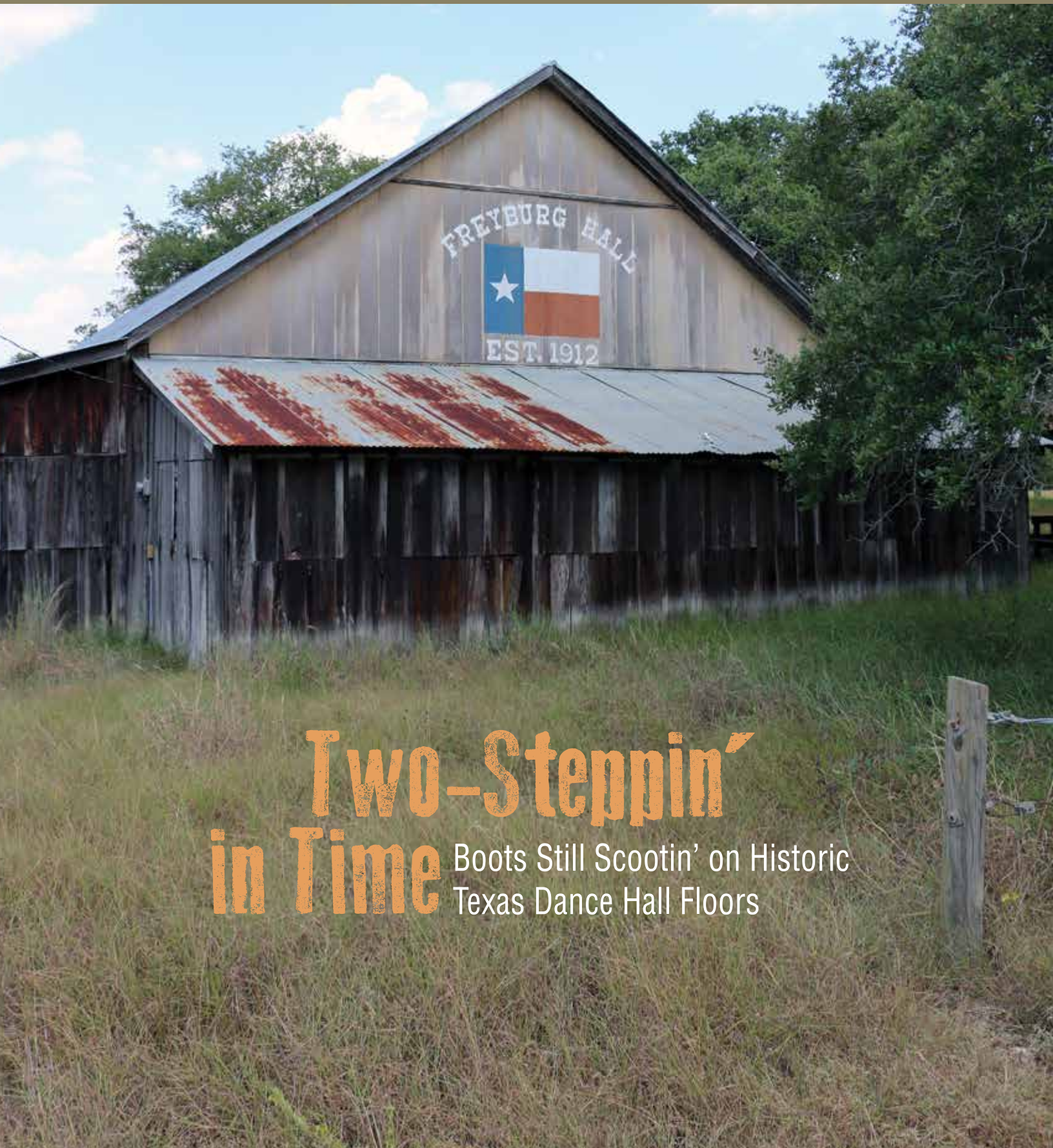


TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

THE MEDALLION

FALL 2015



Two-Steppin' in Time

Boots Still Scootin' on Historic
Texas Dance Hall Floors



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Freyburg Hall near La Grange. Photo by
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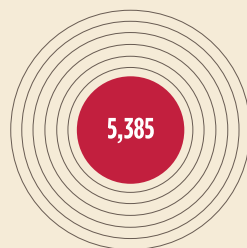
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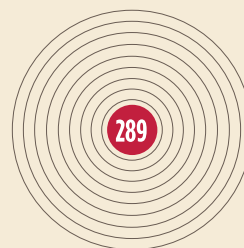


FAST FACTS

These numbers show the significant economic impact of the
Texas Main Street Program (2013).



