

THE MEDALLION

FALL 2012



HISTORIC VICTORIA

Heritage Attractions Drawing Visitors
to Coastal Bend City



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THE **MEDALLION**

FALL 2012

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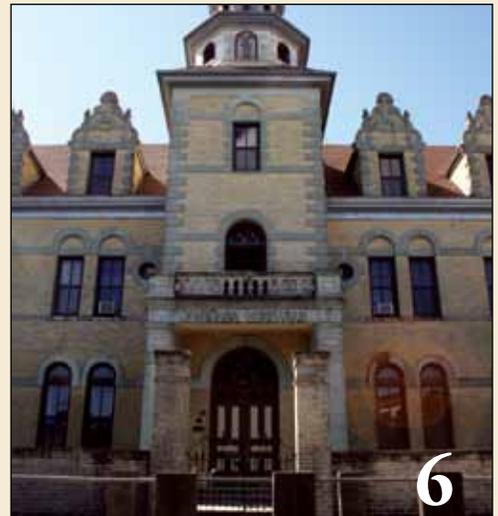
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ON THE COVER: Victoria's Evergreen Cemetery (photo by Andy Rhodes)

VISIT US ON THE WEB

www.thc.state.tx.us

Learn more about the real places telling the real stories of Texas.

www.texastimetravel.com

The Texas Heritage Trails Program's travel resource

www.texashistoricsites.com

The THC's 20 historic properties

<http://seethesites.blogspot.com>

The agency's historic sites blog

FAST FACTS

TEXAS MAIN STREET PROGRAM REINVESTMENT FIGURES

From **January–June 2012**, reinvestment into our **83** Texas Main Street districts included:

PRIVATE SECTOR REINVESTMENT:



\$43.4 million

JOINT VENTURES:



61 projects with a
\$23.3 million
value

PUBLIC PROJECTS:



\$79.6 million
value

*Based on 2011 figures for the value of a volunteer hour.

GRAND TOTAL OF 6-MONTH REINVESTMENT: \$146,328,608 + 36,638 reported volunteer hours, a value of **\$798,342***



Meet Matt Kreisle

THC's New Chairman Discusses Opportunities and Challenges

What are your initial plans as the agency's chairman?

The THC's last two years have been largely about reacting to the budget cuts and staff reductions from the last legislative session. Coming into the new session, I believe it's important for us to re-energize and focus our attention on the real value we provide Texans, and how to provide it in the most responsible, efficient, and cost-effective manner to taxpayers.

At our last commission meeting, I challenged our board and staff to begin clearly defining a vision for what we should be. By establishing a set of "big ideas" and priorities in the upcoming biennium, we can position ourselves for the future. In October, we'll hold a commissioner and staff work session to clarify that vision and set realistic goals and strategies for achieving it.

While the THC is already a nationally recognized, award-winning agency, my personal vision is for it to become the model for state historic preservation offices by exciting all citizens, visitors, and future generations of Texas about the proud history we share. We should also be the state model for efficiency in government, while instilling a strong culture of excellence within the organization. I see no reason why the THC shouldn't be included on annual listings of "Best Places to Work in Texas."

How will your experiences help with your new role at the THC?

I've spent the last 40 years in the private sector helping build Texas'

oldest architectural practice into one of the nation's largest international architectural and engineering design firms. I understand what it takes to build today's organization, how to effectively manage operations over a statewide geographical span, and how to motivate people to be the best. As an architect, I bring an awareness, sensitivity, and technical knowledge of our core programs, together with an outside perspective of working with the commission and its processes on major public projects.

How would you describe overseeing a state agency versus overseeing a private company?

That's not a short and easy answer—these are two contrasting models whose differences have far-reaching impacts throughout all levels of an organization. A private company must compete for market share by providing goods or services to support itself based on a risk-reward incentive basis. This necessitates a lean and nimble (yet flexible) organization, operational model, and decision-making process to respond quickly to change.

On the other side, a public agency is funded every two years by the Legislature with taxpayer dollars to provide a valuable public service within the same regulations for all state agencies. As a result, agencies can be more rigid and cumbersome in their organization, operations, and ability to make changes in programs and strategies after funding is in place. A public agency is less self-serving in nature than the private company, and

more focused on the public good. We are currently analyzing the pros and cons of both models to streamline our operations and improve services, while making it a better place to work.

How did you first develop an interest in historic preservation?

As a fifth-generation Texan, I was raised to appreciate the history of this state, but it wasn't until my involvement with architecture that I began to understand the importance of historic preservation. Studying the history of architecture provided a knowledge of styles with a sense of iterative progression over time, dating back to the early Egyptians. This was reinforced when I joined Texas' oldest architectural practice and experienced the evolution of a century's worth of the firm's work.

How can Texans help you with your new position?

I'd like to see Texans excited about their history. Our history is a source of pride that fosters a sense of unity and belonging across all ages and ethnicities. It concerns me when new Texans are not familiar with this great state's history. Also, our schools are placing less emphasis on our history.

I see the THC helping ensure all newcomers and future Texans are proud of this state's history. Texans can help by becoming excited about our history and sharing it—visit our website, tour our facilities, and support our programs. ★

Archeological Awareness

Research Site is One of Texas' Best-Preserved African American Farmsteads

By Douglas K. Boyd, Registered Professional Archeologist

Ransom and Sarah Williams did the same thing as most Central Texans in the early 1870s—they got married, had kids, and raised their family on a hardscrabble farm.

While eking out a sparse yet gratifying existence along Bear Creek in southern Travis County, there was no way for the two former slaves to know that countless people would be interested in their lives more than 140 years later. How this African American family was rediscovered, why their history is important, and how their story is being told today are fascinating tales unto themselves.

The Williams' lives were initially uncovered in 2007, largely as a result of a toll road proposed by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) known as State Highway 45 Southeast (SH 45). Because laws require the state to consider the cultural resources that might be damaged or destroyed, archeological investigations were conducted from 2003–09, at a late 19th-century farm site. These types of studies and their findings are being celebrated in October as

part of Texas Archeology Month, administered by the Texas Historical Commission (THC).

