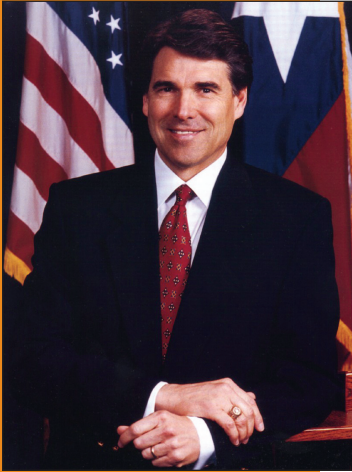


THE MEDALLION



From *Railroads* to *Ruby Reds*
Experience Harlingen's Valley Heritage

Leadership Letter



Greetings:

When Hurricane Ike barreled across the shores of Southeast Texas in September, not only were thousands of homes and businesses destroyed, but a large number of Galveston's historic buildings and markers were severely damaged, if not swept away. Once known as the "Wall Street of the Southwest" and "little Ellis Island," the city of Galveston is one of the oldest and most historic metropolitan areas in our state. Preserving what history is left should be an important aspect of rebuilding efforts as we move forward.

As Ike approached our coast, Texas did an outstanding job of managing preparation and evacuation efforts. Our team of state emergency management officials, mayors and county judges was essential in limiting lives lost and damage incurred in the area. As we continue to sift through the debris, restore utilities and reconstruct neighborhoods, residents of the Galveston and Beaumont areas should know that I am committed to working with our local and federal partners to see hurricane recovery efforts through to the end.

Part of these efforts must focus on restoring and reopening a number of damaged historic sites, many that even survived the great storm of 1900. Such an investment should be made not only for the sake of preserving Galveston's history, but rebuilding its tourism industry on which a large part of the city's economic activities depend.

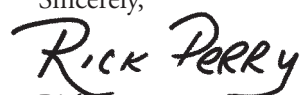
I am proud of organizations like the Texas Historical Commission and Galveston Historical Foundation (GHF) that have already stepped in to address preservation needs. For instance, the GHF has taken the initiative to post a wish list on Amazon.com where anyone can go to purchase a book that will help rebuild the foundation's Preservation Resource Center book collection, which was destroyed by Ike's storm surge.

Innovative ideas like this will ensure that all damaged historic areas are saved for future generations to enjoy. Restoring landmarks like the Strand National Historic Landmark District, East End National Historic Landmark District, Silk Stocking District, Central Business District and countless museums and historic homes will ensure Galveston's tourism industry continues to thrive and preserve an important part of Texas and Galveston's rich history.

Galveston's historic landmarks must be saved so Texans can remember the city where many of the businesses and industries that now thrive among our state's economy originated. I firmly believe that preserving our past will help strengthen our future. Working together, we will return a sense of normalcy to the thousands impacted by this storm and restore the salvageable pieces of this community's historic legacy.



Gov. Rick Perry surveys damage in Galveston after Hurricane Ike. Photo: AP/Harry Cabluck

Sincerely,

Rick Perry
Governor

Texas Jewish Historical Society Documents Cemeteries Great and Small

The Jewish legacy in Texas is similar to the legacy of other groups that immigrated to the state in the late 1800s, and more than a hundred cemeteries serve as a testament to this proud cultural heritage. Jewish burial sites are scattered throughout the state — from small abandoned graves in rural areas to large urban cemeteries — and the Texas Jewish Historical Society is renewing its commitment to documenting these significant sites telling the real stories of their ancestors.

In 1985, the society embarked on an ambitious project to identify and chronicle every Jewish cemetery in Texas, an endeavor ultimately carried out by Baytown residents Don and Gertrude Teter. Their efforts resulted in a 436-page notebook, *Texas Jewish Burials*, released in 1997.

A decade later, the popular book remains in demand and is in need of an update. Society member Charles Hart of Temple agreed to oversee the revision project, which he expects to undertake throughout the year.

“This is a significant project that will benefit Jews in Texas and throughout the country — it’s important for people to be able to trace their ancestry and know their family history,” Hart says, adding that he plans to send letters to county historical commissions seeking their help identifying Jewish cemeteries. “We have a lot of work to do with 254 counties in this state.”

Hart will base most of his research on the Teters’ book, with the hopes of identifying additional sites that have been discovered since its release. Don Teter recently met with Hart to share his experiences, including advice and stories about tracking down vital information.

Teter recalls a particularly insightful and memorable research experience in Gonzales, where he was approached by a community member who shared a little-known secret about an undocumented Jewish cemetery on ranchland outside of town.

“Well, I contacted the property owner who drew me up a map that took me onto a cattle trail. He said I’d find the burial site when I reached a big puddle near an oil well,” Teter says. “Sure enough, I got out of the car and after a little searching I found this little old cemetery. There couldn’t have been more than 10 or 12 gravestones, and there was a beat up old fence that wasn’t working anymore — most of the stones had been knocked down by grazing cattle.”

Teter recruited local youth groups to help clear out the site, repair the fence and maintain the cemetery, which contained graves dating to 1861. The subsequent landowner agreed to take descendants and maintenance volunteers to the site on a flatbed trailer, but Teter is unaware if cemetery upkeep efforts are ongoing.

