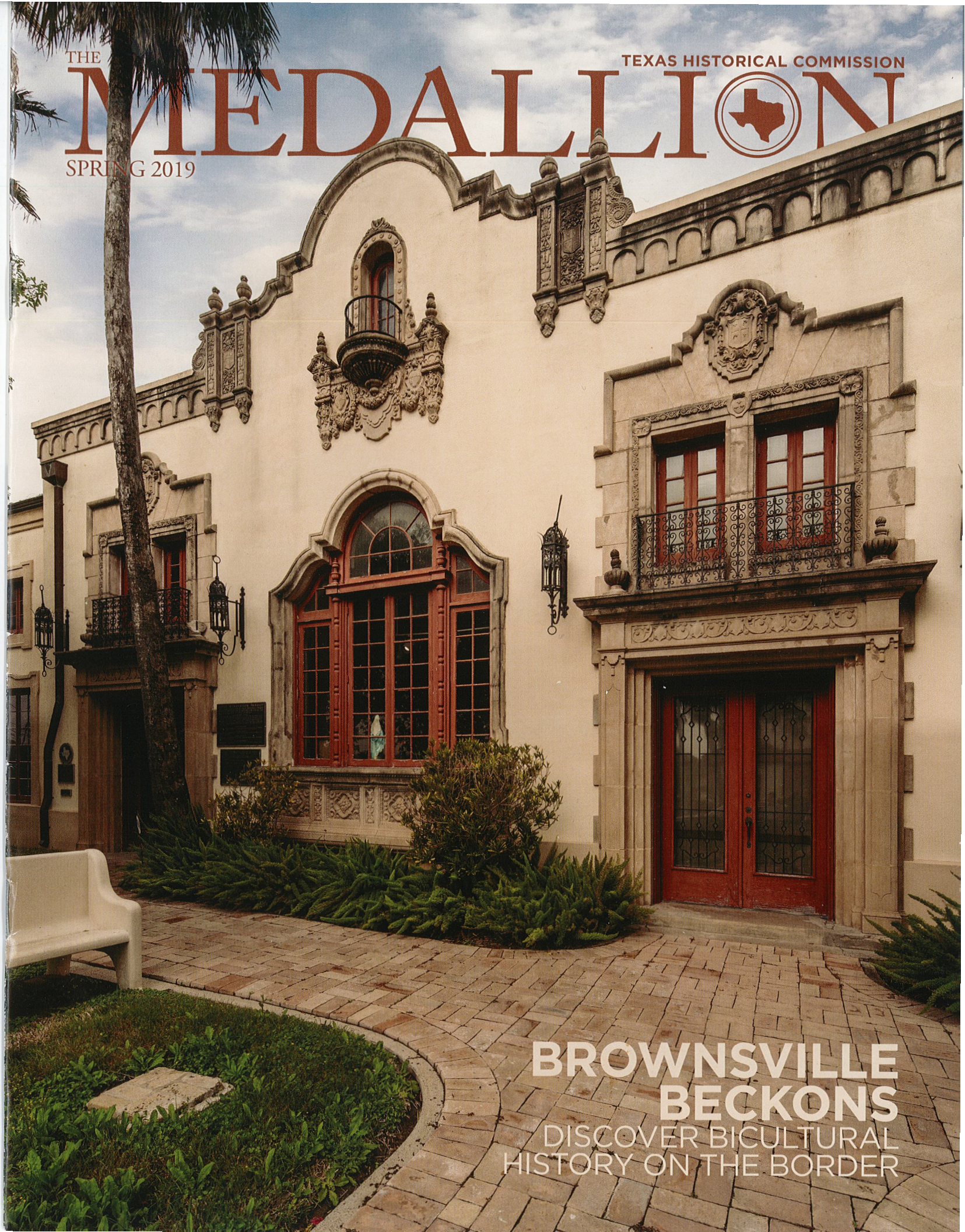


THE

MEDALLION

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

SPRING 2019

BROWNSVILLE BECKONS

DISCOVER BICULTURAL HISTORY ON THE BORDER





TOP: The welcoming 1859 Immaculate Conception Cathedral in downtown Brownsville. Photo: Patrick Hughey.

ON THE COVER: The Historic Brownsville Museum is located in the 1929 Southern Pacific Railroad Depot. Photo: Patrick Hughey.

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SPRING 2019

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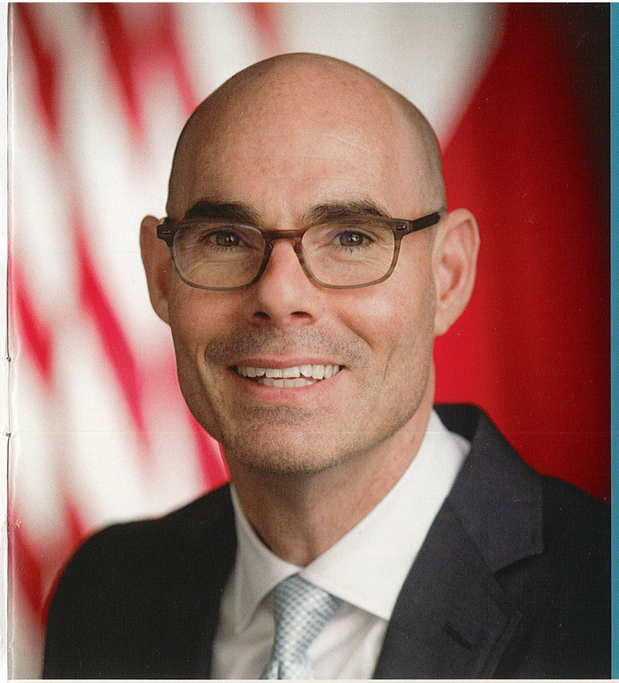
Our Mission

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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TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES SPEAKER DENNIS BONNEN

LEADERSHIP LETTER

As Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives, I am inspired by the legacy of the founding fathers of this great state. By celebrating our past, we honor their memories and help future generations appreciate those who paved our way.

