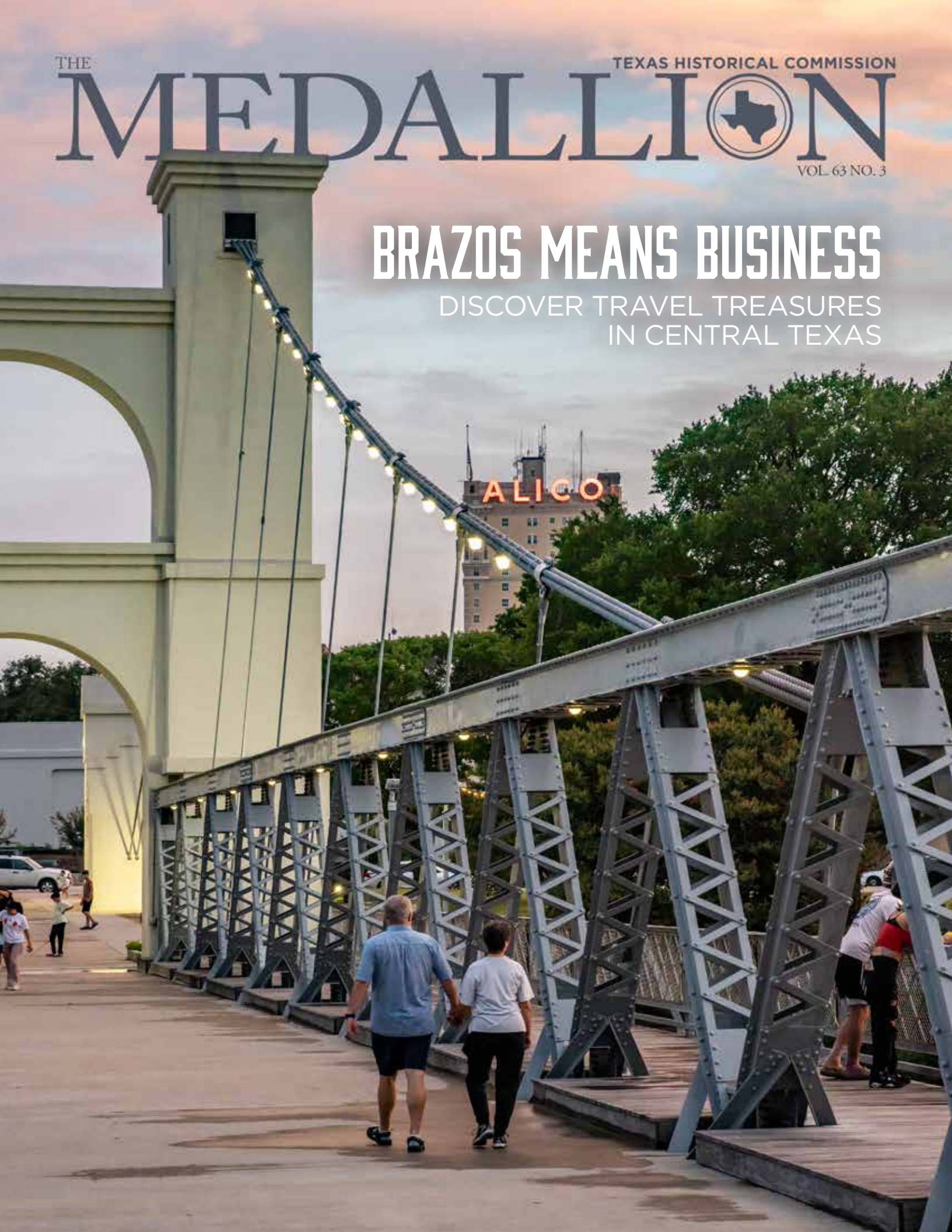
THE MEDALLION
TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
VOL. 63 NO. 3

BRAZOS MEANS BUSINESS

DISCOVER TRAVEL TREASURES IN CENTRAL TEXAS



THE MEDALLION
TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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OUR MISSION

To protect and preserve the state's historic and prehistoric resources for the use, education, enjoyment, and economic benefit of present and future generations.

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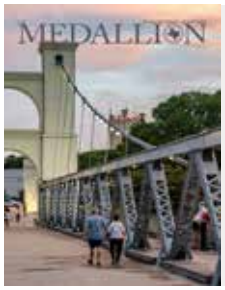


ON THE COVER
The Waco Suspension bridge spanning the Brazos River dates to 1870.

ANGELIA ORR
TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, DISTRICT 13

FRIENDS,

Throughout Texas, significant architectural landmarks and historic sites preserve our sense of place, keeping alive the memory of the individuals and milestones that helped develop our great state. In House District 13, we are privileged to serve as guardians for several important chapters of that narrative.

