

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

THE **MEDALLION**

FALL 2011



*The*  
**REAL STORIES of**  
**BRAZORIA COUNTY**

Plantation Sites Beckoning  
Curious Heritage Tourists



Dear Friends,

I considered using this column to report on the impact of the Legislative session on this agency. But historic preservation really isn't about the past. It's about the future, integrating the wonderful places that define us as a people, as Texan Americans, into our daily lives. It's about passing lessons on to future generations. It's about revitalizing Main Streets and stabilizing property values. It's about rural and urban job creation and welcoming visitors to experience authentic places that express the Texas mystique. And yes, it's also about regulating the activities of government to ensure they don't cause unintended, irreversible harm to meaningful places.

Here at the Texas Historical Commission (THC), we provide training to thousands of people every year in history, architecture, archeology, museum operations, fundraising, and nonprofit management. We restore and interpret 20 state historic sites, using these real places to tell the real stories of Texas history. We protect irreplaceable archeological collections, assist volunteers, provide opportunities to student interns, facilitate massive courthouse restoration projects, and manage federal programs that help developers reuse historic buildings. We interface with dozens of statewide and national organizations and take leadership roles in those groups when we can.

This little agency of about 180 people has a vast impact throughout Texas, and that impact resounds nationally and, in some cases, internationally. We make proud Texans even more proud to be Texans. And that's no small accomplishment.

So instead of looking back, we look forward. With your support we can help make the future a wonderful place. And that's what historic preservation is all about.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Wolfe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark Wolfe  
Executive Director, Texas Historical Commission

# THC Welcomes New Commissioners

## Appointees to Grapple with Funding

### Reductions

As this eventful year draws to a close, Texas Historical Commission (THC) officials are highlighting several noteworthy news items to share with Texas' supportive preservation community.

Of particular significance is Gov. Rick Perry's appointment of the following THC commissioners to six-year terms.



**Earl Broussard Jr.** (reappointed) is president of TBG Partners, an Austin-based landscape

architecture and planning firm, and serves on the Austin Heritage Society Advisory Board. He earned a bachelor's degree from Louisiana State University and a master's degree from Harvard University.



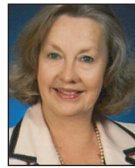
**Matthew Kreisle** serves as managing partner of the Austin office of the 113-year-old PageSoutherlandPage

architecture and engineering design firm. A past president of the Heritage Society of Austin, Kreisle received a Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Texas at Austin.



**Tom Perini** of Buffalo Gap, owner of the esteemed Perini Ranch Steakhouse, is also a board member of the

Buffalo Gap Historic Village and Fort Chadbourne Advisory Board. He graduated from Peacock Military Academy in San Antonio and attended the University of North Texas.



**Judy Richardson** of Caldwell is president of the Burleson County Historical Society and currently serves as an

insurance agent and co-owner of Insurance Associates. She received a bachelor's degree from Sam Houston State University.



**Daisy Sloan White** of Houston is vice president of the Texas A&M University Advancement Board and also serves

as a special event consultant. She received a bachelor's degree from the University of Texas and a master's degree from Southern Methodist University.

### LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Most THC programs weathered the tumultuous budgetary storm as the 82nd Legislature struggled with financial pressures earlier this year. However, the agency's consumer services will be noticeably impacted in the 2012–13 biennium that began September 1, 2011.

Compared to the previous biennium, the THC's budget was cut roughly in half—from \$104.9 million to \$52.76 million. Concurrent staff reductions resulted in the loss of 47 of 221 employees (21 percent) supporting agency programs. Instrumental in maintaining most programs is the Legislature's use of \$4.31 million from the corpus of the THC's Texas Preservation Trust Fund to offset the loss of general revenue funds.

"THC programs will continue to operate, albeit with a reduced scope," said Mark Wolfe, the agency's executive director.

The Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program, absent from the budget bills as initially filed, eventually received \$20 million from the Legislature, a reduction from the average of nearly \$50 million in the program's first 10 years. Funding for

the Texas Heritage Trails Program, also initially proposed for elimination, was ultimately restored for the 10 trail regions, although regional partnership grants will no longer be available.

Other THC programs that survived with enough funding to assure limited continuation include County Historical Commissions, historical markers, museums, cemeteries, and the Military Sites Program.

Restored funding for archeological programs will allow for continuation of the Texas Archeological Stewardship Network, Texas Archeology Month, Historic Lands Plaque program, and efforts involved with the restoration of the 1680s French ship the *Belle*. Funding was also continued for operation of the THC's 20 historic sites, with additional assistance slated for the National Museum of the Pacific War's research and education center.

Critical funding was restored for the THC's public information and education efforts, including websites, outreach initiatives, and continuation of *The Medallion*, albeit in a reduced scope (shifting to a quarterly publication schedule with a decreased page count).

# Courthouse Program Receives Critical Funding

## Rededications Held in Three Counties

In early 2011, the fate of the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program was unclear; however, the 82nd Texas Legislature ultimately continued the program with \$20 million in bond funding. THC staff members have recently welcomed the opportunity to support rededication ceremonies and review Round VII applications for the nationally recognized initiative.

"We are grateful for the continued support from the Texas Legislature, and we remain committed to restoring all of the state's historic county courthouses," said THC Executive Director Mark Wolfe.

Since its inception, the program has awarded \$227 million to counties throughout Texas. To date, more than half of the state's 235 surviving historic county courthouses are participating in the program. Members of the THC's Architecture Division have been working with counties on revised

master plans this autumn, and will announce grant recipients in January 2012.

Earlier this year, three courthouse rededications—in Trinity, Mills, and Harris counties—celebrated the continued success of the program while showcasing Texas' regional and architectural diversity.