**NET JOBS
CREATED IN TEXAS**



**NET NEW
BUSINESSES**



**REINVESTMENT IN
TEXAS MAIN
STREET DISTRICTS**

Source: Economic Impact of Historic Preservation in Texas, 2015

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
real places telling real stories



Dear Friends,

The hospitality and charm of the Lone Star State are world famous. As First Lady of Texas, I have traveled throughout the state and visited the towns and people responsible for this reputation, and I can tell you that there is no better way to experience Texas than through one of our 88 Texas Main Street communities.

These communities have done an exemplary job of revitalizing and preserving their historic downtowns, and have received an official designation and support from the Texas Historical Commission. They join a national network of communities that are preserving not only their historic character, but their economic vitality.

Since 1981, every Texas First Lady has participated in a special Texas Historical Commission tour honoring new communities designated as official Texas Main Street cities. This year, it is my pleasure to continue this grand tradition. This year's festivities will include the unveiling of a local Main Street building's architectural rendering, produced by the Texas Main Street Program.

Main Street communities play a key role in our state's heritage tourism industry. Texas is internationally renowned for its cultural heritage, which draws significant economic contributions to the entire state. In fact, direct heritage travel activity creates more than 54,000 jobs annually in all sectors of the state's economy. From urban centers to small towns, uniquely Texas assets appeal to travelers seeking a connection with our state's distinctive history.

In addition to their tourist attractions, Texas Main Street communities offer fun and meaningful volunteer opportunities. I cannot think of a better way to commemorate the storied past of Texas than by working with your neighbors to honor these cherished places—and the promise their futures hold.

Please join me in celebrating the heritage and historic legacy of our close-knit Main Street communities, which help make Texas such an extraordinary place to call home.

Blessings,

Cecilia Abbott
 First Lady of Texas



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Archeological Awareness

Venerable Houston Group Is Back on the Map

By Jeff Durst
THC Archeology Reviewer

As one of the oldest regional archeological societies in the state—established in 1959—the Houston Archeological Society (HAS) has seen a constant ebb and flow in membership through the years. But the organization is currently experiencing a true renaissance.

With a strong core of members devoted to keeping the organization alive, its renewal is the result of a group effort. But at the center, one individual serves as the spark that has ignited a whirlwind of activity within the society. Linda Gorski, former public relations specialist for the historic George Ranch in Richmond, Texas, and current president of HAS, has put the organization back on the map in a big way.

Five years ago, HAS was on the verge of disappearing—membership was down to 39, and attendance at meetings was often only a dozen people. There were no ongoing archeological investigations, and almost all the meeting presentations were about international topics with no focus on Texas archeology. Then Linda Gorski came onboard.

First she assembled a leadership team as passionate about archeology as she is. Then she expanded the team to start pulling in new talent, while keeping the society's valued old guard part of the group's core.

"I cannot emphasize enough how important our long-time members are to the Houston Archeological Society," Gorski said, adding that veteran members like Beth and Pat Aucoin attend every project and participate in

most of the public outreach programs to mentor, teach, and share their experiences with the newer members. "It's like offering an Archeology 101 class to new folks at every project. The benefit of their experience and their willingness to work alongside new members enables us to immerse the 'newbies' in projects right away."



From left: Linda Gorski, Roger Moore, THC staff Jeff Durst and Pat Mercado-Allinger, and Chris Ringstaff worked at the Dimond Knoll site.

Key to Gorski's initial leadership was identifying and recruiting people who were dedicated to archeology and able to share their passion with the other society members. Gorski also realized that not everyone is interested in all aspects of archeology, so she drew on the various skills and talents of the membership and allowed everyone a place at the table.

Gorski completely revamped the monthly meetings, bringing in top-rated speakers from across the state to discuss a range of subjects, from "Peopling of the Americas" to "Historic Archeology." Importantly, the meetings' focus returned to Texas archeology, and the interest in local prehistory is drawing new people. Meetings are advertised

across Houston, and many times Gorski has arranged for the *Houston Chronicle* to interview participating speakers.

"We noticed that when we offered a Texas-centric or Houston-centric program, the publicity we received from local media was much more comprehensive and, thus, our attendance was way up," Gorski

explained. "Fortunately, we have several members, most notably Houston historian Louis Aulbach, who keep us linked into the local historical and archeological community, which enables us to seek programs that are timely and interesting."

Currently, Gorski is working tirelessly to include the organization in local archeological projects. HAS members may do the work themselves—such as at the newly discovered Timber Fawn Clovis site in Harris County—or they might partner with professional projects taking place in the area.