His other experiences were more challenging, particularly in the large city cemeteries where Jewish families were buried throughout the grounds alongside friends and associates rather than in a segregated area. Whatever the case, Teter meticulously documented each gravesite by dictating vital information — name, dates of birth and death — into a tape recorder while Gertrude handled the transcription.

“Many people don’t realize how many Jews were in small towns across rural Texas,” Teter notes. “Most of them migrated to big cities, but the cemeteries are still there. These are significant places because they help us learn about our Jewish ancestors — that’s why it’s so important for this documentation project to live on.” ★

If you have information about a Jewish burial site in your community, contact the Texas Jewish Historical Society at txjhs@yahoo.com. For other questions about cemetery preservation, visit the THC’s web site at www.thc.state.tx.us.

Article and photos by Andy Rhodes, managing editor of The Medallion.



Austin’s Oakwood Cemetery contains hundreds of Jewish gravesites.

THC's Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program Sparks Downtown Revitalization

As downtown centerpieces throughout Texas, historic county courthouses have enormous potential to promote prosperity within a community. The restoration of these magnificent historic structures through the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program has sparked a revitalization of historic downtowns across the state.

Participation in the THC's other preservation initiatives, including the Texas Main Street Program, Visionaries in Preservation or Certified Local Government, instigates a similar transformation.

"Whatever the level of a community's involvement in these programs, a restored and well-maintained historic county courthouse serves as the anchor of a vibrant town center," said Stan Graves, director of the THC's Architecture Division.

In addition to acting as a catalyst for downtown revitalization by stimulating local and state economies, the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program precipitates financial growth

through the monetary investment made by the THC and participating counties.

The state of Texas has allocated \$207 million and counties have provided local matches of more than \$130 million to complete restorations on 45 of the state's historic county courthouses (17 more are currently under way in Round V). As a result, more than 7,750 jobs have been created along with more than \$17 million generated in local taxes.

The THC recently consulted representatives from Bee, Harrison, Presidio and Wharton counties about the impact of the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program on their communities. The overwhelming consensus was their courthouse restorations played a crucial role in the revitalization of their downtowns and often acted as the primary impetus for economic renewal of the business districts adjacent to the historic courthouse square.

Beeville's downtown turnaround was the result of the leadership of Bee County, the city of Beeville, the Bee Development Authority and the Bee County Chamber of Commerce. Momentum and support for historic preservation, gained during the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation

Program grant, assisted with the restoration of the 1912 Bee County Courthouse and ultimately led to a Texas Main Street Program

application. Since that time, the city's Joe Barnhart Bee County Library was renovated, and most of the historic commercial buildings in the 14-block area surrounding the courthouse square have been rehabilitated and are now occupied.

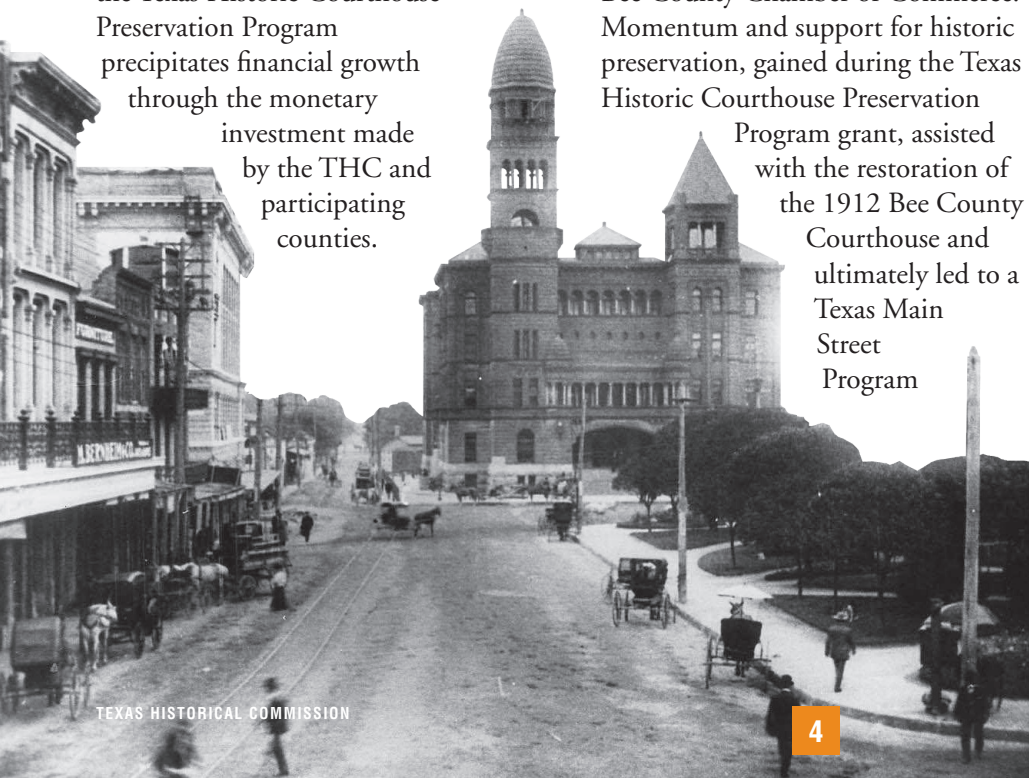
According to Dr. Barbara Welder, former chair of the Bee County Historical Commission and current vice president of the Rialto Theatre Board of Directors, the courthouse restoration reached beyond the building's exterior walls.

