Denton County Turns 170!
Big Celebration, Saturday, April 16

To celebrate the 170th Anniversary of Denton County, the Office of History & Culture and the Denton County Historical Commission will host a series of fun, family-friendly activities at the Courthouse-on-the-Square on Saturday April 16th. Activities throughout the day include a cowboy breakfast, storytelling in a 20 foot tepee, photo opportunities with the Old No. 14 Fire Truck, Dynamic Denton film screening, arts & crafts, and a Denton County birthday cake!

Schedule of Events:
8-10 AM Cowboy Breakfast*
10 AM Opening Ceremony and Edna W. Trigg Historical Marker Dedication
12 PM Denton County Birthday Cake Cutting
1-4 PM Tejas Storytellers

*Tickets for Cowboy Breakfast: Adults $8 and $4 children under 12

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TRIVIA: In the early 1900s, this man was county attorney and state representative before serving in World War I. He was instrumental in forming the American Legion and although he ran unsuccessfully for United States Senator, he served the nation as ambassador to Denmark, Rumania and the Irish Free State. His name was… (see page 6 for answer)
A Message from our county chair, Dr. Charlotte Mooneyham—

Denton County, Best in State

There are 254 counties in Texas. Denton is the best and not by accident. Careful planning and diligent attention to county needs by Denton County Commissioners Court and County Judge Mary Horn are part of the top ten reasons that Denton ranks number one for our family.

County Government
County, City, and Citizen Vision for the future
Valuing all residents
Honoring the past by preserving all the stories, stories of pride and shame

Universities, Community Colleges, Public Schools: my teachers from Stonewall Jackson Elementary, the oldest public school in Denton, the culture of universities (my mom was at the Little Chapel when Eleanor Roosevelt spoke ’39, mom heard John Philip Sousa on campus in the thirties, I attended a performance of the Royal Danish ballet at TWU in the fifties and saw Lady Bird in the sixties, Ted Talks on TWU campus 2016)

Preserving, defining, and identifying seminal artifacts, architecture and buildings: Court House, Historical Park, City Hall, Oak Street, Quakertown, and Satellite Museums, cabins, nature conservation areas throughout the County

Office of History and Culture and Denton County Historical Commission supporting or responsible in part for #2 through #6 along with County Government

Other public and nonprofit help for those needing help: Daily Bread, Denton City County Preschool, Head Start Programs, Prekindergarten Programs (Pilot Offering Pre-K for all children, not only qualifying students) health clinics at TWU, Autism Center UNT, Teacher Education Departments from TWU, NCTC, Collin College and UNT, Denton County MHMR, hundreds of churches and centers of worship

Healthy County: Denton County was listed as number 4 in the ranking for healthy environment of the 254 counties in Texas for 2016

Alonzo Jamison, my government professor at Texas Woman’s University and Denton’s Representative for the State Legislature, 1955 to 1969 (I miss him, his knowledge, and humor).

Alonzo W. Jamison, Jr.
Birth date: April 12, 1918
Death date: October 29, 2011

Thank you to all those who were elected to serve Denton County, hired to work for the county, and those who volunteer, past and present. Alonzo Jamison would be proud and he might even join my family in our belief that Denton County is the number one best place to live.

Six Texas Historical Commission Markers Approved

The Texas Historical Commission (THC) has notified the Denton County Historical Commission (DCHC) that six (6) markers have been approved for 2016.

Four of the markers approved were for Recorded Texas Historical Landmark status. All are in Denton. The houses are:
The Lipscomb-Doggett House at 918 West Oak Street, built in 1895.
The Robert Mounts House at 305 Mounts Avenue, constructed in 1898.
The Simmons-Maxwell House at 607 Pearl Street, built in 1915

The Mounts-Wright House at 403 Mounts Avenue, constructed in 1898

One of the other two markers approved was for the Town of Bartonville, established in the 1880s and incorporated in 1963, and after it un-incorporated, was incorporated again in 1973.

The other marker approved was for Denton’s second county seat—the first Alton, designated as such in 1848. Like the first county seat, Pinckneyville, Alton was not developed as a town. Court and Commissioners meetings were held on the porch of a local cabin. A lack of a water source led to the moving of Alton to a site on Hickory Creek; the second Alton site the place known today as “Old Alton.”

We Want to Hear From You!

Let us know what you like or dislike about Retrospect. What would you like to see more of...or less of? Have a story idea? Want to submit an article?

