RE: Deaf Smith County: Frontier Communities of the Llano Estacado

Dear Mr. Lupfer:

Until now, many treasures of Texas history have been tucked into libraries and museums across Texas – some in remote areas of the state – where access is limited to those historians who could travel to view these documents, and those schoolchildren and teachers who lived nearby. The University of North Texas Libraries, in partnership with the Deaf Smith County Library, intends to place online 3900 historical photographs of Deaf Smith County, as well as a book published by the local historical society, Deaf Smith County, The Land & Its People, 1876-1981, which contains over 600 pages of text and photos.

In 2004, the Deaf Smith County Library received a wonderful donation of local history materials – over 3900 large format negatives of the area. This collection represents a wealth of primary source images that document the people, places and culture of Hereford and the surrounding county. The photographs carry identifying information about the locale and subjects, providing valuable insight into the early history of this remote Panhandle county. Photographer Bill Bradly documented the people and businesses of the area and created preservation negatives of historic photographs. His family donated his photographic archive to the Deaf Smith County Library with hopes that the public could benefit from access to this rich resource. To complement the photographs, the Deaf Smith County Historical Society agreed to allow digitization of its publication, Deaf Smith County, The Land & Its People, 1876-1981.

The “Deaf Smith County: Frontier Communities of the Llano Estacado” project offers a variety of benefits to its core constituents: students, researchers, educators and teachers. This project illuminates an integral aspect of Texas’s history, providing fascinating insights into ranching and pioneer life at the turn of the century. Informal surveys conducted indicate that students of Texas history could benefit from the inclusion of primary source materials in their curriculum. Access to interesting, unique and relevant materials carry learning beyond the strictures inherent in textbooks. A TEKS study guide will enable educators to incorporate the materials from the project into their curriculum. Researchers will have access to a wealth of primary source materials about Deaf Smith County from their desktops.

“Deaf Smith County: Frontier Communities of the Llano Estacado” will provide an important representative view of ranching and farming in the Panhandle area, and will be of great value to students and life-long learners. For this project, we will be requesting $13,396.00 from Humanities Texas. Please find enclosed a copy of the draft application. We look forward to your comments and suggestions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Cathy Nelson Hartman
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E-Mail: chartman@library.unt.edu

The University of North Texas Libraries
P.O. Box 305190, Denton TX 76203-5190
Deaf Smith County: Frontier Communities of the Llano Estacado

Incorporated by the Texas legislature in 1876, Deaf Smith County started as an area dominated by legendary ranching ventures such as the XIT Ranch, the LS Ranch, and the T Anchor Ranch. Cattle rustlers infused the area with lawlessness, and the foremen of the ranches were often former lawmen or Texas Rangers. One such lawman was Ira Aten. Former sheriff of Castro county, and a six-year veteran of the Texas Rangers, Aten brought an innovative tactic to the mayhem of the Fence-Cutting Wars of the cattle boom era. Unsuspecting fence-snippers who cut barbed wire in Aten’s territory set off a trip wire that exploded small bombs. Times changed, and with the decline in large-scale ranching and the advent of wide-spread family farming, the local communities rapidly developed. Weathering the natural and economic forces of more than a century, the county population has grown to over 20,000, producing modern communities and contributing to the richness of the Texas Experience.

The Deaf Smith County Library and the University of North Texas Libraries’ Portal to Texas History propose a collaboration to present primary source local history materials online for the use of researchers, students, educators and lifelong learners everywhere. The collection will include digitized versions of over 3900 large format negatives of historic photographs, as well as a local history book, Deaf Smith County, The Land and Its People, 1876-1981, which includes over 650 pages of material. The three primary goals of the project consist of placing unique historical materials about Deaf Smith County online; creating a Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) study guide for the use of 4th and 7th grade students studying Texas History; and publicizing the project throughout the state. By presenting resources that are not widely available, the “Deaf Smith County: Frontier Communities of the Llano Estacado” project will benefit all Texans by highlighting an under-represented area that richly illustrates Texas’s cattle and farming tradition.

