

# Where Texas Ranching Began

## Exhibition Master Plan April 2019; updated July 2021



**NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE  
HUMANITIES**

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The purpose of this project is to explore the origins of ranching in Texas while expanding visitors' knowledge about the many different groups of people who settled the Coastal Bend and who contributed to the development of this iconic industry.



## Exhibition Plan & Concept

Ranching is a legendary part of Texas history and an important part of today's economy in the Coastal Bend. Ranching played a key part in the Coastal Bend's development and impacted the way people worked and saw themselves.

The first great cattle ranch in Texas was located as early as 1726 in present Mission Valley, Victoria County, at Spain's *Nuestra Senora del Espiritu Santo de Zuniga Mission*. The people who participated in ranching in the Coastal Bend over the next few centuries came from many different ethnicities and social groups, including Mexican colonists, indigenous inhabitants, African slaves and their descendants, and European immigrants. The interplay between these diverse groups as they worked to overcome obstacles led to the invention of the iconic industry of ranching as the world knows it today. Their achievements and struggles are a fascinating story.

## Exhibition Plan & Concept (continued)

The permanent exhibit *Where Texas History Began* depicts the last 13,000 years of Coastal Bend history yet, due to space constraints, ranching is minimally touched in the exhibit content. Since 2006, the museum has presented three temporary exhibits exploring Coastal Bend ranching topics.

- *Echoes: Memories of a Black Culture* (2006 – 2007) -- Photographic portraits and biographies of African-American ranch hands, cooks, and workers associated with Coastal Bend ranches
- *Before the Cowboy* (2007 – 2008) -- The origins of ranching, 1722 – 1845
- *Cattle Boom!* (2011 – 2012) -- Development of the ranching industry, 1845 - 1929

These exhibits explored the diverse groups of people who lived and worked in the cattle industry, and expanded our audience's knowledge of and appreciation for the contributions of these people. Each of these exhibits engendered significant increases in museum attendance during the run of the exhibit.

## Exhibition Plan & Concept (continued)

The tourism industry is the second-leading industry in Texas, and heritage tourism is one of the fastest-growing segments of the tourism industry. <sup>(1)</sup> MCB can capitalize on heritage tourism potential by showcasing the Coastal Bend's unique ranching heritage.

The need to tell the story of ranching in the Coastal Bend, combined with a secondary need for increased multi-purpose space to facilitate group tours and lectures, inspired the plan to expand the museum to house a permanent ranching exhibit.

(1) Travel Texas <https://www.travelstats.com/>

Heritage Tourism Guidebook, Texas Historical Commission <https://www.thc.texas.gov/public/upload/publications/heritage-tourism-guide.pdf>

## Scope

This project involves bringing together existing and new partners and stakeholders with the common goal of expanding the Museum of the Coastal Bend to present the story of Coastal Bend ranching and meet identified audience needs.

- Fundraising by Victoria College Grants Development Office, Victoria College Foundation, in concert with Advisory Board of the Museum of the Coastal Bend
- Construct a 4,000 square foot, multi-purpose addition
- Consolidate and update existing scholarship to create ranching exhibit content
- Organize resources for artifact donations and loans
- Design and create text panels, artifact displays, and interactive exhibit pieces
- Integrate A/V equipment for presentations and lectures
- Increase marketing and promotional efforts targeted at heritage tourists; maximize potential for new and increased marketing partners, such as the Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum in Cuero, TX, and Presidio La Bahia and Mission Espiritu Santo in Goliad, TX.

## Project Budget

Description	Direct Expenditures	Indirect Expenditures	Total
Architect Fees	\$100,000		\$100,000
Building Construction	\$900,000		\$900,000
Interior Fittings	\$100,000		\$100,000
Exhibit Construction (1,997 sq. ft. @ \$150/sq. ft.)	\$100,000	\$199,550	\$299,550
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$1,200,000</b>	<b>\$199,550</b>	<b>\$1,399,550</b>

