that explains why the individual should be considered historic. How does the individual's history relate to the earlier history of his or her community, county or region? What is the individual's relevance to the broader history? What events took place (locally, regionally or nationally) that may have had a bearing on how or why the individual was important? History does not take place in a vacuum; it is dynamic and interconnected, and the context explores these elements.

- **OVERVIEW:** This is the main body of the narrative history, and it represents the key facts in the story. The overview should be told, as closely as possible, in chronological order, with clearly documented connections between earlier and more recent aspects of the context story. While a complete overview is required, the central focus should be on the *historical period of significance* (see *Significance* section), i.e., the years in which the individual made an historical impact.

- **Historical/Cultural Significance**: A topic is considered to have historical significance if it had influences, effect or impact on the course of history or cultural development; age alone does not determine significance. Topics do not necessarily have to be of statewide or national significance; many historical markers deal with local history and a local level of significance. They may also have cultural significance. To determine significance, ask such questions as: How did the individual play a role in history? How has the individual made a difference in the context of local or state history? What role did the individual play in historic events?

- **DOCUMENTATION:** This is, in effect, the evidence necessary to develop the history of significance of a topic. It is the foundation of historical interpretation and accurate research. For the purposes of the Official Texas Historical Marker Program, documentation associated with applications should be broad-based and demonstrate a survey of all available resources, both primary and secondary (see *Types of Sources* section below). Documentation serves as a detailed guide so future researchers can follow the research trail for their own purposes. As used in marker applications, it is most commonly manifested through endnotes, photographs or maps (see *Preparing the Reference Notes* section below).

TYPES OF SOURCES FOR HISTORIC INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH

The THC will consider the objectivity and reliability of information sources used in compiling a narrative history. Whenever possible, consult **primary source** material. Primary sources —

those that are contemporary with the topic — include newspaper accounts, diaries, meeting minutes, deed records, census records and legal documents. Such sources, as well as the recollections of disinterested, unbiased and authoritative persons, are preferred over secondary sources.

When using **secondary sources**, check them thoroughly since they are often not as reliable as primary sources. Secondary sources, such as history books, are not contemporary with the topic's history. Oral histories collected from authoritative sources are valuable research tools if properly documented (see example at the end of this document). Any claims of uniqueness (earliest, oldest, first, largest, etc.) must be accompanied by factual documentation from an authoritative, unbiased source.

SUGGESTED SOURCES FOR COMPILING HISTORIC INDIVIDUAL HISTORIES

Government Records
- Contracts (abstracts of title, court records, probate records, tax records)
- Federal (census)
- Military (pension records, biographical information)

Institutional Records
- Cemetery (family relationships, birth and death dates)
- Church (biographical information on birth, death, marriage; congregational records)
- Fraternal (membership information, dates, building information)

Published Histories
- County (information on buildings, people, institutions, events)
- Community (information on buildings, people, institutions, events)
- Business (commercial trends, economic base of community)
- Biographies
- Handbook of Texas, Texas State Historical Association, online or print

Family Papers
- Deeds (ownership, property value, associated improvements)
- Letters and diaries (biographical information, building information, social and economic history)
- Photographs (biographical information, building information)
- Genealogical information (family relationships)

Directories and Gazettes
- City directories (addresses, approximate dates, occupations)
- Social directories (biographical information)

Photographs and Printed Images
- Family photographs (biographical information, building evolution, landscape changes)

Newspapers and Journals
- Advertisements (owner information, dates, building information, neighborhood development)
- Society pages (biographical information on civic leaders, institutional history)
- Obituaries (biographical information)
- Articles (significant local events, economic history, social history, building information)

Oral Histories
- Minority history, social history, business history, building evolution and uses

Online Sources

- Texas Reference Sources (http://www.txla.org/trsonline.html)
- Portal to Texas History (http://texashistory.unt.edu/)
- The Handbook of Texas Online (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/)
- Baylor Institute for Oral History (http://www.baylor.edu/Oral_History/)
- The Texas Collection (http://www.baylor.edu/lib/texas/)
- Texas State Library and Archives Commission (https://www.tsl.texas.gov/)

PREPARING THE REFERENCE NOTES

For the specific purposes of the Official Texas Historical Marker Program, the **required** means of resource documentation to be used in preparing the historical narrative are reference notes. Generally speaking, facts that cannot be assumed to be common knowledge should be documented with a reference note. They can be either footnotes (placed at the foot of the page on which the fact is mentioned), endnotes (listed sequentially at the end of the history) or parenthetical notes (placed in parentheses immediately following the fact within the narrative history). The notes must be complete so the reader finds the referenced source easily.

