



# HOG AND SNAKE

## NEWSLETTER OF THE GRADY MCWHINEY RESEARCH FOUNDATION

THE GRADY MCWHINEY RESEARCH FOUNDATION IS DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF SCHOLARSHIP RELEVANT TO 19TH CENTURY AMERICAN HISTORY, CIVIL WAR HISTORY, TEXAS HISTORY, AND GLOBAL MILITARY HISTORY.

WWW.MCWHINEY.ORG

SOUTH 14TH AND SAYLES BLVD., ABILENE, TX 79697

JANUARY 2004

### FROM THE PRESENT

The Grady McWhiney Research Foundation has not rested on its laurels since our last newsletter in July. We continue to stay busy following our mission to bring history to the public, through the Buffalo Gap Historic Village, the McWhiney Foundation Press, and the McWhiney Collection.

Perhaps the biggest news is the acquisition of State House Press, which dramatically expands the Foundation's ability to publish books in Texas history. But the Historic Village has also been in the news. It has been awarded the HOTS award for Outstanding Attraction of the Year by the Abilene Convention and Visitors Bureau. The Village was also recognized by the CVB for selling the most Abilene Attractions Packages. Credit for this goes to Village employee Pam Burns who sold the most passes.

### WHAT'S UP AT THE GAP

It has been a busy six months at the Village as preservation work and site improvement continue. Historic lighting has been added to the 1905 area, complete with period fixtures and light bulbs. Not only has this helped to improve the general appearance of this section, but it has made after-dark events possible throughout the site. In addition, the 1925 filling station received some long-overdue work by having the globes replaced and relit on the two gas pumps. The transition of returning the station to its 1920s appearance as a Magnolia Oil Station is about complete. Assisting site staff in this work were the folks at Long Electric, who did a first class job.

With a grant from the Summerfield G. Roberts Foundation, work on restoring the courthouse to its 1883 appearance has commenced. The first part of the project involves restoring and stabilizing the existing windows. Studio C Glass Works of Abilene is doing the work under the guidance of preservation architect Rick Weatherl.

Students of the McMurry University Public History Program have helped at the Village on several occasions, including assisting at a number of our special events. As part of their class, they also created an interpretive master plan for our 1905 doctor's office.

Two of the newest members of the staff are Lillian and Dorothy, our two 1916 and 1919 Model T. depot hacks. A "depot hack" is a multi-seat automobile designed to transport passengers from railroad depots to hotels, or in the case of Buffalo Gap, between the Santa Fe Depot here and the T&P Depot in Abilene. The site is using the two cars to help visitors get a feel of what travel was like in the early 20th century, and they have been available for rides around Buffalo Gap since Christmas. Village volunteer Tim Eyssen has donated his time and expertise in helping to get the Model Ts in first-class running order. Expect to see them at the Village and in local parades this year. And in case you are wondering, we named them Lillian and Dorothy after the two darlings of the silent silver screen, the Gish sisters.

Speaking of traveling by car, next time you're coming down I-20, look for our three new billboards. They feature our living history interpreters and volunteers in period clothing.

They are located on the west-bound side between Baird and Abilene and on the east-bound side between Merkel and Abilene.

The Village hosted three new special events this fall. The hundredth anniversary of the 1883 County Seat vote was marked with an 1883 baseball game, a special meeting of the Taylor County Commissioners, and a "revote" between Abilene and Buffalo Gap for county seat. County Judge George Newman threw out the first ball of the game. The Commissioners Court meeting was the first held in the courthouse since 1883. By the way, Abilene lost this time (the vote was 151 to 13).

In conjunction with the Abilene Actors Guild, the Village played host to two weekends of being the "Haunted Village" during Halloween. It was fun, scary, and a great success.

As part of our Christmas at the Gap event, the Village opened at night for special Christmas Lantern Light Tours. Various Village staff members and volunteers recreated historical Christmas time scenes in several of our buildings. Thanks go to volunteers Andrew Calucag, Fane Downs, Dorothy Thompson, Bob and Kay Wettemann, Phil Huston, Diana Sheppard, Jeff Peterson, David, Mark and Ann Pearson, Vicki and Kenny Baumann, Kay and Sarah Frazier, and Jimmy Lee Alldredge for all their help. Special thanks go to Hester Williams and her Gospel Singers for making the church come alive with their sounds of joy.

The Buffalo Gap Chips, our 1883 period baseball team, played several games this fall, including one with members of Fort McKavett and Fort Concho. The Chips will start up again this spring. Players this year included Joe Christensen, Bob Wettemann, Drew Hillhouse, Don Frazier, Robert Pace, Glenn Dromgoole, Phil Huston, Scott Richardson, Scott Douglas, Kent and Tyler Barnett, Leighton Conway, and Dustin Richard.

The sales in the Buffalo Gap Historic Village Mercantile reflected the increased numbers of our visitors, along with a successful "Christmas in July" sale and the introduction of new products (in keeping with the site's mission statement, this new inventory was historically themed). Three members of the site's interpretive staff joined site manager Kevin Young on a two-week "History Road Trip" which included visiting several historic sites to gain knowledge of how various sites do interpretive programming. This included spending the day at Conner Prairie in Indiana (one of the top living history sites in the country). A week was spent in Gettysburg, in part selling McWhiney Foundation Press books at the Gettysburg Book and Paper Show. This trip was funded by a grant from Texas Farm and Ranch Healthcare.

