An overcast day in April 2009 turned out to be the perfect day to pour the foundation for the CTHM’s annex addition. In the hours just before daylight, cement trucks and a crew of ten workers arrived to take on the task of pouring the cement footers and slab. In spite of pending showers throughout the day, the job proceeded on schedule and wrapped up on time. For all those who have worked so hard to bring the Museum project along to this point, it was truly a milestone moment.

Since these photos were taken, the walls of the Annex are up and the structure’s steel joists are in place. A steel fire-egress stairwell has been erected and rough-in plumbing for visitor’s restrooms on both floors is now complete. Masonry and plaster craftsmen have given the Annex’ exterior walls a finished look, complete with cornice and handsome architectural detail on the building’s east-facing façade. The concrete and steel second floor was poured in early July, while the roof was poured Wednesday, July 15th.

Restoration work has progressed simultaneously in the historic building, carefully planned to honor historic character while meeting today’s standards of a public museum and community facility. Electrical rough-in and HVAC systems have been installed, while a new steel column and beam support system was added on the ground floor to maximize the load of multipurpose facilities above. Original brick and plaster walls have received new plaster, while partition walls – once covered with wallpaper – have been sheet rocked and floated and paint is currently being applied.

In 1986, as part of Texas’ Sesquicentennial celebration, Mary Ann Menning and Cuero’s historic Buchel Bank held a branding party in the Friar Ag Center in Cuero’s Municipal Park. Documenting local ranching heritage, five cowhides were branded with 425 local and regional ranch brands, which hung in Buchel Bank for several decades.

Recently, Phyllis Lapp (above, left) and David Kleineke (center), former and current presidents of Prosperity Bank indicated an interest in giving these unique hides to CTHM. Without hesitation, the board of directors of the Museum gladly accepted this generous opportunity to exhibit and carry these cowhides forward in the newly restored upper floor of the Museum. Also seen in the photo above is Susan Rodriguez (above, right), lobby manager of Prosperity Bank. A very special thanks to Phyllis and David for thinking of CTHM to care for these important pieces of DeWitt County history.
Workers rake the fresh cement material into place.

Final adjustments to the slab forms and elevator shaft before the cement pour.

Completed slab adjacent to the historic building shows historic Proctor residence beyond, which will house offices, housing, and serve as additional research and educational Museum space in the future.

Work continues apace on the interior restoration of the historic building. The interior finishes of the Knights of Pythias ceremonial and recreational areas on the building’s second floor were simple for their time (1903), but by our standards today they are handsomely detailed, with old timber floors and millwork trim. Most original details remain, adding character to the spaces. Our restoration work, guided by preservation architect Lewis Fisher and Fisher Heck Architects, has been reviewed and approved for historical accuracy and modern code compliance by both the Texas Historical Commission and National Park Service in Washington, D.C. Their input in the process has been greatly appreciated.

Envisioned as a multi-purpose space, the 5,000+ square foot second floor of the historic hall will be fully rehabilitated. It will be adapted for public meetings, lectures, receptions, summer children’s camp, small conferences and other cultural, educational and recreational functions. When complete, the restored space will serve to benefit citizens of a multi-county area as well as the local community.

Public and private sector organizations work together for a common purpose.

In early 2008, CTHM received a grant in the amount of $345,000 from Save America’s Treasures, which is being used to restore our historic building. Save America’s Treasures is a national effort to protect America’s threatened cultural treasures, including historic structures, collections, works of art, maps and journals that document and illuminate the history and culture of the United States. Matching funds for the S.A.T. grant have been received from the Cuero Economic Development Corporation, H-E-B Tournament of Champions, M.G. & Lillie A. Johnson Foundation and many individuals and families who have generously contributed to the CTHM Capital Campaign and other fundraising efforts. Save America’s Treasures was originally founded as the centerpiece of the White House National Millennium Commemoration and as a public-private partnership that included the White House, National Park Service and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.
Cuero’s Blackwell Family Anchors
Naming Rights Campaign with Sponsorship

The naming rights for the former recreational room on the second floor of the historic building have been purchased by the Blackwell Family. When complete, the room will serve multiple uses, including hosting small conferences, meetings and cultural/educational functions. The Board of Directors wishes to thank the Blackwell extended family for their community-spirited generosity and for helping us make such a strong start in this significant fundraising effort.

Naming rights are still available for rooms in the historic building and the Annex. Names will be displayed on commemorative plaques, and will become a permanent part of the Museum. It’s an outstanding way to show your family’s support, or to create a prominent place of recognition for your ranch or business.

