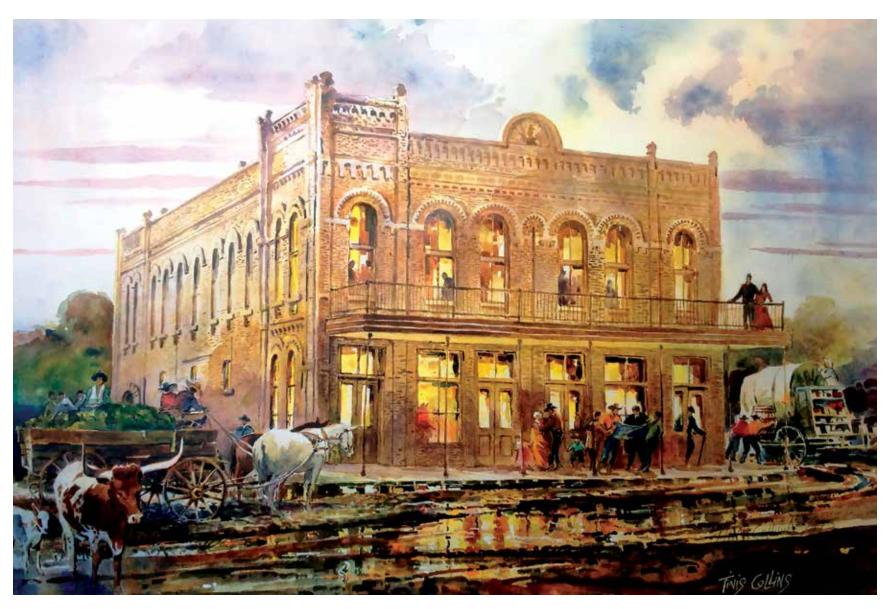


CHISHOLM TRAIL HERITAGE MUSEUM

THE MAKING OF A DEWITT COUNTY CULTURAL LANDMARK

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Imagining the Great Cattle Drive Era: watercolor by Finis Collins, 2000.

"The story belongs to him who tells it best."

J. FRANK DOBIE, LEGENDS OF TEXAS

THINK OF THE COWBOYS AND COWGIRLS who personified the heroes of our childhood fantasies – Roy Rogers and Dale Evans, Gene Autry, Doc Holiday, Annie Oakley, Buffalo Bill, and so many more. Their colorful personalities provided hours of entertainment and kept law and order, while saving men, women and children of the Old West from the "bad guys." But there were so many more unsung heroes of the past who may not have worn a badge or starred in a hit television program. They made their mark in history by forging strong economic revenues for Texas with cattle drives, establishing enduring ethics of brotherhood and friendships for the greater good, and even preserving Cuero's landmark buildings and tales of the cowboy life in Texas.

This story is about those passionate men and women, tenacious individuals who believed all things were possible and that their rich agricultural and cowboy histories were worth preserving. There is a thread which runs among the following stories – from those of the early pioneers of DeWitt County and the heroes of the great cattle drive era to the historic Knights of Pythias Hall in Cuero and the Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum (CTHM).



Heroes of the Cattle Drive Era

The debilitating winds of the American Civil War (1861–1865) had just barely subsided when DeWitt County businessman **Crockett Cardwell** (1812–1891) reached out to a group of local cattlemen with an idea of embarking on a challenging journey – driving a herd of cattle "up the trail" from a location a few miles north of present-day Cuero to St. Joseph, Missouri.

CARDWELL WAS A NOTABLE PIONEER in every sense. He owned an early stagecoach stop and general store at the junction of the La Grange-La Bahia and Victoria-Gonzales roads that he had purchased in 1849 from **Daniel Boone Friar** (1800-1858). Friar, a surname that will appear again and again in the formation of DeWitt County and its county seat, Cuero, had built a home and store on the site in 1839 to serve as the county's first post office and a social, political, transportation and trade center for early DeWitt County. Cardwell continued to operate it as a stage 'stand,' general store, post office, and community meeting place.

A by-product of the Civil War was the abundance of Longhorns in South Central Texas, along with a high demand for beef in markets in the Midwest and Northeastern states. With the wealth of cattle numbers in the state and insufficient local demand, regional market prices remained low. But outside Texas, the sale of one Longhorn could reap 10 times more than its estimated \$2.00 local value, resulting in a boom for the Texas economy.

On April 1, 1866, Cardwell's group of brave cattlemen led a herd of an estimated 1800 'beeves' on an arduous trek through Texas prairies, canyons, badlands, across rivers and Indian Territory (now the state of Oklahoma) to St. Joseph, Missouri. Historians recorded that this life-threatening work was done for about \$40 a month (\$60 if you were a cook!). During the two following decades, a multitude of cattle drives moved millions of cattle into the upper regions of the Midwest. Among the many men who were active in the great cattle drive era (and part of the 1866 cattle drive) was **G.M.** "Tip" Alexander, great-grandfather of Patricia Muir who would later serve as a founding member on the Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum board of directors.

Also predominant in local cattle drive history was **John Tyler Wofford**, where from his River Junction holding pens near Lindenau, he and his brother-in-law, **John Y. Bell**, prepared thousands of cattle for their trek up the Great Western Trail to Dodge City, Kansas. Wofford would later play another important role in Cuero history through a noteworthy position that exemplified his civic commitment of giving back to others.



"Moore & Sames ... Loading Cabbage at Cuero, Texas – January 26, 1910."

Moore & Sames distributed local produce, and were the first ground floor tenants of the Knights of Pythias building.

Both Mr. Moore and Mr. Sames were members of the Knights of Pythias organization.

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Our Story Begins: The Knights of Pythias

"FRIENDSHIP, CHARITY, AND BENEVOLENCE" BORNE OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

The American Civil War caused destructive divisions among people in the United States. In response to the rampant hate, anger and revenge during this dark period in American history, Mr. Justus Henry Rathbone, a religious and devoted citizen, felt an urgent need for a rekindled brotherly spirit between his fellow countrymen.

RATHBONE AND HIS COLLEAGUES established a fraternal order, the Knights of Pythias, in Washington, D.C., in 1864. The organization's principles fostered "friendship, or mutual confidence, being the strongest bond of union between man and man, and only existing where honor has an abiding place." Knights of Pythias chapters, spreading their positive deeds, grew rapidly across the nation. The guiding principles, "Friendship, Charity and Benevolence" (or, the initials "FCB") could be found in engravings on cups and saucers, shaving mugs, lighting fixtures, member's ribbons, advertising, and many other Knights of Pythias memorabilia.

A group of businessmen petitioned the Grand Lodge of Texas in Houston to establish a local Cuero chapter, which became the Jewel Lodge, No. 103. The organization welcomed the town's impressive charter members, including **Dr. D.B. Blake**, who became the first local Chancellor Commander; saddle maker **John Stratton**; **G.H. Myer** and **John Lewis**, both blacksmiths; **Dr. D.W. Nash**, a professor who established the Nash Academy;

banker Otto Buchel; merchant Louis Keller; and brothers P. F. and Walter Breeden. Another member who ranked with Blake as a founding member, and who ultimately rose to the order's highest state position of Grand Chancellor of Texas, was cattleman and Civil War veteran John T. Wofford.

Citizens soon felt the charitable and philanthropic reach of the Jewel Lodge members as the state's orphans and individuals suffering from tuberculosis received housing and financial assistance. Cuero chapter members met at various locations until after the turn of the century. All the while discussions focused on building a more permanent home described as a "new castle hall."

Perhaps foreshadowing the future of the CTHM fundraising efforts in the 2000s, members of Jewel Lodge turned to their community and an important auxiliary organization, The Rathbone Sisters, to assist in raising the funds for the building's furniture and other amenities for the new structure.





The Knights of Pythias' motto, "Friendship, Charity and Benevolence" (or the initials "FCB") can be found in the stained glass, opposite page, and the original chandelier at left.







Clockwise from top left: original chandelier from the Knights of Pythias ceremonial spaces, Blackwell meeting room, Museum Gift Shop, restored Wofford room, Wofford room under restoration. Opposite: Memorial stained glass window inset with Knights of Pythias crest and allegorical image, dedicated to deceased Chancellor C. A. Summers (1866 – 1908).

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Fundraising success was achieved and on December 17, 1903, the Cuero chapter of the Knights of Pythias conducted its first meeting in the new building at 302 N. Esplanade. While gathering upstairs to meet and discuss future charitable endeavors, the

ground-floor space of the Knights of Pythias Hall welcomed numerous businesses throughout the years. From wholesale grocers to automobile dealers, sales of bicycle parts, bus depot, gas station, and auto parts suppliers, merchants came and went from the lower floor of the building.