## Key Dates



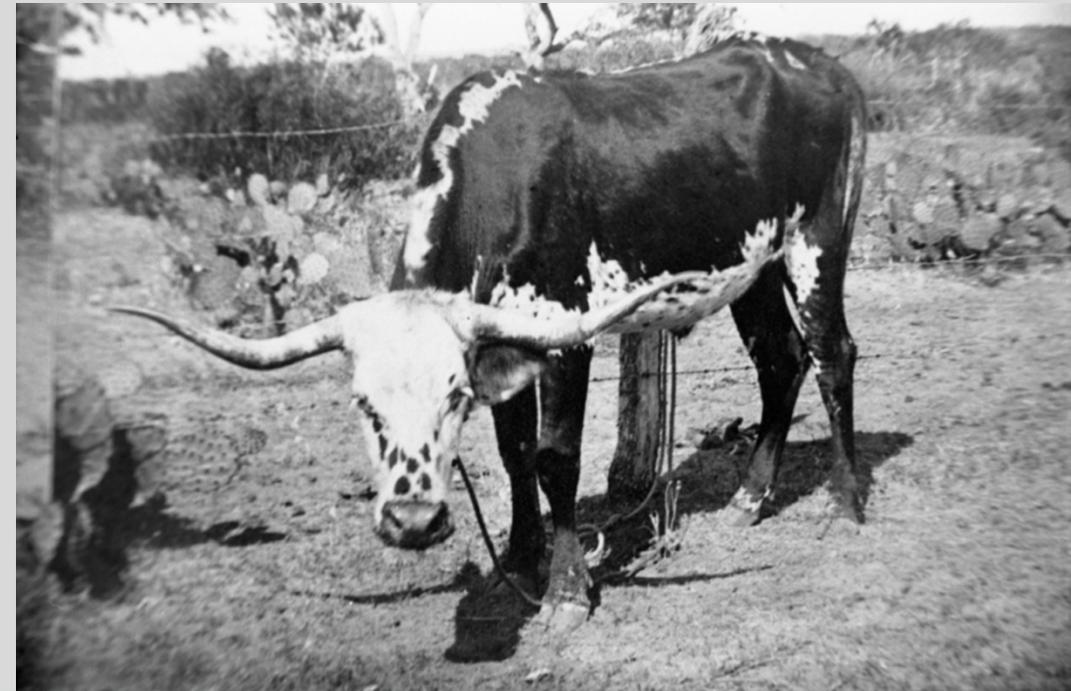
Jan 2020	National Endowment for the Humanities grant notification
May 2020 – Aug 2021	Architect selection and design
May 2020 – Apr 2026	Fundraising
Sept 2021 – Dec 2024	Bidding and construction
May 2024 – Apr. 2026	Exhibit and equipment bidding, design, construction
May 2026	Grand Opening

## Funding Schedule

Year	NEH Funds Requested	Nonfederal Contributions	Total Federal + Nonfederal
Year 1: 5/1/20 – 4/30/21	\$33,600	\$33,600	\$67,200
Year 2: 5/1/21 – 4/30/22	\$66,400	\$66,400	\$132,800
Year 3: 5/1/22 – 4/30/23	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$300,000
Year 4: 5/1/23 – 4/30/24	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$300,000
Year 5: 5/1/24 – 4/30/25	\$155,974	\$155,974	\$311,948
Year 6: 5/1/25 – 4/30/26	\$27,776	\$27,776	\$55,552
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$583,750</b>	<b>\$583,750</b>	<b>\$1,167,500</b>

## Interpretive Themes and Learning Objectives

- Different groups of people participated in and were influenced by ranching
- Victoria is where the origins of ranching began
- The Spanish created the ranching industry in Texas
- Daily lives of ranchers were difficult
- The industry of ranching changed over time
- Much of today's cattle in Texas and North America are descended from breeds developed in the Texas Coastal Bend
- Ranching is an important part of Texas and Victoria history



## Humanities Themes

**Culture and Identity** – The exhibit explores the role ranching played in the development of the Coastal Bend of Texas and Victoria, as well as how ranching shaped the way people worked and saw themselves. Ranching culture will be explored including an exploration of daily life on the ranch and the life of ranching families.

**Representation and Point of View** – The roles of African-Americans, Mexican-Americans, and women in ranching are explored. The exhibit addresses how each group was affected by ranching and how their lives were impacted by the industry. There is a need for this information in the community due to a previous lack of information in cultural centers around the area.