Contact us: DJ Taylor (940) 368-1816
or email: djtaylortx@centurylink.net

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Dallas to Denton by Pony: The World Premiere of Unusual Occupations

By Laura Treat

Seventy-four years ago, in March 1942, a local theater magnate, a pony farmer, and Hollywood studio executives collaborated to turn a 1-minute short film into a county-wide event built on patriotism, nostalgia, and a love for little ponies.

An “Unusual Occupation:” The Will Williams Shetland pony farm

Will Williams was a prominent and well-known resident of Denton County before his moment in the spotlight. He became involved in the Shetland pony business in 1905 when he bought his children several of the small animals, ordered directly from the Shetland Islands all the way across the North Atlantic Ocean. Williams soon became one of the country’s most active and successful breeders. His ponies were sold internationally and were celebrated as performers in the circus, movies, and other entertainment venues.

The Williams pony farm caught the eye of Jerry Fairbanks Studios in Hollywood, California. Since 1937, Fairbanks had produced theatrical short subjects, “Unusual Occupations,” for Paramount Pictures. The series featured eccentric and “unusual” people with exotic jobs and strange hobbies. Once a story was selected as a candidate, it was marked with a pin and slip of paper on a large map in the studio research department wall. Once a cluster of pins accumulated in a region a mobile photographic unit was sent to the area to photograph the stories. When producer Fairbanks learned of Williams, cameramen were sent to photograph the farm.

The charming film shows the 640-acre pony farm in Denton and Williams performing a favorite trick which involved teaching his ponies to come running when he rang a bell and said “Hey!” His 5-year-old granddaughter, Kay, is seen riding and feeding these “little ponies for little people.” The Denton Record-Chronicle later reported that an “expensive color camera made a movie set out of this pastoral farm” and that the “ponies were slicked up and gradually grew accustomed to the strange equipment. Denton was in the movies!” A DVD copy can be checked out at the University of North Texas Media Library (DVD 16659R).

“It Started With a Bang!” Patriotism and Ponies for Little People

In January 1942, the Record Chronicle announced that J.P. Harrison of the Interstate Theater Co. had secured a world premiere of the “Unusual Occupations” episode and a whirlwind of publicity began. There were near daily news articles and advertisements. A “Most Popular and Patriotic Boy and Girl” of Denton County contest was announced. Winners would be awarded their own Shetland pony. Voting coupons were earned by shopping at sponsoring businesses. Local children including Bobby McMakin, Mack Kenneth Foster, Quincy Merl Hughes, and Patsy Manson posted advertisements in the Chronicle soliciting votes. Webber Jan Farris advertised, “My dad said he would help me in the 'Patriotic and Popular Boy and Girl' Contest…if you have any votes I could have if you will telephone he will come for them, and I would certainly appreciate your help.” By the end of February, there were 339 registered. A sub-contest even emerged to name the ponies awarded to contestants. A $5 defense saving stamp was the prize for the best names with those of a “patriotic nature preferred.”

In February, Paramount publicist Tom McKeann met with the Denton Chamber of Commerce and out of this meeting came a strange and fantastic publicity stunt — on March 4th, 1942, a group of local children would recreate the Pony Express on Shetland ponies, by delivering the “Unusual Occupations” film reel from Dallas to Denton! See “Ponies” on page 5.
Courthouse a Full House as All Eyes and Ears Focused on Owsley’s Summation at Seagraves Murder Trial in 1919

BY DJ Taylor

The blustery wind kicked up dust along the streets of Roanoke on the second day of 1918. It wasn’t cold for January; the temperature settling comfortably in the 60s. Thoughts were on the war in Europe and the local boys, many encamped at Fort Worth’s Camp Bowie, who were heading off to fight the “Great War” as it was called. But ill-will among a couple of men cast an unnerving shadow over the quiet Denton County town.

It was mid-day when the Oldsmobile rolled in from the north. Bun Chadwick drove and his brother-in-law Lee Litsey sat in the passenger seat wearing his army uniform. They intended to make a stop in Roanoke before returning Litsey to his post at Camp Bowie. The planned stop would not be of a pleasant nature and the two men had begun their day drinking whiskey; a two-thirds empty bottle beside them as they rolled into town.

Inside Jenkins’ Hardware, a worried Sam Seagraves watched the car pass by. He quickly exited the store and headed to the house of his brother, Jim, a block down and across the street. As he prepared to go inside, the Oldsmobile wheeled into the front yard.

