

THE CHISHOLM TRAIL HERITAGE MUSEUM

CUERO
TEXAS

R O U N D U P



SPRING
2003



The Knights of Pythias Jewel Lodge (c. 1903), in a 1910 photo of produce wagons

THE TRAIL BEGINS AGAIN

The Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum was incorporated in 2000, but the story began in 1866, in the shadows of the Civil War and Reconstruction, when a handful of hardy souls from DeWitt County, Texas embarked on what would be an epic journey Northward on a cattle drive to St. Joseph, Missouri and into the legend of the Chisholm Trail.

The board of trustees of the Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum began as a group of area citizens dedicated to the founding of, and perpetuation of, a museum to tell the story of South Central Texas' proud contribution to the twin legends of the Texas cowboy and the Longhorn. The oldest trail riders that could have told the tales of life along the Chisholm Trail have long since hung up their spurs. But the Museum's mission is to chronicle those formative years by focusing collections on the 50-year period beginning with Crockett Cardwell's now legendary cattle drive of 1866. Our Museum will make a significant cultural, social and educational contribution by interpreting

the historical relevance of a story which begins *right here in our community*.

A NEW JOURNEY

We as a board have begun our own journey, of making our mission a reality. On May 29, 2002, the board of trustees purchased the historic "Jewel Lodge" built by the Knights of Pythias in 1903. Designed by renowned San Antonio, Texas architect, James Wahrenberger, the lodge was built as a recreational, dining and meeting hall by the Knights of Pythias, a national fraternal charity organization, which was chartered by Congress in 1864 to begin healing the wounds created by the Civil War.

OUR RANCHING HERITAGE

Historically, DeWitt and the five surrounding counties, Victoria, Gonzales, Lavaca, Karnes and Goliad have played important roles in the development of ranching traditions, not only for the state of Texas, but for the great American West. One of the best known and documented cattle drives to a northern market was one which departed from "Cardwell Flats" on April 1, 1866 just north of present day Cuero. Crockett Cardwell had organized 1,800 head of Longhorn cattle to be driven in two equal herds by trail boss Thornton Chisholm, also of DeWitt County. These cattle drives provided Texas an economic means of recovery from the Civil War, as they provided beef for northern markets and breeding stock for ranches developing further north and west. A Texas Historical Commission historical marker is located four miles north of Cuero on U.S. 183, near the now legendary site of Cardwell Flats.

HELP FROM THE STATE

The Commission has created a new travel trail and Chisholm Trail brochure in partnership with Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife and Texas Department of Transportation. The brochure, which features maps and information on communities located along the legendary trail, plays an important role in the Texas Historical Commission's efforts in attracting "heritage tourism" to the state by helping heritage tourists explore the lore and history associated with the legendary cattle drive route. The Chisholm Trail brochure highlights the mystique of Texas' early cattle and ranching heritage and encourages people to get out and explore places and events that celebrate that history. Copies of the THC Chisholm Trail brochure may be obtained from area chamber of commerce offices. ✧

AMERICAN COWBOY MAGAZINE INCLUDES CTHM IN TRAVEL ARTICLE

The April 2003 issue of *American Cowboy Magazine*, included the Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum in its **"Adventures West: The Official Western Travel Guide."** Acknowledging Texans and the rich history of its peoples' connection with the land, Cathy Orr, an assistant editor of the magazine living in Buffalo, Wyoming, wrote of the long cattle drives to railheads in the north. "A tribute to the tenacity of Texans, the great cattle trails – the Shawnee, Western, Goodnight-Loving, and Chisholm – began as efforts to boost a dying cattle industry after the Civil War. That industry not only survived, but also thrived, and today, visitors still can wrap themselves up in the West – in the lives of real cowboys and ranchers and in places dedicated to carefully preserving their heritage."

She continued, "Not the first but one of the greater-known cattle trails originating in Texas was the Chisholm. Although a bit congested by controversy over its namesake, the Chisholm looms large in the cattle drive drama. Still a work in progress, the **Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum in Cuero has a mission to chronicle the Chisholm Trail's formative years** by focusing collections on a 50-year period beginning with Crockett Cardwell's now legendary cattle drive of 1866. While its planned opening date is a few years off, Museum organizers have published the Trail's marvelous history in a brochure."

The section pertaining to Texas also included information about the **Fort Worth Stockyards** and the **National Ranching Heritage Center** in Lubbock. ✧

CTHM CHOSEN TO "HELP"

In spring 2002, the Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum was chosen as one of 24 small and mid-sized museums to participate in a program created by ExhibitsUSA (based in Kansas City, Missouri) in partnership with the Texas Association of Museums, known as HELP.

Through supporting workshops and on-site professional consultations, participating institutions will further their museum skills in areas such as exhibit design, volunteer management, public programming, fundraising/grant writing, marketing and public relations. HELP is a program rooted in the premise that experiential or "on-the-job" learning offers the most effective means to receive and retain professional training. The belief is that technical assistance, offered in conjunction with a traveling exhibition experience, can address the particular needs of individual museums through immediate and practical application.

The Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum hosted a traveling exhibit, "Apron Strings: Ties to the Past," from December 9 until January 6, 2003 in the Cuero Community Library reading room. Using aprons dating from the late 1930s through the present, the exhibition chronicled changing attitudes toward women and domestic work. It also surveyed the wide range of design and craft techniques apron-makers used to express themselves, while still working within creative venues traditionally available to women. Today, artists continue using aprons to explore cultural myths and realities as well as their individual experiences with American domesticity.

