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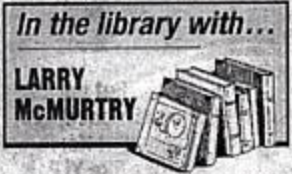
# A Lone Star stash

By MICHAEL GILTZ

In the town of Archer City, Texas, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Larry McMurtry is just as well known for the books he buys as for the books he writes.

The talent behind best-selling classics like "Lonesome Dove," "Terms of Endearment" and "The Last Picture Show," McMurtry has graduated from a minor bookstore owner in Washington, D.C., to a full-fledged book mogul.

In the process, the



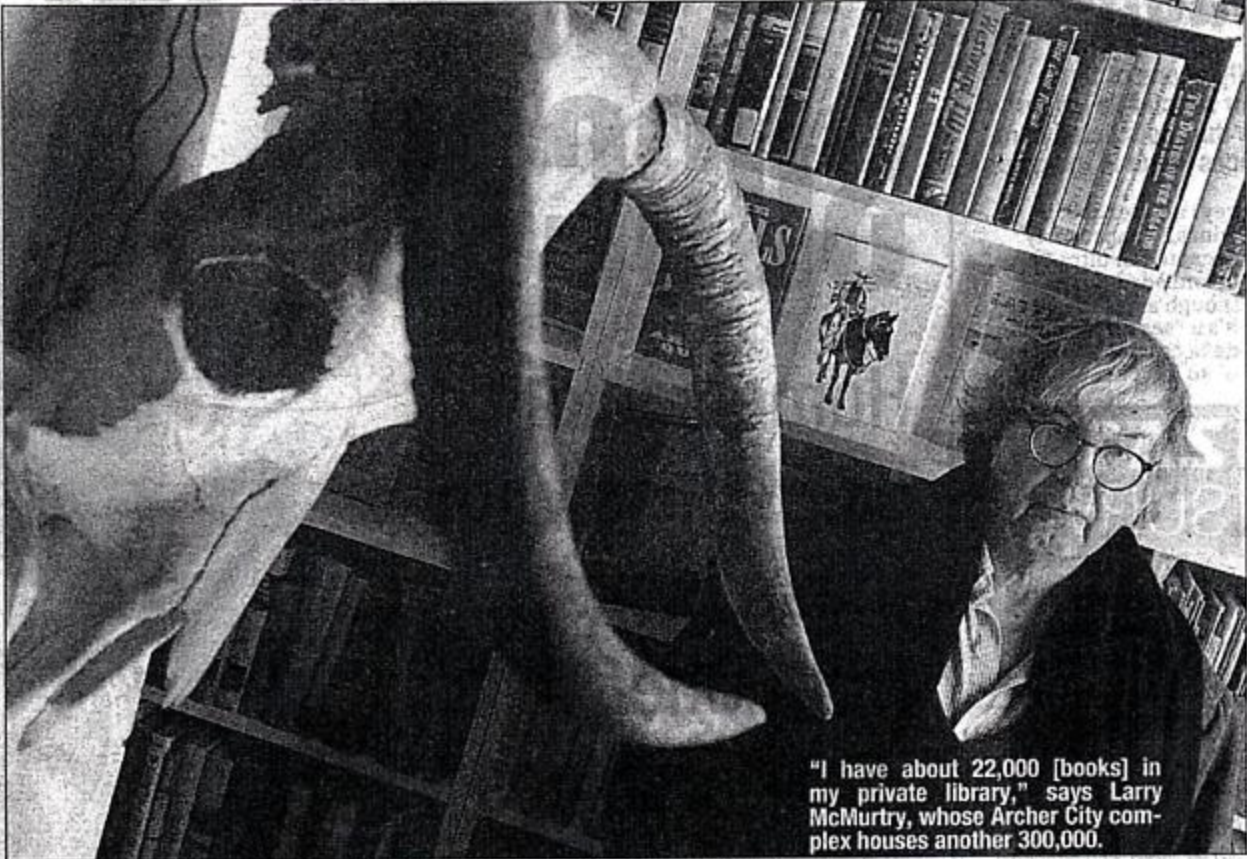
65-year-old has transformed his hometown from a sleepy little outpost into a book-lover's paradise. McMurtry purchased most of the main buildings in Archer City and turned them into huge annexes housing some 300,000 volumes.

An increasing number of book-loving tourists spend days there on vacation to comb through it all.

The latest book to be added to the stockpile might very well be McMurtry's own "Sacagawea's Nickname" (New York Review of Books, \$19.95), a fine collection of essays about the West and some of its unsung literary treasures, such as Janet Lewis (the author of "The Wife of Martin Guerre") and the journals of Lewis and Clark.

So who better than McMurtry to discuss some of the titles in his personal collection?

A town of books is sweet revenge for a man who once wrote that his childhood was spent in a book-



"I have about 22,000 [books] in my private library," says Larry McMurtry, whose Archer City complex houses another 300,000.

less home in a bookless town and who can still remember the first stash of novels he received. (It was a box of 19 books handed to McMurtry by a cousin leaving to fight in World War II.)

Now he owns quite a few more.

"I have about 22,000 in my private library, which is not owned by the bookstore," said McMurtry, who is married to writer Diana Ossana (they've co-authored some books) and is the father of musician James McMurtry.

"I inherited this house from the town. I grew up about a block from it. It's the house of an oilman who made a lot of money in the '20s. It's a big old prairie-style house. It's not fancy, but it's spacious.

"The house out back was the servants' quarters. I had some carpenters make it into a two-story library. I still have lots more room. Since I live here, I'm determined to have all the books I need here. And I do; I rarely have to go to the library." His choices?

"Don Quixote" by Miguel de Cervantes: "That's the first adult book I ever read. I was 12 or 13. It was in the school library. (My parents would probably never have given me a book as a gift.) I don't remember it being hard at all. I might have read a version that was abridged or slightly modernized, but I might not have. I can't remember which edition I read because there were so many. But I didn't have any trouble with it."

"A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush" by Eric Newby: "He's terrific. 'A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush' and the Ganges book are both very good travel books. I tend to read the great travel books a little more often. I have 5,000 travel books in my library, so it's comprehensive. I have a huge number on Central Asia, Africa, the deserts of the world, and the Amazon. They tend to be grouped by the places I'm interested in."

"In Search of Lost Time" by Marcel Proust: "I've read Proust three times. I need to let a little longer gap go before I read it once more. I probably won't read Proust again for 10 or 15 years, assuming I last that long. The last time I read it was a little rushed. I wasn't

ready for it again. It's a great book about a vanished world and it's a world that interests me. I don't read much new stuff. Mostly biographies, diaries, and political history having to do with the First and Second World War."

"A Time of Gifts" by Patrick Leigh Fermor: "Another travel book. It's an old man's book about a young man's journey. In the '30s, he walked across from the hoof of Holland to Istanbul. It's actually three books, the last of which hasn't been published yet. I'm rereading the first one, which takes him through Germany as it was in about '34 or something like that. I'm interested in that period of Europe, but [I'm rereading it] largely for the sheer pleasure of it."

Joe Schifano/TVAP