He was “convinced that the future freedom and prosperity of the peoples of the Americas depended upon their mutual trust, friendship and cooperation and it was in that spirit that the Tinker Foundation was established.”

In 1959, Dr. Tinker created the Tinker Foundation in New York City, and about that time donated his world-class collection of North and South American cowboy and horse-related artifacts to the University of Texas. “We are pleased that after many years of negotiating with officials at the University of Texas at Austin, that they and the Tinker Foundation would agree to allow the Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum the privilege of exhibiting such a rare collection of ranching artifacts from Chile, Argentina, Mexico, Venezuela, Peru, Colombia, the United States and Canada,” said CTHM Chairman Robert Oliver.

Noted Texas scholar and retired Smithsonian historian, Lonn Taylor, who is collaborating with CTHM exhibit designers Drew Patterson and Pony Allen, added, “The Tinker Collection itself far transcends the local experience of cattle ranching in the Guadalupe River Valley because the Edward Larocque Tinker Collection is a collection of horsemen and cowboy artifacts from all over the Americas. One can visit the (Chisholm Trail Heritage) Museum and understand that cattle ranching was not a local phenomenon, but an experience that covered the entire New World.”

Aften approximately seven years of negotiating with the University of Texas at Austin, in December 2009 the Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum signed a permanent loan agreement to exhibit and care for the world-class Horsemen of the Americas – Tinker Collection. Dr. Edward L. Tinker (1881-1968), graduated from Columbia University, New York, in 1902. After earning doctorates in literature from the University of Paris and University of Madrid, Dr. Tinker devoted a significant portion of his life exploring Hispanic culture in Latin America, the Iberian Peninsula and the United States.

Xenophobia is one of the most deadly enemies of peace among nations, for the human race has always had a poisonous tendency to dislike and distrust the man from another country – the foreigner with different ideas and habits – a characteristic that has caused much bloodshed and suffering in this world.

– Edward L. Tinker

Mexican-made spurs demonstrate a high level of craft, and reveal a sense of pride and showmanship.
During my travels, I had been deeply impressed by the fundamental likeness between the cattle-horsemen of this hemisphere – the gaucho of Argentina and Uruguay, the huaso of Chile, the gaucho of Brazil, the chalan of Peru, the vaquero of Mexico, the llanero of Colombia and Venezuela and the cowboy of the United States and Canada.”

Edward L. Tinker

Thomas M. Stell 1856 – 1939

Young Thomas Matthew Stell arrived in Texas in 1858 with his parents, aboard a steamer at the port of Indianola. He was educated at Covey College in Concrete, DeWitt County, Texas and made three cattle drives along the old trail from Cuero to Dodge City before he was seventeen years old. Stell worked as a cowboy on large ranches in Wyoming Territory until he returned to Texas in 1881. Stell married twice, and had five children.

Career as DeWitt County Sheriff

Tom Stell was appointed Sheriff of DeWitt County in 1892 – still frontier days in law enforcement. Local history connects him with a handful of infamous outlaws of the Old West. According to court records, Sheriff Stell delivered John Wesley Hardin – fugitive from justice and black-hat folk hero – to serve time for murder in Huntsville Prison. According to Stell’s sister, Nancy, Tom saw Bat Masterson in Dodge City, and was acquainted with Frank James (brother and fellow outlaw of Jesse James). Her account of his career also mentions one good guy – frontier lawman Wyatt Earp – who is immortalized in the 1957 motion picture “Gunfight at the OK Corral.”

DeWitt County Family Roots

As a very young man, Tom Stell rode cattle to Kansas, Missouri, Montana and Wyoming during the era of the great cattle drives. Stell was hired by Texas rancher J. Frank White to work in Wyoming, which he did for four years before returning to Texas. On his return, he married White’s sister in law, Susan Amanda Kennedy, who died in 1894. The couple had four children. Stell later married Irene Galle in 1896, who lived until 1963. Tom and Irene had a son, Thomas, an artist who won Dallas.

After J. Frank White died, his widow Eliza Jane became postmistress and later, station agent in Edgar, Texas. When she passed away in 1936, Tom Stell eulogized his late sister-in-law at Hillside Cemetery in Cuero. The event drew a crowd from miles around, as Mrs. White and Sheriff Stell were both highly regarded members of the community.

