

November 29, 2017

## Meet Jill Campbell Jordan of Texas Lakes Trail Region



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Today we'd like to introduce you to Jill Campbell Jordan.

**Thanks for sharing your story with us Jill. So, let's start at the beginning and we can move on from there.**

I am a Fort Worth native and a fifth-generation Texan. Growing up I spent a lot of time in Coryell County with my grandparents, enjoying the country. It instilled in me the love for the land and the people who work it and call it home. I can still remember the smell of the dark rich soil as I sat beside my grandfather on his tractor as he plowed. The land is still in our family today as it has been since 1874.

Leaving the city never crossed my mind, visiting my ancestral home was good enough for me. That all changed one day when I met a West Texas cowboy who swept me off my feet. He couldn't leave his precious land, it was in his blood. I am always up for an adventure so, off I went to be a rancher's wife and the mother of a boy with his feet in both worlds. We have a piece of Texas that we call Fish Camp. I love this land and the memories we are making here. If you saw me trying to navigate my way around the Fish Camp you would laugh out loud.

I have made just about every mistake a city girl could but, I love every minute of it! I have taken up fishing and I get so excited every time I reel in a catch. Life in the country isn't for the faint of heart. One's life can change at the whim of mother nature or because of an injury. Out here people pull together when times are tough just like they have done for generations.

In 2005 I became the executive director of the Texas Lakes Trail Region. It covers 31 counties in North Central Texas and is anchored by the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. Our mission is to promote and preserve the unique heritage, cultural, natural, and leisure resources of the communities that we serve. We help heritage travelers get out to see where the stories of Texas took place, which results in a positive economic impact across the region. Working with cities large and small to form partnerships to promote each other is one of the hallmarks of our program. Luckily for us, the cities that make up the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex are willing partners. Cities of every size reap benefits when visitors come to visit museums and historic sites, stay in hotels, go shopping and dine in local eateries.

There are 10 Heritage Trails regions that cover every county in the state. Each region has its own non-profit 501c3 designation and their own scope of work. We all fall under the umbrella of the Texas Historical Commission and receive grant funding, training, and promotional support from them.

### **Has it been a smooth road?**

The last two years have been tough for the Heritage Trails. Although the Lakes Trail has a variety of revenue streams, the financial foundation of the program has been provided by funding through the Texas Historical Commission. In 2015, the 84th Legislature did not allocate any funds for this program; operating costs were slashed and austerity measures were taken. Thanks to an enormous amount of grassroots support, the Heritage Trails Program was included in the state's budget during the last legislative session. We are back up to speed and looking forward for the coming years.

### **We'd love to hear more about your business.**

When we lost our state funding, it pushed us to think out of the box. So, we partnered with 4 other Heritage Trails Regions to develop a magazine that celebrates the Lone Star State and that would sustain heritage tourism. In other words, a for-profit magazine. Authentic Texas was created to help fund our non-profit organizations! Since spring of 2016 Authentic Texas has filled the gap showcasing the genuine people, places and product that makes the Texas experience unique. We cover stories from across the state that benefits urban and rural Texas. It is such a labor of love knowing that I am making a difference in people's lives and learning more about the people that call Texas home.

The Texas Lakes Trail Region is known for a traveling exhibit based on the lives of Cynthia Ann and Quanah Parker. This photographic exhibit is designed so that it can travel to the smallest community or a major university. Our plan was to have a quality exhibit that all could display regardless of their operating budget. The exhibit increases visitation to sites everywhere it goes and creates an economic impact in the community. That is just what we want, people having access to history.

I am proud of the relationships that we have fostered between unlikely partners. We serve as a conduit between museums, attractions, cities, Chambers of Commerce, Convention and Visitor Bureaus, historic sites, and historical organizations. When we all work together everybody wins.

## Is our city a good place to do what you do?

There are many people that have helped me along the way, too numerous to call by name except for one. There is one person that has always been by my side, a creative force to be reckoned with, Doug Harman, former executive director of the Fort Worth Convention and Visitors Bureau. His love for Texas history and the passion for sharing goes unmatched. He is my mentor and dear friend. I would be remiss if I didn't at least list a few of the folks that always have my back.

- The Texas Historical Commission
- My fellow Trail Directors
- Our advocates from across the state
- The City of Granbury

## Pricing:

- Authentic Texas Magazine Subscription – \$15 a year
- To borrow the Cynthia Ann & Quanah Parker Exhibit for 8 weeks – \$300 plus shipping

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