The 1914 Trinity County Courthouse was designed by C.H. Page & Brother Architects and is the county's sixth courthouse. During the restoration, notable architectural elements were uncovered in the double-height courtroom, including the exposure of cast plaster ornamentation and original light fixtures hidden for decades by a modern suspended ceiling.

The 1913 Mills County Courthouse was designed by noted San Antonio architect Henry T. Phelps in a Classical Revival style. Massive Ionic cast stone columns frame the stately brick, stone, and copper entryways, and the building includes distinctive

interior plaster techniques, some using age-old Italian craftsmanship to imitate marble. In a basement room of the Mills County Courthouse, early advertisements for banks, bail bonds, and barbers were uncovered and preserved on the walls.

The 1910 Harris County Courthouse was designed by Charles Erwin Bargebaugh with the Dallas architectural firm of Lang and Witchell. Bargebaugh had previously worked for renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Reflecting the Classical Revival style, the courthouse's details include a colored glass dome, Corinthian columns, and marble interior walls. The exterior is comprised of pink Texas granite and light brown St. Louis brick.

The Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program recently entered its sixth year of partnership with the Texas Land Title Association. This collaboration has offered a series of stewardship workshops that provide training to ensure the restored structures are maintained, preserved, and do not fall back into disrepair.

For more information about the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program, contact the THC's Architecture Division at 512.463.6094 or visit [www.thc.state.tx.us](http://www.thc.state.tx.us).

The 1910 Harris County Courthouse shines brightly in downtown Houston following its recent rededication.



Photo: Ben Giannantonio, Harris County Public Defenders' Office

# Bull Hill Documentary Keeps Rolling

## Researchers Collecting Real Stories About Historic African American Cemetery

Article adapted from a report

Cameras are common at social gatherings, but the equipment at this year's Paul family reunion in Marlin was especially elaborate. Documentarians were on hand to film and capture professional images and conduct interviews of the venerable Central Texas family that has strong ties to the nearby Bull Hill Cemetery dating to the 1850s.

The theme of this year's reunion—Uniting Our Roots and Branches—was appropriately intertwined with the documentary, which centers on recent discoveries and historical connections made at Bull Hill. The film will focus on collaborative efforts to bring attention to the forgotten burial ground by the Texas Historical Commission (THC), the descendant community, and the Dallas-based Summerlee Foundation.

"This is a fascinating aspect of Texas history that's filled with intriguing stories and discoveries," said former THC Archeology Division Director Jim Bruseth, who plays a significant role in the documentary. "I'm very proud to be involved with a film based on the remarkable historical activity that's taken place here over the past few years."

The documentary's working title is "Speak My Name And I Shall Live Again, The Resurrection of Bull Hill Cemetery," and filming is expected to wrap up in early 2012. The movie will likely be completed and distributed by Summer 2012; details about screening locations and DVD



Photos courtesy Lewis Photography

From top: The Rev. Will Miller Jr. offered a prayer at the Paul family reunion in Marlin; members of the Paul family commended new honorary member Jim Bruseth (back row).

availability will appear in a future issue of *The Medallion*.

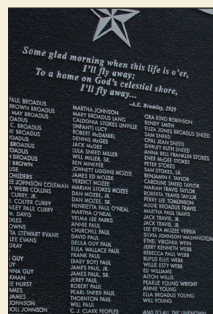
Overseeing the project is researcher and writer Sharon Styles, a Paul family descendant. Styles was conducting genealogical studies in 2007 on her late grandparents when she learned about their connection to Bull Hill Cemetery. Soon after, she began working to find the names of those buried in Bull Hill with Nedra Lee, a THC Preservation Fellow and doctoral student of anthropology at University of Texas at Austin. Lee wrote her Master's thesis on Bull Hill's research, investigation, and preservation efforts and has continued to work with Styles in documenting the cemetery's history and significance to Falls County's African American community.

While attending the gathering in Marlin, Bruseth updated the Paul family on the status of the discovery of the Bull Hill gravesite believed to

skeletal remains were exhumed and transported to the Smithsonian earlier this year for DNA comparison and analysis. Although the DNA was insufficient to make a positive identification, Bruseth strongly believes the remains are Coryell's. In honor of his work at Bull Hill, Bruseth was presented with a Paul Family Reunion shirt and named an honorary Paul family member. The family also acknowledged the efforts of THC Commissioner John Crain, president of the Summerlee Foundation.

Styles is actively completing the Bull Hill documentary and encourages those with historic photos or additional information to contact her at 916.275.8084 or sharon.kay@sbcglobal.net.

For those interested in the cemetery's historical legacy, a video of Coryell's grave excavation is available at [www.thc.state.tx.us](http://www.thc.state.tx.us). For access to Bull Hill Cemetery, arrangements should be made through the Summerlee Foundation at 214.363.9000. ★



be that of Texas Ranger James Coryell, who was killed by Native Americans in 1837.



# *The* REAL STORIES *of* BRAZORIA COUNTY

*By Andy Rhodes*  
*The Medallion Managing Editor*

Visitors strolling beneath the supple Spanish moss on outstretched oaks at the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) Varner-Hogg Plantation are immediately swept into a bygone world of Southern heritage. There's an undeniable charm to the lush, tranquil grounds and distinguished historic buildings, but guests are increasingly curious about the structures and stories that aren't immediately noticeable—those of the hundreds of enslaved people who lived here in the mid-1800s and represent a significant part of the site's history.

THC site staff are developing a comprehensive interpretive plan for Varner-Hogg that will enhance visitors' experiences. Currently, visitors can see the ruins of the slave quarters and the sugar mill where most of the slaves lived and worked.

"In the future, the site will present even more information on the lives of all the people on the plantation including expanded information about individual enslaved people who lived on the plantation prior to the Civil War," says Sue Miller, site manager.

