

Lifestyles

Kempner mural depicts early cattle drives

By MAT TAYLOR
Special Correspondent

Not to be outdone by Lampasas, which sports a new boot mural, the city of Kempner now has a large mural of its own. The mural was recently completed on the east wall of the building occupied by Kemp-Fire BBQ.

Business owner Penny Wortham commissioned Killeen artist Stephen Culver to paint the mural entitled "Hill Country Cattle Drive." Lampasas County remains a significant producer of beef cattle.

"We want the mural to be a landmark for the Kempner community," Culver said. "The mural shows a typical Lampasas County landscape with cowboys gathering Longhorn cattle for a cattle drive."

After the Civil War, there was a severe meat shortage in the North and an abundance of cheap cattle in Texas. This situation led ranchers to collect large herds of wild and range cattle and drive them to markets and railroads in Kansas.

One of the most famous trails was the Chisholm Trail that started in San Antonio and went through Central Texas to Fort Worth then north to Abilene, Kansas, Hancock Springs and Sulphur Springs were gathering points for cattle that would be driven north.

In 1870 alone, more than 300,000 cattle were driven from Texas to Kansas. Estimates are that up to five million cattle hit the trail drives until the railroads were extended into Texas and the long cattle drives were no longer necessary.

Although the Kempner mural does not depict any particular rancher, the Lampasas County history book indicates local ranchers who participated in cattle drives included Jasper and Terry Townsend, Pink Higgins, Bob and Lance Mitchell, and John and Tom Straley. Early Kempner-area pioneer and former Lampasas County chief justice (the equivalent of a modern-day county judge) Daniel Webster Taylor died in Kansas in 1872 on a cattle drive.

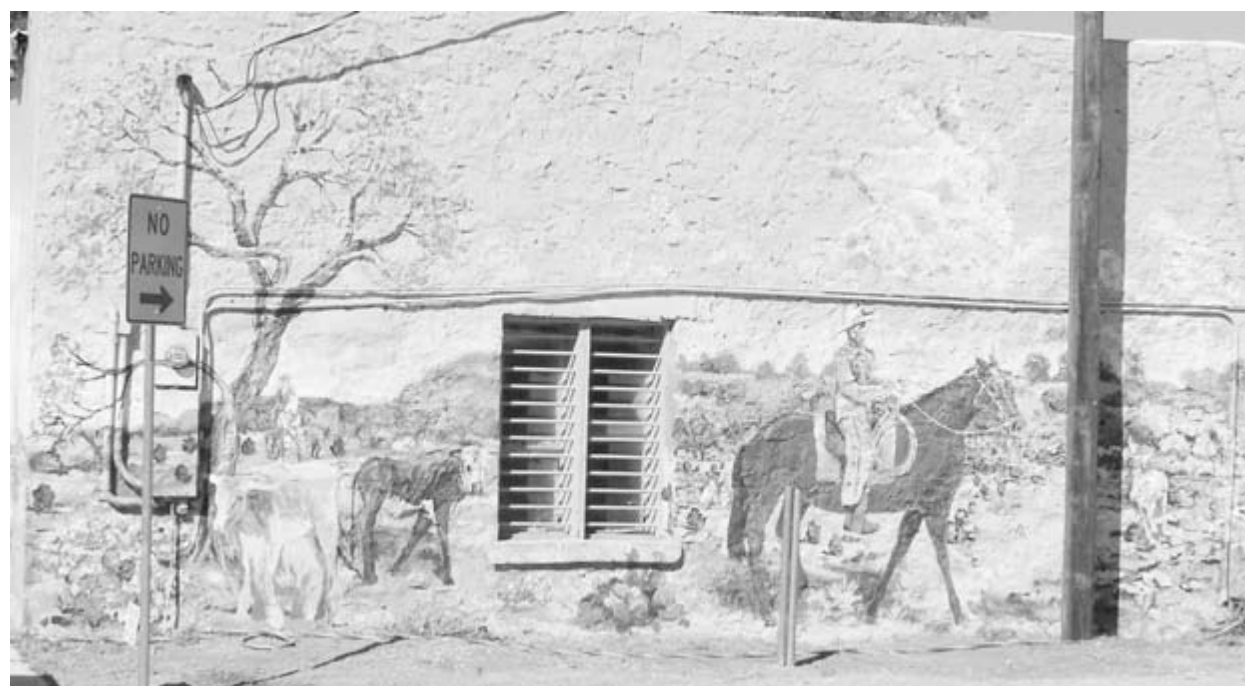
Ms. Wortham said when she opened the barbecue restaurant along U.S. Highway 190 in March 2007, Culver painted a smaller mural at the entrance to the restaurant.

He also painted both bathrooms, with John Wayne depicted in the men's room and several colorful cowboy boots in the women's room.

"The east side of the building was a bare wall, and first I considered power-washing and painting it," Ms. Wortham said. "However, the more I looked at it, I decided I wanted a wall to stand out and decided to have the mural painted."

The wall is 78 feet long and about 20 feet tall. Motorists traveling U.S. 190 and FM 2313 can see the scene easily.

