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# TEXAS HERITAGE

A PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS HISTORICAL FOUNDATION | EST. 1954 | \$6 ISSUE | Volume 2 2021

## Lost and Forgotten Lone Star History

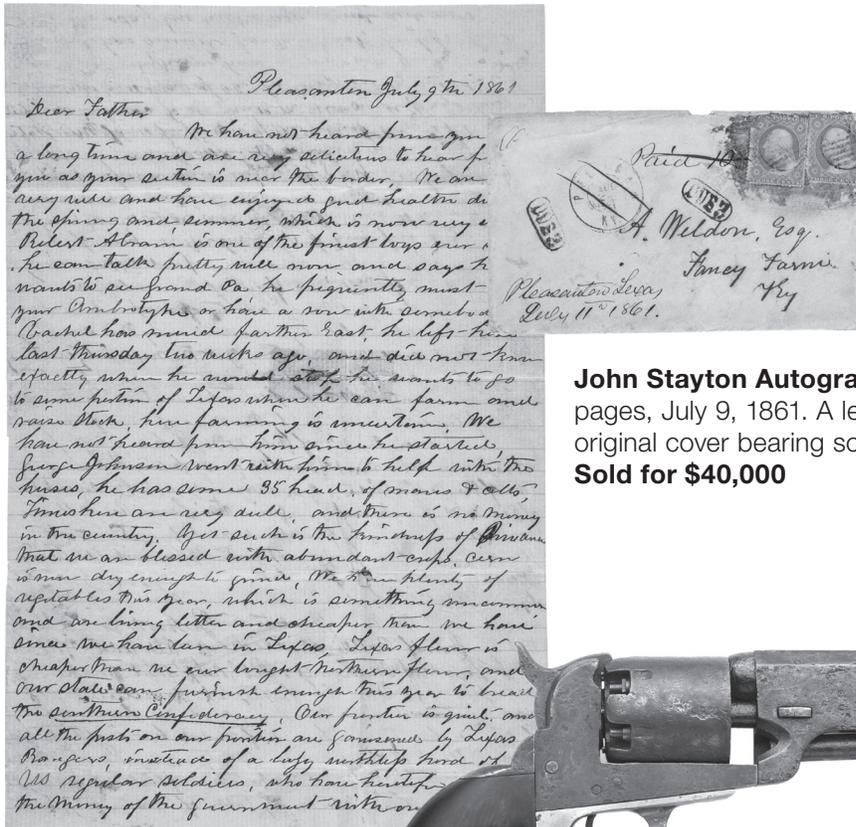
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# TEXAS HERITAGE

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## FEATURES

### 8 Finding Tom Cook

In the 1870s, Thomas "Tom" Cook, Sr., who was born enslaved, opened a blacksmith shop in Bolivar, 20 miles north of Denton. A community archeology project uncovered the former site of Cook's smithy—and helped reconnect his descendants with their ancestor's legacy.

**By Maria Franklin, Douglas K. Boyd, Kevin Hanselka, William Howard Clark, and Halee Clark Wright**

### 20 History Revealed

For two decades, artist Buck Winn's *The History of Ranching*, a 280-foot canvas mural comprised of individual panels, was thought to be lost to history. However, rolled-up and tucked-away sections of the artwork were rediscovered, and 10 now are on display for public viewing.

**By David L. Coleman, Ph. D.**

#### CONTRIBUTORS

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#### ON THE COVER

An upcoming post office box exhibit at the Brenham Heritage Museum will allow visitors to experience local and regional history using a hands-on approach. Photograph courtesy of Core Design Studio.

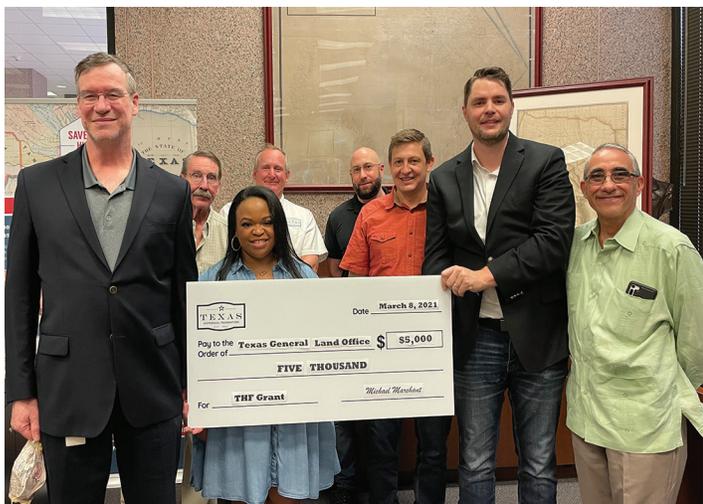
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# Foundation's Grant Accomplishments Continue to Grow



## ↑HEMISFAIR CONSERVANCY, SAN ANTONIO

The Hemisfair Conservancy was given a preservation grant to help with restoration on the Longini-Hermann House, which is shown above. The gift will be used for sanding, prepping, and painting work on the historic structure. Emanuel Longini built the home in 1892 and lived there for 20 years. This is the second THF grant that the Hemisfair Conservancy has received for its urban conservation efforts. Photograph courtesy of the HC.



With tightening government budgets due to the pandemic, the Texas Historical Foundation has been able to step forward to help fill that funding gap by increasing its preservation giving. This quarter, the board awarded more than \$30,000 in grants to the following projects:

- **Brenham Heritage Museum**, Brenham, was given a grant to assist with its post office box project (see article on page 17). The museum is housed in an old city post office, and to celebrate that heritage, an upcoming exhibit featuring 128 post office box doors that, when opened, will reveal historic images and information about Brenham and the area. The THF gift will help with costs of digital components used in the fabrication of the exhibit and other related expenses. The grant is from the Jeanne R. Blocker Memorial Fund.

- **Dallas Children's Theater**, Dallas, won approval for a proposal to produce a biography of native Texan Paul Baker, a major player in the development of the American theater and in performing and visual arts education. Funding will be used for travel, supplies, printing, rights, and transcriptions of the book. Grant assistance is from the William Jack Sibley Arts Endowment.

- **River Road Neighborhood Association**, San Antonio, received a gift to hire a consulting company to develop historic design guidelines. The residential area became a City of San Antonio Historic District in 2010 but now is threatened with development. The guidelines would be codified, adopted, and used by the city's Office of Historic Preservation. The award is from the Jack R. Wahlquist Directors Endowment.

- **Cleburne Railroad Museum Group**, Cleburne, will use its THF grant for labor and materials to build a larger model railroad exhibit. The display will feature the diesel/electric-powered "Texas Chief" and the steam-powered "Texas Ranger." Both trains operated in Cleburne. The gift is from the Jeanne R. Blocker Memorial Fund.

- **Texas Southern University Foundation**, Houston, won approval for a request to preserve and scan the art of John T. Biggers. The project will facilitate the analysis and study of African American art in Texas and its connection to the African diaspora. In 1949, Biggers served as chair of the art department at Houston's Texas State University for Negroes (now Texas Southern University), where he trained generations of artists and teachers. Assistance is from the William Jack Sibley Arts Endowment.

- **Lake Jackson Historical Association**, Lake Jackson, received an allocation for phase two of the restoration of the  
(continued on next page, top)

## ←TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE, AUSTIN

THF directors Frank de la Teja, John Meadows, and Clark Wernecke, Ph. D., gathered with representatives from the GLO to present funds for a coffee table book featuring 100 maps from the state agency's large collection. The Texas General Land Office oversees the care and exhibition of more than 45,000 maps that tell the story of the state's public lands, from early Spanish exploration to present day. Photograph courtesy of Tina Kinser.

Alden B. Dow Office Building as a museum. Foundation funds will be used for the labor for an Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant restroom, remediation of drywall, replacement of exterior columns, repainting, and reconstruction of the south wall to stabilize and anchor the building. The Mid-Century Modern architectural style and the distinctive shape of the front window of the structure define the city icon. The preservation gift is from the Michael C. Duda Historic Architectural Endowment.

- **The Grace Museum, Abilene**, will use its grant to conduct three teacher workshops that focus on the city's early history, military forts of the West Texas frontier, and the State Epileptic Colony that opened in Abilene in March 1904. THF funds will go towards printing expenses, activity supplies, and project materials. Grant funds come from the Jack R. Wahlquist Directors Endowment.

- **Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Austin**, will hire interns to transcribe digital images of the Texas Third Court of Appeals case files, dating from 1891 to 1923, into a searchable database. This is the fifth grant the Texas Historical Foundation has given to this records conservation project. Assistance is from the Marshall J. Doke, Jr., Texas Legal History Preservation Trust.

Since 1990, the Texas Historical Foundation has awarded more than \$2 million to assist preservationists across the state with their projects. Grant proposal deadlines are the first day of the months of December, March, June, and September, and gifts are made quarterly.

To learn more details—and read about the Texas Historical Foundation's nine funding endowments—visit THF's newly launched website at [www.texashistoricalfoundation.org/grants](http://www.texashistoricalfoundation.org/grants).



