## CITY EXPLORER Changes ahead for Bonnie & Clyde Ambush Museum

**By John Andrew Prime** jprime@gannett.com

Changes forced by time loom for the Bonnie & Clyde Ambush Museum in Gibsland.

Opened in the former cafe where outlaw Bonnie Parker ordered the sandwich she was eating when gunned down with boyfriend Clyde Barrow just miles away in 1934, the iconic museum has just seen staffing and ownership changes, and will have some display changes by the time it marks its first decade in June.

Long-time manager L.J. "Boots" Hinton had to retire within the last two weeks due to medical issues, says new owner Perry Carver.

'Boots has always been a good friend to me, has given me a lot of information and let me see some things here most people don't get to see and enlightened me on some other things about the (Bonnie and Clyde) story," says Carv-er, a longtime Bonnie and Clyde buff from Atlanta.

"Boots means a lot to me and he was worried what was going to happen to the museum. I did it basically for him, so the museum would be taken care of. That, and I love the story, the whole history of the story."

## **IF YOU GO**

What: Bonnie & Clyde Ambush Museum, 2419 Main St, Gibsland. Hours: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. **Cost:** \$7 for adults with discounts for seniors, military and children. Info: (318) 843-1934.

The museum commemorates the outlaw couple who carved a path of terror through the heartland of the nation from early 1932 until May 23, 1934, when the select group of lawmen from Texas and Louisiana ambushed the couple on a lonely road in Bienville Parish.

Hundreds of rifle slugs and shotgun pellets ripped through the couple and their Ford sedan, killing them and propelling them into the public mind as a doomed, lovestruck Robin Hoodmeets-Romeo and Juliet pairing.

Its collection features the movie car from the 1967 Warner Brothers film "Bonnie and Clyde," starring Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway, though it now is on indefinite loan to the National Crime Museum in Washington.

Carver, a self-described "trust baby and entrepreneur," just brought several truck-



The Bonnie & Clyde Outlaw Museum in Gibsland.

loads of his own memorabilia and outlaw duo collectibles to add to the Ambush Museum. His interest stems from a day he sat in the actual ambush death car in an Atlanta-area mall in 1970 when he was 9.

"Of course I didn't know who they were then, it was just a shotup car, but it really intrigued me," he said. "I was with my grandmother who was at a beauty parlor and saw me sitting there. It totally freaked her out.'

A few weeks later, he bought a magazine that told the entire story of Bonnie and Clyde, and he was hooked.

"It just grew from there," he said. "I had



COURTESY PHOTO A display at the Bonnie & Clvde Ambush Museum in Gibsland.

mv own museum in Atlanta, it was in my house. I brought all my stuff here to add to the displays. My intention is to fit some wax figures

here in the back. They'll be lying on a slab just like they were when they brought them out of the car. After all, it's the Ambush Museum. I can't get the original car. The guv who owns it wanted \$4 million! I figure I can get wax figures cheaper than that."

The collection also includes film footage taken immediately following the actual ambush, weapons seized from the death car and an extensive exhibit of rare photographs.

Friend Ted Prince, the new museum manager, misses Hinton's presence as well. Hinton, born the same year the couple was ambushed. is the son of former Dallas

deputy sheriff Ted Hinton, who was the last of the original ambush lawmen to die, in 1977.

"Boots was one of the first people I met when I started coming to the (Bonnie and Clyde) festival in 2000, Prince said. "We've become good friends over the years."

Prince shared some of the changes taking place.

'We're going to completely revamp our gift shop," he said. "We're in the process of doing that right now."

Carver plans to move to Northwest Louisiana to be hands-on with the museum, and is looking for a house in either Minden or Arcadia.

Recent wet weather revealed leakage in the building housing the museum. He just owns the museum, not the building, so he hopes to negotiate a fix. If not, he might move it to Arcadia, which after all has a connection with the ambush.

While Gibsland is where the couple bought their last meal, "Arcadia is where they took the bodies after the ambush," he said. "I really don't want to move it. but Arcadia has been flattering me for about a year to do so. I'm thinking about it. I'm afraid some things might get ruined if we don't do something about (the leakage) soon."







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