

Center for Texas Studies at TCU

WINTER 2021 NEWSLETTER • VOLUME 13 / ISSUE 1



They say to expect the unexpected, but in the case of 2020 that was pretty much impossible. When quarantine began in March, we made do. We

thought we might have to cancel a program or two, but soon we'd pick up where we left off. Now we laugh with incredulity at such a naïve notion. We had to press pause on so many events and projects now that we've lost count.

In the meantime, we have been surprised by the doors that have opened to us. Restricted to a virtual presence, the Center has focused on honing our social media skills which were almost non-existent outside of basic Facebook literacy. Today, the fledgling Instagram page begun a year ago by our intrepid intern, Eloise Haynes, has over 600 followers and extends the Center's reach like never before. While social media draws in a whole new audience for our now-virtual programs, we are also using those platforms to raise awareness about important milestones in Texas history, culture, preservation, and education. Since we are here to celebrate ALL that makes the state distinctive, that means we also highlight the wonders (and follies) of the natural world too. Moreover, we encourage folks to get out and enjoy Texas places in person when it is safe to do so. Virtual is great, but there is nothing like the real thing.

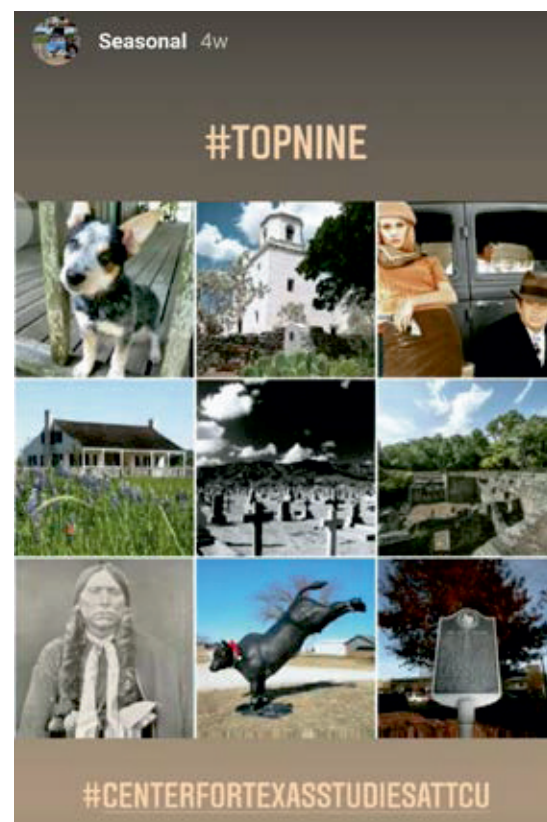
After many conversations with our dedicated partners at the Fort Worth Public Library, we launched the fall installment of our Community History Workshops on Zoom with some trepidation. Would our loyal attendees be comfortable online? As a matter of fact, yes, they are! To our great delight, our attendance regularly exceeds our average in-person numbers and includes a statewide—and sometimes nationwide—audience. Even so, we do intend to resume live lectures at some point in the future. At that time, we hope to greet our longtime local supporters face-to-face again, but leave the virtual door open to our new friends far and wide.

Though some of our publications have been delayed, we have several great titles in process. In his update, Gregg will get you up to date on our Texas Biography Series. I will add that we also have books on TCU history and Texas parks to look forward to along with a Texas history coloring book. As Gene mentions in his note to you, our teacher workshops continue, online but unabated. We deeply appreciate our TCU professors' willingness to assist us with outreach when the demands of teaching have required so much adaptation.

We don't know when, but we are sure this too shall pass. In the interim, please know that we are grateful to all our friends, fans, followers, and financial contributors. You have made it possible for us to forge ahead

amid so much uncertainty. We assure you that we will be here, providing quality educational experiences and celebrating the joys of life in the Lone Star State when this pandemic is just another part of our history. Wish you all good health and happiness in 2021. 🇺🇸

LeAnna S. Schooley, Ph.D.
Executive Director



*A quick glance at our
Top Nine Instagram posts of 2020
#topnine #topnine2020
#centerfortexasstudiesattcu*



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2020 Is Hindsight!