**Impact of Industry** – What was the role of the ranching industry in Victoria and the Coastal Bend of Texas? This will be discussed in the exhibit, including information on the technology that was developed and the transition from cattle drives to fenced ranches.

## Curriculum Integration

Ranching is an important aspect of Texas history and is relevant to school curriculum. The interpretation and hands-on activities will support teachers by connecting material to state education standards.

### History:

- Texas and American history themes
- The Spanish started the ranching industry in Texas
- The people who participated in ranching in the Coastal Bend over the next few centuries came from many different ethnicities and social groups, including Mexican colonists, indigenous inhabitants, African slaves and their descendants, and European immigrants.
- Technology: Learn how technologies such as barbed wire changed the ranching industry
- Explore the use of chuck wagons

## Curriculum Integration (continued)

### Economics

- Learn how the ranching industry impacted the state of Texas
- Explore the history of cattle breeding and why people bred specific cattle
- Discover how cattle drive routes affected Texas

### Environment

- Learn how the environment and natural resources impact industry and the movements of people

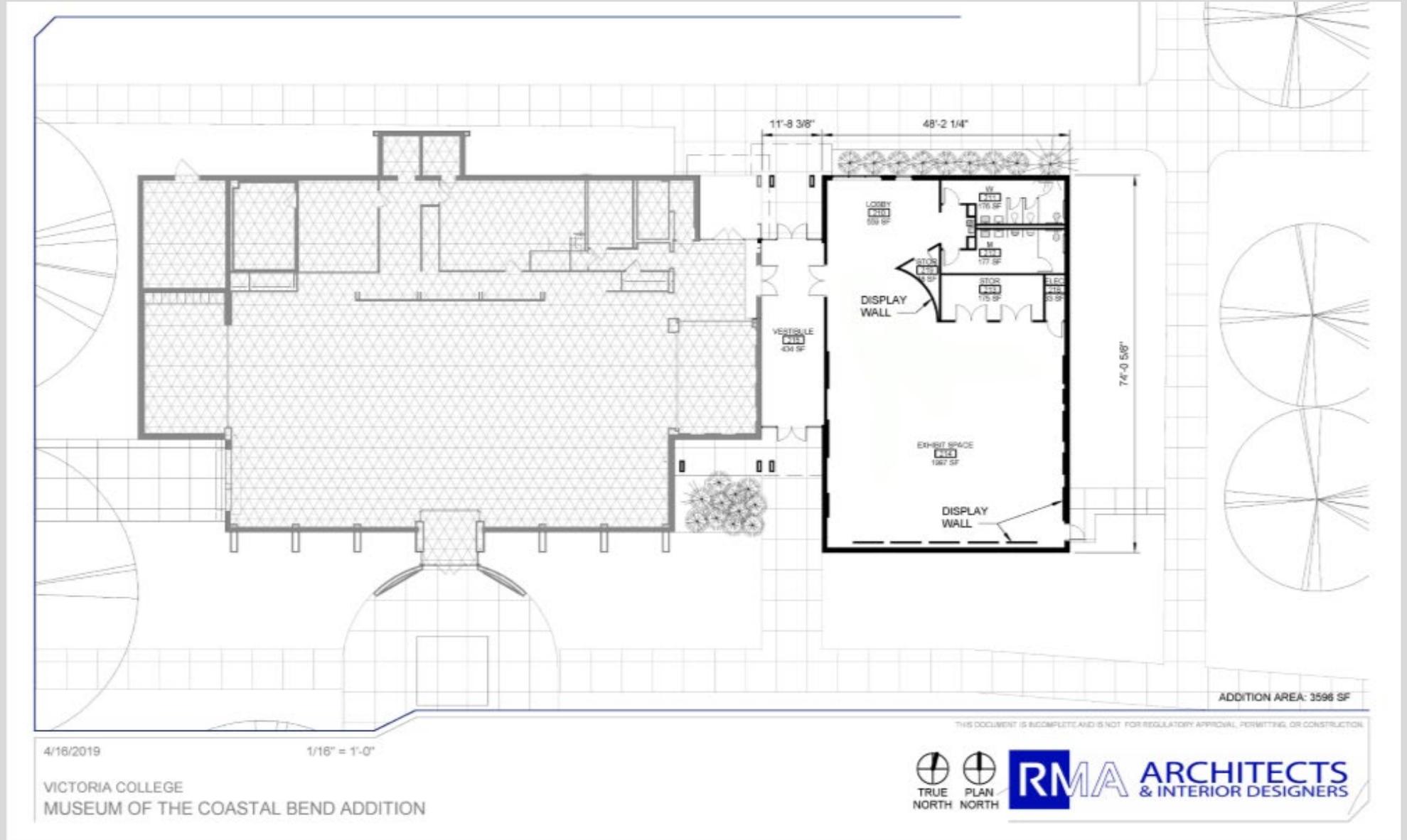
### Language Arts

- See the use of history and archaeology terminology in text
- Understanding context of events

## Experiential Objectives

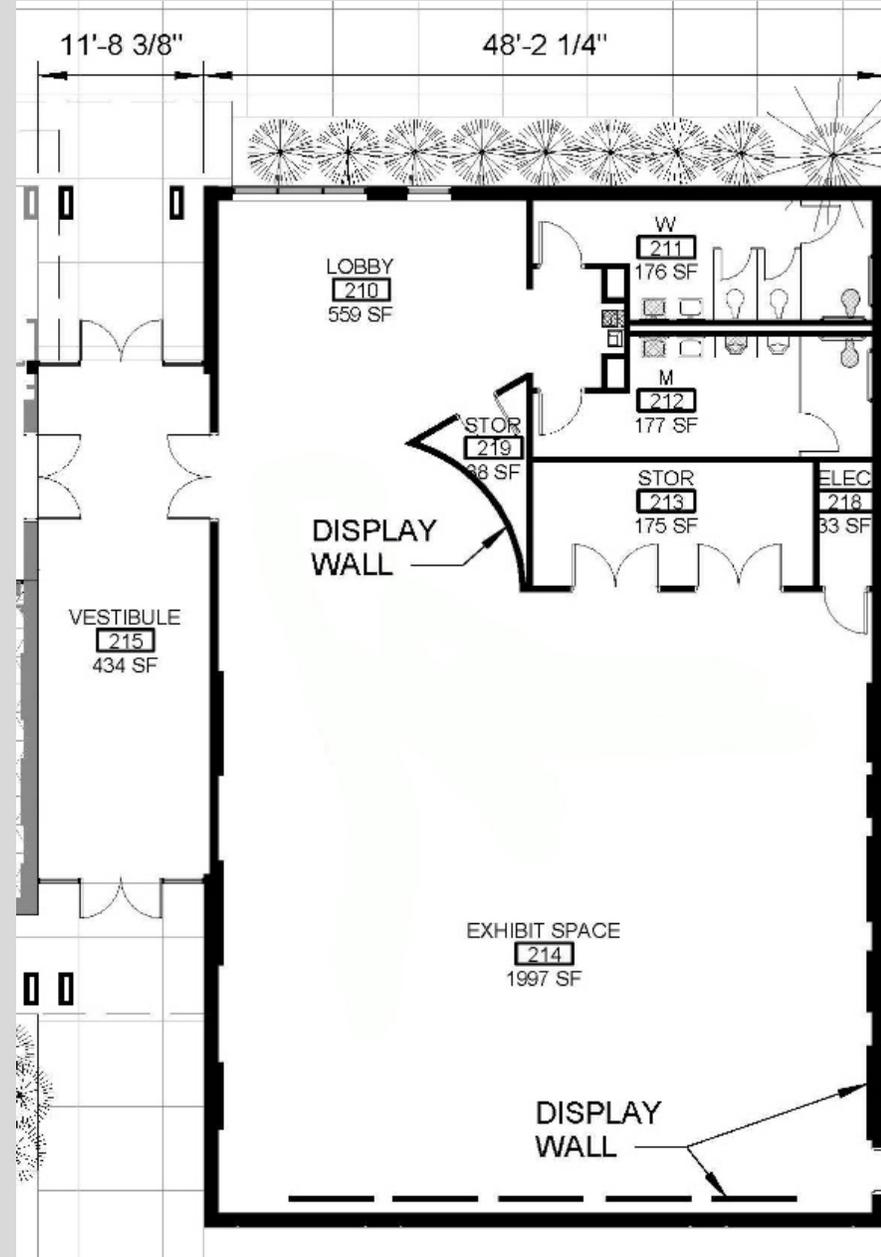
- Visitors will gain a better understanding and an appreciation for the role of ranching in the Coastal Bend, including the many different people who were involved in the development of the industry.
- Visitors will find that the museum encompasses an even greater representation of regional cultures and history.
- By participating in the hands-on components of the exhibits, visitors gain a better understanding of ranch work.