The Collection

In 2004, the Deaf Smith County Library received a wonderful donation of local history materials – over 3900 large format negatives of the area. This collection represents a wealth of primary source images that document the people, places and culture of Hereford and the surrounding county. The photographs carry identifying information about the locale and subjects, providing valuable insight into the early history of this remote Panhandle county. Photographer Bill Bradly documented the people and businesses of the area and created preservation negatives of historic photographs. His family donated his photographic archive to the Deaf Smith County Library with hopes that the public could benefit from access to this rich resource.

Although the photographs highlight the Deaf Smith County area, their usefulness as a historical resource will appeal to educators, students, historians, genealogists, and Texans in general. Ranching and farming hold a primary place in Texas’s history, economic development and culture. Through these photographs, users will gain a visual knowledge that will enrich their understanding of this era in Texas history.
The Deaf Smith County Historical Society granted UNT’s Portal to Texas History permission to digitize its local history book, *Deaf Smith County, The Land and Its People, 1876-1981*. The book is over 650 pages, and provides an in-depth look at the communities of Deaf Smith County. Named after the Texas hero Erastus “Deaf” Smith, the county serves as a representative ranching and farming center. The book covers the early ranching years, when the area was dominated by large-scale interests such as the XIT ranch, which was the largest fenced-in ranch in the world, spanning over three million acres and sections of ten Texas counties. Its Escarbada division covered the western half of Deaf Smith County. Colorful stories within the book tell of foremen, cowboys and former Texas Rangers who rode the local ranches with six-shooters at their sides.

*Deaf Smith County, The Land and Its People, 1876-1981* features stories about ranch life, early cowboys, ghost towns, railroads, sheriffs and law enforcement, farming, native plants, weather and social life. The community histories included cover the towns of Hereford, Bippus, Dawn, Ford, Frio, Glenrio, Palo Duro-Wildorado, Progressive, Sims, Summerfield, Walcott, Milo Center-Ward, Westway, and Wyche. Also noted are the beginnings of the infrastructure that allowed the communities to flourish.

**Project Goals**

The three primary goals of the “Deaf Smith County: Frontier Communities of the Llano Estacado” project consist of placing unique historical materials about Deaf Smith County online; creating a Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) study guide for the use of 4th and 7th grade students studying Texas History; and publicizing the project throughout the state.

**Frontier Communities.** The mission of the Portal to Texas History is to offer students and lifelong learners a digital gateway to the rich collections held in Texas libraries, museums, archives, historical societies and private collections. Our passion is creating access to Texas history and culture, and that encompasses presenting materials from every geographic region of Texas. In completing this project, the Portal to Texas History will incorporate valuable primary source materials about vital Panhandle communities.

After the death of Bill Bradly, his widow Marcella Bradly decided to donate his entire portfolio of negatives from the local photography studio they had owned. These images comprise scenes of local businesses and individuals, capturing daily life in Deaf Smith County. Fortunately, Mr. Bradly had also created preservation negatives from historical photographs, adding to this rich treasure trove of images illustrating the early history of the county. Each negative is surrounded by an envelope inscribed with information detailing all the known information about the picture and its subjects. To complement these photographs, the Deaf Smith County Historical Society agreed to allow digitization of its publication, *Deaf Smith County, The Land and Its People, 1876-1981*. 
**TEKS Study Guide.** With the guidance of our panel of Texas History teachers, the Portal team will create a TEKS study guide using the materials included in the “Deaf Smith County: Frontier Communities of the Llano Estacado” project to present the materials to meet TEKS objectives required by the state. Two of the Texas History teachers participating as advisors to this project hold extensive experience with creating TEKS curriculum materials. Devia Cearlock currently serves as the Amarillo ISD’s Social Studies Curriculum Specialist, and Dawn Marie Bishop serves as a consultant, mentor, trainer and program director for the Teacher’s Curriculum Institute, specializing in Texas History Curriculum. Called a Primary Source Adventure, the TEKS study guide developed through this collaboration will be placed on the Portal to Texas History’s “Resources for Teachers and Researchers” page, and distributed through established workshops for Texas History teachers, such as Texas Christian University’s Center for Texas Studies workshops and the Texas State Historical Association’s History Awareness Workshop.

