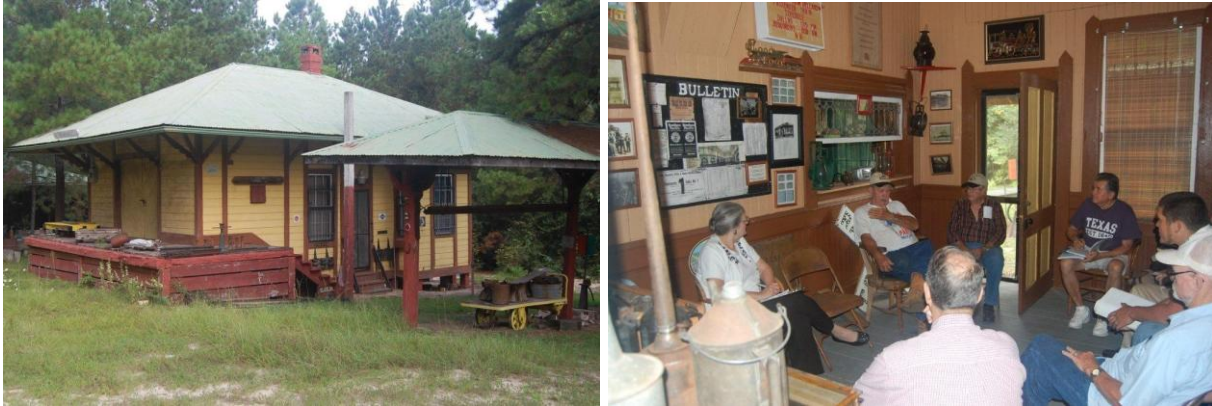


Colmesneil Train Depot Tour



On Saturday, August 25, 2012, Bill Gregory shared the history of the Colmesneil Train Depot with Tyler County Forest Landowners. Bill explained that he purchased the Depot in 1999 and moved it to its present site on FM 3065 in Colmesneil, Texas. This was the second time the Depot had been moved. The Depot was originally located on the railroad right-of-way two blocks north of the flashing light in Colmesneil and was about twice its current size.

The Sabine and East Texas Railroad was completed in 1882 to haul rock from the quarry at Rockland to the Sabine Pass jetties. A post office was established in Colmesneil that same year. In 1902, rock from the quarry was used to build the seawall in Galveston after the 1900 Hurricane. Bill displays samples of the large rocks that were hauled on the railroad.

The first conductor of the train through the area, W. T. Colmesneil, lived only three years in the town which still bears his name. The house he built there in 1883 has been restored and is open as a library and museum. Bill has a strong opinion as to the proper pronunciation of the name of the town. He says both the 's' and the second 'e' are silent. For any doubters, Bill relates the story of a fellow tourist to Paris who confirmed that this was the correct French pronunciation. (Mr. Colmesneil's father had emigrated from France to Barbados.)

Prior to the advent of the railroad, logs were floated down the rivers to the saw mills. The railroads could haul lumber as well as logs and by 1900, there were nineteen sawmills between Rockland and Beaumont. At one time Colmesneil was larger than Beaumont. The Yellow Pine Lumber Company, the largest sawmill in the area, burned in 1893.

In 1992, removal of the railroad tracks began. Over the years, Bill has collected a plethora of railroad artifacts, including a pump trolley, 71 signal lights and numerous lanterns.

At the conclusion of Bill's presentation, thirteen members of the Tyler County Forest Landowner Association participated in the Board of Directors meeting.