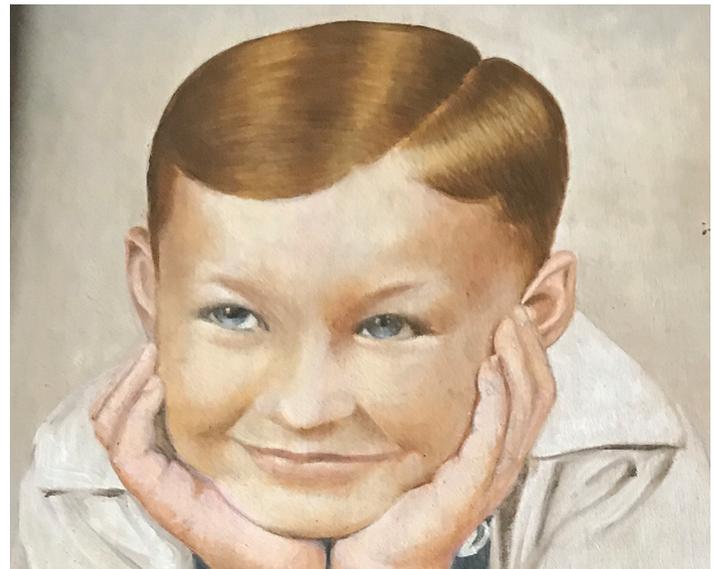
### ↑ NIGHT HERON MEDIA, HOUSTON

Julie Sparks, center, and Bruce Elsom, right, representing THF, presented a grant check that will help fund a Texas history education project. The nonprofit will use a multimedia approach for its Slices of Texas History program by producing short videos coupled with a historical fiction book aimed at young readers. Photograph courtesy of THF Director Michael Sparks.



### ↑ RUTHERFORD B. H. YATES MUSEUM, INC., HOUSTON

This Texas Historical Foundation grant will assist with the recipient's Freedmen's Town Archeology Project. Funds will allow for the purchase of equipment to help complete a permanent artifact lab at the museum. The gift also will support 30 student internships. Artifacts recovered from the Freedmen's Town community have helped shed light on the lives of the people who lived there. Photograph courtesy of THF Director Lane Transou.



### A Reader Adds Depth to Recent Article

Recently I read with great interest the article entitled "A Legacy of Kindness and Kinship" from the Texas HERITAGE, Volume 1 2021. I grew up in Hereford, Texas, and my husband Carl Covington did also. Carl's dad Worth Covington worked at the Italian prisoner of war camp located in Hereford. I have a painting of Carl [shown above] that was done by one of the prisoners. I do not know the exact age of Carl when the painting was done or the date. It is my understanding from previous conversations that this painting was originally done on a bed sheet.—*Jeanette Covington, Conroe*

# Sharing the Texas Story with Others

By Michael Marchant

The state of Texas ranks third in the country for the number of annual visitors and in domestic travel spending. One out of 20 Texans works in the leisure service sector, making it the third largest employer in the state. Texas moves up to second place, though, for heritage tourism, one of the fastest growing segments in the travel industry. Vacationers spend \$44 billion here each year, bringing in almost \$3 billion in state and local taxes. Those statistics prove that history is not only a source of great pride to Texans, but it is also an economic driver that furthers the state's future.

While ranking second is a worthy accomplishment, there is still room to improve. So, how does the state become top ranked in heritage travel? That goal can be achieved by doing even more to preserve and promote Lone Star architecture, archeology, traditions, culture, and art. The Texas Historical Foundation is at the forefront of statewide organizations supporting the work of heritage associations, visitors bureaus, and state agencies by helping those groups restore and showcase the places that tell the story of Texas.

Like many residents, as well as visitors from near and far, THF board members also enjoy exploring the state's history hallmarks. Quarterly board meetings, which typically take place in locations throughout the state, provide the chance for directors to do so as a group. But during the pandemic, these gatherings have been confined to the virtual realm. Now though, with the promise and availability of vaccines, the organization's first hybrid meeting in more than a year was held recently in Goliad, where survivors of the Battle of Coletto Creek were massacred by Santa Anna's troops on March 27, 1836. Many Foundation leaders gathered in person at the historic town to discuss and plan future opportunities, while other directors participated virtually. For those in Goliad, visits to Presidio La Bahía, and a tour of the Chisolm Heritage Museum in Cuero were highlights. Experiences like these not only expand personal knowledge of local history, but also provide insight into the business of heritage tourism—making the Foundation a better partner in historical preservation, promotion, and education.



As a supporter of the Texas Historical Foundation, you are demonstrating both your willingness and eagerness to share and help sustain the grand and diverse heritage of the Lone Star State. We invite you to join our organization's efforts in promoting heritage travel by making groups in your own community aware of the benefits of cross-promoting local historic sites and events and offer the Foundation's resources—its website, social media platforms, and Texas HERITAGE magazine—as avenues for doing so.

By working together, we can provide more Texans and millions of annual visitors access to artifacts, museums, heritage sites, and historic trails—making the exploration of the story of the Lone Star State a “first-rate” experience.

*Businessman Michael Marchant, a fourth-generation Texan, grew up in a military family and now lives in Grapevine. He is chief operating officer at Montgomery Cranes. Send comments regarding this column to: THF, P. O. Box 50314, Austin, Texas 78763 or by email to [admin@texashistoricalfoundation.org](mailto:admin@texashistoricalfoundation.org).*



Architect and Texas Historical Foundation director Lewis Fisher, AIA, explains the construction of the ceiling at Mission Espíritu Santo. Experiences like these support heritage tourism and make THF a better preservation partner. Photograph by Bill Sibley. Original in color.

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The Texas Historical Foundation serves past, present, and future Texans by supporting research in and publication of Texas history, assisting in the preservation of historic and prehistoric artifacts and information, and raising and providing funds for these purposes.

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**New and renewing members are listed on page 16.**

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# Finding Tom Cook

## COMMUNITY ARCHEOLOGY RECONNECTS DESCENDANTS WITH THEIR ANCESTOR'S LEGACY

By Maria Franklin, Douglas K. Boyd, Kevin Hanselka,  
William Howard Clark, and Halee Clark Wright

There is an ongoing effort to expand upon United States and Texas history by being more inclusive of the lives and contributions of minority groups that played an essential, but often little recognized and unacknowledged role in shaping the nation and state. In one North Texas town, a team of archeologists and researchers have been working towards that goal by collaborating with African American descendants on a project that tells the tale of one family's experiences after emancipation.

Founded in 1859, Bolivar is a small rural community located about 20 miles north of Denton. The present-day solitude and scarcity of historic structures belie the fact that the area was once a thriving enclave following the Civil War. Although sparsely populated at the time, the town prospered due to its location near the Chisholm Trail. From 1867 to 1884, this route was the major conduit for transporting livestock from Texas to Kansas. The trail brought a steady stream of cattle drives and stagecoaches to Bolivar, which had general stores, druggists, a hotel, and a saloon. The town's entrepreneurs, ranchers, and farmers constructed churches and a district school in this close-knit commu-

nity. In the early 1870s, Bolivar is where Thomas "Tom" Cook, Sr., his wife Lethia Perry, and their eight children sought to make a life for themselves. Cook was a blacksmith who operated his own business, a landowner, minister, and leading figure in the community. His achievements would be considered notable for any man during the 19th century. They are all the more remarkable given that Cook was born enslaved.

People of African descent have lived in what is now Texas since European colonization. Their numbers grew exponentially during the *antebellum* years (before the Civil War) as slaveowners sought their fortunes in sugar and cotton planting. Thus, by 1865, Tom and Lethia Cook were among the more than 250,000 African Americans who were freed in the Lone Star State. Still, the heritage landscape of Texas only recently has begun to reflect its diverse history and population. The legacy of slavery and secession, and the aftermath of emancipation remain untold stories of the Texas past. It is why archeological research on African American sites has grown in importance during recent decades. Although marginalized groups are underrepresented in

Opposite: Four generations of the Clark family, direct descendants of blacksmith Thomas "Tom" Cook, Sr., pose on the steps of the Quakertown House Museum in Denton. Clockwise from left: Halee Clark Wright, Betty Clark Kimble, Howard Clark, and Mylah Wills-Clark. Photograph by Michael Amador, courtesy of the Texas Department of Transportation.



## TINY ARTIFACTS TELL A BIG STORY

The popular perception is that archeologists always seek to find the most extraordinary and most valuable artifacts. While this is partly true, the reality is that these professionals do not measure “value” in monetary terms as many people think, but rather in relationship to the potential information yield. The relics archeologists find most prized are not what most would expect.

At the Tom Cook site, the excavation uncovered many hundreds of iron artifacts including blacksmithing tools (fragments of hammer heads and tongs), farrier items (horseshoes, horseshoe nails, and a clinching tool), broken wagon parts, stock iron pieces, and small scrap iron fragments. Additionally, the majority of 19th-century blacksmiths used coal to heat the iron so the metal could be hammered into various shapes. In the process, the impurities in coal are driven off and transformed into *coke*, which burns much hotter than the fossil fuel itself. Some of the impurities that burn off are solid particles that form melted blobs called *clinker*. Not surprisingly, fragments of both are the most common finds in and around historic blacksmith shops.

What is less well known is that the act of forging hot iron produces another by-product that is smaller but far more abundant. As a blacksmith's

hammer strikes a piece of hot metal against the anvil, each spark that flies off is a piece of iron called *hammerscale*, ranging in size from a quarter inch to microscopic. One blow may produce dozens or hundreds of these particles, which become super-concentrated inside a blacksmith shop.

By studying the horizontal and vertical distributions of hammerscale, archeologists are able to define the floor zone across the *smithy* (the workshop of a blacksmith) and, in some cases, determine the placement of the forge and anvil inside the shop. When examined, the nature of these particles, which tend to be spherical, can indicate the quality and types of iron and steel that were worked, the variety of forged items produced, and even the skill level of the individual blacksmith.

As with the case of Tom Cook's blacksmith shop, these smallest and often most mundane of artifacts can provide detail that helps reveal the larger story.

Above: Archeologists digging at the Tom Cook site used hand-held magnets to find hammerscale in the soil, confirming where the material was most concentrated. This, in turn, revealed where the wooden smithy building had once stood. Analysis of these iron particles will reveal even more about Cook's blacksmithing skills and business. Photograph courtesy of TxDOT. Original in color.

historical records, archeologists can recover the physical remnants of their experiences. The Bolivar Archeological Project was borne out of a commitment to illuminate the town's early history and Tom Cook's significant role in that past.