Over the years, the site's focus has been the Hogg family—including remarkable 19th-century furnishings and references to the tremendous oil reserves discovered in the 1920s (at one point bringing in nearly \$40,000 daily). But over the past decade, interpretive efforts have turned toward the era of Columbus Patton, the plantation's second owner. Staff member Kyle Roberts says students often inquire about the former slave dwellings during school tours, and visitors are curious about the enslaved people who called the plantation home at the time.

Varner-Hogg staff members are enthusiastic about sharing all aspects of the site's history. During insightful house tours, held seven times daily, guides educate visitors about the legacies of the three families connected to the property: Varner, Patton, and Hogg.

"It's been fascinating to develop this master plan that better integrates the history of African Americans and many others who worked and lived at the site 150 years ago with the rest of Varner-Hogg Plantation's remarkable history," Miller says. "These amazing stories have been here for more than a century just waiting to be told."

While conducting research for the master plan, the staff accessed probate records in the Brazoria County Courthouse



containing detailed accounts of slaves who resided and worked on the plantation, then known as Patton's Place. The detailed information is from a court case in which relatives contested the terms of Patton's Last Will and Testament and declared

him mentally unstable.

Included in the file is testimony from Patton family members about slaves Rachael, Maria, Solomon, and Big Jake as well as names, medical records, and sales receipts documenting slave-related activity.

"It's fascinating to see all these records because they put

names with events and specific actions—it personalizes the challenging aspects of slavery," Miller says. "When you read about a slave named Ina having a doctor attend her at the birth of a child, it becomes much more real. It prompts you to think about individual people rather than the institution of slavery as a whole."

The court files include firsthand testimony from neighbors, former plantation employees, and family members about Patton's mental health and about his relationship with Rachael, a house slave, who he provided for in the will.

Charles Grimm, Patton Place overseer from 1847–49, testified that Rachael "was the mistress of the plantation. I never saw her do anything more than pour out coffee and



Previous page: Varner-Hogg Plantation's southern lawn. From top: A view through Varner-Hogg's kitchen window; site staff offer seven insightful tours daily; the table in the plantation's dining room expands to seat more than a dozen guests.

wait on the table... I thought they lived more like man and wife and that she had more control over him than I ever saw a lady have over her husband or as much so.”

Hal Simon, interpretive planner for the THC’s Historic Sites Division, notes that these types of descriptions “paint a portrait of a very compelling individual.”

With information like this becoming readily available online, sites like Varner-Hogg, nearby THC property Levi Jordan Plantation, and other heritage attractions representing mid-1800s Texas are drawing visitors who express curiosity about the lifeways of enslaved people. Simon adds that there is also greater interest among African Americans, thanks to improved access to information via online resources and genealogical services.

“What’s happening in contemporary society is that there are now a couple of generations who haven’t been raised with the strongly defined color line that existed in the past,” Simon explains. “It makes it somewhat easier to talk about difficult issues that were too sensitive to discuss years ago.”

Bryan McAuley, site manager at Levi Jordan Plantation and San Felipe de Austin state historic sites, agrees, adding that he’s witnessed a change in visitors’ questions and comments over the past several years.

“As the public evaluates issues, it’s been a great opportunity to talk about the unique stories of this site (Levi Jordan), especially how racism affects a community,” McAuley says. “Visitors are transported to a different time and have to put themselves in the mindset of that perspective. Coming to terms with slavery is really difficult because of its barbaric nature.”

McAuley adds that from an interpretive perspective, one of his goals is to inspire visitors and instill an interest to further investigate historical elements of the site or even reexamine their own perspectives. As an example, he cites a discussion with an African

American woman who claimed she wished the Levi Jordan plantation had somehow been wiped away—either by neglect or a natural disaster—since it represented a physical reminder of celebrating the landowners instead of the people who worked there.

“I reminded her that the house tells multiple stories, especially the tremendous effort involved in its construction that has allowed it to still stand,” McAuley recalls. “What we can do is share the stories and get out in the community to tell others about what happened here so people have a better understanding. It feels important to be a part of something that makes people think beyond the surface and realize how they can play a role in telling the story from a more enlightened perspective.”

Although Levi Jordan is in the throes of a major restoration project—it’s currently elevated above ground while a new foundation is prepared—visitors are still encouraged to come by on the first Saturday of each month to engage staff members in discussion about the site’s development progress and the artifacts discovered during recent archeological excavations.



Clockwise from left: Varner-Hogg’s 1921 site foreman building, known as Hal’s House, was used until 1968; the Levi Jordan Plantation is undergoing a major restoration project; a Patton family gravestone on the Varner-Hogg property.





Clockwise from right: the 12,000-square foot Lake Jackson Historical Museum showcases plantation culture and regional heritage; a THC marker documenting West Columbia's significant history; an exhibit at Clute's Brazosport Museum of Natural Science.

## BRAZORIA COUNTY BECKONS

In addition to the THC's historic sites, Brazoria County offers a bounty of heritage attractions, encompassing an impressive breadth of Texas history, from centuries-old coastal communities to early colonists to a chemical company town.

Just down the road from Varner-Hogg Plantation in West Columbia is a small walking trail on a busy highway intersection dedicated to one of the most significant sites in Texas history. Dubbed the **Capitol of Texas Park**, the block-long walkway contains THC historical markers and several interpretive panels chronicling the site of the Republic of Texas' first yet noteworthy **Columbia**

**Historical Museum**, containing a diorama of the town as it likely appeared in the 1820s along with artifacts and artwork related to the city's Republic-era heritage.

Exhibits related to similar subject matters—particularly the events and settlers associated with Stephen F. Austin's Old Three Hundred land grants and pioneering colony—are highlighted in several regional museums. **The Brazoria County Historical Museum**, housed in Angleton's stately 1897 county courthouse, focuses primarily on historical research material but also features artifacts and displays related to the county's colonial legacy.