The Knights of Pythias building was eventually sold to Mr. William T. Smith in 1975 and the Cuero charter was revoked in 1982 due to declining membership. With the exception of occasional community meetings held upstairs in the 1970s, the second floor remained silent for more than 40 years.

Of special note, the meeting spaces were stripped of original pieces of furniture, wood-burning stoves, and a commemorative stained glass window and historic light fixtures. Fortunately, several pieces of the original contents had been saved by Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Means, a couple who had a passion for the preservation of local memorabilia. This meant good fortune for the not yet organized CTHM since original artifacts and objects found a safe, new home in the Means' residence in Cuero. All of these artifacts could have easily been

sold outside the Cuero area and landed in far away locations, including in out-of-state collections. In time, both Mrs. Means and her children allowed these honored relics to be returned to their original location in the Knights of Pythias Hall.

The CTHM board is indebted to the Means Family for their care of these artifacts and willingness to see that they made their way back into their original home. Various furniture pieces were purchased by an affiliate Pythias chapter in Belton, but would also be restored to their original location after the Knights of Pythias Hall was fully restored.

IN 1903, the Rathbone Sisters auxiliary organization advertised a fundraiser in the November 13th *Cuero Daily Record* stating, "The Rathbone Sisters are preparing to give a dinner at the Masonic hall next Friday for the purpose of aiding the Knights of Pythias in furnishing their new hall."

A FINAL NOTICE, which ran in the Tuesday, November 17 *Record* read, "The Knights of Pythias are going to be helped by the Rathbone Sisters in furnishing their new hall and to that end a fine dinner will be given by the sisters Friday. The public is invited – 25 cents."











Clockwise from top left: English-German School (c. 1880), dedicated 2020; historic (c. 1892) Proctor-Green House; George Bishop Park, the Museum's adjacent green space; CTHM in the restored historic (c. 1903) Knights of Pythias Hall with annex, completed in 2010.

Sowing the Seeds for Cuero Preservation

To imagine the eventual undertaking that residents of Cuero, the county seat of DeWitt County, and stakeholders from surrounding cities undertook to find millions of dollars to create the CTHM, one must first understand the character of the town involved.

CUERO, WHICH IS SPANISH FOR "RAWHIDE" or "cowhide," had received accolades for many years. Those included the National Civic League's "All American City Award" in 1969, featured in Look Magazine, which recognized communities that leveraged civic engagement, collaboration, inclusiveness and innovation to successfully address local issues. Then in 2010, Cuero was heralded as one of the "Coolest Small Towns in America" by Budget Travel Magazine. Sadly, much of the historic architectural fabric of the town was rapidly disappearing – so much of it destroyed in the 1970s. It was still a town with a small population; yet, one with a big agricultural and ranching heritage on which its citizens could brag.

According to William "Bill" Blackwell, founding member and long-time treasurer of the CTHM board, these bragging rights included Cuero as a starting point for one of the first cattle drives to northern markets in 1866, and, its agriculture ranked second only to oil and gas production in the county. A handful of DeWitt County residents cared deeply for preservation—not only to honor their family legacies, but to restore the buildings in which many generations had shopped for produce, paid their taxes, or

exchanged handshakes with local merchants.

Preservation efforts throughout the late 1900s and early 2000s witnessed the designation of Cuero as a Texas Main Street Community in 1984; acceptance of Cuero into the

THC's "Visionaries in Preservation" program in 2001; and, the selection of Cuero in 2004 as one of the first 60 communities in the nation designated as a "Preserve America Community." Additionally, the town saw the re-dedication of the historic (c. 1896) DeWitt County courthouse in 2007 after a \$6 million restoration effort, and re-designation into the Texas Main Street program in 2013.

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BILL BLACKWELL

Throughout the community, visitors could stop at one of the THC's historical markers where the landmarks' stories were recorded and honored. Blackwell gave credit to **Anne Friar Thomas** (*deceased*) for planting the first seed of the idea to bring a new museum to Cuero and DeWitt County. Blackwell recalled their first meeting.

"I come from a family with a long history of ranching in the area. In 1994, I was president of Wells Fargo Bank – Cuero, when Anne Friar Thomas walked into my office, and said, 'We need to work on an agricultural museum.' I told her that was not a bad idea, and I offered to put a list of names together and we would hold a meeting," he said.

Names were pulled together and a letter went out inviting representatives of the community to meet on Sept. 16, 1994, at the DeWitt County Courthouse to discuss the establishment of a DeWitt County Agriculture Museum. Afterwards, smaller groups met, but, all the while, noted Blackwell, "We were looking for a leader." Blair James (deceased) was elected Chairman, but eventually resigned. Without a leader to keep moving the plans along the museum never materialized.

Almost six years after Blackwell's first meeting with Thomas, he received another call from her. "She again wanted to discuss the

possibility of holding another meeting to revive the interest in an agriculture museum." That meeting took place in January of 2000 over a cornbread and chili dinner held at a family ranch where the leader for whom they had been searching came into focus. Robert Oliver, host for the evening at his Bellevue Ranch near Cuero, is the great-grandson of John T. Wofford, cattleman and former Knights of Pythias charter member, Jewel Lodge, No. 103.

In wanted to discuss the

Preserved original Knights of Pythias emblem, made up of individual copper patina elements on armature.

Many who were involved in the early days of CTHM, like long-time board secretary **Sue Sulsar**, spoke about Oliver's vision. "Robert clearly saw a museum far better than what anyone imagined in a town of 7,000," she shared.

Oliver grew up in Refugio and after graduating from the University of Texas at Austin departed Texas to live in Vail, Colorado. In his travels throughout Colorado and other western states, Oliver said his interest in historic preservation and history began to percolate as the years passed in Colorado.

"Having grown up in a ranching family and then living in the American West, I began to take interest in visiting western cowboy and Native American-related museums. These included the Gene Autry Museum of the American West in Griffith Park in Los Angeles, the Denver Art Museum, which has an extensive collection of Native American artifacts, and The Buffalo Bill Center of the West in

Cody, Wyoming," said Oliver. "The Buffalo Bill Center was a real eye-opener from chronicling the colorful life of Buffalo Bill to telling the significant story of the lives of Plains Indian peoples, their cultures, traditions, values and histories. It then began to dawn on me that there was a rich ranching history in my hometown area, not only in DeWitt County but the greater South Central Texas region."

He added, "So, it wasn't a life-long passion, but rather an interest that began to grow as I moved from my 30s and 40s into my later years." *

Establishing the CTHM Board of Directors

JANUARY 6, 2000

Joining Robert Oliver at the first meeting at his home on January 6, 2000, to explore the feasibility of a ranching history museum were Bill Blackwell, Arlen Goebel, Rick Gohmert, Ken Liesman, Patricia Muir, Obert Sagebiel, N.A. Steen, Sue Stiles, Missi Thomas, Anne Friar Thomas, Bibba Wilde and Earl Wyatt.

THE AGENDA ITEMS INCLUDED DISCUSSION of a mission statement, legal steps to form a nonprofit, a possible location, and names for the museum. By the February 17, 2000 meeting, as other interested stakeholders joined the group, a long list of names for the future museum were culled down to two favorites: "Stars along the Rawhide Trail Museum" and "Texas Range and Rawhide Museum." Some thought that the word "Chisholm," could be added into a tagline.

At the March 2 meeting attendees elected the first board officers, discussed expansion of the board to 16 to 18 members and selected the name, "Texas Range and Rawhide Museum." Soon thereafter, the paperwork was filed with the Texas Secretary of State. However, a month later, someone from another group of stakeholders from Victoria who had strong roots in Cuero, suggested a name change.

"Sharon Steen, Gary Dunnam, Lester and Burdine Giese attended the April 6, 2000 board meeting to help facilitate our early efforts. It was Sharon who suggested that a piece of Cuero's

past had a large name recognition, not only on a national scale, but also on the world stage," said Oliver. "That was the name 'The Chisholm Trail.' Sharon emphasized the reasons for considering renaming the museum and after much discussion, we did."

The Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum (CTHM) name was secured in May of 2000 with Articles of Incorporation filed shortly thereafter with the Texas Secretary of State. Months of work and planning came to a rewarding announcement on May 29, 2001, when the IRS accepted the nonprofit status of the CTHM. The following board meetings were filled with brainstorming sessions about potential collections, exhibits, fundraisers, collection policies, and, most importantly, where the Museum would be located. Suggestions included the National Guard Armory, located on U.S. Highway 87 to Victoria, and even Cardwell Flats, where the now famous cattle drive originated in 1866.