Regardless of which type of reference note is used, the first use of a source should include a full first citation (all relevant resource details) with abbreviated information thereafter in subsequent citations (see examples below). **Note**: With the use of full citation footnotes, a bibliography is no longer a required element of marker applications.

Examples of First Full Citations (Footnotes or Endnotes):

[1] Terry G. Jordan, *Texas Graveyards: A Cultural Legacy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), p. 79.

[2] Orange County Deed Records, Book 4, p. 139.

[3] 1900 United States Census, Fort Bend County, Texas (Roll 1553) Enumeration District 16, p. 16.

[4] Bessie Jones. Interview with Scotty Jergenson, June 21, 1991. Tape recording and transcript available at the Darrouzett Public Library.

[5] Letter from Maria Gutierrez to Henry Guerra, May 23, 1922. Private collection of Henry Guerra, Dallas.

[6] "San Jacinto Monument Reconditioned." *Temple Daily Telegram*, Vol. 76, No. 256; July 31, 1983, p. 5-C.

Examples of Subsequent Citations:

[9] Jordan, p. 83.

[10] Orange County Deed Records, p. 140.

[11] 1900 United States Census, p. 23.

[12] Jones, 1991.

[13] Gutierrez letter.

[14] *Temple Daily Telegram*, 1972, p. 5-C.

Note: For sources used in preparing the text but not specifically cited, list them separately under the heading ADDITIONAL SOURCES. For further assistance on reference note styles, see the following

guides, or contact your local library.

Chicago Manual of Style, 14th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.

MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations. 5th ed. New York: Modern Language Association, 1999.

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*. Revised by John Grossman and Alice Bennett. 6th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

HISTORIC INDIVIDUALS RESEARCH CHECKLIST

Narrative histories submitted to the THC in support of marker applications for **historic individuals** should include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following information. **Note**: Historically significant individuals may be considered eligible for subject markers or grave markers ten years after death.

- Full name and any nicknames

- Birth and death dates

- Location of birth, death and burial

- Places of residence

- Family information, such as parents, spouse(s), children, along with biographical information; include vital dates (births, marriage, death, etc.)

- Education information

- Occupation/career information

- Military service (if applicable)

- Public service

- Civic activities

- Religious affiliation and activities

- Organizational affiliations

- Significant achievements/honors/awards

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SAMPLE HISTORY: Individuals

NOTE: This sample history, comprised of fictional information, represents in format, scope of content, documentation and length the type of narrative history required for a historical marker application. It is presented as a general guide for developing a narrative of an individual.

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CHESTER T. JONES
1831-1891

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I. CONTEXT

Progressive leadership influenced the early development of the town of Turnbuckle and chartered its course in history. When confronted by adversity by the common transitional phases that all emerging communities must address, individuals came forth to provide the critical decision-making, the sound planning and even the calculated risks essential for sustained growth. In that regard, no person was more instrumental in Turnbuckle's development than Chester T. Jones. An active business leader and an unrelenting advocate of the city's promise and potential, he symbolized the spirit that characterized Turnbuckle's early history. His tireless efforts on behalf of his beloved community not only influenced its initial successes but helped set the agenda for its future growth.

II. OVERVIEW

Born in Grant, Tennessee, on August 14, 1831, Chester T. Jones was the son of Michael and Lucy (Mason) Jones. His family later lived in Louisiana before moving to Post Oak County in 1842. Near present-day Royville, Michael Jones established a dry goods store. About 1847, he moved the business eight miles southwest to the Riparian River and reopened his store on the town square in Turnbuckle.[1] Chester T. Jones worked in his father's store until 1849, when he went to New Orleans to attempt his own hand at business. He stayed with family friends Mr. and Mrs. H.L. Myers initially. Over the next four years, Jones did many odd jobs, including river guide, ditch digger and doctor's assistant. He returned to Turnbuckle in 1853 and took over his father's business after Michael Jones passed away in 1855.[2]