Ten miles south, the **Lake Jackson Historical Museum** documents the intriguing heritage of the region's plantation era along with the city's relatively recent development as a company town for Dow Chemical in 1944. The 12,000-square foot, two-story museum showcases the former sugarcane operations at town namesake Abner Jackson's plantation, as well as the innovative urban planning of Alden Dow, who designed

the community with a naturalistic approach to residential development.

This southeastern portion of Brazoria County, known as the Brazosport Area, is also rich in maritime heritage, offering visitors an opportunity to discover lesser-known stories of Texas' Gulf Coast and the fascinating array of people and nature that shaped the region.

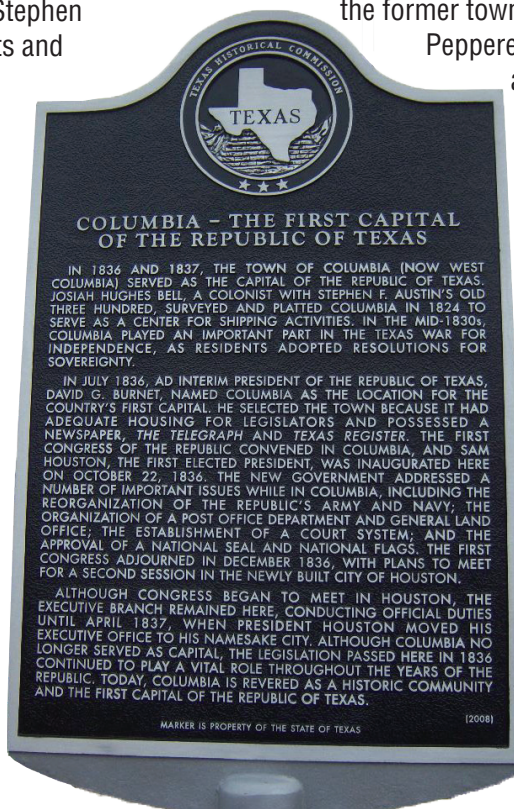
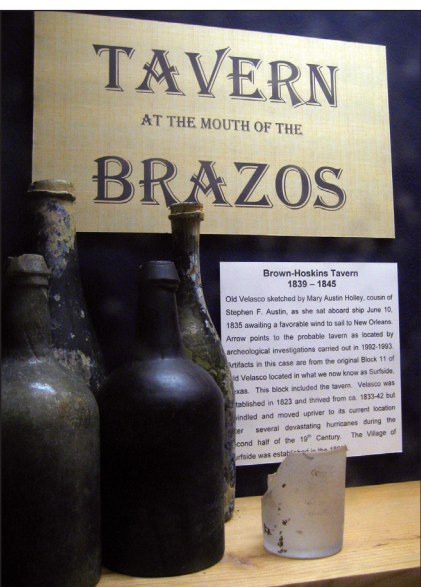
A good starting place is **Sea Center** in Lake Jackson, a Texas Parks and Wildlife property that showcases marine life and the related cultural connections to the area. Visitors marvel at enormous saltwater aquariums, which are sequenced by gulf depth and overflowing with information about the sea creatures, vegetation, and human activity associated with each zone.

Similarly, the **Brazosport Museum of Natural Science** in nearby Clute offers natural history exhibits and artifacts, including the largest display of seashells in the South. Of particular interest is an exhibit containing artifacts related to Old Velasco, a settlement at the mouth of the Brazos River that thrived in the 1830s but was eventually decimated by hurricanes. The community of Surfside Beach now occupies the former townsite.

Peppered throughout Surfside Beach and the adjacent community of Quintana are several THC historical markers offering insight about the area's significance to Republic-era commerce. Before its destruction by the hurricane of 1900, Quintana was a major seaport for Austin's colony and a popular destination for Brazoria County's plantation families.

For additional information about heritage tourism destinations in Brazoria County, order a free copy of the THC's *Texas Independence Trail Region* travel guide by calling 866.276.6219 or visiting [www.texasimetravel.com](http://www.texasimetravel.com). ★

Photos by Randy Mallory and Andy Rhodes



# Veteran's Day

## Santiago Diaz, 95, Shares Stories of World War II Experience

By Eisenhower Birthplace staff

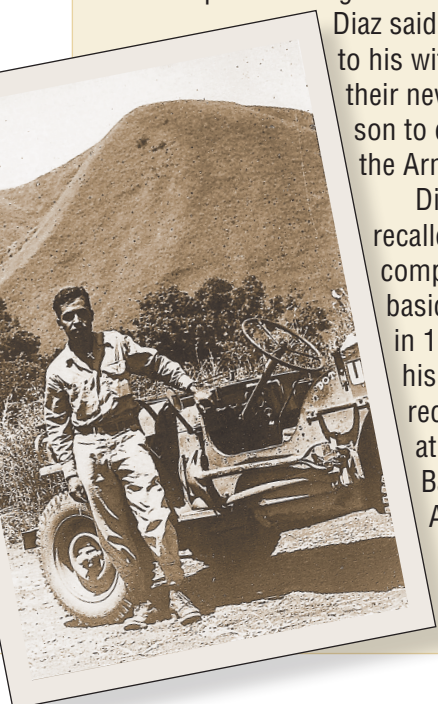
A World War II veteran's recent visit to Eisenhower Birthplace State Historic Site resulted in a day of powerful wartime memories and a boost in pride for everyone involved.

