

# THE JOURNAL

*The unofficial newsletter of Wilson County Historical Society*



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## Halloween

*by Anthony Delgado*

I'm sure we all have certain memories of Halloween. What memories do you have? I remember the smell. I still cannot pinpoint it. Maybe it was almost every house with fresh, carved pumpkins with burning candles in them? Or was it something else? Oh, and who started the tradition of carving pumpkins? And When How about some of the other things we associate with Halloween? Ghosts? Costumes? Tricks or treats? Did you know that the tradition of giving out mostly candy is a "recent" tradition? Check out some of the history of Halloween at this Library of Congress blog:  
<https://blogs.loc.gov/headlinesandheroes/2021/10/the-origins-of-halloween-traditions/>

# Wilson County Jailhouse Museum Grand Re-Opening

The Jailhouse Museum's Grand Re-Opening was held on Saturday, September 30th with more than 100 attending the opening ceremony. City and County officials attended the event as well as a group of former Wilson County Sheriffs' descendants.

The Wilson County Historical Society has been conducting a fundraiser to help raise funds for the jailhouse renovation by selling engraved brick pavers. The more than 130 pavers were installed where they graced and greeted the attendees at the entrance to the historic Jailhouse Museum.

All of the individuals involved with restoring the museum are to be commended for a job well done. The well-attended event could not have happened without the sweat, sore muscles, aching bones, and late nights by Tara and Ryan Lee, Doug Fehse and his crew members, Clarence Ehlers, Eileen and Steve Anderson, Viola Henke, Neila Hopkins, and the countless volunteers and donors who gave of themselves to make this day a reality.

The renovation efforts are not yet complete. So please continue to give so we can put a bow on this monumental project and call it done.

Picture by Hannah Dugi



# Guilty? Not Guilty?

By Nicki Stohr

While researching the life of Texas Ranger Royal Wade Lorenz of Stockdale I ran across the story of his murder and the trial of the shooter as reported in the 1930's Floresville Chronical Journal.

On the morning of February 12, 1930, just two days after Lorenz's 35th birthday, Lorenz was called to the home of R.W. Sells which is just outside the City of Stockdale. Mrs. Lorenz testified that her husband left that morning heading to the Sells property never to return alive. Deputy Sheriff Dionicio J. Acosta, also a former Texas Ranger was summons by telephone to investigate a shooting at the Sells property. Upon arrival Acosta found the body of fellow ranger Lorenz with two bullets in his chest and 2 bullets in his back.

Shooter Dr. C.W. Butler of Crocket, Texas surrendered at the scene of the crime and was taken into custody with no trouble. Dr. Butler was later released after posting \$15,000 bond and entering his plea of not guilty because "all shots fired were in self-defense when Lorenze made a move as though he was drawing a weapon."

Testimony from witnesses and family friends reported that Lorenz was showing improper attention toward Mrs. Butler for several years. In sworn statements "Mr. Lorenz and Mrs. Butler met casually one or two times about two or three years ago; again, when they met up at a store in Kosciusko and for a third time along the Stockdale-San Antonio Road." Dr. Butler and Mrs. Maude Sells Butler had been married 12 years at the time of the shooting.

This court case attracted state-wide attention because of the parties involved. Lorenz being a former Texas Ranger under the famous Capt. Will Wright and later a deputy sheriff of Wilson County. Dr. Butler at the time was the Medical Superintendent of the State Prison.

As the story plays out in court, Mrs. Butler telephoned Lorenz just before breakfast on the morning of February 12th. Mrs. Butler's brother Sam Sells was witness to the shooting. Sells was outside trying to control the dogs when he saw Dr. Butler meet Lorenz at his car as Lorenz drove up to the house. Words were exchanged and Dr. Butler casually walked back into the house only to return with a pistol. Mr. Sells, testimony continued as he stated that "Lorenz was backing away with a 45 pistol in his right hand and his arms were raised when Butler started firing."

Acosta testified in open court he was telephoned from the Sells home that there had been a shooting and he arrived one to one and a half hours later. At this time Lorenz's body was found face up with the four bullets in his body. Lorenz's pistol was cocked and had not been fired. Dr. Butler's gun was missing 6 bullets.

There was a total of over 250 witnesses subpoenaed with 150 individuals of this group from the Crockett or Houston area as character witnesses for Dr. Butler. A jury pool of 150 men were summoned. In the end the jury comprised of all Wilson County farmers.

On November 13, 1930, at 3:30 pm the case was turned over to the jury for a decision. Judge W. O. Murray in his charging of the jury made this statement, "If the jury finds Dr. Butler fired in self-defense the verdict must be not guilty. However, if the jury finds that Dr. Butler sought a meeting for the purpose of killing, the self-defense claim does not hold." At 7:40 pm that same day the court resumed for the verdict.