The survey conducted for the SH 45 project led to a multi-year, multi-disciplinary, publicly funded cultural resources management (CRM) project to investigate the history of the Williams family and the archeological remains of a fascinating historic site.

“Perhaps most importantly, this project included a concentrated effort to reach out to the local population and make the archeological research relevant to the people who care most—the descendant community,” said Pat Mercado-Allinger, director of the THC's Archeology Division.

The farmstead site was initially discovered in 1985, but it took many years to determine it was associated with an African American family. Prewitt and Associates, Inc., an Austin-based cultural resources firm, began investigating the site for TxDOT in 2007. The first step was archival research, conducted by Austin historian Terri Myers, who searched through county deed and tax records.

Myers discovered the farm belonged to Ransom and Sarah Williams, and she traced the history of the property and the family through time. Born about 1846, Ransom was probably enslaved at a plantation owned by John Wheeler Bunton at Mountain City near Buda. After emancipation on June 19, 1865, Ransom began working for himself, and by 1871 he had earned and saved enough money to purchase a 45-acre farm near the Travis and Hays county line. Within a few years he married Sarah, who was born into slavery in 1851, probably on Bunton's plantation.

The couple eventually had nine children; five of whom (born between 1876 to 1892) lived to adulthood and were raised on the family farm. Myers' research also discovered a link between the Williams family and the Buntons.

“Terri found out that five of Ransom and Sarah's great-grandchildren were still living in Texas, and three were in Austin,” Mercado-Allinger explains. “It's



Sixteen of the 27 oral history interviewees attended a recent book release event in Austin for *I'm Proud to Know What I Know: Oral Narratives of Travis and Hays Counties, Texas*.



wonderful to have a present-day connection like this.”

Archeological testing in 2007 revealed the farmstead site was mostly pristine, and that all the discovered objects were associated with the Williams family occupation (circa 1871 to 1905). Because most rural farmsteads were occupied for a century or more, archeologists noted it was rare to find a site reflecting a 34-year occupation of a single family in the late 19th century.

As required by CRM laws, TxDOT and the THC evaluated the site and agreed it was significant, leading to an intensive archeological investigation in 2009. A large portion of the site within the proposed SH 45 roadway was mapped, and archeologists dug 142 1-by-1-meter units, recovering more than 26,000 artifacts.

Documented items include the farmhouse foundation (likely a log cabin), probable outbuildings, stock pond, and a series of rock walls marking property boundaries and a corral complex. The historical evidence and material culture denote a successful farm family, and the Williams’ possessions would have rivaled those of any of their contemporary white neighbors.

University of Texas professor Maria Franklin joined the research team, supporting the decision to engage the community by conducting oral history interviews, which she planned and

directed (see sidebar for information about the finished product). Franklin and her graduate student, Nedra Lee, a former THC Preservation Fellow, interviewed 27 people over a two-year period, including three great-granddaughters of Ransom and Sarah Williams—Jewel Andrews, Corrine Harris, and Lourice Johnson.

“These oral histories reveal much about early 20th-century rural and urban life,” Franklin says. “They play an important role in helping us understand the experiences of the Williams family descendants in the Jim Crow era, and the years leading up to the civil rights movement.”

Archeologists believe the Williams site is one of the best-preserved African American-owned farmsteads in Texas, and the intensive research conducted there sheds valuable light on the African Diaspora in the post-

emancipation period. The project is also important because of its contributions to the understanding of African American history in Texas and the United States.

During the oral history process, area resident Rene Pickard was asked why it was important for people to know about the history of black families in the Manchaca area where he grew up. He replied, “Because it’s a part of history. That’s the way it was...I don’t think it should be totally forgotten.”

Throughout the research and documentation process, archeologists and historians were reminded about the importance of involving the descendant community in CRM projects.

“Community-based public archeology satisfies the spirit of the cultural resources laws,” Mercado-Allinger says. “Archival records may reveal much about the 19th century, but the oral histories truly bring these stories into the modern era.” ★



THE MORE YOU KNOW

Several resources are available for those interested in learning more about the families associated with the Williams farmstead project.

To download a free digital copy of the oral history report organized by the research team, visit www.paiarch.com and click “What’s New.” From there, go to “I’m Proud to Know What I Know.”

Another compelling public outreach project was a documentary feature on Austin PBS affiliate KLRU’s program “Juneteenth Jamboree.” To view the segment, visit www.klr.org/juneteenth/ and click on the “Episodes” tab (2010 entry, “More from the 2010 episode” section).

Top left: one of many historic photos scanned and archived for the Williams farmstead oral history project included students at the Antioch School near Buda in 1921. Above: archeologists, including Jodi Skipper (foreground) studied a rock livestock fence built by Ransom Williams on his 45-acre farm in southern Travis County.

MAIN ST. 100
ORIGINAL TOWNSITE HISTORIC DISTRICT

SODAS

ROSEBUD
FOUNTAIN
& GRILL

OPEN

ALL ROADS LEAD TO VICTORIA

City's Rich Heritage Inspires Bright Future

*Story and photos by Andy Rhodes
The Medallion Managing Editor*

THE TEXAS MEDALLION
THE TEXAS MEDALLION IS A MARK OF DISTINCTION AND A TESTAMENT TO THE STATE'S RICH HERITAGE AND HISTORY. IT IS A SYMBOL OF THE STATE'S COMMITMENT TO PRESERVING AND CELEBRATING ITS CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL LEGACY. THE MEDALLION IS A MARK OF DISTINCTION AND A TESTAMENT TO THE STATE'S RICH HERITAGE AND HISTORY. IT IS A SYMBOL OF THE STATE'S COMMITMENT TO PRESERVING AND CELEBRATING ITS CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL LEGACY.

Historically, Victoria has been known as “the crossroads of Texas” due to the convergence of highways and trails in this coastal bend community. These days, the city is merging its heritage tourism assets—including historical rehabilitation projects, recently designated Texas Main Street status, and La Salle Odyssey participation—to create vibrant options for travelers.

Dennis Patillo believes Texans should look at Victoria in a new light. As vice chair of the Victoria Economic Development Corporation, he’s excited about how the city’s heritage is impacting its future.