Ours is a state of accomplishment with a diversity of heritage and history that uniquely defines us. I'm thankful that the Texas Historical Commission (THC) is preserving our many historical assets and encouraging all Texans to value and protect them.

For more than two decades I've represented District 25, which contains a rich collection of Texas' history and cultural heritage. Among these are two of the THC's state historic sites—Varner-Hogg and Levi Jordan Plantations.

Varner-Hogg tells the story of Texas history via its three owners: Austin colonist Martin Varner, sugarcane mogul Columbus Patton, and Texas Gov. James S. Hogg. Levi Jordan is being elevated to a nationally significant heritage destination reflecting the perspectives of those who lived and worked on the land during the 19th century. Both of these important sites provide insight about the multi-faceted lives of African Americans in the antebellum era of Texas.

Although these sites were mostly spared from Hurricane Harvey's wrath, many other historic properties continue to recover from the storm's devastating impact. Recovery efforts are ongoing in the THC's Texas Tropical Trail Region, which serves as an important economic engine contributing to Texas' $7 billion heritage travel industry.

Texans have a well-deserved reputation for valuing, preserving, and protecting their historic and cultural resources. I encourage my fellow colleagues and residents to do everything we can to support and encourage preservation efforts to protect Texas' valued heritage.

Sincerely,

Dennis Bonnen

Dennis Bonnen
Speaker, Texas House of Representatives

HOUSTON, WE HAVE A LEGACY

PRESERVATION OF NASA'S MISSION CONTROL HONORS 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF MOON LANDING

By Andy Rhodes,
Managing Editor, *The Medallion*

"That's one small step for man…"

Those six words immediately transport us to the iconic scene of the Apollo 11 moon landing on July 20, 1969. Fifty years later, this momentous event still conjures awe and pride among Americans. Flying under the radar, however, is the nerve center that helped make it all possible: NASA's Mission Control.



Over the past few decades, Hollywood has shaped our image of the historic Mission Operations Control Room 2, as it's officially known. Fortunately, they got most of it right. The aquamarine-colored metal consoles, stark monitor screens, and pulsating yellow buttons were integral components assisting tie-clad engineers with piloting the astronauts. Mission Control served NASA as a flight-operations center from 1965 until 1995, guiding the Gemini through Space Shuttle programs until an updated room opened for tours in the mid-1990s.

Designated a National Historic Landmark in 1985, the original Mission Control has become an endangered site due to dwindling financial support, unrestricted access, and alternate priorities. Preservation efforts over the past several years have provided success stories (and a few challenges) that will result in a fully restored Mission Control center worthy of the legacy associated with the events that occurred there.

"The story we're telling is Apollo 11—that's what we want people to experience when they walk into that room," says Sandra Tetley, NASA's historic preservation officer. "That was the event that impacted world history. That's what we hope people will feel."

Although things are on track for a 50th-anniversary reopening this summer, the restoration team in Houston has had some problems. "We made history so fast around here, a lot of it wasn't even documented," Tetley says, adding that over several decades, many reports were thrown away, audio tapes reused, and equipment discarded. Other challenges included restoring consoles and replicating materials that were replaced for the Space Shuttle program.

Fortunately, she and her preservation team—Stern and Bucek Architects, GRAVitate, and Cosmosphere—can consult the ultimate historical resources: former Mission Control employees. NASA retirees like Flight Director Gene Kranz (see sidebar, page 13) have been integral by providing files and stories documenting details of the room's memorable moments. According to Tetley, working with the retirees has been the most rewarding aspect of the project.

"They've been so wonderful—these no-nonsense men have provided insightful information and have such great senses of humor," she says. "They call Mission Control their shrine. It's their cathedral."

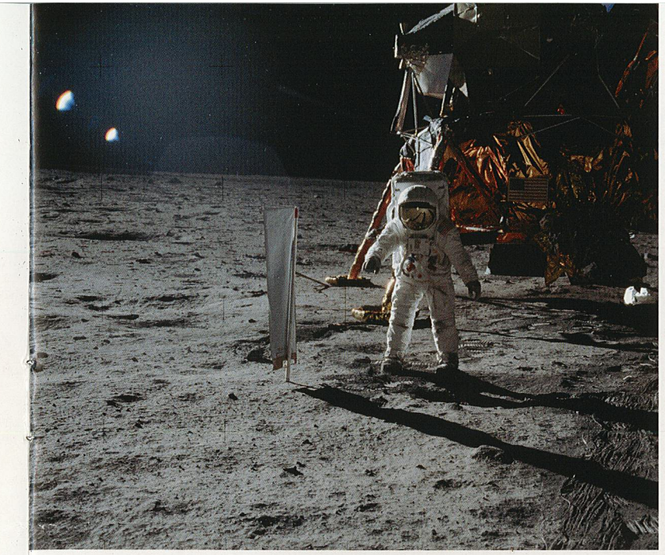
FASCINATING FINDS

During the restoration process, researchers made several remarkable discoveries. Among the biggest was the original carpet under an air-tube station that remained stationary for decades. The team took a sample to Mohawk Carpet, where employees identified the historic style and enthusiastically offered to replicate its materials and colors.

Another fascinating find was hiding behind a fire extinguisher on Mission Control's wall. After removing the boxed enclosure, researchers discovered the original wallpaper underneath and worked with a company to recreate the product.

"They even found the original roller with the exact same pattern," Tetley says. "We worked with them to match the color as closely as possible so we wouldn't have to just slap some commercial replacement paper up there, and they totally nailed it."

Tetley describes one more historical discovery: ceiling tiles. The original style and pattern were found in a long-forgotten lobby phone booth. Once again, the restoration team found



a contractor to work with the closest-available ceiling tile and recreate replicas by hand.

