April 26, 2020

Dear Association Members:

   I hope that all of you are well and taking every precaution against the coronavirus in the current conditions. The Officers and Board Members of the Association have been monitoring the situation with COVID-19 in the last month as it relates to Association activities. As you are aware, we made a decision to cancel the New Deal Symposium scheduled for June in Stephenville due to the ongoing pandemic, and the mailing of the *Journal* is currently delayed due to work stoppages at the printer, SFA Press, and the suspension of an in-person presence at Association offices at the university. These are unfortunate developments, but also actions that were unavoidable given the uncertainty of the continued environment surrounding state and local strictures on social distancing and sheltering in place.

   The past week the officers and board members of the Association began discussion about the progression of our Annual Fall Meeting in Nacogdoches, scheduled for Oct.10-12. The leaders of our organization considered the timely need for arrangements, the potential impact of local and state ordinances designed to deal with the pandemic, the financial responsibilities of the Association, but first and foremost, the health and safety of our members. **Through their discussions of all such aspects, the Officers and Board members of the East Texas Historical Association have made the decision to cancel the 2020 Annual Fall Meeting**.

   The decision was a difficult one for these leaders, and one that they did not take lightly. It was vigorously debated, and a full range of potential options were considered. In the end, the decision became one of health and safety over the need for us to gather. As one board member said, "While we all look forward to our meeting as a time for community, fellowship, and scholarship, if just one member's health was compromised due to us holding our meeting, that would be too much of a sacrifice." It will be the first time the Association has not held a Fall Meeting since our founding in 1962, and I think we can all agree that it has taken an unprecedented and monumental event to cause that to happen.

   The ETHA Board is currently discussing a number of opportunities for events and activities in the months going forward, and will continue to monitor circumstances as it affects all of us. We will be prompt in our communication with you on these possible developments.

   Please accept our regrets about this somber period in our Association's history, but I don't think it could have been avoided. I urge you to please commend President Mary Jo O'Rear for her gallant leadership during this extraordinary time, as well as our Board and officers who exhibited the confidence placed in them as leaders in coming to such a difficult decision. Our Association is strong because we have such noble captains of our ship.

Stay safe!

Best,

M. Scott Sosebee

Associate Professor of History

Executive Director/Editor, East Texas Hist. Assoc.

Stephen F. Austin State University