



**Bell County  
Historical Commission  
Newsletter**

**Spring 2013**  
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Bell County Courthouse  
Belton, Texas 76513

***Holland's 39th Corn Festival set June 13-15***

If someone visiting the annual Holland Corn Festival doesn't find something he enjoys, it's probably because he's not looking. Scheduled on Father's Day weekend, the fest begins with a carnival on Thursday, June 13.

Granger Smith and his band will perform for Saturday night's concert/dance, according to festival chairman Stanley Koonsen. Advance tickets for the 7:30 p.m. to 1 a.m. event are available for \$12 online at [www.hollandcornfest.com](http://www.hollandcornfest.com) or at Cavender's in Temple.

Friday night's dance will feature Kenny Orts; admission is \$5, and no coolers will be allowed.

More than a dozen activities on Saturday, June 15, should appeal to many, with a 5K run beginning at 8 a.m. The traditional parade is scheduled at 10 a.m., followed by a flag-raising ceremony and crowning of local royalty.

Contests will begin at 12 noon with a horseshoe tournament, followed by corn-eating, cornseed-spitting, corncob-throwing, corncob bobbing, a corncob relay and chicken-flying competitions.

Other attractions include a barbecue cook-off and multiple arts and crafts vendors, plus barbecue plate lunches on sale by the Holland Independent School District, corn-on-the-cob provided by the Holland's Future Farmers of America chapter and the Corn Festival Beer Booth.

More information is available at 254-657-2568 or [www.hollandcornfest.com](http://www.hollandcornfest.com).

**HH officials study Comanche Gap possibilities**

Harker Heights city manager Steve Carpenter and his staff have concluded consultations with architect Brent Lueck for a master plan to develop the Comanche Gap site as a history-themed park. The Heights city council is currently discussing that plan and will soon make a decision about the property's future, Carpenter notes.

In April Carpenter has been organizing a volunteer group, composed primarily of high school students and service club members, to begin cleaning and clearing the site.

The city purchased 19 acres of land 2012 from the family of the late Bill Alford, who operated a family-oriented park for several decades, beginning in 1963. The site is a "gap" in a hilly chain from the Lampasas River to Nolan Creek along one of the oldest Indian trails in the southwest. A Texas Historical Commission marker, awarded in 1967, disappeared in the 1980s, but will be replaced by the city of Harker Heights as part of the site's development as a park with a interpretive walking trail, a hike-and-bike trail and family recreational site. It will also remain the site of the annual Medicine Man ceremony, established in 1979.

**Temple, SCV join forces for BTJ #5 May 17-19**

The City of Temple is assisting the Major Robert M. White Camp #1250, Sons of Confederate Veterans, with the fifth annual *Battle of Temple Junction* at Bend of the River Ranch on May 17-19.

According to camp commander James Dossey, Temple is underwriting site costs, as well as arranging for area school children to attend the event on Friday, May 17. The new site features more space, shaded camp sites for re-enactors, better access to water and a location on Interstate-35 that will be an easier place for visitors to find.

History stations currently scheduled for education day on May 17 include a cannon demonstration; homefront sewing by Cathy Akins, United Daughters of the Confederacy; Civil War-period fashions, Katelyn Heisch, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor; a period toys exhibit, Bell County Museum; a grieving widow played by Linda Wooley; Civil War medicine, "Doc" James Bureson; and blacksmithing, "Stringbean" David Lowry.

Period music will provide atmosphere, according to planners, and children will have free time to visit sutlers with souvenirs for sale.

Former commander John Larson, known as "saddler to the 6th," urges potential visitors and participants to check the camp's website, [www.templebattle.com](http://www.templebattle.com), for updates on plans for the event or to call 254-760-3492 for more information.

***Bell County Calendar***

- Blackland Center marker dedication . . . . . **April 23, 1 pm**
- 'Celebrate Killeen Festival' . . . . . **April 25-27**
- Czech Muzika, Texas Style* . . . . . **May 1-December 1**
- Book signing, Charles O. Heller . . . . . **May 2, 5:30 pm**
- Holland community garage sale, auction, run . . . . . **May 4**
- Czech living history demonstrations . . . . . **May 11**
- Battle of Temple Junction*. . . . . **May 17-19**
- BCHC meeting . . . . . **May 27, 7 pm**
- Walking tour (Belton) . . . . . **June 6, 6 pm**
- Holland Corn Festival . . . . . **June 13-15**
- BCHC meeting . . . . . **June 24, 7 pm**
- 'Favorite Things' exhibit (BCM) . . . . . **June 29**
- Independence Day . . . . . **July 4**
- Summer camp (BCM). . . . . **July 9-12**
- Walking tour (Belton) . . . . . **July 11, 6 pm**
- BCHC meeting . . . . . **July 22, 7 pm**
- Summer camp (BCM) . . . . . **July 23-26**
- The Bison: American Icon* (BCM) . . . . . **September 1**
- Dr. Dixon marker dedication . . . . . **September 24, 9 am**

## ***Holland, Texas – Texas population center and lots more!***

Holland, Texas – the population center of the Lone Star State? Yes – and that’s just one of the East Bell County community’s surprising tidbits.

Located in the middle of Texas’ ultra-flat Blackland Prairie, Holland once sported the name Mountain Home.

The little town of fewer than 1,200 was the birthplace of a professional football player for the Green Bay Packers and the Washington Redskins.<sup>1</sup> And in February Holland native Gaylon Christie was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville.

To the casual visitor, driving through Holland from SH 95 on his way to Salado via FM 2268, Holland appears to be just like many Texas communities that don’t seem to be going anywhere. They sit there, seemingly stagnant, but when a special occasion comes around, they astound with activity; natives return to attend reunions, enjoy home-cooking, watch a parade; natives who’ve never left put on a show, eager to demonstrate what’s happening in the town they proudly call home.

