Killeen fixing historic Blackburn house

After lying in ruins for more than two years, the John Blackburn Log House is at last undergoing reconstruction and preservation for the future, thanks to the sustained efforts of Brett E. Williams, City of Killeen Community Services executive director, and his staff.

High winds and a possible tornado brought the historic structure down in the spring of 2015. Built on Blackburn’s 30-acre farm in 1863, according to family tradition, near the Palo Alto community, the oak-log house was later replaced with a larger home just before Blackburn enlisted in the Confederate Cavalry, having served in the Confederate State Militia since 1861.

The log house was moved in 1976 to city property near the Killeen Community Center as “an artifact of frontier life in Bell County.” Though partially hidden by other structures, it is accessible at the intersection of Veterans Memorial Boulevard and W. S. Young Drive.

Contractor for the cabin’s restoration is Blue Moon Builders of Austin. Scope of the job, which began September 5, features attempts to use and preserve as much original material as possible, including log walls and porch roof lumber, along with rebuilding both gable ends to be waterproofed, insulated and paneled inside. In addition, specifications call for construction of new stairs and a handicap ramp at the rear of the house. Price tag is $31,500, and projected finish date is November 3. Williams cautions, however, “Keep in mind that inclement weather could impact the timeline.” A.L.

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Participants in the 1986 dedication of the John Blackburn Log House Texas Historical Commission marker in 1986, according to a preserved program, included Dr. Charles Patterson, chairman, Killeen Sesquicentennial Committee; E. A. Limmer, chairman, Bell County Historical Commission; Mayor Sidney E. Young; Allen C. Cloud, and the Jack M. Cloud Family, marker unveiling/reading. Acknowledgments went to artist (the late) John Carter, the Bob Gilmore Center and the Killeen Area Heritage Association.

* November 7 ballot has seven constitutional amendments!*

RR&HM plans New Year’s masquerade

Folks connected with Temple’s Railroad & Heritage Museum are beginning to see “the light at the end of the tunnel” in a major downtown endeavor known as the Santa Fe Plaza project.

To celebrate the progress that will return the museum’s parking area, the board and staff are putting together a masquerade occasion for New Year’s Eve, December 31, reports RR&HM director Stephanie Long.

“The plaza is progressing,” says Long. “We have been without a parking lot since July and have been shuttling visitors and Amtrak passengers from the community market pavilions to the east of the depot, but expect the new parking lot to be open shortly, with an entrance off Central Avenue onto 9th Street.” More information is available at www.templerrhm.org or www.facebook.com/templerrhm.

Don’t forget to vote!

Bell County Calendar
Night at the Museum (BCM) October 26, 6 pm
Bell County and WWI (BCM) until October 28
Clans Gathering, Games . . . November 10-12
Carnegie Mystery (BCM) . . . November 7
KAHA Veterans Day event November 11, 1 pm
BCGS (TPL) . . . . . . . November 21, 6:30 pm
BCHC Christmas Party . . November 27, 6 pm
Carnegie Mystery . . . . December 1
Pioneer Christmas (SM&CH) . . December 9
Gault Site tour (BCM) . . . December 9
BCGS (TPL) . . . . . . December 12, 6:30 pm
Sign exhibit (RR&HM) . . opens December 15
RR&HM masquerade event . . December 31
Family Day (RR&HM) . . . January 6, 11 am
BCGS (TPL) . . . . January 16, 6:30 pm
BCHC meeting . . . . . January 22, 7 pm
Russell Lee exhibit (RR&HM) from January 27
Family Day (RR&HM) . . . February 3, 11 am
BCGC (TPL) . . . February 20, 6:30 pm
BCHC meeting . . . February 26, 7 pm
Family Day (RR&HM) . . . March 3, 11 am
Backyard exhibit (RR&HM) . . opens March 17
BCGS (TPL) . . . March 20, 6:30 pm
BCHC meeting . . . March 26, 6:30 pm
BCGS (TPL) . . . . April 17, 6:30 pm
BCHC to meet at Cotton Patch Cafe

On Monday, November 27, Bell County Historical Commission members will gather at Cotton Patch Cafe on the north side of Temple Mall for their annual Christmas party and meeting.

