TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

THE MEDALLION

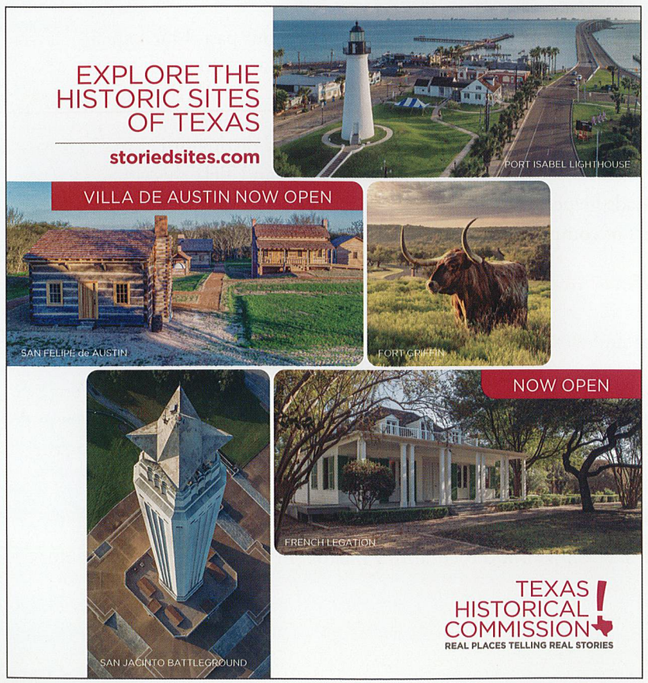
FALL 2021



DISCOVER ASIA IN HOUSTON

DESTINATIONS REFLECT MORE THAN A CENTURY OF HERITAGE





TOP: A statue in Houston's McGovern Centennial Gardens honors the 2,560th anniversary of Confucius' birth and friendship between the Chinese and American people.
ON THE COVER: The Friendship Pavilion in McGovern Centennial Gardens was a gift to the City of Houston from its sister city Taipei in the mid-1970s.

THE MEDALLION
TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
FALL 2021

ISSN 0890-7595 Vol. 59, No. IV
thc.texas.gov thc@thc.texas.gov

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

John L. Nau, III	Chair
Catherine McKnight	Vice Chair
Garrett Kieran Donnelly	Secretary
Donna M. Bahorich	Lilia Marisa Garcia
Earl Broussard, Jr.	David A. Gravelle
James "Jim" Bruseth	Laurie E. Limbacher
Monica Zárate Burdette	Tom Perini
John W. Crain	Gilbert E. "Pete" Peterson
Renee Rupa Dutia	Daisy Sloan White
Mark Wolfe	Executive Director

Medallion STAFF

Chris Florance	Division Director
Andy Rhodes	Managing Editor
Judy Jensen	Sr. Graphic Design Coordinator
thc.texas.gov	Real places telling the real stories of Texas
texastimetravel.com	The Texas Heritage Trails Program's travel resource
texashistoricsites.com	The THC's 34 state historic properties
thcfriends.org	Friends of the Texas Historical Commission

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.

The Medallion is published quarterly by the Texas Historical Commission. Address correspondence to: Managing Editor, The Medallion, P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711-2276. Portions of the newsletter that are not copyrighted or reprinted from other sources may be reprinted with permission. Contributions for the support of this publication are gratefully accepted. For information about alternate formats of this publication, contact the THC at 512-463-6255.

The Medallion is financed in part by a grant from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. All of the agency's public programs and activities are operated free from discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, gender, or disability. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against should write to Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

The Medallion is available online at thc.texas.gov/medallion. If you would prefer to receive The Medallion electronically instead of through the mail, please send your name and address to thc@thc.texas.gov. You will be notified by email when each new issue is available on the THC website and will no longer receive a printed copy.



TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ANGIE CHEN BUTTON

LEADERSHIP LETTER

Friends,

Preserving Texas' distinctive history is an important endeavor that helps future Texans learn from our past. Our state has a rich heritage, and I appreciate that the Texas Historical Commission (THC) takes pride in preserving our cultural treasures and unique stories.

A proud resident of the northeast Dallas area, aspects of my district's heritage contributed to Texas' distinguished past. History lovers in Garland pressed for historic designation of the 1920s coast-to-coast Bankhead Highway and THC historic highways program, both of which became law in 2009. Historic roads helped lead to the development of the area, with farming towns evolving into vibrant commuter communities and centers of commerce.

As chair of the House Committee on International Relations & Economic Development, I've had the opportunity to assist in that business expansion, including telecommunications and other technology companies and jobs. Once a tiny town, Richardson is now a densely populated, exurban tech center, benefitting from our work as legislators.

This issue of *The Medallion* showcases the significant contributions of Asian Americans to Texas' heritage. My parents were forced to flee from China to Taiwan, but they instilled in me the importance of hard work and education. I came to Texas and earned a master's degree in Management Science from The University of Texas at Dallas. I have never forgotten the doors that opened thanks to my education.

