

# History

Hood County News • Granbury, Texas  
Saturday, August 18, 2007

Melba Hoover, pictured among archives at Granbury Depot, is the great-great-granddaughter of Amon Bond, who came to Stockton Bend from Tennessee in the 1850s

# More than a depot

## History archives draw variety of researchers

by PETE KENDALL  
Staff Writer

**M**elba Hoover can speak authoritatively on the contents of archives at Granbury Depot.

She's combed them for information about her family. And been highly amused by what she's found.

"My grandfather (Clint Culberhouse) was very straight-laced, or so I thought," Hoover said. "I found an entry (in court records) that he'd been arrested for gambling.

"I called my oldest brother to tell him, and he died laughing. He said, 'You're not gonna believe what really happened.'

"Turns out, the family had all gone out to my great grandparents' place. My grandfather and three of his brothers-in-law decided to shoot craps under a chinaberry tree, using chinaberries for money.

"And the lady across the road saw it and had them arrested for gambling."

Look hard enough through the archives, and you're liable to find anything about anyone.

Besides court records, there are cemetery, school and tax documents galore, and deed notations are highly popular with oil and gas exploration companies.

"Hardly a week goes by that we don't have a mineral researcher," Hoover said. "They have to be able to prove that the minerals went with the land so far back. They tell us these records are nowhere else."

Searching Granbury Depot archives is free. Most of the oil and gas representatives leave a contribution in

the till on the way out the door.

"We like having their support," Hoover said.

Hoover is a longtime volunteer at Granbury Depot, which is operated by the Hood County Genealogical Society and Hood County Historical Society.

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She got in almost on the ground floor, in time to help save archives that someone, oddly, had ordered thrown away at the courthouse.

"We signed a (Granbury Depot sub-lease) with the city on Nov. 16, 1983,"

Hoover said. "We've had the archives since the '70s. All the books in our archives was being thrown out at the courthouse.

"People of Hood County saw what was happening and got the books and saved them."

Soon, the majority of those archives were donated to the genealogical society. Some of the archives then needed saving in a different way.

"They were in terrible condition," Hoover said. "They'd been in different places. People had stored them where they could.

"Some of them were moldy. My understanding is that they did not go to the library because of the mold. (Library officials) were afraid the mold would spread.

"We took a diluted bleach solution and went over the books page by page with a soft rag. This was in the early '80s.

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First stop for the archives was the depot waiting room. Renovation of the depot itself then commenced.

"Cotton seed and peanuts were all over the freight area, along with some big crawly things," Hoover said, chuckling. "When (Santa Fe) closed it down, they didn't sweep it out.

"Once we got this (freight) area renovated, we started moving the books from waiting area into the archives. Now we have them where they can be used, and they are used quite a bit.

"I think we have pretty much all of them indexed. We're still working on (Please see DEPOT, P. 2B)



Santa Fe doesn't stop here anymore, but this original sign (above) marked the progress of eastbound and westbound trains. At left, Granbury Depot archives were part of records at the Hood County Courthouse before being discarded in the 1970s.