Luck would have it that **Rick Gohmert**, another CTHM founding board member, owned the historic Knights of Pythias Hall. Gohmert, a great-grandson of **Louis Gohmert**, who was one of the original members of the Knights of Pythias organization in 1889, had operated an auto and tractor parts supply store in the building for eleven years. The location of the Knights of Pythias

Hall seemed like a perfect fit for the new project. And for Gohmert, selling the landmark building to the board in 2002 also made perfect sense.

"The timing was probably about as good as it gets. I had two extremely faithful employees who were both ready to retire after many years of working there. Plus, Robert's ambition and vision really made it become a reality for the building to be a museum, especially with the history it had," he said. "One member, Anne Friar Thomas, donated a lead gift of \$25,000 toward the purchase, while others gave what they could and our contribution came in the form of lowering that much off the price of the building."

On May 29 of 2002, the organization purchased the historic Knights

of Pythias Hall for \$165,000 with a down-payment of roughly \$60,000 and the balance due in five years. Various board members contributed what they could afford and the Cuero Economic Corporation generously donated an additional lead gift of \$25,000. Of special note, it took the CTHM board only one

and a half years to fully pay for the Hall and adjacent property. A capital campaign and membership drive provided important financial traction, and the project gained community support

with individual giving and a generous grant from the M.G. and Lillie A. Johnson Foundation in Victoria.

John Hildebrand moved to Cuero in 2003 after retiring from Lucent Technologies. As an active board member for about eight years (later re-joining the board in 2020), John brought business and human resources savvy to the board table. But, Hildebrand noted, it was Oliver who made the CTHM come to fruition.

"The Knights of Pythias Hall building was not in good shape at all when it was purchased. It was in need of substantial maintenance and renovation after a century of being used for various purposes. Throughout the next few years, it was wonderful to watch it be restored to its original glory," he said.

"It took a lot of money and a huge amount of effort. The board members did what was needed, from janitorial duties to working on the grounds. But, I can't say enough about the research, the time, everything that Robert did. Without him, there would be no Museum."



"...Throughout the next few years, it was wonderful to watch it be restored to its original glory."

JOHN HILDEBRAND
BOARD MEMBER

Private-Public Partnerships

As an active member of the Cuero Heritage Foundation in the late 1990s, Robert Oliver witnessed firsthand Cuero and DeWitt County's preservation achievements thanks to the efforts of several dedicated residents. Of the many accomplishments that community members had contributed to the preservation of history, Oliver noted the work of 43 individuals who assembled *The History of DeWitt County, Texas*.

"THESE 1990 MEMBERS of The DeWitt County Historical Commission perhaps contributed one of the most significant components of preserving local and regional history of our lifetime," recounted Oliver. "Many of these individuals have now passed, but their contributions will live for hundreds of years. I especially appreciated the forward written by Mrs. Rosemary Blackwell Sheppard, which read:

Our ancestors fought their way into this country and fought to stay –

For good or bad we are that part of them that remains today to look back.

It has been our duty to preserve the past and insure the future.

This book is our effort to preserve the past, future generations will have to judge how we insured their future.

"Thus, I learned in putting together the CTHM project, you don't work in a vacuum. You quickly learn to appreciate what people have done before you," Oliver noted.

Also acknowledging the important groundwork put in place when the THC came to Cuero to help its residents visualize local preservation, Oliver added, "The underlying benefit of the "Visionaries in Preservation" (VIP) program was that there were interpersonal relationships made between several Cuero residents and THC staff. Like most everything in life one can choose to grow relationships or to simply let a prime opportunity evaporate due to inattention."

Oliver nurtured the relationships made with the THC, which within a few years, he said, "was repaid in spades." Patricia Blackwell Hedgcoxe (deceased), Sara Post Meyer, who at that time served as Cuero Chamber of Commerce Director, and Kerry Rhotenberry were instrumental in their efforts to qualify Cuero for the THC's VIP, a multi-year program to develop an action plan to guide preservation for the next decade.

"The community leaders recognized the value of our historic downtown and how important it was to preserve our 'built environment' through VIP, and the City and Cuero Development Corporation helped with local ordinances and funding for

restoration projects in the historic district," said Meyer.

Furthering the development of the Museum in 2002, an ambitious membership campaign was launched, inviting the residents of DeWitt County and beyond to become a part of an exciting future—a museum which did not yet have a home! Robert Oliver engaged San Antonio graphic designer Jenny McChesney to help visualize a brand identity for the fledgling organization. Wells Fargo and Cuero State Bank (now TrustTexas Bank) underwrote the first membership direct mail brochure, which generated community interest and a list of charter members.

Meanwhile, in 2003 in Washington, D.C., President George W. Bush appointed THC Chair John Nau, III, to chair the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. A new federal program launched by the Council in 2003 called "Preserve America" was the

SEALE STUDIOS

Carefully curated objects bring the story of conditions on the trail to life. Shown above: Leather chaps, a stock whip and lariat. At lower right, a Colt .45 caliber pistol, a popular model nicknamed the "Peacemaker."

brainchild of Nau, President Bush and **First Lady Laura Bush**. Remember the new relationships made with THC staff during the VIP Program and the "payback in spades?" In the spring of 2004, after extensive application preparations and assistance

from the THC, Cuero was designated a "Preserve America Community" for its "commitment to recognizing, designating and protecting cultural resources." Those interpersonal relationships with THC staff members forged during the VIP years yielded positive results for CTHM and would continue to open doors to even more impressive funding for the Museum.

With a growing membership program now in place and a dedicated board led by a capable executive committee, CTHM continued to partner with private/public entities to seek, and achieve, a variety of local, state and national funding. Former CTHM founding board member (2001-2016) **Tempi McLeod** reflected on those early objectives.

"One of the real challenges was to get people to buy into the idea of a quality museum. Robert stressed it was a perfect time to marry local history that highlighted our ranching culture with a concept that appealed to a wider audience," said McLeod. "Funding was always in the back of our minds, or at the top of our agenda, as we crafted a story," she noted. "So many exceptional and talented people committed for the long haul. They understood the dream and helped make it happen."

Oliver shared that a lot of the board's success was about "connecting the dots. One of those connections was with a man I met in 2004 at a Texas Association of Museums conference in Dallas," relates Oliver. The late **Lonn Taylor**, Texan historian and retired curator for the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, was one of those "dots."

Oliver knew of Taylor's work as author of *Texas Furniture*, *The Cabinet Makers and Their Work*, 1840-1880. At the conference, after sharing a table listening to the keynote speaker, Oliver knew right away "that we should involve someone of his caliber with the creation of the Museum."

ESTABLISHING A NARRATIVE: THE INTERPRETIVE CONCEPT PLAN

Lonn Taylor went on to lead the board in a three-phase Interpretive Concept Plan funded in part by the Summerlee Foundation in Dallas and the National Endowment of the Humanities through a program called "We the People." The Interpretive Concept Plan became the road map for the Museum's timeline, story, artifact search, audience and other related museum development issues. Taylor eventually passed the baton to Bruce Shackelford, another Texas historian, to complete Phases Two and Three of the three-phase concept plan.

Another pivotal juncture in the Museum's development came with the "Preserve America" designation at the 2004 THC's annual conference in Fort Worth.

"Dr. David Samson, then Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development in Washington, D.C., was keynote speaker at the THC conference," said Oliver. "He addressed the benefits of

historic preservation as a generator for economic development that could lead to stronger communities and shared how the Department of Commerce had put aside EDA funding to support projects in 'Preserve America Communities.'"

Shortly after, while exploring the Department of Commerce, Economic Development Corporation website, Oliver took notice of a funding "Regionalism and cooperation are very effective in a rural area when approaching federal agencies. It is important that local initiatives become sustainable and collaborative."

JUDY MCADA FORMER DISTRICT DIRECTOR, TEXAS CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 15

opportunity for "Preserve America Communities" with grants averaging approximately \$1.8 million. Instinctively realizing that writing a federal grant was something that required a special expertise, Oliver recommended CTHM begin a search for a federal grant writer. With the hiring of **Gandolf Burrus** and **Sal Valdez** of Grant Development Services in Austin, the organization went after the largest grant of all.