# Floor Plan

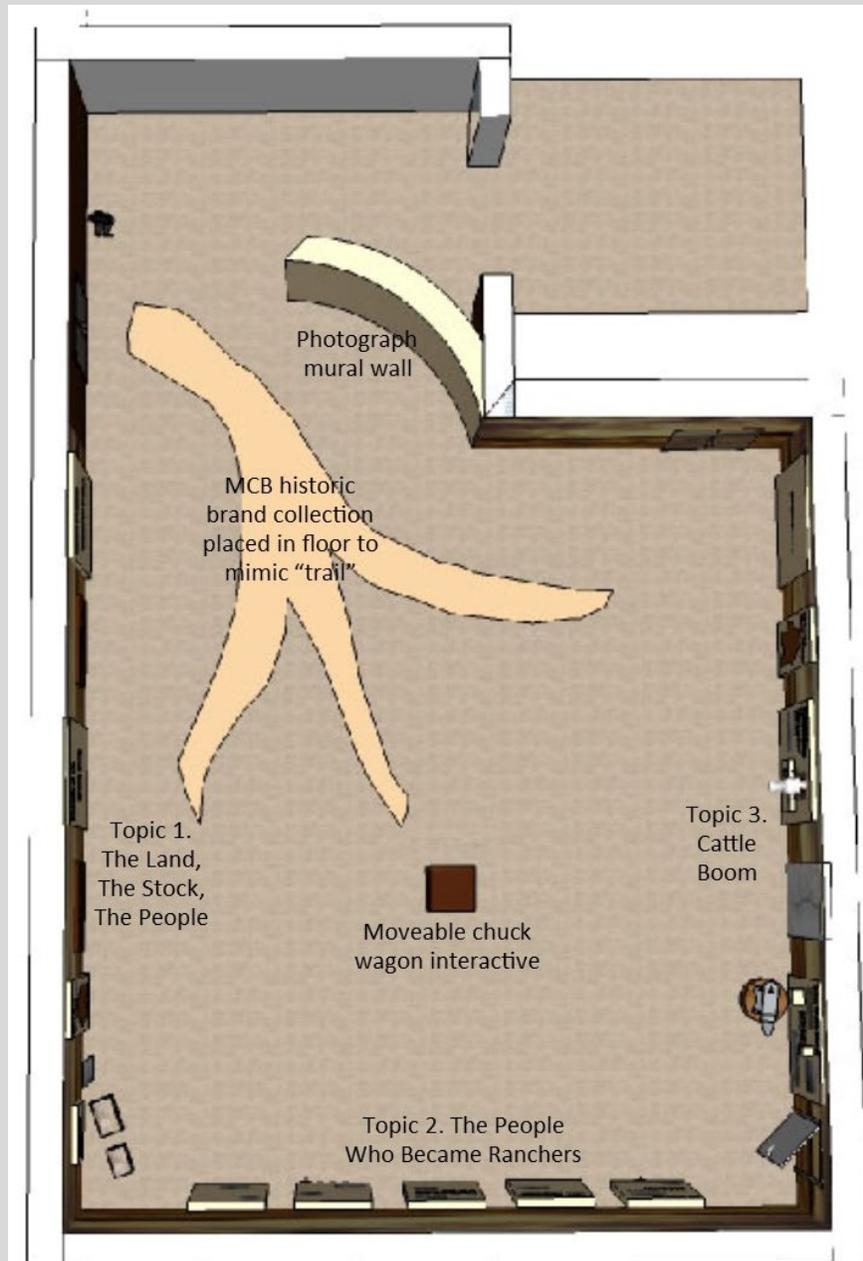


# Floor Plan

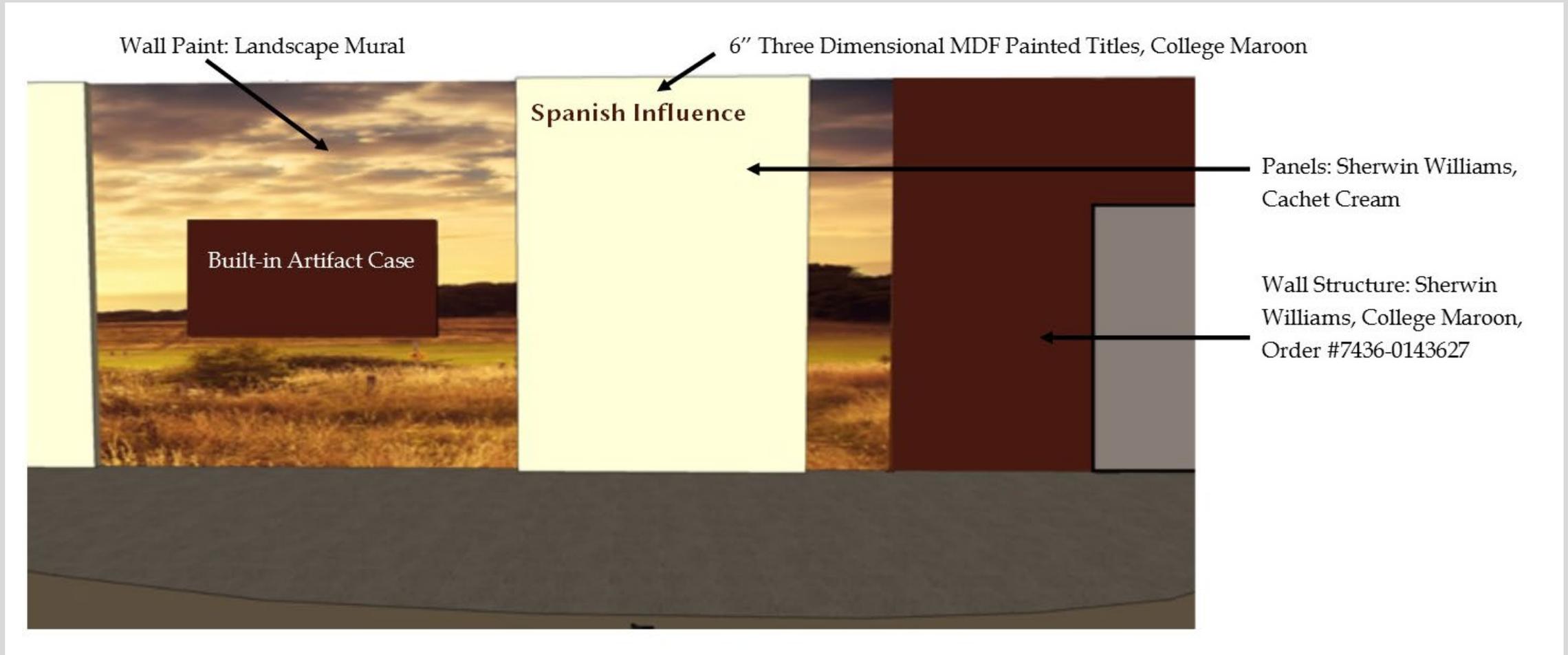
(Expansion Only)



# Topical Floor Plan



## Graphic Design



# Typography

Subject title: Linux Biolinum 250pt

# Title

Body text 1: Linden Hill 100pt

## Body Text

Body text 2: Linden Hill 75pt

## Body Text

Captions: Book Antigua 25pt

Captions

## A Changing Landscape

The ranching industry forever changed the landscape of the Coastal Bend with technologies that developed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

By the 1870s a huge change came to ranching in the Coastal Bend, as the open range system was replaced by individually owned land. This brought fences, water problems and a chance to improve cattle breeds.