## DIGGING INTO THE PAST

In 2016, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) began advance planning to widen a five-mile stretch of FM 455 between Bolivar and the nearby town of Sanger. In Bolivar, an archeological survey of the areas that would be impacted by the construction revealed two late 19th-century sites: Jesse Sartin's hotel, and just across the road, the spot where Tom Cook plied his trade as a blacksmith. Sartin (1820-1899) is believed to be one of Bolivar's founding settlers. In 1881, he paid \$500 for a lot there. The purchase likely also included the wooden two-story structure that would become the Sartin Hotel, which soon became a popular stop along the Chisholm Trail. Archeological excavations were completed at both locations between November 2020 and February 2021. This research has the potential to shed light on the nature of rural commercial enterprises that relied on the Chisholm Trail for patronage. Very few sites associated with blacksmiths have undergone excavation and archeological investigation in Texas, and the Tom Cook Blacksmith Shop has the added distinction of being the first one owned and operated by an African American.

According to the 1880 U. S. census, both Tom (1839-1898) and Lethia (1840-1908) were born in South Carolina, and the couple had eight children residing with them in Denton County. Cook purchased his place of business from another blacksmith in 1882, but he may have been working in Bolivar at his trade before then.



Left: Jack Cook, the son of Tom and Lethia Cook, lived in Denton's Quakertown community and worked as a stableman at the College of Industrial Arts. Photograph, early 20th century, from the Denton County Office of History and Culture archive, courtesy of Kim Cupit.

Blacksmiths were highly skilled and played important social and economic roles in their communities. The artifacts recovered from the North Texas site indicated that Cook was a *farrier* (a person who shod horses) and also repaired wagons for outfits passing through on Chisholm Trail cattle drives. Bolivar residents also would have relied on the tradesman for farming implements, tools, building materials, and other metal goods.

Cook passed away in 1898 and was buried at the Knox Cemetery in Bolivar. He was survived by his wife, sons, and daughters.

## COOK DESCENDANTS JOIN THE PROJECT

Researchers with TxDOT, the University of Texas at Austin, and Cox-McLain Environmental Consulting have partnered with Cook's lineal descendants on the Bolivar Archeological Project. Thus, this undertaking is an example of community archeology that combines archeological research and collaboration with a wide array of stakeholders—local residents, business owners, and members of area historical or-

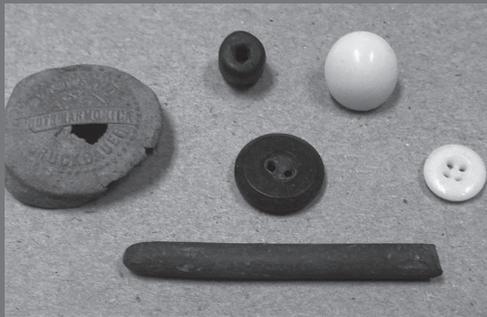
ganizations. Participants in community archeology projects also can include those who have ancestral ties to, or more broadly, a shared heritage connection with the people who once occupied a site. This approach acknowledges that members of a community have a vested interest in heritage resources and may have different but equally important questions about locations undergoing study. It also recognizes the importance of engaging public support for the stewardship of historic and archeological sites.

Cook descendants have resided in Denton County for 150 years, and the blacksmith's story would be incomplete without the knowledge of his life and what transpired for the generations that followed him. Prior to the Bolivar excavation, researchers began collaborating with Howard Clark, Halee Clark Wright, and Betty Clark Kimble, the lineal descendants of Tom and Lethia's daughter Kitty, who married Glasco Clark. Kimble was excited to learn more about her great grandparents and the anticipated dig at the newly discovered site. She helped fill in the gaps concerning the family's genealogy. Her recollections of Tom and Lethia's offspring revealed the strong

family ties that have persisted in subsequent generations.

Clark and Wright were hired as members of the project team to ensure that Cook descendants had a voice in shaping the research questions, outreach efforts, and project outcomes. Howard Clark is the Cooks' great-great grandson. A retired law enforcement officer, he worked as a member of the field crew throughout the Bolivar dig. According to Clark, archeology provided him with the opportunity to experience firsthand "where they [his ancestors] lived, where they stood, something they might have held in their hand, something they might have eaten a meal off of. This is as close as we can get without actually meeting the person." Halee Clark Wright, Howard's daughter, also reflected on her experience:

*It's given me a sense of belonging and helped me believe in myself a little bit more. Because if my great-great-grandfather could come out of slavery and have his own successful business...what's to stop me from succeeding? I come from a...lineage of strong individuals, and [this experience] has given me something to pass on to my daughter.*



## BEYOND BLACKSMITHING

In historical archeology, the integration of multiple lines of evidence—archeological features, artifacts, documents, and oral history—can make historic sites and the people who lived and worked in these places come alive. While digging in the northwest corner of Tom Cook’s lot, the Bolivar team discovered a dugout structure that measured roughly 15 feet by 16 feet inside and was more than four feet deep. The upper portions of its south and east walls were built using stacked limestone rocks resting on clay benches. Large-diameter wooden posts in the corners and the center of one wall once supported the structure’s roof.

The artifacts in the dugout’s floor date from the middle to late 19th century, but what is noticeably absent from these deposits is any material related to blacksmithing. What was found is a wide range of domestic items that are consistent with household occupation from the latter half of the 1800s. The floor zone yielded cast iron cooking vessels and stove parts, jewelry such as brooch pins and necklace beads, an array of clothing buttons, children’s toys, firearm cartridge cases, pieces of glass bottles, a variety of *sherds* (fragments of ceramic materials), and broken vessels used for food storage and consumption. Archeologists believe that some, or perhaps all, of these materials were used or discarded by the Cook family.

Above: Numerous domestic artifacts were recovered from the dugout area of the Tom Cook site. Those include, at center, a hard rubber button made by the Novelty Rubber Company. Directly beneath that and moving clockwise are: a slate pencil, a brass end cap from a tubular G. Bruckbauer mouth harmonica (patented in 1874), a necklace bead, a porcelain dress button, and a Prosser button. Photograph courtesy of TxDOT. Original in color.



Master blacksmith Kelly Kring spent two days at the Cook site and gave the field crew an impromptu lesson on the trade. Photograph courtesy of TxDOT. Original in color.

## THE BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY ARCHEOLOGY

Involving Clark and Wright in the research demonstrates an important component of community archeology, as stakeholder participation helps to demystify the practice of studying the physical remains of the past. Moreover, as researchers and those with a vested interest work side by side, they communicate with one another and build a relationship of mutual trust. This affords more opportunities for stakeholders to ask questions and provide archeologists with their own insights on excavation findings. Thus, both the process of discovery and knowledge of the site’s history are shared.

In addition to Cook’s lineal descendants, the Bolivar project team and TxDOT are conducting outreach with a broad range of other stakeholders. The agency’s scope has been statewide, and the interested parties include academics, heritage preservationists, and cultural resource management firms. To complement TxDOT’s efforts, the project team has focused on working with other Cook descendants, the African American community in both Denton and Sanger, students and faculty at the University of North Texas (UNT), the Denton County Office of History and Culture, the Denton County Genealogical Society,

the North Texas Archaeological Society (NTAS), and Bolivar residents.

Specific to this project, the community archeology approach has entailed employing different strategies to encourage and support the involvement of this diverse group of participants, as well as expanding wider public interest in the project. Volunteers from NTAS spent many days excavating and screening dirt to recover artifacts. In addition, site visits were organized and a series of newsletters on the research findings were circulated to interested parties. As the archeologists shared what was found at the Sartin Hotel and Tom Cook Blacksmith Shop dig sites, these individuals and groups learned about archeology’s role in reconstructing history and the everyday lives of ordinary people. Four generations of Cook descendants and their close family friends toured the site. Dozens of others made impromptu visits when they saw archeologists at work along FM 455, which led to even more interest in the project.

These engagements also have precipitated better research. Conversations with individuals and project presentations to organizations have opened up channels for sharing historical knowledge. After attending a talk given to the Denton County Genealogical Society, member Donna Spears offered to assist with the archival in-



This is a view of the archeological excavations at the Tom Cook Blacksmith Shop, shortly before the dig ended. The stacked rocks in the lower middle of the image are the east and south walls of the dugout structure. The probable location of the smithy is in the shallow excavation area immediately behind the dugout. Photograph courtesy of TxDOT. Original in color.

vestigation of Jesse Sartin and Tom Cook. The Curtsingers, long-time Bolivar residents, and Rheba Marshall, who rented a house during the 1950s where the Sartin Hotel once stood, shared photos and recollections of early Bolivar. Kelly Kring, a local blacksmith, identified artifacts recovered from the Cook site and spoke to the field crew about historic blacksmithing. In years past, UNT oral historians interviewed Betty Clark Kimble, Alma Clark, Ruby Cole, and Reverend Reginald Logan regarding their experiences as African Americans in Denton County. All of these individuals visited the Bolivar excavations and were generous in relating their knowledge of local history with the project team.

## MOVING FORWARD

As decisions are made on how best to commemorate the history of Bolivar, the Sartin Hotel, and Tom Cook's legacy, stakeholders will continue to be part of that process. Their feedback already has helped to define potential public history goals, including a state historical marker, interpretive signage at both Bolivar

sites, and an oral history project involving descendants of the Cooks. The stakeholders also have recommended that an exhibit on the Tom Cook Blacksmith Shop be installed at the Quakertown House Museum in Denton.