The Dimond Knoll project in northwestern Harris County is a prime example of what a local society can do to aid and assist professional archeologists. In 2013, Gorski partnered with the Houston district office of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). She was approached by TxDOT's Dr. Jason Barrett with the idea of HAS screening more than 50 dump truck loads of dirt from the upper level of the Dimond Knoll site, a robust Late Archaic occupation dating to circa 2500 B.C.

The soil had been mechanically removed from the site, after about 40 percent of the site was hand excavated.

“It’s like offering an Archeology 101 class to new folks at every project.”

—Linda Gorski, current president of the Houston Archeological Society

This allowed archeologists to expose the underlying, extremely important Paleo-Indian component deeply buried there.

Undaunted by its sheer magnitude, HAS tackled the Dimond Knoll project with military-like rigor. The members’ efforts resulted in recovering and cataloging hundreds of artifacts. The screening project nearly doubled the number of chipped stone tools recovered during the hand excavations at the site.

While the approach was somewhat unusual for TxDOT archeologists, the opportunity proved to be a win-win for TxDOT and HAS. TxDOT was able to investigate a larger portion of the site, and HAS received an interesting project that kept its membership active in the field for almost a year.

Working closely with HAS volunteers, Barrett proved the perfect mentor for the project. Almost weekly,

HAS members gathered around Gorski’s kitchen table to watch, listen, and participate as Dr. Barrett identified the stone tools that were recovered through the screening effort.

“Our partnership with TxDOT on the Dimond Knoll screening project cannot be overstated,” Gorski said. “Membership in HAS nearly tripled during the course of the project thanks to the public outreach opportunities it offered and the publicity it generated.”

According to Gorski, the Dimond Knoll project promoted an awareness of archeology that was unprecedented in Houston and Harris County. Every weekend, in addition to HAS members, the project drew school children,

college students, Scout troops, and members and staff from the Houston Museum of Natural Science.

“Many of these folks joined HAS on the spot and remain active members today,” Gorski said. “Dr. Barrett’s participation and commitment to the project was key to its success. He was at the site working with us every single weekend and holiday for an entire year, and

he willingly gave up several evenings a month to teach us how to identify recovered lithics.”

All HAS events are now well publicized, both to the membership and the greater Houston community. Attendance at HAS events is larger than ever and continues to grow. Gorski also initiated a revamp of the organization’s website (txhas.org), and now every publication the HAS produced since its founding is online and free to the public. In addition, Gorski never misses a chance to help at school events, San Jacinto Day celebrations, and other historical activities in the Houston area.

As a result, HAS membership has swelled from 39 to about 180. Monthly meetings regularly draw up to 70 people, and sometimes reach more than 100.

“Their enthusiasm is contagious,” says Pat Mercado-Allinger, director of the THC’s Archeology Division. “While the rebirth of the society has truly been a team effort, that team is led by a very special lady who keeps the membership both active and extremely engaged.” ★



HAS members Wilson W. “Dub” Crook and Gary Kott investigate archeological artifacts.



Pat Aucoin, Beth Aucoin, Vincent Ferruzzo, and Andrea Ferruzzo participate in a HAS event in Houston.



Two-Steppin' in Time

Boots Still Scootin' on Historic Texas Dance Hall Floors

Text and photos by Andy Rhodes, *The Medallion* Managing Editor

It's easy to kick up the past at Schneider Hall. Just a glimpse at the inviting dance floor conjures up images of couples two-steppin' the night away to traditional Texas music, with a fiddle, accordion, and upright bass guiding the dancers to swing their partners while spinning and shuffling their boots late into the southeastern Texas evening.

The weathered wooden building is virtually unchanged since its construction in the early 1930s. Like many other German dance halls near Columbus, Schneider Hall hosted families who gathered after a hard week of farming to enjoy a smoked-meat meal, time-honored ales, and old-fashioned dancing.

For current proprietor Amber Burris Becerra, these stories hit close to home: her great-great uncles (both Schneiders) owned the hall, and it served as a popular community destination for several decades. Becerra recalls hearing stories about her grandmother attending dances at the hall, but her own memories reflect the building's following era, when it was used as her family's barn.

"These are the original floors, and they're still in great shape," she says, giving the solid wooden boards a light kick. "That's partly because they were covered with hay for 30

years—I remember playing on the bales. The natural oils in the hay are a perfect way to keep the floors polished and protected."

Preservation, in fact, has been a top priority for Becerra. A self-admitted "history nerd," she researched the property's background at the local library and studied similar dance halls in the area. Inspired by her mother's love for the property, she quit her job in corporate sales and moved back to the Columbus area to upgrade the hall for weddings and occasional public events.