"Everyone has been so dedicated to helping us out and getting everything just right," Tetley says.

WE HAVE A LEGACY

Houston was a burgeoning city in the early 1960s when President John F. Kennedy gave his famous speech at Rice University, stating, "We choose to go to the moon." The structure housing Mission Control, known as Building 30, was constructed on the sprawling NASA campus in 1965. Although rather unassuming on the outside—a large gray monolith with a small section of decorative concrete breeze blocks at the entryway—Building 30's interior hummed with activity. In fact, the energy from room-sized computers generated enough warmth to forego a heating system.

From 10 Gemini flights to a dozen Apollo launches, the Mission Control room evolved as technology improved in the late 1960s.

"Now you have more computing power in your smartphone than all of Mission Control had when we landed a man on the moon," Tetley says.

The Texas Historical Commission plays an important oversight role in the preservation process. According to THC project reviewer Lydia Woods, the agency ensures the Secretary of the Interior's federal preservation standards are met during every stage of the project. Since Building 30 is federal property, Woods reviews proposed alterations through the Section 106 process.

Continued on page 13

Opposite left: An exclusive image from NASA's archives of the Mission Operations Control Room during an Apollo-era space flight.
Above: Astronaut Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin monitors a solar wind composition experiment during the Apollo 11 mission with the Lunar Module "Eagle" in the background. Photo courtesy NASA (taken by Neil Armstrong).
Right: Apollo 11 lifts off in the iconic Saturn V rocket, as viewed from the launch-tower camera. Photo courtesy NASA.



By Andy Rhodes, Managing Editor *The Medallion*, Photos by Patrick Hughey

BICULTURAL BORDERLAND

BROWNSVILLE'S COLORFUL HERITAGE IS INTERNATIONALLY INTERTWINED

THC Commissioner Lilia Garcia is standing on a balcony overlooking the Rio Grande. As she recalls stories about the formerly fluid movement between Brownsville and Matamoros, she sighs deeply. It's been many years since she crossed the river to visit friends in Mexico. Although Brownsville is safe, Garcia wonders if the city's deep connections to Matamoros are in danger.

Garcia's great-great grandfather was Francisco Yturria, a contemporary of Texas cattle barons Richard King and Mifflin Kenedy. In the mid-1800s, Yturria made a name for himself working with these legendary figures as a businessman on both banks of the Rio Grande. It reminds Garcia that Brownsville and Matamoros have historically been intertwined.

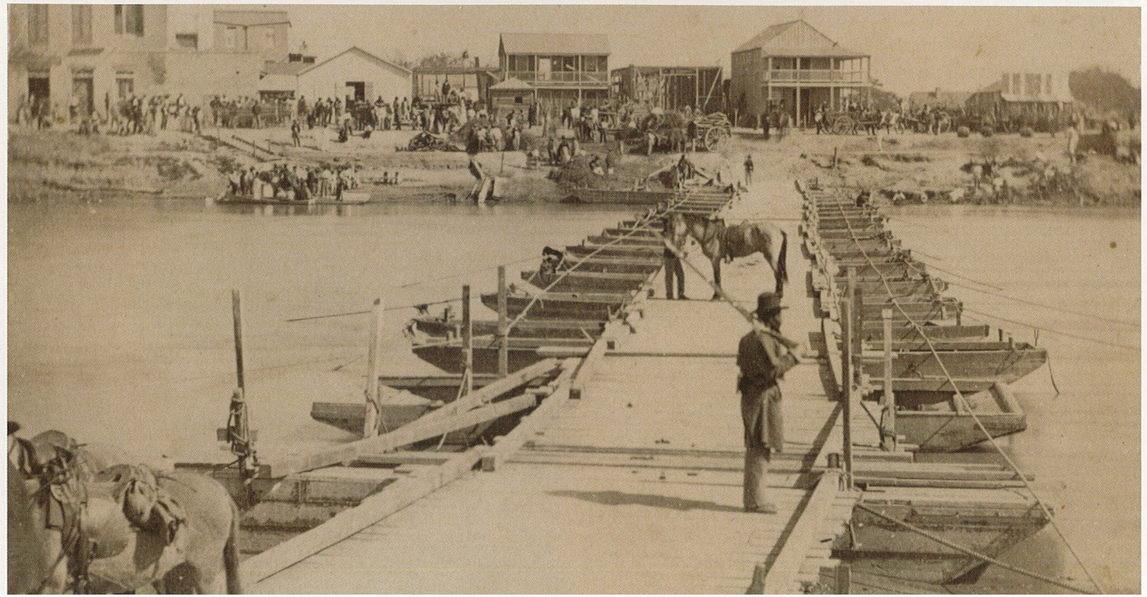
"Everything going on now with the cartels and politics is disrupting that binational relationship—it's a much tougher situation than it used to be," she says. "But I have faith things will work out in the long run."

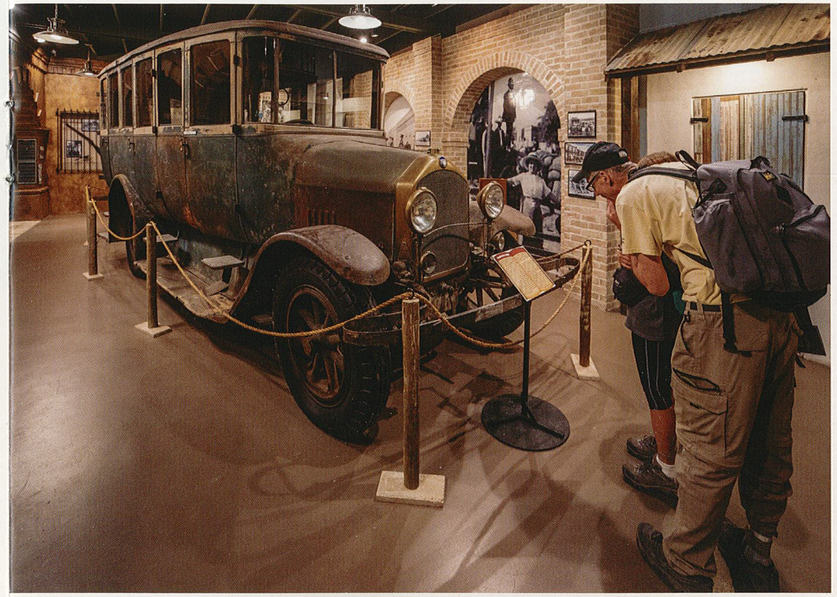
Garcia likens the condition to nearby South Padre Island. Although there are sharks in the Gulf of Mexico, they rarely, if ever, attack swimmers. The danger exists, but not enough to discourage travelers.