The HELP program is made possible through the combined vision and generosity of **Houston Endowment, Inc., the Meadows Foundation, the Don & Sybil Harrington Foundation,** and the **Texas Commission on the Arts.** ✧

MUSEUM RECEIVES KIMBELL ART MUSEUM CABINETS

In late 2002, the **Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas** donated several dozen display cases to the Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum. The cases, which had been used in the Kimbell's exhibit halls, are crafted with ash bases and vitrine (Plexiglas) tops. The cabinets are estimated to have a replacement value of over \$30,000.00.

Larry Eubank, Operations Director of the Kimbell and responsible for the gift, commented, "We're very happy to be of in-kind financial assistance to Cuero's newly planned Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum."

The Chisholm Board of Trustees took action in the early part of summer 2002 to purchase the Knights of Pythias building where the cabinets may be used in the upper floor of the building to display cowboy artifacts and other items relating to late 19th century ranching life. ✧

PRESERVATION ARCHITECT DAVID HOFFMAN IS SELECTED

David Hoffman, a graduate of the University of Texas School of Architecture, was selected to provide restoration services for the 10,000 sq. ft. Knights of Pythias building purchased by the Museum Board of Trustees.

A renowned architect in the field of historic preservation, Hoffman's work in the \$5.5 million restoration project of the Victoria County Courthouse is what brought attention to his talent and style in preserving historic structures.

While still in architecture school at UT Austin, Hoffman distinguished himself early as the first recipient of the Texas Historic Resources Fellowship, for which he produced a historic architectural study of Roma, Texas. Since that time, Hoffman's contribution to his chosen field is the restoration of more than 100 historic buildings throughout Texas.

A number of buildings he has restored are of national significance (National Historic Landmarks) and almost all others are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and/or are Registered Texas Historic Landmarks.

Story continues, back page

2002 BRINGS MEMBERSHIP BROCHURE AND STRONG SUPPORT

Preparations began in the fall of 2001 for the establishment of a membership support organization for the Museum. Our membership brochure, produced by Zeitgraph Visual Communications for Marketing/San Antonio, was awarded a Merit Citation at the Texas Association of Museum's annual conference in Lubbock. Cuero State Bank very generously underwrote the brochure and the piece was introduced to the general public in January of 2002. Wells Fargo Bank pitched in to underwrite our attractive presentation folders. *We'd like to extend our appreciation to all those who have come together in such strong support of the Museum this year.—The Board of Directors*

2002 MEMBERSHIP

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Mr. & Mrs. Robert Briggs, Victoria
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Mr. Paul Crozier, Austin
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 Mr. Charles Yates, Dripping Springs

Membership dues and gifts are tax deductible, and support our building capital campaign and the Museum's programs and operations.

Preservation Architect, continued

Currently, the Board of Trustees is working with Hoffman to provide the Museum with a restoration master plan, which will become a "road map" for building restoration. A Historical Narrative has been provided for the Knights of Pythias building which was constructed in 1903 and recently, with dialogue between board members, Hoffman has provided a Development Philosophy. Other components of his master plan will include Adaptive Use Feasibility, Phased Development ideas, and Cost Determinations. ✧

"TASTE OF THE TRAIL" FUNDRAISER

Congratulations to our dedicated volunteers and organizers for an outstanding job on 2002's "A Taste of the Trail." We had wonderful community participation and support, and raised funds for several important phases for the development of the Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum. Oh, and did we mention we had a Texas-sized party?

The event, kicked off with a ceremonial cannon blast into the sunset, was held on a ranch near Cheapside (northwest of Cuero) and featured authentic chuck wagon cooking and cowboy entertainment, highlighted by singer and cowboy storyteller Red Steagall from Fort Worth, Texas.

The 500 guests attending the fundraiser were first treated to entertainment by the **Arbuckle Boys**, and also by **Grady Lee & K. R. Woods**, (known as the Fathers of Texas). Silent auction and refreshment tables were set among oak trees on a high



We told you the Wells Fargo stage coach was a-comin', Tempi!

ridge, with views to the sunset. Generous helpings of steak with all the sides and trimmings were provided by six chuck wagon cooking operations: **Mickey Pillow** (Goliad), **J. Aubrey & Judy Lenamon** (Victoria), **Delbert & Shorty Castleman** (Eagle Lake), **Buck Reams Authentic Cowboy Cooking** (Fort Worth), **Glen Dorn** (St. Hedwig), and **Rusty Rankin's Trail Blazing Chuckwagon** (Mathis).



Can't arrest a man for bad fiddle playin', Sheriff!



Chuck wagon chefs, cookin' with coals.

The live auction, which consisted of some nine auction items, helped to raise funds for the two next phases of museum development, a restoration master plan for the building and concept plan for the Museum's story, which will be told primarily on the ground floor of the 10,000 sq. ft. former Knights of Pythias lodge.

Red Steagall, the highlighted entertainment of the evening, cast a spell over the seated crowd as he wove stories and songs of the great American West, cowboy life and life on the Texas range. ✧

For more pictures, see TasteoftheTrail.com



BOX 866
 CUERO TX 77954

The Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum is dedicated to "collect, preserve, and archive historical documents, artifacts, memorabilia, and artistic and cultural materials both unique and historically relevant to the region of South Central Texas."

The Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum is a 501(c)3 corporation.

ChisholmTrailMuseum.org