The many months of the Covid-19 pandemic, financial turmoil, and racial unrest harkens back to tumultuous earlier periods of the American past. From February 1918 to April 1920, the Spanish flu epidemic infected an estimated 500 million people during four waves. Somewhere between 17-50 million people died, and it has been credited as one of the deadliest pandemics in human history. The Wall Street Crash of October 1929 was the most devastating stock market crash in the history of the United States, when taking into consideration the full extent and duration of its aftereffects. It signaled the beginning of the Great Depression. Racial riots in Chicago, New York, Washington, D.C., Detroit, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Cincinnati, Kansas City, Louisville, Miami, and a host of other communities reflected public distrust of the American government and military; these protests marked a turning point in the Civil Rights movement. Having three great crises during 2020 has created a sense of worry and foreboding. Plus, when combining these tumultuous issues with a contested election, we can only wonder if any sense of normality will ever return. Will we ever be able to share time with family and friends again? Will the economy recover to the point where people can afford to live? Will systemic racism be acknowledged and be rooted from our government and society? Perhaps 2021 will usher in a renewed hope for the future.

The chaos of last year has created some things that will undoubtedly become a new normal. The Zoom program, which virtually no one knew anything about last winter, has become a way to communicate in a socially-distant manner. We have conducted conference sessions, teacher education workshops, recorded talks for videos, held organizational meetings, and even used it for social happy hours. While everyone wants to be in person, this method will change the way that organizations conduct business in the future. And while books seem to be of less interest to people during this pandemic, hopefully once people tire and get rid of their new exercise machines they will exercise their brain again. But then again, social media has exploded with all types of information that may become common. Hopefully schools and universities will return to a sense of normality soon too, as teaching to a handful of students in person and then trying to also include many virtual students has created pedagogical challenges unforeseen. Teachers, as well as nurses, doctors, and all front-line and essential personnel have given so much of themselves, and we should be thankful and appreciative of their time, energy, and efforts!

Nonetheless, as President Franklin D. Roosevelt expressed during his inaugural address, "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself." We cannot fear and dread so much that we become blinded by the past without seeing the possibilities of the future. Each new day brings a new hope. And through education, knowledge, and confidence

we give young people the tools they need to reshape their future, and to create their own version of what will become history. The Center for Texas Studies will continue celebrating the distinctiveness of Texas culture by sponsoring public history events, organizing teacher workshops, collaborating with related state and local organizations, and publishing books on Texas in partnership with TCU Press. It may look a little different in the future, but we are committed to spreading our message. Through education, knowledge, and confidence we can celebrate the past, the present, and the future.

We would like to offer thanks to the generous support from the many individuals and the foundations that support our activities, including teacher-education and community history workshops. Without your support, we would not be able to give back to the community and educate our youth. 🇺🇸

Gene Allen Smith, Ph.D.
Director

THE CENTER FOR TEXAS STUDIES STAFF

Executive Director
LeAnna Schooley, Ph.D.

Director
Gene Allen Smith, Ph.D.

Texas Biography Series Editor
Gregg Cantrell, Ph.D.

Graduate Assistant
Codee Scott



FROM THE EDITOR

Texas Biography Series Enters Second Decade

It is now eleven years since the Texas Biography Series, a joint project of the Center for Texas Studies at TCU and the TCU Press, published its first volume. Since Light Cummins' *Emily Austin of Texas* appeared in 2009, the Series has published biographies of Edmund J. Davis (by Carl Moneyhon), John S. "Rip" Ford (by Richard McCaslin), Adele Briscoe Looscan (by Laura Lyons McLemore), José de la Santos Benavides (by Jerry Thompson), and George T. Ruby (by Carl Moneyhon). Several of these volumes have won prestigious awards, and all have received favorable reviews.

Our most recent title, *George T. Ruby, Texas Senator, and the Politics of Equal Rights*, published in March 2020, was written by the distinguished historian Carl Moneyhon, our first two-time Series author. Ruby was a Freedmen's Bureau agent, educator, publisher, and president of the Union League before becoming arguably the most influential African American politician and one of the most prominent promoters of black civil rights in nineteenth-century Texas.