"My dad is in construction, and he's pretty particular about how things are made, so we took a look at it with the idea of possibly restoring or improving parts of it," she says. "Once we realized it was so well built with such solid design and materials, we decided to keep all the original resources. You could never find something like this anymore."

Becerra and her father added a few electrical outlets, but maintained the four original light bulb sockets on the main ceiling beam. They decided not to install air conditioning in favor of using the originally designed windows and doors, which naturally capture gentle evening breezes. The result was a welcoming space overflowing with authenticity and rustic



charm, allowing Becerra to book the hall most weekends for weddings during the spring and fall (schneiderhall.com, 210-422-4864).

"All our guests love the history and ambience here—they totally understand the importance of keeping everything as it was originally intended without the modern amenities you'd find in something like a hotel conference room," Becerra explains.

"This place has tons of soul. A lot of younger people really appreciate the authentic feel here—if you can just get them into a dance hall for a show or event, they'll tell all their friends and be sharing these stories forever."

According to Steve Dean of Texas Dance Hall Preservation, Inc. (TDHP), Becerra's approach to restoring and using Schneider Hall is a model for other Texans to follow.

"It's a great combination of bringing in significant revenue from private events to help offset the costs of public gatherings like concerts," Dean says. "This allows the community to come out and enjoy these halls like they were originally intended."

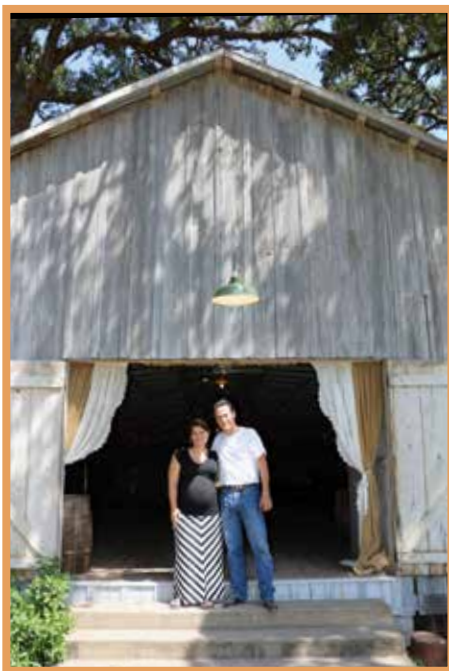
Preservation Hall

Dean has been involved with TDHP for nearly 15 years, but his professional association with Texas music dates to the 1970s when he booked Austin blues clubs, including the legendary Antone's.

"I've spent most of my life in honky tonks and dance halls—they're an important part of Texas culture, where people can let loose after a hard day of work," he says. "There's not a place like Texas anywhere else in the world. The blend of cultures here is amazing, with Germans, Mexicans, and blacks mixing it up musically long before they could mix socially. And dance halls are where it all came together."

According to Dean, there are nearly 1,000 historic dance halls in Texas, ranging from newly restored structures with multiple additions and artificial siding to buildings on the verge of collapse. The TDHP website (texasdancehall.org) includes a map noting nearly 100 documented dance hall locations, primarily in Central Texas where German and Czech communities once flourished. In addition, many of these towns continue to share their cultural legacies through local museums, Main Street districts, and other heritage tourism attractions. Discover more about them via the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) Texas Time Travel website at texastimetravel.com.

Dean adds that when German and Czech immigrants first arrived in the late 1800s and early 1900s, they immediately set to work constructing buildings similar to those in their Old



Schneider Hall proprietor Amber Burris Becerra and Texas Dance Hall Preservation, Inc.'s Stephen Dean visit at Schneider Hall.

World towns—churches, schools, homes, and dance halls. Although many of the Central Texas communities dissipated over time, the sturdy structures remained.

The music being played at these halls had an impact on the evolution of what is now known as "Texas music." From Western Swing to Conjunto to outlaw country, the dance halls hosted traveling bands that brought their distinctive sounds across the entire state, which, in turn, influenced local and regional bands.

"I'm a Texas music buff, so I kept tracing my musical interests further and further back in time until I realized all roads kept leading to these historic dance halls," Dean says, adding that he has visited nearly 900 sites over the past few decades.

Dean has also worked with Central Texas property owners and investors to help restore and upgrade sites like Senglemann Hall in Schulenberg and

Schroeder Hall near Goliad. Along with TDHP, he has developed a "virtual toolbox" to help struggling dance halls develop a plan to stay afloat and ideally become profitable.