Bolstered with a team of grant writing experts and Oliver's personal visits to Washington to meet with the offices of Senator John Cornyn, Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, and

Congressional Representative Ruben Hinojosa, CTHM initially received an EDA matching grant of \$30,000 for an "Economic Impact Analysis and Feasibility Study." The study, which was conducted during 2005, led to CTHM returning to the EDA in 2006 with a grant request that was ultimately funded at \$1 million, which was matched with approximately \$462,000 raised by the Museum. The funds would be used to implement the construction of an adjacent "annex" to the Knights of Pythias Hall. Judy McAda served as District Director for Congressman Rubén Hinojosa for ten years and worked closely to coordinate efforts with the stakeholders of the CTHM for additional federal grants. After leaving her position, McAda joined the CTHM Board from 2010 to 2013, and shared her memories of meeting Oliver for the first time:

"Regionalism and cooperation is very effective in a rural area when approaching federal agencies. It is important that local initiatives become sustainable and collaborative. That was the model that Robert brought to my office. His actions for Cuero and the vision for the Museum were contagious—he could just see it," she said. "When they needed a sidewalk, Robert knew where to go to get it accomplished. When it came time for the design of the Museum kitchen, he created it with caterers in mind. Today, the CTHM is a choice for meetings that provide complete facilities for lunch or dinners. That is the inclusion of economic opportunities in the community."

With substantial funding provided by the EDA, U.S. Department of Commerce, the Museum was awarded \$345,000 in 2007 with dollar-for-dollar matching funds from another federal program, "Save America's Treasures." Created in 1999 under **President Bill Clinton** to serve as a centerpiece project to preserve Old Glory, the weather-beaten flag of **Francis Scott Key's** *Star Spangled Banner*, "Save America's Treasures" lived on after 2000 as a federal funding source. Its purpose was, "To help preserve nationally significant historic properties and collections that convey our nation's rich heritage to future generations of Americans."

Oliver shared the many years of CTHM's hard work to secure substantial funding. "We worked it from the ground up and from the top down. **Senator Hutchison** and **Congressman Hinojosa** worked well together and had successfully brought money into the state for the people of Texas. **President George W. Bush** was from Texas and the EDA Regional Director was from the Valley."

When both 2006 and 2012 Capital Campaigns were launched, memberships continued to grow, visits with government decision-makers happened on a regular basis, and grant awards kept the vision alive. Critical funding was provided by the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA), Cuero Development Corporation, and H-E-B Tournament of Champions. Guadalupe Blanco River Authority provided funding for a water-collection system. But, at the heart of all the efforts to raise money was a Texas-sized ranch party and live auction. The brainchild of master auctioneer Joe Adams, Taste of the Trail was launched in 2002, and became the Museum's signature fundraiser.

Don't Fence Me In!

REMEMBERING HISTORIAN AND CURATOR LONN TAYLOR

In August 2006, Texas historian and retired Smithsonian curator **Lonn Taylor** led a weekend workshop with approximately 20 CTHM board members and regional stakeholders to define the Museum's narrative focus.

Taylor's report produced the thematic statement, "Don't Fence Me In, and Other Life Lessons: How fortitude, ingenuity and skill created an open-ranch ranching and trail driving industry in the country along the Guadalupe River Valley and how those qualities are still deeply ingrained in that region's heritage."

Drawing on a distinguished career in museums, Taylor led the Board in developing the floor plan of our permanent exhibit spaces. He drafted a "wish list" of artifacts that would complete our narratives. Lonn wrote interpretive text for the museum project, still appearing throughout the exhibit space today. He also contributed text for the early, (Castroville) Texas wardrobe displayed at the Museum, an acquisition through the gift of **Fred Pottinger**, owner of Horse of a Different Color in San Antonio.

Over decades of curatorial posts with national and regional museums, Lonn became an authority on the furniture, decorative arts, and architecture of the Southwest. He co-authored Texas Furniture: The Cabinetmakers and Their Work, 1840–1880 (1975), and wrote New Mexico Furniture, 1600–1940 (1987), and The American Cowboy (1983). In 2014 his book, The Star-Spangled Banner: The Flag That Inspired the National Anthem landed him a celebrity appearance on Comedy Central's The Colbert Report, for his "six and a half minutes of fame," he later quipped.

In 2019 Lonn Taylor passed away at home in Fort Davis, survived by his wife Dedie. We will remember Lonn for his impressive command of Texana, and for his strong contribution, along with historian **Bruce Shackelford**, to our Interpretive Plan and the creation of the Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum. ★



Lonn and Dedie Taylor at home in Fort Davis, Texas, 2010.



A storytelling centerpiece, our chuck wagon and campfire.

Taste of the Trail: Our Signature Fundraising Event

What could be more Texan than to gather up a whole lot of friends at the ranch, blend in some chuck wagon cooking, add cowboy storyteller Red Steagall and toe-tapping music with The Arbuckle Boys and K. R. Wood's "The Fathers of Texas"?

THE CREDIT FOR THE CONCEPT of the Taste of the Trail goes to Joe Adams, master auctioneer and ranch manager for the Friar-Thomas ranch since 1979, and CTHM board membersince 2019. The late Anne Friar Thomas was a local Cuero historian and advocate for the Museum. She was, according to Adams, "part of the initial group who kept the idea in people's mind. But Robert Oliver gave the Taste of the Trail the nucleus it needed by offering his ranch for the party."



There was even an ear-splitting vintage cannon blast to kick off the first Taste of the Trail at sundown on November 11, 2002, at Bellevue Ranch.

A long-time auctioneer, Adams donated his talents to the Cuero Chamber, the annual Stock Show, and other local charity events. When he heard Mrs. Thomas discussing the money needed for the Museum, Adams jumped in with a winning idea.

"I told her, 'We got to come up with something special since some of us did a lot of chuck wagon cooking. A big fundraiser would mean a lot to these cookers. At Robert's ranch, the sun goes down and you are on top of hill with a Texas Monthly quality view. So, get five or six chuck wagons with camp fires in front of them to prepare the appetizers and steaks, add some cowboy poetry and musicians playing. And, call it the Taste of the Trail," Adams said.

He presented his formidable ideas at the early February 2002 board meeting, and the concept was a huge hit. The first Taste of the Trail sold out at \$75 a ticket. Sue Sulsar, board secretary from 2001 to 2019, and

chairperson for the wine and spirits committee for several of the events, remembered the board discussion about the first event in 2002.

"There was great interest as the big fundraiser in town was for the hospital every other year. But, ours was new. We were doing ours under the stars! One of the live-auction items was Pasture Golf (or The Cow Patty Classic depending on who was explaining



Taste of the Trail 2012: Nagel Ranch Chuck Wagon team. Left to right: Back row (gentlemen): Gene Carson, Charles Nagel, Wayne Wolf, Melvin Wolf, Byron Wolf and Jim Mann. Front row (ladies): Joyce Carson, Jean Nagel, Sonja Wolf, Kathy Sager, Deanna Wolf and Marcie Mann.





















Candid moments from Taste of the Trail, 2012 and 2014: Top row: Master Auctioneer Joe Adams; Cindi Griffin, Cindy Holcomb and Miss Cuero royalty; commemorative spurs; off-duty cowboy.

Middle row: Longhorn steer for auction, Carol and Fred Hansen prepare to bid, Kyle Oliver, George Bishop and guest of honor former Texas Governor Mark White.

Bottom row: Rick & Lindy Gohmert, Ted Aven and volunteers on horseback. the event), held on the ranch of one of our early board members, **Jeff Steen,**" said Sulsar. "Teams of six players were encouraged to participate in costumes and decorated golf carts and as I remember, one team arrives as a Sheriff's Posse. The event was refereed, or monitored, one might say, by cowboys on horseback."

The first Taste of the Trail generated approximately \$42,500 in net revenue from ticket and raffle sales, sponsorships and live-auction items. These funds allowed for the hiring of preservation architect **David Hoffman** and the funding of the building Restoration Master Plan and Concept Plan for the construction of the permanent museum exhibits on the ground floor of the building. The magnificent ceremonial and recreational facilities on the second floor, once used by the Knights of Pythias organization, would soon provide multi-functional space for children's summer programs, receptions, traveling exhibits, educational programming and a host of other uses.

Jean and Charles Nagel of Nagel Ranch Chuck Wagon, helped bring authenticity to the event. The Nagels were among those who first attended the 1994 exploratory meeting about an agricultural museum; then, their later commitment to CTHM and its programs made a lasting impression on all who encountered their chuck wagon. Jean Nagel once shared the early vision in one newsletter.

"Little did we know that when Charles fulfilled his dream of re-creating a chuck wagon, that we would be able to share living history with so many people," said Jean. "Since 2005, we have enjoyed every time we had the opportunity to share our heritage with someone. You never know what each person takes away from the chuck wagon experience, so we hope that we have introduced a little bit of history that will stick in someone's head and challenge them to take an interest in the history of the cattle drive era."