Armed with a walking cane and a trove of recollections about his experiences in the U.S. Army, 95-year-old Santiago Diaz of Fort Worth visited the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) site in Denison this summer with his daughter, son-in-law, and grandson to tour the first home of esteemed World War II Gen. and President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Born in Jalisco, Mexico amid the turmoil of the Mexican Revolution, Diaz's parents relocated to Texas while he was an infant and settled in Fort Worth. Diaz was raised in Fort Worth and eventually married Justina Alvina at nearly the same time the United States entered World War II. When he learned he could receive American citizenship for serving in the military,

Diaz said goodbye to his wife and their newborn son to enlist in the Army.

Diaz recalled completing basic training in 1943 with his fellow recruits at Camp Barkley in Abilene.



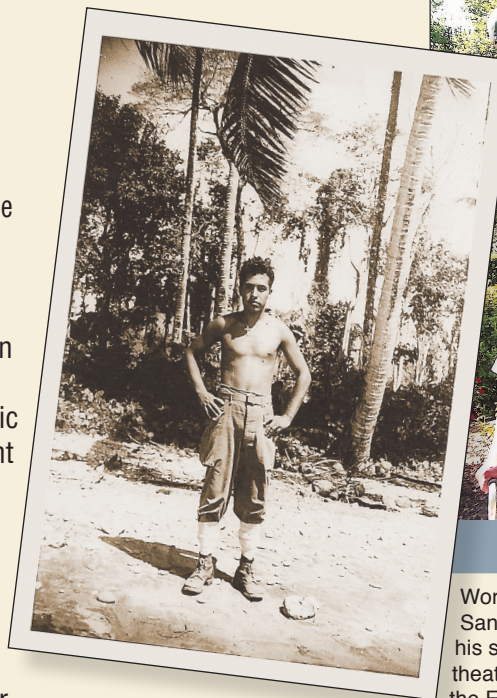
Twelve weeks later, he went to a hospital in Illinois for medical staging, bound for duty in Europe. When his orders were changed to the Pacific theater, Diaz was sent south to Louisiana to prepare for the tropics, "because there are no jungles in Illinois," he said with a smile.

Diaz departed for Guadalcanal from San Francisco on a crowded ship, where many men, including himself, became seasick. Thousands of soldiers slept in bunks stacked four high to the ceiling, and Diaz received a spot on the bottom bed.

"The other guys climbing down would step on my feet and hands," he recalled, adding that it took 21 miserable days to reach New Caledonia, zig-zagging the entire way to evade enemy submarines lurking in the South Pacific. Finally arriving at Guadalcanal, the ship sat offshore all day before the troops disembarked.

"The men climbed down rope ladders that night to the landing craft below (to avoid being observed by the enemy)," Diaz explained.

Most of Diaz's time overseas was spent on Guadalcanal, working as a medic associated with the 53rd Seabees before transferring to an Army Air Corps unit. While on the island, Diaz proudly took his oath and became an American citizen.



World War II veteran Santiago Diaz shared his stories of the Pacific theater during a visit to the Eisenhower Birthplace.

When the war ended, Diaz was stationed on the island for a short time, but returned to Texas on January 6, 1946. Afterward, he claimed he never wanted to be on a boat of any kind again. Diaz and his wife raised four children in Fort Worth, and he enjoyed a lengthy career with the Texas and Pacific Railroad until retiring in 1982.

Diaz has visited several sites from his military days, such as the railroad station in Paris, Texas, where the soldiers were not allowed to get off the train. He was especially impressed by a 2003 trip to Fredericksburg's Nimitz Museum, also a THC historic site.

"We encouraged him to return to Fredericksburg since they now have the National Museum of the Pacific War with wonderful new Guadalcanal exhibits," said Sylvia Rushing of the Eisenhower Birthplace. "I know the staff there will appreciate and enjoy his stories just as much as we did." ★

# THE SPIRIT OF 1836

## Honor Texas Ancestors: Support the Texas Heroes Endowment benefitting THC

The year 1836 was a landmark in Texas history. To this day, it represents the spirit and determination of our forefathers in their unwavering fight for independence.

In 1836, burgeoning Texans responded to the call for freedom from tyranny. Personal sacrifice was a natural and necessary element of this endeavor. Texian settlers, soldiers, and supporters from faraway states offered assistance by answering the call for help.

“It is the duty of all of us, individually and collectively, to do what we can to preserve the tangible evidences of our heritage. Money, time, and dedicated effort are essential to this program. We do this in respect and tribute to the strong men and women who built Texas...”

—Governor Allan Shivers  
Remarks to the Texas Historical Survey Committee  
November 17, 1953

As the only state in the union that was once its own republic, Texas is rich in the real places that tell the real stories of our collective history. The Texas Historical Commission (THC), with the support of the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission, seeks to preserve our heritage for future generations through its esteemed programs in architecture, archeology, historical markers, historic sites and museums, military history, heritage tourism, and many others.

You can help ensure the THC has the resources to fulfill its mission by becoming a Friend to the Texas Historical Commission by making a gift to the Texas Heroes Endowment in memory of early Texans. With the significant year 1836 as inspiration, please consider a gift each month, or each year, in amounts of \$18.36, \$183.60, \$1,836, or more in honor of early Texans. Individual gifts will join with others to build a private endowment providing long-term, dependable resources to support areas of greatest need and unique opportunities at the THC.

Contributions can be made via the detachable form at right, online at [www.thcfriends.org/1836](http://www.thcfriends.org/1836), or by calling 512.936.2189. Together, we will protect the rich and unique cultural legacy of our state and ensure our historic sites and resources are preserved for the education, enjoyment, and economic benefit of future generations of Texans.

**YES!** I want to preserve Texas' history. Enclosed is my tax deductible gift to the Texas Heroes Endowment in memory of early Texans who settled this great land. Please accept my

one time     monthly     annual gift of:  
 \$18.36     \$183.60     \$1,836     \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I understand this gift will be used to build the corpus of an endowment to support areas of greatest need and unique opportunities at the Texas Historical Commission.