The design of the Primary Source Adventures embraces several components. The Primary Source Adventures should: contain subject and curriculum material that is appropriate for the target grade level, correspond to multiple aspects of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for the target grade level, and provide the instructor with all background materials necessary to conduct the lesson. The Primary Source Adventures should be structured in such a manner that each lesson can stand alone or be utilized in conjunction with other lessons. Consisting of visual as well as written components, the Primary Source Adventures will utilize historical documents in a similar manner to the use of hands-on experiments in science classrooms so that students can act like practitioners in the field by entering into a process of critical inquiry. Critical thinking is addressed by introducing the concept of bias in historical documents and engaging the students in exercises that teach them to analyze the author’s motivation and assumptions, as well as the historical context of a given document. Primary Source Adventures develop higher order thinking skills by requiring the student to interpret and juxtapose conflicting information, introduce students to the concept of history as a process of interpretation, and create a you-are-there atmosphere through role-playing activities and the re-creation of past historical events. All of the Primary Source Adventures created for the Portal to Texas History will be available online in digital form, with downloadable forms for printing.

Students enter the collection through the Portal to Texas History’s “Young Scholar’s” interface, which offers an easy-to-use browse and search function. Students searching for materials from this project would find Deaf Smith County listed under the “Places” subject heading. Clicking on Deaf Smith County would pop up a list of available materials, headed by links to a brief county history available from the Texas State Historical Association’s *Handbook of Texas Online*. The *Handbook of Texas Online*, which has agreed to allow this project to link to that description, is an authoritative source of information on all things Texan, with over 22,000 encyclopedia entries. This project will also include digitization of an in-depth local history published by the Deaf Smith County Historical Society, *Deaf Smith County, The Land and Its People, 1876-1981*. 
Publicity. Plans for publicizing this project encompass a wide range of venues. Participants will disseminate information about the project through presentations at conferences and professional meetings, such as the Texas Library Association and the Texas Association of Museums. Articles and publicity in appropriate newsletters, listservs and professional publications, such as the Texas Library Journal and DLIB Magazine, will promote the project. The materials will be freely available online at the Portal to Texas History, as well as from promotional links on each participant’s website.

Additionally, many online resources for Texas History teachers exist, and the Portal team will distribute information and the TEKS study guide about this collection to those sites. Examples of these resource sites include:

- Texas Education Agency. The Teacher’s Toolbag portion of this site offers resources to teachers, including lesson plans and other curriculum materials. http://lucas.tea.state.tx.us/PAI/TTB/TEKS/select_lesson_plan/1,3500,26,00.html

- Celebrate Texas online resources. This source serves as a complement to the Texas history text, Celebrate Texas, and provides resources for enhancing students’ learning experiences. http://www.celebratingtexas.com/contacts.html


- Academic Info’s “Texas History – Directory of Online Resources” provides links to providers of materials about Texas history. http://www.academicinfo.net/histuslocaltx.html

- Texas History Teachers site http://www.nvo.com/ecnewletter/texashistoryteachers/

- Library and Archival Exhibitions a project of the Smithsonian Institution http://web4.si.edu/sil/onlineexhibitions/oe_search2.cfm

- National Forum on Archival Continuing Education’s “Making Primary Sources from State Archives Available for Use in the Classroom” http://www.coshrc.org/arc/education/primsources_states.htm

Work Plan

The Digitization Process. Starting in Summer of 2005, Rebecca Walls, Director of the Deaf Smith County Library, will deliver the negatives to UNT for scanning. Student workers will scan the negatives, which are of sizes ranging from 3 x 2” to 5 x 4”. The large size of the negatives results in excellent quality digital images, but the scanning process takes longer, and thus involves higher labor costs. Scanning will take place using both a UMAX 1200 and a Nikon Super Cool 8000 negative scanner. The Deaf Smith
County history book will be scanned using a Fujitsu fi-4340C duplex scanner. Scanning standards follow best practices for digitization:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of item</th>
<th>File Type</th>
<th>Scanning Resolution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Bitonal, 1 bit</td>
<td>600 dpi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negatives</td>
<td>Grayscale, 8 bit</td>
<td>400 dpi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After scanning takes place, .tif files will be archived and ingested into the Portal architecture. Technical staff will run the local history book through Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software to automatically extract the text. Once the text files are created, full-text searching of the materials will be possible. Metadata records in the Portal will be created using the identifying information drawn from the envelope surrounding each negative and accompanying enclosures. All metadata records will comply with the UNTL metadata standard, available at http://texashistory.unt.edu/guides/help/UNTL-Metadata-Guide.htm.