Quakertown is a former African American neighborhood that was transformed into a city park in 1922. One of the few surviving remnants of that residential community is a house built in 1904. The city purchased and relocated the historic home, restoring it to serve as an African American history museum. Because some of the blacksmith's descendants lived in Quakertown in the early 20th century, an exhibit at the museum would be a natural fit for telling the Cook family story.

Buried for more than a century, Tom Cook's story is coming to life through the practice of community archeology. In 19th-century Texas, most former slaves were landless and labored as sharecroppers. They were largely denied the opportunities to advance due to systemic racism, economic exploitation, and political disenfranchisement. Thus, the Bolivar Archeological Project is

providing a rare opportunity to learn about a self-employed freedman who practiced a skilled trade. Tom Cook succeeded as a father, religious and community leader, and businessman despite the tremendous obstacles that confronted African Americans. His narrative is one that deserves to be told as part of Texas history. ★

*Maria Franklin is a historical archeologist who teaches in the Department of Anthropology at The University of Texas at Austin. Douglas K. Boyd is a senior archeologist with Cox-McLain Environmental Consulting, Inc., in Austin. Kevin Hanselka is a staff archeologist for the Texas Department of Transportation. William Howard Clark is a native of Denton who retired after 30 years in law enforcement. Halee Clark Wright is a special education teacher and coach at Crownover Middle School in Corinth.*

Editor's note: Although "archaeology" is an acceptable spelling used by many professional organizations, "archeology" is the preferred style of Texas HERITAGE magazine.

# An Architectural Anomaly



*As the Texas oil boom was in full swing, a Wichita Falls businessman figured out a way to make a quick buck by swindling investors. In the process of executing his clever scheme, the con artist ended up building the “world’s littlest skyscraper.”*

In the early 1900s, the oil boom in Texas brought all manner of opportunity and with that, hundreds (if not thousands) of opportunists looking to seize on the chance to make a fortune. J. D. McMahon was one such man. His riches, though, were not plumbed from the depths of Lone Star soil, but came by way of constructing the “the world’s littlest skyscraper.”

In 1918, McMahon and five other businessmen were renting one half of the Newby Building in Wichita Falls. The modest single-story, two-room brick structure, located near the railroad depot, was built a dozen years prior by owner Augustus Newby. At that time, a cramped and shared office space was not uncommon. The city’s growth could not keep pace with the demand for commercial infrastructure, and many newly founded oil and ancillary companies often were headquartered in tents. To address the problem, McMahon, an oil rig construction contractor who hailed from Philadelphia, proposed erecting a modern high-rise adjacent to the Newby property. He drew up blueprints for the project and had no difficulty in finding investors flush with cash from the oil fields. Collectively, they handed him more than \$200,000 (nearly \$3 million in today’s dollars) anticipating a good return on their money.

Using his own crew, McMahon quickly broke ground, but the brick structure that emerged when completed in 1919 shocked stakeholders. The building rose a mere four stories, with outer dimensions measuring 10 feet by 18 feet—a far cry from the 40-story skyscraper the financiers envisioned. Adding to the investors’ woes, the interior was without staircases. Access to the upper floors was by way of a series of exterior ladders positioned near a large window on each of the higher levels. The final misdeed was that the plot of land the building sat on had not been purchased or leased from the Oklahoma property owner, a relative of Augustus Newby.

Not surprisingly, a lawsuit against McMahon soon followed, but the petition was dismissed. After examining the blueprint, which bore the approval signature of each investor, the judge declared that the cunning contractor had delivered a building exactly as promised. The financiers, it seems, did not pay attention to the fine print in the design plan, which clearly indicated that when completed, the structure would measure



480 inches in height, not 480 feet as was assumed. Further, the interior architectural detail did not depict staircases between floors. By this time, though, J. D. McMahon already had left the state with a considerable amount of unspent funds in his pocket.

The conned investors had no other recourse but to install interior stairs and rent out closet-sized office spaces. Word of their folly soon spread, and in 1920, the McMahon Building was listed in *Ripley’s Believe It or Not!* as the “world’s littlest skyscraper.” The structure went without tenants during the Depression and suffered a fire in 1931. During subsequent years, it was occupied on and off before being abandoned completely and falling into disrepair. In 2000, an architectural firm partnered with an electrical contractor and purchased the derelict property. Now completely restored, the infamous McMahon Building is home to a new business and is a favored stop for Wichita Falls visitors. The site is a designated Texas Historic Landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

As for J. D. McMahon, his fate remains a mystery—leaving many to wonder whether he was a seasoned con artist or merely an opportunist who devised a clever little scam.

—*Pamela Murtha*

*Pamela Murtha is the assistant editor of Texas HERITAGE magazine.*

Opposite: A little more than a century after its construction, the McMahon Building in Wichita Falls has become a heritage site, an architectural oddity built exactly as promised. Photograph by Travis K. Witt, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons. Original in color.

This page: By 1913, fields in North Texas were producing nearly half of the the oil in the state. Photograph courtesy of the Wichita Falls Convention and Visitors Bureau. Original in color.

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# SPOTLIGHTING THE HOLDINGS OF THE INSTITUTION MEMBERS

— *Brenham Heritage Museum, Brenham* —

Open a post office box and one might find bills, circulars, or magazines. But what if those receptacles offered bits of history and imagination? This is the plan for an exhibit that will be one of the centerpiece in the redesigned Brenham Heritage Museum.

For the team at Core Design Studio in Houston and historian Mike Vance, the content consultant for the project, the unconventional display idea was an obvious choice. The central building for the museum in downtown Brenham is a century-plus old federal building and post office, currently undergoing renovations. From the beginning, the team's goal has been to pay homage to the place that once was a community's heart-beat—a spot to touch the wider world and catch up on local gossip.

To begin the project, which is still underway, Alan Krathaus, of Core Design, purchased a bank of old post office boxes listed for sale. At four feet wide, those will fit nicely between two columns in the museum lobby. Amazingly, some of the companies that manufactured the mail containers and hardware are still in business, a fact that designers hope will aid in the refurbishment process. After some cleanup, hardware replacement, and new numbers recalling the old gold-leaf look, the team will turn its attention to filling the 120 small boxes and eight large drawers with history surprises.

The expectation is for visitors to open the doors and find treasures that capture their interest. Many items will tie directly to United States Postal Service and Texas history. Stamps, letters, and tiny mock packages will be there, along with other USPS ties. For example,

thousands of Washington County men registered for the draft in that building during a 50-year period, and one or two of those draft cards will tell their stories, like that of Matt Foote. He was an African American soldier sent from Brenham to France in 1918. Soon after coming home, he met his demise during a knife fight in a Fort Worth bar. Another door will reveal Victory mail, or V-mail, the wafer-thin World War II-era paper that brought news from the front lines home.

Opening some of the small doors will trigger a music box, a voice recording played from a micro speaker, or a video that beams upwards from a drawer. A vintage telephone headset will deliver an audio message. There also will be micro dioramas of Brenham buildings. Some boxes even might contain clues that point a visitor to another artifact in the museum. In short, each door becomes a portal to fun—and history education.

The quest to create compelling exhibits such as these post office boxes will occupy the history and design team for some time as they work to fill two floors of the old post office and reimagine a totally new Brenham Heritage Museum. The hope is that the results will engage visitors and maybe make an old postmaster smile.—*Mike Vance*

*Mike Vance is a Texas historian, author, and documentary filmmaker.*



Above: This bank of old mail boxes will become an unconventional display case—and ties the museum to the building's original use as a post office. Photograph courtesy of Core Design Studio. Original in color.

*The post office display is expected to open in early 2022. In the meantime, rotating museum exhibits can be seen just around the corner at the Brenham Bus Depot, built in 1947. Additional details can be found at [www.brenhamheritagemuseum.org](http://www.brenhamheritagemuseum.org).*

Editor's note: THF awarded a grant to support this project in April 2021.

# More Than a Century of Service



*San Augustine Drug Store achieved its century-plus status by consistently meeting the essential medical needs of the small Northeast Texas town it serves—and much more.*



As national chains gobble up mom-and-pop enterprises, it is becoming increasingly rare to find a business that has escaped such fate—and managed to flourish. But as of 2021, the San Augustine Drug Store has managed to do so for nearly 120 years. That longevity has earned the small-town pharmacy acclaim as the oldest continually operated business in the Northeast Texas town of San Augustine, a place dating back to 1717 and the establishment of the Mission Nuestra Señora de los Dolores de los Ais.

As for the iconic pharmacy, it has operated under several names during its historic run. Opened in 1902 as the Palace Drug Store, it was purchased two years later by brothers Alonzo and A. E. Rushing. Locals referred to the business as Rushing's Drug Store or sometimes San Augustine Drug. Eventually, the latter name stuck—and it has been on the sign at the East Columbia Street pharmacy ever since.

In addition to dispensing vital medications, the siblings also operated a soda fountain inside of the drug store, which became a gathering place for townspeople to relax and enjoy malts, milk shakes, and other refreshments. In 1926, the brothers hired Casey Jones to oversee the counter service. During the 1950s, future United States Senator John Tower, who served from 1961 to 1985, also took a turn at the San Augustine Drug soda fountain.

The menu there included the usual cherry cokes and ice cream, but it was a special drink that Jones, who enjoyed mixing flavors and syrups, developed in 1928 that turned out to be the talk of the town. His non-alcoholic Grapefruit Hi-Ball mixture immediately became the most popular beverage at the counter, and its closely guarded secret recipe has been passed down through the years to subsequent pharmacy owners. The drink is still on the soda fountain menu today.

Despite this success, Jones had higher aspirations. According to recollections penned by native San Augustinian and historical preservationist Betty Oglesbee, Jones studied pharmacy during his off-duty hours and passed the Texas State Board of Pharmacy's examination in the last class that was permitted to obtain a license via apprenticeship. He later purchased the drug store and worked there until he sold it in the 1960s to Therman Bridges.

