

## Fascinating and important artifacts central to Texas, Bullock Museum history

New book a treasury of significant artifacts from 15 years of exhibitions

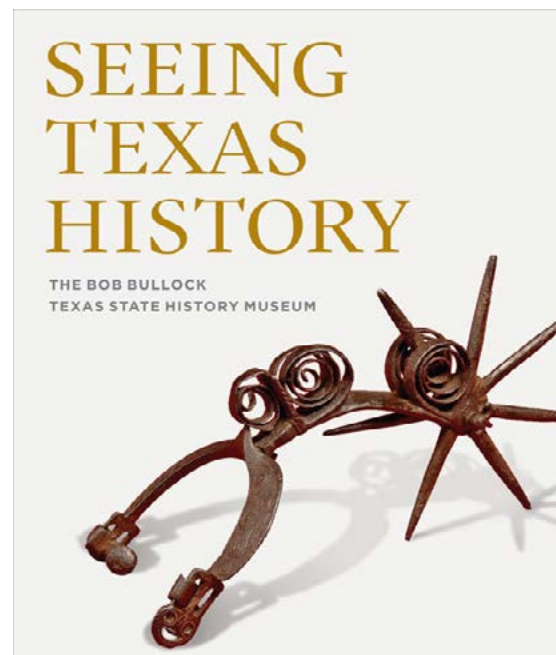
**NOVEMBER 14, 2016 (AUSTIN, TX)** — Since opening in 2001, the Bullock Museum has displayed some of the most important artifacts in Texas history. A book to be published this month, *Seeing Texas History: The Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum* (UT Press: 2016), shares a rich treasury of popular and significant artifacts from some of the 50-plus special exhibitions that have been on view at the official state history museum over the past 15 years. The artifacts in the collection range from Texas's quintessential founding documents to pop-culture items, works of art, and objects that show the state as a leader in science and technology.

"This book presents history as artifact, inviting readers to closely examine historical objects and consider how the past shapes the future," Dr. Victoria Ramirez, author and director of the museum, said. "Visitors to the Bullock Museum are invited to not only see artifacts but to participate in programs and see films that further explore Texas history."

Exhibitions featuring more than 500 original artifacts spanning 13,000 years and representing all eras, regions of the state, and genres have been on view at the museum since it opened in 2001.

The museum has collaborated with more than 700 museums, libraries, archives, and individuals to display original historical artifacts and produce exhibitions that illuminate and celebrate Texas history and culture.

The new book marks the Bullock Museum's 15th anniversary this year. Nearly 8 million visitors from around the state and all over the world have explored Texas history at the museum, which has experienced tremendous growth due to an increasingly robust schedule of exhibitions, artifact installations, films and education programs.



A new book published by UT Press contains beautiful photos and descriptions of significant artifacts spanning 13,000 years of Texas history. 'Seeing Texas History' also marks the 15th anniversary of the Bullock Museum, the state's official history museum, located in downtown Austin, Texas.

The book is one of the highlights of the Bullock Museum's 15th anniversary celebration, and creating it inspired a search for the most rare, compelling, beautiful, and noteworthy artifacts that were both local and international, and that demonstrated Texas' connections to the world, Ramirez said.

"One of my favorite artifacts is the 4,000-year-old child's sandal," she said. "It is beautifully crafted from yucca fibers. It's amazing the sandal was once utilitarian and used to protect the feet."

The original hull of the *La Belle*, explorer Robert La Salle's vessel that wrecked in Matagorda Bay on the Texas coast in 1689, is featured in the book. This pinnacle Texas artifact was rebuilt as part a live-action exhibition at the museum last year. Today, the hull and a selection of the 1.5 million artifacts excavated with the ship are on view alongside it in the main first-floor gallery. The museum is raising funds to further develop its first floor of exhibitions, which will offer an in-depth examination of the early history of the state.

"The artifacts from the French shipwreck *La Belle* are in amazing condition considering they spent more than 300 years under water," Ramirez said. "The cargo that was excavated includes everyday goods like shoes, cooking pots, and rings used for trade. The large number and variety of weapons provide insight into the motivation of the expedition, revealing that the French interest was not about building a colony, but controlling the rich natural resources of the region."

Well-known, high-profile Texans are represented in the book by such artifacts as the "Bowie" knife belonging to James Bowie, a violin reported to have been Davy Crockett's, spurs worn by Bill Pickett, and a saddle owned by Francisco "Pancho" Villa. Life-altering innovations, such as the prototype for the first integrated circuit and the first artificial heart used in a transplant operation, show Texas's impact on science and its connection to the world. The book also showcases artifacts in the book that place Texas at the center of American arts and culture. A Janis Joplin performance poster, Liberace's signature rhinestone jacket, and Stevie Ray Vaughan's Number One Stratocaster guitar, are examples of iconic pop-culture artifacts that have been on view at the museum.

"Of course, Stevie Ray Vaughan's guitar is a treasure and will be back on view at the Bullock Museum in the spring an exhibition dedicated to this Texas music legend," Ramirez said. "This book represents Texas history at its best and broadest, sharing and celebrating the events that shaped the state, but also the music, art, science, and technology that defines who we are as Texans."

*Seeing Texas History: The Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum* premiered at the Texas Book Festival earlier this month. The book retails for \$40 and is available in the Bullock Museum Store. For more information about the museum, visit [www.TheStoryofTexas.com](http://www.TheStoryofTexas.com) or call (512) 936-4649.

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**MEDIA Images and Assets:** <http://bit.ly/SeeingTexasHistory>

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Support for the Bullock Museum's exhibitions and education programs provided by the Texas State History Museum Foundation.

**ABOUT THE BULLOCK MUSEUM**

The Bullock Texas State History Museum includes three floors of exhibitions, IMAX® and 4D special-effects theaters, a café and museum store. The Museum collaborates with more than 700 museums, libraries, archives and individuals to display original historical artifacts and host exhibitions that illuminate and celebrate Texas history and culture. For more, visit [TheStoryofTexas.com](https://www.thestoryoftexas.com) or call (512) 936-8746.

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