Locally famous as the home of the annual Holland Corn Festival – 39 years old this year, on June 13-15 – Holland is also planning a day of springtime events on Saturday, May 4. These include a library fund-raiser featuring a silent auction, community garage sale sponsored by the Holland Area Chamber of Commerce and a 5K run organized by Holland High School’s Leadership Class, directed by instructor Lori Kinard.<sup>2</sup>

Holland native Holly Karl Naizer oversees the B. J. Hill Library and Mayfield House Museum on Travis Street. A single board, headed by superintendent of schools Cindy Gunn, directs both facilities. She says she continues to be amazed by Holland’s community spirit and cooperation. Anytime she needs help at the library or the next-door museum, people show up to assist – whether it’s high school students, volunteers who drop in, even youngsters in the neighborhood who once presented air rifle and paintball threats to the two facilities have become involved in keeping both facilities secure. She adds that many former Holland High School students return to work in the 642-student school district, 28 Hornets this school year.

According to Naizer, the late Barbara J. Hill, elementary school principal, and the late Helen Dobbs formed a non-profit organization in 1997 to transform the 1914 John Henry and Ettie Monroe Alsobrook Mayfield House into a town library. The city of Holland had acquired the home, built by local contractors Frank Wood & Sons, when the late Louise Mayfield moved to Houston. After investigators determined that the structure would not support heavy bookcases, Hill and Dobbs departed from the original plan and began working toward turning the Craftsman-influenced, Prairie School structure into a museum. Because the home had been occupied by Mayfield until the 1990s, many original furnishings remain and today form the core collection. These include a Craftsman-styled library table, still located in the first-floor office used by cotton gin owner and attorney John Henry Mayfield, and two pianos.

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<sup>1</sup> The late Dr. Clyde Goodnight played football at the University of Tulsa, then attended the University of Tennessee Medical School in Tennessee. Because the school used the quarter system, Goodnight and other medical students could play professional football one quarter each school year and attend classes the rest of the year.



## *Holland – more than just Texas’ population center . . . . .*

*(continued)*

According to Naizer, a professional decorator came to town and created a fashionable early 20th century parlor and taught HHS construction students paper-hanging. They, in turn, papered the dining room and kitchen. The under-stairway pantry holds a fascinating collection of antique cookware.

Naizer says that upstairs rooms will be left paper-and-paint-less in order to showcase the home’s construction. Holland residents such as Estelle Coker have supplemented original furnishings like her baby bed and toy collection, quilts adorning beds in other bedrooms and original pharmacy equipment owned by Coker’s first husband, Melvin Goodnight. Furnishings also include antique hats, an antique stove and icebox from the Murphy House when its former owners auctioned the home’s contents. The museum received a grant from the Bell County Historical Commission in 2009 to mount historical materials in the home, as well as assistance from the Bell County Museum.

The house (above) opened for visitors in December. Modern plumbing and appliances in the kitchen will accommodate groups using the museum for social activities. Naizer hopes that the former home of one of Holland’s early citizens will become the setting for weddings, receptions, birthday parties and other events. in addition to serving as an example of what a generous gift to a small city plus the dedication of that town’s volunteers can create for posterity. *A.L.*

<sup>2</sup> More information about Holland’s May 4 activities and about visiting the Mayfield Dobbs Museum and B. J. Hill Library is available by calling 254-657-2884.

## More Niblets (oops!) tidbits about Holland . . . . .

In 1993 Holland historian James K. Persky produced *History of Holland, Texas*, in association with his brother Ronnie as publisher. Painstakingly compiled from numerous sources, including Holland's history of seven newspapers dating back to 1886, the almanac-sized volume is a treasure of early Holland history. Following are a few gleanings from Persky and other sources:

***Why was the community of Holland first called Mountain Home?*** because some of the area's earliest settlers in the 1830s began farming near Gotcher Mountain, south of present-day Holland.

Mier Expedition survivor **James C. Armstrong** received a grant of 320 acres of South Darrs Creek and moved from Washington County in 1851. Born in Kentucky, he emigrated to Texas in 1835 and served in the Republic of Texas Army for about 18 months after the Battle of San Jacinto, April 21, 1836. After their release from the Castle of Perote in 1844, Armstrong was introduced to the sister of fellow-captive Captain Claudius Buster, Frances, whom he married in 1846, according to Mary Nicks in *Story of Bell County Texas*.

Tennessee native and Civil War veteran **James Reuben Holland** brought his wife, four children, wagon, horses and \$6 and settled on Darrs Creek about 1874. After accumulating a good deal of land, he built a steam-powered cotton gin, said to be the first steam gin in south Bell County. In 1882 he sold farm and gin to A. G. Lindemann Sr., newly arrived from Germany, for \$7,000, according to Persky. Holland's great-granddaughter, Mary Jean Boston, relates that her great aunt, Macy Dickenson, step-daughter of James Reuben "Rube" Holland, wrote a history of the town, using many sources, including the application by Captain Augustin Moss of Summers Mill for a post office to be named Mountain Home and located in his store next to Holland's gin. After learning that the name Mountain Home had been taken by a town in Kerr County, Boston's documents show certification from the U.S. Postmaster General that a post office named Holland was approved on April 12, 1888. According to Dickenson, "Rube" Holland was not informed of the name. In 1887 he acquired Summers Mill in trade and lived there until he died in 1912.

Another Darrs Creek settler was Mexican War veteran **Captain Alfred Evans**, who lived across the stream from Holland. Evans was later engaged as part-owner of a one-story hotel in Belton in the 1850s and during the Civil War assisted the county's chief justice with supplying families of men serving the Confederacy, according to George W. Tyler in *History of Bell County*.

