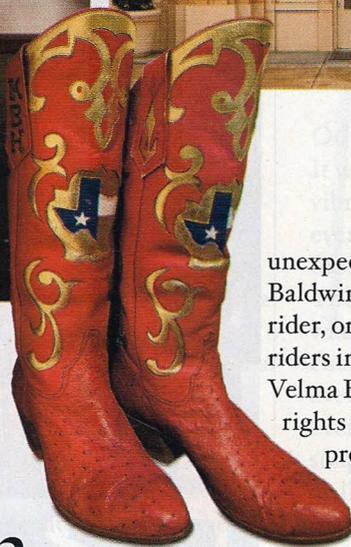


Exhibits tell the cowgirl story in a brick building opened in 2002 in Fort Worth's Cultural District.



Only in Texas: The National Cowgirl Museum

Gallop to this **fascinating tribute** to Western women. BY ALISON MILLER

Think all cowgirls ride horses and wear boots? Not so, according to the National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame in Fort Worth.

"Not all cowgirls are rodeo performers," explains executive director Patricia Riley. "Performers and ranch women are respectfully represented here, but they're only part of it."

Surprising names in the Hall of Fame include Native American guide Sacagawea, the only woman on the

Lewis and Clark Expedition; artist Georgia O'Keeffe, whose paintings are the touchstones of Southwestern art; and livestock advocate Temple Grandin, whose life story recently became an Emmy-winning movie.

Cowgirls are honored in five categories: champions and competitive performers, ranchers, entertainers, artists and writers, and trailblazers and pioneers. Annie Oakley is there. So is Dale Evans, wife and stage partner of TV cowboy-songwriter Roy Rogers. The museum also honors

unexpected inductees like Tillie Baldwin, a hairstylist-turned-trick-rider, one of the best female bronc riders in the history of the sport. And Velma B. Johnston, a lifelong animal rights activist who lobbied for the protection of wild horses on public land. Also Clara Brown, freed from slavery at age 57, who traveled from Virginia to Colorado in a covered wagon to set up her own homestead.

All 199 inductees—and the 500 or so women actively under consideration—share a common thread: independence, an adventurous spirit, and kinship with the land. What better place to pay tribute to these women than Fort Worth? According to Patricia, it's a perfect fit. "Not only does the National Cowgirl Museum have to be in Texas," she says, "but it has to be in Fort Worth—a city that pays great tribute to both its cultural institutions and its Western heritage." *

NATIONAL COWGIRL MUSEUM AND HALL OF FAME: cowgirl.net or 817/336-4475