Social hour will begin at 6 p.m. with the meeting scheduled for 6:30 p.m. A Dutch Treat dinner will follow. Members should respond to Shirley Holleman no later than November 25 at shirlman@att.net or by phone at 254-780-1578.

Salado to host Scots for 56th annual meet

A native of Edinburgh, Scotland, will kick off the annual Gathering of the Clans and Highland Games on November 10-12.

Ed Miller, who now makes his home in Austin, will present a free, one-hour program, Edinburgh and Glasgow in Song, Literature and Humor Friday, November 10, at 1 p.m. at the Salado Public Library, 1151 North Main Street in Salado.

The Salado Museum is the place to contact for information, registration and tickets for the 56th annual gathering and games in Salado, one of the longest running Scottish gatherings in the state of Texas.

Salado’s Christmas Parade will begin on Thursday, November 30, at 6 p.m.

The Salado Museum will also sponsor Pioneer Christmas during the second weekend of the Christmas Stroll, December 8-1. It is free and open to the public. Plans for the annual Tour of Homes are still being formulated.

More information about Salado holiday events is available at www.saladomuseum.org or by calling Madeleine Calcote at the museum (254-947-5232).

Admiring one of three memorial stones placed recently at South Belton Cemetery in honor of the late Michael Kelsey, longtime preservationist and member of the Bell County Historical Commission, are his wife Nancy Kelsey of Belton (left), his niece Scarlett Gott and his sister Donna Gott, both of Temple. Mike served 18 years as research librarian at Temple Public Library and was active in the Temple Historic Preservation Committee and the Bell County Historical Commission; he was author or co-author of numerous books about Texas history.

The stones are part of the Belton Legacy Program, an initiative of the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce “in response to several requests from residents who wanted to participate in a tree or bench program,” according to the CoC website. The Kelseys have planted numerous trees and shrubs at SBC. According to Nancy, Mike planted his favorite tree, the cypress, in several places at the cemetery, and the three stones in his honor were placed beside those young cypress trees.

The BCHC’s cemetery committee has now assumed a greater role in the care of SBC, building on a history of locating, documenting and maintaining more than 175 cemeteries within the county. This development echoes the Legacy Program’s mission: “to provide the citizens of Belton with an opportunity to honor or memorialize an individual or group through the beautification of the city’s park system.” A.H.
No ceremonies, but plenty of cavalry history . . .

Fred Adolphus is one of those horse-lovin’ Texans – the kind who rode a horse before he could walk, someone who since childhood has cultivated a broad knowledge about the equine world. Today, he directs Fort Hood’s 3rd Cavalry Museum where equines may be hard to find, but one can find plenty about the cavalry and its long history in warfare.

Before war-making became completely mechanized, horses and mules performed the heavy lifting to move men, weapons and supplies to prospective battle sites. Then, at a time when communication was poor or non-existent, equines and their riders often had to change direction completely and race to the place where battle was raging and sometimes already over.

The United States Army still used equines at the beginning of World War II, but eliminated most such units by the middle of the conflict except for a handful of units for ceremonial purposes; 1st Cav Horse Detachment at Fort Hood is one of those units.

Historically, Adolphus says responsibilities of equine units always included transporting soldiers, transferring supplies and moving artillery. When capacity became limited, soldiers walked. Military leadership considered the cavalry to be of the lowest logistical importance, Adolphus observes.

Mules have one-third more pulling capacity than horses and can survive better on grass, whereas horses need more grain. Mules, with their obstinate reputation, will quit when situations become tough; a horse, according to Adolphus, feels no fear and will run until he dies.

A compatriot of Major Robert M. White Camp #150, Sons of Confederate Veterans,3 Adolphus entertained members recently by describing Confederate cavalry traditions, as well as U.S. (Union) Army cavalry principles. The U.S. military tradition, Adolphus says, was centered on management, training, heavy on infantry and firepower. The Confederate or “Southern” techniques during the Civil War depended on charismatic leadership, individualism, bravery and luck.

“Our cavalry was usually mounted – at least in the beginning – and had rather romantic ideas about their roles.” But the Confederate Army had too much cavalry, according to Adolphus, which hampered management. “Most CSA cavalry units were actually mounted infantrymen. They rode to battle as cavalry, then dismounted, tied their mounts to a nearby tree . . . (continued after centerfold)
In the 19th century the U.S. Cavalry borrowed Prussian-style helmets for dress occasions.