Civil War veteran **Thomas Allen Upshaw** brought his family to Bell County in 1867, first settling at Prairie Dell, then at Mountain Home. He served as a justice of the peace, county school trustee and first Holland mayor (after being elected in 1881 with 32 votes). He is said to have served with Stonewall Jackson in Virginia, as well as being with Robert E. Lee at Appomattox. A Baptist lay minister, Upshaw is credited by Persky as being "an ardent supporter of Prohibition."

In 1853, **Alexander James Dallas**, aka "Captain Dallas," received a grant from Governor Elisha M. Pease for three *labores* of land (531 acres) on Darrs Creek, according to Louise Limmer in *Story of Bell County Texas*. Dallas later bought 160 acres for \$75. In 1861, Dallas, a trustee of the newly organized Salado College, bought five lots in Salado; these lots were sold to help build the institution. Dallas helped outfit the Civil War company of X. B. Saunders, one of 10 companies organized in Bell County. Dallas willed two acres on his Darrs Creek land for a burial ground, now known as Dallas Cemetery.

Another prominent resident of Holland, businessman **Hugh Mewhinney**, experienced a number of adventures before arriving in Milam County in 1869. Born in Indiana, he and his brother John were taken to Kansas as teenagers to homestead, more or less on their own, according to descendant Helen Mewhinney Dobbs in *Story of Bell County Texas*. The family later homesteaded in California, after which Hugh took a train to Kansas, then made his way to Texas on horseback. Mewhinney's elegant Holland home burned after his death in 1919.

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## More tidbits about Holland . . . . .

*(continued)*

Persky records the story of **Henry Otto Mackenson**, a native of Germany, who left Austin County with his family on November 6, 1860 (the day Lincoln was elected President) and traveled by covered wagon to a farm west of Holland. In 1947 Mackenson's daughter, **Caroline Mackenson Romberg**, described the Darrs Creek School in *The Holland Progress*. A paraphrased description follows:

*The school was located on the north side of Darrs Creek, one-half mile from Holland, and had good water. It was a one-room box house with no windows, but it had shutters to open and primitive benches made of split logs, smoothed a bit, placed around the room. Students rested their backs against a wall. No trees existed around the school, so cattle would collect on the shady side. During a rainy spell they would mire up the place considerably.*

*A person wanting to teach would arrive, then speak with Captain Dallas or some other prominent person. If enough pupils (including grownups) could be rounded up for a term of a few months, school would be opened. One time our teacher and his family lived in a tent during their sojourn.*

In 1870 the Mackenson family moved to Belton for better schooling. Mackenson became a businessman and later served as Belton mayor.

**Where did Darrs Creek get its name?** According to Estelle Goodnight Coker, the old story she grew up with in Holland went like this: A stranger arrived, hot and thirsty, and asked where he could get some water. A settler waved toward a grove of trees and answered: "Darr's a creek!" *A.L.*



**Presumably the oldest church building in Holland, this structure has been home to the First Central Christian Church and the Brethren Church and is now occupied by a Spanish-language Baptist Church.**



**Holly Naizer, who supervises both the B. J. Hill Library and the Mayfield Dobbs Museum, points out a toy collection recently donated by Estelle Goodnight Coker.**

## Dealing with grief through music

*Institute for Humanities honors Jane Wilmer on 89th birthday*



Jane Wilmer – mother of five, widow of Salado’s Institute for the Humanities Dr. Harry Wilmer and devoted supporter of a dozen or more Salado civic organizations – chose Gatesville native David Holt, left, with Wilmer, and his wife Ginny Callaway for this year’s 16th Wilmer lecture, established by the Wilmers after the death of their son Hank in an automobile accident in 1997. The institute selected Jane Wilmer as this year’s honoree on her 89th birthday. More than 100 friends and relatives shared in the celebration.

David and Ginny, too, lost a child, Sara Jane, at age 10, also in an automobile accident. Ginny learned that sometimes compassionate friends want to help each other at times of tragedy, but don’t always say the most appropriate things. Slowly, fitfully, painfully, she began a book, interviewing hundreds of people about their losses, their reactions to actions people took, what they said, what they did or didn’t do when trying to help.

“Grief,” she commented at the recent event, “makes you vulnerable, and it makes you strong, as well.” The book, *A Friend in Grief: Simple Ways to Help*, finally finished after 10 years of work, is intended “to help those with grieving friends navigate these times with more understanding and ease.” The couple met and married in California, but now live in Asheville, North Carolina, where David has immersed himself in the music and culture of the southern mountains. The four-time Grammy Award winner, musician, storyteller, television host and entertainer was on tour in Texas when Sara Jane was seriously injured. He described his panic as he labored to reach home, the ups-and-downs of his daughter’s desperate medical condition and his devastation at her death.

“Grief is some of the hardest work you can ever do,” he said. “It’s a force of nature, and you must get help. Grief is a war going on inside you, and there is no right way to deal with it.” For him, music helped; he followed with a performance that brought The Venue audience into his world of traditional instruments and techniques for using them, demonstrating first the broken-bottle-on-one’s-index finger method with which blues singers achieve the sound of pain life brings them. Moving to other instruments, he played in two banjo styles; he played Civil War-era bones; he played a mouth bow, world’s oldest string instrument; he played a little washboard with four thimbles – all the while regaling listeners with stories of his mountain mentors, their language, their culture. *A.L.*

### ***Czech Museum to present new music exhibit, opening May 1***

*Czech Music – Texas Style*, a new show at the Czech Museum and Genealogical Center, 520 North Main Street in Temple, will open May 1 and run through December 31, according to curator Don Mears. The exhibit will feature band instruments and recordings from Czech bands throughout Texas from the early 1900s, with an emphasis on bands active in the 1940s and 1950s.