In Limestone County, Texas Historical Commission (THC) partners Preservation Texas and the Texas Historical Foundation are restoring the original Trinity University's marvelous 19th-century buildings to create a preservation learning center. I hope you'll visit Tehuacana on October 10 for the first annual College Hill Festival, a free event to explore the historic campus and learn about the future Preservation Texas Institute.

Among other prominent treasures is the Bosque County Courthouse in Meridian. This magnificent 1886 Gothic Revival building stands as an architectural wonder, reflecting the early ambitions of Central Texas settlers. Its restoration and continued protection through the THC's Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program provide visitors with a sense of enduring civic pride.

The THC's Confederate Reunion Grounds State Historic Site, also in Limestone County, illustrates how preservation can bring community history alive, while initiatives like the Texas Main Street Program strengthen commercial downtown districts across the region. With heritage travel activity in cities like Hillsboro and Clifton, this program fosters public-private collaboration to revitalize historic town centers while keeping each unique local identity intact.

My district also includes Waco, another Main Street city, and many Texas Treasure Business Award recipients, featured in the pages of this issue of The Medallion.

These programs underscore a broader devotion assuring that our shared legacy is never lost. By investing in landmarks and historic resources, we reinforce our founding principles as we build toward the future.

I encourage all Texans to explore the vital preservation efforts happening in our backyard and to experience these destinations firsthand.

Sincerely,

Angelia Orr
Texas House of Representatives, District 13

THC HONORS NEW NATIONAL REGISTER ENTRIES

Several historic districts and properties in all corners of the state were recently commemorated for being listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Sour Lake's Downtown Historic District, located approximately 20 miles west of Beaumont, was noted for its 14 buildings dating from 1903 to 1966. The early 20th-century oil boom and a railroad connection to nearby Beaumont helped make downtown Sour Lake a commercial hub in the early to mid-20th century.

The district is visually anchored by the Carpenter Building. Built in 1903 for First National Bank, it is the first brick building in Sour Lake and the oldest building in the district. It was also the only major building to survive a devastating downtown fire in 1904.

Also recently listed is Houston's Commerce Street Warehouse Historic District, established along Houston's primary commercial thoroughfare in the shadow of Buffalo Bayou. The district physically documents Houston's transformation from a coastal community of barely 20,000 people into one of the nation's largest industrial and distribution hubs, and the most populated city in Texas.

The district provides a showcase of Houston's warehouse construction technology in the early 20th century, illustrating an evolution from traditional brick load-bearing walls with heavy timber frames to innovative reinforced concrete construction with large industrial windows. Though much of the larger warehouse district has been demolished due to highway construction and urban redevelopment, seven buildings remain as the last intact remnant of Houston's historic railyard and shipping district.

Another recent listing is Marathon's South Side Historic District in Brewster County. Established in 1886 along the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio Railway in remote Far West Texas, Marathon emerged as a critical supply center for surrounding ranches and mining operations. The town's fortunes rose dramatically between 1900 and 1910, when discovery of guayule plants (a natural source of rubber) and candelilla shrubs (used for wax) transformed Marathon into a booming industrial town.

The first guayule rubber factory in the United States (established around 1905), employed an estimated 250 men and 70 teams of burros at its peak in 1910. A candelilla processing facility began operations around the same time. The rapid influx of workers and their families drove the town's population from an estimated 110 residents in 1896 to 700 by 1900 and to over 2,000 by 1910.

The large number of remaining adobe homes is a remarkable example of earthen brick construction, used well into the mid-20th century, long after concrete masonry had replaced adobe throughout most of Texas. The modest adobe dwellings, with their consistent orientation and density, document the lives of railroad workers, factory laborers, ranch hands, and their families—many recent arrivals from Mexico who came seeking opportunity during the town's industrial boom.

Learn more:
512-463-5853
thc.texas.gov/nrhp

NORWEGIAN SETTLEMENT STEWARDS RECEIVE TEXAS LANDS PLAQUE

The THC awarded Thomas Mannes and his wife Eldbjorg Djoenne-Stuve a Historic Texas Lands Plaque, recognizing their commitment to preserving the Colwick-Peerson Farm in Bosque County. The farm is tied to significant figures in the history of Norwegian immigration to Texas.

The May 26 recognition was the culmination of more than a decade of research, excavation, and collaboration between the Mannes family and THC staff and partners.