Since 2002, the Taste of the Trail has found eager hosts and co-chairs and also welcomed special guests, such as **Former Texas Governor Mark White.** The sold-out event, now held in April of every other year, has showcased spectacular auction items, such as a three-night stay at the Cibolo Creek Ranch in the Big Bend region, a one-week stay in a Jackson, Wyoming home and "T-Bone," a 475-pound Longhorn. Among Adam's favorite auction memories was a rifle that went for \$45,000 and the much-anticipated Taste of the Trail custom-made spurs.

"The main thing with the auction is that you have to have the people sitting in the seats, spending money to help the museum," said Adams. "Every auction, we get a maker to create a set of spurs, one set to auction off and the second to go into the museum."

In celebration of the CTHM's 20th year anniversary and the 10th Taste of the Trail (rescheduled for Fall 2020), Honorary Chairpersons Bill and Nancy Blackwell served as the first to ever hold that noteworthy position. Reflecting on the fundraiser's past successes, CTHM Executive Director Sharon Weber shared her thoughts:

"Reaching the 20th anniversary of the Taste of the Trail is so special for all the many individuals involved. Thanks to their dedication and tireless hours, this fundraiser is always one of the most anticipated events in the county, and those who attend are never disappointed," said Weber.

The Architects, Builders and Dreamers of a Legacy

A SEVEN-PHASE RESTORATION MASTER PLAN PROVIDES A ROAD MAP

"Once restored and its interiors adapted to the requirements of a modern museum, can our institution become a destination for historic tourists while providing added educational opportunities for area youth, visitors and the citizens of this great state? When rejuvenating this historically important structure, can we add to the already impressive list of restored homes and public buildings in South Central Texas that together provide a glimpse into our past?"

THE ANSWER TO THESE QUESTIONS, once proposed by Robert Oliver in an article, was a resounding "Yes!" Both the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Texas Historical Foundation awarded planning grants that helped to implement

the process of building rehabilitation. The Guadalupe Blanco River Authority also generously donated matching funds for projects that fell within Phases I and II of the seven-phase building renovations created by David Hoffman of the firm Bell, Klein & Hoffman of Austin. In 2003, a meticulously laid-out Restoration Master Plan to restore the historic 10,000 square foot Knights of Pythias Hall was created by preservation architect Hoffman who came to the attention of the CTHM board after his restoration planning for the Victoria

County Courthouse earlier in the 1990s. His vision clearly illustrated that Cuero's beautiful landmark would once again see its Romanesque Revival architecture ascend from its broken windows, decaying bricks and general decline. From 2003 until 2007, Hoffman provided and supervised a seven-phase plan for the building's restoration.

In 2007, Hoffman retired from the project for health reasons and after a lengthy and thorough search, **Lewis Fisher**, **AIA**, of **Fisher Heck Architects**, San Antonio, assumed the role of restoration architect to complete the renovations on the historic building and build-out of the newly designed "annex." Fisher's expert leadership

would become a symbol for Cuero's downtown revitalization and ultimately lead to many awards, including one in 2016 from the **San Antonio Conservation Society.** Its *Preservation Award* honored the rehabilitation of Cuero's historic (c. 1903) Knights of Pythias Hall. That same year, **Preservation Texas** presented CTHM an *Honor Award* for the Renovation of the former Knights of Pythias Hall.

Prior to the Museum's awards from the SA Conservation Society and Preservation Texas, the **Texas Downtown Association**



Architect Lewis S. Fisher on site with contractor Mike Weaver during restoration of ground floor permanent exhibit space.

(TDA) bestowed both its Best Renovation/Rehabilitation Award and People's Choice for Best Renovation of a Historic Structure Award at the Association's 2013 annual conference in Bastrop. The Texas Association of Museums (TAM) highly prized President's Award was presented to CTHM in 2014 and, in December 2015, the THC honored the Museum with the John L. Nau Award of Excellence in Museums. The award recognized an institution for significant achievement in the areas of historical interpretation, museum education, conservation of collections and/or community involvement.

The authenticity and quality of the Museum's exhibits established it as a "must-see" destination for travelers from around the state and as far away as Europe. In 2009, after years of negotiation with the University of Texas at Austin, CTHM signed a permanent loan agreement to exhibit and conserve the world-class *Horsemen of the Americas* – Tinker Collection. Dr. Edward L. Tinker's collection of rare ranching and horse-related artifacts from Mexico, Chile, Bolivia, Argentina, Peru and other Latin American countries has dazzled thousands of visitors each year. Kay Walker, board member from 2001-2014, seven of those years serving as vice-chair, said the acquisition of the Tinker Collection was one of her proudest moments. She also recalled other memorable and prosperous times during CTHM's formative years.

"We had a very strong stock market during the period 2003 to 2007, the economy was doing great and later in 2010 when other areas began to feel the recession, exploration in the Eagle Ford Shale formation brought oil and gas prosperity to DeWitt County," said Walker. "We did well during that time and we also had an

attractive project. It caught the donor's imagination of Texas, its folklore, the cattle and the Chisholm Trail, the economic drive of the state."

In April of 2010, the CTHM opened its second floor multi-purpose community space to the general public for lectures, company meetings, parties, and weddings. From the more recent local celebratory football championship dinner to the Smithsonian's traveling exhibit of "Hometown Teams," the Museum and its stakeholders welcomed all to be a part of Cuero's legacy.

The investment of over \$6 million in the development of the CTHM, including property purchase, architectural planning, historic renovations and new construction, certainly paid off in furthering Cuero's economic and educational opportunities. The Museum has been honored with state and national

"We are a town of about 7,000 with four museums – that is impressive – and, the Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum is the keystone of them all."

PATRICK J. KENNEDY
CUERO DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

recognition, and **Patrick J. Kennedy, EDFP**, executive director of Cuero Development Corporation, which has helped CTHM with grants throughout the years, said "you couldn't help but visit Cuero and notice its vibrancy."

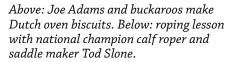
"It is very evident from a windshield tour, that the community has seen an improvement. Reliably, people who come to Cuero always say, 'Something is happening here!" noted Kennedy. "We are a town of about 7,000 with four museums—that is impressive—and, the Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum is the keystone of them all."













Above: Group photo with volunteer camp director Candy Glidden. Below: Dutton Lane and horse Cole visit up close with a camper. Lane and Cole gave demonstrations, and campers got hands-on lessons in horse etiquette.



Above: campers take turns on the saddle of a Longhorn steer. Below: volunteer Dan Glidden shares lore of cowboy and Indian artifacts with young Campers.

Summer at the Museum: Cowboy Camp

The Museum comes to life each summer with local young people getting hands on cowboy crafts, skills, lore and best of all, the food! **Cowboy Camp** engages kids to go back in time with an imaginative program led by dedicated volunteers.

SINCE 2011. authentic. an hands-on cowboy experience, is offered to approximately 35-50 buckaroos free of charge. The annual summer camp is managed by board member and former school teacher Candy Glidden. Candy, husband Dan and son Travis have together also created outreach presentations for the Cuero Library, Cuero Nursing Home, and Faith Academy (Victoria), each centered on Longhorns, horses, and the Great Cattle Drive era.

"A couple of years ago, my husband **Dan** and son, **Travis**, came with me to do camp demonstrations. During

registration, there was a little boy crying beside his mother. Dan noticed him and the shirt he was wearing, and said, 'Oh, man, where did you get that T-shirt?' Sniffling, the little guy said he had 'won it roping goats." Glidden continued, "Dan said, 'I'm so glad you're at Cowboy Camp, because so many



Camp director Candy Glidden offers encouragement to young buckaroos lined up for their practice turn at roping a steer.

kids have never even seen a horse, and here is a *real cowboy!* That camper blossomed, and ended up mentoring future attendees, and teaching them how to rope!"

At Cowboy Camp, there is the opportunity to design your own brand, shoe a horse, learn about The Alamo and practice the trade of leather tooling. The camp features the popular Nagel chuck wagon, dramatic storytelling from Joe Adams, and volunteers dressed in authentic period costumes. Cuero Mayor Sara Post Meyer noted the camp's lasting impact with youth:

"One of the things they do beautifully is Cowboy Camp, where the kids can see what those lives were like back then. They get away from phones and computers and instead, learn horse etiquette or to tie knots or even look at an authentic pair of chaps and spurs."





















