

Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum Newsletter

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Sponsored by the City of Waco

February 2011



A Love Story

Britton and Mary Johnson

In October 1864, while Texas was in the midst of the Civil War, the Comanche and Kiowa raided the Elm Creek Valley settlements near Fort Belknap. Several homes were attacked with inhabitants killed or captured and livestock stolen. Among those captured was a slave named Mary Johnson and her two children. Her husband, Britton Johnson, also a slave, was not at the home during the assault.

The Texas frontier was vulnerable to attacks as the majority of eligible fighting-age men had voluntarily joined or were conscripted into the Confederate Army. Some militia units were organized for the defense of the frontier. Settlers on the sparsely populated frontier relied on these scattered troops for defense. One such group, the Border Regiment, was under the command of Colonel James Bourland. Though outnumbered, men from this company went to the aid of the settlers at Elm Creek and a fight with the war party ensued. Several of Bourland's men lost their lives during the battle. The war party withdrew undetected from the area with the livestock and captives, including the family of Britton Johnson.

When Britton Johnson returned home, he was informed of his family's capture and set out alone after the Comanche and Kiowa. The limited number of Rangers and demands upon them made it impossible for them to pursue the Comanche and Kiowa. Such was Britton's devotion to his wife and children that he made repeated trips into the harsh Llano Estacado searching for his family. He visited reservations in Indian Territory as well as isolated, desolate trading posts on the West Texas plains.

His exploits and commitment became legendary. Some sources claim he actually lived among and befriended a band of Comanches while trying to secure the release of his family. Britton Johnson's diligence paid off, and in the summer of 1865, his family was ransomed and returned to him.

Life on the frontier was a struggle. Tragically in 1871, while hauling freight by wagon, Kiowa warriors attacked and killed Britton and two teamsters. Those who found the bodies claimed that over one hundred spent shells were found near the body of Britton Johnson who obviously fought furiously for his life. But thanks to his determination, his family legacy lived on.

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Mark Your Calendars

Spring Break Round Up returns March 7th through March 12th from 10 am to 3 pm daily with activities to delight children of all ages.

February Store Highlight



The Lone Ranger commemorative knives are now available for fans of all ages.

Bi-Annual Benefit Gala

Robert Duvall and Stoney



The knives feature an image of the Lone Ranger and his horse Silver.

Available in multicolor, Red, Black, Cream, and Navy. To order, call toll free (877) 750-8631 with the color requested and information below.

Lone Ranger Knives
TRN-NOVLTY-0068
\$10.25 each

And remember...You never have to pay admission to shop the store. The gift shop is open 9 am to 4:30 pm daily. We ship worldwide.

Sales from the gift shop benefit the educational programs at the Museum.

LaRue to entertain guests; Rare collectibles to be auctioned

The Texas Ranger Association Foundation (TRAF), a non-profit organization supporting active and retired Texas Rangers, will host its bi-annual gala, *An Evening with the Texas Rangers*, on Saturday, February 12, 2011, at the Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center in Grapevine, Texas. The TRAF's event celebrates the Texas Rangers and raises funds to support the organization's charitable purposes.

This year's gala features actor Robert Duvall, celebrated for his role as a Texas Ranger in the 1989 classic *Lonesome Dove*, as guest speaker. Rising country music star Stoney LaRue, and western swing group, The Quebe Sisters Band, will serve as entertainment throughout the evening. Festivities begin at 7 pm, with a three-course dinner and silent auction.

Sponsors for the event include: Ranger Offshore, Inc., AMSCO Steel, Anadarko Petroleum, AT&T, Balcom Agency, Cowtown Rangers, Mr. Bill Hartman and Mr. Jim Chionsini, Hayman Capital Partners, Hunt Global Security, Justin Brands, the Molina Family, Pioneer Natural Resources, Quality Electric Steel Castings, Mr. and Mrs. Steve Sikes, Spectrum Licensed Consultants, Inc., and many more.

Individual tickets are \$250. Additional information can be found online at www.TheTexasRangers.org.

A Cooperative Gala

In Memoriam



**Weldon Lucas,
Texas Ranger**

**March 17, 1942 -
January 15, 2011**

We remember Texas Ranger and Denton County Sheriff Weldon Lucas. Our thoughts are with his family. Please [click here](#) to read his biography.

Texas Independence Day Celebration

On March 2, 1836, Texas declared its independence from Mexico. On Friday, March 4th, Historic Waco Foundation and the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum are joining together to commemorate the 175th anniversary of Texas Independence.