"It was a catalyst that really helped redevelop downtown," she said. "The courthouse restoration was the basis of a long-range plan for the revitalization of the downtown area and resulted in a reinvestment of \$9 million in a two-year period."

Beeville's Main Street Manager Molly Young added, "Beeville was lucky enough to be awarded Main Street status during our courthouse project. The two programs have intertwined and now it's difficult to separate their impact — there's definitely a new positive energy in this community that can be attributed to both."

In the early 1980s, the city of Marshall struggled with downtown commercial occupancy, and the dilapidated Harrison County Courthouse caused an image problem for the district. According to Marshall's Assistant City Manager Janet Cook, however, the courthouse's recent restoration instilled confidence in private developers, who invested in downtown properties when construction began.

Shortly after receiving its first Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program grant, Marshall was recertified as a Main Street city in 2002. Subsequently, the long-





The Wharton County Courthouse before (above) and after (right) restoration through the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program. Photos courtesy Bailey Architects. Opposite page: The Bexar County Courthouse (pictured in 1895) remains significant in San Antonio's downtown commercial district.



abandoned Hotel Marshall, located across the square from the courthouse, was purchased and rehabilitated under a public/private partnership. Since then, Marshall has become one of the state's most vibrant historic downtowns and continues to support new restaurants, shops and loft apartments on and around the courthouse square.

"Without the restoration of the courthouse, Marshall's downtown development could never be considered successful," Cook said. "Instead of a deteriorating building contributing to blight, the Harrison County Courthouse is once again a beautiful centerpiece for our downtown area."

In Marfa, where the Presidio County Courthouse is the focal point of downtown, Mayor Dan Dunlap claims the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program's dramatic restoration resulted in adjacent properties becoming particularly desirable for businesses.

"Competition for space on the square has certainly enhanced the property values," Dunlap said.

Joni Marginot, director of the Marfa Chamber of Commerce, reports several new businesses have been established on and around the courthouse square since the

completion of the restoration project. An increase in community pride has also inspired the city to discontinue street lighting surrounding the courthouse, allowing the lighted courthouse to stand out at night.

Additionally, as a result of its involvement with the courthouse program, the city of Marfa joined the THC's Visionaries in Preservation program with the goal of producing a citywide preservation action plan.

When Wharton became a Texas Main Street city in the 1980s, many historic buildings on its downtown square benefited from adaptive use despite a decrease in commercial activity due to a highway bypass. In 2000, the Wharton Economic Development Council commissioned Texas A&M's School of Urban Planning to conduct a downtown analysis. Texas A&M advised the city to make the most of its existing assets, primarily the historic courthouse and surrounding buildings.

Wharton County applied to the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program and completed its courthouse restoration in August 2007. Prior to entering the program, Wharton County considered plans to demolish its historic courthouse and construct a new facility outside of downtown.

Barbara Young, former chair of the Wharton County Courthouse Committee, believes this would have been the "final nail in the coffin" for Wharton.

"Fortunately, the courthouse restoration brought a lot of new businesses to the town center," Young said, adding that it "literally brought the town back from the dead" and prompted regular visits from Houston tourists to see the courthouse and shop on the square.

According to Graves, a city's involvement in urban renewal through preservation of its historic town center — particularly a restored historic county courthouse — provides a hub for a prosperous downtown and a distinctive vitality.

"We're very proud of the commitment of counties across the state that preserve and restore their historic county courthouses through the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program," he said. "It affects many facets of Texas communities by bolstering citizens' pride, increasing heritage tourism and downtown revitalization, and by enriching lives through history." ★

This article was written by Susan Gammage of the THC's Architecture Division.

After the Storm: Landmarks Lost and Lessons Learned

Hurricane Ike crashed into Galveston Island on Sept. 13 with 110 mile-per-hour winds. Considered the most expensive storm in Texas history with damages estimated at more than \$11 billion, the strong category 2 storm took at least 37 lives and many more remain unaccounted for. Debris, destruction and the determination to rebuild are what Ike left behind.

The majority of Galveston Island's and Southeast Texas' historic properties survived the ravages of Hurricane Ike. The Texas Historical Commission's (THC) newly acquired 18 historic sites suffered minimal impact, with the exception of Sabine Pass Battleground, where markers were damaged and new picnic shelters were destroyed. To the north, Houston's most prominent historical site, Sam Houston Park and its collection of historic buildings, survived the storm along with Hobby Airport's 1940 Air Terminal.

"It certainly could have been worse, but it's not good," said Galveston Historical Foundation Executive Director Dwayne Jones from his temporary Austin headquarters shortly after the storm.

Like hundreds of buildings on the island, the foundation's Galveston headquarters, the 1861 U.S. Custom House, was flooded with eight feet of water. THC Executive Director Larry Oaks indicated as many as 1,500 of the approximately 7,000 historical buildings throughout Galveston were damaged.

Galveston's best-known historic structures, many overseen by the Galveston Historical Foundation, were affected. Nearly 10 feet of water flooded the Strand National Historic Landmark District, compounded by thick and sometimes toxic mud from Galveston Bay. In the nearby

East End National Historic Landmark District, residences also suffered significant flooding. However, unlike the Strand's commercial buildings, many of these homes were originally built a few feet above street level, lessening the damage.