Seagraves had heard of the threats being made by Chadwick and had been told the man was armed. His response was to buy a pistol of his own. He walked slowly to the car and put a hand on the top of the driver’s door. Words were exchanged, increasingly angry words. Suddenly, there was movement by both men. Seagraves stepped back, reached into a pocket, pulled a pistol and fired three times. Bun Chadwick, with two bullet wounds to his head, slumped to his right and back, dead. A third shot passed through his right arm, through the car’s front seat and lodged in the right rear side of the vehicle.

There was never any doubt or denial that Seagraves had killed Chadwick. After both Seagraves and Litsey sought help, the shooter surrendered; admitting to firing the fatal shots. But—he claimed self-defense.

In a time when trials and judgements quickly followed a possible crime, this case took almost two years to reach the docket. The reason? There was but one surviving person present at the shooting other than Seagraves: Lee Litsey. The pesky war in Europe and Litsey being in the military hindered the case coming to trial. Without its main witness, the prosecution team was left to wait until the war ended and the doughboys returned. Lucky for the prosecution, Litsey survived the war.

Seagraves posted bail of $6,000 soon after his arrest, his father, Dr. Byrom Seagraves, being the prime guarantor. During the twenty-one months that followed until the trial, Sam Seagraves returned to Roanoke and worked at odd jobs, paper-hanging, farm work, gin work, as he had always done.

The trial began in October, 1919 and would be one of the most sensational trials ever held in the county. With most in the county having knowledge of the shooting and entrenched opinions regarding the case, finding a jury would not be easy. When Denton County Attorney Robert H. Hopkins announced that prosecution would seek the death penalty, picking a jury became even more difficult.

Hopkins put together a very select prosecution team. In addition to himself as lead prosecutor, he enlisted Dallas Judge J. C. Muse, Denton Judge John Spear and local attorney J. W. Sullivan.

Not to be outdone, the defense team could be considered among the best around, too. It was led by Denton attorney Alvin C. Owsley, a man renowned as a persuasive speaker with a long resume that included being a favorite orator for anyone seriously campaigning for statewide office. He also seldom lost a court case. His was assisted by his two associates in the firm of Owsley, Owsley and Alcorn; W. W. Alcorn and Owsley’s son, former state representative, former county attorney and just returned war hero, Alvin Mansfield Owsley.

Expecting a difficult time in getting twelve men (women did not serve on juries in that era) qualified to serve, the court called a venire of 100 men. When examination of these yielded but eight jurors, another 40 were called. This second effort produced three more jurors. Frustrated at the failure to fill the jury, Judge C. E. Pearson ordered Deputy Sheriff Ed Hammett to go out on the streets of Denton and bring back ten potential jurors. At last, the final jury slot was filled.

See “Seagraves Trial” on page 11
Denton County Honors Edna Trigg with Historical Marker

On Saturday April 16th Denton County will unveil a new historical marker dedicated to Mrs. Edna Westbrook Trigg (1868-1946). Edna Trigg served as the first County Home Demonstration agent in the state of Texas, representing Denton County.

Born in Milam County in 1868, Enda Westbrook Trigg grew up in a rural farm community. She taught and served as principal at Rural High School in Liberty. In 1911, the United States Department of Agriculture asked her to take on the position of county ‘collaborator’ in which she created the Girls’ Tomato Club. Trigg organized eleven clubs with an average of ten girls, aged 10 to18. In the Tomato Clubs, the girls were responsible for cultivating one-tenth of an acre of tomatoes; the tomatoes were split to be either canned or sold. When the funding ran out in Milam County, she returned to Rural High School until she was offered the position of Home Demonstration Agent in Denton County in 1916.

As the first Home Demonstration Agent in the state of Texas, she paved the way for others who also went out into rural communities to provide demonstration on gardening, canning, sewing, cooking, household management, family health, poultry-raising, and many other aspects of daily life. Seen as an outsider and “government woman,” Edna Trigg was not always welcome in the Denton County, but she didn’t let this discourage her from educating the community and helping Denton County to “feed herself.” She served as Denton County’s home demonstration agent until 1937, when she was given the title of County Home Demonstration Agent Emeritus, a position she held until her retirement in 1945. She also taught classes at the College of Industrial Arts (now Texas Woman’s University), overseeing courses in methods for home demonstration work and assuring the professionalism of future agents. Mrs. Trigg's hard work and dedication set the standard for all county extension agents.

