The Lewis-Wagner House was showing much wear and damage from Hurricane Carla when Hazel Ledbetter purchased it from the Wagner family in 1961. Mrs. Ledbetter removed some outbuildings but left the house largely untouched until she showed it to her friend Ima Hogg in 1963. Captivated by the decorative paintings of Rudolph Melchior on the walls and ceiling of the upper room of the house, Miss Hogg decided to buy and restore the building with the initial thought of relocating the house to Bayou Bend. When that proved impossible, she set out to restore the old house on the site as a showplace for the 19th-century Texas and Pennsylvania German crafts she had been collecting. The restoration project was directed first by Houston architect John Young, then by University of Texas restoration architect Wayne Bell, who served as Winedale’s director for thirty years.

As Miss Ima worked with the University, her vision for Winedale evolved into that of a fully conceived museum and conference center to promote the study of the ethnic heritage and cultural history of the area. In 1964, she offered the Winedale property, and an endowment for its support, to the University of Texas. Formal dedication ceremonies were held at Winedale in April 1967, when the spring flowers were in bloom. Among the speakers at the dedication was Charles van Ravenssway, director of Winterthur, the famous museum of decorative arts in Delaware.

“The buildings left to us by earlier generations, which we once took so easily for granted, note command our affection and respect. . . . We know that the real value of these structures doesn’t come just from their age, their size, or their elegance, but rather from what these buildings mean; their significance in terms of human experience.” —Charles van Ravenssway at Winedale dedication

IMA HOGG WAS A renowned philanthropist and collector well before she discovered Winedale. The Hogg family’s long devotion to public service and its strong ties to the University of Texas led Miss Hogg to donate the Winedale property to her alma mater. As she worked with the University to restore the property, Ima Hogg’s vision for Winedale evolved from its being simply a place to showcase her collections to Winedale as a fully conceived outdoor museum and historical center. The University received the Winedale property in formal ceremonies in 1967.

Round Top citizens, scholars, and the University of Texas all sang the praises of Miss Ima Hogg for her dedication and generosity. Winedale curator Lornni Taylor acknowledged her contributions to the book Texas Furniture, which he co-authored, and the University and friends feted Miss Ima with sparklers at Winedale in 1972 on her 90th birthday.