It is my hope that all Texans learn the wonderful and rich history of our state and continue to share the stories of our past. I'm pleased to represent northeastern Dallas County, and I will ensure our ideals are firmly planted in the proud heritage that has made Texas the great state it is today.

Sincerely,

Angie Chen Button

Angie Chen Button
Texas House of Representatives, District 112

KOMATSU: TEXAS' TREASURED ARCHITECT

FORMER THC OFFICIAL BUILDS AND PRESERVES STATE'S LEGACY

By Andy Rhodes
Managing Editor, *The Medallion*

Karl Komatsu is a legendary figure in Texas' preservation community. His family's Fort Worth-based architecture firm has overseen historic rehabilitation projects and designed high-profile commercial structures for more than 60 years. He also made a significant impact on the state's preservation programs and policies during his impressive tenure with the Texas Historical Commission (THC).

Komatsu was a THC commissioner and chairman in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the agency was developing and eventually launching its Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program (THCPP). He recalls chatting with a judge during this time about the challenges of preserving the county's nearly 100-year-old courthouse.



"He told me, 'We've always been so poor that we couldn't ever spend the money to mess it up,'" Komatsu says. "Then he said, 'But we also realized that even an automobile has to have its oil changed and given a new battery. We cannot let a gem like this just go to waste—fixed up, it'll be worth more than anything we could build new, not to mention keeping the pride alive for all our generations of folks."

This sense of appreciation for history and collaboration has been a guiding principle for Komatsu throughout his lifelong architectural journey. From witnessing his father's dedication to quality design and craftsmanship to his own experiences managing historic preservation projects, Komatsu has focused on creating and protecting exceptional structures.

ORIGIN STORY

Komatsu's story begins with his grandparents' arrival on the West Coast from Japan in 1900. His grandfather Hisakichi Komatsu worked as a merchant marine and decided to stay in Oregon when he landed a job with Union Pacific Railroad.

When World War II started, the Komatsu family was displaced to an internment camp in Jerome, Idaho. His father, Albert, was released and eventually settled in Minneapolis after the war. When he turned 18, Albert joined the Army and later achieved an architecture degree from the University of Minnesota, where he met Komatsu's mother, Tokyo Tanaka. Albert was recalled for the Korean War and served overseas, leaving Minnesota for active duty.

"That's when I was born," Komatsu says with a smile. "My parents were boarding with a family at the time, and they're the ones who suggested my first name—Karl with a K, to go with Komatsu."

When Karl was just 11 months old, his father was transferred to Camp Wolters in Mineral Wells, Texas. Albert eventually moved 50 miles east to Fort Worth, where he opened Komatsu & Associates in 1959.

"People have asked me what it was like growing up in Texas (as a Japanese American). It was probably like other parts of the country at the time, but one thing I can say for sure is that Texans truly have big hearts," Komatsu says. "I remember dressing up like a cowboy as a youngster, and it made quite an impression on my mother's family in Hawaii. When I got off the plane with boots and a toy six-shooter holster, their mouths just dropped wide open."

By the time Komatsu graduated from high school, he decided to pursue architecture at the respected University of Virginia. Although the school was known for its Thomas Jefferson-designed buildings, Komatsu found professors in the early 1970s were attempting to expand its reputation into contemporary instruction. The balance between old and new benefitted Komatsu, who also received valuable lessons from his father's acquaintances like Philip Johnson, who designed Houston's Bank of America Center, Fort Worth's Amon Carter Museum, and many national landmarks.



Johnson advised him to experience the world's greatest architecture and absorb the structural and design details that make them iconic. He recalls visiting Italy's Palladian Villas, which influenced Jefferson's entrance designs and ultimately inspired one of Komatsu's later projects.

"Years later, I worked on a project in what's now known as Dallas' Travis Walk area—it has outdoor courtyards and restaurants with a European feel," Komatsu explains. "I went back to visit recently and, due to the pandemic, one of the only ways to keep businesses afloat was outdoor dining. The restaurants were busy and among a small percentage of businesses that survived. I must admit I felt a sense of satisfaction in contributing to this."

After graduating from college, Komatsu worked for several architecture firms in Washington, D.C. (one of which offered him "the grand sum of $4.25 an hour to work for them") before eventually settling in with Harry Weese Associates, famous for designing the Washington Metro system. Komatsu proudly assisted with the firm's northeast metro design team and with many historic preservation and government projects, which served as a foundation for his later work.

TEXAS TIME

In the early 1980s, Komatsu moved back to Fort Worth to be closer to family and work alongside his father at the growing Komatsu Architecture. While overseeing the restoration of the Hood County Courthouse in Granbury, he met esteemed Texas historians and THC commissioners Shirley and Clifton Caldwell, who encouraged him to get involved with the agency.

Komatsu certainly followed through. Over the next 15 years, he served as a member of the State Board of Review and a THC commissioner and chairman. During this time, he worked with many other high-profile figures in Texas' political scene, including Julian and Anice Read, Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock and his wife Jan, and Governors William Clements, Ann Richards, and George W. Bush. He's especially proud of his work with Gov. Clements and his wife Rita, with whom he helped establish the THC's Texas Preservation Trust Fund, which continues to provide financial assistance to historical projects across the state.