The museum will present Czech immigrant Charles Ota Heller, author of *Prague: My Long Journey Home*, in a lecture and book signing on May 2 at 5:30 p.m. The book is the true story of a man who, at age nine, shot a Nazi. The museum is open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday-Saturday. Phone number is 254-899-2935.

For Saturday, May 11, the museum has organized living history demonstrations from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. during Bloomin’ Temple 2013. These include spinning wheel and quilting demonstrations and lace, noodle and sauerkraut making plus live Czech music and Beseda dancing.

### Stephanie Long takes RR&HM directorship

Texas native Stephanie Long began her new position as Railroad & Heritage Museum director in March, after serving as senior curator of collections for four city-operated museums in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

"I love history and history museums," she says. "My job at Las Cruces included an art museum, a science museum, a history and local culture museum and a railroad museum. I am excited about the chance to focus on history again."

Ken Cicora, director of Temple Parks and Leisure Services, observed that Long has a "great deal of knowledge and experience that will help improve the RR&HM with new exhibits and programs."

Long said that one of her goals is to raise the visibility of the museum and get more of the community involved.

"I look forward to meeting with as many Temple residents as I can," she remarks.

More information is available at 254-298-5172 or at [www.rrhm.org](http://www.rrhm.org).

### West Ward still making NASA, space history

"Kids at our school actually assume that science is fun!" says Maureen Adams, Killeen's West Ward Elementary School principal, on board to travel into space in 2014, she hopes, one of seven educators still in the program from the original 10 selected in 2009.

Since her selection Adams has spent a good deal of time attending summer seminars, earning 19 college credits in science subjects, and will complete her training as a certified mission specialist this summer.

Adams, a fine arts major in college who performs on occasion at Vive Les Arts Theatre in Killeen, has been principal for 13 years; her school has hosted Space Week for 12 of those years. This year's Space Week included visits by two astronauts as well as professionals in science fields like meteorology and paleontology. In addition, Harvard University Medical School has adopted the school, assisting with instruction during Space Week.

West Ward fifth graders visit NASA every year, a treat for students at a Title I school where 84 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-fee lunches.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration named the school a NASA Explorer School in 2004; it's one of only 126 schools in the nation authorized to use the NASA logo, sported by Adams in a recent presentation to Killeen's Modern Study Club. Student projects, including a robot, have been beamed to the space station, and West Ward teachers have been invited to attend NASA seminars.

Adams is scheduled to participate in a cooperative project involving X-COR, a private company, and NASA. If all goes well, she will be one of the two-person Lynx crew traveling 50 miles above the earth's atmosphere.



### SHS names Hodge 'Person of Year'

Mary Harrison Hodge is Salado Historical Society's "Person of the Year," named at the organization's annual potluck dinner in March.

Daughter of Fred and Eva Harrison, Hodge was born and reared in Jarrell where, she says, "We knew everyone in Bell County." Hodge and her late husband, C.B. Hodge, reared three children: Claude, Glenn and Rita.

The family, described in a slide show as "dedicated to the community," has donated land for the Salado Youth Association and Salado Cemetery, gave the first well to contribute to the Salado Water Supply Corporation, sponsored Lamb-O-Rama that led to the building of Salado's first fire station, underwrote soccer and baseball teams for young people, supported the Bell County Fair Livestock Auction, owned C. B. Hodge Livestock Company and C.B. Hodge Feed and Grain, built the former cotton warehouse and developed several subdivisions near Salado.

C. B. Hodge served on the board that established the Bell County Expo Center, was a charter member of the Salado Youth Fair, charter member of the National Cattlemen's Association, Salado Chamber of Commerce president and Central Texas Area Museum board member. Mary Hodge is a member of National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, Daughters of the Republic of Texas, Bell County Historical Commission, East Bell County Genealogical Society and Robertson Colony-College Hill Foundation. An avid postcard collector, in 1999 she turned her hobby into a book of historic postcards, *Salado and Bell County, Texas*; she is also author of *Jarrell*, an Arcadia Publishing Company's Images of America book. She serves this year as one of SHS'10 directors.

Some 70-80 potluck dinner guests enjoyed polka music by Clayton Capps and Mike Middleton.

## Professor ‘teaches’ genealogy course at EBCGS meeting

Former Bell County Historical Commission chairman Dr. David Yeilding, retired professor of history, didn't award college credit to members of the East Bell County Genealogical Society recently; nor was anyone required to take a final exam. But, perhaps both *should* have occurred – and maybe a term paper, as well.

In “Genealogy 301,” Yeilding recounted a history of how people have recorded human and family history, with examples from 40,000-year-old cave paintings in Spain and Native American pictographs dating back 10,000 years. The Bible, he noted, tells of Hebrew interest in genealogy because one of the requirements for a man to become a Levitical priest was lineage to Moses' brother Aaron; the New Testament records the lineage of Jesus, as well.

“England's King Henry VIII issued an edict in 1538 that ministers must maintain vital records of baptisms, christenings, marriages and burials,” Yeilding related, observing that this move “greatly assisted genealogical research.” In the British American colonies Virginia instituted a similar vital records requirement in 1632, followed by the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1639, Yeilding added, saying that “few people can positively trace their past to those ancients.”

For the more extremely left-brained in his audience, Yeilding offered these tidbits: “At generation #16 (with oneself as generation #1), a person has 32,768 grandparents. At generation #21, the number rises to more than 1,000,000. The number doubles each generation.” (Right-brainer query: Where would you hold a reunion?)