The pandemic has affected everyone, and historians are no exception, as the imperatives of teaching online have required many additional hours of preparation for classes, and travel to research collections has been curtailed. But I am happy to note that our newest author, Professor Ty Welborn of the Maricopa Community Colleges, continues to work on the seventh volume in the Series, *Lone Star Crusader: Antonio Maceo Smith and the Texas Civil Rights Movement*. Smith was one of the most prominent African American leaders of the twentieth-cen-

tury Civil Rights Movement in Texas. Because the mission of the Series is to publish cutting-edge scholarly biographies of historical Texas figures who either have no biography or no quality modern biography—and because we have particularly striven to include biographies of figures from historically neglected groups—we are especially pleased that when Professor Welborn's book is published, the last three volumes in the Series will have focused on important African American and Tejano leaders. When we consider that two additional subjects of our books have been influential Texas women, it is clear that the Series is achieving its goal of making the history of Texas more inclusive.

The first several titles in the Series have been underwritten by a generous grant from the Houston Endowment. In 2011, the Center received an additional grant from the Carl and Florence E. King Foundation and the Summerlee Foundation, ensuring that the Series will continue into the future. I am in conversation with several other potential authors, and always on the lookout for scholars with interesting projects. If you, or someone you know, is working on a biography that would be appropriate for our series, please drop me a line at g.cantrell@tcu.edu, and I will be happy to send you a copy of our Author's Guidelines and discuss your project with you. 🇺🇸

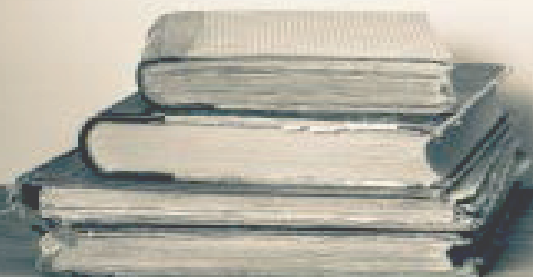
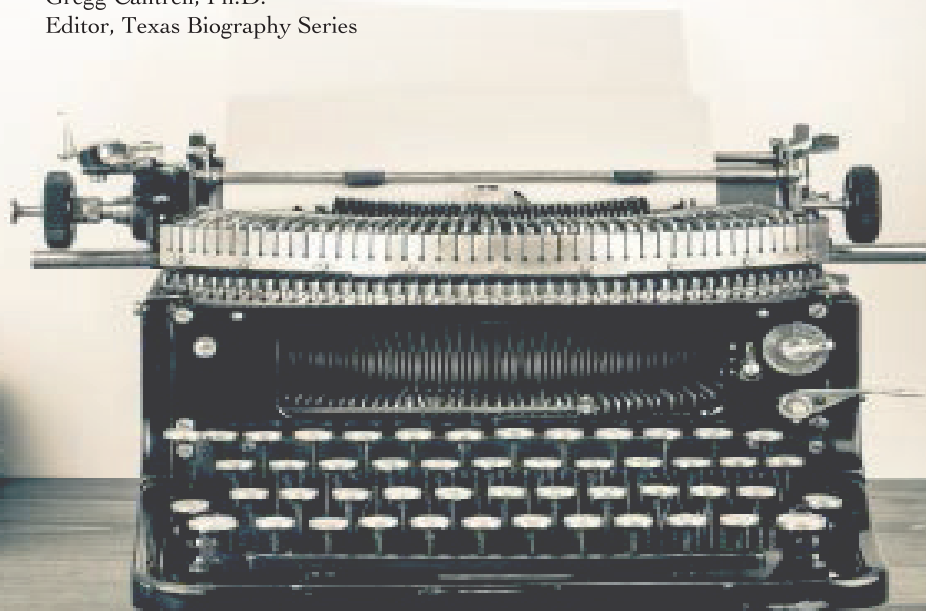
Stay safe!
Gregg Cantrell, Ph.D.
Editor, Texas Biography Series



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2020 [Election] Vision in Extended Education

The Center for Texas Studies offers short classes through TCU's Extended Education program that coincide with our mission to celebrate all that makes Texas distinctive.

In January, Charlotte Hogg, professor of English at TCU, offered "Messin' with Texas: Writing about Place." This course was a must for those interested in writing anything set in the Lone Star State, be it a family history, novel, or memoir.