In 1861, Chester T. Jones left to join the Confederate Army. However, a foot impairment that he suffered in childhood led the Confederacy to send Jones home. For the duration of the war, he

continued to run the dry goods store. On March 22, 1863, he married Daisy Judith Long (1839-1928) of Millerstown.[3]

Despite the adversities of Reconstruction, Turnbuckle developed steadily after the Civil War and Jones figured prominently into that important transformation. Indicative of his leadership and public service was his role in a group organized to establish a college in the city. Known initially as Turnbuckle College, the institution was formally chartered by the Texas Legislature in the 1870s as Middle Texas College. Jones also helped initiate the local Chautauqua organization, which brought renowned speakers and entertainers to Turnbuckle. Of his many civic contributions, Jones was particularly proud of his role in organizing the town's volunteer fire department, which he directed for the first 20 years of its existence, from 1870 to 1890.[4]

In business, Jones was in the forefront of economic development. A charter director and later president of the Turnbuckle Railroad Corporation, he oversaw establishment of the town's first rail line in the 1870s. Linking up with an existing line at Millerstown, the new commercial artery proved vital to Turnbuckle's continued growth.[5] In the early 1880s, Jones sold his business to the firm of Smith and Wayne and opened a private bank. In 1892, his financial institution became Turnbuckle National Bank and he became its first president. Jones also initiated a water works, which he eventually sold to the city, and a feed and seed business that shipped locally grown produce to widespread markets. He was also a founding member of the chamber of commerce formed in 1888.[6]

Jones was active in real estate and, over the years, amassed sizeable holdings throughout the county, but particularly in the vicinity of Turnbuckle and Marionville. Jones believed Marionville, like Turnbuckle, held great economic potential and he planned eventually to link the two by rail. To aid in the development of Marionville, he donated land for the construction of the community high school and also conveyed property to the Marionville Baptist Church.[7]

The Jones family home, located at 334 Lanier Street in Turnbuckle, still stands. There, Chester T. and Daisy raised two children: a son, Randall L. Jones, and a daughter, Josephine, later the wife of Daniel Rogerson.[8] By 1890, Jones turned his attention toward the railroad project linking Turnbuckle and Marionville. He passed away on January 30, 1891, before the right of way was finalized.[9] He and Daisy (d. 1928) are buried in Evergreen Cemetery in Turnbuckle.

III. SIGNIFICANCE

As a legacy to Chester T. Jones, the Marionville railroad link was completed in 1892, influencing even greater economic growth for Turnbuckle well into the 20th century. Jones' leadership and projects within the community of Turnbuckle helped a small town grow into an important city. As a leading merchant, founding member of the chamber of commerce, founder of the local college, coordinator of Chautauqua programs and organizer of the fire department, Jones contributed significantly to the 19th century development of Turnbuckle. His business interests included a bank, waterworks, and most importantly, the Turnbuckle Railroad Corporation, which linked Turnbuckle to neighboring cities and ensured its continued economic success. No other individual in the late 1800s contributed more to the growth of this city. His impact continues to be felt more than a century after his death.

VI. DOCUMENTATION

[1] Prater, Elihu. *Beyond the Rim: A History of Early Post Oak County*. Jergenson: Post Oak County Historical Commission, 1978, p. 104; *Post Oak Express* (Turnbuckle), February 1, 1891.

[2] *Post Oak Express*, February 1, 1891.

[3] Wilson, John R., editor. *Texana History*. Crosbyton: Blanco Canyon Press, 1989, p. 502; Genealogical information written in family Bible, now in possession of Chester T. Jones's descendant, Mrs. Emma Smith of Turnbuckle.

[4] Chester T. Jones papers, Turnbuckle Public Library, folder 4-2.

[5] Post Oak County Deed Records, County Clerk's Office, Post Oak County Courthouse, Turnbuckle, Texas: 15/73 (railroad charter), 15/159 and 32/180.

[6] Post Oak County Deed Records: 32/468; Prater, p. 159; *Texana History*, p. 527; *Post Oak Express*, February 2, 1891.

[7] Post Oak County Deed Records: 56/88 and 62/504.

[8] *Post Oak Express*, February 2, 1891.

[9] *Post Oak Express*, February 2, 1891