You can view a Texas State Historical Commission marker on Stell’s grave in Hillside Cemetery, Cuero.
Museum Acquires Artifacts for Collection at Gish Auction

In fall 2005, the Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum partnered with the Cuero Cultural & Heritage Foundation and Humanities Texas to host a lecture titled, “My Love is a Rider: America’s Affair with the Cowboy.” Noted Texas scholar and retired Smithsonian historian, Lonn Taylor, presented the lecture to some 25 attendees in the Trust Texas Bank community room. Since that initial partnership with the Museum, CTHM and Taylor have continued building a relationship, which led to a collaboration in 2006 and 2007 when Taylor facilitated a select committee of board members and community stakeholders to create the Museum’s Concept Plan.

One of the Museum Concept Plan’s prime objectives is to acquire authentic Western and cowboy artifacts for developing exhibit material. That opportunity arose in February 2012, when representatives of the board acquired many fine artifacts at auction in Fredericksburg, Texas. The auction presented pieces from the estate of Western fine artist and collector Joe Gish.

The late Mr. Gish had realized his dream of retiring to the Hill Country in 1978, where he and wife Charlene built a home with an adjacent log cabin to house Joe’s expanding collection. The cabin showcased his treasure trove of cowboy artifacts, pre-1920s antique firearms, Western art and collectibles, eventually becoming a small museum. Joe relished his role as guide and curator, especially since some of the artifacts had back stories – like the cowboy vest worn by Gary Cooper in a Hollywood movie.

As a young fine artist, Mr. Gish acquired his earliest pieces as props for his Western-themed paintings, but he soon found his true passion in researching and acquiring the artifacts themselves. He set aside painting to build his collection in the early 1970s, at a time when Western objects were relatively affordable and accessible to the hobby collector. Gish passed away in 2011, leaving what had become a rare and special memorial to cowboy culture to his wife Charlene.

Recently, I called to chat with Charlene and invite her to visit the Museum this fall for our grand opening. We reminisced about her life with Joe, from their early days in McAllen. During his thirty years working in the Valley, Charlene said, “he nearly drove everyone nuts, talking about retiring to the Texas Hill County.” In her home in Fredericksburg, Charlene keeps a bookcase of mementos dedicated to Joe. There, she displays “pewter statues of sheriffs and marshals, a pair of miniature boots, and family pictures.” Of her late husband Joe, Charlene shared her sentiment, “he was a very special guy. No one ever had an unkind thing to say about Joe.”

The centerpiece of the Joe Gish Collection was leather - fine show saddles, saddlebags, boots, holsters, gun belts, and chaps, many of which were purchased by the Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum at the Gish Estate Auction. Because Gish began collecting cowboy artifacts years before the general public caught on, his collection was known throughout Texas and the American West as one of the finest private collections in the country. CTHM is pleased to have many of these rare objects on display when the Museum opens in November 2013. – R. O.
For a week last summer, Cuero’s kids unplugged from games and tv and tried on the cowboy life! Volunteers treated the campers to traditional camp crafts, rope skills, story time, and authentic camp cooking.
Saddlemaker Tod Slone teaching roping basics.

Carolyn Leist leads a leather tooling workshop.

Scenes from The Alamo Sue Sulsar and fellow volunteer enjoying the festivities.

Travis Glidden showing them the ropes.

Who wants biscuits?

Aug 12–16, 2013 The Nagels demonstrate an important piece of cowboy life with their authentic chuck wagon.

Cowboy Camp SAVE the DATE Aug 12–16, 2013

Scenes from The Alamo
2012 CHISHOLM TRAIL HERITAGE MUSEUM MEMBERSHIP

SCOUT | $1000
Lester & Burdine Giese
Bill & Coylene Oliver and Family, 746 Ranch
Dr. Heather J. Kopecky

POINT MAN | $500
Bill & Franke Albrecht
Ted & Frances Aven
Pat Hickey Barlow
Buddy Billups
George & Kathy Bishop
Bill & Nancy Blackwell
Dr. & Mrs. W. Grant Braly
Mary Gayle Brindley
David & Diana Burrow
Paddy & Bettye Burwell
Tracy Post Cliburn
Charles Cole III
Kathy Crim
Errol John & Shirley Dietze
Mrs. Lem Duderstadt
Sid Duderstadt
Bill & Janet Fly
Stacy Gasch
Ricky & Lindy Gohmert
Rosemary Harrison
John & Carol Hildebrand
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Tess Liberto
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Bucky & Dee Sager
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Matt & Amy Thigpen
Missi Thomas
Susan Wallis
Ann and Robert Watson
Matt Watson
Mike & Kim Weaver
Milton Weikel
Jode Zavesky