“Victoria used to be called a crossroads because nobody ever stopped here—they’d just pass through on the road to somewhere else,” he exclaims. “Now, we’re a destination, and a lot of that has to do with our rich history. It’s a wonderful time to be living and doing business here.”

Patillo and his wife Louise co-own Victoria’s original 1884 waterworks building, which they recently restored as **The Pump House** restaurant (www.victoriapumphouse.com, 361.572.9800). Louise also serves as Victoria’s Main Street Board Chair, where she’s witnessed a transformation in the historic downtown district—an eclectic collection of traditional storefronts, pedestrian-friendly walkways, and a restored county courthouse overlooking a lush, tree-lined plaza.

“There’s an energy in Victoria that’s becoming contagious—everyone’s talking about the tremendous amount of activity around here,” she says.

A stroll through downtown offers heritage travelers a glimpse of Victoria’s vibrant past and busy present. Visitors can learn about dozens of sites via Texas Historical Commission (THC) markers or the city’s online tour featuring informative maps, photos, and audio clips.

According to Gary Dunnam, a member of the Victoria County Historical Commission and executive director of Victoria Preservation, Inc., “all the pieces of the heritage puzzle are finally falling into place.”

“One thing that’s definitely new for us is having the Main Street district linked with other historic destinations in Victoria,” Dunnam says. “A site like the Pump House is a great link to downtown. Ever since the doors opened, people have been funneling in.”

For Dennis Patillo, the Pump House’s impressive origins are a compelling topic of discussion. As president of Stewart Title of the Coastal Bend, Inc., he claims the property’s deed is “the cleanest (he’s) ever seen,” with its origins traced to the Republic of Texas. He proudly points out the original property title, signed by Sam Houston himself, has changed hands only twice: to the city of Victoria in 1841, and to Patillo and his wife in 2010.

For the recent rehabilitation, Patillo says his crew restored the steel casement windows, replaced broken window panes, reconstructed antique metalwork, and

refurbished walls, floors, and ceilings. According to THC architectural reviewers, rehabilitation projects like this can be eligible for a federal tax credit (if the work complies to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and meets other requirements). This could save property owners 20 percent of certified rehabilitation expenditures, potentially equaling tens of thousands of dollars.

Patillo says the City of Victoria’s approach to economic development incentives is a model for other Texas communities. In addition to its recent acceptance into the Texas Main Street Program, Victoria offers several initiatives to encourage historic preservation. These include a grant program for façade restoration and

residential use of upper floors, two designated historic districts limiting new construction, and providing time to seek demolition alternatives.

Patillo adds that these programs are attracting the attention of economists throughout the state, along with the recent growth of Victoria College (according to administrators, enrollment has increased from approximately 3,800 students in 2007 to 6,000 currently) and investment in the community by industries such as Caterpillar.

“Our economy is in great shape—I like to say we’ve rounded first base and we’re heading in strong to second,” he says. “Thanks to our vibrant history and local economy, this is one of the most exciting places to be in Texas.”



From left: Victoria CHC member Gary Dunnam joins Dennis and Louise Patillo at the Pump House restaurant, a successful historic rehabilitation project.

LA SALLE'S LEGACY

From 1996–2002, Victoria was drawing attention for completely different types of preservation activities: the world-renowned La Salle projects.

Nearby, the THC excavated two of Texas' most important archeological sites relating to the famous French explorer Robert Cavalier, Sieur de La Salle—his ill-fated ship *La Belle*, which wrecked in 1686 approximately 40 miles away in Matagorda Bay, and Fort St. Louis, the adjacent settlement he established on Garcitas Creek. Both yielded a fascinating array of artifacts representing 17th-century colonialism.

After the excavations, seven museums in six Texas coastal counties banded together to create the La Salle Odyssey, a series of exhibits telling the comprehensive story of La Salle's expedition and the THC's work. One of the most impressive collections of exhibits is at the **Museum of the Coastal Bend** (www.museumofthecoastalbend.org, 361.582.2511) on the Victoria College campus.

The museum's new curator, Eric Ray, has devoted the past several years to assisting the THC in the curation of *La Belle's* extensive artifact collection at the Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History. As an editor of the upcoming technical volume with former THC Archeology Division Director Jim Bruseth, and THC archeologists Amy Borgens and Bradford Jones, Ray has contributed research to new interpretations of the wreck's artifacts. Together, these provide expanded insight into world events in the late 1600s.

For example, Ray has analyzed several items of weaponry in the ship's cargo that reveal the military focus of La Salle's