The 1889 Bishop's Palace at 14th and Broadway survived, but needs an estimated \$1.2 million in repairs. Nearby, the 1857 Ashton Villa mansion at 24th and Broadway sustained 18 inches of water, damaging furniture on both the first and second floors, where windows were blown out. THC staff were among the many who helped with cleanup, along with a Houston couple who were planning to host their wedding reception at Ashton Villa the following Saturday.

The legendary 1940s Balinese Room, where the likes of Frank Sinatra and Bob Hope performed, was completely destroyed. THC staff also assisted with salvaging as many significant objects as possible, but sorting through the large piles of debris proved difficult. Some items turned up as far away as Corpus Christi.

Galveston's Reedy Chapel, the first African Methodist Episcopal Church in Texas, established in 1848, is a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark and a Juneteenth celebration site. The church's beautiful stained glass windows were damaged in the storm (one was recovered a block away), and the roof, pews and a recent \$5,000 reupholstering job were ruined. When THC architect Sharon Fleming assessed the Gothic Revival structure and assured pastor Salapehia Honors the building suffered no structural damage, Honors was visibly relieved.

"People need encouragement right now," Fleming said. "They need to hear that they can rebuild, that help is available, that there is hope."

Further to the east is the Bolivar Lighthouse, which provided shelter during Galveston's 1900 hurricane that killed thousands of people. It still stands, but most buildings on the nearby peninsula were washed to sea. The communities of Gilchrist, Caplen and Crystal Beach no longer exist, except on maps. Near Caplen, the gulf claimed a National Register of Historic Places and



Recorded Texas Historic Landmark home, The Breakers, along with its more contemporary neighbors. In Orange, the Navy Park National Register District, damaged in 2005's Hurricane Rita, was flooded by Ike along with the city's large residential historic district and Hollywood Cemetery, where caskets floated to the surface.

Beaumont did not take a direct hit from Hurricane Ike, and many of its historic structures — including St. Anthony's Cathedral Basilica — sustained damage but remain standing. The city's historic Jefferson County Courthouse also remains, albeit with a damaged roof.

The 17-foot historic Galveston seawall, erected after the 1900

hurricane, did its job protecting the island from the 12-foot storm surge, but there were also other factors at play.

"What we learned from this and other storms is that the seawall worked," said THC Architecture Division Director Stan Graves, who surveyed much of the destruction first-hand. "It's also clear that the historic properties, for the most part, were simply built more soundly than many of the newer structures. Much of the worst damage from this storm was not to the historic properties."

THC staff members have worked in satellite offices in Galveston and Beaumont to assist the communities and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Both agencies stress that having a preservation ethic in place, complete with photos and a baseline survey identifying historic properties, can greatly facilitate assessments, cleanup and reconstruction.

"The city of Galveston had a disaster plan and local ordinances in place taking into account historic properties — that helped tremendously in expediting the damage assessments," said THC architectural reviewer Brad Patterson.

"Our response was also more effective in counties to the east because we'd assessed some of these areas after Hurricane Rita so we were better equipped and could respond faster."

Patterson adds that after disaster strikes, historic buildings are often demolished due to misinformation. The term "red-tagged" does not mean the building cannot be rehabilitated. Quick, inappropriate repairs can also be damaging, but with the assistance of the THC, property owners can work with historical architects and structural engineers, many who volunteered their time, to rehabilitate historic structures.

Mold damage can also be a serious and sometimes confusing issue. State regulations do not require a property owner to remove otherwise sound historic materials or finishes, such as wood flooring or plaster walls, in order to accomplish effective mold remediation. In most instances, removal of historic materials would prove more detrimental to the property than treating them in place. Helpful information and additional resources are available on the THC's web site at www.thc.state.tx.us.

Enriching lives through history takes many forms and assisting with cleanup and reparation after a hurricane is but one of them. Like past hurricanes, the stories of survival and rebuilding from Hurricane Ike will be remembered not for what was lost, but ultimately for what endured. ★

This article was written by Debbi Head of the THC's Marketing Communications Division.

Far left: Hurricane Ike stripped the brick veneer off of Galveston's Macedonia Baptist Church. At left: THC architect Lyman Labry consults with a Liberty Street homeowner during a recent hurricane assessment trip in Beaumont.



Down in the Valley

Harlingen's Multicultural Heritage Sparkles on Main Street, in Museums

Harlingen is a Valley city, not a border town. There's a big difference. Harlingen offers international character with a proud connection to its neighboring Mexican culture, but it also contains a distinctly American sensibility, with a traditional grid-patterned downtown based on the railroad and strong ties to its historic Main Street and military legacies.

Harlingen regularly hosts visitors from nearby border towns who are drawn by its folksy Americana. Jackson Street is the centerpiece of the city's historic commercial district, offering traditional downtown shops and restaurants accented by towering palm trees and peppered with sounds of Tejano music.

"Harlingen has the flavor of the Valley with wonderful Hispanic customs and the natural beauty of the tropics but it also has an endearing sense of Midwestern charm," explains Cheryl LaBerge, the city's Main Street manager. "People are often surprised by what they find here — it's a fantastic blend of people and cultures in an incredibly unique environment."