In 1988, just as Bridges was preparing to pass the reins of the business to pharmacists Debbie and Mike Jackson, his daughter and son-in-law, the historic building was destroyed by a devastating fire on July 23. Even that catastrophe, though, did not interrupt business as usual. Two days later, San Augustine Drug Store began operating out of a nearby temporary location, filling prescriptions while the year-long rebuilding process took place.

In recognition of its longevity and service to the community, San Augustine Drug Store was honored by the Texas Historical Commission with the Texas Treasure Business Award. According to THC, that honor “pays tribute to the state’s well-established businesses and their exceptional historical contributions toward the state’s economic growth and prosperity.”—*Gene Krane*

Opposite page, left: This image of the soda fountain in the San Augustine Drug Store was taken in 1943 by John Vachon for the U. S. Farm Security Administration/Office of War Administration. Photograph courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. Right: A young girl enjoys a cold treat at the soda fountain. Photograph courtesy of the City of San Augustine. Original in color.

This page, left: San Augustine Drug Store is on the right side of the street in this historic image. Photograph courtesy of City of San Augustine.

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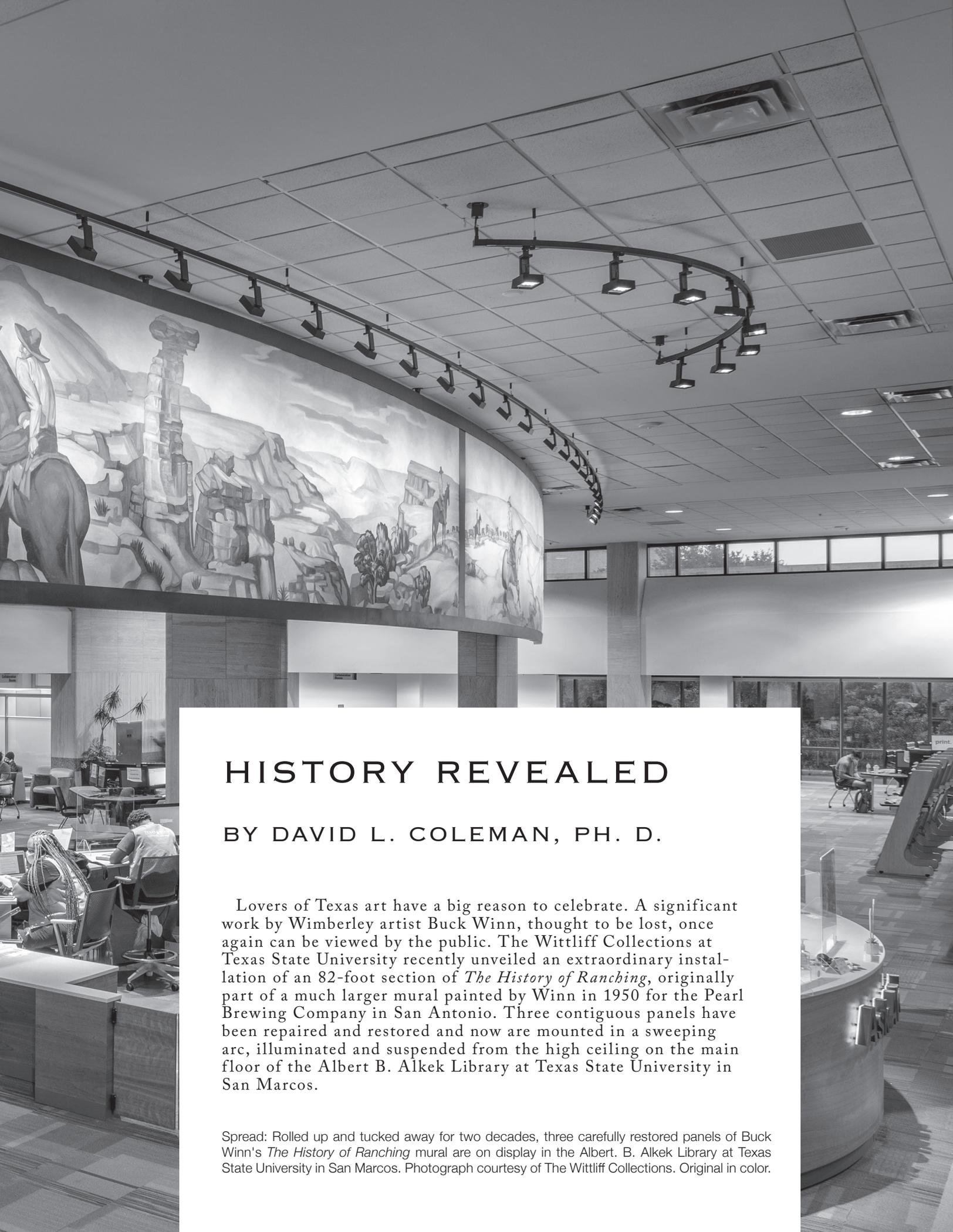
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# HISTORY REVEALED

BY DAVID L. COLEMAN, PH. D.

Lovers of Texas art have a big reason to celebrate. A significant work by Wimberley artist Buck Winn, thought to be lost, once again can be viewed by the public. The Wittliff Collections at Texas State University recently unveiled an extraordinary installation of an 82-foot section of *The History of Ranching*, originally part of a much larger mural painted by Winn in 1950 for the Pearl Brewing Company in San Antonio. Three contiguous panels have been repaired and restored and now are mounted in a sweeping arc, illuminated and suspended from the high ceiling on the main floor of the Albert B. Alkek Library at Texas State University in San Marcos.

Spread: Rolled up and tucked away for two decades, three carefully restored panels of Buck Winn's *The History of Ranching* mural are on display in the Albert. B. Alkek Library at Texas State University in San Marcos. Photograph courtesy of The Wittliff Collections. Original in color.

**T**he recovery of this iconic work of art is only the most recent event in the artist's long and eventful story. Painter, sculptor, and inventor James Buchanan "Buck" Winn, Jr., was born in 1905 in Celina, a small town in Northeast Texas. After graduating high school, he continued his education at Washington University in St. Louis and spent a year studying painting at the Académie Julian in Paris. Upon his return to the United States in 1929, Winn settled in Dallas. The following year, he began working on a series of painted mural commissions in his adopted city for clients, including the Titcher-Goettinger department store, the Medical Arts Building, and the Highland Park Village Theater. Yet, it was his fine easel paintings that won him a selection in the Exhibition of Young Dallas Painters in 1932, the original group that formed the famous Dallas Nine, a circle of regional artists who would go on to garner national attention.

From there, Winn's mural career blossomed, and he received two important commissions in 1935 for the Federal Reserve Bank in Dallas and the Gonzales Memorial Museum and Library in Gonzales. The following year, Winn joined the Texas Centennial Exposition project, creating pieces that include what surely is his most viewed work. The Texas Centennial Commission had selected Eugene Savage, then the nation's most prominent muralist and an instructor at Yale University, to decorate the Hall of State, the main building of the Exposition. He, in turn, hired Winn as his chief assistant. In that role, Winn helped design and paint the huge murals inside the Great Hall that depicted the state's history, as well as its industrial, cultural, and agricultural progress. Winn also contributed some important individual elements, including the sculptural frieze on the base of the tower located at the Exposition's entrance

and the huge gold-leaf medallion inside the Hall of State. Measuring 24 feet in diameter, that circular piece features a large star in the center surrounded by figures representing the six nations whose flags have flown over Texas. Preserved and restored by the City of Dallas, all of these items remain visible today. Savage was so impressed with Winn that he later asked the young Texan to collaborate on murals for the New York World's Fair in 1939.

By the time Winn was hired by the Pearl Brewing Company 11 years later to paint what would become the largest of any of his works, the Lone Star native was an extremely successful muralist with a statewide reputation. The brewery was repurposing its large, oval-shaped former stables into an Old West-themed hospitality room called the Pearl Corral, and the owners asked Winn to paint a massive mural for the walls of the second tier. At 280 feet long and six feet high, *The History of Ranching*, depicting the story of cattle ranching in the Southwest, was considered the longest in the world at the time. Winn's sketches demonstrate how he composed the full span of the installation by designing themed scenes on separate canvases that were joined visually by stretches of landscape. The panels then were installed edge-to-edge to produce a continuous work of art. The narrative includes scenes of a chuck wagon and a railroad, as well as horse breaking, cattle branding, and a mule train passing a sheep herder. Landscape sections included a large canyon, mesas, and a windmill. At its center was an Old West street scene with cowboys and several storefronts, including a Buck Horn saloon, a sheriff's office and, humorously, an undertaker's business advertising "U. Diggum & I. Plantum" as proprietors.

When Pearl remodeled the Corral in the early 1970s, management determined that the expansive piece did not fit the proposed new theme. The canvas panels were pulled from the walls (in some cases, they were



cut) and slated for the demolition pile. Winn's mural would have been forever lost to history but for the efforts of Chuck Remling, the Corral's manager, who rescued and rolled the discarded pieces, storing them in a shed on the brewery's grounds. By the time he retired, however, the panels were long forgotten, fated to fall victim to destruction, like so many other murals when the buildings they grace are repurposed or demolished.

About 20 years after the panels were pulled from the Corral's walls, they were rediscovered thanks to the dogged efforts of Dr. Dorey Schmidt, a faculty member at the University of Texas–Pan American (now the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley) in Edinburg. After visiting Buck Winn's studio at Four Winns Ranch in Wimberley during the early 1990s, she became fascinated with the painter's work and career. So much so that Schmidt developed a "WinnKit," a mobile educational exhibit that she used to recount the artist's legacy to Texas civic organizations and schoolchildren. During her research into the painter's body of work, she

contacted Pearl Brewing Company and eventually tracked down Remling. He revealed saving *The History of Ranching* from the trash heap and indicated where the panels were stored—if they still remained where he had left them. Amazingly, they did.