The first fences in the Coastal Bend were wooden plank fences. Martin De Leon had built a wooden fence around some of his land in San Patricio as early as 1806. Later Tom O'Connor fenced some of his Refugio land. In 1858 Preston Rose enclosed his 10,000 acre ranch with a plank fence in order to facilitate efforts to improve his stock.

Barbed wire appeared in South Texas in the 1870s. The wire fences were inexpensive, easy to build and maintain. In 1875 Thomas O'Connor and the M. L. Stoner ranches began wire fencing, as did Dillard Fant in Goliad County. After the hurricane of 1886, everyone turned to wire fences.

Fences closed off access to natural water sources for some. In the Victoria area a number of ranchers (as well as the city of Victoria) tapped into artesian wells. Others topped wells with windmills. Soon almost every ranch (and even individual homes, small ranches and farms) had one or more windmills.



Once the barbed wire industry overcame rancher's fears that they would harm their cattle, the fencing of the Coastal Bend ranches occurred rapidly, and was a major factor in ending open range ranching, 1910, courtesy of the Photograph Collection at the VC/UHV Library.

# Exhibit Topics

Time period covered: 1721-1920

## 1. THE LAND, THE STOCK, THE PEOPLE

Ranching played a key part in the Coastal Bend's development and impacted the way people worked and saw themselves.

Topics:

- Agriculture
- Spanish missions
- Ranching culture
- Ranching families
- Cattle rustling
- Establishment of Victoria

Exhibit Features:

- Spurs, bits, and saddles
- Photographs of ranch activities
- Children's spurs
- Chuck box
- Cowboy hat
- Photographs of local ranching families
- Photographs of rodeos
- Period artifacts from Presidio La Bahía



## Exhibit Topics (continued)

### 2. THE PEOPLE WHO BECAME RANCHERS

Ranching affected a diverse group of people, both directly and indirectly.

Topics:

- Mexican colonists
- European immigrants
- Vaqueros
- African-Americans
- Mexican-Americans
- Women

Exhibit Features:

- Ladies chaps and spurs
- Vaquero spurs
- Oral histories/personal stories



## Exhibit Topics (continued)

### 3. CATTLE BOOM!

The ranching industry forever changed the landscape of the Coastal Bend with technologies that developed in the late 19th century. With the explosion of the cattle industry, other trades grew as well.

Topics:

- Chisolm Trail (cattle drives)
- Coastal Bend landscape and environment
- Tanning
- Blacksmith
- Meat Packing
- Leatherwork
- Breed improvement
- Barbed wire
- Railroads
- Continued significance of ranching industry
- Oil

Exhibit Features:

- Bianchi anvil
- Tibiletti leather
- Bianchi spurs
- Photographs of tanning process
- Taxidermy Brahman head
- Examples of different types of barbed wire
- Period artifacts from Chisolm Trail Heritage Museum and Market House Museum