The event will be held at the newly renovated Knox Center and will include tours of the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame with the Foundation's Belles and Beaus, hors d'oeuvres, entertainment, silent auction, dinner and an evening of dancing to the music of Jonquil Street. The entertainment also includes Mia Orosco, a nationally acclaimed fiddler, and Dave Tanner, a musical entertainer. Vicky Parker of Waco's Bestyett Catering will cater the dinner.

The event will start at 6:30 for the reception with dinner and dancing from 7:30 to 11:30 pm. Cost will be \$80.00 per person. Proceeds will support Historic Waco Foundation and the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and our efforts to preserve Waco/Texas history.

Please call Historic Waco Foundation at (254) 753-5166 for reservations by March 1st.

Sponsored by Johnson Roofing, Inc.



Knox Center Open House Recap

January 27, 2011

On Thursday, January 27, 2011, the Museum hosted an open house and ribbon cutting ceremony for the newly renovated John Knox Texas Ranger Memorial Center. Knox Center was originally presented to the City of Waco and Texas Rangers in 1982 by the family and friends of John Knox. John Knox, who lived from 1881 to 1964, was the surveyor of Lee County, a Texas Ranger enthusiast and a historian of Central Texas.

After the founding of this museum, the Knox family and John Knox's children, John Jr., Louis, Robert and daughter Jo, originally presented more than 200 of his historical antiques to the museum and later raised \$450,000 in today's dollars to build the original Knox Center. Judy Morton, granddaughter of John Knox, spoke on behalf of the Knox family thanking the City for renovations.

One hundred fifty people attended the event and multiple people saw the Center as the perfect place to host their next event. The open house included refreshments donated by Waco's Bestyett Catering and decorations donated by Action Rental Center. The Greater Waco Chamber of Commerce provided a ribbon cutting ceremony.

Mayor Jim Bush thanked the voters of Waco, who approved funding for the renovation in the form of a bond issue. For 27 years Knox Center served for wedding receptions, parties, corporate meetings and even memorial services for Waco and the surrounding communities. We thank the Waco citizens for their generous support and hope we can serve their event needs for decades to come. Advisory Board Chairman Joe Hinton also acknowledged the staff for their dedication in overseeing the renovations.

Executive Director Byron Johnson recognized Dan Henderson of Uncle Dan's Bar-B-Que and Catering for campaigning for the passage of this bond issue, the late Nick Klaras for his advice on the catering kitchen, City Manager Larry Groth, Vince Tobola and his staff from City of Waco Facilities Department and the staff of the City Purchasing Department for coordinating the bidding and construction of this project in amongst many other City bond projects, and architects George Jezek and David Nisbet from the Wallace Group and John Erwin Construction for their design and craftsmanship.

To learn more about renting Knox Center, visit [our website](#) or call the booking office Monday through Friday 10 am to 4 pm at (254) 750-8631. To watch a video tour of the facility, visit the [City of Waco website](#). To see more photographs from the open house, [click here](#).



Lone Ranger Fan Day Recap

January 29, 2011

On Saturday, January 29, 2011, the Museum hosted its first Lone Ranger Fan Day. Almost 300 people were in attendance for the event, which included a radio performance. The Waco Civic Theater and McLennan County Public Library read the 20th anniversary script, *The Return of Butch Cavendish*, which originally aired on January 30, 1953. The performance was complete with a word from its original sponsor and sound effects. The performance can be seen on the [City of Waco website](#).

Between performances, guests mingled with a Lone Ranger impersonator portrayed by Kevin Smith of Sherman, Texas. At one point, he practiced his quick draw skills with one of our guests. Other activities included: making a mask, a sound effects station, Lone Ranger shooting practice with gun safety handouts, making a bookmark, and more! Children and adults alike dressed in masks to receive discounted admission and in full costume to receive free admission.

Thanks to Bellmead Walmart Super Center, Kevin Smith, and the Junior League of Waco volunteers. The talented radio show volunteers included Pat Mears and the Waco Civic Theater, Vivian Rutherford and the Waco Library, and Blake Powell and Mark Randolph with WCCC-TV who provided sound effects.





**Save
\$2.00**

Save \$1.00 off adult admission for up to two regular adults. No cash value.

The museum is open 9 pm to 5 pm with the last guest admitted at 4:30 pm. The Museum is located off I-35 Exit 335B University Parks Drive in Waco, Texas. For more information, call (254) 750-8631 or visit www.texasranger.org.

Offer Expires: June 1, 2011

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