

THE

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

MEDALLION

SUMMER 2017



DIVE INTO HISTORY

Beat the Heat
at Texas' Iconic Swimming Holes

PLUS WWI Marine Archeology | Caddo Lake | Preservation Scholars



ON THE COVER: Hamilton Pool near Dripping Springs.
Photo by Patrick Hughey.

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Texas' historic swimming holes lure travelers to beat the heat.

THE MEDALLION

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Fast Facts

These numbers show the significant economic impact of annual travel and heritage-related spending in Texas.

Source: Economic Impact of Historic Preservation in Texas, 2015

\$58.4

BILLION IN DIRECT
VISITOR SPENDING

\$2.25

BILLION IN HERITAGE TOURISM

54,000

JOBS CREATED
VIA HERITAGE
TRAVEL





TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION MARK WOLFE LEADERSHIP LETTER

Dear Friends,

Now that the 85th Texas Legislature's regular session has wrapped up, I'd like to share the impact it will have on our agency and our valuable preservation partners across the state.

The Texas Historical Commission fared well during the recent session, most notably with our programs dedicated to courthouse preservation and state historic sites. The Legislature included \$20.2 million for the THC's nationally recognized Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program, which will assist more counties seeking to preserve their courthouses.

In addition, we received \$1.5 million for our Texas Heritage Trails Program, and \$6.3 million to address capital needs at our historic sites, including deferred maintenance and new construction projects. We're especially excited about our continuing work on a new museum at San Felipe de Austin State Historic Site.

In other sites-related news, the THC accepted its newest historic property—the French Legation in Austin. Dating to 1841, the site once served as the home of a French dignitary to the Republic of Texas, and is among the city's most historic properties. Our agency officially assumes operation of the French Legation on September 1, 2017, although it will likely be closed for at least a year to address significant maintenance issues.

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention that we will also be making some challenging financial-planning decisions due to a budget reduction imposed on all state agencies. We will continue to prioritize our efforts to efficiently invest in the historic buildings and cultural landscapes that have defined Texas' special sense of place for centuries.

It's exciting to know we'll be partnering in these efforts with all of you throughout this great state. We look forward to the opportunity to protect and preserve Texas' history and economy for the benefit of future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature of Mark Wolfe in black ink. The signature is stylized, with the first letters of the first and last names being large and prominent.

Mark Wolfe
Executive Director

Ship Shape

Texas' WWI-related Shipwrecks Outnumber All Other Historical Categories

By Amy Borgens and Dorothy Rowland
State Marine Archeologist and Marine Archeology Program Intern

As the Texas Historical Commission continues its commemoration of the World War I centennial, one of the agency's primary missions is to educate Texans about the state's connection to the Great War. Many residents may be surprised to learn about the number of World War I-related shipwrecks in Texas.

In fact, the THC's Marine Archeology Program oversees 32 war-associated shipwreck archeological sites in state waters—the largest number of discovered shipwrecks by historical category. All of these are tied to Texas' World War I shipbuilding effort. To offset allied merchant vessel losses during the war, the U.S. Shipping Board contracted new ship construction in southeastern Texas. Due to concerns about metal shortages during the war, shipbuilders supplemented the steel fleets with more traditional material types, such as wood, and also experimented with concrete. The construction of these vessels was designed, contracted, or commenced during the war, although they may have been built later and repurposed.

Wooden vessels built in Texas during World War I were constructed for the Emergency Fleet Corporation (EFC) and are believed to be primarily 281-foot "Ferris" class steamships. These were predominantly constructed in Orange and Beaumont due to the plentiful pine resources, but also in Rockport.

With the armistice, contracts were terminated and many vessels were

unfinished. Attempts to sell or convert the ships largely failed, and many were abandoned in the Sabine and Neches rivers in the 1920s. There are 29 wooden EFC vessels in East Texas rivers and an additional nine on the Louisiana side of the Sabine River. This is believed to be the second-largest collection of abandoned EFC vessels in the U.S., after the Mallow Bay "Ghost Fleet" in Maryland's Potomac River.



This wooden vessel was constructed in Beaumont in 1918. Many similar ships were built for the government's Emergency Fleet Corporation during World War I.

Many of these Texas shipwrecks are locally well known and are sometimes visible when river levels are low. The THC's Marine Archeology Program, in partnership with the Underwater and Historical Exploration Society and Louisiana's Office of Cultural Development's Division of Archaeology, investigated some of the sunken Sabine River EFC vessels from 1999–2000. One of the Neches River wrecks was discovered in 2006 by environmental consulting firm PBS&J during a survey for a Texas Department of Transportation bridge construction project.