Top row: Charles Nagel, honor guard of the Native American Women Warriors, Dr. Francisco Cigarroa and Hon. Mark White, Nagel chuck wagon volunteer serving campfire coffee.

Middle row: Former Cuero Main Street Program Director Bridgette Bise and daughter, Bill and Nancy Blackwell and family, Candy and Dan Glidden, Cowboy Camp founders; Bibba Wilde and friends.

Bottom row: Opening day attendees preview the exhibits; Gay Kokernot Ratliff, Robert Oliver, Hon. Mark White, Native American Women Warriors, Linda Gale White.

Grand Opening, November 2013

A "WHO'S WHO" OF LEADERS FROM PRESERVATION, EDUCATION, AND GOVERNMENT JOIN THE CELEBRATION.

On Grand Opening weekend, November 12 and 13, 2013, the Museum hosted a gala Friday evening performance of Aaron Copland's American classic *Appalachian Spring*, followed by Saturday's official dedication ceremony and festivities on the grounds.

SERVING AS MASTER OF CEREMONIES for the Grand Opening event was former Governor of Texas Mark White and wife, Linda Gale. Joining the couple were Bobbie Greene McCarthy, Executive Director of "Save America's Treasures" (Washington, D.C.); The Chancellor of the University of Texas System, Dr. Francisco Cigarroa and his wife, Graciela; Larry Oaks, the former Director of the THC; Mark Wolfe, the current Director of THC; the Deputy Director of the THC, Terry Colley; Renate Rennie, the President of the Tinker Foundation (New York); Gay Ratliff, long-time preservationist and former THC Commissioner; and, Cuero Mayor Sara Post Meyer. Even former First Lady Laura Bush made an appearance by way of her video congratulating the Museum on opening day, and acknowledging its hard work to further the principles of the "Preserve America" initiative.

Of course, at the center of the landmark occasion was the Museum board, its members and donors, who had clearly envisioned a first-rate museum for many years. Without that faithful support none of it would have been possible. The familiar Nagel chuck wagon, open fire cooking, a Longhorn steer, demonstrations from period costumed volunteers, and members of the Native American Women Warriors, serving as the Color Guard, lent a cultural richness to the day.

Visitors of all ages came to explore the execution of first-class museum exhibits, created and designed by a collaborative effort of Pony Allen and Drew Patterson. The talented duo was hired in 2009 to lay it all out on paper with this early notation: "The exhibit should appeal to a wide variety of learning styles and should not assume that the visitor has a great deal of previous information about ranching and trail-driving." With prior exhibit experience at the Bob Bullock State History Museum, The Alamo, and La Bahia in Goliad, the selection of Allen and Patterson was destined to be a winning team to lead the project to final success. Their partnership, along with skilled story writing by Lonn Taylor, served the very goals set forth in those fledging years dating from 2000.

The Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum: Here to Stay

GRAND OPENING WAS JUST THE BEGINNING OF AN EXCITING RIDE TOWARD OUR 20TH ANNIVERSARY.



The restored Knights of Pythias Hall and annex with the Proctor-Green House in the background, 2020. The CTHM has become an anchor of Cuero's Reuss-Terrell Streets National Register District.

SINCE 2002, THE TASTE OF THE TRAIL, led by hard-working chairpersons and volunteers, continued to successfully raise funds for critical educational programs, such as traveling exhibits and the popular Cowboy Camp. The landscape of the surrounding property became more breathtaking with the addition of the Proctor-Green House (c. 1892), a beautiful historic home restored in 2011–2013 and gifted to CTHM by Robert Oliver in 2018.

About that same time, the dedication of **George Bishop Park**, named after the founder of **NRG Exploration** and its drilling partner, **GeoSouthern Energy**, enhanced the rear of the building with green space, annual flowers and native plantings. Historical markers on the Museum property grew as the THC acknowledged the various buildings' importance in the state's history.

Another of the board's dreams came true in 2014. The once condemned—and slated for demolition by the City of Cuero—historic English-German School (c. 1880) was saved and moved to the museum grounds in September of that year. Once again, after endless fundraising, grant writing efforts, and contributions from individuals, foundations and corporations, an important local landmark structure was rehabilitated so that it could bring future educational programs and activities for adults and children alike.

Since that cold night in front of an oak-burning fire in 2000, over a meal of chili and cornbread, Oliver has led the charge to bring forth the Museum that would be nationally recognized for its historic preservation, enhanced heritage tourism, and educational excellence in his community. Cuero, a place where G.M. "Tip" Alexander, Crockett Cardwell, Louis Gohmert, and John T. Wofford played early roles in the history of the great cattle drive era and the Knights of Pythias organization, has now been

recognized with a first-rate museum and multi-purpose community facility.

This is a place where the descendants of many from the ranching communities continue to meet, share and bring their important stories to life for future generations. Historic preservation became an important cornerstone of the museum project right from the beginning. Fortunate for the organization, the historic Knights of Pythias Hall was owned by a founding CTHM board

member and, together, Gohmert and his fellow board members came together to forge ahead with saving the important landmark for many generations. The attractive Proctor-Green House, located behind the Museum at 307 N. Terrell and Cuero's only example of Queen Anne Victorian architectural style was

saved from demolition and is now an important component of the CTHM campus. Uniquely situated in the Reuss-Terrell Streets National Register District, the Proctor-Green House shares green space and a parking facility with the Knights of Pythias Hall, a contributing structure to Cuero's Downtown Commercial National Register District. Former board member Tempi McLeod explained the value of preservation applied in her own world.

"I think the past is the future, a building block for appreciation of history and built into our community now. We should not forget that. We should preserve our buildings in a quality way—restoring the fine brick and wood craftsmanship, for example. You really get a feeling of what life was like back then," she said.

CTHM was honored again in 2018 when it received "The Spirit

of Texas Independence Award" for the Smithsonian-TSHA "Hometown Teams" exhibit. Awarded at the Texas Independence Trail Annual Conference, the award, "recognizes partners with projects and programs within the Texas Independence Trail Region that have measurable impact on regional heritage tourism in a striking and powerful manner."

In pondering the last 20 years of development and service to the community of Cuero and the region, Oliver is forever focused

on the future. "There are so many ways in which we can improve on what we've been able to accomplish over the past two decades. I can see expanding the Museum's footprint even more than what's been attained since 2010 and 2013 when we opened the multipurpose community facilities and Museum

community now."
TEMPI McLEOD

"I think the past is the future,

a building block for appreciation

of history and built into our

component respectively." He added, "I would like to see our permanent collection grow to include more local artifacts and perhaps, a 'Texas Room' that would include Texana furniture, Texas pottery, early Texas maps, literature and art created by Texas artists."

"My journey with the Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum is filled with gratitude for the multitude of supporters and donors who have shared the vision of a first-rate institution for Cuero. It's impossible to acknowledge everyone individually, but collectively I think we've achieved such more than we ever could have dreamed in January 2000."

"So, saddle up!" Oliver concluded. "There are more trails to discover and more surprises around the bend." ★



Ranching Heritage of the Guadalupe River Valley





THROUGH DISPLAYS of authentic artifacts and illustrated narrative. Ranching Heritage of the Guadalupe River Valley interprets the story of ranching in DeWitt County before and after the Great Cattle Drives of the late 1800s. The exhibit celebrates the rich folklore of horses, cattle, and the cowboy - from Texas, the American West, and Mexico. Key artifacts in our exhibit, such as the road brand of John Tyler Wofford, and the Crockett Cardwell store ledger, draw the direct connection between the local community and the Great Cattle Drives.

The Great Cattle Drives were an unprecedented movement of animals between the beef producing areas of Western states to Northern railheads. Accounts of life on the trail left a lasting imprint on Texas and on the American imagination. Remarkable, because in less than twenty years' time, railroads and barbed wire fences would all but eclipse the trail driving cowboy.

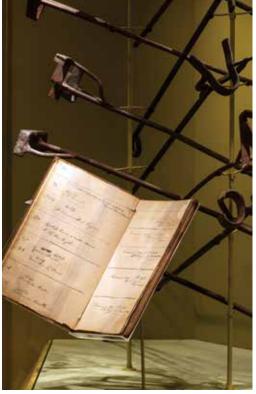
An authentic perspective is presented through everyday articles of ranch life – tough, primitive, and emblematic of an independent spirit. Or, as historian Lonn Taylor put it, "Don't fence me in!" Our permanent exhibit also chronicles more colorful local lore, including the infamous Sutton Taylor War – pitting cattle-rustling renegades against lawmen such as the legendary Texas Rangers and local sheriffs.

