

Terrell County Memorial

October, 2010

Museum News

Under new management



Photo courtesy of Ruth Engeldorf

Terrell County Memorial Museum

Terrell County Memorial Museum has a new curator and an assistant to help him.

CW (Bill) Smith has been hired as the new and first ever, paid curator. There have been volunteer curators in the past but Mr. Smith is now a county employee who will serve two roles...computer tech and curator of the museum.

For the past year he has been under contract to provide computer technol-

ogy services for the court house and other county entities. As of October 1, 2010, he was hired by the county to continue providing tech services, but also become the new curator for the museum.

Mr. Smith was born and reared in Marathon, Texas, the son of local cafe operators Charlie and Margie Smith. His sister still lives in Marathon and is well known to Sanderson residents. Shirley Smith Rooney was the first di-

September produces bumper crop...of visitors

September proved to be a great month for visitors at the Museum. We had a total of 48 visitors for the month.

At the beginning of the month a party of six was discovered outside the building by Ray Hernandez as he drove by. He pulled in and invited them inside and they stayed for over an hour looking at the exhibits. He did not catch their names and they did not sign the guestbook.

On the 23rd the entire Marathon Elementary School, grades Pre-K through 6, came to Sanderson to catch the Amtrak and ride to Alpine. But, as luck would have it, the train was two hours late and the 36 students and their 6 sponsors ended up at Centennial Park with nothing to do.

Fate intervened, though, and Bill Smith happened to be at the Visitors

Center repairing a computer when a sponsor called enquiring about the Museum.

Bill met the group at the Museum and gave them a guided tour, relating the history of Sanderson and Terrell County and correlating it to Marathon history, of which he, being an ex-Marathonite, has an intimate knowledge.

Bill reports it was one of the best behaved groups of youngsters he has dealt with in a long time. "They politely asked lots of intelligent questions on a variety of subjects, and they really kept me hopping!" he said. He said it also helped that half of them were his cousins!

Now that the Museum is open all week we hope that visitor numbers will increase.

Management continued from page 1

etician/manager for the new cafeteria at Sanderson High School in the 1980s, and also ran the popular Shirley's Burnt Biscuit Bakery in Marathon.

Mr. Smith graduated from the Marathon schools and received a Bachelor of Science degree and a Master of Education degree from Sul Ross State University. He came to Sanderson in 1990 to teach school and spent the next 14 years working for the school district as a teacher and as the district technology coordinator.

In 2004 he resigned and started a web design and computer repair service. He runs the Terrell County News Leader website, the Schoolmaster Auctions and Realty website and the Chamber of Commerce website. He also assists with the county website and has created a new website for the museum.

In addition, he is an accomplished musician and plays the organ for three

churches...St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Marfa, St. James' Episcopal Church in Alpine and First Presbyterian Church of Sanderson.

Mr. Smith has been married to his wife, Gail, for 38 years and the couple has raised five children, all graduates of the Sanderson school system.

~

Assisting Mr. Smith is Jerry Brotherton, currently employed by the County Clerks Office. Mr. Brotherton will be on loan for part of the week to the museum and will act as assistant curator.

Mr. Brotherton is a Sanderson native, having graduated from Sanderson schools in 2001. He received a Bachelor of Arts in history and a Master of Arts in history at Sul Ross State University. While at Sul Ross he was associated with the Museum of the Big Bend as a student employee. He is a great asset to have at the Terrell County Museum.

New equipment for the Museum

The Terrell County Historical Commission voted at its September meeting to allow curator Bill Smith to purchase a new laser printer for the Museum and to pursue setting up a Museum website.

The new Lexmark monotone printer was installed the second week of October and the new website went online on October 14th.

The printer is inexpensive, put produces high quality printing at a reasonable price. This will enable correspondence and reports to be printed on site, and allow visitors to print photos and research when needed, at a small fee.

The website, seen below, covers many important aspects of Terrell County and Sanderson history with text and photos from the Museum collection, in eight sections.

The first section, **History**, includes early-day photos of the railroad and a

vignette of Charlie Wilson and his Cottage Bar Saloon, along with Bill Hawn's overview of important county events and Anna Lee Allen's 1936 award winning history of Terrell County and Sanderson.

The second section, **Museum**, has photos of our Museum building, as built, and a history and anecdotes of the Lemons family, who donated the building to the county.

The third section, **Photos**, has a wealth of early photos of Sanderson buildings and the town as a whole. This section will be updated regularly and more photos added.

The fourth section, **Historical Commission**, contains our Commission constitution and bylaws, and includes our collection policy.

The fifth section, **Genealogy**, is a help page for beginning and experienced genealogists. It contains links to help the beginner and databases related to Sanderson, such as the Cedar Grove Cemetery listing of graves, with photos



A word from the Curator

This year marks our twentieth year in Sanderson. In all those years I had always wanted to be involved in the Historical Commission and the Museum, but school and family duties left me little time for outside interests.

This year, though, I decided to get involved. I began to go to the Historical Commission meetings, and volunteered to scan all of the pictures at the Museum and create a digital database so that Museum patrons could see what we have, without endangering the actual, fragile photos. To date I have scanned some 2500 pictures and organized them by source (albums, envelopes, boxes, etc. as they are presently stored) and by groups (businesses, ranches, railroad, etc.) to at least have an organized way of searching.

In addition to photos I am in the pro-

cess of scanning the Terrell County history book and turning it into an editable, searchable database (which can be accessed only at the Museum,) making information much easier to find.

Now the judge and commissioners have asked me to become a full time employee and take care of the computers at the court house and run the museum. I am happy to oblige! It only took twenty years to go from do-nothing to whole enchilada!

Let me encourage you to think about becoming a volunteer. Consider bringing historical photos that I can scan into the computer and return. You don't have to donate your precious photos of Sanderson and Terrell County. The personal rewards from volunteerism are immense. It feels great to know you are preserving the history of your home town! ... Bill Smith

Equipment

continued from page 2

of markers and newspaper obituaries where available.

The sixth section, [Links](#), lets one explore a list of area museum websites.

The seventh section, [Contact Us](#), is contact information for the Museum and the Commission.

An eighth section is set up for special online exhibits. The first exhibit running is a set of WC Horne penny postcards with scenes of the Mexican revolution of 1910-1920, featuring Pancho Villa and his army. Horne was allowed to follow Villa on his campaigns and some of the photos are quite graphic...viewers beware!

Also included are photos of the American "Punitive Expedition", in which General Blackjack Pershing took a force of 4,800 men to Mexico to capture Villa and end his raids on the US

side of the border.

Sanderson folks quite eagerly collected these postcards and the Museum owns an extensive collection.

The website may be visited at:

<http://terrellmuseum.info>

Finally, the county agreed to buy a new computer for the Museum, and it arrived on October 18th.

Bill Smith had brought an old computer from the Court House for use in the Museum, but it proved to be too slow for scanning the high resolution photos necessary for saving the deteriorating photos of the Museum collection. Too much time was being wasted to create one scan.

The new computer is super fast and has a huge amount of memory, perfect for scanning large photos and creating videos, which is also among Museum plans for the future.