One of Komatsu's favorite memories from his THC tenure was helping lay the groundwork for the THCPP in the early 1990s. He assisted with a project that raised awareness of historic courthouse restorations by highlighting the 100th anniversary of an 1895 state-funded courthouse construction program. He had the support of Jan Bullock, who held an inside edge on negotiating with her husband Bob, the lieutenant governor.

"One night, they were reading together in bed when Jan casually mentioned the idea to him, along with our proposed

Continued on page 13



OPPOSITE: Esteemed architect Philip Johnson chats with Komatsu. TOP: Komatsu speaks at the THC's recent Falls County Courthouse rededication ceremony in Marlin. ABOVE: THC Executive Director Curtis Tunnell and Komatsu on Komatsu's birthday in 1991.



Vietnam Buddhist Center

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

DISCOVER ASIA IN HOUSTON

CULTURAL DESTINATIONS REFLECT MORE THAN A CENTURY OF HERITAGE

Houston's Civil Rights movement had a different character than the rest of Texas. Much of the state wrestled with addressing inequalities for African Americans and Mexican Americans, but few Texas cities had as many Asian American residents as Houston.

The first half of the 20th century was especially challenging, with cultural impacts of the Chinese Exclusion Act, Immigration Act of 1924, and World War II's internment camps. Still, a modest Asian American community developed just east of downtown, where some residents lived adjacent to family-owned grocery stores, restaurants, and laundry services.

By the early 1960s tensions were beginning to thaw, as evidenced by the civic ascent of the Gees, a second-generation Chinese family. Albert Gee's restaurants on South Main—Poly-Asian and Ding How—were popular culinary destinations for Houstonians and high-profile visitors, including Gov. John Connally, Richard Nixon, and Bob Hope. Gee was named Houston Restauranteur of the Month and elected president of the Houston Restaurant Association.

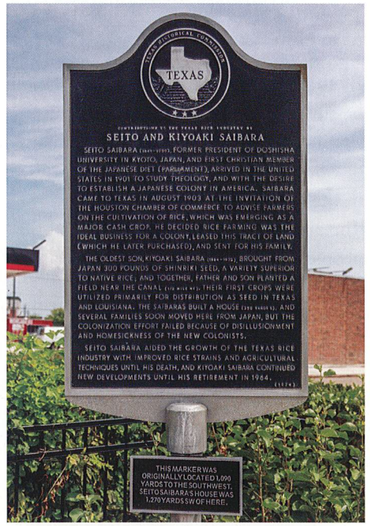
"The Gee family was groundbreaking—they were extremely important to this city's Asian American history," says Stephanie Todd-Wong of Asia Society Texas Center, an organization dedicated to cultural enrichment. "Albert Gee was a leader in the restaurant industry and opened the doors for other Asian American businesses to establish in this city due to his success."

According to a recent *Houston Chronicle* article by Anne S. Chao, manager of Rice University's Houston Asian American Archive, Gee became known as the city's unofficial "mayor of Chinese." He received numerous civic awards, including recognition from the Houston Chamber of Commerce. The Gee family built on the success of their restaurants and achieved prominent business positions, including a renowned immigration lawyer and part-owner of the Houston Texans football team.

"The Gee family's experience is just one of many examples of leaders and neighbors in Houston's vibrant Asian American community," Wong says. "There are still so many stories we haven't heard that should be shared. We need to listen and uplift these voices."

ASIAN-HOUSTON HERITAGE

The first known Texas Asian immigrant, Francisco Flores, arrived in the Mexican state of Coahuila y Tejas from the Philippines around 1822, according to *Houston History* magazine. A significant group of Japanese immigrants later arrived, led by Seito Saibara, who came to Texas in 1903 at the invitation of the Houston Chamber of Commerce to advise farmers about cultivating rice. His son Kiyoaki brought 300 pounds of Shinriki seed from Japan; together, they



planted near a canal along present-day NASA Parkway, where a THC marker now honors the family's contributions to the growth of the Texas rice industry.

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 opened the door for many Asian newcomers in Houston, allowing the community to grow significantly in size and diversity. South Asians, Filipinos, Koreans, and Vietnamese arrived by the thousands and established temples, mosques, churches, and civic groups. Many Asian immigrants initially settled in east and southeast Houston before urban development

forced their relocation to then-outlying southwestern Houston.

After the fall of Saigon in 1975, hundreds of Vietnamese residents fled their country and settled in Houston, where they found shrimping, fishing, and agriculture jobs in a humid coastal environment reminiscent of their homeland. Later, thousands of additional Vietnamese residents relocated from California and their native country to southwestern Houston.

By the 1980s, the city's Asian population began to expand even further with a significant influx of South Asians, many of whom also established communities in the southwestern part of the city. The 2010 census lists more than 82,000 people with Indian ancestry and nearly 28,000 Pakistanis residing in the Houston area.