Mannes, originally from Norway, purchased the property in 2012, drawn by his belief that the land held a direct connection to Cleng Peerson—widely regarded as the key figure of Norwegian immigration to Texas. Clifton and the surrounding area of Bosque County are well known for their Norwegian heritage, reflected in the region's distinctive architecture and cultural traditions. Mannes was convinced the property contained the final residence of Peerson, who died in 1865. In 2015, the site was nominated and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

"Thomas and Eldbjorg didn't simply allow research to take place on their property—they made it possible," said Brad Jones, state archeologist and THC Archeology Division director. "Their willingness to open this land to a decade of careful investigation has given us a richer understanding of Norwegian settlement in Texas."

The Historic Texas Lands Plaque program recognizes private landowners who have taken concrete steps to preserve significant archeological sites on their property. Since 2001, the THC has awarded 40 plaques to landowners throughout the state.

Learn more:
512-463-6096
archeology@thc.texas.gov

BRAZOS MEANS BUSINESS

TRAVEL TREASURES AWAIT DISCOVERY IN CENTRAL TEXAS

By Andy Rhodes
Managing Editor, The Medallion

The premise of the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) Texas Treasure Business Awards (TTBA) is pretty profound in its simplicity: honor a historic company that's still part of our everyday lives. Instead of a town founder's home, 19th century battle, or former congregation site, the distinction commemorates currently operating (and at least 50-year-old) grocery stores, hair salons, restaurants, and other local businesses, ideally helping them endure another half-century and beyond.

"What I love about this program is that it's a reminder that historic preservation doesn't have to happen in hindsight," says Ana Alicia Acosta, TTBA coordinator. "The past as we know it depends on what we preserve today. So, by acknowledging local businesses while they're still in operation, we honor them as places of living history."

Acosta adds that having officially recognized historic businesses raises a city's profile as a heritage travel destination. This, in turn, can boost economic benefits and support future preservation efforts within communities.

Since 2005, nearly 800 Texas businesses have been honored as TTBAs for their historic significance. Here, we highlight a few examples where travelers can make memories in the Texas Brazos Trail Region.

THE HISTORIC CHICKEN

After moseying through the famous saloon-style swing doors of the Dixie Chicken in College Station, it's evident this is a true Texas treasure. But how is it already historic?

The bar and restaurant opened in 1974, making it eligible for a TTBA. Still, the stories about Robert Earl Keen and Lyle Lovett don't belong in the same classification as historical figures like Stephen F. Austin and Davy Crockett.

According to Tina Duncan, the Dixie Chicken's marketing representative, Don Anz and Don Ganter initially

invested $7,000 to turn the former Aggie Den pool hall into what is now the oldest and most famous bar in the city. Taking the name from a Little Feat album, the Dons drew from the mid-70s Southern rock scene to create a honky-tonk style destination.

"They were inspired by Robert Earl and Lyle, who used to play music on a small back porch here," Duncan says. "And from what I understand, the reason they played on the back porch at first is they weren't that good."

She adds, "I'm still kind of trying to wrap my mind around something from '74 being historic, but that's the way things get preserved—making sure they're protected and that everybody knows about it."

Although the Dixie Chicken is surrounded by upscale high-rise student residences outside its walls, inside it still feels like 1974. And the tradition-minded Texas A&M community packs its dark wood-lined rooms from lunch until last call.

Many of them search the restaurant's tables for their carved initials—some dating back decades. Others drop by a glass enclosure to say howdy to

Sneaky Snake or start a marathon session of dominos. Don't be surprised to find some students dumping a collection of beer bottle caps in the adjacent alley, layered several inches thick with hundreds of thousands of tops. And despite the establishment's name, diners won't find any chicken on the menu—its time-honored grill exclusively produces some of the best burgers in this part of Texas.

Reflecting on the Dixie Chicken's recent TTBA designation, Duncan says, "We hope to be around for another 50 years because now we're in the books. We're here to keep this gem alive."

AGGIELAND ACTIVITY

While experiencing Aggieland traditions in College Station, be sure to stop by a few campus-area cultural attractions.

The highest-profile destination is the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum. Dedicated to America's 41st president, the museum is a welcomingly nonpartisan destination that immerses visitors in Bush's family background and cultural context during his years as Vice President and President (1981–1993).

The museum boasts 66 million pages of archives and 66,000 artifacts, including knick-knacks from various political campaigns, luxurious gifts from foreign dignitaries, and a replica of the Oval Office for visitor photo-ops.

But why did Bush choose Texas A&M for his museum site when he didn't attend the university?

According to museum representative Danny Stribling, Bush frequently attended sporting events, provided guest lectures, and spoke at graduation ceremonies. In the process, he developed a strong relationship with the university since the community aligned with so many of his personal beliefs.

"It was a pretty natural fit," Stribling says. "He realized he shared the core values here. It's the Aggie spirit—that's what he enjoyed."