"It's similar to what's happening on the border," she says. "You can come here and experience this beautiful historic city without being at risk."

Garcia dedicates her career to the subject of history as a lecturer at the University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV). She wrote her academic thesis about her great-great grandfather, and his compelling story often informs her students about the region's colorful history.

Yturria was born in 1830 in Matamoros. Before there was a defined border, the area was simply known as the Wild Horse Desert, with Matamoros housing citizens from the U.S., France, England, and Germany. Later, Yturria began working with businessmen in Matamoros and Brownsville, including town organizer Charles Stillman. During the Civil War, Yturria assisted in shipping operations with King and Kenedy. The boats—loaded with cotton for overseas markets—flew the Mexican flag, so Union troops could not stop them during the war's commercial shipping blockade.





"Francisco's bi-national background was really advantageous in this situation," Garcia says. "Since he's Mexican, he knew that power and influence come from your name and land holdings. The American part of him understood finance and how you make a name for yourself with big numbers. He really straddled that line."

Yturria went on to become a naturalized U.S. citizen and a prominent Brownsville merchant and banker. As he gained wealth and property, he became more interested in his land holdings. He found success in the Chisholm Trail era by sending cattle with King and Kenedy, and eventually invested in railroads (the St. Louis, Brownsville, and Mexico Railway), which opened the Valley to the lucrative business of citrus farming.

Yturria died in 1912 at age 81. He had amassed over 150,000 acres in four South Texas counties. By the end of his life, he was known as Don Francisco Yturria (nicknamed Don Pancho), a title he carried with pride.

"Francisco never fought against his Mexican identity," Garcia explains. "He had power-holding friends on both sides of the Rio Grande, but he was still from Mexico. He was a bridge—much like the bridges in Brownsville from the U.S. to Mexico. He truly served as a connection between the two countries."

BROWNSVILLE BECKONS

The Yturria family's legacy reaches all aspects of the Valley, including the long drive south to Brownsville on State Hwy. 77, which traverses the family's historic ranch. Look for a building near the road with the sign "Yturria Ranch, Frank Yturria" (referencing Garcia's uncle, who was a THC commissioner from 2001–07).

The Wild Horse Desert area helped spur the birth of Texas cowboys, also known as vaqueros. Hispanic ranch hands rustled cattle and tamed horses with *lazos* (lassos) and *las reatas* (lariats) into *corrales* (corrals) while avoiding *estampiadas* (stampedes).

"Everything John Wayne did in his movies was first done by the vaqueros," Garcia says.

Ranching fortunes contributed to the growth of Brownsville's downtown business district, which still contains dense sections of historic buildings with international designs. A glance upward reveals architectural influences from France, Mexico, New Orleans, and the U.S. colonial period.

Garcia notes the THC has a strong association with downtown, including its designation as an official Texas Main Street city, a recent recipient of a Certified Local Government grant for a historic resources survey (which identified 2,000 historically significant buildings), and the agency's recent approval of its nomination as a National Register district.

For much of the 20th century, Matamoros residents crossed the river to shop in downtown Brownsville for goods and services unavailable in Mexico. Although the foot traffic has slowed due to recent trends—mainly driving to Brownsville's suburban strip malls for parking and cargo convenience—the historic downtown area is still vibrant and safe.

"On this side of the Rio Grande it's not dangerous, but we still tell everyone *ten cuidado* (be careful)," Garcia says. "Fortunately, people are starting to open new restaurants, bars, and shops downtown for a younger crowd. Locals and visitors will always be interested in old buildings with a lot of historic charm."

Opposite: An 1886 photo of Brownsville, as it appeared during Francisco Yturria's time. Courtesy of Library of Congress.

Above: Visitors at the Brownsville Heritage Museum admire a 1909 limousine.



One of these places is TERRA'S (terraskitchenbar.com, 956-621-0886), an "urban Mexican kitchen." The large historic room is welcoming, with windows offering plentiful sunshine and pleasant views of the busy street scene. The food is even more impressive, including a rotating menu with options like shrimp tacos on homemade corn tortillas, a Mexican club sandwich with prosciutto and chile arbol sauce, and ribeye with pecan mole.

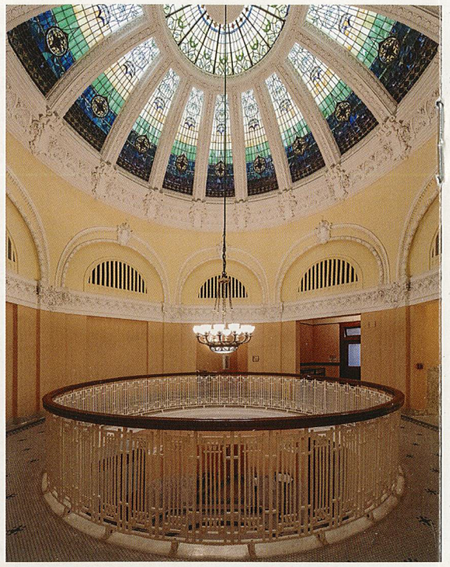


While downtown, be sure to visit the nearby BROWNSVILLE HERITAGE COMPLEX (brownsvillehistory.org, 956-541-5560), containing the Heritage Museum and the Stillman House Museum. The 1850 Stillman House—one of the city's oldest structures and former home of Brownsville founder Charles Stillman—showcases period furniture, family mementos, and educational panels about the town's early history. It also has a binational connection that's often overlooked: it served as the Mexican consulate when it was purchased by Manuel Treviño de los Santos Coy in 1858.

