



THE WINDOW PANE

Brazoria County Historical Museum

DISCOVER WHERE TEXAS BEGAN

“Mad Dogs” let loose In Museum

Join the Brazoria County Historical Museum on Friday, April 15, at 6:30 p.m. for a book review and signing by Steve L. Davis for his book Texas Literary Outlaws. The book recalls the lives and antics of Bud Shrake, Gary Cartwright, Billy Lee Brammer, Larry L. King, Dan Jenkins and Peter Gent, renowned twentieth-century Texas authors.

At the height of the 1960s, a group of Texas writers including Shrake, Cartwright, Brammer, King, Jenkins and Gent stood apart from Texas' conservative establishment. Calling themselves the “Mad Dogs” and “Famous Arthurs” they crashed headfirst into that decade, and their legendary excesses often have overshadowed their literary production. In Texas Literary Outlaws, Davis never shies away from criticism in this unrestrained account, yet he also shows how the “Mad Dogs” rambunctious personae have deflected a true understanding of their deeper aims. He makes extensive use of untapped literary archives to weave a fascinating portrait of writers who came of age during a period of rapid social change. Despite their popular image, the “Mad Dogs” were deadly serious as they turned their gaze on their home state, chronicling Texas culture

with daring, wit, and sophistication. These six writers closely observed the effects of the Vietnam War, JFK's assassination, the rapid population shift from rural to urban environments, LBJ's rise to national prominence, the Civil Rights Movement, the new Outlaw Music scene, the birth of a Texas film industry, Texas Monthly magazine, the flowering of “Texas Chic,” and Ann Richards' election as governor.

Steve L. Davis received his Master's degree in Southwestern Studies from Texas State University at San Marcos in 1995. He currently serves as the assistant curator of the Southwestern Writers Collection at TSU-SM, which houses the literary papers of Shrake, Cartwright, Brammer and King.

Bruce Taylor -Hille



April 2005

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Texas Literary Outlaws

book review and signing

**Friday, April 15,
6:30 PM**

*for Food
and
Protection*

*Firearms from the
Permanent Collection*

April 8 - June 1, 2005

Quilt Project to Honor Military Service in Afghanistan and Iraq

The Brazoria County Historical Museum and the Plantation Quilting Guild of Lake Jackson announce a joint venture to ensure that the names of those Brazoria County residents who have served or currently are serving in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom are remembered. From April 1 until August 1, 2005, names will be collected to be embroidered on quilt blocks, which will be sewn into a quilt that will be put on display at the Brazoria County Historical Museum. The project is expected to be completed in time for the quilt to have its premier on Veteran's Day, 2005. Military personnel will have a quilt block inscribed with their name, rank and branch of military service. Because of privacy concerns, those family members who want their service members to be represented are asked to contact Michael Bailey, Curator of Collections, at the Museum at 979/864 -1208 in order to provide the required information. This project is open only to service members who are residents of Brazoria County.

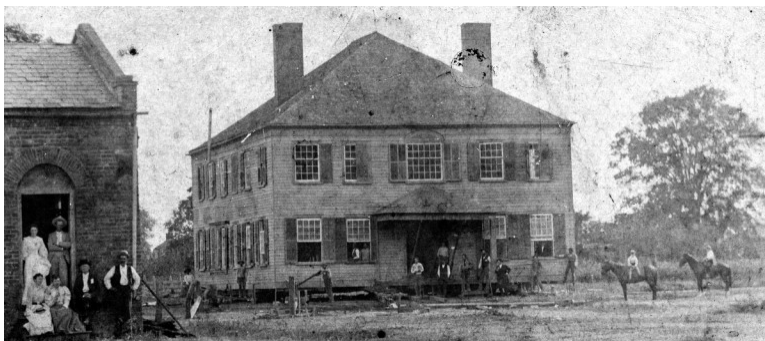
Founded in 1992, the Plantation Quilting Guild is a not-for-profit organization whose purposes are educational and charitable. Because community service is an important part of the Guild's activities, its members have made donation raffle quilts for numerous charitable organizations in Brazoria County. One of the Guild's current projects is the making of small quilts that are given to local police departments to comfort children in crisis situations. "We are looking forward to working with the Brazoria County Historical Museum on this patriotic quilt to demonstrate our appreciation for the sacrifices made every day by our service men and women," said Project Liaison Pat Woods.