While our Extended Education courses were put on hold for the remainder of the spring and summer, in early November, TCU political science professor Dr. James Riddlesperger virtually guided seventy students through a fascinating, data-driven overview of the upcoming federal and state elections in Texas. Riddlesperger utilized statistics and percentages to discuss how presidential races affect down-ballot races and explain voting patterns of the past, such as voter turnout. The majority of his course focused on political polling, namely how national polling in 2016 was misleading. He revealed the intriguing reasons why the polls were so skewed four years ago. The age of mobile phones renders it difficult for pollsters to get a representative sample of a geographic area due to

unwillingness of people to answer unknown numbers, and how certain voters do not honestly reveal which candidate will receive their vote. Riddlesperger ended his lesson with the advice to review multiple polls and to look at the polls collectively in order to receive a better picture of the potential election outcome.

The attendees raved about the course in their evaluations! Many called Dr. Riddlesperger a treasure and lauded his ability to handle a potentially divisive topic with open-mindedness and grace. As an answer to what they enjoyed most about the program, one glowing participant responded "Dr. Riddlesperger's presentation was interesting, informative, and engaging. I enjoyed that he touched on seven different areas of the election—giving explanations of each without getting too bogged down in any one area. It was a great overview of the election process!"

Make sure to be on the lookout for news about our virtual spring courses, including a follow-up from Dr. Riddlesperger! You can find the most recent information about upcoming courses on our website, Facebook, and Instagram. 🇺🇸

Codee Scott
Graduate Assistant

ROUND UP

- Texas Studies graduate assistant Codee Scott has contributed two entries to the new Handbook of Texas special project: Handbook of Dallas-Fort Worth. You can find her articles on Dallas residents Dorothy Malone, an Academy Award winning actress, and African American civil rights activist Sam Tasby at www.tshaonline.org/handbook.

- The Center, TCU Press, and A&M Press hosted a book signing at the Texas State Historical Association annual meeting in Austin in March 2020. The reception celebrated the 2019 releases of *The Art of Texas: 250 Years* by Ron Tyler and *Wanted in America: Posters Collected by the Fort Worth Police Department, 1898-1905* by LeAnna Schooley and Tom Kellam and the March 2020 launch of *George T. Ruby: Champion of Civil Rights in Reconstruction Texas* by Carl H. Moneyhon. We look forward to offering in-person events with these and other Center authors in the future.

- Do you receive notices about our programs and publications? If not, send your email address to texasstudies@tcu.edu and we'll add you to the list! No spam, we promise.

- TCU Faculty, Staff, and Retirees—Covid has changed our email distribution abilities. If you have not heard from us lately via your TCU email, please send your email address to texasstudies@tcu.edu and we will make sure you continue to receive our announcements.



EXTEND YOUR TEXAS EDUCATION

Reserve your spot today: www.lifelong.tcu.edu

March 31
7:00pm - 8:30pm

Imperfect Vision: A Review of the Elections of 2020

with Jim Riddlesperger
TCU Political Science Professor

April 12 & 19
6:30pm - 8:00pm

How to Research the History of a Building

with Carol Roark
Author, Local Historian, Preservationist



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New Challenges, Same High Standard for 2020 Speaker Series

Despite the obstacles this year has brought, our speakers in the Preserving Our Past Community History Lecture Series continued to present wonderful, fascinating, and timely research. The year kicked off with journalist Joe Nick Patoski in January, who discussed the transformation of Austin into its current place in American iconography for its music, film, food culture, and technology from his book *Austin to ATX: The Hippies, Pickers, Slackers & Geeks who Transformed the Capital of Texas*. For African American History Month, University of Texas at Dallas professor Dr. Kimberly Hill spoke about her current research, "History of the African American Y.W.C.A. in Dallas, 1920 – 1960." Hill connected the work of the Y.W.C.A. to the future Civil Rights Movement, as well as major regional events such as state-wide elections. In commemoration of the centennial of the Twentieth Amendment, Dr. Rachel M. Gunter of Collin College joined us for Women's History Month. Her program, "The Texas Suffrage Movement and Changes in Citizen-

ship & Voting Rights," traced how women earning the right to vote across Texas impacted the voting rights of other groups, including immigrants, WWI veterans, Mexican Americans, and African Americans. Fortunately, we got to hear Gunter's program in person just before COVID-19 made hers our last in-person lecture of the year. The Center spent the remainder of the spring and summer planning virtual programs, which have allowed us to reach new audiences across the country!