The adjacent Brownsville Heritage Museum features large-scale photos and significant artifacts related to the region's multicultural history. A highlight is the massive 1909 German limousine reportedly custom-made for former Mexican President Porfirio Diaz.

Just a block away is another Brownsville Historical Association (BHA) property—the MARKET SQUARE RESEARCH CENTER (956-546-4242). This stately building, complete with whitewashed walls and a domed bell tower, made its debut in 1852 as an open-air market. After nearly a century of hosting fruit, vegetable, and meat vendors, the property was acquired by the city, and it now houses the BHA's collection of costumes, Mexican cinema posters, and photos. Research requests are available by appointment.

Nearby is the BHA's HISTORIC BROWNSVILLE MUSEUM, located in the 1929 Southern Pacific Railroad Depot, a magnificent Spanish Colonial Revival building listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Ornate stone carvings hug the window frames, red-clay tiles descend from the roofline, and Old-World ironwork transport



visitors to another era. Plan extra time to view the railroad exhibit, including an impressive 1872 Baldwin locomotive, and the Mary Yturria Education Center.

Just down the street is the OLD CAMERON COUNTY COURTHOUSE (956-544-0830, aka The Dancy Building), a 1912 Classical Revival structure restored via the THC's Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program. Architectural highlights include ornate plaster detailing, smooth marble walls, and a magnificent stained-glass octagonal rotunda.

Around the corner is the National Register-listed IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CATHEDRAL (immaculateconceptioncathedral.org, 956-546-3178), a stunning 1859 Gothic Revival building. The monochromatic tan exterior belies the colorful beauty awaiting inside—including an expansive sky-blue ceiling of stretched canvas, colorful stained-glass windows, an ornate altar, and the angelic sound of recorded choral music.

Hallowed in a very different way is PALO ALTO BATTLEFIELD (nps.gov/paal, 956-541-2785). Located about 10 miles north of Brownsville, this National Park Service site was the scene of a bloody battle on May 8, 1846 during the U.S.-Mexican War. The battle set the stage for the Mexican army's retreat across the Rio Grande, which ultimately gave the U.S. a nation from sea to shining sea. The site's visitors center hosts interactive exhibits, artifacts, and an engaging film that tell the battlefield story. Walking trails with interpretive panels provide an overview of the battleground's key locations.

A few miles away is PALMITO RANCH BATTLEFIELD, one of the most significant Civil War military sites in Texas—both regionally and nationally. The National Historic Landmark, identified by a THC historical marker, is the site of the last land battle of the war (May 12–13, 1865), and is the topic of a THC brochure (available at thc.texas.gov).

For detailed information about Palmito Ranch and how the conflict—and other Civil War battles in South Texas—impacted state and national history, visit UTRGV's CIVIL WAR TRAIL (utrgv.edu/civilwar-trail). The community-based project offers a virtual multimedia tour to encourage heritage tourism, foster cultural awareness, and provide historical resources.

A visit to the Valley is incomplete without stopping by LA LOMITA CHAPEL (on FM 1016 in Mission, 956-580-8760). This profoundly serene site dates to 1899 and offers travelers a respite from the road and modern distractions with its historic adobe architecture, gleaming white walls, and welcoming breezes.

Just a few miles away are two of the Rio Grande Valley's major destinations for ecotourists, who flock to the area to see and photograph rare bird and butterfly species. The Valley is a channel for migratory animals, drawn away from the gulf waters to the area's nourishing flora. Mission's NATIONAL BUTTERFLY CENTER (nationalbutterflycenter.org, 956-583-5400) and McAllen's QUINTA MAZATLAN WORLD BIRDING CENTER (quintamazatlan.com, 956-681-3370) are especially popular with heritage travelers. Read more about the Valley's ecotourism destinations at thc.texas.gov/blog.

Discover more historical destinations in the Texas Tropical Trail Region: download a free copy of the THC's *Tropical Trail Region* guide at texastimetravel.com.

PHOTOGRAPHERS Head east about 20 miles and ascend 75 steps to capture panoramic views from the Port Isabel Lighthouse.

LOCAL EATS El Ultimo Taco transports travelers to Mexico with flavorful and affordable street tacos.

Opposite page, clockwise: Shrimp tacos at Terra's; the Old Cameron County Courthouse rotunda; Market Square in downtown Brownsville.

Below: Migratory species draw travelers to Mission's National Butterfly Center.





SACRED SPACES

RIO GRANDE VALLEY LIFTS SPIRITS AT CATHEDRALS, CHURCHES, AND CHAPELS

Photos by Patrick Hughey,
THC Communications Specialist

Residents and visitors in the Lower Rio Grande Valley can find solace from the distractions of daily life at one of the area's welcoming churches. Catholic churches remain cornerstones of communities and are often stunning historic structures.

From modest adobe chapels to grand Gothic Revival cathedrals, these sacred spaces offer a peaceful place to take time to contemplate the spiritual. The calming sounds of light breezes through windows and choral music provide a joyful escape from outside noise.



This statue of the Virgin Mary sits on the grounds of La Lomita Chapel in Mission.