Ranches of DeWitt County are located on a wall map of the region, along with local cattle brands. Interactive displays engage younger visitors with wit and humor, and oral history videos spotlight local masters of Western craftsmanship. An original short film, "Pointing Them North," loops for visitors in the Stars Along the Rawhide Trail Theater, re-creating the spellbinding view from the buckboard and saddle in 1866. *

Left: the "Lazy F" road brand of John Tyler Wofford (framed portrait), and saddle bags stamped with the imprint (detail) of R.C. Flick, well known Cuero saddle maker.













Right: In 2020, CTHM revealed a handsome exhibit of Texas spurs. The collection showcases spurs by local masters Bianchi, Buermann, Crockett, Kelly Brothers, McChesney, Shipley and Alfred Smith, to name a few. Spur expert Bruce Bartlett, San Antonio, lent his expertise to this permanent exhibit.





















Horsemen of the Americas: Tinker Collection

A permanent loan agreement reached in 2009 with the **University of Texas at Austin** to exhibit and conserve the world-class *Horsemen of the Americas*: Tinker Collection broadened our narrative to include an appreciation of horsemanship in Mexico and South America.

DR. EDWARD LAROQUE TINKER'S collection of rare and horse related artifacts from Mexico, Chile, Bolivia, Argentina, Peru and other Latin American countries is a priceless educational tool illustrating the expanse of cowboy and ranch life introduced to the New World by Spain in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Retired Smithsonian historian at the National Museum of American History, Lonn Taylor, remarked about the transfer of Tinker's Horsemen of the Americas, "the Edward Larocque Tinker Collection is the most significant collection of cowboy gear in the United States, representing traditions not only of North American cowboys but of the horsemen of Mexico and South America." He continued, "the fact that the University of Texas has entrusted the Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum in Cuero with this collection is an overwhelming vote of confidence for the Museum. The Tinker Collection's presence will make Cuero and the Chisholm Trail Museum an international center for the study and appreciation of horsemen of the Americas."

Opposite page: embellished horse related artifacts, including a tooled leather saddle monogrammed for Edward Laroque Tinker.

Right: decorative maté bombilla, for sipping the tea-like beverage popular in Latin America.











From the Tinker Collection: examples of exquisite workmanship in traditional riding gear and personal accoutrements.





Edward S. Curtis: A Portrait of Native American Life

A handsome series of photogravures of Native American subjects lines the hallway on CTHM's second story. In the early 20th century, **Edward S. Curtis** captured Native American subjects – predominantly portraits but also landscapes, still lifes, scenes of everyday life, and more. In an article published in 1914, at the height of his fame, he wrote, "We want the documentary picture of the people and their homeland – a picture that will show the soul of the people."

Curtis (1868-1952) was born in Wisconsin, raised in Minnesota and in 1887 migrated to the Pacific Northwest. By the 1890s he had married and founded a successful photographic portrait studio in the burgeoning city of Seattle, Washington. He was appointed as official photographer to the Harriman Alaska Expedition of 1899. His encounter with natural history and anthropologists in the Expedition enabled him to conceive a comprehensive record of the Native American tribes of western North America.

Curtis began seeking funds for his North American Indian project, initially from such public bodies as the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. His ultimately successful efforts (largely funded by the immensely powerful banker, J. Pierpont Morgan) resulted in *The North American Indian*, 20 volumes of illustrated text accompanied by 20 portfolios of large photogravures.

Gift of Alan Wanzenberg in honor of Jed Johnson, of Johnson/Wanzenberg and Associates, New York.



















₹ 38

Proctor-Green House Restoration

A handsome example of Queen Anne Victorian architecture in Cuero, the historic (c. 1892) Proctor-Green House is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

THE PROCTOR-GREEN HOUSE was built by Col. David C. Proctor, a veteran of the Civil War who graduated from Yale University and Harvard Law School. Having established his law career in Indianola in 1840, Proctor opened his law office in Cuero in 1880. Cuero was a booming cattle town in the late 19th century when he purchased the property from L. C. Fudge, who had previously purchased the land from the Cuero Land and Immigration Company.



After Proctor's death in 1908, his widow sold the house and property in 1911 to **John M. Green** (1861-1939). Green served in the Texas House of Representatives (1900-1904), served on the board of Texas A&M College (1907-1911) and was appointed judge of the Twenty-Third Judicial District. Soon after retiring from the bench in 1929, he organized a law firm, Green & Green, with his son, Howard P. Green.

Howard Green continued to live in the home with his family, enjoying a career as District Attorney for District 24 (1930-40), District Judge for District 24 (1940-1963) and Chief Justice of

the newly formed 13th Court of Civil Appeals in Corpus Christi beginning in 1963.

As highlighted by the prominent careers of both Col. Proctor and generations of the Green family, the Proctor-Green house played a significant role in the political and government circles in South Central Texas for almost 100 years beginning in 1892.

The house and property was purchased by Robert Oliver in 2008, who began

restoring the structure in 2011. The house is one of the few remaining late 19th century houses in the Terrell-Reuss National Register District. Now part of the CTHM campus by gift, Proctor-Green House is an asset to both the Museum and the community.

When the restoration of the Proctor-Green House was awarded an *Honor Award* from **Preservation Texas** in 2016, Cuero Main Street Chair, Kerry Rhotenberry added, "the physical transformation and sustainable revitalization of this authentic community asset has become a true economic development driver for our community."

Cuero's Historic English-German School: Back in Session



Above, the restored English-German School's original single classroom complete with antique desks and slates. Desks were generously donated by St. Thomas Missionary Baptist Church in nearby Westhoff.

1877 | THE GERMAN COMMUNITY in Cuero and DeWitt County formed the English-German School Association in 1877, in order to provide a quality education for German children in the area. According to an oral history obtained in 1965 by a Cuero resident who attended the school, students in grades 1 though 12 received instruction in English, German and even Latin in addition to basic subjects.

The Association executed a mortgage on the property in 1880, possibly to raise funds to erect the schoolhouse. If so, this

would date the structure circa 1880. The simple, wood frame schoolhouse was constructed of weatherboard siding with a gabled, composition shingle roof, double-hung windows and a single-door primary entrance.

In 1894 the school was closed and property sold. The building was converted into a residence in 1911 by **Robert Mernitz**, which stayed in the Mernitz family for generations, acquiring a Texas Historical Medallion in 1965.

2014 | By the early 2000s, the abandoned structure was due for demolition. Concerned CTHM board members organized to save the English-German School, and owner Mr. Richard Mundt generously agreed to gift the building to the Museum. Through direct support by Board members, the building was lifted from its foundation and transported by trailer through downtown Cuero to its new home on the grounds of the Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum complex on September 4, 2014.

2020 | Considering the cultural and historic role that the English-German School played in the education of Cuero's earliest citizens and future leaders, Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum is the perfect steward of this important Texas landmark. Our vision for the re-dedicated English-German School is that it will resume its original role as a place of education and learning by imparting the history, heritage and culture of a bygone era to a new generation of visitors to the Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum complex. ★



BUILDING AND PROPERTY PURCHASE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN [™] 2000 – 2003

Early sponsors with a shared vision of a heritage museum made possible the purchase of the original Knights of Pythias Hall and adjoining land.

Cuero Development Corporation

Rick & Lindy Gohmert

M. G. and Lillie A. Johnson Foundation

Anne Friar Thomas

ويستنين

R. F. Blackwell Estate, Bill and Nancy Blackwell Mrs. Lem Duderstadt Robert Oliver Fred Pottinger Katherine L. Reilly

Jeff Steen and Family

William Albrecht
Patsy Goebel
N. A. Steen
Sue Sulsar
Kay Walker
2002 Taste of the Trail
2002 Members
2003 Members

CALL CALL

Building Restoration and Annex Construction Capital Campaign [∞] 2005 – 2008

Building on the foundation of major government and institutional grants, community sponsorship made the restoration of the Knights of Pythias Hall and annex construction possible.

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EXHIBITION CONSTRUCTION CAPITAL CAMPAIGN [∞] 2011 – 2018

Completion of permanent exhibits Ranching Heritage of the Guadalupe River Valley and Horsemen of the Americas: Tinker Collection was made possible by the generous financial support of these individuals, families, ranches, and business leaders.