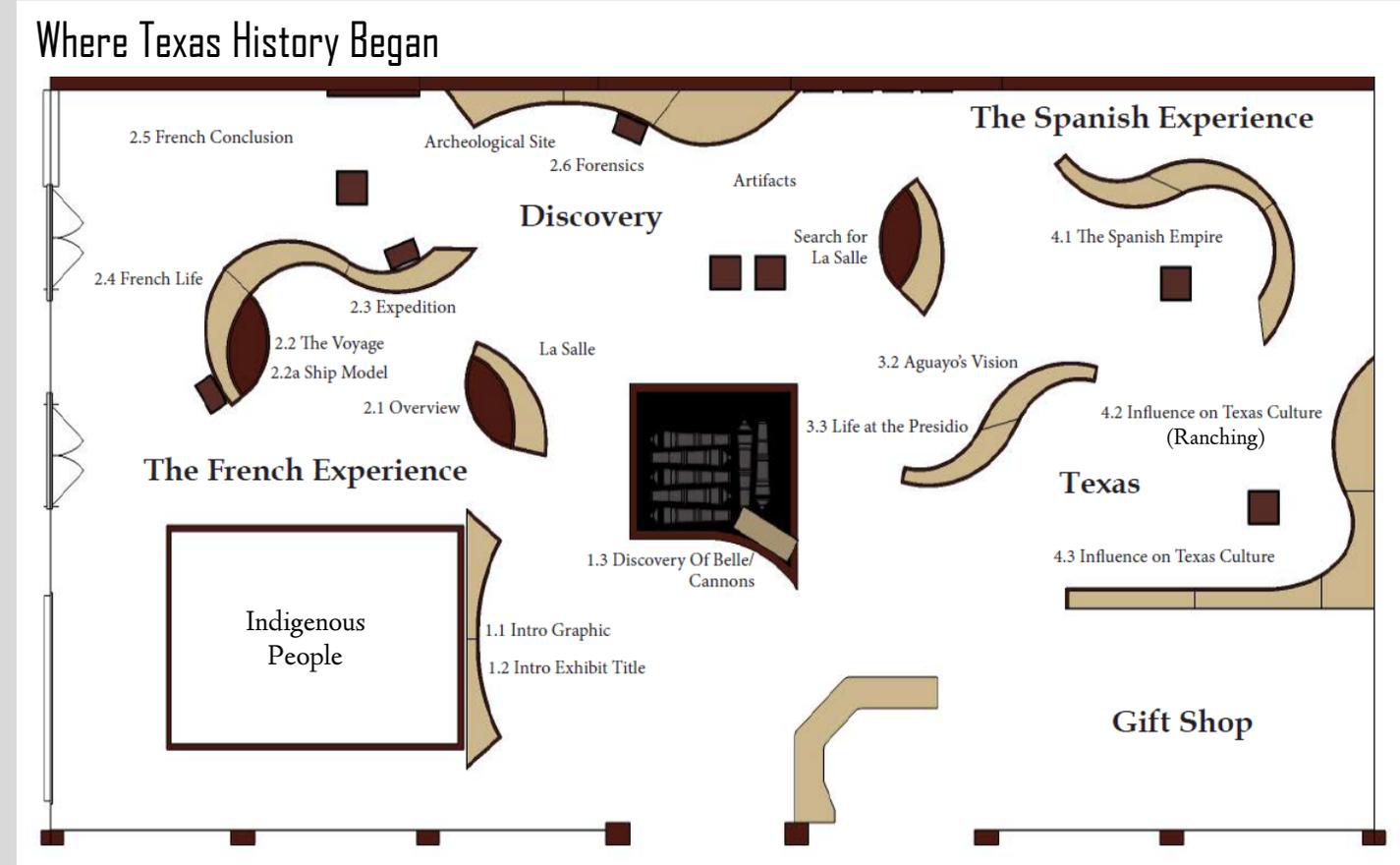
## Permanent Exhibit Changes

### Option 1

Information about ranching in *Where Texas History Began* will be moved to *Where Texas Ranching Began* and the space will be used to discuss the founding of Victoria. This exhibit would focus on Martin de Leon's involvement in establishing the city, while his ranching history will be discussed in the expansion.

### Option 2

Update and expand the indigenous peoples section of *Where Texas History Began* to include additional detail on the Karankawa and their Rockport Pottery production. In expanding the indigenous peoples section, the French and Spanish sections will be shifted to the previous Ranching area.



## Photo Credits

Slide 2 Courtesy of the Photograph Collection at the VC/UHV Library.

Slide 8 *Brains vs. Muscle*, photograph by J. D. Mitchell, Victoria County, March 19, 1913. Courtesy of Mary Sue Koontz Nelson.

Slide 9 Longhorn, 1907, courtesy of the Photograph Collection at the VC/UHV Library.

Slide 19 Cowboys handling cattle in the corral at Welder Ranch, 1910, courtesy of the Photograph Collection at the VC/UHV Library.

Slide 20 Courtesy of the Photograph Collection at the VC/UHV Library.

Slide 21 From left: Tijerina Family: Minnie De la Garza, Julian Tijerina, and Lupe De la Garza, 1920; Clarke Family, 1914; Frank Wasek Sr. and family celebrating the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, c.1870-1890; Courtesy of the Photograph Collection at the VC/UHV Library.

Slide 22 From left: The Bianchi Blacksmith Shop, courtesy of the Photograph Collection at the VC/UHV Library; Tibiletti saddle, courtesy of the Tibiletti Collection of the Photograph Collection at the VC/UHV Library.