In “Genealogy 302,” Yeilding listed methods of locating and organizing one's family history: Gather documentation (birth, death and marriage documents); talk to relatives; search for published family histories; use a search engine like Google to find your family name; use genealogy databases online, such as Rootsweb's World Connect website or <https://familysearch.org>; try Ancestry.com's free 14-day trial search of its databases (A fee is required to join Ancestry.com.); explore material in one's local library or resources at the Texas State Library in Austin, the Dallas Public Library or the Clayton Library in Houston, the latter two being consistently listed in the top 10 genealogical libraries in the nation, according to Yeilding.

For organizing one's family history, Yeilding recommended, as do most genealogists, one should begin with oneself and work backwards. Some have learned the hard way that attempts to link themselves with a well-known person in the past, with whom a surname is shared, is almost always doomed to disappoint. To assist with organization, Yeilding suggested using pedigree charts or family group record forms, acquiring a computer program to manage and manipulate data, learning about “primary sources” versus “secondary sources,” using caution when reading a relative's published book about one's family, making use of public and private facilities (libraries, the National Archives, state archives, genealogical society libraries, the Family History Library System of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and its local branch libraries at LDS churches, visiting libraries where one's ancestors once lived [to use phone books, city directories, local history files, locally written books on county and city history, vertical files and cemetery indices]).

“Vital records are a must for researchers,” Yeilding emphasized. “To learn what vital records are available all over the nation, consult this site: <http://www.vitalrec.com>. Once vital records are in your hands, make copies and always retain the original.” U.S. Census records, he concluded, are probably the best-known records used by genealogists. The U.S. government has maintained these records since 1790, with a new census every decade. Census records include a good deal of information about American households, with more questions added every 10 years. Other sources include TexSHARE's Heritage Quest (TexSHARE requires a username and password, which a participating library will supply.) and the for-pay website Fold3, especially for military records. *A.L.*

### ***Two new books published about West Bell County***

Publishers introduced two new West Bell County-themed books during March, both written by Bell County Historical Commission members.

Titles are *Encamped Toward Heaven: The Story of More Than a Century of the Nolanville Encampment* by Paul Chapman and *Killeen*, part of Arcadia Publishing's Images of America series, by Annette S. Lucksinger and 40-year Killeen Daily Herald managing editor Gerald D. Skidmore Sr.

The Nolanville encampment, according to Killeen-native and BCHC secretary Chapman, began in about 1885 by Church of Christ members in Nolan Valley and nearby areas. They met annually along Nolan Creek for 10 days in August, not missing a year until the last encampment in 1996.

In early years participants came in covered wagons and cooked over campfires or wood-burning stoves. Those meetings were not only an opportunity to hear good preaching and singing, Chapman writes, but were also "huge social events," with sometimes as many as 100 families, providing a chance to visit with family and friends. The encampment, on a 14-acre site along Nolan Creek, attracted people from all over Texas and from other states, as well.

"As many as 1,000 would attend evening sermons, presented by well-known Church of Christ preachers and song leaders," Chapman relates. The property, now owned by the Killeen Church of Christ and located on Old Nolanville Road, received a Texas Historical Commission marker in 2001.

*Killeen* features photographs of Killeen's early history, many heretofore unpublished, as well as images capturing Killeen's history as a center for agricultural products, primarily cotton, to its selection as the site of a World War II tank destroyer training facility to a bustling city today of some 130,000. It includes Elvis Presley, stationed at Fort Hood in 1958, as well as anti-Vietnam War protester Jane Fonda, plus characters from early days as a railroad town and its frontier history as the site near the infamous Riggs Massacre of 1859.

Featured are the Blairs, a family of early town marshals who regularly packed heat, trying to deal with men who did likewise, giving and occasionally receiving same. From a "white man's town" in 1940 with the census showing "no foreign-born residents" to one of the nation's most diverse cities, Killeen now boasts a multi-cultural population with examples of residents who've achieved national status, like golfer Keith Fergus; Women's Army Corps director Oveta Culp Hobby, later President Dwight D. Eisenhower's choice for Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare; and Killeen High School football player Joseph Searles III, who helped smooth integration of Killeen's public schools and became the first black member of the New York Stock Exchange.

Sponsored by the Killeen Area Heritage Association, *Killeen* is a collaboration by two non-natives whose perspective and long residence offer a new look at Bell County's westernmost city.

### **Here's a Mother's Day treat – for free!**

In observance of National Preservation Month and Texas Travel and Tourism Week, the Texas Historical Commission invites Texans and visitors to visit 20 state historic sites free of charge on Sunday, May 12.

THC manages these sites across the state:

**Acton State Historic Site – near Granbury**  
**Caddo Mounds SHS – near Crockett**  
**Casa Navarro SHS – San Antonio**  
**CSA Reunion Grounds SHS – near Mexia**  
**Eisenhower Birthplace SHS – Denison, near Sherman**  
**Fannin Battleground SHS – Corpus Christi area**  
**Fort Griffin SHS – near Abilene**  
**Fort Lancaster SHS – near Ozona, off I-10**  
**Fort McKavett SHS – near Menard via US 190**  
**Fulton Mansion SHS – near Corpus Christi**  
**Landmark Inn SHS – near San Antonio**  
**Levi Jordan Plantation SHS – near Brazoria**  
**Magoffin Home SHS – El Paso**  
**National Museum/Pacific War – Fredericksburg**  
**Sabine Pass Battleground SHS – Port Arthur**  
**Sam B. Maxey House SHS – Paris**  
**Sam Rayburn House SHS – 70 mi. from Dallas**  
**San Felipe de Austin SHS – off I-10 near Sealy**  
**Starr Family Home SHS – Marshall**  
**Varner-Hogg Plantation – 50 mi. from Houston**

"Near" means different distances for different people; in the above list, "near" indicates "fewer than 100 miles. This is Texas, y'all!"

More information is available by calling 512-463-7953 or checking [www.texashistoricsites.com](http://www.texashistoricsites.com) where a map of these sites may be found.