Just down the road in Bryan is Martin's Place, a legendary barbecue joint and TTBA recipient. Housed in a tidy brick building since 1925, Martin's earned a THC historical marker in 2005. Diners can sit at its distinctive horseshoe-shaped counter to enjoy the third-generation pitmasters' classic Texas brisket with a side of German potatoes.

THE CASTILLOS' CASA

On the northern edge of the Brazos Trail Region is Waco, home to nearly a dozen TTBAs. Four of them are Mexican restaurants—Casa de Castillo, El Conquistador, La Fiesta, and Trujillo's. The last three date to the 1960s, but Casa de Castillo proudly claims a 104-year history.

On a recent summer afternoon, siblings Mary Lou, Richard, and Tony Castillo gathered around a table in a cozy room at Casa de Castillo, their restaurant in southern Waco. The homey atmosphere was enhanced by the three family members' easy laughter and shared stories. The Castillos' deep roots in the community demonstrate why Casa de Castillo received the TTBA.

The restaurant traces its origins to 1922, when the trio's grandfather, Antonio Castillo Sr., opened the Texas Cafe in downtown Waco (the name later changed to Aztec Cafe). By the 1950s, a family member from Chicago introduced Italian dishes to the menu after customers from the northern U.S. asked for a particularly exotic item.

"They wanted something called pizza. No one had heard of a pizza," Tony says with a smile. "It went over so big they had to change the name to the Italian Village. But they still served all the Mexican food. It was kind of funny going to the Italian Village to eat enchiladas."

Most of the customers continued ordering the enchiladas, the restaurant's signature dish. The plate's accompanying chili recipe is the same one their grandfather used when he opened the restaurant in 1922 Although the Italian Village eventually gave way to Casa de Castillo in 1981, the family keeps a nod to that era with its popular chili mac dish (spaghetti).

One of the main reasons the restaurant has endured and thrived over the past several decades is Mary Lou's energy and dedication.

Her highest-profile customer was President George W. Bush, who frequented the restaurant in the early 2000s while staying at his ranch in nearby Crawford. She enjoyed bantering with Bush, who appreciated her direct style of humor.

"One time he was like, 'Hey sister!' I said, 'What's up, Pres?' He goes, 'Can I talk to you for a minute?' I'm like, 'Oh my God, I'm busy. There are actually other people in here besides you,'" she says with a laugh. "He goes, 'You're the only one who's never asked to take a picture with me.'"

She then gladly posed for a photo with the president.

It's easy to see why the Castillos have managed to keep their restaurant in business, with their shared stories of beloved past employees and generations of devoted customers.

"I've put a great-grandmother, grandmother, mother, and their children all in highchairs from the time I was nine," Richard says.

Regarding their pride in receiving the TTBA and continued success, Tony says. "My dad always told us not to change anything—keep your head down. Just take care of your own business, and it'll take care of you."

WHILE IN WACO

For the past decade, travelers have been flocking to downtown Waco for the Magnolia experience, centering around historic silos on two full blocks dedicated to the nationally celebrated lifestyle brand from homegrown tastemakers Chip and Joanna Gaines. Beyond the popular home decor market, visitors can explore a row of six curated boutique shops, a bakery and vintage coffee company, and a massive green lawn lined with local food trucks.

The enormous influx of Magnolia visitors has made a big impact on the local economy and adjacent heritage travel destinations like the Dr Pepper Museum. According to Joy Summar-Smith, the museum's deputy director and a Brazos Trail Region board member, visitation has increased dramatically during this time, from 65,000 to 300,000 a year.

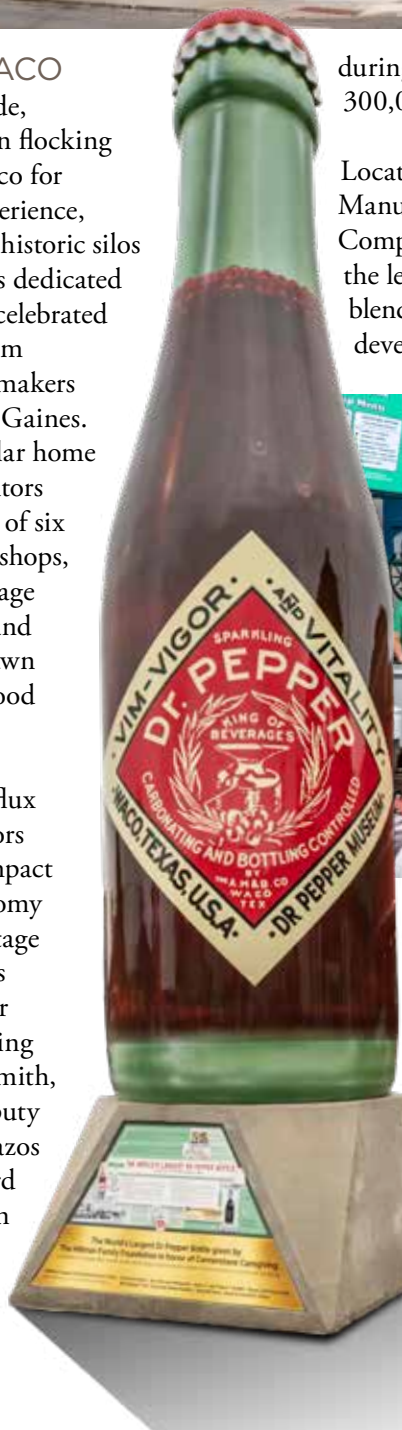
Located in the former Artesian Manufacturing and Bottling Company, the museum honors the legacy of the distinctive blend of 23 (secret) flavors developed in 1885 by pharmacist Charles Alderton at a drug store just down the street.