He notes that properly restored sites like Schneider Hall are rare, mainly because most are not privately owned. Instead, the majority are run by an organization—usually a fraternal group like the Knights of Columbus, Sons of Hermann, or historic German and Czech societies—which are managed by a board that determines accessibility and fees.

"If they could get better visibility online or even get a few more weddings or parties in there to help pay for upgrades, they could be in much better shape from a preservation standpoint," he says. "We're happy to help set them up with the tools and get them on the right track to make sure these special places continue to be filled with Texas music and dancing well into the future."



Opposite: The dance floor beckons at Schneider Hall. Above: Michael Meloneck has been attending dances at Peters Hall near Sealy his entire life.

Independence Halls

The historic dance halls within the THC's Texas Independence Trail Region—Austin, Colorado, and Fayette counties in particular—are especially vulnerable and in need of awareness and preservation. According to Dean, these buildings have not benefitted from steady regional tourism draws like winery tours and river tubing in the Hill Country.

However, he believes pride in local heritage and outreach efforts can play key roles in preserving many halls in the Independence region. For example, the distinctive octagonal halls in and around Austin County—most designed by German immigrant and *baumeister* (master builder) Joachim Hintz—are especially ripe for restoration projects and increased visibility. Hintz, the subject of a recently designated THC historical marker in Bellville, designed nearly two dozen halls, distinguished by his precision joinery and elaborate roof-framing systems.

One example near Sealy is **Peters Hall** (756 Trenckmann Rd., 281-898-1346). Upon entering the hall, visitors' eyes are immediately drawn to the round dance floor and upward to the elegantly constructed roof, with its immaculately placed cross-beams and framework leading to a cupola venting system.



Stephen Dean and Michael Meloneck stand inside Peters Hall, a classic example of intricately constructed German dance halls designed by master builder Joachim Hintz.

According to Michael Meloneck, whose grandfather was a founding member of the 1897 Peters–Hacienda Schuetzenverein, the hall originally served as a gathering place for the *schuetzenverein* (shooting club). These traditional societies date to medieval Europe, where archery and jousting contests were held to keep skills sharpened for potential combat. In Texas, these

competitions became social activities at the dance halls, with shooting contests, a meal, and evening dance.

“When we were kids, we used to have a lot of celebrations and events here,” Meloneck says. “I remember my parents would bring a wooden palette and put it under the benches along the side of the hall. I’d sleep on that thing just fine while the adults stayed up and kept on dancing.”

Now, Peters Hall is used for occasional weddings, graduation parties, or quinceañeras. The site’s highest-profile public event is an annual festival on Mother’s Day with an auction, food, and dancing. The proceeds help pay for basic maintenance, but additional projects like installing air conditioning remain unaffordable.



“The real challenge is getting people interested in keeping this place maintained and getting enough financial support to keep us afloat,” Meloneck says.

Just up the road is the 1928 **Coshatte Hall** (400 Smith Rd. near Bellville), another octagonal structure. According to Coshatte Agricultural Society member Bruce Chandler, the organization dates to the late 1800s, when German immigrants named it in reference to the nearby Coushatta Indian tribe. Flags from this era are still displayed inside the hall, which remained an active destination “well into the teenage dance craze of the 1980s,” Chandler says.

He adds that the hall only hosts a handful of events—mainly weddings and private parties—but efforts are being made to resume an annual barbecue cook-off held at the site each November. If the organization can raise more money, Chandler hopes to get the hall’s exterior painted and open it for additional public events to share its rich history.

“A whole lot of relationships started here—all the families lived nearby, and they’d come over here to socialize and kick back for a little bit,” he says as he surveys the pristine dance floor. “We’re trying to keep those memories going. We’re just gonna keep plugging along with the old gal until we can’t anymore.”

Kick up Your Heels

Although many of the dance halls in this region are privately owned and well suited for drive-by viewings and photo ops, several are open regularly for public events and dancing opportunities.



This style of stage backdrop at Sengelmann Hall was common at German dance halls throughout Texas.

Among the most reliable for traditional food, drinks, and dancing is **Sengelmann Hall** in Schulenberg (sengelmannahall.com, 979-743-2300). Dating to 1894, the hall was meticulously restored in 2009—including impressive upgrades to the original plank flooring, carved marble pillars, and pressed tin ceilings—and has become a popular stop for musical acts such as Asleep at the Wheel, Crystal Gale, and Ray Wylie Hubbard.

Just a few miles away is **Swiss Alp Dance Hall** (swissalptexas.com, 979-247-4536), a rare example of a hall not affiliated with a religious, fraternal, or other cultural organization. As a result, it has always been a public dancing venue, which has transformed over time with the changing trends

of Texas music—from polka to big band to country to rock ‘n roll. The current hall dates to the early 1930s and boasts past appearances by legendary acts such as Bob Wills, B.J. Thomas, and Sunny and the Sunliners.