### ***DRT dedicates third marker honoring Jeff Hamilton***

On March 2, Sam Houston's 220th birthday, the Sam Houston chapter, Daughters of the Republic of Texas, honored the slave whom Houston rescued from the auction block with a second marker at East Belton Cemetery. After slaves became free, Hamilton remained with the Houstons until after his former master and his wife, Margaret Lea Houston, had both died. Hamilton worked many years at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, where another marker remembers him.

*This newsletter is published quarterly by the Bell County Historical Commission, Box 712, Belton, Texas 76513-0712. Editorial material should be sent to Annette Lucksinger, 811 Oakhill Drive, Killeen, Texas 76541. Phone is 254-699-5916; e-mail is [annettelucksinger@yahoo.com](mailto:annettelucksinger@yahoo.com). The commission meets at 7 p.m. on the fourth Monday of most months at the Bell County Courthouse. BCHC volunteers are available at the commission's office on the first floor of the courthouse Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 12 noon to assist visitors and residents with historical and genealogy research. Phone number is 254-933-5917.*

### BCM opens new exhibit, plans busy summer

The Bell County Museum has scheduled a busy summer program for residents and visitors, with an exhibit featuring photographs of “golden age” jazz musicians already open for viewing.

Two of the popular walking tours of downtown Belton will occur, the first on Thursday, June 6, followed by a discussion about D-Day, the invasion of Europe in 1944 during World War II. Next tour is planned for Thursday, July 11. Tours, led by museum director Stephanie Turnham, begin at the north side of the Bell County Courthouse at 6 p.m.; the \$1 charge includes a map.

E. A. Limmer summer camps are on the calendar for children aged nine-12 on July 9-12 and for six-eight-year-olds on July 23-26. Fees for each camp are \$30 per child.

Future exhibits include a presentation of museum staff’s “favorite things” from the museum’s collection, slated for June 29 through August 15. A new National Endowment for the Humanities On the Road exhibit, *The Bison: American Icon*, will open September 1 and continue through January 7, 2014.

“Amazing” was Turnham’s reaction to the crowd of approximately 400 who attended Talmadge Boston’s talk about Abraham Lincoln’s work as an attorney before becoming president and the 450 who enjoyed the “Lincoln Birthday Bash,” both events occurring in February. More than 7,000 visited the museum during the Lincoln exhibit, *Self-Made in America*. The annual Big Bell County Garage Sale earned slightly over \$13,000, according to Turnham. The museum, located at 201 North Main in Belton, is open Tuesday through Saturday, from 12 noon to 5 p.m. Admission is free. More information is available at 254-933-5243 or at [www.bellcountymuseum.org/](http://www.bellcountymuseum.org/).

### Book/Author luncheon earns \$7,270 for library

The ninth annual Book and Author luncheon earned \$7,270 for the Lena Armstrong Public Library of Belton. In addition a recent library book sale raised \$850.

This year’s fund-raiser, sponsored by Friends of the Lena Armstrong Public Library, honored retired Air Force Colonel Jack Oliver and his autobiography, *Full Circle*; Ginger Allen Cuculo, military wife, daughter of Raye Virginia Allen of Temple and author of *Dog Tags: The History, Personal Stories, Cultural Impact and Future of Military Identification*; and Mary Margaret Quadlander, author of *Grace Jones of Salado*, a WASP during World War II before becoming a leader in the world of high fashion. Oliver recognized Gloria Ramos, who typed his hand-written manuscript for publication. Cuculo disclosed names of Bell County residents whose military dog tags are pictured on her book’s cover, and Quadlander said that she had received a phone call from a man in Hollywood interested making a movie based on the Grace Jones book.



**Katelyn Heisch, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor work-study assistant at the Bell County Museum, made her Civil War-era plaid dress and modeled it at the recent Lincoln Birthday Bash.**

### Updated Salado history booklet now on sale

A new version of *History of Salado, Texas*, compiled by MaryBelle Brown and Bill Kinnison, arrived in local shops in March and incorporates research conducted by Brown about 18 early pioneers, as well as developments and events the village has experienced in recent years – all this in a 52-page booklet selling for \$3.

The handy 8.5”x5.5” size of the booklet helps visitors locate Salado’s historic sites by providing a map keyed to those sites plus photos of many of the properties. The book is available at Salado’s visitor center, the Central Texas Area Museum and numerous Salado shops.

Sponsored by the Salado Historical Society, the booklet also received support from Salado’s First State Bank.

### Mayborn non-fiction conference set July 19-21

“Unearthing the Past,” a Grapevine seminar focusing on historical non-fiction, will include eight well-known writers: Susan Orleans, Jon Vaillant, Ron Powers, Caroline Alexander, Hampton Sides, Jeff Guinn, Kevin Merida and Helen Benedict.

The event is sponsored by the Frank and Sue Mayborn School of Journalism at the University of North Texas, <http://journalism.unt.edu/>.

## *Rick McCaslin offers Texans Civil War ammunition*

Texans visiting eastern Civil War sites, especially during the 150th observance of that epic struggle, sometimes find themselves defensive: "Why would a Texan want to learn about the Civil War?" they're asked. "Nothing happened there, did it?"