Summar-Smith notes the building is an artifact itself, with its original artisan well (now covered by thick plexiglass for optimal visitor viewing), and pockmarked floors from century-old machinery and chemicals.

"We like to focus on the wide range of people that would have been in this space," she says. "I think that's what sets our museum apart."

The rest of the museum includes several floors' worth of historical memorabilia, including advertising materials for famous campaigns like "Drink a bite to eat at 10, 2, and 4!" and "I'm a Pepper." In an adjacent building, visitors can learn about the bottling process and participate in the popular Make-A-Soda exhibit to create a personalized fizzy drink (reservations recommended).

Summar-Smith says the museum remains a popular draw because it represents a distinctly Texas product.



"Dr Pepper is part of the makeup of being a Texan—it's part of what makes us unique," she says. "And that's been Dr Pepper's identity, too. It's out of the ordinary. It's one-of-a-kind. And that perfectly captures the whole mystique of being a Texan."

Learn more:
texasbrazostrail.com
thc.texas.gov/ttba

HISTORICAL LESSONS

THC'S SUMMER INTERNS INSPIRED BY EXPERIENCES ACROSS THE AGENCY

By Ana Gutierrez
THC Preservation Scholars Committee Member

KAMILLE ANAYA

TRINITY COLLEGE (CT), UNDERGRADUATE

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO PURSUE THIS INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY WITH THE THC?

Because I wanted to explore career opportunities that bridged the gap between my historical interests and desire to build community relationships. I also understood that stepping into this role would open my eyes to the labor, effort, and positions involved in historical preservation.

WHAT WAS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT DURING YOUR INTERNSHIP?

Meeting people inside the THC and outside of the THC because it is rewarding to hear about their journey in the world of preservation. The way everyone practices historical preservation is dependent on their personal backgrounds, which makes their work even more impactful.

DID YOU LEARN ABOUT A NEW PIECE OF TEXAS HISTORY? WHAT WAS IT?

The most memorable has been how Jason Rivas (Preservation Scholar Program alumnus) utilized oral histories to document how Mexican American communities in Houston felt the impact of the killing of Jose Campos Torres as a lasting injustice. Additionally, it taught me how oral histories are greatly important to remember lasting memories in undertold communities.

FABIANA BRACHO

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN, UNDERGRADUATE, LARRY OAKS SCHOLAR

WHAT ABOUT HISTORIC PRESERVATION EXCITES YOU?

Seeing the real-world community impact that preservation makes is a driving factor for my interest. I would love to capture people's identities and experiences in the space around them, helping them feel seen. Also, I think creating social spaces that focus on history leads to more enriched communities and curious minds.

WHAT WAS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT DURING YOUR INTERNSHIP?

My site experienced a leak in our collections room. It gave me the opportunity to help with the drying procedures, which provided me with hands-on experience in the real challenges of a small museum. Further, I was able to see how the staff here collaborated to help, often doing duties outside of their formal job description.

DID YOU LEARN ABOUT A NEW PIECE OF TEXAS HISTORY?

The other scholars and I took a field trip to Denison, where I learned that President Eisenhower was born there! I had no idea he had Texan roots, but it was incredible to see how much that fact mattered to the community of Denison, shown in their efforts to preserve his birthplace and the parades they have thrown in his honor.

VICTORIA CASE
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY, UNDERGRADUATE

WHAT WAS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT DURING YOUR INTERNSHIP?
Assisting the site educator with community programs and seeing how excited the local children are to learn about history. Watching them become engaged and interested reminds me that preservation is about sharing history, not just protecting it.