Coming attractions: The Historic Village Mercantile is going online! Soon, you'll be able to buy history items in the store from the comfort of your computer terminal. Check it out at [www.texashistorystore.com](http://www.texashistorystore.com).



#### SPECIAL EVENTS AT THE VILLAGE

We continue to work to make the Village a place where people can visit over and over again, by crafting new attractions and activities. In addition to special scheduled events, we're also adding variety through a new living history interpretive program. The program has interpreters scheduled for one of three time periods on alternate weekends, 1883, 1905, or 1925. Future attractions:

**February 21:** Civil War Veterans' Reunion

**April 3-4:** Buffalo Hunting Program

**May 1:** Annual McWhiney Foundation Fundraiser

#### THE MCWHINEY FOUNDATION PRESS

The second half of 2003 was a time of unprecedented growth for the McWhiney Foundation Press.

This fall, we purchased the highly-respected Texana publishing house, State House Press in Austin, and moved it to the McMurry University campus. The acquisition adds thirty-two active titles to our list, provides us the rights to reprint twenty more books now out of print, and authorizes us to use the prestigious State House Press name in future publishing ventures. With more than sixty-five Texas History and Civil War titles, McWhiney/State House now covers a wide variety of topics and interests. We will be issuing new Texas titles under the State House imprint while continuing to publish books on Civil War and military history as the McWhiney Foundation Press.

Our most successful book ever came out this fall – *Christmas at the Ranch* by Elmer Kelton. The small Christmas gift book launched our new Texas Heritage Series and immediately became our all-time best-seller. With the State House purchase, we also acquired the rights to republish another Elmer Kelton book, which we plan to do in time for next Christmas.

Other books published the second half of the year included a paperback edition of *Tracks Along the Clear Fork*; an additional paperback printing of *Vicksburg: Fall of the Confederate Gibraltar*; three new Civil War books — *George Gordon Meade and the War in the East*, *Winfield Scott Hancock: Gettysburg Hero*, and *The Last Stronghold: The Campaign for Fort Fisher*; a book in conjunction with an art exhibit, *Texas Myths and Legends*; and the second book in our Texas Heritage Series, *What I Learned on the Ranch*.

In 2003 we published or reprinted eleven books, and we look forward to publishing a dozen or more in 2004. Coming soon are *Sacrificed at the Alamo* by the historian at the Alamo, Bruce Winders; *Frontier Texas: History of a Borderland to 1880*, which will be released in conjunction with the opening of the Frontier Texas historical experience museum/theater in Abilene; and *20 Good Reasons to Study the Civil War*, by John C. Waugh with a foreword by Jim Lehrer.

Six months ago, at the time of our last newsletter, actual ordering of McWhiney Foundation Press books via the web was a fairly cumbersome process. The Texas A&M Press Consortium, which handles our book distribution, has now completely automated the online ordering process. The Con-

sortium has also added the State House inventory to our on-line booklist, so their titles can be ordered just as easily as our original ones. The McWhiney Press is located at [www.mcwhiney.org/press/press.html](http://www.mcwhiney.org/press/press.html).

With the addition of State House Press, the McWhiney Foundation Press has grown to a point that another part-time employee has been hired to assist Mr. Dromgoole, our managing editor. We welcome Carlyn Kahl who is already doing an admirable job.

#### THE MCWHINEY COLLECTION

Work is currently underway on developing an inventory of serial holdings (journals and periodicals) not maintained by the Abilene Library Consortium, an inventory of all duplicate copies of books, as well as a comprehensive listing of all materials in need of rebinding. The McWhiney Collection is also pleased to announce the creation of the Buffalo Gap Historical Collection, a special collection dedicated to early Taylor County History. This material was organized and catalogued with the assistance of Randall Shaw, a student in McMurry University's Public History Program, who completed this project as a class assignment.

Staffers of the McWhiney Research Collection have spent much of the fall semester incorporating a collection of approximately 1300 scholarly journals into the collection. Included in this accessioning are significant numbers of *Military Affairs*, the *Journal of Military History*, *Civil War History*, *Louisiana History*, the *Journal of the Early Republic*, and others not otherwise available in the Abilene Library Consortium. When integrated into the consortium catalog, these holdings will be available to users who otherwise would have had to travel a significant distance to access them.

The collection works in partnership with the Texas Forts Trail to serve as a repository for all materials relating to the Texas Forts Trail. In conjunction with the staff and board of directors of the Forts Trail, we continue to submit grants in an effort to expand the collection holdings to include microfilm and materials relating to the military in Texas.

#### EMAIL INSTEAD OF SNAIL MAIL?

If you would prefer to receive an email version of this newsletter rather than the printed one, simply notify our secretary, Ms. Larue Williams, at (325) 793-3862 or [williaml@mcmurryadm.mcm.edu](mailto:williaml@mcmurryadm.mcm.edu), and we'll move your name from the hard copy distribution list to the email one.

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