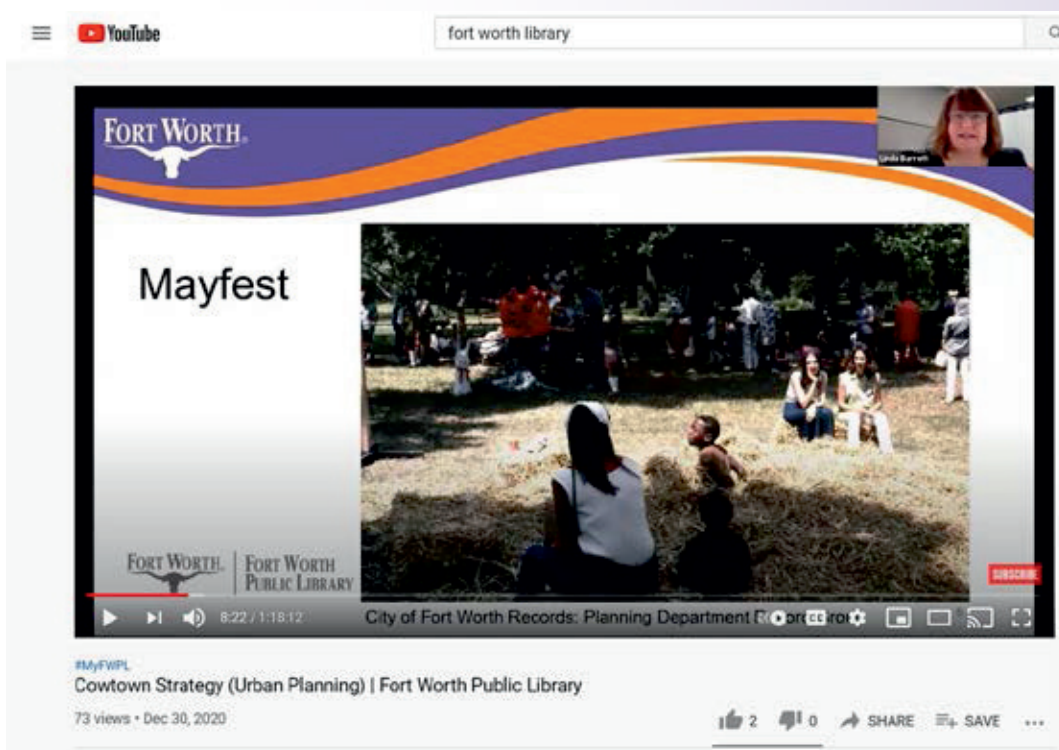
Dr. Peter Martinez joined us for our first-ever virtual program in September, in honor of Hispanic American Heritage Month, to discuss "Food as Cultural Identity: European, African, and Indigenous Foods and Crops in America." He detailed for us the foods introduced from the New World to the Old, and vice versa, as well as how these crops helped shape European, Indigenous, and African culture in the era of Transatlantic travel. Dr. Brian Cervantez spoke in October about his new book, *Amon Carter: A Lone Star Life*,



the first scholarly biography of the Fort Worth giant. The next month Dr. Brennan Gardner Rivas shared research from her dissertation/upcoming manuscript in "The Deadly Weapon Laws of Texas." Rivas revealed how Texas's reputation as a state with lax gun laws only began relatively recently, and in fact had strict weapons laws in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Our December program always highlights the projects of our partners at the Fort Worth Public Library. This year, archivist Linda Barrett presented "Cowtown Strategy: Planner James Toal's Urban Designs for Fort Worth," and highlighted the city planner's role in shaping the city of Fort Worth, notably the Trinity River Vision.

Preserving Our Past lectures are held one Saturday a month from January to May and September to December at 10:30 AM, currently via Zoom. These events are made possible through the generosity of the Summerlee Foundation and the Summerfield G. Roberts Foundation. Admission is free. For a complete schedule of upcoming events, visit www.texasstudies.org, like us on Facebook, or follow us on Instagram. 🇺🇸

Codee Scott
Graduate Assistant





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