DID YOU LEARN ABOUT A NEW PIECE OF TEXAS HISTORY?
One of the big things I've learned is how to connect the dots through historical research. As I cataloged and researched a postcard collection, I began piecing together family relationships, travel, and correspondence. It showed me how individual artifacts can come together to tell a much larger story about a family and their history.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE "TEXAS" THING?
A home-cooked Texas meal. The meals my family make are part of our traditions, and those recipes have been cooked generation after generation. That's the taste of Texas to me, and I think preserving traditions like this are just as important as preserving historic places.

TRINITY FRANKLIN
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO, UNDERGRADUATE

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO PURSUE THIS INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY WITH THE THC?
Pursuing this internship is my way of finding personal values in a workspace. I also wanted to affirm my worth with this experience. I tend to underestimate and limit myself to opportunities where rejection feels unlikely. Applying to this program was my first step at pursuing my ideal life without doubt stopping me. I am more hopeful because of the Preservation Scholars Program, and I can't wait to see what amazing things I'll do next.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR PROJECT. WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU FACED, AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THEM?
My project is the "Heritage Tourism Next: Gen Z & Alpha Engagement Campaign." The goal is to create a marketing plan that exposes younger audiences to the Texas Historical Commission's sites and programs. It's helped me figure out how to maintain the values of the THC while pushing boundaries for more engagement.

DID YOU LEARN ABOUT A NEW PIECE OF TEXAS HISTORY?
Yes! I knew "The Great Debaters" movie was based on a true story, but I had no idea it happened at Wiley College in Marshall, Texas. I learned that from one of our Instagram reels while doing brand research.

ANGELICA MOCK
WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY, UNDERGRADUATE

WHAT WAS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT DURING YOUR INTERNSHIP?
Everything was incredibly memorable. All the field trips, meetings, days at the office, and even the long conversations spent asking a million questions. However, the amazing women who made up my cohort made a lasting impression that has inspired me.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR PROJECT. WHAT CHALLENGES DID YOU FACE, AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THEM?
I assisted with research and writing for the Undertold Markers Program. With the help of my supervisors, Alicia Costello and Bob Brinkman, I was able to overcome challenges by conducting research through Austin and Texas archives, searching through countless historical newspapers, and revising and rewriting drafts at least 10 times until my writing reflected the work being conducted.

WHY IS TEXAS AN INTERESTING PLACE TO PURSUE A CAREER IN A HISTORY-RELATED FIELD?
Sustaining such a long and complex history that involves the stories of indigenous tribes, Mexico, and the United States takes a lot of effort that can only be fulfilled through much-needed humanities-related work. I have never met such a large group of enthusiastic people that share the same goal of protecting, preserving, and telling the stories of Texas history.

ASA OWENS
PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY, UNDERGRADUATE, CLAY SCHOLAR

TELL US ABOUT YOUR PROJECT. WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU FACED, AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THEM?
I have been focusing on Texas Green Book entertainment venues that participated in the Chitlin' Circuit, as well as how jazz and blues music evolved and took shape in Texas. One of my main challenges when facing this project was the initial compiling of so many sources and modes of information into one succinct narrative, leaving me overwhelmed at times. The more experience I gained, the easier it was to find my footing in preservation work.

DID YOU LEARN ABOUT A NEW PIECE OF TEXAS HISTORY?

I learned about the history and work of Sam Rayburn when visiting the Sam Rayburn house. Living in Texas, you see many memorialized statues, bridges, and buildings and often are unsure of their impact on the state or the country. I gained a better understanding and historical context for a name I had heard but never knew.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE "TEXAS" THING?

High school homecoming season. From the excessively feathered mums to spirit week and football games, Texas brings something special to that time of year.

EMILY PUENTES

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY, GRADUATE STUDENT

TELL US ABOUT YOUR PROJECT. WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU FACED, AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THEM?

I was assigned to Casa Navarro State Historic Site to create an exhibit about Francisco Ruiz, uncle of Jose Antonio Navarro. So far, the biggest challenge has been the writing process—narrowing down weeks of research to 100 words or less has been complicated. However, I am overcoming this challenge one day at a time by writing and editing as I go, getting rid of flowery words and language that may affect the accessibility of the exhibit.

WHY IS TEXAS AN INTERESTING PLACE TO PURSUE A CAREER IN A HISTORY-RELATED FIELD?

The most important events stemming from Spanish governance all the way into American control are what have built the United States to what it is today. I can always trace many of the issues in the borderlands to the pivotal American War on Mexico of 1846.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE "TEXAS" THING?

As a non-native of the state of Texas, the greatest gift this state has given me is Dr Pepper. In Mexico, we have all sorts of fruity flavored sodas and traditional coca cola. It took me moving to Texas to find out that the best soda flavor is Dr Pepper.