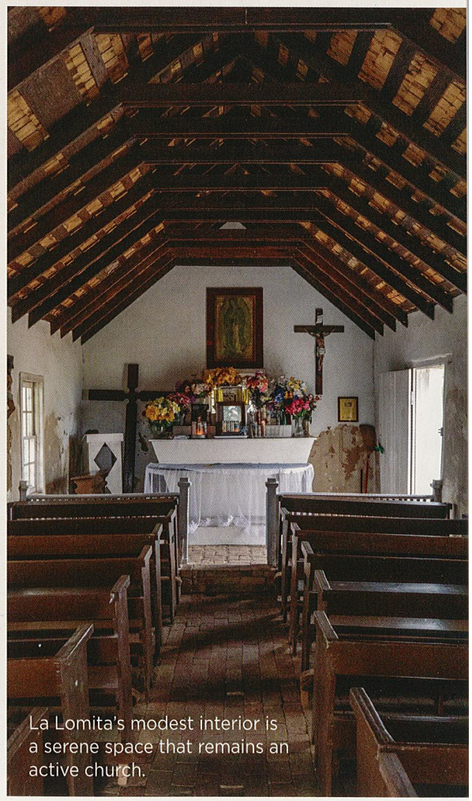
Brownsville's Immaculate Conception Cathedral features magnificent Gothic arches with a ceiling made of stretched canvas.



The Immaculate Conception Cathedral has been serving parishioners since 1859.



Mission's La Lomita ("little hill") Chapel dates to 1899.



La Lomita's modest interior is a serene space that remains an active church.

FUTURE PRESERVATION

FRIENDS OF THE THC HOSTS PROGRAMS, SEMINARS FOR UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

By Katie Cukerbaum, Friends of the Texas Historical Commission Development Manager

With summer just around the corner, the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission (FTHC) is excited to support two of the THC's summertime programs that engage students in historic preservation. Education is central to the projects and programs the FTHC supports. Today's students are tomorrow's preservationists, and making sure there's a workforce of passionate individuals and history enthusiasts is vital to the future study and stewardship of our shared past.

DOING HISTORY SUMMER CAMP

The FTHC is excited to partner with the THC to offer the Doing History Youth Camp for a second summer. Led by trained teachers, education specialists, and experts in the field of historic preservation, the camp is offered to rising 4th–7th graders and focuses on Texas history and historic preservation content.

This summer, the THC is hosting two camp sessions. The five-day camp includes a daily field trip, creative experiences, oral history collection, community-based service event, and the option for extended afternoon activities. The goal of the camp is to encourage student engagement in historic preservation and to provide TEKS-aligned learning experiences related to Texas history, all while having good ol' camp fun!

PRESERVATION SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Now in its 12th year, the Preservation Scholars Program—created by the Friends in partnership with the THC—continues to build interest in historic preservation among undergraduate and graduate students from underrepresented cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups. The goal of the program is to engage a wider range of communities and perspectives in the effort to discover and share Texas history.

Over the course of an eight-week, paid internship with the THC, students spend time with each THC division headquartered in Austin and complete a special project based on their primary areas of interest or academic backgrounds. The FTHC aims to support the growth of these programs over the coming years, engaging an increasing number of students across the state. Your support of the Friends makes this possible.

DO YOU HAVE TEXAS SPIRIT?

Be a part of preserving Texas history by supporting the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission's Spirit of Texas Program. We are delighted to show you our appreciation with a variety of thank you gifts! Show off your pride in being a Texas history supporter with a tote bag, yearly pass to the THC's state historic sites, bumper stickers, and more at thcfriends.org

FRIENDS ON THE ROAD IN 2019!

The FTHC's vision is to have enduring, ample, and sustainable funding and advocacy for historic preservation projects and initiatives across Texas. To accomplish this mission, the FTHC offers regional Development Seminars throughout the year to support volunteer leadership (board members and advisors) and staff from nonprofit organizations interested in learning more about how to secure philanthropic support for their organization or project.

While the series is taught by FTHC and THC staff, and held at historic sites across the state, the seminar is suited for organizations from any discipline, and for people with all levels of fundraising experience.

UPCOMING SEMINAR DATES

JULY 24–25
Fulton Mansion State Historic Site, Rockport

SEPTEMBER 18–19
Magoffin Home State Historic Site, El Paso

Learn more and register online.
thcfriends.org/development-seminars



Right: FTHC Executive Director Anjali Zutshi leads a recent development seminar.

NASA'S MISSION CONTROL

Continued from page 5

"Every element of this project comes across my desk at some point—I never thought I'd be so fortunate to work on an internationally significant place like this," she says. "It's extremely humbling to talk with those who were working in the room during the Apollo 11 landing. Their memories will help visitors see what it was like to be there on that day."

Justin Kockritz, another THC project reviewer for federal programs, adds that part of the agency's role is to serve as an advocate for the state's interest in preserving and restoring Mission Control while mediating conflicts. THC reviewers also help demonstrate the distinction of Mission Control's connection with events of global significance.

"Even in its pre-restoration condition, just visiting Mission Control was awe-inspiring—but to have an opportunity to play a small part in the restoration of this incredible place has been amazing," Kockritz says. "Knowing that future generations will not only get to learn about the history of the American space program, but that they will get to visit and experience the actual place where that history occurred, is truly rewarding."

According to Tetley, the preservation team initially struggled to replicate Mission Control details due to an unexpected lack of video documentation. However, several sources recently emerged that proved to be invaluable, including historic films so well-preserved they reveal details that weren't attainable in grainy footage and oral histories.

"The films are unbelievably clear—you can even see the wrinkles and worry lines on the engineers' faces," she says. "You can also see the vivid colors of the ashtrays, coffee cups, pens, and lighters. All those little details make everything feel real—it's almost like being there."