For community events, one of the region’s most notable sites is **Cat Spring Agricultural Society Hall** (catspringagsociety.org, 979-865-2540). Located 10 miles north of Sealy, the unique 12-sided building was constructed in 1902, and it has since served as a popular destination for community dances, festivals, and holiday celebrations.

To plan a visit to these and other historic dance halls in the area—including **Freyburg Hall** near La Grange, **Appelts Hill Hall** near Hallettsville, and **Millheim Verein Hall** near Sealy—visit TDHP’s website for a calendar of live music events or to contact a representative about potentially arranging a tour.

For information about other heritage tourism destinations in the area, visit texastimetravel.com. ★



Coshatte Hall near Bellville is a classic octagonal structure.



A THC historical marker graces the grounds at Millheim Verein Hall near Sealy.

View more dance hall photos at thc.state.tx.us/blog.

Be a Hero!

Friends Program Offers Support for Preservation Projects

By Rebecca Borchers

Executive Director, Friends of the Texas Historical Commission

Texas has always been known for its heroes. From Sam Houston to José Antonio Navarro to Barbara Jordan, our state's heroes have been larger than life and dedicated to making our state—and the world—a better place.

The Texas Historical Commission (THC) has its very own Texas Heroes, a special group of philanthropists that support the agency's efforts to preserve the rich and colorful history of our state, educate youth and adults about our heritage, and celebrate the real people helping real places tell the real stories of Texas. Through the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission, the THC's affiliated nonprofit organization, Texas Heroes make annual contributions to help preserve our state's rich historical legacy.

In the past year, the Heroes helped fund the Fulton Mansion State Historic Site restoration project (see page 13 for details) as well as ongoing efforts to restore many of East Texas' damaged Centennial Markers. In addition, Texas Heroes funding assisted with education programs and videos for Caddo Mounds and Eisenhower Birthplace state historic sites.

The generosity of the Texas Heroes listed at right allows the THC to celebrate excellence in historic preservation and to honor those who represent "The Best of the Best" in conserving and promoting the history of our state.

The Friends invites you to become a Texas Hero to help continue building a strong financial foundation for the THC's outstanding programs. For more information about the program, email Rebecca Borchers at rebecca.borchers@thc.state.tx.us, call 512-936-2241, or visit thcfriends.org. ★

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former Gov. Dolph Briscoe, Jr.



Left and above: Funding from the Texas Heroes program has helped pay for important projects like the restoration of Centennial Markers in East Texas and education programs for students at the THC's state historic sites.

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Margaret C.B. & S. Spencer N. Brown Foundation, in
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Right: One of the most significant projects to be funded by the Texas Heroes program is the recent restoration of the Fulton Mansion State Historic Site.

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Due to space limitations we were unable to list Scouts who give \$50-\$99. Please see the names of these donors at www.thcfriends.org. We are grateful to every Texas Hero that supports the THC.

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Loessin Family
Mr. and Mrs. John P. Wier, in memory of Walter
"Wayman" Ward
Gary and Susan Wilson

Certiably Effective

CLG Program Assists Preservationists at Local Level

By Kristen Brown
CLG Program Coordinator

Even though the acronym CLG is used in many of Texas' historic preservation circles, not everyone knows what it means. But they should.

The Certified Local Government (CLG) program is a significant starting point for Texas municipalities interested in sustaining a preservation ethic in their communities; this local, state, and federal partnership supports preservation goals by offering technical assistance and financial grants.

CLG requirements include a strong preservation ordinance, a historic preservation officer, and a historic landmarks review commission with the authority to review proposed alterations to landmarked properties. By offering technical assistance to CLGs and potential CLGs, the Texas Historical Commission (THC) establishes close working relationships with a diverse range of communities across the state.

Texas currently has 73 CLG communities, and all are eligible to receive training, assistance with ordinances and bylaws, preservation recommendations, and more. The THC's CLG program has two full-time staff members who answer questions and provide support.

CLG communities are also eligible to apply for preservation grants. Texas receives an annual appropriation

from the federal Historic Preservation Fund, and at least 10 percent of that funding goes directly to the CLGs in the form of grants.

The grants provide funding to participating city and county governments to develop and sustain preservation programs critical to preserving local historic resources. CLG grant

amounts generally range from \$2,000 to \$30,000, and several are awarded each year. The grants can fund a variety of preservation projects, including historic resource surveys, preservation plans, design guidelines, ordinance revisions, regional trainings, educational publications, and brick and mortar restorations.

