



Museum Musings

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On view
 September 17th – November
 3rd, 2005 . . .

RUSSELL LEE: THE MAN WHO MADE AMERICA'S PORTRAIT



Russell Lee, Ladies talking together at Fourth of July celebration, Belton, Texas, 1956.

Russell Lee: The Man Who Made America's Portrait opens Saturday, September 17, 2005, at both the museum (1:00 p.m.) and at Temple College's Visual Arts Gallery (2:30 p.m.). The joint exhibition, on loan from the **Witliff Gallery of Southwestern and Mexican Photography**, examines the photojournalistic work of one of the most prolific American photographers of the twentieth century. Lee (1903-1986) is well known for his photography from 1936 to 1942, working for the Farm Security Administration (FSA), a New Deal program designed to assist rural communities during the Great Depression. Of the many photographers employed by the FSA, Lee created perhaps the largest body of work, about 30 percent of approximately 164,000 images. Lee's career spans four decades. His work captured America from the wheat fields to industrial sites as well as everyday life. He worked extensively in Texas and taught at the University of Texas for eight years before retiring in 1973.

Museum staff hopes to identify the two women featured above. If you know who they might be, please let us know!

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Drs. B.J. & Bob McConnell have given the Bell County community an extraordinary gift: a collection of "flapper" dresses, unique handbags and other dresses that date back to the 19th century. The four exquisite flapper dresses, worn by Bob's mother, Harriette Klaner McConnell, are extremely rare because of their remarkably good condition; normally, the fragile chiffon of which most of these dresses are made shreds and tears, due to the weight of the beading. Another interesting aspect of them is their sizing; Bob explains that his mother wore three of the dresses before his birth, in 1922. After 1922 Harriette no longer maintained the same slim figure, but she certainly maintained her stylish sense of fashion, as the fourth (larger) dress exemplifies.

Bob gives some interesting accounts regarding his rather unusual lineage. He states that on the night that she was to make her debut with the Chicago Opera Company, Harriette eloped with the future father of Bob, Glen G. McConnell. Her father, Fred Klaner, was a mortician in 1920s Chicago who, according to family legend, buried the notorious gangster Al Capone. Interesting family!

Volunteer Recognition Coffee



Margaret Williamson, Dorothy Ann Aldrich, Mary Jean Boston

Welba Dorsey, Jane Brown

The lovely Belton home of **Walt & Jane Brown** was the perfect setting to honor our many volunteers who do so much to help the museum. From service on the Board of Trustees to assistance with all aspects of the annual Big Bell County Garage Sale, from providing quality tours to area schoolchildren to helping fold the newsletter, our volunteers do the work of one full-time employee per year. You are special, indeed.



Coming Soon.... New Holiday Ornaments!

This year, the museum continues its series of historic church ornaments and will also be creating a special ornament of the centenary Carnegie library building. The church ornament is Belton's First United Methodist Church. Its historical marker reads:

Founded in 1850 when Bell County was created, this church was part of a circuit until 1869. By the 1880s, the members had outgrown their original church building at Pearl and First Avenue. This larger sanctuary was erected in 1884-86 Constructed of locally made bricks with a native stone foundation, it features Gothic style detailing.

Both ornaments will retail for \$15.00 plus tax; museum members receive a 10% discount on these and other items in the museum store.



The museum welcomes its new assistant, **Candice Thaler**. Candice, a Belton High School and Temple College graduate, also attends Tarleton State University. She replaces **Jordon Winker**, who is relocating to Oklahoma to finish her degree. Welcome, Candice!

MEN AT WORK

Work is proceeding rapidly on the museum's new construction project, as attested by the gentlemen at right. They are building the elevator shaft and are well on the way to completing the walls of the structure that will connect the Carnegie building with the Guffy building. Every day brings new excitement as the project continues, and we are grateful to the community and the many museum supporters for making this expansion possible. The Board and staff are eager to show off what will soon be a beautiful new facility.



Please join us! Take part in preserving the rich history of the Bell County region by joining the Friends of the Museum Association. Your membership allows us to continue award-winning programming through exhibits and educational activities that enhance our county-wide community. Benefits of membership include discounts in the museum bookstore, invitations to special events, and the satisfaction of knowing that YOU are an important part of the preservation of Bell County and Central Texas history. Together, we make our community great!

Yes! I want to support the Bell County Museum by becoming a member of the Friends of the Museum Association.

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| _____ \$10 Student | _____ \$100 Patron |
| _____ \$25 Friend | _____ \$250 Partner |
| _____ \$50 Family | _____ \$500 Associate |
| _____ \$75 Advocate | _____ \$1,000+ Benefactor |

THANK YOU

to our

New & Renewing Friends

Friend:

- Mia & Ed Bellens
- Mr. & Mrs. E.W. Berry, Jr.
- Debra Brock
- Judy Greene
- Bea Huston
- Marietta Parker
- Betty Prescott
- Faye & Jimmy Stewart
- Bernice Sunbury

Family:

- Alton Cook
- Nan & Andy Crowson
- Sarah & Joe Dorn
- Ruth & J.W. Perry
- Deborah & John Stokes
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- Dorothy Ann Aldrich
- Mary Jean & Paul Boston
- Marilyn & Luther Brewer
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- Judy & Don Cast
- Hon. & Mrs. Bill Jones
- Bob & Bettye Kennedy
- Adele B. McCarron
- Mike & Margaret Williamson

Partner:

- William & Marion Brakebill

Associate:

- Dorothy & George Ohlendorf

MEMORIALS

In memory of
Elbert Aldrich
by
Mr. & Mrs. Sol Neman
Lynda & Bill Stokes
Ann & Dennis Turk

In memory of
Harry G. Austin
by Stephanie Turnham

In memory of
J.D. Cannon
by Bob & Bettye Kennedy

In memory of
Ralph McDonald
by Denzel Neal & Elaine Ward

In memory of
Irvin McLeod
by Bob & Bettye Kennedy

In memory of
Cora L. Mulhollan
by Betty, Lisa & Jeff McCreight

In memory of
Bob Jones
by Anna & Al Klaus



Congratulations to Belton Jr. High teacher Kay Coppin and her 2004-05 Voyager Team! The AP English students researched and produced a comprehensive history of 400 N. Wall Street, the address of 90 years of Belton secondary education. Well done!

A contribution has been made to the museum honoring
Dr. & Mrs. John Barton
by Mr. & Mrs. E.A. Limmer, Jr.