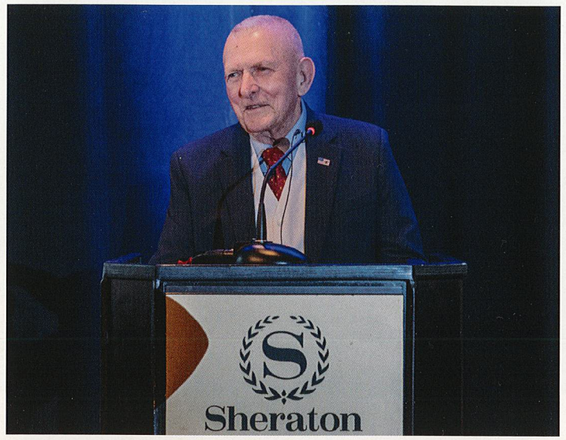
TRANSPORTING VISITORS

By the time the Mission Control restoration is wrapped up, the preservation team hopes to transport visitors to the Apollo 11 lunar landing via precisely rehabilitated and replicated details in the famous room. People will see numbers and charts, and listen to a relatively unknown phone call from President Richard Nixon to Armstrong.

She adds that visitors will also hear the air-to-ground audio loops, including conversations with engineers and astronauts, along with background chatter in the Mission Control room. She hopes it's an emotional experience for people that will leave them with a sense of pride and awe.

"When visitors walk into the viewing room, we want them to feel like it's July 20, 1969—we want people to be able to relive this important era in history," she says. "What America did 50 years ago was so, so cool. That feeling of achievement and seeing our astronauts on the moon is still an awesome sight. I hope people have that same incredible feeling as all of America did 50 years ago."





KRANZ'S KEYNOTE

Along with successes like the moon landing, Mission Control was the center of several tense and tragic moments. One of the most heart-pounding experiences was during Apollo 13, when the ship and its crew of three astronauts were in grave danger after an onboard oxygen system failed.

As leader of the flight directors who brought Apollo 13 safely back to Earth, Gene Kranz was at the heart of the nerve center. The film "Apollo 13," starring Ed Harris as Kranz, chronicles his valiant efforts to devise the plan that would safely bring the ship home.

Kranz was the keynote speaker at the THC's Real Places conference earlier this year. His first-person account of the historic events he helped orchestrate from Mission Control was gripping. Many conference attendees claimed it was the highlight of Real Places, and Kranz's compelling story revealed his heroism and NASA's significance to Texas and world history.

Above: NASA Flight Director Gene Kranz spoke about his experience in Mission Control at the THC's Real Places 2019 conference.

Left: The family of Commander James A. McDivitt monitors the Apollo 9 mission from Mission Control's visitors room. Photo courtesy NASA.

TO THE MAXEY

THC'S HISTORIC SITE SHOWCASES FRUITS OF FOUR-YEAR RESTORATION PROJECT

By Heather McBride,
THC Senior Communications Specialist

What did the Sam Bell Maxey House look like during its heyday at the turn of the previous century? A dramatic, four-year interior restoration at the THC's historic site reveals the answer.

The Italianate-style home, built in 1868 during the height of the Reconstruction Era in Paris, Texas, housed the Maxey and Long families for almost 100 years. During that time, its interior changed as styles and tastes progressed. The restoration returns the interior to a period that bridges the first and second generation of the family to tell the stories of a changing state and nation.

Site staff completed thorough research on the home's evolution to develop a plan that guided the restoration process by using family letters, photographs, artifacts, and historic documents.

"One of the biggest transformations was the library—we removed the built-in bookcases that were later additions and restored it to its original look," said Site Manager Kaitlin Ammon. "With the bookcases gone, we found some of the Maxeys' original wallcovering that was used to choose both a paintable wallpaper for the room and the colors to paint it."

Ammon adds that a circa-1900 photograph of the room guided the meticulous restoration. Staff also found documents behind the bookcases, including an old photograph of neighborhood children celebrating Easter on the grounds.

"We'd seen copies of that photograph, but we thought the original was located at the Texas State Archives," she says.

The project also involved installing new soft furnishings in the rooms, such as window treatments. A historic green valance (decorative drapery) in the site's collection informed the library and dining room's custom-made treatments after staff determined it was one of Marilda Maxey's original items.

The project was no small undertaking. Every room received a new coat of paint and most required new period-appropriate wallpaper. Staff took up the library and dining-room flooring, installed by the Longs in the 20th century, to expose the Maxeys' original pine floors.

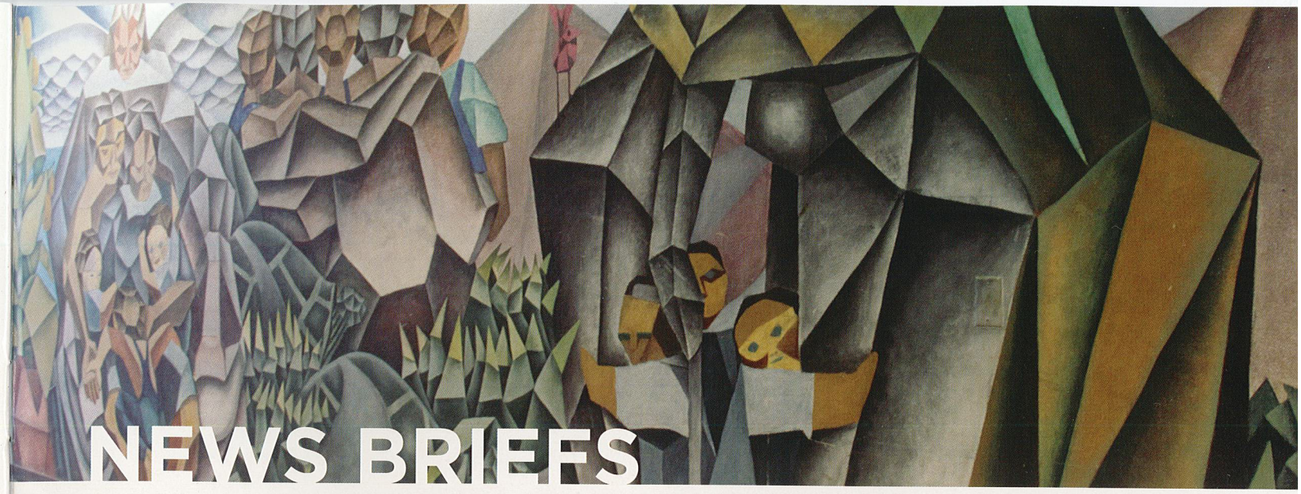
"We knew the Maxeys and Longs had faux grain wood throughout the house that needed to be replicated if the restoration was to be done correctly," Ammon says. "A faux graining specialist carefully exposed areas of the Maxeys' original faux grained wood in the library and dining room and replicated both patterns in the rooms and hallway."