Texas' best-known concrete ship from World War I is the 425-foot tanker *SS Selma*, which was built in 1918 and served as a merchant vessel for less than a year before running aground near Tampico, Mexico. *SS Selma* limped back to Galveston for repairs, which were ultimately determined to be too complicated. Instead, *SS Selma* was deliberately sunk in a shallow area in Galveston Bay.

A second ship from this program is also believed to be off the Texas coast. *SS Dismore* was built in 1920 and had a very short life as a shipping vessel. *SS Dismore* was retired from service and used as a breakwater off the Texas coast around 1921, but the ship's exact location is unknown.

Two concrete ships—*Darlington* and *Durham*—were built in Port Aransas in 1919. These ships had rounded hulls, which caused them to be very poor sailers. By 1925, both ships were no longer in service. *Durham* was sunk to be used as a fishing pier off Galveston, and *Darlington* sank in Matagorda Bay as it was towed to Galveston.

"Wooden and concrete ships are one of Texas' lesser-known connections to World War I," said Pat Mercado-Allinger, director of the THC's Archeology Division. "As we continue to learn more about this unique aspect of Texas history, we take pride in adding to our state's World War I legacy."

FEELING SWAMPED?

UNWIND WITH HISTORY AND RECREATION AT CADDO LAKE

By Rob Hodges, THC Communications Project Coordinator

Legends of the Caddo Indians provide explanations for the origin of the lake they called Tso'to, but geologists believe Caddo Lake was formed by the Great Raft, a nearly 100-mile-long logjam on the Red River in Louisiana. Caddo lived in the nearby village Sha'chahdinnih (Timber Hill) from roughly 1800 to the early 1840s, when East Texas tribes were forcibly relocated. Their removal marked the end of at least 12,000 years of indigenous habitation of the area.

During the Republic of Texas era and a few decades during statehood, riverboats plied the swampy waters of Caddo Lake, then known as Ferry Lake or Big Lake. Goods and people were transported on steamboats between Louisiana and bustling Texas ports such as Swanson's Landing, Port Caddo, and Jefferson.

The riverboat freight industry thrived and expanded when the lake was connected to the railroad in the mid-1850s. But all that changed in the 1870s when the Great Raft was cleared by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The water level fell dramatically. The expansion of the railroad over the next couple decades then sealed the fate of the riverboat industry.

Today, Caddo Lake primarily draws visitors seeking water recreation and nature experiences. Travelers can base a trip near the town of Uncertain, where they'll find rental properties and boat launches for fishing, boating, and paddling expeditions. These are good put-in points to explore the lake via kayak or canoe on one of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's officially designated paddling trails. White signs nailed to trees mark the routes for the Cathedral, Turtle Shell, and Old Folks Playground trails, which guide paddlers through the lake's famous Spanish moss-covered cypress trees.

Heron, egrets, turtles, and jumping fish make regular appearances, while a host of other wildlife—including alligators and beavers—tend to be secluded. Flat-bottomed motorboats are available to rent for deeper ventures into the sloughs and bayous of the swamp, but routes should be



followed closely, as it's easy to get stuck in the shallows or lost in the labyrinthine waterways.

A Texas Historical Commission marker greets heritage travelers at Caddo Lake State Park, where they'll find recreational opportunities and historic structures built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930s. Nine cabins, a group recreation hall, and a shelter house are among the CCC-constructed buildings standing today. Built in a rustic style from natural materials in the surrounding forest, the cabins make a perfect home base for explorations of the park.

The nearby Pine Ridge hiking trail connects to the Caddo Forest Trail and leads to the shelter house (aka CCC Pavilion) for an easy hike of less than a mile. Combine it with other trails that wind through the forest for a memorable and hilly trek of nearly two miles.

To see more photos and video of Caddo Lake and Caddo Lake State Park, visit thc.texas.gov/blog.

Historic Swimming Holes Have Helped Texans B
for Thousands of Years

DIVE INTO HIST



eat the Heat

Text by Andy Rhodes Photographs by Patrick Hughey

The first adrenaline rush hits you during the drop down. Then comes the exhilarating moment of impact.

