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Separating fact from fiction in 'The Searchers' UT author to discuss new book that sheds light on the iconic American film

AUGUST 29, 2013 (AUSTIN, TX) – Author and University of Texas Professor Glenn Frankel will be the featured speaker for the Bullock Texas State History Museum's September High Noon Talk, *John Ford's Texas*. On Wednesday, September 4, 2013 at noon, Frankel will discuss his new book, *The Searchers: The Making of An American Legend*, which attempts to separate fact from fiction in Hollywood's telling of the story of Cynthia Ann Parker.

In 1836 in East Texas, nine-year-old Cynthia Ann Parker was kidnapped by Comanche Indians. She was raised by the tribe and eventually became the wife of a warrior. Twenty-four years after her capture, she was reclaimed by the U.S. cavalry and Texas Rangers and restored to her white family, to die in misery and obscurity.

Cynthia Ann's story has been told and re-told over generations and has become a foundational American tale. The myth gave rise to operas, one-act plays, and in the 1950s, to a novel by Alan LeMay, which would be adapted into one of Hollywood's most legendary films, *The Searchers*, directed by John Ford, starring John Wayne, and described as "The Biggest, Roughest, Toughest... and Most Beautiful Picture Ever Made!"

Beginning in Hollywood and then returning to the origins of the story, Frankel creates a rich and nuanced anatomy of a timeless film and a quintessentially American myth. The dominant story that has emerged departs dramatically from documented history.

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What makes John Ford's film so powerful, and so important, Frankel argues, is that it both upholds that myth and undermines it, baring the ambiguities surrounding race, sexuality, and violence in the settling of the West and the making of America.

About Frankel's book, the *Austin American-Statesman* said, "In vivid prose, the director of the University of Texas at Austin School of Journalism explains why his favorite film is important and a masterpiece. And he does so in the clear, economical style of a writer who's lived a life of deadlines in news capitals around the world...his passion is contagious."

Glenn Frankel, the new director of the UT School of Journalism and G.B. Dealey Regents Professor in Journalism, came to Austin after spending 33 years in the news business, most of them as a reporter, editor and foreign correspondent for the *Washington Post*, and four years as a visiting professor at Stanford University. He is the author of two books and winner of the Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting.

John Ford's Texas is part of the Bullock Museum's High Noon Talk lecture series held the first Wednesday of every month during the noon hour. High Noon Talks feature engaging conversations related to exhibits with special guests who reveal the interesting and often untold tales that shape the story of Texas. The lecture is free and open to the public. Books are available for purchase in the Museum Store. Please visit www.TheStoryofTexas.com or call (512) 936-8746 for more information.

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About the Bullock Museum

The Bullock Texas State History Museum in downtown Austin tells the unfolding story of the history, culture and people of Texas. One of the most popular attractions in Central Texas, the museum has welcomed over 5 million visitors since it opened in 2001. The museum and IMAX Theatre are located at 1800 N. Congress Avenue, between the State Capital complex and the University of Texas campus. For more, visit www.TheStoryofTexas.com or call (512) 936-8746.