Throughout the entire restoration, the site remained open to visitors. Depending on the work being done, visitors were able to peek into rooms and see wallpaper being hung or the steps required to replicate a faux finish.

"Staff photographed every phase of the project and documented the work on the site's social media channels," Ammon adds. "Both methods allowed staff to not only present information on the Maxeys' and Longs' lives, but also about the intense research completed to undertake this major restoration project."

SAM BELL MAXEY HOUSE STATE HISTORIC SITE
812 Church St. • Paris, TX 75460 • 903-785-5716
Hours: Tuesday–Sunday: 9 a.m.–4 p.m.
visitsambelleymaxeyhouse.com





NEWS BRIEFS

RENOVATION OF NIMITZ GALLERY BEGINS AT NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR

A $4 million renovation is underway in Fredericksburg at the Admiral Nimitz Gallery of the National Museum of the Pacific War, a Texas Historical Commission state historic site.

The gallery closed in April to prepare for construction, which is expected to take about a year. The building was originally home to the Nimitz Hotel, built by Admiral Chester Nimitz's grandfather prior to becoming the heart of today's museum complex.

The renovation will combine two exhibit areas into one, improving the flow of the galleries and expanding the overall size from 1,600 to 1,800 square feet of display space. The new galleries will feature additional artifacts, information panels, and state-of-the-art audio/visual displays that put viewers in the shoes of Admiral Nimitz as he makes key decisions during his life.

The Admiral Nimitz Foundation and the THC are working on this project with McKinney York Architects of Austin in conjunction with DG Studio of Houston.

Learn more about the museum. • pacificwarmuseum.org

HELP PRESERVE UNDERTOLD STORIES OF TEXAS

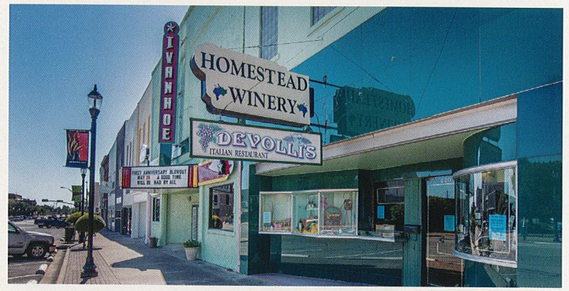
The THC is currently accepting applications for undertold Texas historical markers that address historical gaps and promote diversity of topics and cultures. The deadline for submission is June 15.

The THC utilizes general marker application funds to sponsor these markers that represent an untold or undertold aspect of Texas history. Previous undertold markers honor significant individuals and places like Mina Ward school in Bastrop, the site of the first Mexican-American integration into white public schools and the murals of Hannah Hall at Texas Southern University in Houston that were painted by students of the renowned artist Dr. John Biggers.

The THC can assist local sponsors and County Historical Commissions with selected topics by paying for the foundry cost of a historical marker, or by assisting with the research necessary to submit and complete a qualified application.

Contact the THC's History Programs Division for more information about the Undertold Markers Program.
512-463-5853 • thc.texas.gov

APPLY NOW TO BECOME A MAIN STREET COMMUNITY



The application period is now open for cities to apply to the THC's Texas Main Street Program (TMSP).

Each year, the THC may select up to five Texas cities to participate in the program. Local Main Street programs receive a wide range of services and technical expertise from the THC, including design and historic preservation, planning, economic development, organizational management, and training.

Applications are due July 31.

Additional information about the TMSP can be found on the THC website. Application questions can be directed to TMSP State Coordinator Debra Drescher at 512-463-5758 or debra.drescher@thc.texas.gov. • thc.texas.gov/mainstreet

Top above: A mural in Hannah Hall, Texas Southern University. Courtesy of Texas Southern University.

Above: Denison has been an official Main Street community since 1989.

NOTICE

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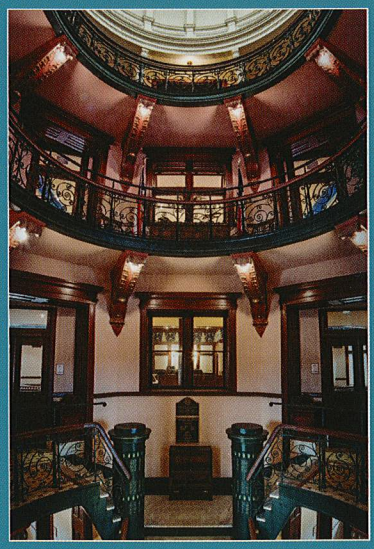
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WHERE ON EARTH...IN TEXAS

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 receive a prize and be named in the next issue of *The Medallion*. Send your answer to: *The Medallion*, P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711-2276 or email to medallion@thc.texas.gov. Limit one prize annually per contestant.

NEED A CLUE? This structure adjacent to a courthouse in the Texas Plains Trail Region was built in 1909 and served its original purpose for 20 years.



ANSWER TO THE PHOTO FROM THE LAST ISSUE:

The photo at left is the intricately restored Harrison County Courthouse in Marshall. Congratulations and prizes go to the first three readers who correctly identified the site: Nancy McWhorter of Longview, Lauren Neal of Hillsboro, and Marcia Thomas of Jefferson. Thanks to all who participated!



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