UNT is providing in-kind contributions of management personnel to monitor and guide the entire production process. The project requests funding from Humanities Texas for two part-time lab assistants to aid in OCR processing of text materials and preparation of metadata records, and a graduate student for half a month to create the TEKS curriculum materials for the project.

**The Young Scholars Interface.** The Young Scholars’ interface to the Portal to Texas History remains under construction, but will be updated and finalized by the end of Spring 2005. When planning the interface, 7th grade students were included in an informal focus group to refine the look and layout of the Young Scholars pages. A mock-up of that page is included with the work product materials. The students in the focus group selected their favorites from several different styles of colorful, engaging icons and page layouts. Recognizing that learners approach materials in differing ways, the interface allows for multiple pathways to the resources. The finished interface will include a basic search function, a Yahoo-style browse page with attractive icons, a timeline by Texas era, and a location search. The search function for the Young Scholars’ page will also differ from the researchers’ search page, because it will only search the subject term and keywords to pull up material. The researcher’s search function performs a full-text search of the entire metadata record. By limiting the functionality of the Young Scholars’ search, the Portal will provide them with materials relevant to their interests, without overwhelming them with a glut of information.

**Long-term Benefits**

The benefits arising from this project will carry far into the future. The TEKS curriculum created through this endeavor will prove to be a continuing resource for teachers of Texas History. When developing the Portal to Texas History, UNT viewed the development of curriculum materials as an integral part of our mission. By providing Primary Source Adventures for educators, UNT supports the teaching of Texas History for 4th and 7th grade students throughout Texas. In designing digitization projects, materials that map
directly into the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) requirements mandated by the state play a major role in the planning process. While envisioning curriculum activities, the Portal team developed a list of topic areas to guide selection of projects by historic theme, attached as an appendix. The “Deaf Smith County: Frontier Communities of the Llano Estacado” project ties into four of these curriculum driven themes: The Texas Landscape; New South, Populism, Progressivism, and the Great Depression, 1876-1939; the Cattle Boom, 1865-1890; and Into Modern Times, 1939-Present.

“Deaf Smith County: Frontier Communities of the Llano Estacado” will provide an important representative view of ranching and farming in the Panhandle area, and will be of great value to students, life-long learners and Texans. Through the efforts of this project, users of the Portal to Texas History will be able to freely access materials that are not widely available to researchers. Primary Source Adventures will support the teaching of Texas History for 4th and 7th graders required to study Texas history. In providing cultural heritage materials, the Portal team feels that items from every corner of Texas play an integral role in telling our state’s story. Including materials illuminating Deaf Smith County adds to the geographic diversity of material presented in the Portal, increasing the cultural understanding of all Texans.

Sources:


Lynch, Dudley M. (1966) *The Hereford Brand: Belle of the Prairie Press*, Department of Journalism Development Program, the University of Texas, Austin.
Before starting this proposal, the UNT Digital Projects Department obtained a few sample negatives from the Deaf Smith County Library to assess their quality for digitization, which proved to be excellent. The negatives were scanned and records were created, placing them on the Portal to Texas History.

People using the Portal to Texas History can search through collections by keyword or by browsing. Here's an example of a results page from the Portal to Texas History using the keyword “Hereford” or “Deaf Smith”. A user can then click on a record to view it more closely. The work samples provided come from the sample images added to the Portal to Texas History for this project.
For the “Deaf Smith County: Frontier Communities of the Llano Estacado” project, the results list will present the user with a thumbnail of the image as shown below:

Users can then click on the thumbnail to look at a larger version of the object:
Work Product Samples
Deaf Smith County: Frontier Communities of the Llano Estacado

And even larger:
Other sample images from Deaf Smith County: Frontier Communities of the Llano Estacado:
1910 Wells Fargo Wagon

View the description | Return to the gallery
Work Product Samples
Deaf Smith County: Frontier Communities of the Llano Estacado