



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.

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JULY 2004

From the Present

It has been an exciting six months at the Grady McWhiney Research Foundation since the January newsletter. The Foundation experienced a number of personnel changes in April, with Amy Smith taking over as the new Controller and Tim Yandell as Director of Advancement. These employees offer experience, expertise, and excellent people skills within the Team.

The McWhiney Foundation staff thanks those who asked to receive their newsletters by email. And, of course, thanks is also due to all our donors and volunteers for their continuing efforts.

Please contact Larue Williams at (325) 793-3862 or williaml@mcmurryadm.mcm.edu if you wish your newsletter to be sent to you by email.

So, what has been happening? Read on...

Buffalo Gap Historic Village

The first six months of 2004 have been very exciting for the Buffalo Gap Historic Village. The Village has set record year-to-date attendance. If the trend continues, over 13,500 visitors could pass through its gates this year. Several displays have been moved to align more closely with the focus of the Village. The Texas History Store has been changed, and Doc's Cook Shack has opened. Modifications in the interpretive programming have given new life to the summer busy season. Special events and personnel changes have also been marked with success.

The biggest addition to the Village in the first six months of this year has been the revamping of the Buffalo Gap Mercantile, which reopened as the Texas History Store on March 2nd. The Store has moved from a kitschy, cowboy boutique to a regional history outlet. It now carries a large collection of history books. All titles from the McWhiney and State House Presses, and additional titles from our partners in the A&M Press consortium, are available. The Store also stocks items representing the time periods the Village presents. It has out-performed projections every month this year.

Doc's Cook Shack is finally open and operational! The Village began selling mesquite grilled hamburgers, hotdogs, sausage, and hot links for the weekend of June 26-27. The official opening date was the July 3-4 weekend. Some kinks remain to be worked out, but the food is absolutely incredible. Doc's Cook Shack has already booked a catering event for a private party at the Village. This is potentially a great revenue stream for the Village. Bill Young, a Spanish teacher at Wylie High School, has taken on the responsibility of running the Cook Shack.

The interpretive staffing at the Village has also undergone an overhaul. The management decided to hire 10 to 12 interpreters for the summer season and to use tour guides for the winter weekends. There is now a vibrant and interactive period community for visitors to enjoy. Several visitors have joined the interpreters for a game of dominoes or Mah Jongg. The interpretive staff's ages range from Can't Yet Drive to Well Seasoned, and the youngest interpreter has expertly engaged visiting children in games like marbles and jacks. Barbara Lambert, who spent two years at Billings Farm in Vermont as an interpreter, was promoted to Lead Interpreter in May.

Special events included a Civil War Veterans Reunion, which brought interpreters from all over the state. The fundraiser this year was a phenomenal success. Red Steagall again regaled the participants with many of their favorite songs. The silent auction went well and was the Village's biggest money maker. The next fundraiser was the annual BBQ Dinner Theater performed by the Abilene Actors Guild. There were about 60 people in attendance over the three nights of performances.

1883 baseball is in full swing again. Scott Douglas, one of our volunteers, has taken over coordinating the program and notifying volunteers of games and meetings. Baseball is one of our bigger Independence Day events. This year Congressmen Charlie Stenholm (D - Abilene) and Randy Neugebauer (R - Lubbock) both joined the action. Randy threw out the first pitch and Charlie took the first at bat. Both congressmen played through the third inning when the umpire was "arrested" on the accusation of public drunkenness by the Village Marshal and two deputies.



Randy Neugebauer and Charles Stenholm joke with Assistant Site Manager Justin Frazier about their upcoming 1880s style baseball game (photo courtesy of Josie Liming/ *Abilene Reporter-News*).

The Village has experienced several personnel changes over the past six months. Justin Frazier was hired in February to be the new Assistant Site Manager and blacksmith. The Foundation sent Justin to New Mexico to learn blacksmithing in March. In May, Site Manager Kevin Young resigned to pursue his degree back in his home state of Illinois. The staffs of the McWhiney Foundation and the Buffalo Gap Historic Village wish Kevin and his wife Gail the best of luck as they move forward. Upon Kevin's resignation, Justin was promoted to Acting Site Manager until a suitable replacement is found and installed. Pam Burns, our Store Manager, was promoted to full-time Retail Manager.