The thrill of free-falling from a rope swing, high boulder, or diving board is quickly usurped by the jolt of icy water that engulfs your body upon plunging into the aqua-blue depths. These sensations and other life-nourishing elements have drawn people to Texas' historic spring-fed swimming holes for more than 10,000 years.

Texas Historical Commission markers across the state note that American Indians frequented these natural springs to hunt animals drawn to the reliable water sources. In the process, the early Texans undoubtedly dipped into the clear refreshing pools to cool off on a hot summer day.

These days, heritage travelers and locals value the springs' recreational relief, but they don't often question the geological source. How did these swimming holes form in the first place?

According to Texas State University's Sam Massey, an assistant manager for education at the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment (MCWE), the springs originate when a fissure forms in the aquifer's limestone. These are typically found along faults where the rock is fragmented. In Central Texas, the Balcones Fault provides the fractures for water to flow from the subterranean Edwards Aquifer through natural conduits, which become springs.

"Most of the faults were formed by earthquakes millions of years ago," Massey explains. "Through the erosional process, water gets through the porous limestone and flows continuously from the fissures with varying degrees of pressure."

As a result, the steady flow along a creek or river often provides a natural pool, which can become a swimming hole. The

San Marcos springs were dammed circa 1850; a century later, the pool (Spring Lake) became the centerpiece of Aquarena Springs amusement park.

It now hosts the MCWE's glass-bottom boat tours. The springs also feed the San Marcos River, where Rio Vista Park—featuring a historic dam with a chute of swiftly flowing water—draws swimmers, paddlers, and sunbathers.

More than 3,000 springs babble across the state, but Texas' best-known historic swimming holes are clustered along an arc hugging the eastern edge of the Hill Country—from roughly Austin to San Antonio and continuing westward toward Del Rio.

Hundreds of miles away in Far West Texas lies Balmorhea State Park's pool, an iconic Texas swimming hole fed by nearly 20 million gallons of water gushing daily from San Solomon Springs.

According to Tim Roberts, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's cultural resources coordinator for the West Texas Region, the San Solomon Springs likely receive their water from nearby mountains. Runoff from the Davis Mountains and other ranges farther west supply the groundwater that has nourished the area for millennia.

"Archeological work around here dates to the Paleo-Indian people from the Late Archaic period," Roberts says. "Hundreds of years ago, the Jumano Indians used the springs for irrigation, and the Mescalero Apache also had a presence here."

There's no documented evidence of ancient water toys or games played in the state's historic swimming holes, but Texans of the past were likely leaping from lofty spots to experience the unique thrill of descending into a cool spring-fed pool on a scorching summer afternoon.

ORY



PHOTOGRAPHERS Capture the stunning cypress trees near Krause Springs.



BICYCLISTS Explore the hike-and-bike trail by Austin's spring-fed pools.



HISTORIC LODGING Balmorhea's adobe San Felipe Courts date to the 1930s.



LOCAL EATS Opie's Barbecue near Krause Springs serves mouth-watering meats.

HAMILTON POOL, Dripping Springs (parks.traviscountytx.gov)

If you visit only one Texas swimming hole this summer, opt for Hamilton Pool 24 miles west of Austin. Beyond stunning, the panoramic beauty awaiting at this lush wonderland includes a waterfall plunging more than 50 feet from an arced terrace into an azure pool.

According to Michael Brewster, parks supervisor of Travis County's Hamilton Pool District, the waterfall originates as natural springs near the curved geological formation, which is a collapsed grotto dating back thousands of years. Tonkawa and Apache tribes lived nearby, and the property was eventually purchased in the mid-1800s by the brother of Texas governor Andrew Hamilton.

"It's a very beautiful place. People think of it as only a swimming hole, but they don't always appreciate the history of the natural preserve around it," he says.

Note: due to overwhelming demand, the county has implemented an online reservation system (capped at 70 visitors daily).

BARTON SPRINGS AND DEEP EDDY, Austin (austintexas.gov/parks)

Barton Springs is deservedly referred to as Austin's crown jewel, and the constant 68-degree flow of water—up to 80 million gallons daily—provides revelers a cool respite on triple-digit summer days. A THC marker notes that Spanish missions once occupied the banks in 1731 (no trace of them exists), followed in the 1800s by a merry-go-round, riverboat, and ice machines.

Today, Barton Springs remains a natural escape in this rapidly growing city. An ample hillside offers a shady place to relax while watching swimmers of all ages attempt varying degrees of daring jumps from the diving board.

