

museum musings

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Opening November 10 . . .

Lee and Grant an NEH On the Road exhibit

By the end of the Civil War, most Americans considered either Robert E. Lee or Ulysses S. Grant to be a hero. The reputations of the two generals, molded in part by a sectional bias that would enhance the achievements of one often to the detriment of the other, would wax and wane over the next 140 years.



The exhibit *Lee and Grant* provides a major reassessment of the lives, careers, and historical impact of Civil War generals Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant. It also encourages audiences to move beyond the traditional mythology of both men and rediscover them within the context of their own time – based on their own words and those of their contemporaries. *Lee and Grant* presents photographs, paintings, prints, coins, reproduction clothing, accoutrements owned by the two men, documents written in their own

hands, and biographical and historical records to reveal each man in his historical and cultural context, allowing audiences to compare the ways each has been remembered for almost 150 years.

“Visitors will enjoy discovering similarities and differences between Lee and Grant that are rarely pointed out,” said Dr. William M. S. Rasmussen, exhibition co-curator and the Lora M. Robins Curator of Art at the Virginia Historical Society. “These generals have been explored by historians for decades, but *Lee and Grant* is the first exhibition to present the two men together so that visitors can make decisions about them, side by side, based on facts. We hope that after they view *Lee and Grant*, visitors will give more thought to the legacies of both generals.”

A special opening reception will be held on Saturday, November 13, from 2-4 p.m. Re-enactors from the Robert M. White Chapter of the Sons of Confederate Veterans will set up camp on the museum grounds, a speaker will discuss the history of the war, and Civil War-type foods will be served (don’t worry, we will not serve hard tack).

Lee and Grant has been made possible by NEH On the Road, a special initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The exhibit was originally developed by the Virginia Historical Society, and co-curated by Dr. William M.S. Rasmussen and Dr. Robert S. Tilton, Chairman of the Department of English, University of Connecticut, Storrs. The exhibit is toured by Mid-America Arts Alliance through NEH On the Road. NEH On the Road offers an exciting opportunity for communities of all sizes to experience some of the best exhibitions funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

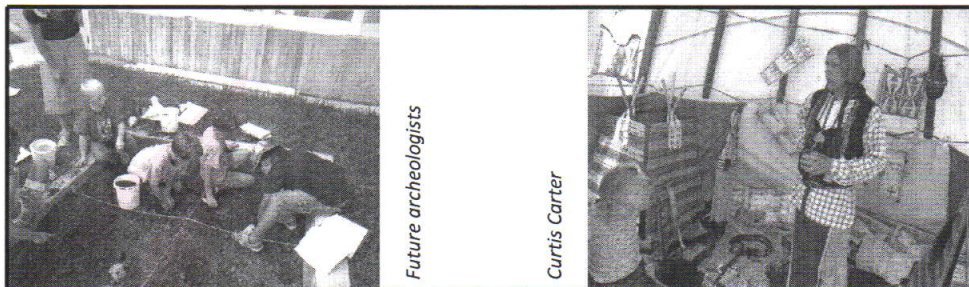
Historical Marker Dedication * Historical Marker Dedication * Historical Marker Dedication

Please join us for a historical marker dedication for the Belton Woman's Commonwealth. The dedication will be held on Saturday, October 16, 2010, at 2:00 p.m., at 400 N. Pearl in Belton. Dr. Diane Howard of UMHB will reprise her role as Martha McWhirter, founder of the Commonwealth. Refreshments will be served after the dedication at the museum.

Members of this interesting group called themselves the True Church Colony, and later incorporated as the Belton Woman's Commonwealth. Beltonians called them many things, but mostly the Sanctified Sisters. Some newspapers of the era referred to them as that "strange society of women." Regardless of the epithets, a primarily female commune organized around religious beliefs in 19th-century Texas and became an unusually autonomous and successful economic force in the Central Texas area that lasted well into the 20th century.

The Commonwealth formed between 1867, the year of Martha McWhirter's sanctification experience, and 1880, when the group began to organize as a communal society. The "cult of true womanhood," the struggle for women's suffrage, the temperance movement, increasing urbanization, spiritualism, and the rising divorce rate helped shape the development of the institution. The Commonwealth also fits within the post-Civil War framework of the emancipation of slaves.

Finally, the utopian movement helped shape the Commonwealth. The formation of the United States was, as our history books tell us, a "great experiment," and an interest in ideal living existed in pockets of the United States, but was rarely successful. The Commonwealth was successful in part because its members increasingly relied on utilizing their considerable housekeeping skills to fill community needs, rather than existing solely as a religious group. Within this rich context, the Commonwealth developed as a group based upon four tenets: the commitment to celibacy; non-denominationalism; dream interpretation; and communal living.



Future archeologists

Curtis Carter

October is Texas Archeology Month

The Bell County Museum is gearing up for a busy Texas Archeology Month. Every Saturday in October, our archeology pits will be open for youngsters to conduct mock digs. This is a drop-in event that is also free, and will be held from noon until 5 p.m. The museum conducts mock digs in two simulated excavation sites, an 1880s farmhouse and a 2,000 BC campsite. Tools are provided!

On Saturday, October 9, living history interpreter Curtis Carter will be here from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. Curtis uses a Cheyenne tipi as a backdrop for his program. The tipi contains materials that depict an 1860s Cheyenne household. Dressed in Cheyenne attire, Carter will demonstrate how toys, tools, and other implements were used.

On Saturday, October 23, we will host a tour to the Gault Site. Located in southwestern Bell County, the Gault Site is recognized as one of the most important archeological sites in America. The 2 ½ hour tour covers about one mile of gentle terrain. Space is limited to 30 persons. Participants will meet at the museum at 8:30 a.m. \$10 per person, payable to the Gault School. Please call or email to register.

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 and Renewing Friends

- Friend:* Debra Brock * Dorothy & Jack Martt * Wade Matthews * Faye Stewart * Dortha & Jim Walker
- Family:* Dorothy Ann Aldrich * Caroline & Benny Bay * Mary & Cleo Bay * Marilyn & Dr. Luther Brewer
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 Don Miller * Carwyn Smith, Subway * Margaret & Mike Williamson
- Partner:* Dr. & Mrs. R.J. Carabasi
- Associate:* Lou & Dave Palmer

<p>IN MEMORY OF:</p> <p><i>Betty Ann Barge</i> by Lon Curtis Elly & Cliff Jones Susan & Mike Shobe Faye Stewart Ann & Dennis Turk</p> <p><i>Dr. John A. Barton, Jr.</i> by Dr. & Mrs. Ramon Carver Lon Curtis Kathy & Ted Floca George W. Tyler Chapter, Sons of the Republic of Texas Stephanie Turnham</p>	<p>IN MEMORY OF:</p> <p><i>Bill Ashe</i> by Dr. & Mrs. Ramon Carver</p> <p><i>Nora Guthrie</i> by Caroline & Benny Bay Stephanie Turnham</p> <p><i>Anita & Joe Holt</i> by Dr. & Mrs. Ramon Carver</p> <p><i>Ruth Howe</i> by Dr. & Mrs. Ramon Carver</p> <p><i>Ann Petty</i> by Anna & Al Klaus</p>
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STAFF NEWS	<p>We welcome Troy Gray as our new program coordinator. Troy comes to us from the Waco Mammoth Site, and holds a master's degree in museum studies from Baylor University. His BA is from Olivet Nazarene University in Bourbonnais, Illinois and is in social justice and history/political science. We are glad to have Troy with us. Meanwhile, we congratulate Museum Assistant Candice Thaler upon receiving her BA in history from Texas A & M Central Texas. <i>Good job!</i></p>
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