When the mural is completed, Ms. Wortham said her business name with the slogan "World-



This large mural, titled "Hill Country Cattle Drive," highlights the east wall at Kemp-Fire BBQ. The mural on the 128-year-old masonry rock building is at the corner of U.S. Highway 190 and FM 2313.

famous BBQ" will be painted at the top of the wall.

Culver uses acrylic latex paint, and the entire mural will be covered with a sealant that should preserve the work for many years.

The building that houses Kemp-Fire BBQ was constructed in 1880, and originally contained Patterson's Mercantile and then later the Turner Store. Through the years, other businesses located there until Ms. Wortham acquired the structure.

"If anyone has any old photographs of the building or downtown Kempner, I would like to have copies to display in the restaurant," she said.

Culver said he previously painted three murals in Killeen for the city's 125th birthday and several others on buildings along old U.S. 190 in Killeen. "I am used to painting in a grand style," he said.

He also has painted a number of backdrops for theater and stage productions.

A product of Killeen High School, Culver graduated from Southwestern University with a degree in art education. While in college he helped paint a mural in the city of Taylor.

Ms. Wortham also plans to renovate the front of her building and landscape the area in front of the mural.

"Today, people are worried about the economy, and businesses are hurting," she said. "However, I am putting a great deal of money into this project and going out on a limb. But I want to show that I have confidence in the people of this community, and I think the economy will come back."

Some final touches to the mural will be the addition of wildflowers such as bluebonnets and Indian paintbrushes.

Culver said when he completes the mural, he hopes it turns out well and will be something of which Kempner residents can be proud.



Killeen artist Stephen Culver uses acrylic latex paint to paint a Longhorn steer on the large mural that depicts cowboys in early-day Lampasas County gathering cattle to drive them north to the railroad and cattle market.



Penny Wortham, owner of Kemp-Fire BBQ, is at the front entrance of her restaurant. A mural of a Lampasas County landscape was previously painted by Culver on the south entrance of the restaurant, and Ms. Wortham commissioned Culver to extend the mural to the east side of the building.

Browning garden club reports on recent coat drive

Browning Community Garden Club members met at the festively decorated home of Sharron Van Weelden for the December Christmas gathering.

The meeting opened with "Bless the Garden," taken from the National Garden Club's "Prayer Book."

Koneta Saum reported on the winter coat drive and the provisions for needy family support, to which each member contributed non-perishable food items and funds.

Thanksgiving fruit baskets were provided to residents of both Winderest and Hill Country nurs-

ing centers.

"Howling Winds to the Rescue," a Lone Star Gardener article describing the benefits of hurricanes by aerating bottom waters, was reviewed by Doris Magnor.

In keeping with the season, each club member brought a favorite holiday dessert.

Arbor Day will be observed Jan. 16 with the planting of a crepe myrtle tree at the Kempner Post Office. The public is invited.

The Jan. 20 meeting will be at Clear Creek Baptist Church fellowship hall and will feature a program on floral design by Beate Pace.

BIRTHS

Daughter born

Don and Janet Beaver of Kempner announce the birth of their daughter, Madysen Dawn, born Dec. 12, 2008, at 9:32 a.m. in Georgetown.

Upon arrival, Madysen weighed 8 pounds, 6 ounces and was 19 1/2 inches in length.

She joins brothers, Corey and Kaleb, and sisters, Ashlee, Krysta, Allyssa and Kayleigh.

Mattie Staton of Georgetown is the baby's grandmother.

Adamsville group set to gather

Adamsville Heritage Association Inc. will meet Jan. 12 at 6:30 p.m. at Jones Music Hall in Adamsville.

Anyone interested in preserving the heritage of the community is invited.

An agenda will be provided at the meeting. For more information, phone Betty Rials, president, at 768-3307.

Button Club to meet Wednesday

The Bluebonnet Button Club of Burnet will meet Jan. 7 at 9:30 a.m. at the Burnet County Courthouse Annex, Highway 29 East.

The program will be a slide show on art deco buttons by club member Bob Folsom.

For more information, contact Doris Gates at (512) 756-8719. Visitors are welcome.

School Menu

Week of Jan. 5-9

Monday, Jan. 5

BREAKFAST: Waffles/syrup, sausage patty, fruit or juice and milk.

LUNCH: Pizza, Italian vegetables, green salad, fruit cocktail and milk.

Tuesday, Jan. 6

BREAKFAST: Cinnamon roll, ham slice, fruit or juice and milk.

LUNCH: Spaghetti, green beans, oranges, hot roll and milk.

Wednesday, Jan. 7

BREAKFAST: Oatmeal, toast/ham slice, fruit or juice and milk.

LUNCH: BBQ on bun, pinto beans, blushing pears, fruit freeze bar and milk.

Thursday, Jan. 8

BREAKFAST: Breakfast taco/salsa, fruit or juice and milk.

LUNCH: Chili pie, whole kernel corn, fresh apple, cornbread and milk.

Friday, Jan. 9

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