The Edna W. Trigg Historical Marker Dedication Ceremony will take place on the lawn of the Courthouse on the Square at 10 AM Saturday April 16. The marker will be placed on the northwest corner of the Courthouse, close to where her office was located in the basement of the building during her years with Denton County.

Riding continued with Sheriff Roy Moore supervising the changing of ponies every 2-3 miles. A crowd gathered in Carrolton for Major J.C. Davis and Betty Jean Abbey—a bareback rider and only girl in the contest. In Lewisville, schools were let out and a “herd of wild horses were driven across the street” for the cameras. Back in Denton, a replica pony express relay station was the background for the ceremonies. Governor Stevenson visited NTSU and TSCW before lunching with Williams. When the pony express “thundered across the finish line” at the Texas Theater at 1:00 p.m., it was said that a world record had been broken with a travel time of 2 hours and 37.8 minutes. Because the theater planned to show the news reel at the world premiere the following day, Whitman rushed back to Dallas to process and edit the film. Due to high demand, the premiere was held at all 3 downtown theaters. Prior to the screening, Dorothy Hester (sp.) and George Watkins were announced as the “Most Patriotic Boy and Girl” of Denton County and were presented with ponies “Victory” and “Liberty.” Unfortunately, I have not been able to locate nearly as much information about the premiere of the film or its reception as I was about the Pony Express ride. A search for the Life magazine article and the Paramount Newsreel have been unsuccessful.

If you have any additional information about the “Pony Express: event, please contact Laura Treat at laura.treat@unt.edu or by phone at 940.369.5293. If you were part of the extravaganza and have home movies, photographs, or memorabilia, please consider bringing them down to UNT for a free community digitization event on Saturday, April 30, 2016 from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. More details are available on the projects Facebook page: www.facebook.com/SpotlightNTX.
During the month of February visitors to the Court-house-on-the-Square viewed African-American in-spired quilts by Barbara McCraw, Denton resident and nationally known textile artist. The exhibit, *Quilt As Art: The Works of Barbara McCraw* featured color-ful quilt designs using fabrics and patterns repre-senting aspects of African-American culture and iden-tity. The Office of History & Culture also exhibited *Be-hold the People: R.C. Hick-man’s Photographs of Black Dallas*, a traveling exhibition courtesy of Humanities Tex-as.

Along with the exhibits, Black History Month pro-gramming included a gallery talk given by Barbara McCraw and a presentation on African-American spiritu-als by Rose Taylor, a student in the music education pro-gram at Texas Woman’s University.

As a kick-off to Black History Month, the OHC and the Denton County Commiss-ioners Court recognized Barbara McCraw for her one-of-a-kind quilts and for sharing her talents with the people of Denton County.

Barbara McCraw has quilted for over sixteen years and has taught and given various classes and lectures. McCraw’s artwork is influenced by her imagination, the encouragement she receives from friends, and the memory of her mother. The artist also draws in-spiration from vivid colors that signify movement, nature, and the beauty of the people around her. McCraw greatly respects traditional quilting and loves to learn the history behind the patterns. However, her true quilting interest is in creating one-of-a-kind quilts that call for techniques that are more contem-porary. —*Office of History & Culture*

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*Trivia Answer:* Alvin Mansfield Owsley. The son of famed attorney Alvin Clark Owsley and Sallie Blount Owsley, he married Lucy Ball, an heir to the Ball Company of canning jar fame; retiring to private life after a number of years in public service.
Texas History, The History of Might and Sometimes Right: Remember the Alamo and San Jacinto Too

By Charlotte Mooneyham

Texas, our Texas, all hail the mighty state. I grew up being taught that Texas was the biggest and best of all 48 states. Texans were taller, stronger, smarter, and had more grit than other people from the other little states we joined as the 28th state in the union. The bluebonnet, the mockingbird, and the pecan tree were epic symbols of this state, the only state that had been a republic, a country with a declaration of independence, a revolution of their own, and their own Lone Star Flag. Alaska became the biggest state in 1959 but my third grade friends and I often chanted, still the best, second biggest and best of the best. England fits inside Texas about 3 times. I learned the England to Texas ratio well after third grade.

Some Texas branding and bragging is supported by events and some events support the opposite. Texas independence from Mexico and Santa Anna’s tyranny in 1836 is truly to be celebrated.