A mile upriver is Deep Eddy Pool, which celebrated its centennial in 2016. Named for an eddy (circular current) formed by a large boulder, this National Register-listed site is distinctive for its immense 600,000-gallon capacity pool and tree-filled surroundings, providing a cool compliment to the 70-degree water.

KRAUSE SPRINGS, Spicewood (krausesprings.net)

Step back in time at this historic Hill Country swimming hole, a refreshing privately owned property operated by the Krause family for more than 50 years. Located nearly 35 miles northwest of Austin, this lush landscape features a fern-filled, waterfall-topped grotto surrounded by knotty outstretched cypress trees.

Listed in the National Register, the 115-acre property contains 32 springs, which flow into Cypress Creek and eventually Lake Travis. One of the springs feeds a man-made pool on a bluff, while others form the comfortably sized swimming hole.

One of Krause Springs' main draws is a rope swing affixed near a large boulder on the bank. Swimmers young and old grasp the rope and squeal in delight (or fear) as they swoop toward the welcoming water.

Krause Springs also offers camping and gardens for those seeking a low-key weekend getaway.



HAMILTON POOL



BARTON SPRINGS



JACOB'S WELL

JACOB'S WELL AND BLUE HOLE, Wimberley

(www.co.hays.tx.us and jwna.checkfront.com/reserve) Located about 40 miles southwest of Austin, Wimberley provides summer travelers two fascinatingly different swimming holes to help beat the heat.

Among the finest in the state is Jacob's Well, a Hays County-operated park featuring a 30-foot deep crystal clear, ice-cold natural pool. Visitors gather around a series of tall outcroppings to watch swimmers consider several jumping-off options. Teenagers scale the nearly 20-foot boulders to fearlessly leap into the chasm below, while children and adults

usually choose a lower rock for a swift dive or splashy cannonball.

A few miles southeast, Blue Hole provides a lush landscape straight out of a postcard. Cypress branches form a vivid-green canopy over the clear blue water, punctuated by splashes from rope-swing jumpers. Surrounded by a 126-acre regional park with trails and picnic areas, Blue Hole offers visitors a picturesque escape unlike any other in Central Texas.

Both sites encourage advanced reservations.

For more stories, photographs, and videos, please visit thc.texas.gov/blog.

BALMORHEA STATE PARK, Toyahvale (tpwd.texas.gov)

Balmorhea is an oasis on the edge of the Chihuahuan Desert. The 1.75-acre pool, concession building, two bath houses, and motor lodge were constructed by members of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the mid-1930s. These stunning whitewashed adobe buildings reflect the site's arid surroundings and Southwestern heritage.

According to Park Superintendent Carolyn Rose, the pool has averaged nearly 160,000 visitors the past few years. The strain on the site prompted park officials to implement a cap of 1,300 daily passes.

On most summer days, the pool will host nearly that many visitors, who explore the vast pool by swimming, snorkeling, or scuba diving. A major draw is the diving board directly atop the San Solomon Springs, which pump nearly 20 million gallons of 72-degree refreshment into the historic waters each day.

"The springs are really a major draw for so many people—it's been a destination for thousands of years," Rose says. "This is a very special, beautiful, and unique place. You won't find anywhere else like this in the entire state of Texas."



Summer School

THC's Interns Continue Preservation Education

By Andy Rhodes
Managing Editor, The Medallion

This summer, the Texas Historical Commission welcomed two college interns to Austin for nearly two months of preservation education through the agency's Preservation Scholars program (formerly Diversity Interns).

Zoe Simien (Texas State University) and Ledell Thomas (Prairie View A&M University) will spend much of the summer working with THC staff on projects related to their fields of study. Both are looking forward to experiencing the day-to-day tasks of working in a professional preservation environment.

The THC's Preservation Scholars program was created to build interest in and awareness of historic preservation, specifically among students from underrepresented cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups. The program is funded solely by private gifts, as are the THC Preservation Scholars Endowment and the Clay Family Trust Preservation Scholars Endowment. To donate to these important programs, please visit thcfriends.org/preservation-scholars.

ZOE SIMIEN

Texas State University

Why did you decide to pursue this internship opportunity with the THC?

When I came across the internship, I saw it as an opportunity to gain more experience and the "know-how" of preserving and protecting historical sites.

How have your past experiences prepared you for interning with the agency?