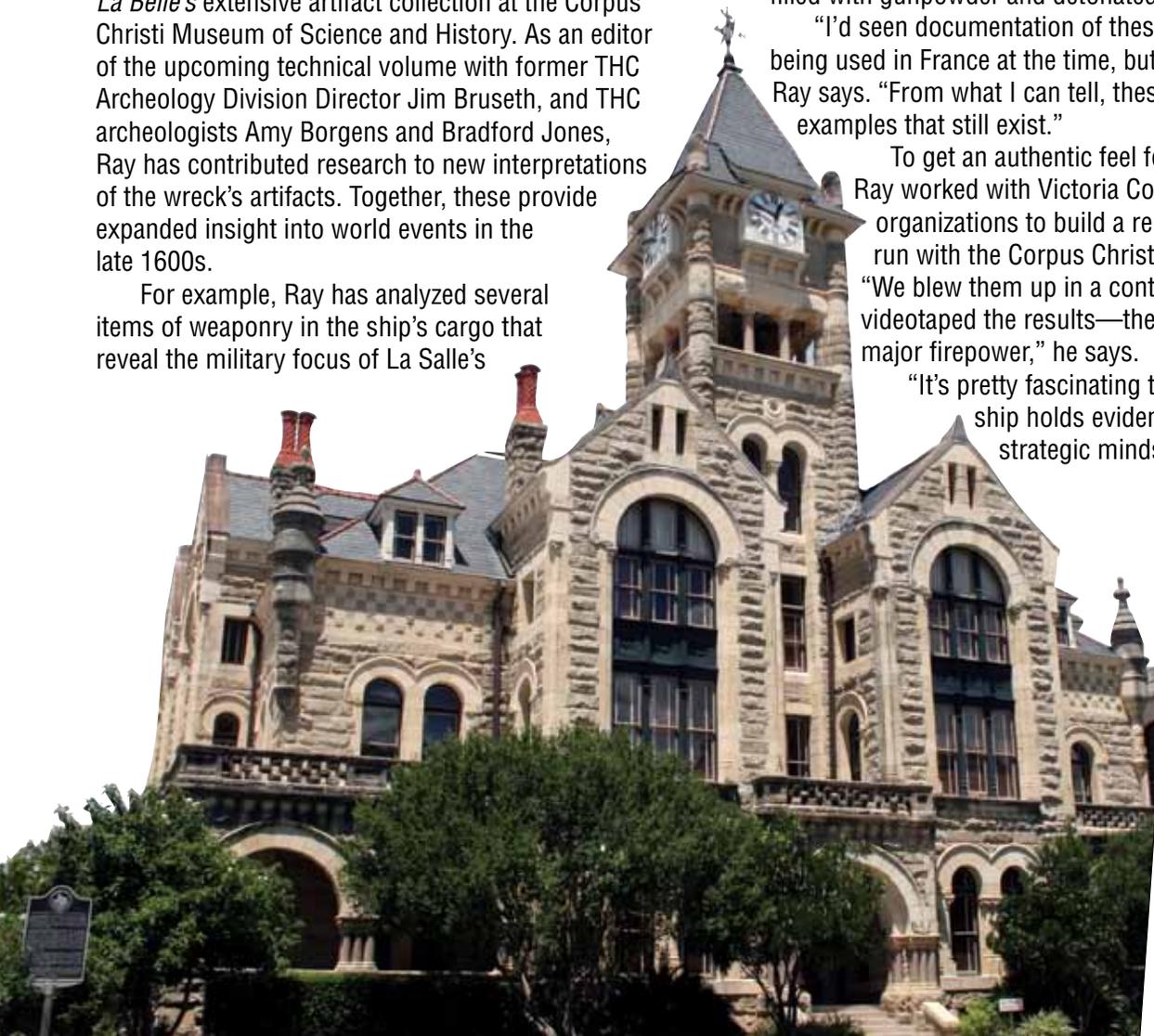
Above: the Museum of the Coastal Bend on the Victoria College campus showcases hundreds of La Salle Odyssey artifacts, including a firepot (left). Below: the 1892 Victoria County Courthouse (left) and 1904 St. Mary's Catholic Church.

expedition. In particular, Ray helped determine that cast-iron vessels originally identified as crucibles, were in fact petards, a small bomb-like device for blowing up gates and walls. Ray also analyzed the firepots, small ceramic jars filled with gunpowder and detonated like a grenade.

"I'd seen documentation of these types of weapons being used in France at the time, but no artifacts survived," Ray says. "From what I can tell, these are the only known examples that still exist."

To get an authentic feel for the firepots' use, Ray worked with Victoria College and other organizations to build a replica, followed by a test run with the Corpus Christi Police Department. "We blew them up in a controlled environment and videotaped the results—these things had some major firepower," he says.

"It's pretty fascinating that the cargo on this ship holds evidence showing the strategic mindset of the geopolitical



movements at the time,” Ray adds. “If things had worked out differently, it could have had a major impact on the history of Texas and even the entire country.”

The museum’s La Salle Odyssey section is a primary focus, showcasing seven cannons from Fort St. Louis, intricate artifacts from *La Belle*, and dozens of informative maps and panels. Beyond these exhibits, the facility also sheds light on the region’s prehistoric past and ranching history with displays of historic objects and photos.

“Every time visitors come here, they see something different—that’s an exciting thing to be a part of,” Ray says. “Too many times, museums stick with what they have and become artifacts themselves. I’m looking forward to taking the great resources we have and presenting them in ways that make people rethink what they already knew about history.”

VISITING VICTORIA

Heritage travelers can experience Victoria’s multi-faceted history at dozens of cultural attractions throughout the community. One of the city’s most popular destinations is its downtown Main Street district, featuring several blocks brimming with turn-of-the-century storefronts.

Downtown’s crown jewel is the 1892 **Victoria County Courthouse** (www.victoriacountytx.org, 361.573.1878), a towering Romanesque Revival structure built of blue Muldoon sandstone and designed by renowned Texas architect J. Riely Gordon. The late 1990s restoration project was hailed as a successful collaboration between public and private entities.

Other downtown sites of note include the eye-catching 1904 **Nazareth Academy** (105 W. Church St.), a National Register property, and the adjacent **St. Mary’s Catholic Church**, a remarkable 1904 neo-Gothic building that received the THC’s Recorded Texas Historical Landmark designation in 1965. Just around the corner, another THC marker adorns the 1882 **Fossatti’s Delicatessen** (302 S. Main St., 361.576.3354), the “oldest deli in Texas.”

Several blocks away, the **Nave Museum** (www.navemuseum.com, 361.575.8227) showcases regional and national artwork in an impressive 1932 Greek Revival temple-like structure designed by noted Texas architect Atlee Ayres. The museum hosts approximately six exhibits each year, including landscapes and portraits by namesake artist Royston Nave.

Just a few miles north of town, the **Hiller House** (www.keepvictoriabeautiful.com, 361.571.0582) represents Victoria’s early pioneer era in the dwelling built by German immigrants Friedrich and Margaretha Beck Hiller in 1852. Now serving as the headquarters for Keep Victoria Beautiful, the homestead and Hiller Family Museum are open for tours by request.

An Official Texas Historical Marker stands at the entry to **Evergreen Cemetery** (1800 block of N. Vine St.), also designated by the THC as a Historic Texas Cemetery. Dating to the 1850s, the extensive grounds contain more than 9,000 gravesites, including those of Victoria founder Martín de Leon (1765–1833), and veterans of the Texas Revolution and Civil War.