The verdict was read by District Clerk N. R. de la Zerda to a perfectly silent room, "We the jury find the defendant not guilty."

So, I ask you if you were a member of this 1930's jury panel would you vote guilty or not guilty?

### Sources

- R. W. Lorenz of Stockdale Killed Wednesday AM: Body Found Near R.S. Sells Home 18 Miles East of Here. Dr. C. W. Butler of Crockett Being Held. Floresville Chronicle Journal, February 14, 1930.
- Dr. C.W. Butler Granted Bail in Slaying Charge. Floresville Chronicle Journal, February 21, 1930.
- Grand Jury Adjourned Wednesday: Return Forty-One Bills: Butler Murder Case Set for Trial Tuesday, May 6th. Floresville Chronicle Journal, April 18, 1930.
- Butler Murder Case Continued Until November Term of Court: Illness of Defendant in Houston Hospital Causes Preponement. Courtroom Crowded at Opening Trial. Many Out of Town Witnesses Present: Case Set for Trial by Judge Murray for November 10th. Floresville Chronicle Journal, May 9, 1930.
- Butler Murder Case Goes to Trial Here Monday Morning: Crockett Physician is Charged with the Killing of R.W. Lorenz of Stockdale on February 12, 1930. Selection of Jury Completed Wednesday Afternoon. Examining of Witnesses Began Yesterday. Floresville Chronicle Journal, November 14, 1930.
- Verdict of Not Guilty Rendered in Butler Murder Trial Here: Judge Frees State Medical Supervisor After Four and Half Hour Session. One of Most Bitterly Contested Trials in History of Local Court. Floresville Chronicle Journal, November 21, 1930.

# November Opry

Come listen and dance to some Live Classic Country Music!  
First Thursday of every month!

## Floresville Opry

Thursday,  
Nov. 2, 2023

Wilson County Expo and Community Center  
435 Hwy 97 E, Floresville | 6 - 9:15 pm ~ Doors open @ 5 pm

### Court of Nature's Elements



GRAND MARCH

General Admission  
**\$15**

Reserved Table  
(Seats 8)  
**\$100**

Bring your own  
adult beverages!

Set-ups & soft drinks  
available.

**TURKEY & DRESSING  
DINNER AVAILABLE — \$10**  
by Malcher's Catering



Wyatt  
**ALEMAN**

### Floresville Opry House Band

Roger Edgington, Fred Michalczak,  
Gary Trial, John Schattenberg, Viola Henke, Producer,  
Sally Carlson, Alan Kolby, Terrell O'Neal,  
Nell Baeten, Emcee, and Mark Odem, Sound

SILENT AUCTION | CONCESSIONS  
DOOR PRIZES | DESSERTS

Benefit for  
**Wilson County Historical Society**

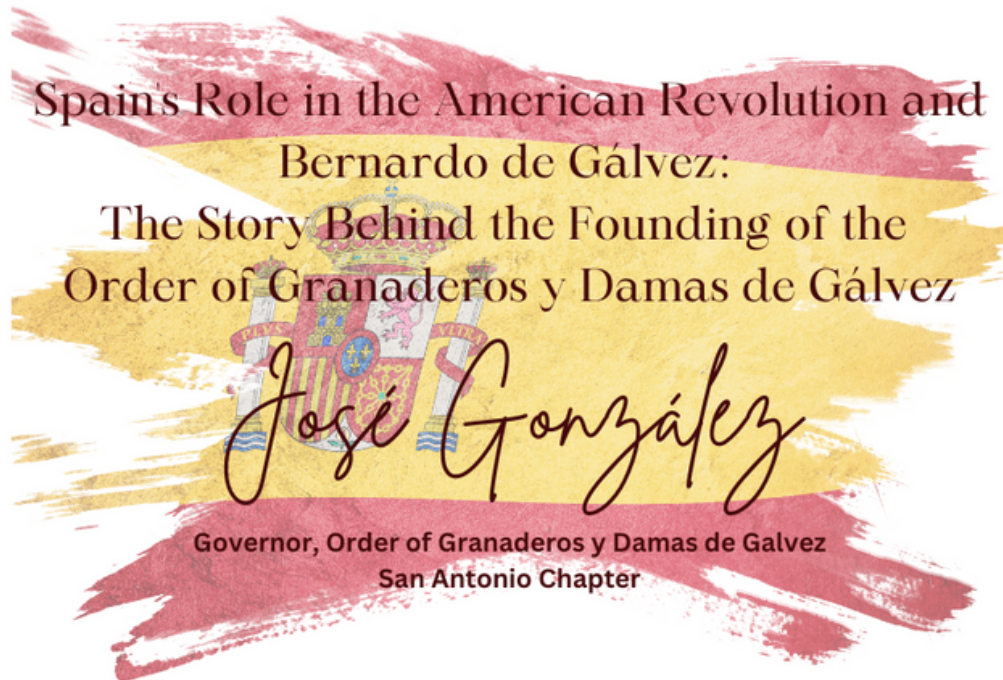
For info., or to reserve a table,  
call Viola (830) 391-1062