On behalf of the nonprofit Wimberley Institute of Cultures (WIC), Schmidt arranged for the brewery to donate the rediscovered canvases to the organization. The panels were retrieved and later brought to the Albert B. Alkek Library at Texas State University (then Southwest Texas State University) in San Marcos, which offered to provide climate-controlled storage.

Since then, 10 individual canvas sections (an eleventh panel is privately held) have made their own unique journeys in returning to public view. All are on display in Hays County locations—a fitting tribute to Buck Winn's embrace of Wimberley after he and his wife Kitty settled in the small town in 1941. In addition to the newly installed three panels (featuring the chuck wagon, canyon, and railroad scenes) at the Alkek Library, two more panels (including the cattle branding and mule train and sheep scenes) are in the lobby of the Hays County Government Center in San Marcos. The other five are



Top: This 1910 panoramic photograph of the Pearl Brewing Company in San Antonio includes all three modes of beer transport: train car, horse-drawn wagon, and delivery truck. Image from the collection of Charlie Staats; photograph in the public domain. Right: *The History of Ranching* originally was on display in the Pearl Corral at the brewery. Photograph courtesy of UTSA Special Collections.



This page, left: Artist Buck Winn, pictured at his home in Wimberley, painted scenes that chronicle the epic story of cowboys, cattle drives, and the wide open landscape in the Old West. Photograph courtesy of Texas State University Archives. Opposite page: This restored panel from *The History of Ranching* illustrates the depth of color and detail in Buck Winn's work. Photograph courtesy of The Wittliff Collections.

history—or one talented painter's version of it—can be rediscovered with hard work and the generous support of donors. ★

*David Coleman, Ph. D., is the director of the The Wittliff Collections at Texas State University in San Marcos.*

in Wimberley, with four of the sections (featuring the horse breaking and Old West street scenes, along with two smaller landscapes) on view at the Wimberley Community Center (WCC). The remaining panel is on exhibit at the Wimberley Valley Museum in the historic Winters-Wimberley House, adjacent to the WCC.

With the exception of the one at the Wimberley Valley Museum, each individual panel underwent a repair and restoration process that was years long. The 1970's removal, rolling, and storage in an unheated and unairconditioned space for two decades unfortunately caused significant damage to the paintings. There were deep scratches, abrasions, and dirt that marred their surfaces, and in some areas, the paint had loosened or flaked off completely. Without core support, the rolled canvases became flattened, crimping the edges and rippling the surface. Cuts and tears also weakened the historic artwork. Beginning in 1992 and continuing through 2020, the 10 mural sections were restored by several painting conservators, bringing Winn's beautiful work of art back to life.

Despite the artist's impres-

sive record of creating murals throughout the state and his association with the Dallas Nine, Buck Winn is a lesser-known 20th-century Texas painter. In part, this is because he devoted himself to creating large installations for fixed sites, rather than focusing on easel painting, smaller works that could have been acquired and displayed by influential museums or collectors. Moreover, none of Winn's murals were part of the federally supported New Deal public art programs of the 1930s, which funded approximately 1,400 murals in post offices across the country. Instead, Winn's commissions almost exclusively were done for private companies and seen in public lobbies and on building exteriors. This meant that the artist's renderings were subject to the vulnerability of commercial structures that were more likely to be renovated or razed when ownership changed hands or when the business failed.

The newly restored panels from *The History of Ranching*, now residing in much more publicly accessible spaces, help resurrect awareness of this important Texas artist. His works are breathtaking examples of how

In addition to *The History of Ranching*, several of Winn's projects are viewable to the public, including:

- Painted murals, Gonzales Memorial Museum and Library, Gonzales, (1935)
- Painted murals and large gold-leaf medallion, Hall of State, and entrance tower sculpture frieze, Fair Park, Dallas (1936)
- Five painted murals, Commercial National Bank, Shreveport, Louisiana (1940)
- Painted ceiling scenes and decorations, Hillcrest Mausoleum, Dallas (1940)
- Exterior concrete and glass bas relief sculpture, Flowers Hall, Texas State University, San Marcos (1959)
- Stained glass cross, Chapel in the Hills, Wimberley (1960)
- Exterior bas relief sculpture, Hilton Palacio del Rio Hotel, San Antonio (1968)
- Frog Fountain (four stylized lotus leaves), Texas Christian University, Fort Worth (1968)



# A Virtual History Vacation

*Faced with the challenge of engaging an audience not able to visit because of the pandemic, Lockhart State Park officials turned to their computers—and a New Deal legacy.*

By Jason Jonathan Rivas

Texas state parks have long provided public historians with storytelling opportunities through interpretation of cultural treasures and local histories. More than 740,000 people visited at least one of the 95 state parks in March 2020, but the following month, Governor Greg Abbott ordered the closure of all these facilities due to COVID-19. When they reopened, social distancing became the norm, and many park interpreters, including those at Lockhart State Park, began experimenting with new concepts, such as virtual programming, to continue engaging with patrons.

## A Different Approach to History

Assistant Superintendent Chris Dooley and Park Interpreter Lauren Hartwick saw the shutdown as an

opportunity to reintroduce the site's cultural treasures in a new format. "When it closed," Hartwick said, "we were looking for ways to stay connected to our visitors and community."

As trained interpreters, the rangers understood public history's vital role in making that possible. They livestreamed visits to various natural and historical sites through the park's Facebook page. Public feedback indicated their immediate success.



audience. Digital films allowed for the insertion of informative visuals that enhance the viewers' understanding of a particular feature. For instance, one clip focused on the park's golf course that was built by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the late 1930s. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)

In June 2020, through AmeriCorps VISTA, a national service organization, I joined the effort to produce recorded programs. This approach proved advantageous, as shorter, more media-friendly videos could reach a wider

Top: Civilian Conservation Corps members pose in front of the Lockhart State Park Recreation Hall, circa 1930s. Photograph courtesy Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Bottom, left: This is a present-day view of the golf course's original hilltop first hole tee box. Photograph by Courtney Stevens and courtesy of Lockhart State Park. Original in color.



oversaw the development of the park, which featured a dramatic hilltop tee box (no longer used) and a drop of several hundred feet to the first hole below. Drone footage presented the history of the tee box through eye-catching visuals and a reenactment of a “first swing.” A later social media campaign, highlighting various cultural resources, encouraged online visitors to view a short video *CCC What They Did There*. The film gained nearly 2,000 views, while Facebook posts reached an even wider audience. Those numbers were solid evidence of the success public historians achieved during the pandemic.

Although onsite visitation at Lockhart fell more than 12 percent compared to 2019, media interactions substantially increased the park’s internet presence. Now that state facilities have been reopened, attendance is above pre-pandemic numbers, and online programming viewership remains high as well, an indicator of a new era for the historic state park.

*Jason Jonathan Rivas, of Houston, works at the Texas Department of Transportation as a historic preservation specialist.*

### A New Deal Legacy

From 1935 to 1938, CCC company 3808 constructed the infrastructure on Lockhart State Park’s 263 acres. They built a residence, a recreation building, Park Road 10, bridges, dams, culverts, outdoor fireplaces, trail head markers, a water storage tank, picnic tables, and a swimming pool, which was filled in years later. Work Progress Administration recruits were responsible for completing the nine-hole golf course. Initially leased to a local country club, the recreational facility opened as a public state park in 1948.



Top: More than eight decades later, this stone arch bridge remains a visible reminder of the work completed by CCC enrollees. The Lockhart project was one of more than 50 parks completed by the New Deal program. Bottom: The stone masonry surrounding the state park’s historic water tower was designed to support the concrete tank. Photographs courtesy of Larry D. Moore. Originals in color.

# TEXAS HISTORY ALONG THE WAY

## DOCUMENTING THE PAST IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC

*The COVID-19 pandemic provided historian Dan Utley and his wife the opportunity to drive the backroads of Texas and then share snapshots of what they found along those byways with friends and colleagues on social media.*

*Soon, researchers everywhere will be able to access this photographic record of life in rural Texas.*

Text and photographs  
by Dan K. Utley

Experiencing a case of cabin fever one day during the COVID-19 pandemic, my wife Debby and I took a drive into the country near our Travis County home in the summer of 2020 and ended up at the picturesque New Sweden community. There, we photographed a number of sites, including the magnificent 1922 Lutheran church (at right), which rises dramatically from the surrounding Blackland Prairie. That afternoon, we posted the pictures on Facebook, and the responses indicated that many of our friends, even those who were longtime county residents, had never seen this historic landmark. So, the next week we made another rural sojourn and social media posting, with similar results. We have continued the backroad explorations for a year now, documenting thousands of out-of-the-way and often overlooked elements of the Central Texas cultural landscape.

Depending on our interests, perspectives, and curiosities, we have photographed historic homes, abandoned buildings, vintage signs, churches, yard art, and rural cemeteries, as well as seasonal flora and ancient native trees.

Along the way, we approached friend and colleague Kris Toma, who heads the University Archives at Texas State University, about depositing our notes and photographs for use by



researchers, and she agreed. The material first will be featured in an online exhibit entitled “Texas History Along the Way” (web address to be provided later) and then permanently preserved as part of the institution’s growing collections focusing on regional history.

*Dan K. Utley is a public historian and author.*

Author’s note: For those interested in preserving photos of the Lone Star past, contact your local library, county museum, or archival center for professional assistance.

Above: New Sweden was established in 1873 as Knight’s Ranch.