"Houston is a wonderful example of how Texas can be a destination for newcomers from a variety of backgrounds who can come together as a community," says Charles Sadnick, director of the THC's History Programs Division and a second-generation Asian Texan. "The city has embraced people from across Asia and the entire world who've come here to carve out a very American and Texan experience."

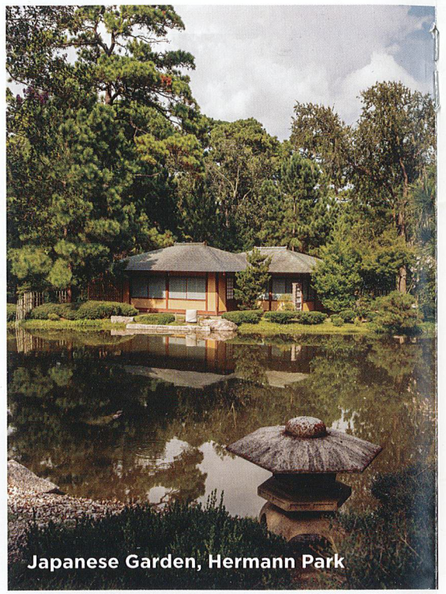
EXPLORE HOUSTON'S ASIAN HERITAGE

Houston travelers can discover the culture, religion, and food of countries from East Asia, South Asia, the Pacific Islands, and others. Although most of the businesses and homes from the city's early immigration period are long gone, visitors can experience impressive temples with memberships dating back nearly 50 years, public gardens with ties to the city's early immigrants, and hundreds of restaurants featuring traditional Asian dishes from family recipes.

DOWNTOWN

On the edge of the sprawling Museum District is the architecturally stunning **Asia Society Texas Center** (asiasociety.org/texas, 713-496-9901), a cultural organization with 13 international outposts that traces its founding to John D. Rockefeller III in 1956. The Houston group opened in 1979 with the help of former First Lady Barbara Bush; by 2012, the center unveiled its new public building, designed by esteemed Japanese architect Yoshio Taniguchi, known for his work on the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The Asia Society Texas Center was his first free-standing building in the U.S.


Asia Society Texas Center


Japanese Garden, Hermann Park

The center features clean architectural lines and impressive details, including its signature second-floor water terrace—an edgeless suspended pool punctuated by occasional fountain bursts and breezes. The building also includes a large lobby that showcases art exhibits, a contemporary theater for local productions, and galleries for area artists to create and exhibit their work.

Jennifer Kapral, Asia Society's director of education and outreach, has been addressing the challenges of public interaction during the pandemic via web-based projects. She says programming like Asia Fest, the Asian American Stories series, At Home Adventures, Family Day, and food videos have been extremely popular and beneficial.

"We developed these online programs and videos to highlight contributions of marginalized groups that are sometimes in the news for the wrong reasons," Kapral says. "How do you respond to misleading stories about Asian Americans? Through education."

She adds that the center's food programming provides an opportunity to discover distinctive regional styles of cuisine, learn about the cultural roots of recipes for home cooking, and support independent restaurants and businesses.

"We're trying to uplift the voices that aren't always heard, and engage with them in person and online," Kapral says. "We're all neighbors. What we have in common—like being parents, teachers, and small business owners—should be shared and celebrated. It's the little everyday encounters that make the biggest difference."

A half-mile walk away, contentment awaits at the **Japanese Garden** in Hermann Park. Designed by renowned Japanese landscape architect Ken Nakajima in the 17th-century Daimyo style, the garden symbolizes the friendship between Japan and the U.S. Colorful Japanese maple and cherry trees intertwine with live oaks and pines above a stone path meandering to a small pond. A shoreline teahouse was built in Japan with traditional materials and donated by the Commemorative Association.

At the nearby **McGovern Centennial Gardens**, visitors can see a remarkably designed pagoda (be sure to notice the colorful ceiling) provided by Taiwan as part of the Sister Cities Association. Across the path lies a statue of Chinese philosopher Confucius sculpted by the late Willie Wang.

ASIATOWN AND VICINITY

The heart of Houston's Asian American community has shifted several times due to development pressure, from just east of downtown in roughly the 1930s–50s, to southeastern Houston in the 1960s–70s, to its current location in the southwestern suburbs in the early 1980s. Known as Chinatown until recently, Asiatown now stretches over six square miles.

Two THC markers in the area shed light on Houston's Asian American heritage. **Chinese Texans and Civil Rights** (6400 Bissonnet St.) acknowledges Albert C.B. Gee's efforts with the Chinese American Citizens Alliance to pass the Immigration Act of 1965. Nearby, a marker honoring **Edward Chen** (3599 Westcenter Dr.) notes that during the Korean War, he taught Cantonese to Federal Bureau of Investigation agents.