One mile north of the cemetery along a scenic bend of the Guadalupe River, Victoria’s colonial-era heritage is memorialized on a marker commemorating **Old La Bahia Road** (400 block of McCright Dr.), a branch of the legendary El Camino Real de los Tejas trade route. A Daughters of the American Colonists plaque marks the site of a centuries-old Spanish outpost and burial ground.

For additional information about heritage tourism destinations in the Victoria area, download a free copy of the THC’s *Texas Independence Trail Region* travel guide at www.thc.state.tx.us. ★

Above: Fossatti’s Delicatessen is a popular destination on Victoria’s historic Main Street. A THC historical marker welcomes visitors to the 1852 Hiller House. Right: a marker for Old La Bahia Road.



Recently Registered

New National Register Listings Include a Courthouse, a Church, and a Coffin Company

By Greg Smith
State National Register Coordinator

In Texas, more than 3,000 sites are on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) list, and dozens more are nominated each year. The Texas Historical Commission (THC) oversees the review and approval process in Texas. Texas' recently listed historic properties reflect the diversity of the state's heritage in areas such as industry, recreation, architecture, agriculture, and ethnic heritage. Noteworthy new listings include:

BRACKENRIDGE PARK

Bexar County, San Antonio

Brackenridge Park is one of the preeminent public parks in Texas. Formally established in 1899, when George Brackenridge's Water Works Company donated 199 acres of property to the City of San Antonio for public use, the park includes a wide array of prehistoric and historic sites,

including two Spanish-built irrigation ditches and a former rock quarry. In 1915, recreational areas were introduced into the park, adding pavilions, playgrounds, bathhouses, and picnic areas. New features were introduced over several decades, including a golf course, ball fields, and Pioneer Hall and the Sunken Garden Theater, two of the largest products of the Texas Centennial program. For the official National Register listing, the park was noted for its significance in the areas of Conservation, Entertainment & Recreation, Industry, Architecture, Art, Landscape Architecture, Engineering, and Archeology.

VALLEY FRUIT COMPANY

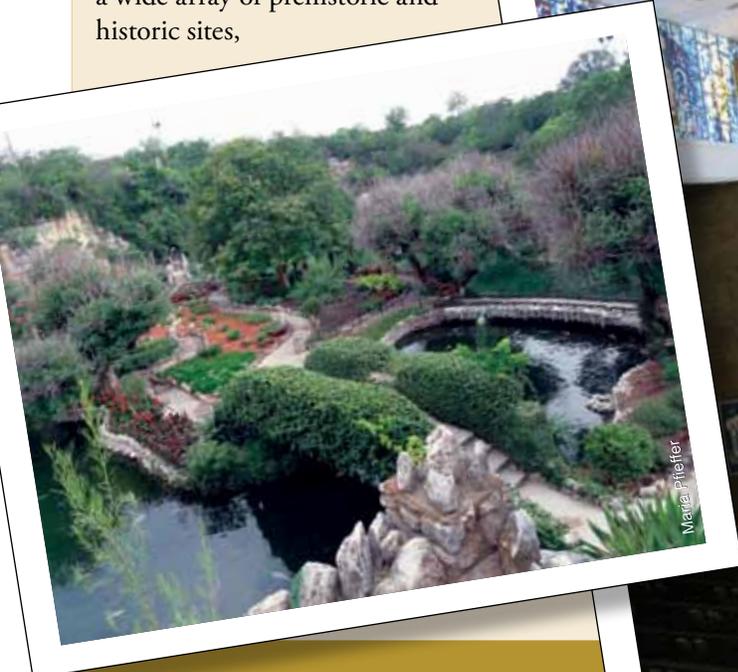
Hidalgo County, Pharr

During the height of its activity, the Valley Fruit Company was the world's largest grapefruit packing and shipping company. Built in 1947, the facility expanded in the 1950s to include vegetable processing and became one of the largest agricultural packing facilities under one roof. The property is significant in the area of Commerce and in Architecture, recognizing the significance of the wood lamella truss roofs that span enormous areas in the primary building. The property was recently rehabilitated with the use of Federal Preservation Tax Credits via the THC.

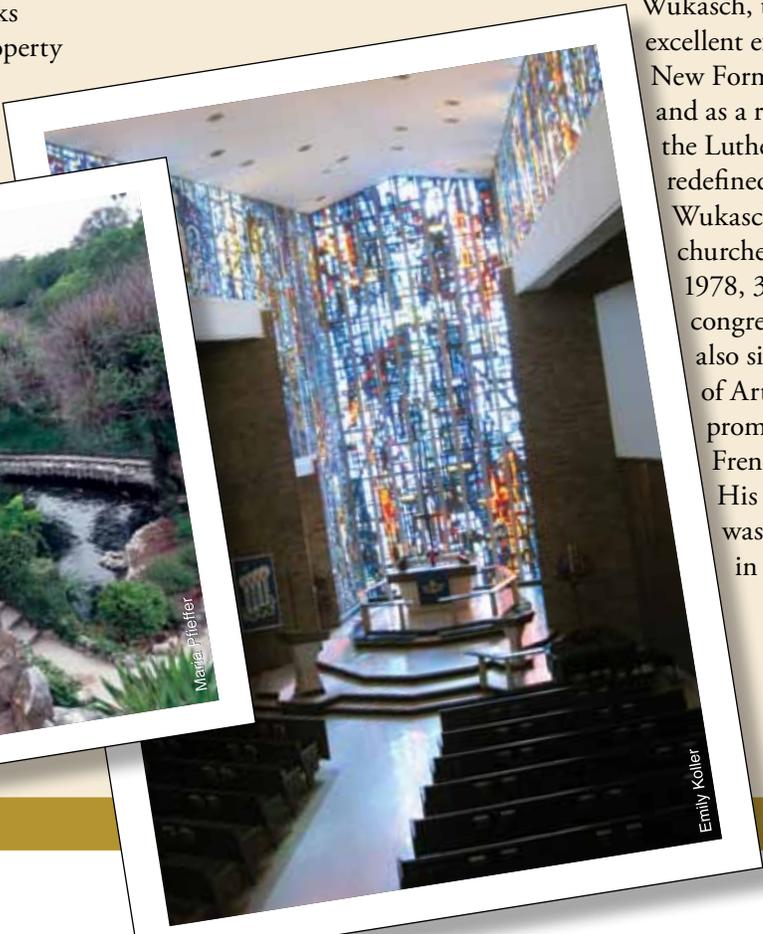
GETHSEMANE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Travis County, Austin

