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East Texas News and Events

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EAST TEXAS NEWS AND EVENTS

By Mark Barringer

The William P. Clements Center for Southwest Studies in the Department of History at Southern Methodist University in Dallas has several programs of interest to East Texas historians. Research and travel grants to facilitate study at the Center and SMU's DeGolyer Library are available for periods of between one and four weeks. The Center's collections include the papers of Stanley Marcus, Horton Foote, and the J. C. Penney Co. Applications for travel grants are available throughout the year.

In addition, the Center will award three Bill and Rita Clements Research Fellowships to persons involved in humanities or social sciences research in the American Southwest. Fellows will reside at SMU during the 2005-2006 academic year, receive a substantial stipend and publication subvention, and have access to all of the Center's resources. For more information about either of these programs, contact the Clements Center at (214) 768-1233 or via email at swcenter@smu.edu.

The East Texas Historical Association held its forty-third annual Fall meeting in Nacogdoches on September 23, 24, and 25, 2004. Sessions began on Thursday afternoon and continued through Saturday morning. Highlights included L. Patrick Hughes' presentation of "The Great Depression and Texas Music" and sessions on historic preservation and Spanish exploration in East Texas. Outgoing ETHA President Gail K Beil spoke at the Friday banquet about the humor to be found in history, and University of North Texas history professor Randolph B. (Mike) Campbell delivered the Saturday luncheon address. More than 180 people attended the meeting, and we expect similar successful events in the future.

The Hon. Charles (Charlie) Wilson, former U.S. congressman from Texas' Second District, delivered the eighth annual Georgiana and Max Lale Lecture at Stephen F. Austin State University on September 23, 2004, to an eager audience of approximately 700. Wilson spoke of his role in the Afghan resistance to Soviet occupation during the 1980s, his conviction that the Afghan struggle played a definitive role in ending the Cold War, and his perspective on the current situation in Afghanistan. Congressman Wilson also signed copies of *Charlie Wilson's War*, the recent best-seller by George Crile.

Earlier on September 23, the East Texas Research Center, located in the Ralph W. Steen Library at Stephen F. Austin State University, formally opened the Charles Wilson Papers with a ceremony at the library. The collection consists of 413 boxes of Wilson's personal and political papers from 1960-1996. Researchers should find this collection a valuable tool for future studies of East Texas politics. For more information, visit the ETRC on the web at: <http://libweb.sfasu.edu/etrc/default.htm>.

Longtime Panola College history professor Bill O'Neal received the Doris and Bob Bowman Best of East Texas Award at the ETHA Awards Banquet on Saturday, September 25, 2004. Bill's contributions, whether in teaching, publish-

ing, or service, are without parallel. His most recent book, *Sam Houston Slept Here: Homes of the Chief Executives of Texas*, was published by Eakin Press.

Several of the ETHA awards were shared by multiple winners this year. Robert Glover and Jo Ann Stiles were named Fellows of the ETHA, an honor reserved for only twenty-five living members at one time. James Conrad of Texas A & M Commerce and Ben Procter, TCU Professor Emeritus, shared the Ottis Lock Educator of the Year Award. Research grants, also funded by the Ottis Lock Endowment, were presented to Pamela Lippold of Lamar University and Richard Merrill of Stephen F. Austin State University. The C. K. Chamberlain Award for best article published in the *East Texas Historical Journal* during the previous year was presented to Robert Vogel for "Paul Bouet Laffitte: A Borderlands Life," published in the issue for Spring 2003. The Lock award for Outstanding Book in East Texas history went to Helen G. Green for *East Texas Daughter*, published by TCU Press.

Meetings and conferences of note include the 109th annual Texas State Historical Association gathering in Fort Worth, at the Radisson Plaza Hotel, on March 3-5, 2005. This meeting of the venerable organization will be the last under Ron Tyler's dynamic leadership, as he is returning to full-time teaching after this academic year. Program information, registration, and hotel reservations are available at <http://dev.tsha.utexas.edu/index.html>. Plan to attend and congratulate Ron on nearly twenty years of a job well done.

The Texas Folklore Society will meet in El Paso on March 24-26, 2005. For more information, contact the TFS at (936) 468-4407 or see the TFS website at <http://texasfolkloresociety.org>.

The East Texas Historical Association will hold its Spring meeting in Galveston on February 18 and 19, 2005. ETHA Past President Don Willett organized a program that includes twenty sessions, including one focused on writing Texas history textbooks with panelists Randolph B. Campbell, Cary Wintz, Jesús F. de la Teja, and Gregg Cantrell. The Friday banquet will feature Edward Cotham talking about the Civil War struggle for Galveston, and at Saturday's luncheon Ron Tyler will discuss runaway slaves in Texas during the Civil War. For more information, contact ETHA at (936) 468-2407 or visit us on the web at <http://www.easttexashistorical.org>.

Two ETHA members recently began full-time teaching assignments in East Texas. Kenneth W. Howell accepted a position at Prairie View A & M University and Dr. Gene Preuss joined the History Department at the University of Houston, Downtown campus. Both are valued members of the Association who regularly contribute their time and talents, and we are pleased that both will remain close by for the foreseeable future.

Of special interest to those with Newton County connections is the new website devoted to the history of Shankleville. Joan C. McBride, author of four books on Newton County history, developed the site and encourages comments and contributions. Visit Shankleville Roots at <http://www.shanklevilleroots.012webpages.com> to learn more.

Dr. Jeffrey Owens of Tyler Junior College continues to be one of the most successful recruiters of students for the ETHA. During the past year more than ten of Dr. Owens' students have joined the Association, and students comprised one of the fastest-growing categories of ETHA membership. Dr. Owens has set an example that those of us who see young East Texans on a daily basis would do well to follow. Thank him the next time you see him.

ETHA member Tommy Stringer reminds everyone that Navarro Junior College houses The Pearce Civil War Collection, a valuable resource for researchers. The collection includes more than 3,000 letters, diaries, journals, photographs, and memorabilia from the Civil War era. For more information, contact Tommy at Navarro College, 3200 West 7th Avenue, Corsicana, Texas, 75110.

For those members who have been gathering at the Fredonia Inn in Nacogdoches for longer than they can remember, a treat is in store. Freida Kennedy Johnson of Nacogdoches has penned a brief history called *The Fredonia – Nacogdoches' Grande Hotel*. Featuring photographs by Charles W. Gound, this is a pleasurable account of the edifice once dubbed "The Million Dollar Boarding House" by the *Houston Chronicle*. We will try to have some copies available the next time we all visit in the lobby.

ETHA Fellow Bobby Johnson has written a play about the New London school explosion titled "A Texas Tragedy." The author of two previous dramatic works, "East Texas Remembers" and "East Texas Remembers World War II," Johnson's latest effort details the lives of those involved in one of the greatest disasters ever to hit the state. The play is scheduled to run for two weekends, April 1-2 and April 8-9, 2005, at the Lamp-Lite Theatre in Nacogdoches. For more information, contact Bobby Johnson at (936) 468-2224 or via email at bhjohnson@sfasu.edu.

The sixth volume in the Association's Ann and Lee Lawrence Series has arrived. *Steam in the Pines*, by Jonathan Gerland, tells the story of the Texas State Railroad between Palestine and Rusk. To order a copy, contact the East Texas Historical Association at (936) 468-2407.