Texas Heritage Museum
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Dear Friends of the Museum,

I am proud to tell you about the Texas Heritage Museum’s exciting spring semester. First of all, the museum hosted its third annual membership banquet on April 26. The banquet included the unveiling of the museum's newest sculpture, a figure group entitled “West Texas Pioneer Family.” The statue weighs more than 2000 pounds and could not have been assembled without the expertise of Frank Williams, Jr., THM lab and exhibit assistant. Tom Sale, Hill College art instructor, was invaluable in the conservation of the statue. This beautiful sculpture now resides in the museum lobby and was created by the late Granville W. Carter. Carter was a well-studied artist having attended more than five art schools around the world, was a national Academician, an honor awarded to only 50 sculptors in the entire United States, and was a member of numerous art societies including the National Sculpture Society, America’s oldest organization of professional sculptors whose members have created most of the country’s finest sculptures including the Lincoln and Jefferson memorials.

Also at the banquet, the Texas Heritage Museum presented the 2011-12 museum service awards to John Murphy and Brown Holden. Murphy, a past museum advisory board member, has spent the past 15 years assembling 57 volumes of American veteran stories and history. Holden has been working in the Historical Research Center indexing the vertical files using the British Oxford University archival system and was our in-house civil engineer in assembling the “West Texas Pioneer Family” statue.

Dr. Earl Elam spoke during the festivities as well, on the much-anticipated Hill College Press publication on the 36th Division, due to be out in late summer. Finally, the Hill College History Department and THM have once again teamed up for their second History Trails Trip entitled “Conquering the Rockies.” I encourage everyone to sign up and attend this wonderful learning journey. See inside for more information.

Thank you for your continued support of the Texas Heritage Museum at Hill College.

Sincerely

John Versluis
Director THM
The press was pleased to release, in March 2011, “Civil War Letters of Louis Lehmann,” a translated collection of more than 60 letters, originally written in German, at combat and bivouac areas in southeast Texas and Louisiana in 1863 and 1864 by Louis Lehmann to his wife, Friedericke, on their farm near Brenham, Texas. Lehmann was a Confederate conscript who had no quarrel with the Union but who was loyal to his adopted homeland to which he had migrated with his parents in 1849. He served as a private, first with Alexander Terrell’s Texas Cavalry Regiment, then with that of James B. Likens. Lehmann was captured by Union forces near Marksville, Louisiana in May 1864, and nine weeks later was released in a prisoner exchange. His original letters were kept by Friedericke. She died in 1875, and a daughter of the couple later took them with her when she went, in the 1890s, to live permanently in Germany. The letters, revealing much about cavalry positions and conditions and life at the homestead near Brenham, were kept by family members in Germany. Only recently, in 2011 as this book went to press, through the efforts of its author, Edmund Louis Burnett, a great grandson of Louis Lehmann, were the letters returned to Texas where they now are permanently preserved in the THM’s Historical Research Center. Copies of this unique and well-received book are available in the museum’s Gift Shop and through Amazon.com.

We jump ahead about 100 years to a World War II subject in the next book being prepared for publication by HCP. It is the story of a young soldier’s service in the 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion, a unit normally attached to the Texas 36th Infantry Division, during the invasion of Southern France in August 1944 and to the end of the war which found him, on May 8, 1945, at medieval Fischhorn Castle near the village of Zell am See in Austria near the German border. The soldier, Sergeant Rufus Lester Leggett, served with the reconnaissance company of the battalion and was in the vanguard of action with the Seventh Army, usually reconnoitering ahead of a 36th Division unit, in the Allied drive north from the coast of France and then east to the Rhine River and into Germany. Leggett assisted in guarding the second-ranking Nazi leader, Hermann Goering, who surrendered at the castle to a task force of the 36th Division and took a few photographs of Goering and American officers. After being discharged, Leggett completed his education and then re-entered the U.S. Army and retired as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1967. He worked on this book for years, but it remained unpublished when he died in 2008. The press is pleased to have the opportunity to present an edited version of his writing with the goal of having copies for release later this year.

Among other projects on the HCP horizon is a follow-up (or sequel) to “Texas Burial Sites of Civil War Notables,” by James A. Mundie, Jr., et al., published by HCP in 2002. The new work, the product of a decade or more of work by Mundie and co-authors Dean Letzring and Kathleen Miller at (254) 659-7751.