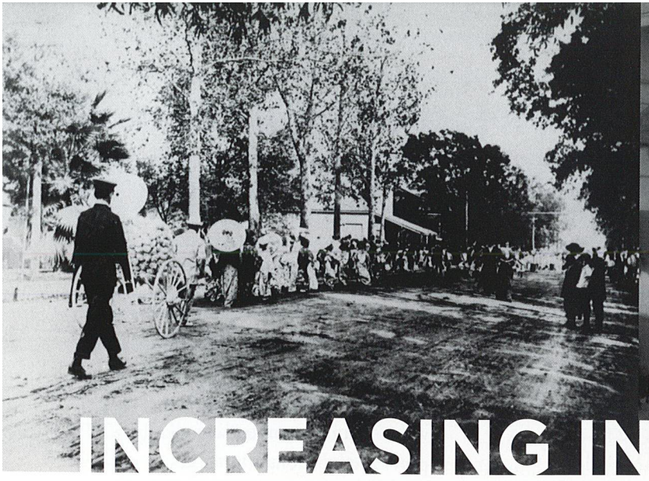
Several of the area's magnificent Asian American temples are free and open to the public. Although these are active places of worship, visitors are graciously welcomed by members who gladly provide educational tidbits about the site's history and cultural traditions.

One of the most remarkable is **BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir** (baps.org, 281-765-2277, visitor hours Mon.-Sat. 8-10 a.m., 4-6 p.m.). This breathtaking structure transports visitors far away from suburban Houston to the heart of India. The mandir—a Hindu place of worship—is a true sacred space, comprised of intricate Turkish limestone and Italian marble. Members trace their group's origins to the early 1970s; they helped construct the building 17 years ago from more than 33,000 individually hand-carved pieces sent from India.

Guests are required to remove their shoes (placed in a small room at the entrance) and wear "clean, conservative clothing"

Continued on page 14


BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir





INCREASING INFLUENCE

THC MARKERS DOCUMENT ASIAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCES IN TEXAS

By Bob Brinkman
THC Historical Marker Program Coordinator

Asian American Texans—once dispersed across the state—are now a rapidly coalescing and growing part of the state's population, often accounting for large portions of neighborhoods and cities. The demographic now accounts for about five percent of the Texas population with a total of nearly 1.5 million people. By itself, that figure is larger than the total count of any of the 11 least-populated states.

With this growing population and influence comes a deserved acknowledgement of the heritage behind this significant cultural group. Stories of communities and individuals are documented across the state through Official Texas Historical Markers administered by the Texas Historical Commission (THC).

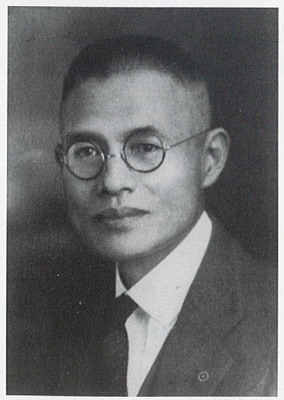
Among the first Asian immigrants in Texas were the more than 200 Chinese laborers who came in January 1870 to build the Houston and Texas Central Railway between Calvert and Dallas. Most stayed only a few months, but there are reports of about two dozen families who stayed in Central Texas as sharecroppers in the cotton fields. A pending marker will be placed at Kosse, about the midpoint of a 20-mile stretch of rail line graded and built by these early arrivals.

A larger Chinese workforce in the thousands helped complete rail lines through West Texas in the 1880s. A historical marker between Langtry and Del Rio recalls the site of Vinegarroon, a labor camp along the Southern Pacific route which was home to perhaps thousands of Chinese workers.

Many Chinese families later migrated to the state's larger cities, including El Paso, San Antonio, and Houston. One of the THC's first undertold markers was awarded in 2008 for El Paso's Chinese Community, placed downtown to commemorate what became a vibrant ethnic enclave which added to the city's cosmopolitan atmosphere.

San Antonio's Chinese community grew exponentially in the 1910s. General John J. "Black Jack" Pershing and U.S. troops, in pursuit of Pancho Villa, returned from Mexico in February 1917 with more than 2,500 civilians, including 527 Chinese living in Mexico.











Chinese immigration to the U.S. was unlawful since 1882, so General Pershing and others advocated for those who had supported the army in its mission. In 1921-22, the U.S. government awarded them full citizenship. It is estimated that half of this group and their descendants stayed in San Antonio permanently. A marker for the Pershing Chinese is located at Fort Sam Houston.

Sadatsuchi Uchida is credited with connecting Japan and Texas. Working for the Japanese consulate in America, he toured the Gulf Coast in 1902 and spoke with government and business officials about the prospects for rice farming in the area.

Historical markers have been placed for agricultural efforts led by father and son Seito and Kiyoaki Saibara in Webster, and brothers Yoshio and Yasuo Mayumi in Hamshire. A marker for the Site of the Kishi Colony recalls the leadership of Kichimatsu Kishi, a veteran of the Russo-Japanese War who established a community between Vidor and Orangefield in 1908.

Sometimes the Asian influence on the Lone Star landscape has come not from people but from architecture. A 1914 National Geographic article titled "Castles in the Air" introduced much of the world to the remote Himalayan Mountains nation of Bhutan. After a fire destroyed the main building at El Paso's Texas College of Mines, Kathleen Worrell, wife of the school's dean, saw a kindred spirit of design in the architecture of Bhutan and the school's site at the foot of the Franklin Mountains.