I have faced a lot of challenges in college and obstacles at work that I had to either work through or find a way around. The work I am doing at the agency is not easy, and my past experiences in school and work have prepared me for the hard work ahead.

What factors did you consider when choosing your major?

I chose to major in criminal justice because I have a strong drive to protect those who need it. As I continued my college education, I realized there was a shortage in law enforcement's involvement with protecting and preserving

archeologically significant sites. I felt this needed to change. Combining this drive with my passion for archeology allows me to protect these sites.

What are you looking forward to accomplishing during your internship this summer?

I hope to make a strong foundation for future training of law enforcement officers on preservation and site protection.

Why is Texas an interesting place to pursue a career in a history-related field?
There was a rich culture in Texas before

early Spanish exploration. Since then, more cultures have been added, and the mixture has grown more than many other states because of its geographical location. Insight into much of Earth's history is deep within Texan grounds.

How do you anticipate using your experience at the THC in the future?

The knowledge and skills I develop as a Preservation Scholar for the THC will enable me to implement better site protection with the help of law enforcement officers throughout the state, country, and hopefully the world.

How do you like to spend your free time?

I am focusing a lot of my time and effort on my career and working toward accomplishing my goal of combining law enforcement with archeology and enhancing the preservation and protection of archeologically significant sites. I also enjoy family time and different activities downtown when I have the chance.



LEDELL THOMAS

Prairie View

A&M University

Why did you decide to pursue this internship opportunity with the THC?

I decided to pursue this internship to gain more knowledge about the preservation and history of Texas. I'll be able to have a background in working with a commission that celebrates the rich history of Texas, and grasp the importance of preservation for the future of Texas. I hope to use my research about Texas' history to contribute to the new and future architecture culture.

How have your past experiences prepared you for interning with the agency?

I've obtained leadership skills from being a trainee manager at McDonald's and sponsor associate at Walmart. This will be beneficial when making decisions, being organized, harboring morals, and knowing how to take directions for the task to be completed on time. I also had the pleasure of partnering with the executive director at Independent Heights Redevelopment Council (in Houston), where my group's proposal has been used for the revitalization of Independence Heights and is now being implemented for the community.



What factors did you consider when choosing your major?

When choosing my major, I knew from a young age that I wanted to go into the field of architecture. I love to design facilities that people will inhabit and utilize for their needs. It's important to know the history of a building's environment, since it will serve as a visual representation of the time and culture it was built in.

What are you looking forward to accomplishing during your internship this summer?

I'm looking forward to learning more about the history and culture of Texas. I'll incorporate those principles when designing for future buildings and developments to preserve the rich history and culture of Texas.

Why is Texas an interesting place to pursue a career in a history-related field?

Texas is an interesting place to pursue a career in history-related field because of its diversity. Since Texas has served as home and a safe haven for many, you get to experience diverse cultural backgrounds within its history.

How do you anticipate using your experience at the THC in the future?

I plan to use the experience to allow me to obtain information about historical places that have significance to the culture and past of Texas. It will enhance my knowledge of the architecture and character of Texas in order to preserve it as I move forward in my architecture career.

How do you like to spend your free time?

When I get a chance to have free time, I like to read and watch videos about different forms of architecture, and about sustainability and building efficiency. I apply this knowledge to my future designs for the building, so it can be built and work as efficiently as possible while still being aesthetically pleasing.

Seeking Treasure

THC Business Award Honors Historic Texas Companies

By Andy Rhodes
Managing Editor, The Medallion

Most people notice when a new business opens in their community—especially when it's in a prominent historic downtown building. But what about other enterprises that can fade into the background due to their perpetual presence?

These companies often represent the backbone of a town's economy; as a result, they serve as ideal candidates for the Texas Historical Commission's Texas Treasure Business Award (TTBA). The TTBA pays tribute to the businesses that reflect the state's history, having provided employment for at least 50 years and significant contributions to the state's economic growth. More than 350 businesses—including 54 dating to the 19th century—have received the award since 2005, and the decorative decals indicating this distinction are increasingly being displayed on storefronts across Texas.

The Beaumont Main Street program recently bestowed this distinctive honor to 20 businesses at a special 25th anniversary celebration on May 11. THC Chairman John L. Nau, III gave the keynote address to nearly 300 attendees and presented a specially designed TTBA medallion to the recipients.