The 3rd U.S. Cavalry was involved in the Philippine Insurrection from 1899-1902. Enlisted men typically wore this dark khaki uniform.

Enlisted Rough Riders had to leave their mounts in Florida after the three-month Spanish-American War in 1898. Here they parade after their return from Cuba.
Fred Adolphus, director of 3rd Cavalry Museum at Fort Hood, has been associated with military museums for 21 years.

footnotes from “No ceremonies, but plenty of cavalry history . . .”

1 Whenever that was! Does one go back to the seven-month Roman Siege of Masada in present-day Israel in 73 or 74 A.D., a stand-off that eventually employed a catapult? Or even earlier in 399 B.C. when Dionsias the Elder, ruler of the Greek colony of Syracuse in Sicily, supervised the development of a shoulder-mounted catapult as he prepared for a war against Carthage, which rivaled Syracuse for control of the western Mediterranean.

2 From Wikipedia: Immediately preceding World War II (1941-1945), the U.S. Cavalry began changing to a mechanized, mounted force. The last horse-mounted cavalry charge by a U.S. Cavalry unit took place on the Bataan Peninsula in the Philippines in early 1942. The 26th Cavalry Regiment of the allied Philippine Scouts executed the charge against Japanese forces near the village of Morong on January 16, 1942. The 10th Mountain Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop of the 10th Mountain Division, while not designated as U.S. Cavalry, conducted the last horse-mounted charge of any Army organization while engaged in Austria in 1945. An impromptu pistol charge by the Third Platoon was carried out when the troop encountered a machine gun nest in an Italian town sometime between April 14 and April 23, 1945. In addition, shortly after the attack on the World Trade Center in 2011, the U.S. military assigned 12 Army Special Forces troops and two Air Force combat controllers to join the allied Northern Alliance. Once they arrived in-country, they needed transportation suitable to the difficult mountainous terrain of Northern Afghanistan. The men were offered and accepted horses by the Afghan tribes they were supporting.

3 A SCV compatriot for 42 years, Adolphus joined the organization with his father Judge Jim Adolphus in 1975 in Houston, Texas. His two direct Confederate ancestors included Seaborn Jones Clack, 42nd Georgia Infantry Regiment, who was captured by Union forces three times. The other was James Adams Hooper, of Buck’s Mississippi Cavalry, who was wounded in his first battle at Resaca, Georgia. In addition to listing some 30 uncles who served in Confederate forces, Adolphus himself has served as camp commander at Atlanta, Georgia, and DeRidder, Louisiana.
and proceeded as infantry.” (Their descendants tend to forget their ancestors’ “dismounted” service. – A.L.)

Mortality statistics regarding CSA cavalry units are staggering: 2,500,000 horses dead along with 1,200,000 men, although numbers continue to be debated.

At today’s 3rd Cavalry Museum, ties to historic cavalry responsibilities, tactics and traditions abound. Among these links are black Stetsons and spurs with dress uniforms. The museum’s showcases are full of uniforms, headgear and accessories from historic conflicts in which the organization has been involved.

A graduate of Texas A&M University with a major in history, Adolphus holds a master’s degree in History: American Strategic Culture from Louisiana State University; he served three years on Army active duty. He took over 3rd Cavalry Museum management in 2010 after serving eight years as director of the Fort Polk Museum in Louisiana. He has also been associated with the 1st Infantry Division Museum, 1st Armored Division Museum, Army in Atlanta Museum and National Museum of the Army Reserve.

Besides Adolphus, the museum staff includes civilian assistant Jack Dugan, soon to complete 50 years in government service, plus six military members: SFC Edwin Pierce; SGT Carlos Gonzalez; SGT Shannon Jones; SGT Henry Arendt; SGT Devon Elshafie; and Specialist 4 Anthony Alicea.