Geographically, Harlingen is part of the Valley region, but the Lower Rio Grande is technically a lush river delta. The fertile soil was the main draw for the area's agricultural development at the previous turn of the century. Harlingen's economic growth intensified when the railroad arrived in 1904, connecting the burgeoning town to the big coastal cities of Brownsville and Corpus Christi.

The railroad put Harlingen on track to early prosperity. The region's plentiful produce was packed in the city's icehouses and shipped north on the rails to Texas locales and beyond.



Above: Harlingen's historic Main Street (Jackson Street) is lined with palm trees and specialty shops. At right: Main Street Manager Cheryl LaBerge with art gallery owner Tony Schaub. Far right: Harlingen's famous Iwo Jima Memorial is the working model used for the official bronze monument.

Harlingen's proximity to the Rio Grande also added to the city's export options. Despite modest growth and commercial development, Harlingen didn't see a significant population increase until the 1920s, when land developers often found creative ways to entice Northerners to the Texas tropics.

According to LaBerge, local legend claims the railroad companies advertised the region's abundant, fertile and affordable property to Northerners before loading people on trains to see this "land of opportunity." When the trains reached the desolate coastal plains in the King Ranch area, developers



reportedly lowered the window shades and opened the liquor bottles so prospective land buyers would be in good spirits by the time they arrived in the Valley's tropical paradise.

"Apparently, people were enthusiastically buying plots of land immediately on site," LaBerge says. "The population went from around 1,700 people to nearly 12,000 in the course of a decade."

“The fascinating thing to most people who visit and live in the Valley is the tremendous culture — we have wonderful food traditions, music legacies and a rich built environment.”

— Cheryl LaBerge
Harlingen Main Street Manager



Harlingen received another significant influx during the 1950s, when military installations (Harlingen Army Airfield, preceding Harlingen Air Force Base) raised the population to nearly 41,000 by the end of the decade. Unfortunately, the Air Force base's 1962 closing also affected a major decline in the city's development, resulting in a loss of thousands of military personnel and the sale of nearly 1,400 homes. It would take another 20 years for Harlingen to return to its 1960 population numbers.

The city has recently experienced another population boom, with significant numbers of people relocating to Harlingen due to its proximity to Mexico and available jobs resulting from the North American Free Trade Agreement. This multicultural influence has resulted

in the city's increasing prominence as a tourist destination. Also intrigued by the Texas mystique are Winter Texans, who flock to Harlingen for its comfortable climate and standard of living while enjoying its unique South Texas heritage.

“The fascinating thing to most people who visit and live in the Valley is the tremendous culture — we have wonderful food traditions, music legacies and a rich built environment,” LaBerge says. “We're working hard to develop a preservation ethic to hold on to these traditions and customs, and I think people in Texas and across the country are becoming more aware of that all the time.”

Harlingen Happenings

Harlingen's appeal as a heritage tourism destination is unlike other

Texas cities. Instead of 150-year-old structures or battle sites, the city is prized for its distinctive historic downtown and cultural traditions.

A stroll down Harlingen's Jackson Street, the center of activity for the Texas Main Street program, reveals the diversity that attracts visitors from throughout the Valley. Businesses ranging from traditional offices, clothing boutiques and lunch counters coexist easily with a custom furniture maker, local rap music store and a dress shop dedicated to local traditions (quinceañeras, cotillions).

“People come to our downtown from all over the world looking for things they can't find in the places they live,” says Mary Rekwad, owner of Simply Elegant, an international jewelry and accessory store. “Everybody takes care of each other down here. Some of the shops

on this street aren't making tons of money, but the owners are genuinely happy doing what they love to do. I've never seen so many people this passionate about their businesses — that's what entrepreneurship is all about."

Rekward and her colleagues regularly participate in the city's Good Morning Downtown Coffees, the monthly gatherings promoting Main Street businesses by addressing potential grants, available property and economic reports. According to LaBerge, the events have galvanized the store owners by helping them network about common issues in Harlingen's distinctive historic district.

Another downtown initiative celebrating local heritage is the city's mural program, a collaborative effort among several groups, including the Harlingen Historical Preservation Society and the Harlingen Chamber Convention and Visitors Bureau. The murals — typically numbering around a dozen at any given time — celebrate the city's legacy with colorful images by local artists depicting the region's multicultural influences (while deterring graffiti).

The city's Hispanic heritage also draws visitors to several downtown bakeries, where *pan dulce* are in high demand. These delectable treats — comprised of a fluffy semi-sweet pastry with tasty fruit fillings and syrupy glazes — are distinct to the Valley region. Two of the venerable venues offering these cultural traditions are **La Mexicana Bakery** and **Lara's Bakery**, where locals line up early to get fresh pastries straight out of the oven.

Further outside downtown near the airport is the city's premier history-related destination, the **Harlingen Arts and Heritage Museum**. Located at the former Harlingen Army Airfield site, the museum complex contains several facilities representing Harlingen's colorful past. Highlights include the Lon C. Hill Home, a relocated 1904

structure where Harlingen's founding father lived with his eight children during the city's early years. The home features period antiques and a fascinating collection of historic photos chronicling family and frontier life in the early 1900s.