ANAHISA RODRIGUEZ

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN, GRADUATE STUDENT, LARRY OAKS SCHOLAR

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO PURSUE THIS INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY WITH THE THC?

Because it aligns with my academic interests and addresses relevant skills. I was also drawn to the networking opportunities this specific program features.

WHAT ABOUT HISTORIC PRESERVATION EXCITES YOU?

As a graduate student studying archives, artifacts have always called to me. The moment you can analyze and interact with tangible evidence of the past is pure magic. The stories and insights gleaned from such artifacts ensure that there's never a dull day in the historic preservation field.

DID YOU LEARN ABOUT A NEW PIECE OF TEXAS HISTORY? WHAT WAS IT?

Talking with the State Marine Archeologist, I learned about the 1554 shipwrecks. Although the field of marine archeology is interesting in and of itself, I was shocked to learn that such significant archeological sites existed at South Padre Island. I wasn't taught this history growing up.

FREINDS OF THE TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

PRESERVATION SCHOLARS

The Preservation Scholars Program, an initiative of the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission, seeks to build interest in historic preservation among students from underrepresented cultural backgrounds. This engages communities and perspectives reflective of the population of Texas to fully share the state's historical narrative.

DONATE TO THE PROGRAM OR LEARN MORE!

FRIENDS OF THE TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

thcfriends.org

Presidio La Bahía State Historic Site

SECURING THE PERIMETER

FRIENDS CREATE IMPACT IN UNEXPECTED WAYS

By Anjali Kaul Zutshi, FTHC Executive Director

As the nonprofit partner to the Texas Historical Commission (THC), the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission (FTHC) works to preserve and protect the real places and real stories of Texas and all Texans by securing philanthropic support for future generations.

For 30 years, the FTHC has built support for the THC's capital projects, educational programs, and stewardship initiatives. As the fundraising landscape evolves, the organization continues to find nimble, creative ways to advance the THC's preservation mission and ensure Texas history is preserved in perpetuity.

One impactful approach is securing state historic site perimeters through the acquisition of adjacent lands, creating much-needed buffers to protect sensitive historical and archeological resources.

Recently, the FTHC acquired several key properties to expand the agency's historic sites. At Presidio La Bahía State Historic Site, 81 acres—one of three known massacre sites in Goliad—was added as a critical preservation area.

In Washington County, 5.78 acres adjacent to Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site were secured with the help of the Washington on the Brazos Historical Foundation, enhancing the visitor experience at the recently redeveloped site. At Fulton Mansion State Historic Site, a small but vital tract will improve access between the visitor center, parking area, and the mansion.

We are deeply grateful to the landowners and partners who made these efforts possible. Their collaboration helps ensure that these sites continue to serve Texans and visitors for generations to come.

This work depends on donors and partners like you. Your support strengthens and preserves Texas history, whether through the Spirit of Texas Annual Fund or by exploring a legacy gift—both of which have a lasting impact.

Legacy gifts—planned contributions made as part of long-term giving—can transform organizations and extend a donor's impact well beyond their lifetime. These gifts are inspiring, not only to us as the organization that benefits from them, but also for our donors and their families. Research shows that planning for legacy gifts is not just the purview of high net-worth individuals—it makes philanthropy accessible to people of all income levels. Most donors who make planned or legacy gifts to organizations are not among the wealthiest.

As we mark our nation's 250th anniversary and look toward Texas' bicentennial in 2036, we remain grateful for your continued support. We hope you will continue to help us with this ambitious endeavor, so we can ensure Texas' historic sites are prepared to share the full, complex stories of our state and continue building community through storytelling.

Learn more:
thcfriends.org/legacy-giving
thcfriends.org/spirit-of-texas

OLD FANDANGLED ENTERTAINMENT

OUTDOOR MUSICAL FEATURES THE STATE'S OFFICIAL LONGHORN HERD

The Fort Griffin Fandangle is a must-see Texas summer event, the oldest outdoor musical in the state. During the last two weekends in June, over 250 performers retell the founding of Fort Griffin and the settling of the surrounding Albany area.

But some of the biggest stars of the show (literally and figuratively) are our very own Official State of Texas Longhorn Herd. A group of special steers take center stage to the tune of oohs and aahs before making a majestic exit to a round of applause. The steers are kept in a group by the alert cowboys while a lone rider sings the poignant tune, "Cowboy's Prayer."

For those who haven't been able to attend a production of the Fandangle, you can catch a glimpse of the spectacle on the State of Texas Longhorn Herd at Fort Griffin Facebook page.

Learn more:
thc.texas.gov/social

WHERE ON EARTH...IN TEXAS

KNOW YOUR TEXAS HISTORY?