In  memory     honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

Please notify the following of my gift:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

### BILLING ADDRESS

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please print how you prefer your gift be recognized:  
 \_\_\_\_\_

### PAYMENT OPTIONS

Check or money order enclosed for \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Payable to the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission)  
 Please charge my gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to my credit card:  
 VISA     MasterCard     Discover

Credit card number \_\_\_\_\_  
 Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_

### MATCHING GIFTS

You may be able to double or triple your gift to the Texas Heroes Endowment benefitting the Texas Historical Commission. To find out if your company matches charitable contributions made by their employees, visit your company's human resources department.

Cut and mail to P.O. Box 13497, Austin, TX 78711

# Building an Effective Main Street

## National Expert Shares Business Development Tips

at THC Seminar

By Debra Farst

*Texas Main Street Program Coordinator.*

Some historic downtowns seem magical. For small businesses, the magic comes from the support and encouragement of an entrepreneurial environment.

Although patrons may feel enchanted when visiting a historic downtown, there's actually nothing magical about the experience. Behind every successful downtown is a well-planned strategy for making things happen.

The coordination of many partners—including local government, a management organization, and property and business owners—is critical in becoming a high-functioning downtown commercial district. The most effective effort involves a community-driven approach. This community engagement philosophy is a primary premise of the Main Street model.

In recognition of its 30th anniversary as a state coordinating program, the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) Texas Main Street Program held a series of seminars throughout 2011 on topics related to the national Main Street Four Point Approach™: organization, design, economic restructuring, and promotion. The seminar series was made possible through a grant provided by Preserve America and the National Park Service.

The final seminar, presented by Rick Ferrell, principal of Wilmington, Del.-based Retail Market Answers, LLC, focused on proactive business recruitment, retention, and expansion for historic downtowns. According to Ferrell, the three-part process for creating sustainable growth includes

property and business owners, real estate brokers, and developers; planning for business recruitment and retention; and an effective communications and public relations structure.

Ferrell claims financial incentives are commonly used in communities across the country to spur local business development, but they should be viewed only as a component of a larger plan.

"In these competitive and challenging economic times, communities offering business development incentives may find themselves more attractive to prospective businesses and redevelopers than those who do not have incentives," said Ferrell.

In a successful Main Street environment, the plan features historic preservation as the basis of all activity.

These activities require the cooperation of all stakeholders, which is why effective partnerships are so critical to the downtown economic development effort.

"Ultimately, when everyone is working together, the lineup of businesses represents

the highest and best use of each building and parcel in the commercial business district," says Ferrell, adding that a key point to keep in mind is an effective downtown revitalization program must be structured to be sustained over time.

Local Main Street programs in Texas are a testament to this concept. Nearly 60 Texas programs have been officially designated for 10 years or more. Of those, 36 have participated continuously.

For those interested in Ferrell's detailed business development tips, his presentation and supplementary materials are available at [www.thc.state.tx.us/mainstreet/mswork.shtml](http://www.thc.state.tx.us/mainstreet/mswork.shtml). ★



Downtown vibrancy comes from activities that encourage use of historic places and successful businesses, such as Denton's Beth Marie's Ice Cream (left) and a summer music series at Denton's county courthouse.

assessment, planning, and action. He says that five things are necessary for effective business development: a building and business inventory; understanding the local market; an ongoing willingness to establish and cultivate relationships with

# Preserving Sam Rayburn's Legacy

## Restored Cadillac Among Notable Upgrades at THC Museum

By Carole Stanton, Sam Rayburn House Museum Site Manager

Ongoing restoration work at the Sam Rayburn House Museum near Bonham will ensure its preservation for the future and allow visitors to experience the home as it appeared when "Mr. Sam" last lived there 50 years ago. When the site reopens next spring, visitors will also be able to enjoy Rayburn's spruced-up 1947 Cadillac in the site's recently rehabilitated historic garage.

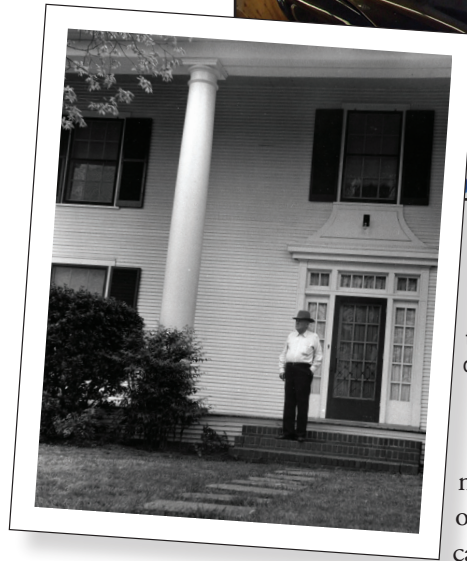
Constructed in 1916 by Rayburn, the home is currently being restored to improve its exterior condition and enhance its historic interpretation. Work is centered on repairing and replacing wood siding, and repairing windows and doors with original materials.

In addition, the front of the home and its back porch office will be restored to their historic appearances. The front porch will be decked with wood planks and brick steps, based on the original appearance. In addition, the modern sidewalk from the street will be replaced with cement pavers as they appear in historic photos from the mid-20th century. A separate new sidewalk will curve in a gentle slope from the visitors center to the side of the porch.

Preservation architects worked with museum employees and Texas Historical Commission (THC) staff to prepare plans for the restoration project.

"Site records and photographs, plus analysis of period paint, wood, and brick were analyzed to find the appropriate materials to maintain the historic integrity of the house," says Donna Williams, director of the THC's Historic Sites Division. "One of the factors in selecting the construction firm was its knowledge and experience with historic preservation work."