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# OCTOBER'S MEETING PROGRAM



José (Joe) L. González, AFSC, MEd, is a native El Pasoan who relocated to San Antonio in 2003. He earned a BA in History ('70) and, while working as an El Paso County law enforcement officer, he earned his Masters of Education ('74), both from the University of Texas at El Paso. He has been involved in education at the high school, community college and university levels--the last two as an adjunct instructor--and retired as a high school administrator in San Antonio in 2013. A living historian & reenactor for over 25 years, he has interpreted U.S. Civil War, Indian Wars, and Spanish Colonial Eras. He is trained and certified as an artillerist as well as a living history docent at both the Alamo and Goliad State Park's Mission Espíritu Santo.

He is a past member & officer of several historical organizations, and in September 2017 he & his wife joined the ranks of the San Antonio Founding Chapter of the Order of Granaderos y Damas de Gálvez. He has served as the Chair of the Education Committee, and as the Chapter's Chaplain, the very persona he portrays while in period attire at events featuring the chapter's uniformed Granaderos, Militiamen, and Fife & Drum Corps. In January of 2023 he assumed the duties of Governor of the San Antonio Chapter. When not busy with his grandkids and their numerous activities, his retirement days are focused on church ministries, living history commitments, reading, researching, and writing. In 2022, he self-published a compilation of articles into a book titled "The Sons of St. Francis y Las Misiones Franciscanas en Nueva España," which he hopes to enhance with new articles for publication as a revised edition.

Be sure to check out our Website and "like" our Facebook page



<https://www.wilsoncountyhistory.org>



[facebook.com/wilsoncountyhistoricalsociety](https://facebook.com/wilsoncountyhistoricalsociety)

Have you visited the Wilson County Clerk's Official Records Site?



Email us to enter your name into a special drawing. The winner will be announced at our next meeting.



# Floresville Opry Lineup

## *Floresville Opry with Dancing*

<i>Nov. 2, 2023</i>	<i>Wyatt Aleman</i>
<i>Dec. 7, 2023</i>	<i>Mike Hughes</i>
<i>Jan. 4, 2024</i>	<i>Sean O'Brien</i>
<i>Feb. 1, 2024</i>	<i>Justin Trevino</i>
<i>Mar. 7, 2024</i>	<i>Tony Booth</i>
<i>Apr. 4, 2024</i>	<i>Billy Mata</i>
<i>May 2, 2024</i>	<i>Randy Carson</i>
<i>Jun. 6, 2024</i>	<i>Jody Jenkins</i>

