

Boenicke Museum (near Trickham)

By Carl Langford

In the 1935 Santa Anna Newspaper, Mrs. H. W. Schulze wrote an article about the largest collection of various types of horns and art by Albert Boenicke, which represents the work of a life time, who lives in the Salt Branch Community of Brown County, which was purchased in 1892.

She goes on to state: "The collection is all in one room of the home, which can only be compared to the Buckhorn Salon in San Antonio. The horns have been gathered from everywhere, with some being shipped to him by friends from different places, also by his children."

Not only horns being collected, Mr. Boenicke has about ninety-five pieces of old coins with age from 910 B. C. to 1300 A. D. , also different kind of bills. All the odd pieces are arranged in frames, hung on the wall. Above the coins a large number of arrowheads arranged in various groupings containing eleven hundred arrowheads artistically placed by Mrs. Boenicke.

You wonder what size room all this is placed. Five mounted Moose heads, each the size of a grown moose. Other heads of Rocky Mountain sheep, goats, antelope, fawns and half mounted deer with just head and front feet. She goes on to give some history on deer and their horns (antlers).

Also, in this room are rugs from bear skins, leopard, coyote, and mountain lion skins. One of his most peculiar articles includes a turtle shell about four and one-half feet wide and four feet long. The shell was turned upside down and rockers were place on it, and now can serve as a cradle for twelve children. The turtle shell weights around three hundred pounds.

Several chandeliers hang from the ceiling are very beautifully made with horns. There is hardly limit to the value of this collection, which has been made by an uneducated man. Mr. Beonicke has been offered thousands of dollars, but considered the amount work put into it and that would seem rather small. The life work of a man, who possesses this type of art can only be a lover of nature, to produce this type of collection.

Albert Boenicke, 84, who had presented to Howard Payne college one of the largest collections of horns and other curios in Texas died 27 Dec. 1939 in his daughters home, Misses Pauline and Lydia Boenicke of Salt Branch, Brown Co., Tx. In 1935, he made arrangement for HP to take the collection. There were many others who wanted the collection , but since he had collected it in Brown County wished he to stay there for all to see. HP officials stated plans will be made for a building to be known as “The Boenicke Memorial Museum” for the collection to be shown to the public. I don’t know if this ever took place or is the collection still in storage?

Albert was the Son of *Gottfried Boenicke* born July 1, 1807, Machtaburg, Germany died 19 Nov 1883 in New Ulm, Austin Co., Tx. and married *Johanna Sophia Lindemann* born 20 May 1821 in Koselitz, Germany and married there in 1842, died 17 Dec 1908 Hallettsville, Lavaca Co., Tx. Immigration: arrived in Galveston, Tx. in 1852 and from there went to New Ulm, Austin Co., Tx. Pauline, the first child, to be born upon arriving at there new place on 22 Apr 1853. They had five children, Sophia, Otto, Pauline, ALBERT, and Anna Boenicke.

Albert Boenicke married *Bertha Wunderlick* Jan 1882, born March 1860 in Shelby, Austin Co., Tx., died 21 July 1906 in Brown Co., Tx. They had nine children, Edmund Heineich, Alma Bertha, *Ernest Jakob Beonicke* born 5 Jun 1885, married *Hattie Shirley Cheatham* (who is in our Family Tree of James Albert Cheatham), Pauline Friedericke, Louis August, Anton Willie, Oswald Robert, Lydia, and Laura Boenicke. After, Albert’s wife, Bertha died, he remarried to Selma Miller on 27 Dec 1909, no children noted.

CURIO COLLECTION IS GIVEN TO HOWARD PAYNE

One of the largest collections of skins and other curios in the world has been given to Howard Payne by A. Boenicke of the Salt Branch community in western Brown county, 8 miles west of Bangs.

Mr. Boenicke, 80-year-old German and resident of the Salt Branch for more than 30 years, has been working on the collection for more than half a century, devoting most of his leisure time to it during the last fifty years.

Mr. Boenicke's name will live in the collection, for the college will place it in a building to be known as the "Boenicke Memorial Museum." Plans for erection of a suitable building to house the collection on a campus of Howard Payne are now being made by college officials.

Others Wanted Collection
Several colleges and universities had attempted during the last few years to secure the collection, either through donation or purchase, but Mr. Boenicke said most of the collection had been assembled while he lived in Brown county, and he wanted to keep it here for his children and friends to see and enjoy. Dean O. E. Winebrenner and Dr. M. E. Davis of Howard Payne, friends of Mr. Boenicke for many years, have worked with Mr. Boenicke on plans for proper preservation of the collection. Through the donation to the college, it will be preserved for posterity.

Articles From Many Places
The curios were collected from many places in Europe, Canada, and the United States. The collection includes a large number of horns, large and small, from deer, elk, moose, Rocky Mountain sheep and goats, antelope, fawn and one set of locked deer horns.

Several life size mounted specimens of deer, old and young, one large elk and one full grown moose are in the display. There are also eight mounted elk heads, two mounted reindeer heads, five mounted moose heads, and a number of Rocky Mountain sheep and goat heads. Rugs with mounted heads and made from the skins of bear, leopard, coyote, mountain lion and deer are included in the

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1,100 Arrowheads

The collection of arrowheads is said to be one of the most complete in the world, there being more than 1,100 different heads in the display, mounted in large frames, and arranged in an interesting and beautiful design. Arrowheads in one frame are designed in the emblem of the Lutheran church, another frame shows the Texas Lone Star, another the moon, another the sun, the stars, the Milky Way and still another shows an anchor and several stars.

A peculiar article in the collection is a turtle shell, about four and a half feet wide, and four feet long, which at one time served as a child's cradle. The shell was taken from a turtle that weighed about 300 pounds. Another interesting item in the collection is a leather bag marked "Powder Bag, 1884." It was taken from the Indians in the late 80's.

Last Buffalo Horns

A pair of buffalo horns in the collection are from one of the last, if not the last, buffaloes killed in Brown county. The horns were given to Mr. Boenicke by the late "Uncle Billy" Brown, pioneer Brown county settler, who killed the buffalo and saved the horns for many years before he gave them to Boenicke.

Mr. Boenicke started collecting curios while still a small boy, although he did not devote much time to it until later years. He really began the collection when he found an arrowhead as a child and saved it. That first arrowhead is in the collection today. Mr. Boenicke, who was 80 years old July 10, was born in Austin county in Southeast Texas. He lived there until 1903 when he moved to his ranch in the Salt Branch community, which he had purchased in 1892. Mrs. Boenicke died in 1906.

Collection Is Stated

Mr. Boenicke has nine children living, all of whom make their homes in Brown county. They are: Mrs. W. F. Miller, who lives south of Bangs; E. J. Boenicke, Brooksmith; Miss Pauline Boenicke, Brownwood; L. A. Boenicke, Brownwood; Mrs. E. R. Deera, Brownwood; A. W. Boenicke, Salt Branch community; O. R. Boenicke, Salt Branch community; Miss Lydia Boenicke, Brownwood, and Mrs. Carl Harris, Salt Branch community. Another son, Ed, died a few years ago.

The collection at present is stored at the college until arrangements can be completed for a place for its proper exhibition. The collection will be open for public inspection when these arrangements are completed.