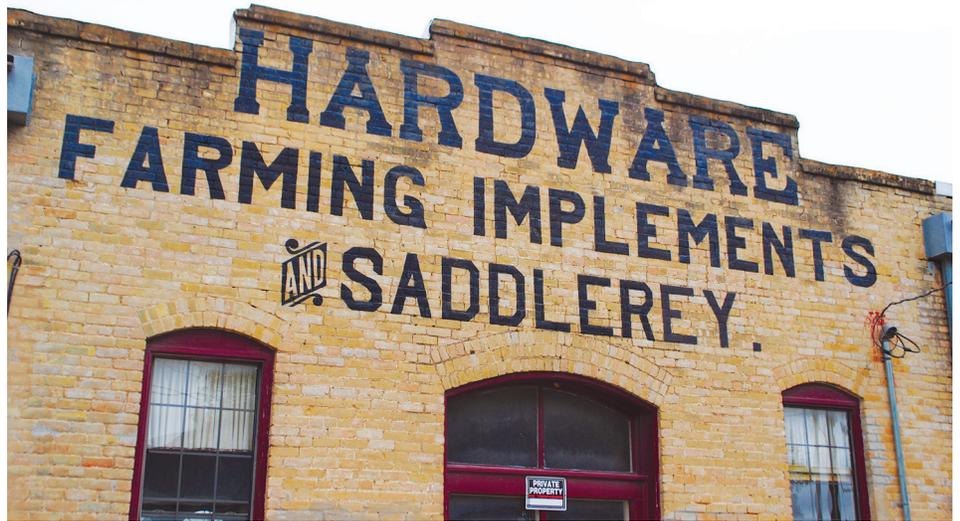
Photographs are from top to bottom, clockwise:

Alley signage, such as this example in the Hutto historic district in Williamson County, can provide historical connections to earlier businesses. Hutto was established in 1876 when the International-Great Northern Railroad went through the small Central Texas town.

The main highway through Umland, on the Hays-Caldwell county line, no longer passes by the historic commercial center that dates to the early 20th century. In 1910, there were two cotton gins and two stores in Umland, serving rural ranchers, farmers, and townspeople in the area.

Documenting the past includes photographing the missing pieces as well as *extant* (still existing) structures. This photograph depicts the aftermath of straight-line winds that heavily damaged historic commercial buildings in Bertram, Burnet County, in March 2021. Such tragedies serve as reminders of the vulnerability of the built environment, which in turn points out the need to record history whenever it is possible to do so.

For those who document historic structures, unexpected discoveries are rewarding but also sometimes puzzling. Such is the case with this carved feature above a pilaster in the commercial district of Liberty Hill in Williamson County.



# TEXAS HISTORICAL MUSEUMS

## CENTRAL

### ANDERSON MILL MUSEUM AND GRIST MILL

13974 FM 2769, Volente 78641; 512-258-2613; 2-5 on the fourth Sunday of each month March-Oct, or tours by appointment; [www.volente.org/amgc](http://www.volente.org/amgc)

### AUSTIN COUNTY JAIL MUSEUM

36 South Bell St., Bellville 77418; 979-877-8814; Sat 11-3; [www.austincounty.com/page/austin-museum](http://www.austincounty.com/page/austin-museum)

### BASTROP COUNTY MUSEUM

904 Main St., Bastrop 78602; 512-303-0057; Mon-Sat 10-5, Sun 1-4; [www.bastropcountyhistoricalsociety.com](http://www.bastropcountyhistoricalsociety.com)

### BRENHAM HERITAGE MUSEUM

105 S. Market St., Brenham 77833; 979-830-8445; Mon-Fri 10-4, closed Sat-Sun; [www.brenhamheritagemuseum.org](http://www.brenhamheritagemuseum.org)

### CAMP HEARNE MUSEUM

12424 Camp Hearne Rd., Hearne 77859; 979-814-0733; Wed-Sat 11-4; [www.camphearne.com](http://www.camphearne.com)

### ELGIN DEPOT MUSEUM

14 Depot St., Elgin 78621; 512-285-2000; Wed-Fri 10-2, Sat and tours by appointment; [www.elgintx.com/200/Elgin-Depot/Museum](http://www.elgintx.com/200/Elgin-Depot/Museum)

### FORT MASON

204 W. Spruce St., Mason 76856; Open year round; [www.masontxcoc.com/attractions-recreation/fort-mason](http://www.masontxcoc.com/attractions-recreation/fort-mason)

### FRONTIER TIMES MUSEUM

510 13th St., Bandera 78003; 830-796-3864; Mon-Sat 10-4:30; [www.frontiertimesmuseum.com](http://www.frontiertimesmuseum.com)

### LA VERNIA HERITAGE MUSEUM

13136 U. S. Hwy. 87 West, Hwy 87 at Bluebonnet (FM 775), La Vernia 78121; 210-392-3281; every first and third Sunday, 12-3 and by appointment; [www.laverniahistory.com](http://www.laverniahistory.com)

### LBJ MUSEUM OF SAN MARCOS

131 N. Guadalupe St., San Marcos 78666; 512-353-3300; Thurs-Sat 11-5; [www.lbjmuseum.com](http://www.lbjmuseum.com)

### MASON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 477, Mason 76856; 325-347-6137; [www.masontxcoc.com](http://www.masontxcoc.com)

### NEW BRAUNFELS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

1300 Church Hill Dr., New Braunfels 78130; 830-629-2943; Tues-Sat 9:30-12 and 1-3. Call ahead for tours; [www.newbraunfelsconservation.org](http://www.newbraunfelsconservation.org)

### PIONEER FARMS

16201 Pioneer Farms Dr., Austin 78754; 512-837-1215; Thurs-Sun 10-5; [www.pioneerfarms.org](http://www.pioneerfarms.org)

### PIONEER VILLAGE LIVING HISTORY CENTER

2122 N. St. Joseph, Gonzales 78629; 830-672-2157; Tues-Sun 1-5; [www.thepioneervillage.vpweb.com](http://www.thepioneervillage.vpweb.com)

### PRESIDIO DE SAN SABÁ

191 Presidio Rd., Menard 76859; Daily 8-5; [www.presidiodesansaba.org](http://www.presidiodesansaba.org)

### RIVER ROAD NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

P. O. Box 120372, San Antonio 78212; [www.riverroadna.org](http://www.riverroadna.org)

### SAN ANTONIO GENEALOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

911 Melissa Dr., San Antonio 78213; 210-342-5242; Mon & Sat 10-4, Wed 10-7, Sun 1-5; [www.txsaghs.org](http://www.txsaghs.org)

### SEAQUIST HOUSE FOUNDATION

405 Broad Street, Mason 76856; [www.seaquist.org](http://www.seaquist.org)

### STAR OF THE REPUBLIC MUSEUM

23200 Park Road 12, Washington 77880; 936-878-2461; Sun-Sat 10-5; [www.star-museum.org](http://www.star-museum.org)

### TEXAS COTTON GIN MUSEUM

307 N. Main St., Burton 77835; 979-289-3379; Tues-Sat 10-4; [www.cottonginmuseum.org](http://www.cottonginmuseum.org)

### TEXAS HERITAGE MUSEUM

112 Lamar Dr., Hillsboro 76645; 254-659-7500; Mon-Thurs 8-4:30, Friday 8-4; Research Center hours Mon-Fri 9-1; [www.hillcollege.edu/museum](http://www.hillcollege.edu/museum)

### TEXAS WENDISH HERITAGE MUSEUM

1011 County Road 212, Giddings 78942; 979-366-2441; Tues-Sun 1-5; [www.texaswendish.org](http://www.texaswendish.org)

### VILLA FINALE AND VILLA FINALE VISITOR CENTER

401 King William, San Antonio 78204; 210-223-9800; Tues 12-4, Wed-Sat 9:30-4; [www.VillaFinale.org](http://www.VillaFinale.org)

## EAST

### CHANDLER HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

721 Hwy. 31 East, Chandler 75758; 903-849-2243; Wed-Sat 1-4; [www.chandlerltx.com/542/Museum-Visitors-Center](http://www.chandlerltx.com/542/Museum-Visitors-Center)

### COMMUNITY AND FAMILY HISTORICAL PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION, INC.

7466 FM 2799, Jasper 75951; 409-489-9330; [www.cfhpa.org](http://www.cfhpa.org)

### FRIENDS OF ORANGE DEPOT

1210 Green Ave., Orange 77631; 409-330-1576; [www.orangetxdepot.org](http://www.orangetxdepot.org)

### THE HISTORY CENTER

102 N. Temple, Diboll 75941; 936-829-3453; Mon-Fri 8-5, Sat 9-1; [www.thehistorycenteronline.com](http://www.thehistorycenteronline.com)

### MUSEUM OF HARDIN COUNTY

830 S. Maple St., Kountze 77625; 409-246-8434 or 409-755-7313; Tues, Wed, Fri, Sat 10-3; [www.kountzelibrary.org/about-us/kountze-organizations/museum-of-hardin-county.html](http://www.kountzelibrary.org/about-us/kountze-organizations/museum-of-hardin-county.html)

### TEXAS FORESTRY MUSEUM

1905 Atkinson Dr., Lufkin 75901; 936-632-9535; Mon-Sat 10-5; [www.treetexas.com](http://www.treetexas.com)

## NORTH

### AMON CARTER MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

3501 Camp Bowie Blvd., Fort Worth 76107; 817-738-9133; Tues, Wed, Fri, Sat 10-5, Thurs 10-8, Sun 12-5; [www.cartermuseum.org](http://www.cartermuseum.org)