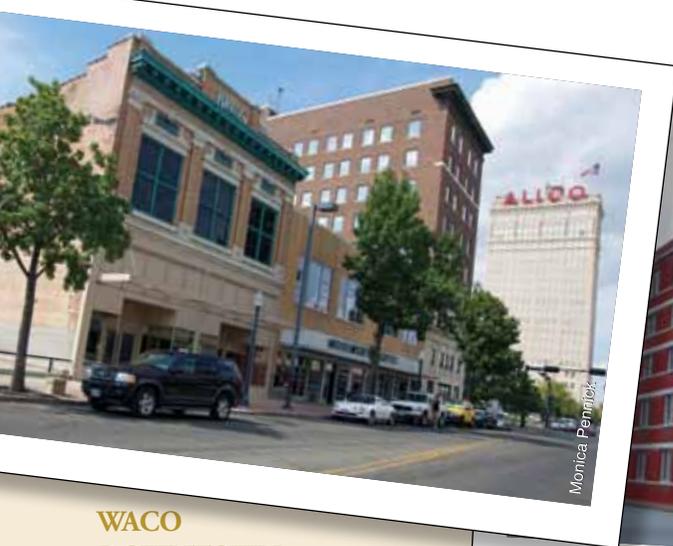
The 1962 Gethsemane Lutheran Church was constructed to meet the changing needs of the state's oldest Swedish Lutheran congregation. Designed by Austin architect Eugene Wukasch, the church is an excellent example of postwar New Formalist church design, and as a representation of how the Lutheran Church in Texas redefined itself at mid-century. Wukasch designed at least 47 churches between 1948 and 1978, 37 of them for Lutheran congregations. The church is also significant in the area of Art, for the building's prominent stained glass by French master Gabriel Loire. His work in Gethsemane was Loire's first project in Texas.



Merla Pfeiffer



Emily Kolier



Monica Pennick



Norman Alston

**WACO
DOWNTOWN
HISTORIC DISTRICT**

McLennan County, Waco

The Waco Downtown Historic District—the heart of the city’s central business district and former industrial sector—retains a high concentration of properties representing the commercial, cultural, physical, and architectural development of Waco. The buildings range from modest 20th-century brick commercial buildings to some of the region’s finest examples of multi-story office buildings, hotels, and fraternal lodges. The district is composed of 237 buildings and sites, of which eight buildings are individually listed in the National Register.

**ADDIE AND A.T. ODOM
HOMESTEAD**

Newton County, Shankleville

Constructed in 1922, the Odom house was built by Alvah Troga Odom for himself and his family. In addition to the dwelling, the property retains a number of historic-era outbuildings and structures, including a smokehouse, chicken house, barn, and large storage building. The house stands as a rare, intact example of early 20th-century housing in the African American community of Shankleville. A.T. and his wife Addie Odom attained a high level of personal achievement with their skills and service, and made significant contributions to Shankleville institutions and community life during and after the Jim Crow era.

DALLAS COFFIN COMPANY

Dallas County, Dallas

The 1911 Dallas Coffin Co. building housed a manufacturing facility, warehouse space, and offices. The building anchored a multi-building complex that included woodworking sheds and lumberyards adjacent to the St. Louis Southwestern (“Cotton Belt”) Railway line south of downtown Dallas. The company occupied the building until 1950, after which it housed an insurance company and a printing company until 1960, when Sears Roebuck & Co. used it as a warehouse. Designed by the Dallas architecture firm C.W. Bulger and Son, the building is an excellent example of the functional aesthetic of 1910s Commercial style buildings, and represents the burgeoning funeral industry in Texas at the turn of the century.

For more information, please visit www.thc.state.tx.us/markerdesigs/madnr.shtml. ★

Far left: Brackenridge Park, San Antonio; Left: stained glass interior by the French master Gabriel Loire, Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Austin. Top center: Waco Downtown Historic District; Dallas Coffin Company

OTHER NATIONAL REGISTER LISTINGS IN TEXAS

July 2011–June 2012

Bexar County

Alamo Stadium, San Antonio
Heidemann Ranch, San Antonio
Presnal-Watson House, San Antonio

Brooks County

Brooks County Courthouse, Falfurrias

Callahan County

Baird T&P Depot, Baird

Dallas County

Parkland Hospital, Dallas

Gregg County

Frank Taylor Rembert House, Longview

Guadalupe County

Hardscramble, Seguin vicinity

Harris County

Idylwood Historic District, Houston
I.P. Walker House, Shoreacres
Mellinger House, Houston
Yale Street Bridge, Houston

Hudspeth County

Wallace Pratt Residence,
Guadalupe Mountains National Park

Jackson County

Edna Theater, Edna

Matagorda County

Christ Episcopal Church, Matagorda

Somervell County

Oakdale Park, Glen Rose

Tarrant County

Butler Place, Fort Worth
Ridglea Theatre, Fort Worth

Travis County

Delta Kappa Gamma Society
International Headquarters, Austin

Upshur County

Upshur County Courthouse, Gilmer

Williamson County

Hutto Commercial Historic
District, Hutto

The Past Meets the Present

THC Shares Preservation News with New Social Media Accounts

By Rob Hodges
THC Social Media Coordinator

Have you heard about the THC's three new historical sites? They're welcoming visitors online at Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

This summer, the official THC Facebook page was launched, followed by a Twitter account and photo-sharing app Instagram. The new pages are a dynamic way for the THC to engage new audiences, expand public and media relations, and participate in the ongoing conversations about historic preservation in Texas that are taking place on social media platforms.

The new social media pages promote THC programs and highlight preservation projects and events throughout Texas. The THC Facebook page has become a daily source of news about heritage-related activities, agency initiatives, and partnerships. It provides updated information, program activity, and links to resources while allowing followers to post preservation-related information of their own.