SWING RIDER | $250
Curtis & Betty Jo Afflerbach
Travis & Peggy Basham – The Basham Ranch
Michael & Debra Benge
Lovel & Avis Ann Blain – Blain Cattle Co.
Joe Bland – O’Connor & Hewitt Foundation
Jimmy & Betty Ann Borchers – Borchers Ranch
Jay & Cheryl Bramlette
Barry & Beverly Breaux
Richard and Chris Carbonara – JHC Insurance
Paul & Cathy Celauro – Cuero Creek Ranch
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Dr. Gary & Mary S. Cox – Coastal Skincare and Wellness Center
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Paul & Dorothy Guthrie – Triple O Ranch
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David Scott – Duncan-Williams, Inc
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Gary Dunnam & Sharon Steen
Jerry & Judie Stevenson
Ron & Kay Walker – Querencia Ranch
Mike Weber
Mary Fanett Wheeler
Billy & Debbie White
F. West “Smokey” Wilson – Wilson Ranch
Mark & Betty Zgabay – Rock N Z
Michael Zuber
2012 Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum Membership

Taste of the Trail Membership

Joyce Albrecht
Albrecht Cattle Company
Lawrence & Linda Anzaldua – Rancho Pancho, DeWitt Co.
Juana Avery
David & Debra Baros
James & Bonnie Barton
West T. & Margie Bell
Mary Gayle Brindley
David P. & Mignon Brown
Kenneth & Chris Buenger
K B Ranch
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Eric & Dawn Draper – Freund Funeral Home
Pat & Karyn Elder
Cowbuddy Ranch
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Greg & Sara Gossett – Ful-O-Pep Feeds
Paul & Myrna Hassfield
Pat B. Hedgecoxe – PBH Land Company, Ltd.
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Avila Mal Hermes
Allan R. & Neva Irwin
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Shirley and Gary Janssen
Kevin & Mary Keating – Q-Rare-O Market
Kirk & Polly Laging
Renvia Lander
Kay Lapp – Cuero Chamber of Commerce Agriculture & Visitor’s Center
Daryl & Diane Lassig
Ryan Leatherbury – Weston Solution
Joe Loiacono II
Ramsey & Pam Longbotham
Jack Marr
Howard Mays
Judy McAda
Kerry McCann
Julie and Bob McCan
Tempi McLeod
Tempi McLeod – Parkside Family Clinic
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Darrell & Pam Morrow
William Murphy IV
Dale & Becky Murray
Tim Pennell
Sarajane E Stanton and William E. Pinckard
John & Laurie Pokluda – John G. Pokluda Surveyors
Michael & Susan Pope – 2H Ranch
Erwin & Annette Rath – Rath Propane Gas Company
Shannon & Gay Ratliff
Dr. Raymond R. Reese
Robert and Dorothy Reichard
Robert & Kerry Rhotenberry – Courtyard Gallery
Bill & Caroline Sabin
Jeanine Baker & George Sayre
Rosemary Blackwell Sheppard
Tod & Lonna Slone – Slone Saddles
Darryl & Nancy Stefta
Don & Linda Stiles, Jr. – Ranch House Spirits & Gifts
Lee & Kay Tillman
James Wearden
Richard & Holly Weber
Rick & Bonnie Wheeler
Barry & Sondra Wineinger
Darlene Wyatt
Louis & Kerry Yaeger – Los Caballos

Drag Rider | Family $100

Jay Banning
Margaret Bluntzer
Bill Braden
Will & Chandra Carbonara
John & Judy Clegg
Mr. & Mrs. Joe Cohen
Jim & Margaret Conrad
Dr. & Mrs. Dan Dugi, Jr.
Clete & Kathleen Ernster
Frank & Margo Flack
C. J. Garland
Kyle & Marsha Gibson
Vic & Velma Hoffman
Mary Alice Holcomb
Billie Liesman
Dr. Fred Lykes
Lewis & London McFadin, Jr.
Fain & Janie McDougal
William & Maxine Montgomery
Dr. & Mrs. James E. Pridgen
Andria Rucker
Arlyn Seiler
Sue Sulsar
Helen R. Walker
Wes Wallis
Ted & Sheryl Winslow

Wrangler | $50

Buddy & Susan Barnes
William & Louise Marie Cusak – Lost Creek Ranch
Terrell West Dahlman
LeOlive Rogge

Buckaroo | $25

Carolyn Arrington
Sandi English
Bonnie Chisholm Helten
Linda Henderson
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Alvin & Joann Jendrzey
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Crocket Cardwell Store Business $100

