

A View Through History
With Kyle Schiller Barrett

Garden Club Has 64 Years of History, Contributions in Cameron

Upon entering the city limits of Cameron, visitors and locals alike are greeted by one of three signs which read, "Welcome To Cameron, Established 1846." These signs are located as follows: one on State Highway 36 & US Highway 190 traveling east into the city; one on US Highway 77 coming south into our hamlet; and the third is in Cameron City Park at the corner of east 4th and Milam Streets. At ground level, each of these brick-and-mortar structures features a rectangular flowerbox, which is filled with plants and shrubs to make our city inviting to all who enter. These three signs are maintained by a group that has been beautifying the Milam County Seat for many years. This group is Cameron's own Fleur-de-Lis Garden Club. This club has a rich outstanding history of service to the community, which spans the last sixth-four years.

The Fleur-de-Lis Garden Club began serving our area in 1960 with twenty-four Charter Members. The group's main purpose was promoting flower arranging and horticultural education in Cameron. This group chose its name for the French term "fleur-de-lis" or "flower of Iris" or "flower of lily" because their club flower is the Iris. The club's colors are purple and white, with its theme or motto being "Plant, Grow, and Show!"

Today, the Garden Club stays active, by not only keeping the "Welcome to Cameron" signs looking nice, but they also promote beautification in the City of Cameron by selecting a "Yard of the Month." This distinction is given to a homeowner or business that displays a well-kept lawn or garden area with many plants and flowers. The club will furnish these places with a yard sign to let everyone know that this is a "showplace" in our community. Perhaps you have seen photos in the Cameron Herald that depict this long-running Garden Club tradition.

Each Spring, the ladies in the Fleur-de-Lis Garden Club award a college scholarship to a well-deserving graduating senior at C. H. Yoe High School in Cameron. They have been doing this for many years. At the Old Milam County Jail Museum, Garden Club members have helped to clear out weeds and began planting new flowers and bushes in the beds surrounding the 1895 structure. This project was headed up by current Garden Club Vice-President Patsy Miller and former club officer Doris Van Noord. For many years on Arbor Day each April, this group has planted trees and plants in our downtown area, at the public library, at the Cameron VFW Post, and in our city parks. The huge magnolia tree on the Milam County Courthouse lawn was once a sapling planted by the Fleur-de-Lis members and it now shades the historic Veterans' Memorial.

In 1961, Mrs. Edna Fuchs served as District V Governor of Texas Garden Clubs Inc. She had been active in Garden Clubs for 10 years prior and she played an active role in starting and promoting the newly formed Fleur-de-Lis Club. Today the club is still a member of the Texas Garden Clubs Inc. which is headquartered in Fort Worth. Fleur-de-Lis is a member

of District V and holds eight meetings each year. Each Spring the group plans a Pilgrimage for its members to travel to various flower and garden related venues. With Mrs. Helen Fuchs serving as the club's first president beginning in 1960, the organization held their first flower show in 1961. This type of fundraiser is no longer part of the club's agenda. However, they are now offering a beautiful new fundraiser in which everyone in our community can participate.

The Fleur-de-Lis Garden Club members are selling raffle tickets to raise money for their organization's many projects. A beautiful "Butterfly Quilt" is the prize that one lucky winner will take home if their name is drawn December 10th. Garden Club President, Marie Christopher said, "The raffle tickets, for a chance to win the quilt, are \$5.00 each or 5 tickets for \$20.00 and must be purchased from a Garden Club member." Buying a ticket for this fundraiser is your way of helping the Fleur-de-Lis Garden Club continue their decades-long work and worthy projects in Cameron and Milam County.

The quilt is currently on display at the Milam County Historical Museum in downtown Cameron. Longtime Fleur-de-Lis club member, Mrs. Carolyn Cobb said, "The butterfly pattern quilt was made by three quilters: Brenda Dean, Kim Erwin, and myself." She also acknowledged the assistance and loan of quilting equipment from Marilyn White. According to club members, the quilt will remain at the Milam County Historical Museum where you can see it on display. Contact any Garden Club Member to purchase tickets for a chance at winning a beautiful quilt that is sure to become a family heirloom.

The county's museum proudly has many quilts on display that relate to the people and history of Milam County. To visit come by 112 W. First Street in Cameron. The museum hours are Wednesday-Saturday 10am-3pm. The Old Milam County Jail, Transportation Exhibit, and Sneed Log Cabin are open for tours on Saturday 10am-3pm, or by contacting the museum staff for a tour on weekdays. Next door, the Milam County Railroad Museum and Old Town Cameron Display is open Wednesday-Saturday 10am-4pm. Admission is free; donations are accepted. All our museums are closed on Sundays.