Another noteworthy attraction in this palm-lined complex is the Historical Museum, located in the former police headquarters of the Harlingen Air Force Base. Exhibits chronicle the area's military history through artifacts (weapons, flags, uniforms and maps) and an impressive photo gallery. The Harlingen Arts and Heritage

Museum also includes two historic structures showcasing the area's early years — the Paso Real Stagecoach Inn and Harlingen Hospital — and a main building featuring rotating cultural exhibits and touring art shows.

Just around the corner is Harlingen's most recognizable heritage tourism attraction, the **Iwo Jima Memorial**. This massive structure is the original working model used by sculptor Dr. Felix de Weldon in his casting of the official bronze version in Washington, D.C. The monument is as powerful as the true rendering,



with its six inspirational figures stirring strong patriotic emotions among the veterans and visitors who make regular pilgrimages to the memorial. Dr. de Weldon donated the structure to the nearby Marine Military Academy as an inspiration to young cadets, also considering the regional connection to one of the soldiers depicted in the monument and the area's ideal temperatures.

Be sure to visit the adjacent museum and gift shop associated with the Marine Military Academy. The museum contains exhibits and

displays primarily related to the U.S. Marine Corps, including the Iwo Jima Veterans Hall of Fame and an educational and stirring film about the Battle for Iwo Jima.

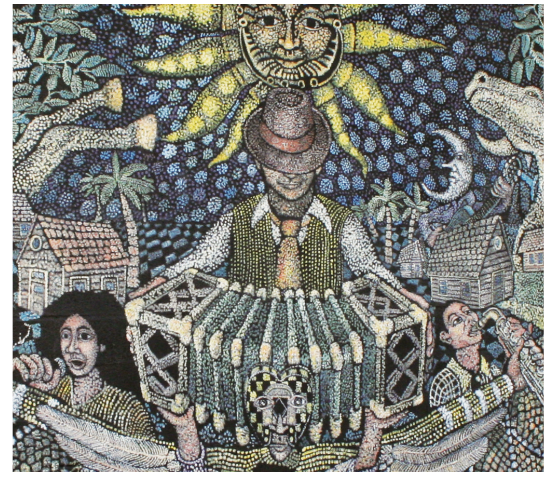
A visit to the Valley would be incomplete without acknowledging the significant cultural heritage associated with its citrus industry. The famous Ruby Red grapefruits originate from the area, and the Harlingen-based **Rio Pride Orchard** (aka Granny Claire's Citrus) is one of the best-known and most visited sites in the Valley. The orchard thrives from November through March, when plump grapefruit and succulent oranges burst from the groves to the delight of farmers and tourists. Drop by the orchard for some freshly picked fruit and a history lesson about this important agricultural industry that put the Rio Grande Valley on the map.

Harlingen's natural attractions also draw thousands of birders annually to the spectacularly lush 55-acre **Hugh Ramsey Nature Park**. This is a paradise for nature tourists, who flock to this pristine swath of Valley vegetation containing dozens of varieties of rare birds, colorful butterflies and subtropical plants. Although the park peaks during winter months, its pleasant walking paths and peaceful gardens are a welcome natural respite any time of the year. ★

Harlingen is located in the Tropical Trail Region of the THC's Texas Heritage Trails Program. To discover additional cultural and heritage-related destinations in the region, request a free copy of the THC's Texas Tropical Trail Region travel guide at 866.276.6219 or www.thc.state.tx.us/travel.

Article and photos by Andy Rhodes, managing editor of The Medallion.

Clockwise from left: A butterfly at Hugh Ramsey Nature Park; a popular birding trail at the nature park; grapefruit are significant in Harlingen's agricultural heritage (THC photo); a downtown mural. On the cover: Harlingen's development was influenced by agriculture and the railroad (historic photo courtesy Harlingen Downtown Office).



If You Go...

Downtown Harlingen (Main Street program)

956.216.4910
www.myharlingen.us

Harlingen Arts & Heritage Museum

2425 Boxwood St.
956.430.8500

Hugh Ramsey Nature Park

1001 S. Loop 499
956.427.8873

Iwo Jima Memorial

320 Iwo Jima Blvd.
956.421.9234
www.mma-tx.org

La Mexicana Bakery

501 W. Tyler Ave.
956.421.3155

Lara's Bakery

403 W. Polk St.
956.423.1219

Rio Pride Orchard

14748 Hoss Ln.
956.423.1191

A Place of Comfort, a Time of Hope

What makes a place a community? Is it a name on a map? Is it the people? Or is it the collective dreams of families and friends that tomorrow will be better than today? In the deep woods near the town of Elysian Fields, the land holds the memory of a community unique in Texas history.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, rural America was threatened with extinction. Agricultural prices plummeted from the combined forces of Dust Bowl desolation and a collapsing job market. In response to the strain on farms and families, the federal government's agencies worked to create new agricultural communities for displaced farmers and laborers. The Resettlement Administration was one of these New Deal initiatives, establishing about 200 new communities nationwide to repair the social fabric that was ripping apart.

In these resettlement communities, sharecroppers were given the promise of land ownership and desperate people were given hope. Thirteen of the sites were segregated for African Americans; the only one of these located in Texas was the Sabine Farms community in southern Harrison County, several miles from the county seat of Marshall. At the time, African Americans comprised about 70 percent of the population of Harrison and Panola counties.