For example, Comal County has taken an active role in surveying and designating its historic resources since joining the CLG program in 2001. Using

a series of CLG grants, the county was able to develop a plan for a phased countywide survey for all historic resources constructed prior to 1945.

Currently, the county is using a CLG

grant to prepare a National Register nomination for the community of Fischer, which was settled in the 1850s. The small community 50 miles north of San

Antonio contains many distinctive historic structures, including the circa 1902 Fischer Store, circa 1895 Fischer Dance Hall, a Victorian house, a nine-pin bowling alley, and an extensive agricultural complex

with remarkably intact resources such as a smokehouse, cistern, outhouse, and barn.

In 2013, the City of Palestine used a CLG grant to survey its downtown district. The survey was produced in-house by the historic preservation officer and volunteers from the community, who provided photographs and did much of the legwork in the field. This was an alternative to the traditional method of hiring a historic preservation consultant to conduct the survey.

Palestine's project updated an existing 1993 survey and documented more than 80 downtown resources, including the Lucas Hardware Building, a 1901 Romanesque Revival structure with a façade that had previously been obscured by a mid-20th century brick slipcover. The 2009–11 restoration of the building removed the slipcover and exposed the building's rusticated stonework and transomed storefront.

For more information about the CLG program and its grant application process, please visit thc.state.tx.us/clg or call Kristen Brown at 512-463-7812. ★



CLG grants helped fund a historical survey project in downtown Palestine (top) and a National Register nomination for the Fischer community (above).

'A Love Letter from the Community'

Fulton Mansion's Massive Restoration Celebrated in Rockport

By Heather McBride
THC Senior Communications Specialist

When the restoration at the Fulton Mansion State Historic Site began in June 2013, it was estimated to be completed in one year. Although it took longer than expected, the scope and quality of the preservation work—celebrated at a grand reopening event on October 24—was well worth the wait.

"This extensive restoration project has been a love letter from the community to the Fultons' legacy on the bay," says Dr. Marsha Hendrix, site manager at the mansion, one of the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) 20 historic sites.

The mansion is now meticulously preserved and restored. The project included restoration of its slate roof, gutter, and lightning protection systems, and significant repairs to the original wood windows, doors, and siding. The building was repainted, damaged stucco replaced, and improvements made to the porch that enhance its ability to withstand coastal storms. The project also included removal and reinstallation of tile floors to replace degraded wood, iron beam, and shellcrete structural elements; improvements to electrical and mechanical systems, addition of sump pumps, and repair of interior finishes.

According to Hendrix, contractors and preservation architects worked closely with a strong commitment to "do it once and do it right." They carefully

disassembled and investigated uniquely constructed building components, and responded to hidden conditions and unexpected opportunities to make it a better and more complete project. Private and corporate donations raised by the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission and Friends of Fulton Mansion totaled over \$800,000 to augment the \$1.9 million in THC bond funds to restore this grand jewel.



The extensive restoration of the Fulton Mansion was celebrated at a grand reopening event on October 24.

"A great deal of credit for this restoration goes to Jerry Kissling, the construction supervisor," Hendrix says. "He could propose a half-dozen different ways to solve a problem, and his skilled crew's attention to detail is apparent in the quality of their work."

The mansion's legacy dates to the 1870s, when entrepreneur George Fulton and his wife Harriet made their

fortune shipping cattle tallow and hides between Rockport and New Orleans. To celebrate their success, they built a mansion between 1874–77 which they called Oakhurst.

The bayside residence is a classic example of French Second Empire domestic architecture and is known for its innovative construction methods and advanced mechanical systems. These included gas lighting, central heating, and indoor plumbing with hot and cold running water—rare amenities for homes in this region at the time.

"The Fulton Mansion is a significant heritage tourism attraction and we are very proud of the improvements that have been made," said Joseph Bell, director of the THC's Historic Sites Division. "The mansion staff and volunteers are excited to have their house back to show off to visitors. Area educators and students will also be happy to have one of their favorite teaching tools available again."

The mansion's real stories provide rich material for school children to learn about subjects such as economics, math, language arts, and history." ★

Fulton Mansion State Historic Site
317 Fulton Beach Rd.
Rockport, TX 78382
361-729-0386
visitfultonmansion.com

Travel Through Time with New Mobile Tours



THC staff members recently shared the agency's new mobile tour "World War II on the Texas Home Front" with visitors at the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg.

Several new mobile tours from the Texas Historical Commission (THC) help travelers plan journeys to the real places where the real stories of Texas took place across the Lone Star State.