Since 1917, the majority of the buildings on what is now the University of Texas–El Paso (UTEP) campus have been built to resemble Bhutan's dzongs, with massive sloping masonry walls, high and deeply inset windows, overhanging roofs, and prominent bands of brick and mosaic designs. Old Main, completed in 1917, was designated a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark in 1982.

Other Asian-influenced landscapes across the state, smaller in scale but no less enduring, include two in San Antonio: Dr. Shigetaka Shiga's monument placed at the Alamo (1914) and Kimi and Miyoshi Jingu's Japanese Tea Garden at Brackenridge Park (1919). Other notable examples include Isamu Taniguchi's Japanese Garden at Zilker Park in Austin (1969) and the Japanese Garden of Peace at the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg (1976).

Some stories have truly come full circle. Claire Chennault, leader of the "Flying Tigers" in World War II, became well-regarded in China during and after the war. In 2015, the state's first all-Chinese language marker (in traditional and simplified characters) was dedicated at his birthplace in Commerce. As stories continue to be shared, more connections will be made and more chapters will be added to the growing tales of Texas.

Explore a map featuring the physical location of Official Texas Historical Markers highlighting Asian American heritage at thc.texas.gov/AsianMarkers.

TOP FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: A gathering on Green Avenue in Orange, Texas, 1900. University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, https://texashistory.unt.edu; crediting Heritage House Museum. Methodist church at Terry, Texas, 1922. University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, https://texashistory.unt.edu; crediting Heritage House Museum. 70-year-old Isamu Taniguchi worked without a salary for 18 months to transform three acres into a peaceful Japanese garden that opened to the public in 1969, Zilker Botanical Park, Austin. Randa Bishop/Danita Delimont. A Chinese-American man writing a name in Chinese at the second annual Texas Folklife Festival, 1973. Texas Cultures Online and was provided by the UT San Antonio Libraries Special Collections to The Portal to Texas History.

OPPOSITE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Fuji Kishi, wife of Kichimatsu Kishi, date unknown. She came with her husband to Texas in 1908. University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, https://texashistory.unt.edu; crediting Heritage House Museum. Kichimatsu Kishi, date unknown. He was the owner of a 3,500-acre rice colony in Terry, Texas between Beaumont and Orange. University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, https://texashistory.unt.edu; crediting Heritage House Museum. The Lhakhang on the campus of The University of Texas at El Paso tells the life stories of the Buddha and Guru Rinpoche. Christ Chavez.

A CENTURY OF CONTRIBUTIONS

ASIAN AMERICANS REPRESENT TEXAS FROM FARMING TO FEDERAL JOBS

Although the first documented Asian Americans arrived in Texas nearly 200 years ago, it has only been the past century when members of this significant community began having a cultural impact in the state. The images below capture scenes of challenges, daily life, and achievements across the state during this time.

1908



Workers thresh and bag rice on the Onishi farm in southeast Texas.
UTSA Libraries Special Collections.

1917



Chinese refugees at Camp Wilson, Fort Sam Houston.
UTSA Libraries Special Collections.

1926



Japanese American children on a pier in Kemah, near Houston.
UTSA Libraries Special Collections.

1936



Frank Eng, Stinson Field, San Antonio.
UTSA Libraries Special Collections.

1942



Japanese internees playing volleyball at Kenedy Alien Detention Camp, Kenedy.
UTSA Libraries Special Collections.

1952



Young Chinese League Battle of Flowers float, San Antonio.
UTSA Libraries Special Collections.

1968

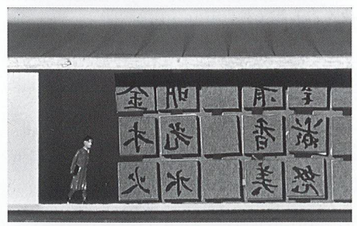
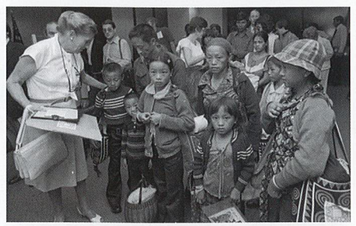


Image of a model of the Chinese Pavilion at the 1968 World's Fair known as HemisFair '68, held from April to October 1968 in San Antonio, Texas.
The Portal to Texas History.

1975



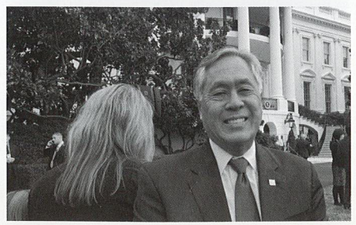
Vietnamese, Laotians, and Cambodians arriving at Houston Intercontinental Airport in 1975 are assisted by Travelers Aid workers.
GD0006N-1978-2294-015, *Houston Post*, Houston Public Library, HMRC.

1982



Gene Lee founded the bilingual-language paper in 1976. It ran until 1985, serving the immigrant community of Houston by distributing information about their needs and available local services and opportunities.
The Portal to Texas History.

