



An ETHA Pine Cone Profile

May 2024

Carroll Scoggins-Brincefield

Hallettsville, TX



Charming and welcoming, often costumed as one of the historical figures she presents in her talks, Carroll Scoggins Brincefield has graced historical gatherings in Texas for almost twenty years. Her participation in the New Deal Symposium is almost a given, and her contributions to East Texas Historical Association, West Texas Historical Association, and Texas State Historical Association conferences have been numerous. Her leadership as President of the South Texas Historical Society has led to meetings south of the Nueces River, like Alamo. and north of the river, like Rockport. Always on the lookout for great topics and intriguing locations, our Pine Cone Profile for this month is Carroll Scoggins Brincefield. | Mary Jo O’Rear

Where do you live?

Hallettsville, Lavaca County, Texas

How long have you been part of the East Texas Historical Association?

Sixteen years.

What convinced you to join?

I had been out of college just a few years and I missed the camaraderie of fellow historians. Charles Spurlin convinced me I needed to be part of ETHA and I have not regretted it at all.

What is there within ETHA that has kept you a member?

The members who are willing to share their knowledge and expertise with me. By experiencing new fields of study through ETHA, I have grown as a historian so much.

What is there about Texas and East Texas that attracts you?

I began my journey of Texas History when my seventh-grade history teacher Mr. Wm. Stanton introduced to me the many unique stories of the past in Texas. East Texas played a role in my family history, so the more I learn about East Texas, the more I can understand my own family history.

What is there about history that attracts you?

I love searching the past and finding the hidden gems in research, the exploring and the way things used to be.

How do you usually pursue history: reading books/articles? Writing columns? Attending conferences? Watching documentaries? Filming documentaries? Doing research? Exploring graveyards? Teaching classes? Developing exhibits? Organizing programs? Pursuing genealogies? Administering courses? Writing books? What else?

All of the above.

Why do you love history? Has there been anything in your personal life that led to this? What was it?

My grandfather was a minister, and he was also a "historian". He made history come alive when he preached. The first book he read to me was *The Fall of the Roman Empire*. I was five at the time, but it was so real to me! I still remember the way he told the story. He always let me ask questions and really encouraged me to explore the past. Why do I love history? Can you be programmed to love it? If so, my grandfather did his job well.

What is your favorite historical period or historical movement? Why?

I have always been fascinated by WWII, the home front, and the internment camps. I have spoken on the internment camps here in Texas, in Seattle, Washington, and on national radio programs across the United States. We hear so much about the Japanese relocation camps but nothing about the German and Italian internment camps, so I have tried to share the information and histories as much as I can. I work with Texas Historical Commission in getting the histories out to the public.

What is your favorite historical period or historical movement? Why?

I can blame ETHA and three men, George Cooper, Keith Valento, and the late Patrick Hughes, for showing me a movement that had not been explored, The New Deal. This is the most fascinating time in our history, and we still have very little public awareness of it or in-depth research.

Who is your favorite historical person? Why?

My favorite person would be Lyndon Baines Johnson. My stepfather was close friends with him and when we visited, he just seemed to be bigger than life to me. So, as I got older, I started on my journey of learning all I could about this complex, yet down to earth man.

If there is one event in history at which you could be present, what would it be? Why?

This is a hard question, but I think if I could just spend time in the Roosevelt White House and observe the many people working on the New Deal programs, it would be so interesting and answer many of my questions.

What else would you like others to know about you?

I have four children, two sons and two daughters, three grandsons and three granddaughters, and one great granddaughter. I am a late bloomer when it comes to education; I did not start college until my mid-forties with less than a tenth-grade education and finished with two degrees (BS &MA) in four years. I love learning. Fun things to know about me: I used to race cars and loved attending Woodstock. I sung with the USO while living in Greece. And I totally believe in making someone—anyone—smile every day. Life is too short to wear a frown so shoulders back, heads up, and walk tall!