Last year, a gift from the Friends of Sam Rayburn (matched by the THC) funded a mechanical restoration of Rayburn's 1947 Cadillac Fleetwood by Canton, Texas-based Hatfield Restorations. The car was a gift to Rayburn after he lost his seat as Speaker of the United States House of Representatives in 1947. Along with the job of Speaker of the House came the use of a limousine, which Rayburn relinquished to the new Speaker, Joe Martin.



From top: Sam Rayburn's 1947 Cadillac and its garage were recently restored; Mr. Sam circa 1959; Rayburn and guests after the 1957 Sam Rayburn Library dedication ceremony.

Several Democratic members of the House offered to purchase a new car for Rayburn, but he refused. He feared that such a large gift might make it appear he was taking bribes; therefore, he mandated that his fellow congressmen could not spend more than \$25 on a gift for him. In an effort to comply and yet sidestep Rayburn's rule, each congressman donated \$25. Checks poured in from 142 house Democrats (and a few Republicans, although their money was returned with many thanks), reaching a sum of \$3,550, enough to buy a new Cadillac Fleetwood.

Rayburn knew his circa-1916 garage was not designed to hold a vehicle as large as the new Cadillac, so he phoned his handyman from Washington, D.C., and asked him to make an extension on the garage to accommodate his new car. Rayburn did not know the Cadillac's exact size, so he estimated the dimensions.

"When he returned home, he found that although his car fit through the existing garage doors, there were only a few inches to spare on the sides and nothing to spare in length," Williams explains. "When parking the Cadillac in the garage, there is still no margin for error." ★



# Historical Happenings

## APPLICATION DEADLINE FAST APPROACHING FOR THC HISTORICAL MARKERS

The Texas Historical Commission (THC) is accepting applications for subject historical markers, designated Historic Texas Cemeteries, and Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks (RTHL). The deadline to submit applications is November 15, via email to [markerapplication@thc.state.tx.us](mailto:markerapplication@thc.state.tx.us).

The Texas Legislature has limited the THC to processing 275 new historical marker applications in 2012, plus 20 new untold topics. RTHLs are prioritized for 2012 and will receive additional points when applications are scored.

Complete information regarding the application process is available at [www.thc.state.tx.us](http://www.thc.state.tx.us) or by calling 512.463.5853.

## THC ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR DIVERSITY INTERNSHIP

The Friends of the THC seeks to increase the diversity of professionals working in historic preservation by offering a \$5,000 stipend for an eight-week internship with the THC. Applicants should be U.S. citizens of African, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, or Native American/Hawaiian/Alaskan heritage and should be Texas residents attending an accredited four-year college or university as a graduate or undergraduate student.

Ideal applicants will demonstrate an interest in pursuing a career in history, preservation, architecture, landscape architecture, archeology, downtown revitalization, or heritage tourism. Applications are available at [www.thcfriends.org/diversityinternship](http://www.thcfriends.org/diversityinternship). The deadline for submission is January 31, 2012.

## THC REVISES CEMETERY PRESERVATION GUIDE

The THC has produced an updated guide to cemetery preservation, detailing the agency's Historic Texas Cemetery (HTC) designation process and the RIP (record, investigate,

and protect) Guardian network. The colorful manual also addresses cemetery conservation and repair, maintenance, and cemetery law.

Established in 1998, HTC designation helps communities record graveyards in the county records to address the problem of cemetery destruction. The designation has recognized nearly 1,600 historic cemeteries in all 254 Texas counties. The RIP Guardian network is a statewide connection of cemetery preservation volunteers dedicated to protecting historic burial grounds.

To learn more, or to download the updated guidelines, visit [www.thc.state.tx.us](http://www.thc.state.tx.us) or contact the agency's History Programs Division at 512.463.5853.



A new THC guide assists preservationists with historic cemeteries, irreplaceable resources that tell the real stories of Texas.

## HARRIS CHC NAMES FIRST FEMALE CHAIR



For decades, Houston preservationist Janet Wagner has dedicated her efforts to researching multi-faceted aspects of Texas' heritage; now she's made history on her own.

Earlier this year, Wagner was named the first female chair of the Harris County Historical Commission (CHC). She was officially sworn in by Harris County Judge Ed Emmett and was commended for breaking the gender barrier. Wagner also serves as president of the Harris County Historical Society, the oldest historical organization in Harris County.

Wagner, a San Antonio native, graduated from Texas A&M University with a degree in landscape architecture and eventually opened her own firm, J.K. Wagner and Company, Inc., which provides historical and cultural land-use research services for archeological, environmental, and land development projects. Wagner was responsible for registering the Old Sixth Ward as Harris County's first historic district and was also instrumental in designating Houston's first subdivision, Frost Town, as a City of Houston Landmark. Wagner is currently working on a book detailing her 20 years of research on Carolana Florida, a 17th-century English colony in Houston and the Gulf Coast region.



*The Medallion* is published bimonthly by the Texas Historical Commission. Address correspondence to: Managing Editor, *The Medallion*, P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711-2276. Portions of the newsletter that are not copyrighted or reprinted from other sources may be reprinted with permission. Contributions for the support of this publication are gratefully accepted. For information about alternate formats of this publication, contact the THC at 512.463.6255.

**TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**Commissioners:**

Jon T. Hansen, Chair  
David A. Gravelle, Vice Chair  
Gilbert E. Peterson, Secretary

Thomas E. Alexander	Sheri S. Krause
Earl Broussard Jr.	Matthew Kreisle
A. Mario Castillo	Tom Perini
Leslie "Kirk" Courson	Thomas R. Phillips
John W. Crain	Judy Richardson
Lisa A. Hembry	Nancy Steves
Steven L. Highlander	Daisy Sloan White

**Commissioner Emeritus:** T. R. Fehrenbach  
**Executive Director:** Mark Wolfe

**Medallion Staff:**

Heather McBride	Department Head
Andy Rhodes	Managing Editor
Barbara Putrino	Contributing Editor
Judy Jensen	Senior Graphic Designer

ISSN 0890-7595  
Vol. 49, No. IV

[www.thc.state.tx.us](http://www.thc.state.tx.us)    [thc@thc.state.tx.us](mailto:thc@thc.state.tx.us)

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

*The Medallion* is available online at [www.thc.state.tx.us/medallionmag/mddefault.shtml](http://www.thc.state.tx.us/medallionmag/mddefault.shtml). If you would prefer to receive *The Medallion* electronically instead of through the mail, please send your name and address to [thc@thc.state.tx.us](mailto:thc@thc.state.tx.us). You will be notified by email when each new issue is available on the THC web site and will no longer receive a printed copy.

**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.

# CHC Impact

## Groups Doing More with Less

*By Amy Hammons, County Historical Commission Outreach Coordinator*

The year 2011 has been filled with conversations about the value of preserving and promoting our heritage. Inevitably, this leads to questioning the value of preservationists' service—the time, energy, and money we invest in our efforts to save the real places of Texas.

It is difficult to express and qualify preservation's intangible impacts on a community. Consequently, County Historical Commissions (CHC) are undervalued and rarely provided the funding necessary to do the work for which they are tasked.

Typically, CHCs rise to these financial challenges and continue to serve by supplementing county budgets with personal funds and services. As a result, it becomes difficult to demonstrate the need for continued and additional support when our only response is to do more work with fewer resources.

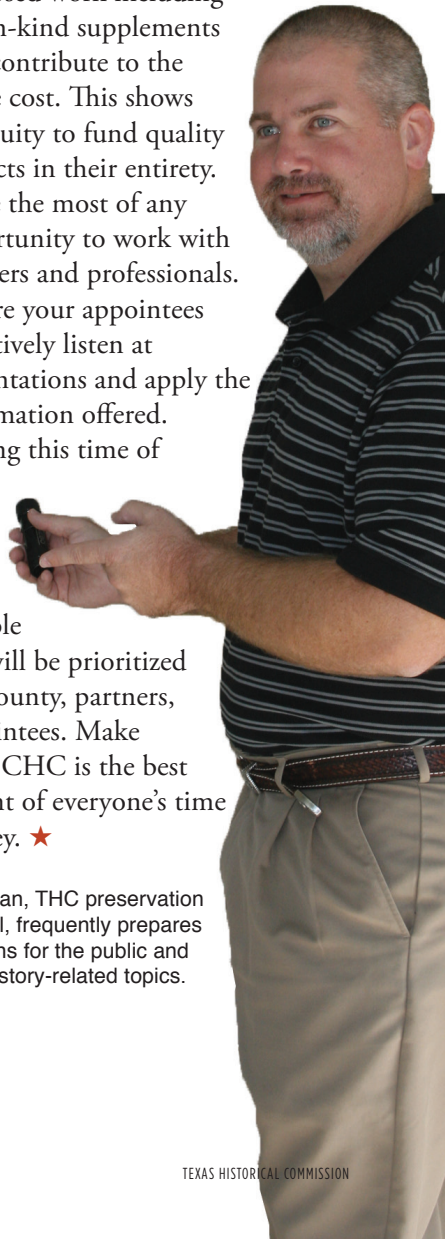
Consider how this impacts our members and partners. Do we value our volunteers if we not only expect more of their time, but also expect them to incur more out-of-pocket expenses to fund projects?

Think of your requests to professionals for presentations, site visits, and conditions assessments, which require research, preparation, evaluation, and travel costs. If we continue to expect others to provide these services pro-bono or at a reduced rate, then we may undervalue their worth just as others often undervalue the significant contributions of CHCs.

There are no simple solutions to these quandaries, but the following tips will help to illustrate and convey the value of CHCs' work.

- Keep track of time, travel, and expenses and report the information to your county to document the extent of the investment in your appointed role. This also affirms the contribution of your volunteers.
- Provide realistic budgets for your work. Instead of lowering your requested amount for fear of being turned down, provide a line-itemed estimate of the proposed work including any in-kind supplements that contribute to the entire cost. This shows ingenuity to fund quality projects in their entirety.
- Make the most of any opportunity to work with partners and professionals. Ensure your appointees attentively listen at presentations and apply the information offered. During this time of reduced budgets, opportunities with sizable impacts will be prioritized by your county, partners, and appointees. Make sure your CHC is the best investment of everyone's time and money. ★

Bob Brinkman, THC preservation professional, frequently prepares presentations for the public and CHCs on history-related topics.



## NOTICE

Texas law requires quarterly state newsletters to notify recipients that to continue receiving the publication, they must request it once each year. To maintain your free subscription to *The Medallion*, please mail or fax this portion of the page (including the mailing label) to:

### ***The Medallion* Circulation**

P.O. Box 12276  
Austin, TX 78711-2276  
Fax: 512.463.6374

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_



**TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
*real places telling real stories*

P.O. BOX 12276 • AUSTIN, TX 78711-2276

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

## WHERE ON EARTH...IN TEXAS

**Know your Texas history?** Put your skills to the test by identifying the pictured site! The first three people who correctly identify the location will receive 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](mailto:medallion@thc.state.tx.us).

Need a clue? Located in North Texas and dating to 1867, this small building was reconstructed in the 1930s after residents complained about the site's unsightly ruins.



Answer to the photo from the last issue: This monument, located at Monument Hill/ Kreische Brewery State Historic Site in La Grange, was created for the Texas Centennial Commission as an homage to those who

died in the Dawson Massacre and the Mier Expedition.

Congratulations to the first three readers who submitted the correct answer: Gladys Dickson of Lampasas, Auddy Hernandez of Zapata, and Margaret Roscher of La Grange. Thanks to all participants! ★