There are only two official Texas state holidays: Texas Independence Day, March 2nd and San Jacinto Day, April 21st. Every defender of the Alamo was killed. The defenders voted to stay and hold off Santa Anna’s advancing army. Without this heroic act the war might have been lost. Because of this heroic act Texas independence became a reality. Sam Houston and his forces were able to have time to plan the battle of San Jacinto where humane treatment for all under a dictator, Santa Anna, and the Mexican Rule he imposed. The troops who remained were Santa Ann and his vast army was defeated because the defenders of the Alamo delayed the advances of Santa Anna. The Republic of Texas was born and another flag flew over Texas. A single star was on the Texas flag, the Lone Star Flag, to represent that Texas stood alone against the cruel, autocrat and dictator, Santa Anna, and the Mexican Rule he imposed. The white strip on the flag stood for purity and the red strip for the bloodshed by Texians to defeat Santa Anna. The Texas flag is always displayed with red at the bottom where the blood ran.

In 1836, Texas became a republic where humane treatment and a government of laws not of despotic men was implemented. Without the heroism represented during the Texas Revolution, the story of Texas would have been very different. The real bragging rights come genuinely and the story of the courage and struggle of the emerging republic is epic.

The stirring of the ideal of humane treatment for all under a nation of law, not a rule of force and cruelty echoed through philosophies and revolutions in the 1700s and 1800s. The French Revolution, The American Revolution, Simon Bolivar in South America and Toulouse Lautrec in Haiti heard and felt the message of freedom, dignity, and protection. The writings of philosophers, Locke, Montesquieu, and Rousseau resounded. The spirit of justice and self determination seemed to be carried on the winds of the times, the spirit that still grows within hearts.

The quote on the base of the Statue of Liberty (a gift from France to celebrate the 100th Birthday of the United States) expresses the ideal eloquently.

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
Send these homeless, tempest tossed, to me:
I lift my lamp by the golden door.

Emma Lazarus

When the Cruel Dictator of Mexico, Santa Anna, could no longer be tolerated. The Hispanic and Anglo Texians joined together to fight for freedom. Timeless ideals of humanity were defended.

Texas, Our Texas, we salute those who defeated Santa Anna. The stories of the Alamo and San Jacinto are proud stories, the stories of the events and heroes that need to be told and retold. The stories of the might of Texas, the right of Texas, the story bigger than the individual participants grew into inspiration to keep righting wrongs. Texans believe impossible dreams because there is Texas grit infused with Texas. The ideals, the dreams continue to guide Texas; Texas Our Texas, So Wonderful, So Great.

Texas Independence was declared after the battle of the Alamo started. All the defenders of the Alamo were killed. The Texians, the rebels who fought for freedom from Santa Anna did not survive to see the outcome of sacrificing their lives. The battle lasted 13 days. The heroes who died there knew they could not win the battle. Outnumbered almost 100 to 1, surrounded and without supplies, those defenders chose to stay and meet certain death. These Texian patriots could have escaped under the cover of night, in tunnels, in small groups, one at a time as some scouts and a lone woman had done. They stayed knowing the battle would be lost but their heroic sacrifice enabled the war to be won.

Sam Houston, commander of the Texian forces was able to win at the Battle of San Jacinto because the Alamo defenders delayed Santa Anna’s troops long enough for Sam Houston to execute a brilliant battle plan. When Santa Anna’s forces camped by the river, Houston knew that retreat was blocked by the river on one side. He divided his ranks into attacking parties to surround Santa Anna’s men. Houston carefully selected the time to trap Santa Anna and his soldiers. After the midday meal, during siesta time, Houston gave the attack order. Santa Anna’s forces had eaten, and smoked peyote. The troops who remained awake were very relaxed. Many slept. Houston attacked. The skirmish lasted 18 minutes or perhaps 13 minutes according to one source. San Jacinto was one of the most decisive battles in history. See: “Texas History” on page 8.
Texas Historical Commission Marker Dedicated for Elm Fork Bridge

A capacity crowd of 90 filled the pews or found a place to stand at Aubrey’s First Christian Church on Saturday, February 13, for a ceremony dedicating the Texas Historical Commission marker for the Elm Fork Bridge. Afterwards, the majority drove the three-plus miles to the old steel bridge for the unveiling of the marker.

