

William A. Owens Centennial Celebration

November 9-12, 2005

Paris Junior College
and
Texas A&M University-Commerce

November 9, 2005-Program Texas A&M University-Commerce

Session One: *"Owens as Writer and Folklorist: Academic Perspectives"*.....**9:30 – Noon**
Bluebonnet Room - Memorial Student Center

John Mark Dempsey, Presiding
Texas A&M University-Commerce

"The Owens Papers at College Station"

Sylvia Grider

Texas A&M University at College Station

"Writing on Borrowed Land: William A. Owens and the Ethnography of Self"

Lyman Grant

Austin Community College

"Swing and Turn: Play Parties"

Francis Abernethy

Stephen F. Austin State University

"Owens on Stage"

John Hanners

Texas A&M University - Commerce

Lunch**On Your Own**
Lion's Lair – Memorial Student Center

Session Two: "Remembering Owens: Personal Observations" 1:00 -2:30 PM
Bluebonnett Room – Memorial Student Center

Bill McCarron: Presiding
Texas A&M University - Commerce

Francis Abernethy
Stephen F. Austin State University

Jack Duncan
Little Elm, Texas

Lyman Grant
Austin Community College

Sylvia Grider
Texas A & M University at College Station

Charles Linck
Texas A&M University - Commerce

Brenda Black White
Commerce, Texas

Session Three: "Listeners' Theatre" 3:00 – 4:00 PM
Studio Theatre – Performing Arts Center

Look to the River by William A. Owens,
Adapted for the stage by **John Hanners**
Directed by **Jim Tyler Anderson**
Texas A&M University-Commerce

Wine and Cheese 5:00 – 5:30 PM
Founders Lounge – Memorial Student Center

Dinner 6:00 – 8:00 PM
Heritage Room – Memorial Student Center

Welcoming remarks: **Keith McFarland**, President of Texas A & M University – Commerce

Bill McCarron: Introduction
Texas A & M University - Commerce

"Choppin' Cotton, Bill Owens and Me: A Texas Literary Tradition"
Don Graham
University of Texas at Austin

Note: The exhibit "Literary East Texas" will be on display during the Celebration and Dr. Charles Linck will have a table of Owens' books for sale at the MSC on Wednesday, November 9, 2005.

November 10, 2005-Program Paris Junior College

On-going Oral History Project **8:30 AM**
Mike Rheudasil Learning Center

Luncheon and Personal Reflections **Noon - 2:30PM**
Ballroom – PJC McLemore Student Center

Keynote Speaker: **Don Graham**
University of Texas at Austin

Panel: “Personal Reflections of Owens in Texas”

Performance of spirituals and folk song selections **2:30 – 3:00 PM**
Ballroom – PJC McLemore Student Center

“*Frontier Boy*,” a film based on the early life of **Dr. William A. Owens**..... **3:00 – 4:30 PM**
Ballroom – PJC McLemore Student Center

“*Tell Me a Story, Sing Me a Song*” a play based on one of **Dr.Owens’ books** .. **7:30 - 9:00 PM**
Ray E. Karrer Theater for the Performing Arts - Louis B. Williams Administration Building
(*Performance will be repeated on Friday and Saturday*)

November 11, 2005 Program Paris Junior College

Veteran’s Day (PJC Homecoming)

On-going Oral History Project **8:30AM**
Mike Rheudisal Learning Center

Traditional Veteran’s Day Program **9:00 AM**
DeShong Chapel and Flag Monument

Adjourn to Noyes Stadium..... **9:30 AM**

Ceremony..... **10:30 – 11:00 AM**
Noyes Stadium

Lunch **Noon – 1:30 PM**
Cafeteria - PJC McLemore Student

Book Review of Eye Deep in Hell by Dr. William A Owens.....2:00PM – 3:00 PM
Ballroom - McLemore Student Center

Play -“*Tell Me a Story, Sing Me a Song*”7:30PM – 9:30 PM
Ray E. Karrer Theater for the Performing Arts - Louis B. Williams Administration Building

November 12, 2005 Program

Play -“*Tell Me a Story, Sing Me a Song*”230 – 430 PM
Ray E. Karrer Theater for the Performing Arts - Louis B. Williams Administration Building

Baseball Game(s)6:00 PM
Hunt Center

Owens Centennial Celebration Committee

Dwight Chaney, Co-chair

James Conrad, Co-chair

Eric Gruver

John Hanners

Charles Linck

Holley Narramoore

Karen Roggenkamp

Derek Royal

Fred Tarpley

Richard Tuerk

Craig Wheeler

William A. Owens: A Literary Heritage

Born in 1905, in a small community approximately 15 miles northeast of Paris called Pin Hook, Owens is perhaps best remembered for his autobiographical account, *This Stubborn Soil*, which chronicles his growing up years as a poor farm boy. A Distinguished Alumnus of A & M – Commerce, Owens attended the sub-college of East Texas State Teachers College and earned a high school diploma and elementary teaching certificate. He then attended Paris Junior College, and in 1932, Owens completed studies at Southern Methodist University, earning a Bachelor of Arts degree. In '33, he graduated with a Master of Arts degree from SMU and in 1941 was awarded a Ph D degree from the State University of Iowa. His career in higher education included teaching at Wesley College in Greenville and at Texas A & M University, serving as director of Research in the Oral History project at the University of Texas at Austin, and holding a professorship at Columbia University in New York. A World War II veteran, Owens was a member of the U.S. Army's Counter Intelligence Corps. He was awarded the Legion of Merit for his service in the Philippines. Throughout his career, he wrote several books and numerous articles, most of them about Texas and Texas folklore. Three books were autobiographical about his northeast Texas background and professional life. In addition to *This Stubborn Soil*, Owens wrote *Walking on Borrowed Land* and *A Season of Weathering*. Also, among his books is *Black Mutiny: The Revolt of the Schooner Amistad*, detailing the anti-slavery case which John Q. Adams argued before the Supreme Court in 1841. Owens is also remembered as an engaging storyteller. During his career, he won several awards including those from the Texas Institute of Letters, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Southwest Library Association. Owens died in 1990, in Suffern, N.Y.