PLATINUM

GeoSouthern Energy –
George Bishop, Meg Molleston
Frank Klein Family
Robert Oliver
Katherine L. Reilly
Anne Friar Thomas
and Margaret Anne Thomas

GOLD

Bill and Nancy Blackwell
David and Diana Burrow
Family of Patricia Blackwell Hedgcoxe
Steen Family in memory of Lias F. Steen
and Jennings Dincans
Susan Wallis and Family

SILVER

Cuero Industrial Foundation

Jean B. Duderstadt

Sid Duderstadt

Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority

H-E-B Corporation

Scott Noble

Ed Rachal Foundation

BRONZE

Brown Foundation
Cuero Development Corporation
In honor of Dr. and Mrs. Peter Flawn
Howard Mays and Mona Parikh/Jones,
Mays, Ramsey and Parikh
Patricia Muir
U.S. Department of Agriculture

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ROBERT L. OLIVER ENGLISH-GERMAN SCHOOL CAPITAL CAMPAIGN © 2014 – 2020

The Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum would like to recognize the family, friends, and community organizations who supported the relocation and renovation of the English-German School in tribute to Robert L. Oliver. Your gift lives on in the authentic preservation of local ranching and agricultural heritage with future generations.

Bill & Nancy Blackwell
H-E-B Tournament of Champions
Robert Oliver
The Family of William "Bill" T. Oliver
Missi Thomas
The Steen Family
Sheryl & Ted Winslow

CALLES OF THE PARTY OF THE PART

David & Diana Burrow
Cuero Development Corporation
Guadalupe Valley Electric Cooperative
Norma & Don Hyatt
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In honor of Jason and Clayton Natho
The Powell Foundation
Summerlee Foundation
Texas Historical Foundation
Union Pacific Foundation
Honoring Bibba Wilde, by her children

ويتناشين

Anonymous
Linda & Lawrence Anzaldua
Peggy & Travis Basham
The Benevity Community Impact Fund
Avis Ann & Lovell Blain
Bettye & Paddy Burwell
Coastal Bend Community Foundation



Breezeway with Salt Grass Trail Wagon, gift of Kimberly Dietze Zarsky.

Charles E. Cole, III ConocoPhillips Community Award Mary and Dr. Gary Cox Charles Cusack Lewis Fisher Friends of the Texas Historical Commission Sandy Hahn and Avi Ghosh Burdine & Lester Giese Lindy & Ricky Gohmert Charles Lewis Hershal Ferguson for Brenda Lord Judge & Mrs. Daryl L. Fowler Howard W. Mays Jenny McChesney Patricia & Judd Miller Horizon Millworks

Meg Molleston

Patricia Muir 2015 John Nau, III Award of Excellence in Museums Nopal Oaks Ranch, LLC Elizabeth & Kenneth Odom Gay and Gale Oliver, III Kathy Oliver Leslie & Will Oliver Nance & Alex Oliver Oliver Ventures Dawn Ontiveros National Trust for Historic Preservation Gay & Shannon Ratliff Dee Sager Michelle Schlinke Sue Sulsar The Siegel Family Fund of the JEWISHcolorado Cindy Tally - Callicrate Co. Interior Design TrustTexas Bank Diana & Bill Thibodeaux St. Thomas Missionary Baptist Church Kay & Ron Walker Debbie & Jack Wesley Wallis Susan H. Wallis Sharon & Cliff Weber Elizabeth Wilde

Kimberly Dietze Zarsky

Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum Board Members

Honoring the dedication, financial support and exemplary leadership of CTHM board members over our first 20 years.

W. D. "Billy" Albrecht Joe Adams Linda Anzaldua Thomas "Tommy" Barre Debra Baros Tom Batts William "Bill" Blackwell Brady Boehl Angie Stiles Briggs Ginger Broughton Diana Burrow Paddy Burwell Phylis B. Canion Charles E. "Charlie" Cole III Kathy Crim Errol John Dietze Pat Dunn Karyn Elder

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Our mission is to preserve the ranching and Western heritage of South Central Texas through interpretative exhibits, research, and educational programs.

⇒ CHISHOLMTRAILMUSEUM.ORG | 302 NORTH ESPLANADE | CUERO, TEXAS 77954 | 361-277-2866 € 797

The Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum is a 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in 2000.

A Tradition of Excellence: CTHM Awards 2002 – 2020

2002 | CTHM is chosen as one of 24 small and mid-sized Texas museums to participate in HELP, a program created by ExhibitsUSA, based in Kansas City, Missouri in partnership with the Texas Association of Museums. HELP was a four-year program offering on-site professional consultations in skill areas of volunteer management, public programming, fundraising/grant writing, and marketing and public relations.

2002 – 2009 | Development of permanent loan agreement in 2009 with the University of Texas at Austin to exhibit and conserve the world-class *Horsemen of the Americas* – Tinker Collection, a collection of rare and horse-related artifacts from Mexico, Chile, Bolivia, Argentina, Peru and other Latin American countries.

2013 | Texas Downtown Association (TDA) recognized CTHM with its *President's Award for Best Renovation / Rehabilitation Project*. This was followed by the TDA's *People's Choice Award for Best Renovation of a Historic Structure* at their annual conference in Bastrop, Texas.

2014 | Texas Association of Museums (TAM) presented the highly prized *2014 President's Award* to CTHM at their annual meeting in Lubbock. TAM's President's

Award is given annually by the TAM Executive Committee at its discretion, "to an individual, institution or 'partner' organization or foundation that has done significantly impactful work over the past year within the Texas museum community." At the same meeting, CTHM also received the 2014 Mitchell A. Wilder Publication Design Award, Best of Show, for 2013 grand opening event graphics.

2014 | Texas Association of Builders awarded a 2014 Star Award for Best Historic Renovation to East End Builders, Victoria, for their work on restoration of the historic Proctor-Green House.

2015 | CTHM was honored by the **Texas Historical Commission** (THC) with the *John L. Nau Award of Excellence in Museums*. The Nau Award recognizes an institution for "significant achievement in the areas of historical interpretation, museum education, conservation of collections and/or community involvement."

2016 | San Antonio Conservation Society honored CTHM with its 2016 Preservation Award for the rehabilitation of Cuero's historic (c. 1903) Knights of Pythias Hall. The Conservation Society's mission is "... to preserve and to encourage the preservation of historic buildings, objects,

places and customs relating to the history of Texas, its natural beauty and all that is admirably distinctive to our State; and by such physical and cultural preservation, to keep the history of Texas legible and intact to educate the public, especially the youth of today and tomorrow, with knowledge of our inherited regional values."

2016 | Preservation Texas presented CTHM an *Honor Award* for the renovation of the former Knights of Pythias Hall. This award recognizes, "those individuals in Texas who have continued to use a particular traditional technique or method in construction to achieve authenticity in the restoration of historic resources. The technique must be considered artistic as well as rare."

2016 | Preservation Texas presented Fisher Heck Architects an *Honor Award* for the Proctor-Green House restoration. The Proctor-Green is a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark, and is on the National Register of Historic Places, National Register District. Original Architect: James Hull.

2018 | CTHM received the Spirit of Texas Independence Award from the Texas Independence Trail Region for the Smithsonian-TSHA Hometown Teams traveling exhibit. ★



THE LONGHORNS

BY J. FRANK DOBIE. 1941

"The Chisholm Trail was a lane opening out of a vast breeding ground swarming with cattle life to a vacant, virgin range of seemingly illimitable expanse. It initiated the greatest, the most extraordinary, the most stupendous, the most fantastic and fabulous migration of animals controlled by man that was the world has ever known or can ever know."



GALVESTON NEWS, AUGUST 16, 1866

A newspaper correspondent from the brush country of DeWitt County lamented,

here's not a boy of American parentage learning a trade or reading for a profession west of the Colorado. Our youths have souls above the mechanical arts.

The little children, as early as they can walk, pilfer their mother's tape and make lassos to rope the kittens and the ducks. The boys, as soon as they can climb on a pony, are off to the prairie to drive stock. As they advance towards manhood, their highest ambition is to conquer a pitching mustang or throw a wild beef by the tail."







RIATA AND SPURS

BY CHARLES A. SIRINGO, PUB. 1927

"In going through the Indian Nation we had several bad rivers to swim. the Washita and the South and North Canadians being the worst. Large bands of mounted blanket Indians gave us much trouble. They were in the habit of riding into camp when the cook was alone and eating all the cooked grub in sight. They also demanded the bosses to give them 'whoa-haws' (steers) for beef or they would stampede the herd at night. In this way these roaming bands from the Comanche, Kiowa, Kickapoo and Wichita Agencies to the westward, near the Wichita Mountains, kept themselves all supplied with fresh meat. They were the cause of many stampedes among the hundreds of herds passing up the trail at this season of the year."

CTHM 20TH ANNIVERSARY STORY. PUB. 2020

Research and narrative: Terri Schexnayder.

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