Richard M. McCaslin, history department chairman at the University of North Texas, has plenty of verbal grenades Texans can keep in their haversacks and toss when needed. Here are a few, presented by the author of *Tainted Breeze: The Great Hanging at Gainesville, Texas*, and at least three more Civil War-related books in production:

- \* *Texans fought in every theater of the Civil War*: Eastern Theater, Trans-Mississippi Theater, the New Mexico-Arizona campaign, plus defending the state against hostile Indian tribes during the entire struggle and guarding the Texas Gulf Coast from Union invasion, as well as defending East Texas against penetration during the Union's Red River Campaign.
- \* *Texans were possibly more contentious then than they are now*: Here McCaslin displays the famous *Harper's Weekly* cartoon of a Texas Ranger as viewed by the rest of the country – A shifty-eyed character whose beard stretches as wide as his extra-broad sombrero, he's loaded with combat essentials – a long gun, a Bowie knife, four pistols, a tomahawk, a rope in case there's someone to be hanged, a long-necked bottle strapped to the reins of his long-suffering pony.
- \* *Many Texans had combat experience even before Secession* – An armed struggle was nothing new after the Texas Revolution of 1835-36 and continuing conflict with frontier Indians; in addition some new Texans were veterans of the War of 1812.
- \* *Texas males had, by 75 percent, overwhelmingly supported Secession* – even if Governor Sam Houston was opposed and was forced to leave office. (During an anti-secession speech he made in Belton, a secessionist almost attacked him.)
- \* *Dick Dowling and his 36 Texan Guards repulsed four Union gunboats escorting 18 transports with 4,000-5,000 Union soldiers at Sabine Pass*: In one of several attempts to invade Texas, Union forces lost some 200 men and two gunboats as Lt. Dowling's six artillery units, having practiced on target stakes in the channel, destroyed two gunboats, forcing two remaining gunboats to withdraw. (Although considered a Confederate victory, the September 1863 battle occurred less than two months after the fall of Vicksburg, which had split the Confederacy.)
- \* *According to McCaslin, New York's Fifth Infantry Zouaves wanted to be opposite units of Hood's Texas Brigade at the Battle of Second Manassas* – However, the Union force was shattered in the greatest battle fatality sustained by a Federal infantry unit in the war, with 332 of 525 casualties, 121 killed. From the Fifth Texas regimental history: During the winter of 1861-1862 the Fifth Texas had been camped across the Potomac River from the Fifth New York Infantry, "Duryee's Zouaves" and had traded insults and threats across the ice, offering to take the measure of the other when they met in battle. At Second Manassas the Texans were able to settle accounts. After the brigade drove off the 10th New York, deployed as skirmishers, driving them through the Fifth New York, the Fifth Texas emerged from the woods and found themselves facing the Fifth New York, which was across a creek and on higher ground. The Fifth New York's first volley was high, and the Fifth Texas' was not. The Texans were sent into the New Yorkers and destroyed it as a unit, as one report put it . . . Flushed with success, the Fifth Texas continued to advance, tearing through the disintegrating Federal flank, outdistancing not only the rest of the brigade, but the rest of the main army. In his official report General John Bell Hood said that the Fifth Texas had "slipped the bridle" and earned themselves the name "The Bloody Fifth." During the battle the Fourth Texas Infantry captured a Federal battery of artillery.
- \* *The Eighth Texas Cavalry Regiment (Terry's Texas Rangers) made their last charge at the Battle of Bentonville, North Carolina, where a handful of cavalymen were asked to confront 9,000 Union troops.* – After the Rangers participated in an inadequate attempt to slow William Tecumseh Sherman's "march to the sea" on March 19-20, 1865, about 150 members of the regiment, now down to some 248 men, escaped through Union lines to join other Confederate units rather than surrendering with the rest of Joseph E. Johnston's army at Durham Station on April 26, 1865. The regiment never officially surrendered, and with Hood's Texas Brigade remains the most well-known Texas organization to have participated in the Civil War. McCaslin, author of 12 books and numerous articles, says that Texans should not be ashamed of their state's actions in the Civil War and suggests that Texans researching an ancestor's Civil War service should consult state records, in addition to National Archives records, because their ancestors may well have served on the home front rather than in regular Confederate military units. *A.L.*

**A Civil War Journey** by *Tom Hughes, Bell County Historical Commission member and associate member, Major Robert M. White Camp #1250, Sons of Confederate Veterans*

Many years ago, my great-grandfather, James Henry Hughes of Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, took up arms in a cataclysmic event in order to preserve the Union. His initial foray with the 4th Pennsylvania Infantry took place under President Lincoln's April 1861 call for an initial 75,000-man, 90-day force. James Henry's motivation has been lost to the ages. In addition to his first enlistment, he enlisted again in September 1864. His regiment this time, the 210th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, was enrolled in Harrisburg and spent its entire service in the Siege of Petersburg, Virginia. For this enlistment he was paid a \$100 bounty. The 210th was present as the Confederate flag of truce was carried through the lines on its way to the surrender site at Appomattox. After participating in the Grand Review in Washington, D.C., the regiment was mustered out of service in June 1865.

Since my initial research, I have continued to study events and battles of the Civil War. Recently my wife Sharon Ann and I took a road trip back to our hometown of Niagara Falls, New York. As we have made this trip many times in the last 30 years, we decided to extend our travels to visit as many Civil War battlefields as time would permit. Traveling up the east coast, we first stopped at Chickamauga & Chattanooga National Battlefield Park, the nation's first such park, established in 1890 and dedicated on September 18-20, 1895. Considered to be a Union victory, the Chattanooga battle established the northwest area of Georgia and southeast area of Tennessee as the base of operations for General William Tecumseh Sherman's Atlanta Campaign or the infamous "march to the sea."

Our itinerary continued to Appomattox Courthouse, the scene of the war's conclusion in the Virginia area. (The final surrender of the Confederacy took place in Texas in June, 1865.) The Museum of the Confederacy-Appomattox recently opened in Appomattox as an extension of the Richmond (Virginia) Museum and White House of the Confederacy. Opened in 1896, the Museum of the Confederacy owns the world's most comprehensive collection of artifacts and documents related to the Confederate States of America.