Put your skills to the test by identifying the pictured site! The first three people who correctly identify the location will be named in the next issue of The Medallion. Please email your answer to medallion@thc.texas.gov or send to: The Medallion, P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711.

NEED A CLUE?

At left: Built in 1936, this museum features exhibits and artifacts from South Asia to the Southwestern U.S.

ANSWER TO THE PHOTO FROM THE LAST ISSUE:

At right: The St. Germain Place Lofts on Postoffice Street in Galveston were originally built in 1898 as the Ikelheimer & Company building. It is now part of The Strand Historic District. Congratulations go to the only two readers who correctly identified the site: Judy Bryant of Bedford and Jason Gray of Royse City.

Thanks to all who participated!

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
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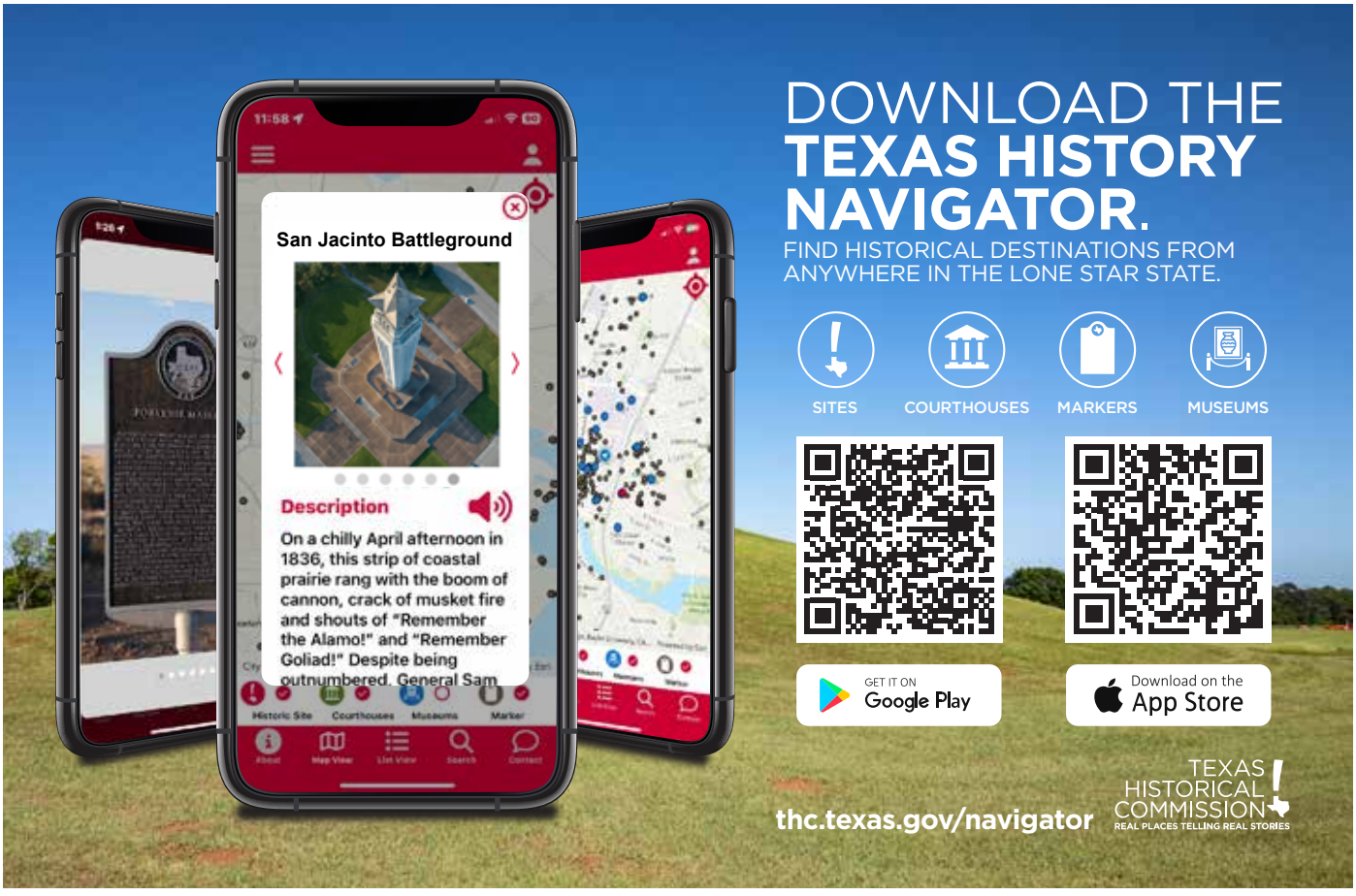
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