1997



Native Texan Robert Gee has served as an attorney, Assistant Secretary for Policy and International Affairs, and Assistant Secretary for Fossil Energy of the U.S. Department of Energy.

2018



Renee Dutia, born and raised in India, is a THC commissioner, founder of Dallas-based Regali, Inc., and founder and chair of Asian100, a North Texas-based nonprofit organization.

Continued from page 5

funding request—she said she'd never seen him sit up so fast in her life!" Komatsu says. "He liked the idea, but the price tag was too high at the time. We eventually got sufficient funding, and I feel like the Bullocks' legacy has been honored."

Years later, Komatsu would have another memorable encounter with a legendary politician when George W. Bush was the featured speaker at one of the THC's early courthouse rededication ceremonies in Lampasas.

"His advance team hadn't done quite as much preparation for him as he needed, so he came directly up to me and said, 'Karl you're going to be my speech writer today—give me four points I can base my presentation on,'" Komatsu says. "I gave him four items, with economic development being the big one. He just went with it, and it ended up being a great speech."

'THE CAUSE OF PRESERVATION'

Komatsu adds that despite the courthouse program's ties with high-profile people like Bush, he found that the restoration projects' unheralded heroes were county judges and THC staff members. He speaks fondly of his experiences working with judges from all corners of the state and admires their ability to offer "the clarity of their country wisdom."

"Some are able to lean on their County Historical Commissions to educate the community if they are fortunate to have informed and enthusiastic volunteers," Komatsu says.

Regarding THC staff, Komatsu cites his decades of agency-related work as an ideal way to witness efforts that often go unnoticed by the public.



"I've had insight into the incredible dedication of the THC staff not just to a job, but to the cause of preservation," he says. "This is quite different from other agencies and organizations. From my exposure, most were there not just to fill a job function, but believed in the bigger mission of the THC."

He adds, "The sincerity, integrity, and professionalism of those on the front lines and program support roles is evident to someone who has spent 40 years in a working relationship with the THC from within and from the outside."

Komatsu's respect and appreciation were returned in 2013 when the THC presented his family's firm with the Texas Treasure Business Award in recognition of more than 50 years of contributing to Texas' economic and cultural prosperity. He was proud to accept the award with his father and officials from Fort Worth and the THC.

"My father is 94, but he's still going strong and contributing important work to our firm and industry," he said. "I hope I can follow his example and continue to add to the architectural legacy of this great state."



TOP: Komatsu, at far right, joins Gov. Ann Richards and other state officials for a Women's History Month Proclamation signing in 1991. LEFT: Komatsu's firm helped restore the Throckmorton Courthouse.

Continued from page 9

(no shorts, skirts, or sleeveless shirts) before ascending the massive temple steps. Inside, Hindu deities are represented by colorful artwork at individual stations. The sense of harmony and welcomeness is complemented by the surrounding exquisite architectural detail inside this monument to peace.

Several miles north is **Vietnam Buddhist Center** (281-575-0910), featuring a traditional prayer hall and lush gardens. Its focal point is an enormous 72-foot-tall statue of Quan Am, a revered bodhisattva (one who seeks awakening) known in Vietnam as the Goddess of Compassion. It is among the tallest sculptures in the country.

The statue is surrounded by a gorgeous garden with welcoming pathways and gigantic fan-shaped water lotus leaves among colorful flowers. The prayer hall evokes a Vietnamese village with its pagoda-style roof and intricate wood detailing.



Teo Chew Temple

Five miles northeast is the colorful and welcoming **Teo Chew Temple** (281-983-0097). Yet another secluded temple surrounded by suburban development, Teo Chew transports visitors to Vietnam via statues and traditional architecture. Inside, guests are greeted by fragrant incense rising to an ornamental red ceiling with suspended lanterns. Stations with deities are accompanied by tables filled with temple members' offerings of fresh fruit and flickering candles.

To learn more about Asian American heritage in Houston, visit Rice University's Houston Asian American Archive on campus at the Fondren Library (6100 Main St.) or online at haaa.rice.edu.

PHOENIX I RESTORATION AND CONSTRUCTION PRESENTS



NEWS BRIEFS

STATEWIDE PRESERVATION PLANNING BEGINS

The National Historic Preservation Act requires the Texas Historical Commission (THC) to periodically develop a statewide historic preservation plan. Although it was updated in 2016, Texas' last full Statewide Preservation Plan was published in 2011. Now you have the chance to participate in the creation of a new one.

The process encourages broad public participation in discussions about the challenges related to preserving cultural and historical resources, while setting goals and objectives that empower local communities, organizations, and individuals to action.

Texans can stay informed with updates on the planning process and upcoming meetings, as well as participate in online surveys, discussion forums, and other activities designed to maximize participation in this important statewide preservation planning effort.

To get involved, visit texaspreservationplan.com

MISSION DOLORES REOPENS

After a two-year closure to revamp its museum and implement improvements, the Mission Dolores State Historic Site officially reopened its doors October 9 with a public event.