New tours include: "Historic Bankhead Highway," "Red River War of 1874-1875: Clash of Cultures in the Texas Panhandle," "La Salle Odyssey," "World War II on the Texas Home Front," and "Hispanic Texans: Journey from Empire to Democracy." They join the THC's initial "African Americans in Texas" tour.

The mobile tours allow users to experience these different eras of Texas history through images, narrated slideshows, and videos. Self-guided tours allow users to explore familiar destinations in Texas and discover new heritage attractions.

The THC's mobile tours are free and available at texastimettravel.com. ★

APPLICATIONS FOR 2016 HISTORICAL MARKERS BEING ACCEPTED

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

RTHLs are properties judged to be historically and architecturally significant, and must be at least 50 years old. The THC can approve up to 165 new applications; up to 15 additional markers may be approved through the Undertold Stories marker program.

Complete information regarding the marker applications process can be found at thc.state.tx.us/markers. ★

SAN JACINTO MUSEUM EXHIBIT FEATURES U.S.–MEXICAN WAR ARTIFACTS



This nickel-plated .44 caliber six-shot single action revolver is displayed in the San Jacinto Museum's new exhibit.

A new special exhibit at the San Jacinto Museum of History, "A Destined Conflict: The U.S.–Mexican War," features photographs, art, artifacts, and newspapers relating to this decisive war. The artifacts offer insight about how the officers, soldiers, and news outlets viewed this conflict that saw more soldiers dying from disease than battle.

Admission to the special exhibit—scheduled to be available for at least a year—

is \$5 for adults and \$3 for children under 11. Combo tickets for the new exhibit, the multimedia presentation "Texas Forever!! The Battle of San Jacinto," and an elevator ride to the Observation Level are available. Seniors, children, and groups of 10 or more receive a discounted rate, and members of the military receive free admission to all attractions.

The San Jacinto Museum is located within the San Jacinto Monument on the 1,200-acre San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site, located just east of Houston in La Porte. The museum, exhibit, and battleground are open from 9 a.m.–6 p.m. daily. For more information, call 281-479-2421 or visit sanjacinto-museum.org. ★

Finding the Facts

How to Effectively Field Archeology Questions from the Public

By Amy Hammons,
County Historical Commission Outreach Coordinator

County Historical Commissions (CHC) often require help when sorting out local issues involving archeology. Although CHC appointees have a wide variety of preservation knowledge, archeological issues can be sensitive and nuanced, particularly when artifact collection and site damage are involved.

Most CHC appointees typically field two general questions; fortunately, Texas Historical Commission (THC) archeologists have several simple responses to the following inquiries:

- What do I do if I find an archeological artifact (an arrowhead, a piece of pottery, etc.)?
- What do I do if I see an archeological site in which people have been digging?

First, THC archeologists stress the importance of leaving the artifacts in place. Archeologists must know the artifacts' location and circumstances of the find to determine significance, protect an archeological site, and gain information about the past.

Second, they suggest taking a picture and noting the location. Digital cameras may provide location coordinates. At the very least, you must

determine the county and adjacent roads. A dot on a map is helpful.

Finally, archeologists recommend informing the land manager or landowner. Often, THC archeologists can provide expertise to private landowners.



Archeological activity, like this dig at the THC's Levi Jordan Plantation State Historic Site, requires input from professionals to assure proper techniques and documentation.

The THC's website has several publications to help people determine next steps when presented with archeology concerns. Search "looting" on the THC website to find a list of resources that address archeological issues impacting local preservationists. This search provides links to the following brochures:

- Destruction of Archeological Sites in Texas
- A Property Owner's Guide to Archeological Sites
- Artifact Collecting in Texas
- Laws that Protect Archeology Sites

If attempts to locate land managers are unsuccessful, you may call the THC's Archeology Division at 512-463-6096. More importantly, you should call the THC when you see uncontrolled digging that is not conducted by trained archeologists.

You can directly call the THC archeologist assigned to your county. To find your county's archeologist, go to thc.state.tx.us/contact and scroll down to the "Contacts by County" section. ★

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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 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.state.tx.us. Limit one prize annually per contestant.

Need a clue? This cemetery in the Texas Brazos Trail Region includes a marker honoring a king's visit.

Answer to the photo from previous issue: These buildings are in Denison; specifically, the 500 block of Main Street. Denison has been a member of the Texas Main Street Program since 1989. Congratulations and prizes go to the following readers,

who were the first to correctly identify the site: Mavis Bryant of Sherman, Marcus Hubbard of Denison, and Joy Pearce of Levelland. Thanks to all who participated! ★



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