Robert Blank – Ryan’s on Main
Steve & Dr. Phylis B. Canion – Organic Emporium
Lloyd & Karon Copeland
Lewis S. Fisher – Fisher Heck Architects
Ilene Gohmert – Ilene B. Gohmert, CPA
Carol & Dr. Robert Beer, Dot and Jerry Hoffman – A Taste Above
Jerry and Dot Hoffman
Sue Prudhomme – Museum of the Coastal Bend

2012 Honorary Gifts

Lynn Bishop
Sue Sulsar
Henry Sheppard
Al Ebert
Floyd Doehrman
Rosemary Sheppard
Jeff Steen

2013 Membership to Date

Point Man | $500
Bill & Nancy Blackwell
John & Carol Hildebrand
A. J. Simpson & Mike Mixon
Robert Oliver – Bellevue Ranch

Swing Rider | $250
Charla Borchers-Leon & Robert Leon
Michael & Susan Pope – 2H Ranch

Drag Rider | Family $100
Jean Barth Albright – Riverplace Farms
Judd & Patricia Miller
Sue Sulsar

Crocket Cardwell Store Business $100
Sue Prudhomme – Museum of the Coastal Bend

2013 Honorary Gifts

Henry Sheppard
Al Ebert
Floyd Doehrman
Rosemary Sheppard
Dick Slack
Margaret Conrad
Charles Hadlicka
Chanky Van Eman
Mike Wheat
Lias J. Steen

Henry Sheppard
Lindy Gohmert
Robert Oliver
Albert Meta Hausser
William “Bill” Cusak, Jr.
Charles E. Cole
Lynn Bishop
Sue Sulsar
Cattle to Canvas: Six Stars in the Texas Sky

September 2012  The CTHM mounted a rare exhibit of works by six significant Texas artists: Buck Schiwetz, Berthold “Tex” Schiwetz, Charles Shorre, Kyle Polzin, Tom Stell, Jr., and Al Barnes. The Board of Directors of the Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum hosted a reception honoring the artists in the upper level Community Center. The exhibit showcased artworks celebrating ranching and cattle, landscape, and natural beauty, spanning a hundred years.

Left: Katie’s Saddle, Kyle Pozin. Oil on canvas. From the private collection of Richard & Angelina Wagner.
Many thanks to the artists and sponsors for supporting this very special cultural event. Special thanks to Sharon Steen and Event Coordinator Patricia Strobel Miller.

**Sponsors**
The Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum
Robert Oliver
Sharon Steen and Gary Dunnam
Judd & Patricia Miller

**Collectors**
Bill Blackwell
Gary Dunnam
Pat & Karyn Elder
William C. Foster
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Pam Nelson Harte
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Taste of the Trail Donors

Hearty thanks to the many businesses and individuals who generously supported Taste of the Trail 2012.

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Vanessa Cole – Vacations of Mexico

Watercolor Gang Rides Again: Texas Light Exhibit at CTHM

April 2013 Watercolor Gang artists Clay McGaughy, Finis Collins, Gordon West, and Lee Ricks have been painting together for almost fifty years. Their enduring collaboration in plein aire painting – painting outdoors, in the landscape – has earned them a loyal fan base in San Antonio and the region. Each artist has a unique style. “Otherwise, we’d all paint like Norman Rockwell,” quipped McGaughy in a recent interview.

This spring’s exhibit, Texas Light, celebrated DeWitt County landmarks and landscapes, cowboys, native wildflowers and more. The collection included recent works painted on site in Cuero and the local area. Proceeds from the exhibit and sale benefited the CTHM.

Lee Ricks: detail, Near Charco

GVEC Power Up Program Awards $20,000

The Guadalupe Valley Electric Coop, through their Power Up grant program has awarded CTHM $20,000 for its multi-purpose Outdoor Education Resource project. The GVEC Power Up grant program is funded through the GVEC Charitable Foundation, which collects funds from participating members of the cooperative who agree to have their monthly electric bill rounded up to the nearest dollar amount.

Slated for completion by mid-June, the Museum’s multi-purpose green space is located behind the Museum’s historic building and annex and will provide space for a multitude of outdoor activities, including the popular Cowboy Camp which will be held August 12 – 16, 2013. The green space is part of a larger project that includes approximately 55 new off-street parking spaces for the Museum, St. Mark’s Lutheran Church, and the northern sector of Cuero’s Downtown Historic District.
Chatting with Susan Hamilton Wallis in her home in April, I learned a lesson in pride in community as Mrs. Wallis reminisced about her life in Cuero and DeWitt County. She and her late husband Jack shared many decades of leadership in the community, but she remains unassuming about their contribution.