## *Floresville Opry House Band*

*Wilson County Expo & Community Center*

*435 St Hwy 97 East out of Floresville, Texas*

*Doors Open @ 5:00 pm—music 6:00-9:15 pm*

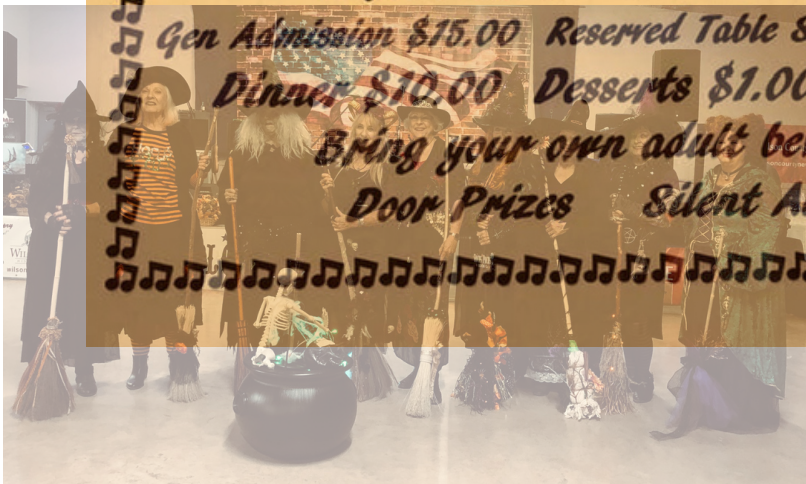
*Info: Viola Henke 830-391-1062*

*Gen Admission \$15.00 Reserved Table Seats (8) \$100.00*

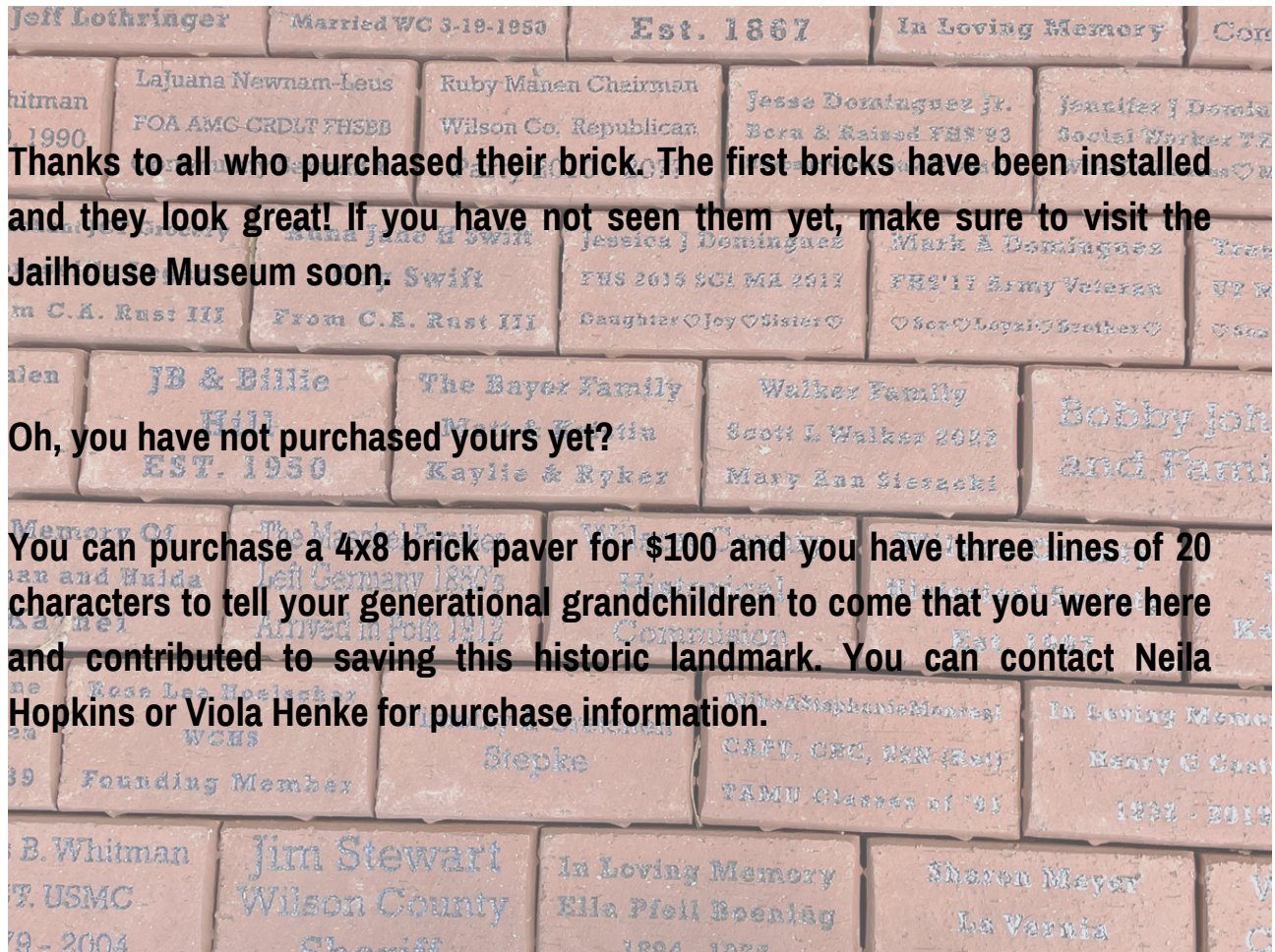
*Dinner \$10.00 Desserts \$1.00 Concessions*

*Bring your own adult beverages.*

*Door Prizes Silent Auction*







Submit your newsletter articles not later than the 5th of each month. Please send them via email to [info@wilsoncountyhistory.org](mailto:info@wilsoncountyhistory.org) in MS-Word format. If sending pictures, please send them separate from the article and provide description of the picture(s). When taken, the location, and name of persons, if applicable, in the picture.