With Twitter and Instagram, the agency is expanding its ability to provide breaking news, real-time coverage, and visual content from the preservation community. The eye-catching Instagram photos—posted on Twitter and featured in



After just a few months, the THC's Facebook page garnered more than 1,200 "Likes." The page has become a daily resource for heritage-related news and events throughout the state. If you're on Facebook, please Like the THC's page to keep up with all the activity!

a "Staff Instagrams" tab on the Facebook page—allow THC staff to share photos of historical sites throughout the state. Subjects include the agency's 20 state historic sites, historical markers, National Register of Historic Places properties, Main Street shops, historic courthouses, and historic cemeteries.

"Each of these social media platforms provides a great opportunity for the preservation community to see the important statewide projects and programs the THC is involved in," says the THC's Deputy Executive Director Terry Colley. "We encourage everyone to follow our new accounts to experience the activity and keep up with all the latest preservation news."

In addition to these social media pages, the THC has individual Facebook pages for 10 of its historic sites, as well as its historical marker program. Twitter feeds are also available for Casa Navarro and Fort Griffin State Historic Sites, along with the National Museum of the Pacific War and historical marker program. These pages will continue in addition to the THC's centralized pages on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Additional social media platforms will be coming later this year.

As new media platforms come and go, the THC intends to adapt and remain part of the ongoing and important preservation conversations wherever they are happening. The past meets the present as the THC tells the real stories about the real places in Texas history in a brand new way. ★



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Su Casa

Casa Navarro Showcases New Mural, Interactive Exhibits

By *Andy Rhodes*
and *Maureen Brown, THC staff*

It can take a moment for Casa Navarro visitors to become acclimated with their surroundings. Much like the Alamo just a mile away, Casa Navarro's environment has changed over time. The gentle landscapes of centuries past have been replaced by towering urban edifices.

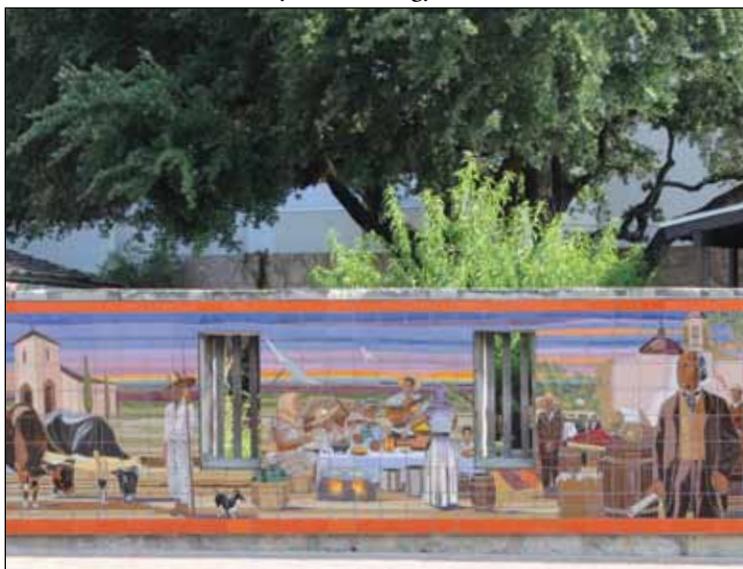
As soon as visitors pass through the modest wooden gate, however, they're transported to the mid-1800s, when Tejano patriot and politician José Antonio Navarro lived and worked here in the adobe structures that now comprise one of the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) 20 historic sites. Recent upgrades and the addition of an eye-catching mural (at right) have increased visibility and visitation for the site, which offers a comprehensive and interactive experience for those interested in this compelling slice of San Antonio's heritage.

This summer, a colorful 50-by-8 foot hand-glazed tile mural was added along the outside wall of the site by renowned San Antonio artists Jesse Trevino and Elizabeth Rodriguez. The public mural, located on the exterior wall along Nueva Street, honors Navarro's life and legacy along with the thriving community of Laredito (little Laredo), which once surrounded the site.

Inside, recent upgrades highlight Navarro's life and times through self-guided, multi-sensory exhibits, including sounds of Laredito, interactive iPad displays, and smells of

herbs and foods from a traditional San Antonio Tejano kitchen. Educational exhibits showcase gardens, preservation, and environmental elements.

"Historic homes like this one, made of adobe and caliche block, have traditionally been energy efficient,"



Casa Navarro State Historic Site www.visitcasanavarro.com
228 S. Laredo St., San Antonio Open Tuesday–Saturday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
210.226.4801 Sunday 12–4 p.m.

explains Donna Williams, director of the THC's Historic Sites Division. "The site staff continues to use the time-honored, natural formula—lime, water, and prickly pear cactus juice—to whitewash the buildings every year."

A native of San Antonio (1795–1871), Navarro was an influential political figure during the momentous 55 years when Texas' destiny was forged, serving in Texas legislatures under Mexico, the Republic of Texas, and the State of Texas. In 1836, he and his uncle José Francisco Ruiz were the only two native Texans to sign the Texas Declaration of Independence.

Navarro lived at the site with his wife Margarita de la Garza Flores Navarro. After his death in 1871, his daughter, Josefa inherited the property then sold it almost immediately. During the early 20th century, the home was rented to Laredito residents, and the mercantile building housed several businesses, including a grocery, café, inn, and tavern at different times.

The San Antonio Conservation Society acquired and restored the property in 1960 and opened it to the public in 1964. The site is a designated local and state landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It was transferred to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in 1975.

In 2008, Casa Navarro was transferred along with 17 other historic sites to the THC. The Friends of Casa Navarro have continued to make substantial contributions to the improvements at the site, including funding the interpretive renewal plan and providing a significant financial contribution toward the preservation project and new exhibits.

The visitor center is the first stop for admissions and a brief site introductory film. The museum store offers a variety of books—including Texana and Tejano history, Tejano cooking, and gardening—plus craft items, heirloom seeds, historic games, writing implements, and decorative items. ★

Gov. Perry Appoints Two New THC Commissioners

The Texas Historical Commission (THC) welcomes August Harris III of Austin and Michael Donegan of McLendon-Chisholm to the agency. Gov. Rick Perry appointed both to the commission for terms to expire in February 2015.

