

ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHT

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Handcrafted in wood

Texas Furniture showcases 19th-century life

Let's face it, we take furniture for granted. We sit, sleep, and stretch on it and store clothes, linens, and food in it without giving a thought to the craftsmanship that went into making it. We might treasure a piece or two of antique furniture passed down to us, but the majority of our furniture was made in a factory and much of it can be assembled with an Allen wrench. The newest special exhibit at the Bullock Museum will take you back to the days when furniture was a handcrafted work of art.

Texas Furniture From the Ima Hogg Winedale Collection showcases the most significant collection of 19th-century Texas furniture ever assembled. Before the rise of imported factory-made furniture in the 1880s, most Texans bought home furnishings from their local cabinetmaker. These skilled craftsmen, many of them immigrants from Germany or the American South,

used locally available and imported woods to build beds, wardrobes, desks, tables, chairs, cupboards, and sofas that would stand the test of time. The 36 furniture pieces on display at the Bullock reflect the history and culture of those times, the isolation of the state, and the changes wrought by the coming of the railroads.

The exhibit is a partnership with the Briscoe Center for American History and is curated by Lonny Taylor, co-author of the recently updated and expanded two-volume edition, *Texas Furniture* (University of Texas Press). On a recent walk through the gallery, Taylor commented on the pie safe featured here. "Every house had one of these in their kitchen or on their back porch. The pierced holes in the tin were most likely done by a tinsmith and were meant to provide ventilation while keeping bugs and other insects away from the food that was stored on the top three shelves. Pies and meats were usually stored in these."

**Pie safe, ca. 1880**

Courtesy Briscoe Center
for American History,
The University of Texas at Austin

Texas Furniture is on display in the Herzstein Hall of Special Exhibition from July 13, 2013 to October 6, 2013.

DID YOU KNOW?

All but one of the furniture pieces in the exhibit are from the Winedale Collection housed near Round Top, Texas. Winedale is a complex of 19th-century structures situated on 225 acres in northern Fayette County. You can learn more about Winedale here: www.cah.utexas.edu/museums/winedale.php



**BULLOCK
TEXAS
STATE HISTORY
MUSEUM**

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