Among them was the Texas Coffee Company, which opened in 1921 when Charles Fertitta began with \$1,800, a few pounds of coffee, and a shotgun-style shack in downtown Beaumont. By 1926, the company moved to a larger facility on Port Arthur Road, which remains

the company's manufacturing and corporate home. The building's historic hardwood floors, exposed steel beam supports, and fragrance from the roasting coffee remind locals of the business' long-standing ties to the community.

Another recent TTBA recipient, Bill Miller Bar-B-Q, opened in San Antonio in 1950. Armed with a \$500 loan from his father, Bill Miller opened a small poultry and egg business, which evolved into a small fried chicken restaurant, then hamburgers, and finally barbecue. Today there are 69 Bill Miller Bar-B-Q restaurants in the San Antonio, Corpus Christi, and Austin markets.

In North Texas, Felcman's Men's and Ladies' Shop was established in 1919 by Frank Felcman, who crafted tailor-made suits until 1940. After serving in the Navy, his son Frank Felcman Jr. and wife Mary Ann established a complete menswear shop in Ennis.

Their daughter Juliana worked for the company during high school and continued until her father's retirement in 1996. Juliana eventually purchased the store from her father, and added ladies apparel and accessories, jewelry, home décor, and tuxedo rentals. The business has operated in the same location since 1924, in an 1872 building located in Ennis' downtown National Register Historic District.

Businesses can be nominated for the award by an elected state official, business representative, community member, or organization—including Main Street managers and County Historical Commission members. They must meet the following criteria: operate as a for-profit business in Texas for at least 50 years, offer the same or very similar type of business as it did at least 50 years ago, and have a continuous record

of employment for at least the past 50 years.

For more information about the THC's Texas Treasure Business Award or to download a nomination form, visit thc.texas.gov/ttba. For additional details, call 512-463-6006.



THC Chairman John L. Nau, III (holding award) presented 20 TTBA medallions at Beaumont Main Street's anniversary event. From left are BMS' Tom Bell, Nau, Reagan Rothenberger, and the THC's Brad Patterson.

Bill Miller Bar-B-Q proudly offered to-go cuisine with a five-minute service, which was rare at the time. The company's concept of serving daily barbecued meats and baked goods from a central commissary was considered unique to its industry.

Navarro Goes National

THC's San Antonio Site Receives Federal Historic Designation

By Heather McBride
THC Senior Communications Specialist

On a crisp, sunny day last February, more than 250 people gathered at Casa Navarro State Historic Site to celebrate José Antonio Navarro's 222nd birthday and the site's recent designation as a National Historic Landmark by the National Park Service.

"As custodians of this historic property, we are grateful for this national designation," said Mark Wolfe, executive director of the Texas Historical Commission. "Navarro's story of patriotism, liberty, and quest for equality for his people is one that inspired not only Texans but people across the nation."

Today, Casa Navarro is the best-preserved historic property in its original location directly associated with Navarro. He was one of only two Tejano signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence, a writer of the Texas State Constitution, a champion of civil rights for Hispanics, and the namesake of Navarro County.



A crowd celebrated Casa Navarro's recent designation as a National Historic Landmark.

Located in a San Antonio neighborhood once known as Laredito (Little Laredo), the site consists of three contributing buildings—Navarro's house, a two-story office and mercantile structure constructed in the 1850s, and a free-standing kitchen with a central room dating to the early 1830s.

Administered by the National Park Service, the National Historic Landmarks program highlights places of exceptional historic value to the nation. These landmarks are designated by the Secretary of the Interior because they possess extraordinary value and illustrate the heritage of the U.S. through

their history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture.

For more information about the site, call 210-226-4801 or go to visitcasanavarro.com.



Left: Casa Navarro visitors. Above: The 222nd birthday party.

Celebrate 'The Boom that Won the War'



Above and left: The community of Ranger, located 85 miles west of Fort Worth, became a true boom town in 1917 when the McCleskey No. 1 well came in as a gusher. The Eastland County Historical Commission celebrates the event's centennial in October.

Make plans to visit Ranger, 85 miles west of Fort Worth, to celebrate local, state, national, and international history. The Eastland County Historical Commission kicks off an entire week of celebrating Ranger's "oil boom centennial" on October 14.

In October 1917, the Thurber-based Texas and Pacific Coal Company completed an oil well on the J. H. McCleskey farm near Ranger. The well came in as a gusher, making 1,600 barrels daily, which started the rush to Ranger and the development of one of the most esteemed oil fields in the country.