Photo above: Bucky Sager and wife, Dee Blackwell Sager; Pat Blackwell Hedgcoxe; Bill and Nancy Blackwell. Not pictured is Mr. Pat G. Hedgcoxe.

Act now to acquire prime naming rights.

Naming rights are available now for community rooms and exhibit spaces in the historic building, as well as areas in the new Annex. Contact any Board member today to take advantage of this first-come, first-served opportunity to show your support.

Above, Left: Original plaster over brick walls were removed for repair and restoration in the future Blackwell Family room. Candelario Cubillos of Robert Adkins Masonry of Victoria, Texas, is pictured applying a second scratch coat of plaster. Right: New millwork in the second floor Blackwell Room echoes lines in the existing interior. Attention to details such as these helps to maintain the building’s historic character.

Original ceiling panels, removed in order to work on the structure, are painstakingly nailed back in place to maintain historical integrity.

Workers welding in stairwell structure of the Annex building. Welder is Jacob Absher, assisted by Mario Monroy. The Annex brings the complex up to current accessibility and safety codes, with features like accessible rest rooms, the elevator and fire stair.

A half wall defines space at the front of the building that will be used for interpretive displays visible to the street.

View of second floor space showing detail of coffered ceilings. The ceiling will be painted in a palette of historically appropriate colors.
One of the first major decisions and actions taken by the CTHM board of directors in 2001 was to determine the physical location of the newly proposed ranching heritage museum. After a lengthy discussion and weighing the options of various locations, the board of directors decided to save one of Cuero’s historical assets and purchased the historic Knights of Pythias Hall, ideally located on Esplanade Street, Cuero’s main north/south thoroughfare (which also serves as U.S. Highways 183, 87, and 77A).

Rehabilitating the historic structure for public use now required modern code compliance, including elevator access to the second floor, ADA-compliant public restrooms, and the integration of fire-egress and other public safety features. Not wishing to destroy the very historic fabric of the building that was intended for restoration, a two-story Annex was designed for the north side of the historic building.

Restoration planning of the historic building and design of the 4,500 square-foot addition was rigorously reviewed and approved by the Texas Historical Commission, Austin and the National Park Service in Washington, D.C. Now over fifty percent complete, the Annex has begun to take shape and become a formidable structure in its own right. The Annex will serve many important functions – the foremost being the primary and secondary entrances to the Museum and community center complex.

As our visitors enter the complex on the east-facing side of the Annex, they will be greeted by the Museum’s gift shop and an historic bar, which was purchased by the Board of Directors from the Leske family after Leske’s Saloon was unfortunately heavily damaged by the flood of 1998. Beyond the entrance one enters the elevator lobby, stairwell to the second floor, and hallway to the modern public restrooms, Museum storage and office space. The facility will be fully accessible to wheelchair users.

Guests may conveniently arrive on the second floor via the two-story elevator where additional public restrooms and catering kitchen will serve the multi-purpose community facilities located inside the historic building.

Lewis Fisher of Fisher Heck Architects noted, “The historic and the new parts of the Museum complex have a harmonic relationship, providing an authentic yet visitor-friendly environment.”

The Board of Directors would like to acknowledge the outstanding service and quality of workmanship demonstrated by general contractor Weaver & Jacobs and subcontractors. Thank you for all your hard work and outstanding professionalism.
$500 POINT MAN
Bill & Franke Albrecht
Margaret M. Allums
Lawrence & Linda Anzaldua
Travis & Peggy Basham
Mr. & Mrs. Tom Batts
Bill & Nancy Blackwell
Keith & Kris Box
David & Diana Burrow
Mollie & Andy Carter
Kathy Cren
Mrs. Lem Duderstadt
Walter Fisher & Judy Bruce Fisher
Burdine & Lester Giese
Iiene Gohmert
Greg & Sara Gossett
Dan Harrison III
John & Carol Hildebrand
Bill & Katherine Reilly
Mr. Robert Oliver
Ray & Sue Kelley
Milt & Kathy McLeod
Ray & Sue Kelley
Chuck & Roseann Jacob
John & Carol Hildebrand
Dan Harrison III
Buck & Dee Sager and Family
David & Mary Sue Sparks
Don & Mattye Lou Stiles, Sr.
Missi Thomas
Mr. & Mrs. Ronald B. Walker
Michelle Wofford Easterling
R. F. & Dorothy Blackwell
Dr. & Mrs. Pat Hedgecoxe
James & Shannon Mann
Bill & Nancy Blackwell
Ricky & Lindy Gohmert
Glenn & Linda Ruschhaupt
David & Paula Robinson
Dr. Raymond R. Reese
Terrell W. Dahlman
$50 WRANGLER
Terrell W. Dahlman

