



January 2018

Texas Ranger Hall of Fame Newsletter

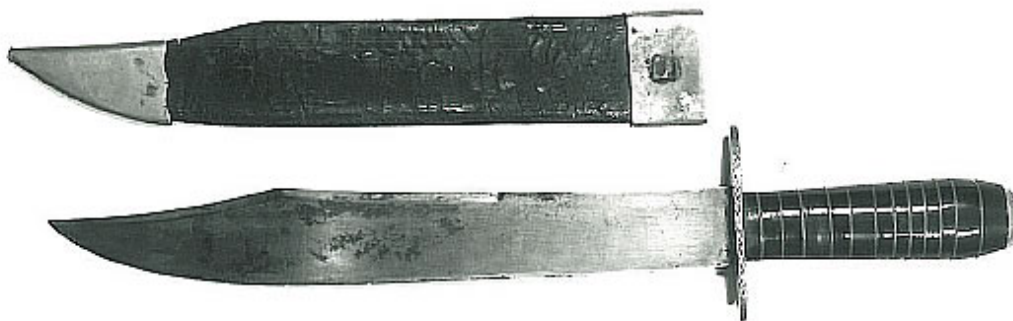
Sponsored by the City of Waco

Official State Historical Center of the Texas Rangers

Home of Texas Ranger Bicentennial 1823-2023

The Lacy Bowie Knife - A Mystery

Over the holidays, Mr. Rudolph Gleichman of Pennsylvania donated a fascinating item from his collections, a 17" long 1830s-40s style Bowie knife. Its scabbard bears an intriguing inscription "R.P. Bowie to Capt. Wm Y. Lacey." The blade was likely made in England for the American trade, and the handle is horn, possibly buffalo. It has been examined by numerous Bowie knife authorities over the decades who have attested to its age.



James "Jim" Bowie (1796-1836) who died at the Alamo made the "Bowie knife" famous in the "Sandbar Fight" duel he fought in 1827. Bowie knives became a fad so popular that factories in England and Germany turned out thousands for export to Texas and the West. There even existed schools to teach greenhorns knife fighting. Urban legend, now largely discredited, has it that Bowie's brother, Rezin Pleasant Bowie (1793-1841), a Louisiana planter, land speculator and slave smuggler "invented" the Bowie knife. He may have influenced the addition of the

iconic cross-guards and Texas-clipped point to what was otherwise a butcher or dressing knife.

After Jim Bowie's heroic death, Rezin presented Bowie knives of different designs to a number of acquaintances including the Governor of Louisiana, an army officer (the Fowler Bowie displayed at the Alamo), and actor Edwin Forrest. The inscription on the Forrest Bowie matches this knife.

Rezin Bowie would have presented this knife to William Young Lacy/also Lacey (1814-1892). Lacy came to Texas in 1830, rode with Jim Bowie for eight months in 1834, and was commissioned into the Corps of Rangers from May of 1836 to December of 1837 serving as acting captain on the death of his commander. Sam Houston later sent him to Nacogdoches and Houston Counties to form militia (Ranger) companies. It is unclear if Rezin Bowie knew Capt. Lacy. If he did they would have met between 1830 and 1832 when Lacy and Rezin Bowie were both in Texas. The knife would have been presented before Rezin's death in 1841.

Is the inscription genuine? Old artifacts have sometimes been 'enhanced' with tantalizing inscriptions. However, most counterfeit inscriptions refer to well-known individuals. When Mr. Gleichman purchased the knife 36 years ago, Capt. Lacy was barely known to a few historians and is little-known today.

Although the attribution looks promising there is more research to be done. We thank Mr. Gleichman for the generous gift to the people of Texas of a rare Bowie knife, one of perhaps great historical value.

NEW ADMISSION DESK

When the museum opened in 1968, the admission desk was just the stone section seen below. In response to a growing need for a freshened up space with more storage and workspace, the museum and City of Waco hired Koerhy Cabinets of Waco to create a wood desk that would wrap around and incorporate the original stone desk. Workers installed it on December 6th, just in time for the holiday rush. The fourth picture shows the first museum guest utilizing the new desk.



SPRING BREAK ROUND UP 2018

Save the date for our annual Spring Break Round Up on Saturday, March 10th. This year's participants include the Texas Top Guns and the Legends of the Texas Rangers - two living history groups. Activities will be held from 10am to 2pm. More details to come in our upcoming newsletters!



A WINTER WONDERLAND

We are always amazed by the talent of the brides who transform Knox Center for their weddings. Here a bride created a Winter Wonderland altar with pine trees and fake snow. Beautiful!



BEST ATTENDANCE YEAR ON RECORD

The numbers are in, and the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame welcomed a record 93,444 visitors in 2017. This is the best year since the museum opened its doors in 1968.



Texas Ranger Joel Timms of Company "E" (Brady) speaks with students and faculty

Among the many Highlights for the year were:

- A new entrance sign and Memorial provided by the City of Waco on I35.
- A Certificate of Excellence from TripAdvisor for achieving a 93% visitor good-to excellent rating.
- Listings as one of the "Best Specialty Museums in Texas" and a US/British Travel Award as one of the three top Central Texas Attractions.
- Premier of the first two Texas Ranger Bicentennial Books "Texas Rangers: Lives, Legend and Legacy by Bob Alexander and Donaly Brice and "The Ranger Ideal - Rangers in the Hall of Fame 1823-1861" by Darren Ivy. The first edition of "Texas Rangers" sold out in four months.
- Restoration of an historic 1850s portrait of Sam Houston sponsored by the family of Mr. J. Fred Bucy III.
- Donation of a c.1835 Bowie Knife attributed to Jim Bowie's brother, Rezin P. Bowie, he gave to Texas Ranger William Lacy.

QUICK LINKS

[Website](#)
[Gift Shop](#)
[Knox Center](#)
[Education Center](#)
[Education Programs](#)
[Research Center](#)
[Distinguished Service](#)
[Museum Video](#)
[Texas Ranger Bicentennial](#)
[Bicentennial Video](#)
[Texas Ranger Association](#)
[Foundation](#)
[Facebook](#)

EDUCATION CENTER

The following groups utilized the Education Center for programs in December:

Texas DPS
 Texas Rangers
 NAACP

Newsletter Compiled by
Christine Rothenbush, Marketing & Development Specialist

SIGN UP & SAVE \$2.00

Save \$1.00 off regular adult admission for up to two adults.
 Coupon not valid on discounted senior or military admission. No cash value.
 The museum is open 9am to 5pm with the last guest admitted at 4:30pm. The museum is located off I-35 and University Parks Drive in Waco, Texas.

For more information, call (254) 750-8631 or visit www.texasranger.org.

Offer Expires 02/28/2018.