At Sabine Farms, several dozen families formed a new community and forged a new identity. The project, later operated through the Farm Security Administration, was designed for 75 families to live on 12,000 acres, with each family working its own portion of land in cooperative fashion. For each family farm, the government built a house, barn, poultry house, hoghouse, pumphouse and privy.



Sabine Farms' historic community center still stands in a field near Marshall (photo courtesy Preservation Texas' Most Endangered Places program). Inset images: Sabine Farms was a thriving agricultural community in the early 1940s (photos courtesy Library of Congress).

Many of the families were descended from slaves of the 19th century and sharecroppers of the early 20th century who toiled with no hope of owning the land.

The fertile fields surrounded a complex of buildings that included a headquarters community center, library, church, school, dormitories, mess hall, sweet potato curing house, trade school, store and workshop. The large community center, built by an all-African American Civilian Conservation Corps camp, had room to seat 400 people. Later shared facilities included a cannery, weaving loom and smokehouse.

"The barbecue pit was so big it could hold three or four hogs," said Myrtle Davis, whose husband, Alvin, grew up in a Sabine Farms home.

The federal government brought the project to a close in 1944 and put the land up for sale. Residents of the area formed the Sabine Farms Educational Society, joining with Marshall's Bishop College to buy the property. The society's mission was to meet the educational needs of low-income families and provide training on problems affecting low-income farmers.

Bishop College continued the tradition of empowerment and community activism. Sabine Farms had a community health service, farm and home improvement activities, a cooperative association for marketing farm produce, a cooperative store, organized recreation, community fairs and celebrations, college workshops, a community Sunday school, religious services and a county rural school.

Joseph J. Rhoads, president of Bishop College, was a great supporter of the Sabine Farms experiment, extolling the virtues of hard work along with home and land ownership in developing model citizens. A 1946 Sabine Farms brochure stated, "A well-integrated, industrious, Christian farm family, on a farm adequate for its size, is the greatest man-building laboratory on earth."

Professor J. C. McAdams oversaw the agricultural training courses and the supervision of applied farming activities at Sabine Farms. Dr. M. W. Dogan, president of Marshall's Wiley College, and Bishop R. E. Jones of the Methodist Episcopal Church were also keen supporters of Sabine Farms.

Sabine Farms was a viable and vibrant community, but by the early 1960s residents drifted away and most of the houses and buildings were torn down or moved to other sites. Only the community center, now deteriorated and in need of restoration, remains today. Preservation Texas included the Sabine Farms Community Center on its inaugural list of Texas' Most Endangered Historic Places in 2004. Recent efforts have included revival of the Sabine Farms Educational Society as an active nonprofit group to restore the community center and promote educational programs. An Official Texas Historical Marker will soon mark the site, helping tell the story of this special and real place in history. ★

This article was written by Bob Brinkman of the THC's History Programs Division.



The Sabine Farms community center near Marshall (photo courtesy Preservation Texas' Most Endangered Places program).

THC Unveils Markers Highlighting Untold Stories

In July, THC commissioners approved the first set of underrepresented marker topics through Marker Application Funds. The THC will research and fund the following 15 markers throughout the state, addressing aspects of thematic and geographic diversity:

COUNTY

Blanco
Brown
Cherokee
Dallas
Dallas
El Paso
Fayette
Galveston
Goliad
Harrison
Hidalgo
Jackson
Robertson
Sherman
Taylor

SITE

Peyton Colony
Camp Bowie Enlisted Men's Recreation Hall
Weeping Mary Community
Leadbelly in Deep Ellum
William Sidney Pittman
Chinese Immigration to El Paso
Cedar Creek Cemetery
Galveston Movement
Cologne Community
Sabine Farms
"Lemon Pie Factory"
Little Schools of the 400
Andrew (Rube) Foster
Sherman County Courthouse
Atlas ICBM Launch Facility

Nominations and topic suggestions can originate from county historical commissions, individuals or preservation groups. Check the THC web site at www.thc.state.tx.us for the next call for untold marker topics.

A Tribute to Texas Heroes

Texas has always been known for its heroes. From Sam Houston, José Antonio Navarro and Audie Murphy to Oveta Culp Hobby, Ann Armstrong and 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 council of philanthropists who provide support for a wide variety of projects for which state funds cannot be used. Through the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission, the THC's affiliated nonprofit organization, Texas Heroes make an annual contribution of \$1,000 or more to help preserve our state's rich historical legacy, and

they are invited to special events throughout the year.

Funding from the Heroes allowed the THC to host an inaugural celebration honoring Texas' Preserve America communities featuring First Lady Anita Perry as guest speaker. The Heroes sponsored the 2008 T. R. Fehrenbach Book Award and a ceremony where Gov. Rick Perry presented Dr. Kathleen Gilmore of Dallas with the agency's highest honor — the Governor's Award for Historic Preservation.

In the coming year, the Heroes will again sponsor the Fehrenbach Award and will also help underwrite the THC awards program, presented during the Annual Historic Preservation Conference in Lakeway

April 15–17. The generosity of the Texas Heroes 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 coming year holds great promise, and the Friends of the THC welcomes statewide support to help achieve its goals. The Friends invite 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, contact Toni Turner at toni.turner@thc.state.tx.us or 512.936.2241. ★

This article was written by Toni Turner, the THC's development officer.