Susan was born in Cuero to Mary Sue (Graves) and Graham Hamilton. After graduation from Cuero High School, she attended the University of Texas at Austin, graduating in 1946 with a Bachelors degree in Science. A tennis champion, Susan coached tennis in Austin for several years before returning to her hometown of Cuero, where she continued to provide private tennis lessons. Two of her Cuero tennis students, Charlotte Zimmerman and Joyce Towery, won first place in the University Interscholastic League (UIL) state-wide tennis competition.

**LOCAL ROOTS IN AGRICULTURE** Ranching and agriculture are in her blood. Her great-great-grandfather, John Hamilton, brought young Alex Hamilton, Sr. (her great-grandfather) from their home in Kentucky to DeWitt County in approximately 1848 – soon after Texas became the 28th state. Growing up on their DeWitt County ranch, Deer Creek, Alex began his business career as a merchant in Clinton, moving to Cuero around 1872 to become one of the new county seat’s first business owners.

Alex Hamilton, a founder of the First National Bank of Cuero, was also keenly interested in ranching. He built the first cattle dipping vat in the county, and was among the first to import registered Hereford cattle from nearby Missouri in the 1890s. Susan remarked, “Herefords are still my very favorite breed of cattle,” but due to the advance of photosensitis disease in white-face cattle, “we went black,” and began breeding Black Angus.

**LIFE IN THE COMMUNITY** After Susan and Jack married, they raised a family in Cuero. All three children, Wes, Cheryl, and Sue, were born in Cuero and attended Cuero schools. Jack and his father, also deeply rooted in ranching and agriculture, raised “broad-breasted bronze” turkeys, shipping eggs nationally for breeding.

An avid skier for many years, Susan shared stories of skiing the Colorado Rockies. Perhaps her athletic gifts were inherited from her father, Graham Hamilton, who set a world record in javelin as a varsity letterman at the University of Texas.

Continuing to serve her community, Susan served as the first woman trustee on the Cuero School Board – a landmark accomplishment, also serving on the Cuero Country Club board and vestry in Cuero’s Episcopal Church.

The Wallis family has shown vital support for the Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum. Visitors will begin their tour in a section underwritten by Susan and her family, “Ranching Heritage in the Guadalupe Valley,” an overview of our unique geographic area featuring a Guadalupe River Valley landscape. A large case in the introductory wall will display signature artifacts of the region. Also underwritten by the Wallis family, “Turning Grass Into Beef” features native grasses found in the 1870s and 80s along the Guadalupe River; the exhibit also highlights several prominent ranching families of the great cattle drive era.

Cuero and the Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum are greatly indebted to individuals like Susan Wallis. Susan personifies pride in community, and her contributions to the preservation of the ranching and agricultural legacy of this region will surely be appreciated by countless guests to the Museum.

*Thank you for your invaluable support!* – R.O.  

Construction Update

Construction of permanent exhibit space is well under way. Cuero-based Weaver and Jacobs Constructors have leveled the floor, erected walls for exhibit cases, painted and wired the 4,000 SF gallery.

Austin-based Drew Patterson and Pony Allen are leading the exhibit design and installation. With the focus of transporting our visitors back to the early days of south central Texas, they will bring ranching history – where cattle were wild, the dangers many, and brave settlers few – vividly to life. Visitors will be immersed into the world of the native vaquero, and of the migrant farmers from the eastern United States, Europe and Mexico, whose stories became Texas legend.

ConocoPhillips Contributes $4,500

The ConocoPhillips Lower 48 Business Unit held an award presentation at Coastal Bend College in Beeville on March 19th where the Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum was awarded a $4,500 grant. CTHM was one of several dozen non-profit recipients, including rural fire departments, Boys and Girls Clubs, and other social services taking place in DeWitt and surrounding counties.

This generous grant will be used to complete the Museum’s multi-purpose green space, which is being constructed behind the historic building and annex. When complete, the green space will be used for a multitude of outdoor events, including the Museum’s popular, Cowboy Camp, which was established by board member Candy Glidden several summers ago.

Cowboy Camp brings together approximately 35 to 40 local and area young people who learn the rich traditions and practices of early ranching, horse-etiquette, and rural Texas life in the late 1800s. Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum is grateful for ConocoPhillips’ philanthropic contribution.
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

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To book our Community Center for your next fundraising event, business meeting, or festive social gathering, please contact Beverly Hadley (361) 277-2866.

SAVE THE DATE!

Grand Opening Celebration
Weekend of November 22 | 23
Friday Chamber Orchestra Gala
Saturday Festive Block Party