Memorial quilts are a traditional way of preserving names of those individuals who have served in various military conflicts. As early as World War I, women from a community would get together and hand stitch the name of military personnel who served overseas. Many service members never returned home, and in certain instances their names on a quilt may be the only reference that they ever lived. The quilt project is both straightforward and commanding, yet will lead to a quiet remembrance of modern-day military conflicts and those who served in them.

Michael Bailey

Adriance Library & Research Center

Just when we think we have seen them all, another outstanding old photo from Brazoria County's past comes to light. Max Royalty recently donated this wonderful image of the 1839 courthouse building in Brazoria. The brick building to the left housed the offices of the County Clerk and District Clerk until a new courthouse building was erected in 1895.



What became of the old two story frame courthouse building? We are on the trail of this story in the Adriance Library & Research Center. A report of what we discover will appear in the next issue of the Window Pane.

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Thanks to Killum Pest Control for their donated services to the Museum.

Texas History Essay Contest Winner

Every year the Brazoria County Historical Museum and Varner -Hogg State Historical Site sponsor an essay contest for 7th grade history students in Brazoria County. The top three winners receive an award and a savings bond. In addition, the winning essay is published in "The Window Pane." Joshua Truksa from Harby Junior High in Alvin won first prize this year with the following essay on James Frank Dobie.

J. Frank Dobie had a gift that was clearly unique. He surely let people to be able to understand the beauty and pride of Texas.

Starting out as a university Literature teacher, he decided to become a work supervisor on his uncle's ranch when he was given the opportunity. Although being a work supervisor is definitely not as much money as being a university Literature teacher, he never really cared for a lot of money. He took the job because he felt more at home on a ranch than in between the tall, dreary shelves full of books in the university.

As a work supervisor on his uncle's ranch, Dobie was very skilled at ranch work himself. He impressed the vaqueros during his first week on the job, by showing them how to butcher and cook a wild boar.

At night, a friend of Dobie's who worked as a vaquero on the ranch would call on him every night. They would start a fire outside and brew a pot of hot coffee, and then the old vaquero would tell Dobie old Texan and Mexican folklores about animals and vaqueros of a long time past, and ghost who guarded buried Mexican treasure, which would later encourage him to travel the state and collect such types of stories.

Dobie realized that there were many Texan folk stories similar the ones that the old vaquero would tell him, and that they were very important to the Texan heritage, as well as the old, and modern way of life. He knew that he had to present them to the people of Texas and allow other people to know about them.

He decided to suggest the University of Texas to allow him to teach a class about Texan heritage

and folk lore; he called the name of his course "Life and Literature of the Southwest". The staff of the university doubted that there would be enough worthy things to teach in such a course. The faculty chairman did not want to accept the idea at first, but eventually, Dobie persuaded him to do so.

Before Dobie could teach his course, he had to gather as many Texan folklores and stories as he could; he would do this by traveling throughout Texas to speak with people who had heard such stories as children, and natives whose tribes have been telling the stories for centuries.

Meanwhile, the great people who had conquered the West and the huge oil industry revolution in Texas were beginning to be recognized by some of Dobie's friends. This is what inspired Dobie to write a book about one of the conquerors of the West. Coincidentally Dobie's book happened to be published during the Great Depression. It allowed people not only from Texas, but from all over the nation to know of these fantastic stories of an array of unanimous things. There were many stories of buried treasure that the people of America were informed of through the book. Many of which claimed that there was gold and silver in the isolated wilderness of West Texas. This coincidence encouraged people of Texas and the rest of the nation to settle the wilderness that nobody had ever thought of settling until then.

Hence the story of how Dobie transformed into a famous author.

Illustration from [Tales of the Brazos](#) page 255



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Historical Museum

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Happy San Jacinto Day

for Food and Protection:

Firearms from the Permanent Collections

The Brazoria County Historical Museum will open a new exhibit on April 8, entitled *For Food and Protection: Firearms from the Permanent Collection*. The exhibit features some of the most well-known firearms from nineteenth-century America. *For Food and Protection* will be on display through June 3, 2005.

The firearm played an important role in America's westward expansion. Not only did a firearm provide protection for the various threats that the settlers faced as they



traversed the continent, but it also served as a means of procuring food during a time when families had to live off the land. The type of firearm an individual owned often was a defining measure of his or her occupation, financial standing and social status. Nineteenth-century weaponry, from the no-frills basic rifle to the very artistic expensive revolver, was an essential aspect of the American settlers' lives.

Michael Bailey