Memorials

Mitchell Wofford Easterling
Margaret M. Allums

R. F. & Dorothy Blackwell
Bill & Nancy Blackwell
Dr. & Mrs. Pat Hedgecoxe
Dorothy Alcorn

Randy & Rhonda Pakebusch
Dorothy Ploeger

Faye & Larry Ramer

Verlin & Colleen Trautwein

Brian & Leslie Schibli

Bill & Franke Albrecht
Margaret M. Allums

Lawrence & Linda Anzaldua
Travis & Peggy Basham
Mr. & Mrs. Tom Batts
Bill & Nancy Blackwell
Keith & Kris Box
David & Diana Burrow
Mollie & Andy Carter
Kathy Cren
Mrs. Lem Duderstadt
Walter Fisher & Judy Bruce Fisher
Burdine & Lester Giese
Iiene Gohmert
Greg & Sara Gossett
Dan Harrison III
John & Carol Hildebrand
Bill & Katherine Reilly
Mr. Robert Oliver
Ray & Sue Kelley
Milt & Kathy McLeod
Ray & Sue Kelley
Chuck & Roseann Jacob
John & Carol Hildebrand
Dan Harrison III
Buck & Dee Sager and Family
David & Mary Sue Sparks
Don & Mattye Lou Stiles, Sr.
Missi Thomas
Mr. & Mrs. Ronald B. Walker
Michelle Wofford Easterling
R. F. & Dorothy Blackwell
Dr. & Mrs. Pat Hedgecoxe
James & Shannon Mann
Bill & Nancy Blackwell
Ricky & Lindy Gohmert
Glenn & Linda Ruschhaupt
David & Paula Robinson
Dr. Raymond R. Reese

It's so easy to join the Museum, or to give a Memorial or Honorary gift online. Go to ChisholmTrailMuseum.org and navigate to “Contribute” for giving and membership levels.

It's so easy to join the Museum, or to give a Memorial or Honorary gift online. Go to ChisholmTrailMuseum.org and navigate to “Contribute” for giving and membership levels.
Several local families who have objects and artifacts relating to the cattle drive era and the Museum’s focus period (1865 - 1915) have begun to offer items for display in the Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum. John Wofford and Tom Frazier, both descendants of Josephine Stevens and John T. Wofford, are seen here with several objects which will help to tell the story when DeWitt County ranchers and cowmen took an active role in sending cattle “up the trail.”

Wofford, a pioneer in the stock raising industry of DeWitt County, sent herds of cattle from the late 1860s to 1882 by way of both the Chisholm and Great Western Trails. Owning ranch property between Cuero and Westhoff in the area of Lindenau, Wofford had large stock pens located not far from the confluence of Sandies Creek and the Guadalupe River. This area was one of the gathering places for stockmen preparing for cattle drives “up the trail.” Frazier is seen above holding Wofford’s road brand, the Lazy F, which was used to brand cattle before their long trek north to markets in Kansas. Also featured in the photograph is a pair of John T. Wofford’s saddlebags made by famed saddle and harness maker R. C. Flick of Cuero and a Deed of Purchase, dated April 1, 1879, for a herd of steers purchased by partners Bell and Wofford.

Wofford was also a charter member of the Knights of Pythias organization, Jewel Lodge, No. 103, which built the two-story, Romanesque Revival hall that is currently being rehabilitated to house the new Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum and multi-purpose community facilities. John T. Wofford’s home was built on the family ranch near Lindenau, but in 1884 the house was dismantled, boards numbered and brought to Cuero by ox cart and river ferry, and reconstructed at its current site on Reuss Boulevard. In his memoir, Forty Years a Peace Officer, Lewis Delony gives an account of moving the house from the Lindenau to its current location in the Terrell and Reuss Streets National Register District.

Leah Brown, program grant officer for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, visited the site to see construction under way. Leah works from the National Trust’s field office in Fort Worth, Texas that has generously provided the Museum grants for historic preservation planning and a historic structures report.

**Mission Statement**

The Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum’s mission is to preserve the ranching and Western culture of South Central Texas through interpretive exhibits, research, and educational programs.

The CTHM is a 501(c)(3) corporation.

ChisholmTrailMuseum.org