According to Eastland CHC member Jeane Pruett, "The Ranger Boom was heard far and wide." The United States, Great Britain, Italy, and France were in WWI and facing a critical petroleum shortage, which threatened to halt Allied equipment. Thanks in part to oil reserves from the Ranger Field, Pruett notes that Ranger became known as "The boom that won the war."

For more information about the centennial event, email oilboom100@outlook.com.



THC Web Film Highlights Goliad Massacre

The THC recently premiered a web film about the Goliad Massacre that uses 360-degree video technology, offering a new way to experience this dramatic historical event. The

film is available for free viewing at thc.texas.gov/goliad-massacre.

The film features new information and video footage of artifacts, the location of Col. James W. Fannin's death, and details regarding the Battle of Coleto Creek. The five-minute video helps viewers gain a deeper understanding of the tragic story that played an important role in the 1836 march toward Texas independence.

Dallas' 900lbs of Creative provided film production and creative and design services. Gravelle Branding/Marketing of Dallas provided overall direction and strategic services.

Honor the USS Houston's 75th Anniversary

This year marks the 75th anniversary of a high point of the city of Houston's World War II patriotism. After the cruiser *USS Houston* was sunk in the Battle of Sundra Strait, a call went out for a replacement crew. On Memorial Day weekend of 1942, more than 1,000 new Navy recruits, known as the Houston Volunteers, were sworn in on Main Street in front of large crowds lining the streets.

A granite historical marker was placed in 1973 to commemorate the mass swearing-in ceremony, and a granite monument at Sam Houston Park includes the bell from the first *USS Houston*, along with the names of the men who were lost. To learn more about Texas' significant military legacy, visit thc.texas.gov/ww2.

Community Restoration

Llano CHC Assists Preservation Organizations with Marker-Cleaning Project

By Andy Rhodes
Managing Editor, *The Medallion*

Sometimes a challenge can galvanize a community.

Earlier this year, vandals defaced historical markers in Llano County, including a granite centennial marker southeast of Llano. The incident resulted in local heritage groups—notably the Llano County Historical Commission (CHC)—organizing restoration plans and solidifying the community's preservation efforts.

On May 23, noted conservator Robert Marshall helped restore the 80-year-old historical marker that commemorates an 1873 battle between American Indians and settlers on Packsaddle Mountain. Marshall gathered with representatives of the Llano CHC, Texas Historical Commission, and local preservationists to tackle the graffiti-removing project. In addition, they addressed damage to the marker's bronze center star and wreath, and lettering marred by rust stains.

The Llano CHC joined with community partners, including Terry

“Tex” Toller, the city’s Main Street manager and historic preservation officer, to ensure locals and visitors benefitted from the restoration services. Attendees were especially appreciative of the Llano CHC’s generous offering of a hearty barbecue lunch.



Noted conservator Robert Marshall (seated) worked with the Llano CHC and members of the preservation community for a marker-cleaning project in May.

For CHCs interested in undertaking similar restoration projects, contact the THC’s Marker Program Coordinator Bob Brinkman for guidelines regarding specific needs. In Llano’s case (involving a granite surface), the conservator Marshall coated the granite in a biodegradable cleaning product that soaked overnight to allow the

graffiti paint to saponify, or turn to soap. The following day, he rinsed the soap and granite, leaving virtually no trace of painted lettering.

Centennial markers have become significant works of public history and art throughout the state. The THC oversees the 1936 markers and often works with CHCs to coordinate their repair and relocation when necessary. Restoration efforts for the markers are ongoing to address wear and damage caused by weather, vehicles, and vandals.

Your CHC can follow Llano’s lead by playing an important role in galvanizing area preservation groups to work together for a common project or cause. As the THC’s local representatives for marker-related issues, CHCs can contribute by keeping communication channels open and continuing to support positive preservation efforts throughout the county.

To assist with statewide restoration for centennial markers, visit thcfriends.org.

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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.texas.gov. Limit one prize annually per contestant.

Need a clue? This memorial in a Panhandle county honors fallen World War I veterans.

Answer to the photo from the last issue: The photo at left is Hangar 9 at the former Brooks Air Force Base in San Antonio. The structure was recently restored as an event center just in time for its 100th birthday next year. Congratulations and prizes go to the first three readers who correctly identified the site: Angela Fondren of Schertz, Eugenia Gilley of Canyon, and Douglas Steadman of San Antonio (who helped design Hangar 9's restoration). Thanks to all who participated!