Village management has implemented other programs of interest. All Buffalo Gap residents now receive free admission. Many local residents say they have driven by the Village for 10 - 20 years and never taken a tour. The Village's new television commercial, complete with jingle, is now playing on several cable channels in the Abilene market. New summer hours for the Village are 9 AM until 6 PM. In October, the Village returns to its regular winter hours of 10 AM to 5 PM.



Publishing Activity Continues to Increase

With the addition of State House Press as an imprint of McWhiney Foundation Press, publishing activity has escalated, particularly in the area of Texas history.

14 books are being published in 2004 and at least 20 books in 2005. This will make State House/McWhiney the third most active university press in the state in terms of new titles published. The books continue to receive excellent reviews statewide and nationally; the Press has upgraded its presence on Amazon.com and other Internet book sites. In addition, there is now a web site through the Buffalo Gap Historic Village offering discounts on our Texas books – www.texashistorystore.com

Books for the spring/summer catalog include:

What I Learned on the Ranch, by James Bruce Frazier.
Texas Myths and Legends, by John C. Ferguson.
Sacrificed at the Alamo, by Richard Bruce Winders.
20 Good Reasons to Study the Civil War, by John C. Waugh.
The Parramore Sketches, by Dock Dillworth Parramore.

The fall/winter list includes two books which actually came out this spring:

Frontier Texas, by Robert Pace and Don Frazier.
Cowboy Corner Conversations, by Red Steagall.

Also on the fall list:

My Kind of Heroes, by Elmer Kelton.
A Small Town in Texas, by Glenn Dromgoole.
Hellcats: The 12th Armored Division in World War II, by John C. Ferguson.
The Team of the Century, by Al Pickett.
West Point: Two Centuries and Beyond, an anthology edited by Lance Betros.
In the Saddle with the Texans, edited by Anne Bailey.
Texas Indian Fighters, bringing back an out-of-print classic by A.J. Sowell.

Looking ahead, the Press plans a series of children's biographies on Texas history which tie in with the study of Texas history in the fourth grade. Other 2005 titles include *Quotable Texas Women*, *Rattlesnake Bomber Base*, and *Sherman's March to the Sea*.

Carly Kahl joined the press staff part time last fall and is now the full time publishing assistant.

Spring 2004 Collection Report

McWhiney Collection Staff spent Spring 2004 updating collection databases and comparing these databases to those maintained by the Abilene Library Consortium. All titles currently listed in the McWhiney Collection were marked in anticipation of adding them to the Abilene Library Consortium, pending funding availability. In addition to comparing the collection against ALC holdings, approximately 250 new titles were

added to the collection database maintained on site. While this may sound a bit technical, it means that the Staff continues to improve a user's ease of access to the collection holdings. Through the assistance of the McMurry Public History Program, additional items were also added to the Historic Buffalo Gap Collection, and its finding guide was updated.

Coming Attractions at the Village

August 7: The Buffalo Chips continue in action with 1880s-style baseball.

September 25, 2004: An Evening with Meriwether Lewis

October 2, 2004: Horses to Horseless Carriages

October 21, 22, 23, 28, 29, 30, 31, 2004: The Haunted Village ("Horrors of the Frontier")

December 11, 2004: Christmas at the Gap

The McWhiney Webpages

This summer, the total number of pictures on the Buffalo Gap Historic Village webpages has been greatly expanded. For most of the buildings in the "See the Village" section, a mouse click on the initial thumbnail image loads a whole screen of larger images of the interior of the structure. Often, the interpreters will be making presentations. With your computer, you can take your own virtual tour of the Village at

www.buffalogap.com

Fundraising

In April, Tim Yandell joined the McWhiney Research Foundation as Director of Advancement. Yandell most recently served as Regional Coordinator of the Texas Forts Trail and has also been affiliated with both Christian Homes of Abilene and the Abilene Intercollegiate School of Nursing in the areas of development. He will work in all areas of development and fundraising, including capital improvements, annual giving, and planned giving. Yandell says, "I am excited to be at the McWhiney Foundation and look forward to working with the staff and board on the many exciting projects that are underway. Though the Foundation has only existed for about to eight years, it has already had a far reaching impact in the areas of history education within the state."

Yandell received his BA in Mass Communications Public Relations in 1985 from Abilene Christian University and the Master of Science in Organizational and Human Resources in 1994, also from ACU.

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