Harris is the president of Covenant Financial Solutions LLC, a board member of Leadership Austin, first vice president of the Heritage Society of Austin, a member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and a volunteer for the Austin Museum of Art. He is president of the Austin High School Continuing Education Foundation and a volunteer and past committee chair of the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce's Public Policy Roundtable and the Transportation and Local Issues committees. Harris received his bachelor's degree from the University of Texas.

Donegan is an accounts manager at El Dorado Chemical Co. and former mayor of the city of McLendon-Chisholm. He is a member of the Texas Agricultural Industries Association, past vice president and a past board member of the Rockwall Youth Fair, and a past member and past class agent of the Texas A&M University Association of Former Students. Donegan received his bachelor's degree from Texas A&M University.

"We look forward to working with both of our new commissioners who bring a wealth of expertise, enthusiasm, and energy to the agency," said THC Executive Director Mark Wolfe. "As we embark on new preservation projects and challenges, we welcome their input and experience in helping us tell the real stories of the real places of the Lone Star State."



A recent ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrated Fulton Mansion's new Education and History Center.

APPLICATIONS FOR 2013 HISTORICAL MARKERS NOW BEING ACCEPTED

The THC is currently accepting applications for subject historical markers, designated Historic Texas Cemeteries (HTC), and Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks (RTHLs). Applications must be submitted to the appropriate County Historical Commission (CHC), and the deadline for CHCs to forward applications to the THC is November 15, via email, to markerapplication@thc.state.tx.us. Education and RTHLs are the thematic priorities for 2013 applications.

RTHLs are properties judged to be historically and architecturally significant, and must be at least 50 years old. Applications for RTHLs and education topics will receive additional points when new applications are scored. The THC will approve up to 225 new applications; up to 20 additional markers will be approved through the Undertold Stories marker program.

Complete information regarding the marker applications process can be found at www.thc.state.tx.us. To learn more about Official Texas Historical Markers, RTHLs, and HTC designations, contact the THC's History Programs Division at 512.463.5853.

BANKHEAD HIGHWAY SERVES AS PILOT FOR HISTORIC HIGHWAYS INITIATIVE

As the first step on a journey to identify, designate, and promote the historic highways of Texas, the THC has contracted with the Austin consulting firm of Hardy-Heck-Moore to begin surveying the Texas route of the coast-to-coast Bankhead Highway, established in 1916.

In partnership with the Texas Department of Transportation, federal transportation enhancement funds will enable the THC—using the Bankhead Highway as a pilot—to oversee several educational projects. They include a historic context for Texas highways statewide, a survey of historic resources along the Bankhead Highway corridor, and a Bankhead Highway website.

The Bankhead Highway was a transcontinental roadway from Washington D.C. to San Diego that today roughly parallels Interstates 20 and 30 from Texarkana to El Paso. In 1916, the Bankhead Highway Association was created, named for Alabama Sen. John Hollis Bankhead, who was a leading proponent of "good roads."

CHC Reporters

Online Tool Helps Highlight Significant Accomplishments

By Amy Hammons

County Historical Commission (CHC) Outreach Coordinator

Each year, CHCs are asked to report their activities to the Texas Historical Commission (THC) as directed by the Texas Local Government Code. While reporting may seem routine to some, this exercise results in a variety of direct and indirect benefits to CHCs and the preservation community.

The CHC Outreach Program uses this information to improve how the THC responds to CHC needs and to help others understand the importance of CHC work. Here are several ways CHC reports help Texas' preservation community:

- **Individual evaluations:**

We read each report to gain a better understanding of the activity levels, priorities, and needs of each CHC.

- **Collective evaluations:**

We use the summaries generated by the online reporting tool to identify educational needs that are most prevalent, and to help CHCs understand the breadth of their statewide contributions.

- **Information sharing:**

We make this information available to CHCs, THC staff, and preservation partners to promote CHCs as a source of local preservation leadership.

- **Preservation testimonials:**

We use CHC accomplishments to quantify the value of CHC service, to illustrate CHC impact on local communities, and to inspire other local preservationists.

Since its creation in 2008, the CHC Outreach Program has used online tools to expedite the reporting and review process. Prior to CHC Outreach, the THC did not have the personnel to evaluate the paper reports submitted each year. Currently, we read reports and distribute CHC information and concerns to THC staff. Additionally, online reporting allows us to generate and share cumulative results with all CHCs, while providing one-on-one evaluations with CHCs that have an interest in improving their level of activity.

The larger preservation community benefits from CHC reporting because the information demonstrates how to



Atascosa CHC received a 2011 Distinguished Service Award; they strive to share county history in meaningful ways.

accomplish goals within the Statewide Preservation Plan. CHC Outreach staff formatted the CHC reports to affirm the plan and use its online platform (www.preservationconnection.com) to post CHC projects and reinforce accomplishments.

Annual reporting is a record of a CHC's service and a method to measure preservation success, so please make efforts to report each January. For more information about CHC reporting, summary documents, and ongoing efforts, visit www.thc.state.tx.us/county_commissions/chcannlrpt.shtml. ★

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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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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 prizes from the THC's Texas Heritage Trails Program and be named in the next issue of *The Medallion*. Send your answer to: *The Medallion*, P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711-2276; via fax to 512.463.6374; or email to medallion@thc.state.tx.us. Limit one prize annually per contestant.

Need a clue? In 1913, this North Texas site hosted "Ben Hur," boasting the only stage in Texas that didn't have to be altered to accommodate the performance.



Answer to the photo from the last issue: The site pictured (at left) is St. John Lutheran Cemetery at Ross Prairie near Ellinger. Covering about an acre nearly 12 miles southeast of LaGrange, it contains several family plots with intricate wrought iron work.

Congratulations to the two readers who submitted the correct answer: Linda Dennis of Fayetteville and Carolyn Heinsohn of La Grange (who has ancestors buried there). Thanks to all participants! ★

