The impact of the return of the horse to North America is explored in "Splendor on the Range: American Indians and the Horse" at the Witte Museum.

**Transformative horses**

Witte exhibit shows what they meant to American Indians

By Deborah Martin

The horse’s first go-round on this continent did not end well.

“It became extinct probably 10,000 to 12,000 years ago,” said Bruce Shackelford, South Texas Heritage Curator for the Witte Museum. “They were a prey creature, so they were eaten. They were probably eaten by humans and animals.”

Things have gone much better since the Spanish brought the horse back to these shores in the 16th century. The transformative power of the animal’s return on the lives of native people is explored in “Splendor on the Range: American Indians and the Horse,” an exhibit Shackelford curated for the museum.

As the exhibit explains, the horse’s arrival in North America aboard the Spaniards’ ships did not immedi-

A diorama captures the return of the horse to North America courtesy of the Spanish conquistadors.