### ANNA AREA HISTORICAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY

10468 County Road 288, Anna 75409; 469-982-6396; [www.aaaps.org](http://www.aaaps.org)

### CLEBURNE RAILROAD MUSEUM

206 N. Main St., Cleburne 76033; 817-645-0940; Tues-Sat 11-3; [www.cleburne.net/1051/Cleburne-Railroad-Museum](http://www.cleburne.net/1051/Cleburne-Railroad-Museum)

### DALLAS JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

7900 Northhaven Rd., Dallas 75230; 214-239-7120; Mon-Fri 9-5; [www.djhs.org](http://www.djhs.org)

### FARMERS BRANCH HISTORICAL PARK

2540 Farmers Branch Ln., Farmers Branch 75234; 972-406-0184; Mon-Fri 8-6, Sat-Sun 12-6; [www.fbhistoricalpark.com](http://www.fbhistoricalpark.com)

### FARMERSVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

7166 Country Road 662, Farmersville 75442

### GRAPEVINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM

206 W. Hudgins St., Grapevine 76051; 817-410-3526; Tue-Sat 10-4, Sun 1-4; [www.grapevinehistory.weebly.com](http://www.grapevinehistory.weebly.com)

HILL COLLEGE, TEXAS HERITAGE MUSEUM  
112 Lamar Dr., Hillsboro, 76645;  
254-659-7750; Mon-Fri 8-4; Historical Research Center, Mon-Fri 9-1;  
[www.hillcollege.edu/museum/Index.html](http://www.hillcollege.edu/museum/Index.html)

HISTORIC FORT WORTH, INC.  
1110 Penn St., Fort Worth 76102;  
817-336-2344; Two historic properties: McFarland House and Thistle Hill; Individual/group tours Wed-Fri 11-2, Sun 1-3; [www.historicfortworth.org](http://www.historicfortworth.org)

HISTORIC WACO FOUNDATION MUSEUMS  
810 S. Fourth St., Waco 76706;  
254-753-5166; Four historic houses: Earle Napier Kinnard, East Terrace, Fort House, and McCulloch; Tues-Sat 10-4, Sun 1-4; [www.historicwaco.org](http://www.historicwaco.org)

HISTORIC MESQUITE, INC.  
P. O. Box 850137, Mesquite 75185;  
972-216-6468; Two historic properties: Opal Lawrence Historical Park, Tues-Fri 10:30-3:30; Florence Ranch Homestead, Thurs-Fri 10:30-3:30;  
[www.historicmesquite.org](http://www.historicmesquite.org)

JEFFERSON HISTORICAL MUSEUM  
232 W. Austin, Jefferson 75657;  
930-665-2775; Mon-Fri 9:30-4:30;  
[www.jeffersonmuseum.com](http://www.jeffersonmuseum.com)

LAYLAND MUSEUM  
201 Caddo St., Cleburne 76031;  
817-645-0940; Tues-Fri 10-5, Sat 10-4; [www.laylandmuseum.com](http://www.laylandmuseum.com)

MORTON MUSEUM OF COOKE COUNTY  
210 S. Dixon St., Gainesville 76240;  
940-668-8900; Tues-Fri 10-3;  
[www.mortonmuseum.org](http://www.mortonmuseum.org)

NICHOLSON MEMORIAL LIBRARY  
625 Austin St., Garland 75040;  
972-205-2500; Mon-Thurs 9-8; Fri-Sat 10-6; Sun 2-6;  
[www.garlandtx.gov/158/Library](http://www.garlandtx.gov/158/Library)

THE SHERMAN MUSEUM  
301 S. Walnut St., Sherman 75090;  
903-893-7623; Wed-Sat 10-4;  
[www.theshermanmuseum.org](http://www.theshermanmuseum.org)

STEPHENVILLE HISTORICAL HOUSE MUSEUM  
525 E. Washington St., Stephenville 76401; 254-965-5880; Open daily; Guided tours Tues-Sat 10-5, Sun 1-5;  
[www.stephenvillemuseum.org](http://www.stephenvillemuseum.org)

TALES 'N' TRAILS MUSEUM  
1522 E. Highway 82, Nocona 76255;  
940-825-5330; Mon-Fri 10-5, Sat 10-4;  
[www.talesntrails.org](http://www.talesntrails.org)

THE SIXTH FLOOR MUSEUM AT DEALEY PLAZA  
411 Elm St., Dallas 75202; 214-767-6660; Mon 12-6, Tues-Sun 10-6;  
[www.jfk.org](http://www.jfk.org)

WISE COUNTY HERITAGE MUSEUM  
1602 S. Trinity, Decatur 76234;  
940-627-5586; Mon-Sat 10-3;  
[www.wisehistory.com](http://www.wisehistory.com)

WICHITA COUNTY HERITAGE SOCIETY  
900 Bluff St., Wichita Falls 76301;  
940-723-0623; Mon-Fri 10-3, Sat-Sun 2-4;  
[www.wichita-heritage.org](http://www.wichita-heritage.org)

#### PANHANDLE

PANHANDLE-PLAINS HISTORICAL MUSEUM  
2503 Fourth Ave., Canyon 79015;  
806-651-2244; Mon-Sat 9-6, Sun 1-6;  
[www.panhandleplains.org](http://www.panhandleplains.org)

WOLF CREEK HERITAGE MUSEUM  
13310 Highway 305, Lipscomb 79056;  
806-852-2123; Mon-Fri 10-4;  
[www.wolfcreekheritagemuseum.org](http://www.wolfcreekheritagemuseum.org)

#### SOUTH/GULF COAST

BROWNSVILLE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION  
1325 E. Washington St., Brownsville 78520; 956-541-5560; Tues-Sat 10-4;  
[www.brownsvillehistory.org](http://www.brownsvillehistory.org)

THE BRYAN MUSEUM  
1315 21st St., Galveston 77550;  
409-632-7685; Tues-Sun 10-5;  
[www.thebryanmuseum.org](http://www.thebryanmuseum.org)

CHISHOLM TRAIL HERITAGE MUSEUM  
302 N. Esplanade, Cuero 77954;  
361-277-2866; Tues-Sat 10-4:30;  
[www.chisholmtrailmuseum.org](http://www.chisholmtrailmuseum.org)

CITY BY THE SEA MUSEUM  
401 Commerce St., Palacios 77465;  
361-972-1148; Tues-Sat 10-2;  
[www.citybytheseamuseum.org](http://www.citybytheseamuseum.org)

COLUMBIA HERITAGE FOUNDATION  
P.O. Box 1013, West Columbia 77486;  
[www.columbiaheritage.wordpress.com](http://www.columbiaheritage.wordpress.com)

FRIENDS OF THE CORPUS CHRISTI MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND HISTORY  
1900 N. Chaparral St., Corpus Christi 78401; 361-826-4667; Mon-Sun 10-5;  
[www.ccmuseum.com](http://www.ccmuseum.com)

GALVESTON AND TEXAS HISTORY CENTER  
2310 Sealy Ave., Galveston 77550;  
409-763-8854 ext. 127; Tues-Sat 9-6;  
[www.gthcenter.org](http://www.gthcenter.org)

THE HISTORY CENTER FOR ARANSAS COUNTY  
801 E. Cedar St., Rockport 78382;  
361-727-9214; Mon, Fri 10-2, Sat-Sun 1-4;  
[www.thehistorycenterforaransascounty.org](http://www.thehistorycenterforaransascounty.org)

LAKE JACKSON HISTORICAL MUSEUM  
249 Circle Way, Lake Jackson 77566;  
979-297-1570; Tues-Sat 10-4;  
[www.ljhistory.org](http://www.ljhistory.org)

LAUGHLIN HERITAGE FOUNDATION MUSEUM  
309 S. Main St., Del Rio 78841;  
830-719-9380; Mon, Wed, Fri, Sat 10-12 and 1-4;  
[www.laughlinheritagefoundationinc.org](http://www.laughlinheritagefoundationinc.org)

LOS AMIGOS DEL CEMENTERIO LOMA DE LA CRUZ  
202 Silver Sage Drive, Del Rio 78840

STANZEL MODEL AIRCRAFT MUSEUM  
311 Baumgarten St., Schulenberg 78956;  
979-743-6559; Mon, Wed, Fri, Sat 10:30-4:30; [www.stanzelmuseum.org](http://www.stanzelmuseum.org)

RUTHERFORD B. H. YATES MUSEUM  
Andrews St. and Wilson St., Houston 77019; 713-739-0163; visit by appointment only; [www.rbhy.org](http://www.rbhy.org)

WHITEHEAD MEMORIAL MUSEUM  
1308 S. Main St., Del Rio 78840;  
830-774-7568; Tues-Sat 10-6, Sun 1-5;  
[www.whiteheadmuseum.org](http://www.whiteheadmuseum.org)

#### WEST

FORT CONCHO NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK MUSEUM  
630 S. Oakes St., San Angelo 76903;  
325-481-2646; Mon-Sat 9-5, Sun 1-5;  
[www.fortconcho.com](http://www.fortconcho.com)

THE GRACE MUSEUM  
102 Cypress St., Abilene 79601;  
325-673-4587; Tues-Sat 10-5 + FREE Thursday nights 5-8pm;  
[www.thegracemuseum.org](http://www.thegracemuseum.org)

MARTIN COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM  
207 Broadway St., Stanton 79782;  
432-756-2722; Mon-Fri 9-11:30 and 12:30-5:30;  
[www.facebook.com/Martin-County-Historical-Museum-361747468373](https://www.facebook.com/Martin-County-Historical-Museum-361747468373)

WEST OF THE PECOS MUSEUM  
120 E. Dot Stafford St., Pecos 79772;  
432-445-5076; Mon-Sat 9-5, Sun 1-4;  
[www.westofthepecosmuseum.com](http://www.westofthepecosmuseum.com)

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