We continued to the Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, The Wilderness and Spotsylvania Courthouse areas of Virginia, where for two brutal years, 1862-1864, the war raged back and forth, ending in the nine-month siege of Petersburg (June 1864 to April 1865). As a bonus, I attended a school educational reenactment during the 150th observance of the Battle of Antietam/Sharpsburg in Maryland. Local school students are immersed in living history presentations and first-person accounts of events leading to this savage combat. More than 100,000 soldiers, both blue and gray, were engaged in this event with approximately 23,000 killed, wounded, captured or missing. In the end the Union Army held the field. This has been described as the bloodiest one-day battle of the war.

Next on our journey was the historic area of the first battle of the Civil War where the two inexperienced armies of a divided nation clashed for the first time on the fields overlooking Bull Run/Manassas, Virginia. Soldiers on both sides were stunned by the violence and destruction they encountered. At day's end, the Union army was forced to retreat in great confusion to the safety of Washington. Approximately a year later both armies once again met on the same battlefield. This time the naïve enthusiasm of the previous encounter was gone. Once again the Confederate forces were victorious. Lee's bold and decisive campaign opened the way for the South's first invasion of the north.

*(continued on next page)*

### A Civil War Journey *(continued)*

On to Gettysburg: What has not been said about this momentous encounter? This battle was a Union victory, but many consider it also the high-water mark of the Confederacy. The new museum and visitor center at Gettysburg National Military Park provides visitors a 21st century Civil War experience unlike any other.

We completed our Gettysburg adventure and, after a quick stop in nearby St. Mary's, Pennsylvania, to donate an old Swedish family Bible to the Elk County museum, we traveled on to Niagara Falls. Western New York has a rich history relating to the French & Indian War, the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. A major symbol of the warring period is Fort Niagara, situated at the mouth of the Niagara River as it flows into Lake Ontario. This fort was the principal facility controlling commerce from Lake Erie to Upper Canada.

After visiting relatives and friends and enjoying the good Italian food for which Niagara Falls is famous, we set our GPS for the long ride home with one last stop at Shiloh National Battlefield Park. We visited the battlefield, nestled in a wooded area northeast of Corinth, Mississippi. After our visits to all the other parks we found the Shiloh battlefield to have the most secluded location with little or no commercial activity in the surrounding area. As a result, one may immerse oneself in history of the events with very little distraction.

One last time we fired up Sally the GPS lady and wound our way back to beautiful central Texas. Total mileage: 4560 miles. After 21 days on the road, Sharon Ann and I are still on speaking terms and looking forward to our next trip, heading westward, we hope.



**Journal writer Hughes at ease during the February Lincoln Birthday bash at the Bell County Museum**

### *Letter from a 5th Tx Infantry, Co I Soldier . . .*

*April 27, 1863 – reached Natchez, Mississippi, after a long and fatiguing trip. "We were in the stage 10 days. When we got to Crockett we found we would either have to stop for several days or change our route so we abandoned the route to Alexandria and went to Shreveport and from there to Monroe, Louisiana, where we were detained for four days and finally had to leave in the stage for Harrisonburg on the Washita."*

Among other troubles this soldier's unit encountered was mistaking a "biou" for a river. It took them three hours to go upstream one mile. Nearer their destination, the letter writer took the mail boat and arrived at Natchez before his group did.

*"The Yankee Cavalry here have made a raid on the N.O. & Jackson Railroad at Hazelhurst which may detain us. I do not know what damage they have done nor whether they injured the track or not several gun boats have passed Vicksburg but are still above – none near this place. A great many persons are moving their negroes from the northern part of Louisiana to Texas I met them by the hundred from Biou Macon there are also great many crossing over here from Louisiana."*

### *Part of a letter from a soldier in Waul's Legion . . .*

An East Texas soldier in Waul's Legion wrote to his wife from Mississippi in early 1863 . . . and about how one minor battle had satisfied his need to experience combat:

*It is raining to-day, one of these slow, drizzling, disagreeable cold, all-day sort of rains, just exactly the kind of day, of all others, that I would like to spend in my rocking chair at home, with my own Little Darling in my lap & (their daughter) playing and cutting up all kinds of antics [sic] about the room . . . I think you will like me better when I get home than you did before, Little Honey, not only my ways & manner, but my appearance. You know that you always objected to my being fat & made fun of me about it. Well, I think you would say that now I am about the right size. I weighed, when I left home, about 187 pounds; now I weigh just 167 with heavy winter clothes on.*

(Both excerpts on this page are from Civil War archives at Pearce Museum, Navarro College, Corsicana, Texas.)



## **Armstrong, Goodman, Ellington, Sinatra now 'playing' at BCM**

The Bell County Museum is currently hosting *PORTRAITS FROM THE GOLDEN AGE OF JAZZ*, 75 black-and-white photos made between 1938 and 1948 by William Gottlieb, writer, photographer and jazz enthusiast for use in his columns in *The Washington Post*, *Downbeat* magazine and other publications.

Gottlieb is known for “a distinctive, storytelling touch (*The New York Times*) and the *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner* has said that his photos “. . . transcend mere documentation. They provide a dramatic, mood-inducing setting. All that’s missing is the music.”

Even the music is there for visitors to the BCM exhibit, which opened earlier this month.

Gottlieb’s negatives were stored for more than 30 years; then in 1979 he began printing them, and they have been used in countless magazines, books, calendars, album and CD covers and posters, in addition to appearing in movies and documentaries. The National Portrait Gallery acquired his photograph of Duke Ellington, and the U.S. Postal Service has used four of Gottlieb’s images on postage stamps.

The exhibit is presented by Smith Kramer Fine Art Services of Kansas City, Missouri.

The museum, located at 201 North Main in Belton, is open Tuesday through Saturday from 12 noon to 5 p.m. Admission is free. More information is available at 254-933-5243.