The site unveiled several new features, including an expanded museum space, gift shop, and disc golf course. Enthusiastic San Augustine residents gathered on the grounds for the ceremony, where THC Executive Director Mark Wolfe and Betty Oglesbee from the Friends of Mission Dolores organization shared their excitement and hope for the future of Mission Dolores.





Afterwards, the THC had an official ribbon cutting and visitors were welcome to explore the site and enjoy cake and refreshments. The site is fully opened and admission is free.

Check out visitmissiondolores.com for more information.

MARK TIME WITH OUR NEW NEWSLETTER

Can't get enough Texas history? Our new monthly newsletter *Marking Time in Texas* spotlights interesting markers, upcoming dedication events, and other updates from our popular marker program.

Historical markers can be found in all 254 Texas counties, commemorating diverse topics in Texas history, including architecture, religious congregations, and military sites; events that changed the course of local and state history; and individuals who have made lasting contributions to our state, community organizations, and businesses. Undertold markers preserve stories that might otherwise be lost to time.

The THC's Communications Division offers several other periodic email newsletters, providing some of the best ways to learn about history and travel opportunities across Texas.

To learn more about the THC's historical markers program, visit thc.texas.gov/markers.

LEFT AND TOP: The THC hosted a public reopening event for Mission Dolores State Historic Site on October 9.

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

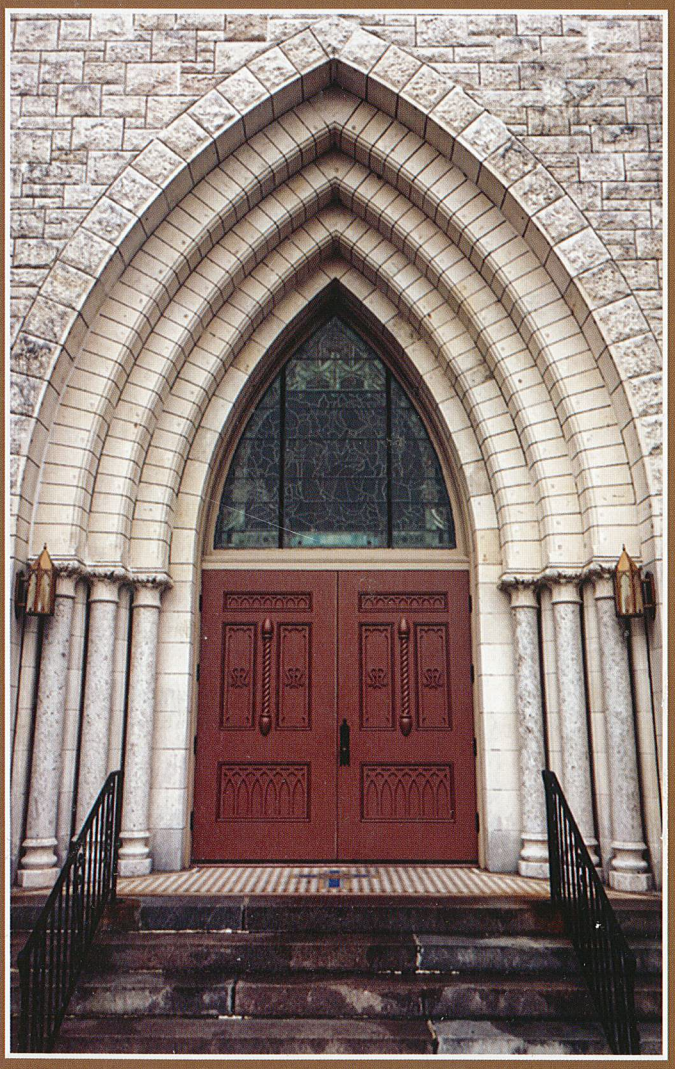
The Medallion
Texas Historical Commission
P.O. Box 12276
Austin, TX 78711-2276

PRESORTED STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTIN, TX
PERMIT NO. 1938

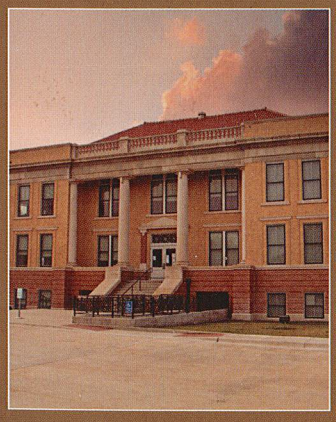
WHERE ON EARTH...IN TEXAS

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 impressive Gothic Revival structure in the THC's Texas Independence Trail Region dates to 1903 and was constructed with the help of Italian masonry workers.



ANSWER TO THE PHOTO FROM THE LAST ISSUE: The Beaux Arts building pictured at left is the 1913 Roberts County Courthouse, a twin of Jefferson's Marion County Courthouse and one of six Texas courthouses designed by architect Elmer George Withers.



Dozens of readers correctly identified the site, but congratulations and (eventual) prizes go to the first three: Susan Bowers, curator of the Roberts County Museum in Miami, Francine Carraro of Burnet, and Dick Smith of Bastrop. Thanks to everyone who participated!