

museum musings

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THE GAULT SITE: A WEALTH OF NEW ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Our new permanent archaeology exhibition is scheduled to open on Saturday, May 2nd. *The Gault Site: A Wealth of New Archaeological Evidence* is an interactive experience that will focus on how the Gault Site was used by early peoples as an extremely important source for tool making. Evidence found at the site is changing what we know about the past and the first people in the Americas. The exhibition is made possible by the Bell County Museum Association, Inc., Bell County Museum Friends of the Museum, Bosque Memorial Museum, Jerry Bridwell, Bob Burleson, E. Rhodes & Leona B. Carpenter Foundation, The Gault School of Archaeological Research, Calvin Smith, Texas Archeological Research Laboratory, and Texas Beyond History. We are thrilled with this project, and hope you will be, too!

On March 14th.....

it's the greatest flea market in Central Texas!

Big Bell County Garage Sale

9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Bell County Expo Center, Belton

Admission: only \$2 per person; children under twelve are free!

Free parking! Food is available! And remember.....

It's not just a day - it's an experience.

New Book by Rick Miller Now Available

Rick Miller's newest book is *Bell County Texas: Marriage Licenses, 1850-1899*. Available for purchase at \$49.95 at the museum, the book is a wealth of information for genealogists, as it includes more than 10,000 licenses issued during the period 1850-1899. It took quite some time to compile. Rick said, "This was one of those projects where I feared that I had bitten off more than I could chew and took over a year to complete, . . ." He adds that some notable names are included here, such as the marriage on December 31, 1899, of James E. Ferguson and Miriam A. Wallace, later known as Ma and Pa Ferguson, as well as family members of the gunfighter Bloody Bill Longley. Museum members received a 10% discount off of their purchase.

From the Collection: Gifts to the Bell County Museum

The award-winning Bell County Museum was established in 1988 by the Bell County Commissioners Court to preserve, collect and interpret the rich history of the Bell County region. Over the years, the museum collection has grown to almost 13,000 artifacts that are cared for, stored and exhibited for the benefit of the public. Most of these objects are donations.

When someone makes a contribution to the museum collection, they are contributing to our knowledge of ourselves and our environment – who we are, and where we came from. People are often frustrated when they visit the museum and do not see their gift on exhibit. There are several reasons that objects may not be on view.

First, the sheer number of objects in the collection prohibits them from being placed on exhibition at one time. Also, the intrinsic nature of various objects, such as textiles, archival materials and photographs, prevents regular exhibition due to the tough exhibition environment (dust, lighting, transport, and handling). Third, creating an exhibit is often likened to writing a book, or even giving birth! There are numerous facets to exhibition development that are extremely time consuming, expensive and require great effort from many people.

From the Collection: Gifts to the Bell County Museum features an eclectic mix of objects from the Bell County Museum collection. Many of the objects, such as the Rio Airways airplane and the sidesaddle, are on view for the first time. We are grateful for each and every donation, and try to meet the expectations of the public whenever possible regarding exhibitions.

One of the many interesting objects on exhibit is a Rio Airways model airplane of an N15RA, a gift from the Estate of Pete Howe in 2004. Ted Connell, a pioneer in the airline passenger industry in Killeen and Central Texas, founded Rio Airways. It was a regional passenger airline based in Killeen, the largest city in Bell County. The airline began operations around 1970, and went out of business in 1987. Ted Connell was a civic leader in Killeen who began Connell Chevrolet in 1946. A WWII veteran, he also served as Commander-In-Chief of the national Veterans of Foreign Wars. He died in 2001. The terminal at Killeen-Fort Hood Regional Airport is named the Ted C. Connell Terminal.

Another object on view is a Colt .45 Army revolver, ca. 1920, from the Estate of George Hogwood in 2008. Although no hard evidence exists, this revolver is believed to have belonged to Temple Police Chief Wiley Fisher, the unfortunate victim of the Bonds-Fisher feud. Following is a synopsis of that tale:

Former Bell County Sheriff Albert Bonds, believing that Temple Police Chief Wiley Fisher sought Bonds' professional demise, shoots and kills Fisher in front of Eads Funeral Home, located on Central Avenue, about halfway between East Avenue and Penelope Street in Belton. Bonds subsequently surrenders to Sheriff John R. Bigham and is accompanied back to Belton by Texas Ranger Frank Hamer (relentless pursuer of Bonnie and Clyde), but is never charged with the slaying. Bonds is then murdered in a drive-by shooting which took place at the bank building on the corner of East and Central avenues. Although almost everyone suspected Wiley's eldest son, Monroe Fisher, he was tried but found not guilty of the killing.

Finally, a pair of cowgirl boots made by Lawton Golden in 1952 is a gift of Jane Potter in 2002. The blue and white leather boots, made by the Lawton Golden Boot Shop, were worn once by the donor. She was, as the boots state, "Miss Belton 1952," and was sponsored by Griggs Equipment Company.

These objects and many more are on view through May 30. Stop by and marvel at the past!

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
- \$25 Friend
- \$50 Family
- \$75 Advocate
- \$100 Patron
- \$250 Partner
- \$500 Associate
- \$1000+ Benefactor

THANK YOU
to our
New & Renewing
Friends

Friend:
Dr. & Mrs. Bill Frick
Tom Heard
Merle Mahler
JoAnn & Stan Pemberton

Family:
Donna & Jim Ernst
Adelaide & Bob Heckman
Dr. & Mrs. Wade Knight
Dottie & Joe Oliver
Miriam & Jack Oliver

Advocate:
Ken Peel

Patron:
Eva Marie & Paul Dyke
Dale Marie & Fred Springer

MEMORIA

In memory of:

Wayne Baden
by Wanda & Dr. Jack Weinblatt

Betty Duckworth Bunker
by Mary Lapwing

Frank Cannon
by
Charlynn & Louis Casey
Nicholas & Beth Christoff
E.J. & Martha Daniel
Camilla & Don Gidden
Woman's Wednesday Club

Roy Finney
by Stephanie Turnham

John Garth
by Celinda Hallbauer

Jack Hemingway
by Roy Leach

E.A. Limmer, Jr.
by Celinda Hallbauer

Truett Tomlinson
By
Bell County Judge & Commissioner's Court
Gloria & Pete Ramos
Peggy Dillard

Charlie Turnbo
by
Joan & Jack Schrock
Stephanie Turnham

Exceptional Volunteers

Welba Dorsey and Pat Davis are among our many amazing volunteers. Welba interprets the life of her grandmother, and greets schoolchildren in the log cabin in her "19th-century" clothing as she is knitting. Pat is truly intrepid as she guides children through our *Passport through Time* exhibition. We are really grateful to them and to the positive impact they have on our young visitors.

NEW AT THE MUSEUM! Join us for our *Taste of Bell County*, happening every 3rd Saturday from 2-4 p.m. Enjoy free butter churning, corn dodgers and fun activities in March!