The ceremony was co-hosted by the Denton County Historical Commission and the Aubrey Historical Society. Boy Scout Troop 424 posted the colors and led the pledge. County Judge Mary Horn and Texas Parks & Wildlife’s Isle du Bois manager Mark Stewart spoke as did University of North Texas (UNT) archivist Morgan Gieringer. Along with UNT graduate student Zachery Richardson, Gieringer researched the bridge’s history and wrote the historical narrative that won approval for the marker.

The bridge is a Pratt through-truss, 100 feet long with east and west approaches that are Warren pony-truss bridges. Built in 1922, it was the longest bridge in Denton County at the time. The construction of the bridge and the highway, known as Sherman Drive made for better access to the federal courts in Sherman as well as providing easier access to Denton for residents in the northeastern quadrant of the county. After a new bridge was built adjacent to it in 1990 as part of the improvement of FM 428, the historic bridge became part of the Ray Roberts Lake Greenbelt trail from the lake to Denton.

Texas History, continued from page 7

Wonder who was timing the fight? Many of Santa Anna’s soldiers surrendered having no loyalty to their leader and no ideals to exchange for death. Santa Anna dressed as a private was captured when his soldiers, now prisoners started calling out El Presidente, El Presidente! Santa Anna surrendered to Houston.

The Republic of Texas raised the fourth flag, the flag of an independent nation. Sam Houston was elected to two terms as President of the Republic of Texas, though not consecutive terms. Maribea B. Lamar and Anson Jones were the other two Presidents of the Republic. When Texas became a state in the United States in 1845, the American flag was raised. Sam Houston served as a US senator and governor of the state as well as President of the Republic. Clearly Houston cared about Texas and was the governor of Texas when Texas voted to secede from the Union. Sam Houston, ever a hero, resigned. He refused to be a part of the rebellion against the United States. Houston said that he would not see blood shed on Texas soil again. The ideal, the humanity was missing from the Civil War that was part of the Texas Revolution. Houston said, “I wish no epitaph to be written to say that I survived the ruin of this glorious union.”

The opinions expressed in the context of the writing are my own. The facts were taken primarily from the seventh grade textbook, Texas and Texans by Anderson and Wooster. Corrections and differing opinions are welcome.

—Charlotte

Deliberation and debate is the way you stir the soul of our democracy.

—Jesse Jackson, Civil Rights Leader, Political Activist
The University of North Texas Library Invites Denton County Residents to Be Part of Film History

The public is invited to join the University of North Texas Libraries and the Texas Archive of the Moving Image for the unique opportunity to become part of North Texas film history while also preserving your family’s photographs, home movies, and more. From ticket stubs and theater advertisements to home movies of local parades and festivals, this free community event will help to preserve Denton County’s extensive but disappearing film heritage.

Residents of Denton County are invited to participate in “Spotlight on North Texas,” on Saturday, April 30th at the UNT Willis Library Forum (First Floor, Room 140) at 1506 Highland Street from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free parking is available in “Lot 26” on Highland Street & Avenue C and all “G” lots. Paid parking is available in the Highland Street Parking Garage at Avenue A & Highland Street.

Families may bring in historic photos, advertisements, ticket stubs and other print items documenting the history of film production and distribution in Denton County. UNT Libraries staff and volunteers will scan these items onsite and immediately return the original materials along with a free digital copy. The Texas Archive of the Moving Image (TAMI) will also be onsite to collect your historic family film and videos, which will be digitized off-site and returned by mail to the owners at no cost, along with a digital copy. To qualify for free digitization, the movies must be shot by a Texan, shot in Texas, or be about Texas. Print items must relate to Denton County’s motion picture heritage. We may also accept digital copies of already digitized or born-digital materials.

Digitization is limited to 25 print items, up to 20 reels motion picture film, and 5 videotapes per household. The sponsoring organizations will retain a digital copy of the materials for long-term preservation. With a selection of digitized items, UNT will create a community collection on the Portal to Texas History which will document local and regional heritage. A selection of materials will also be placed online as part of TAMI’s digital collection. Thousands of materials have already been preserved by these institutions and can be viewed online at www.texashistory.unt.edu and www.texasarchive.org.

“Spotlight on North Texas” is free and open to the public. In addition to digitization, attendees can learn about film history and preservation and view historic film clips from North Texas including the Southwest Premiere of Bonnie and Clyde and a recently preserved film by legendary director Joe Camp. Dr. Georgia Caraway will be selling and signing copies of her books including Legendary Locals of Denton and Postcards of Denton County from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Light refreshments will be provided.