The museum is located in Building #409 on 461st Tank Battalion Avenue, former home of the 4th Infantry Museum, the 2nd Armored Division Museum and the 1st Armored Division Museum. Hours are Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sunday, 12 noon-4 p.m.; and federal holidays, 12 noon-4 p.m. The museum is closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year’s Day. Phone number: 254-287-8812. A.L.
Terry Tyler, commander, Major Robert M. White, Camp #150, Sons of Confederate Veterans, has announced that SCV compatriots will work to clean up the McBryde Cemetery on Saturday, October 28, at 10 a.m. Tyler and his wife Judy are members of the Bell County Historical Cemetery committee. According to John Hoover, the original name of the cemetery was McBryde-Hoover, but he does not know why the “Hoover” portion was dropped. John is a descendant of the Hoover family for whom the cemetery was originally named.

The marker is inscribed as follows: “Mancel T. McBryde (1821-1896), who brought his family here from Georgia in the early 1860s, began this family cemetery in 1885 upon the death of his wife, Jane W. Goar McBryde (1826-1885). A farmer and rancher, McBryde selected a site south of his family’s home on which to bury his wife. The McBrydes had eight children, four of whom married into the Hoover family. McBryde and Hoover descendants are also interred here, the burials facing east. The oldest McBryde family graves are enclosed in stone. The McBryde Cemetery is maintained by descendants. (1986)”

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The Bell County Genealogical Society will meet on Tuesday, November 14, at 6:30 p.m. on the third floor of the Temple Public Library. Speaker will be Nancy Kelsey who will discuss “How to Publish a Family History Book.” New officers for 2018 will be elected. BCGS will meet on Tuesday, December 12, for its annual Christmas get-together and installation of officers for 2018-2019. More information is available from Kathy Taylor at kathy.taylor56@yahoo.com.

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Annette and Henry Lucksinger are grateful to those who purchased Remembering Texans and their Experiences during the Civil War, a collection of articles that appeared in the Bell County Historical Commission newsletter from 2006 to 2017. Those who contributed for extra printing costs made on-time delivery of the volume possible and saved us from collating more than 3,000 individual pages of text. Thank you!
The Bell County Museum will sponsor Night at the Museum on Thursday, October 26, a pre-Hallowe’en event from 6 to 8 p.m. Theme for the family event is “History comes to life,” and participants have been encouraged to wear costumes, meet important people in Texas history, participate in a costume contest, make crafts and play games. Museum director Coleman Hamilton reminds attendees that the event is “kid-friendly,” not a haunted house, so frightening costumes are not appropriate.

The museum’s Work, Fight, Give: American Relief Posters of WWII exhibit will continue through November 30 in the upstairs Carnegie Room. The exhibit is a collection of original poster art, poster stamps, photographs, banners and programs issued by various relief agencies and the National War Fund created in early 1942 to assist nations and peoples devastated during the first part of the war. The exhibit is on tour from ExhibitsUSA, Mid-America Arts Alliance.

Carnegie Mystery! After the first session on November 17 was sold out within 48 hours, a second session will occur on December 1. Participants may register for the 7 p.m. or 8 p.m. show time, with one hour to solve the mystery. Pre-registration is required, using a form on the museum website (www.bellcountymuseum.org). Tickets are $10 per person. Clues will be hidden throughout the Passport Through Time exhibit.

On Veterans Day, November 11, at 2 p.m., the local Quilts of Valor organization will honor returning veterans with handmade quilts currently on exhibit at the museum.

The museum will host a booth at the Christmas on the Farm event at the Bell County EXPO Center on Saturday, December 2, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Children will be able to make a special treat for Santa’s reindeer.

Now is the time to register for a tour of the Gault Site, one of the most important archeological sites in America. The 2.5-hour, approximately one-mile walking tour will take no more than 30 visitors over gentle terrain. Participants will meet at the museum on Saturday, December 9, at 8:30 a.m., driving their own vehicles in company with a museum staff member. The site is located near the Bell-Williamson county line between Salado and Florence. Information about the significance of the Gault Site is available at www.gaultschool.org. Fee is $10 per person, payable to the Gault School. Pre-registration is required by calling 254-933-5243.

Discovery Day – Holiday Fest at the museum on Saturday, December 9, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., will feature Charley Chisholm. Children and their families will learn about winter holidays, including Christmas, Hanukkah and St. Nicholas Day.

The museum has recently joined the North American Reciprocal Museums program. NARM requires that museum members join their museums at the $100 level. BCM members at this level will receive member benefits at more than 900 museums and cultural institutions across the continent. Hamilton is currently distributing NARM membership cards to qualified BCM members.