If you have questions about the program or whether your materials qualify for free digitization, please contact the Program Director, Laura Treat at laura.treat@unt.edu or (940) 369-5293. Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/SpotlightNTX and Twitter @Spotlight_NTX.

This event has been made possible in part by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities: Exploring the human endeavor. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this project do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Did You Know?

Movies with Denton connections go back at least 100 years. The April 20, 1916 edition of the Fort Worth Star-Telegram reported from Denton: “A moving picture drama was taken yesterday afternoon, the actors being home talent. The picture included a scene in which a young woman was rescued from a burning building while the fire was being fought by Denton’s new automobile fire engine.” —DJ Taylor
Quanah Parker: One Man, Two Worlds
Courthouse Museum Exhibit, March 20-April 30, 2016

The Office of History & Culture welcomes two traveling exhibits to the Courthouse-on-the-Square. The first traveling exhibit will be on display March 14th – April 29th, “Quanah Parker: One Man, Two Worlds” includes over forty rarely seen photos of Cynthia Ann and Quanah Parker. This exhibit is courtesy of the Texas Historical Commission’s Texas Lakes Trail Program. In 1836, a Comanche raiding party took Cynthia Ann from her family, and over the following years she became wife to a Comanche chief and mother to three children, including Quanah. Due to his mixed heritage Quanah became one of the most important Comanche leaders both in war and peace. This pictorial exhibition highlights the lives of these influential figures in Texas History.

—Office of History & Culture

Running for Office: Candidates, Campaigns, and the Cartoons of Clifford Berryman

The second traveling exhibit, on display May 3rd – July 26th, is courtesy of Humanities Texas. “Running for Office: Candidates, Campaigns, and the Cartoons of Clifford Berryman,” displays the creative, insightful and satirical political cartoons of Clifford Berryman, the Pulitzer-prize winning editorial cartoonist for the Washington Post and the Washington Evening Star during the first half of the 20th century. Berryman became a Washington Institution and one of the most celebrated and respected political cartoonists of his time. Today, his pen-and-ink drawings are housed by the Center for Legislative Archives at the National Archives, serving as official records of the U.S. Senate. “Running for Office” emphasizes the enduring significance of Berryman’s drawings to American political history.

—Office of History & Culture

Seagraves Trial, continued from page 4

The trial would last for a full week and interest was high. A large crowd of onlookers filled the courtroom and its gallery on a daily basis, hanging on to every detail of what was sometimes sordid testimony.

Both sides agreed that the main interest of Lee Litsey in seeing Sam Seagraves that fateful January day was to settle accounts regarding payment for work done by Seagraves on Litsey’s farm, but also Seagraves’ writing checks on Litsey’s bank account. The two men seemed to have an understanding about how it was to be worked out; the disagreement was in regard to the “when.”

Bun Chadwick, however had his own bone to pick with Seagraves, who had worked for him on occasion. Part of his worries were in regard to a house fire at Christmas, 1916. That fire had destroyed Chadwick’s highly insured home west of Roanoke on what is now called Litsey Road. Seagraves and Clint Merrett would both testify that Chadwick had offered them, at different times, $100 to burn the house. Testimony from Seagraves stated that Chadwick was afraid his offers would become known and he wanted Sam Seagraves to leave the area. The testimony of several others recalled Chadwick displaying a gun and telling them that he was going to “light a fire under Dad” (Sam Seagraves’s nickname) and had also threatened to shoot him if he didn’t leave.

But perhaps the biggest fear Chadwick had, and a more important reason he wanted Seagraves out of town, was a rumor being whispered about—rather loudly—that Chadwick was involved with a teenaged girl. To fully understand the ramifications of this, one must know some facts. Chadwick’s wife was a daughter of R. R. Litsey, a man who owned over 6,000 acres in southern Denton County as well as other large tracts in the panhandle. R. R. Litsey had died in April, 1917, and Mrs. Chadwick was about to inherit a portion of the estate. But the talk about his dalliance was threatening his marriage and he stood to lose a small fortune.

The rumors of Chadwick’s extra-marital shenanigans would prove true and become public knowledge when former Denton County Sheriff Pat Gallagher was called to the stand. He’d first heard of the relationship when Chadwick had told him that he feared the girl’s father intended to kill him (Chadwick). After talking with the girl, Gallagher took Chadwick to the county jail only to learn, in his words, “the girl was over fifteen” and he couldn’t arrest Chadwick for corrupting the morals of a minor.

The senior Owsey repeatedly put prosecution witnesses on the defensive by asking about recent personal acquisitions. It soon became apparent that many, or more correctly their families, had received valuable gifts from the Chadwick and Litsey families. One can easily imagine Owsey giving a knowing look to the jury.

This trial was one of the first to hinge on forensics. A final witness for the prosecution, former sheriff Gallagher, testified that he had tried to match up the holes in the arm of Chadwick’s coat with the holes in the seat and back right panel. He said the only way he could do this was with his right arm on the steering wheel. Seagraves had testified that Chadwick was reaching for a gun in his right back pocket when the shooting began. Witnesses who came on the scene after the shooting gave conflicting testimony as to the position of Chadwick’s right arm, but Litsey testified he had moved the body in an unsuccessful attempt to start the car.

The lengthy testimony in the trial led to closing arguments being held on Friday night. When it was announced that Alvin C. Owsey would close for the defense, crowds poured into the courthouse to hear the grand orator, lining the walls on both levels as all seats were taken. Those in the hallways strained to hear the proceedings.

Alvin C. Owsey, in his summation, recalled the testimony of undertaker John Tabor who stated that his inspection of the wounds showed the path of the bullet entered the upper right arm of Chadwick and exited the forearm. Owsey demonstrated how that would occur if Chadwick had been reaching for the pistol in his rear pocket, rather than Gallagher’s speculation that Chadwick’s right hand was on the steering wheel when he was shot.

The courtroom was momentarily silent but murmuring began until Judge Pearson called for order.

The jury was given their charge at 9:45 that night and went immediately into deliberations. Judge Pearson, expecting a long deliberation, took the Saturday morning train to Dallas. But the jury announced they had reached a decision just after the train departed. Both the prosecution and defense scrambled to find a judge to preside over the verdict. They agreed on Judge Joe S. Gambill and he called the court to order.

Hearing that a verdict was imminent, word spread from the courthouse square and the courtroom was soon filled once again.

“Not guilty” was the decision and the stunned prosecution looked from one to the other as handshakes were exchanged by the defendant and his attorneys.

That should be a happy ending for Sam Seagraves, wouldn’t you agree? But wait for the end of the story.

Returning to Roanoke, Sam Seagraves was soon working at the Farmer’s Gin in Roanoke, his employer being Jack Medlin, a man who had testified for the prosecution at the trial.

It was a Friday night, November 21, 1919. In Denton, fifteen miles from Roanoke, every house shook from the explosion of the Farmer’s Gin. Its owner stated that he had left only an hour before and the levels of the steam operation were in working order. Every residence in Roanoke was damaged. Three men working at the gin died: Charley Cleveland, Clint Merrett (who testified that Chadwick offered him money to burn the Chadwick home), and—Sam Seagraves, his body found 200 yards from the gin.

Some said it was a pity Sam Seagraves only lived a month free from the threat of execution. Others said justice had finally prevailed. The debate continued for years. One thing was certain, though: Roanoke had seen more than its share of tragedy the past two years. —DIT
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Upcoming Events

Dent County Historical Commission
Meets at 3:00pm, 2nd Floor Courthouse-on-the-Square
April 7
May 5
June 2

Denton County Office of History & Culture Lectures
12 noon
Commissioners Courtroom, 2nd floor Courthouse-on-the-Square
April 6: Nita Thurman presents, “John B. Denton”
May 25: Dr. Shaun Treat presents, “Denton County’s Hooch History”

Other Events
April 7: Revin’ Up Roanoke, Oak St.
April 16, 8am-5:00 pm: Denton County’s Birthday Celebration, CHOS
April 16: 10am: Texas Historical Marker Dedication for Edna Trigg, CHOS
April 23: Denton Redbud Festival, Civic Denter
April 29-May 1: Denton Arts ^ Jazz Festival, Quakertown Park
May 14: Cinco de Mayo, Denton’s Quakertown park
June 11: Craft Brew & Que, Little Elm Park
June 17-18: Juneteenth Celebration, Fred Moore Park, Denton
June 18: Best Little Brewfest in Texas, Lewisville
June 18-19: Denton Airshow, Enterprise Airport