Texas Heroes

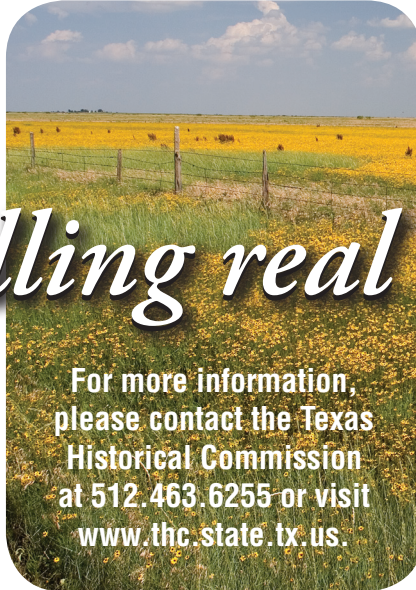
- Ebby Halliday Acers, Dallas
- Killis and Beverly Almond, San Antonio
- Carolyn M. Appleton, Corpus Christi
- Peggy and Ray Bailey, Houston
- Jane and John Barnhill, Brenham
- Dolph Briscoe, Jr., Uvalde
- J. P. Bryan, Houston
- Diane and Stuart Bumpas, Dallas
- Shirley and Clifton Caldwell, Albany
- Richard H. Collins, Dallas
- Harold and Joyce Courson, Perryton
- Mary and Thomas Duncan, Lufkin
- Glen S. Ely, Fort Worth
- Mary Carroll Foley, Austin
- Forttours.com, Fort Worth
- Albert “Boo” and Meta Hausser, San Antonio
- Sarita and Bob Hixon, Houston
- Loyce Ince, San Antonio
- Franklin Jones, Jr., Marshall
- Lewis and Judith Jones, Buda
- Harriet and Truett Latimer, Houston
- Ann Lewis Lawrence, Tyler
- Janey Briscoe Marmion, Uvalde
- Bonnie and Bob McKee, Saint Jo
- Joan and Doug McLeod, Galveston
- Maureen Miller, Corpus Christi
- John and Bobbie Nau, Houston
- Virginia S. Nicholas, San Antonio
- W. D. and Susanne Northcutt, Longview
- Peter and Edith O'Donnell, Dallas
- John R. Parten, Houston
- Thomas R. and Lyn Phillips, Bastrop
- Gay and Shannon Ratliff, Austin
- Marilyn and Lanier Richey, Tyler
- Billie Leigh Rippey, Dallas
- Carole and Louis Romano, Castroville
- Gale Hamilton Shiffrin, San Antonio
- Brian and Debra Shivers, Dallas
- Thomas and Ann Thomason, Laurens, S.C.
- Dianne and Eliot Tucker, Houston
- Linda Valdez, Rockport
- Marty Vaughan, Jonesville
- Vinson & Elkins LLP, Houston
- Marcus Watson, Dallas
- Lee Spencer White, Freer



Annual Historic
Preservation Conference

★

April 15-17, 2009
Lakeway, Texas



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

real places telling real stories

For more information,
please contact the Texas
Historical Commission
at 512.463.6255 or visit
www.thc.state.tx.us.



Sponsored by the Texas Historical Commission
in association with Preservation Texas.

THC Hosts House Museum Workshop

The Texas Historical Commission (THC), in partnership with the American Association for State and Local History and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, is hosting the Historic House Museum Issues and Operations workshop Feb. 19–20 in Austin. The event will be held at the French Legation Museum, 802 San Marcos St.

Participants can explore management, collection and interpretation issues during workshop sessions and address questions about how to translate research into interpretive themes, storylines and plans. An interpretive exercise focused on designing exciting house tours will also be available. Other topics include marketing, working with volunteers, understanding earned income, developing membership programs and caring for buildings and landscapes. Each participant will work on an important issue or problem during the workshop. The workshop is designed for first-time directors, new and mid-career professionals and dedicated volunteers involved in historic house museums.

Early registration for the event closes on Jan. 19. For more information, visit www.aaslh.org or contact the THC's Museum Services Program Specialist Carlyn Hammons at 512.463.5756 or carlyn.hammons@thc.state.tx.us.

Former THC Commissioner Receives Special Resolution

Former THC Commissioner Frank Gorman of El Paso was recently honored with a resolution of



Former THC Commissioner Frank Gorman (center) of El Paso recently received a resolution of appreciation from THC Executive Director Larry Oaks. Also pictured is Magoffin Home Site Manager Leslie Bergloff.

appreciation from the agency for his years of service and contributions, including spearheading the award-winning Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program. The resolution was presented to Gorman at the El Paso County Historical Commission meeting.

Gorman served as a THC commissioner from 1996–2007 and during his tenure was instrumental in the advancement of several of the agency's most successful programs. As chair of the THC's Architecture Committee, Gorman was influential in establishing the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program. The success of this program came to a culmination in May 2008 when it was honored with the prestigious Preserve America Presidential Award during a special White House ceremony. Gorman represented the THC at the award presentation.

"Commissioner Gorman inspired the Texas Historical Commission through his powerful leadership," said THC Executive Director Larry Oaks. "From the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program

to the partnerships he established to save our treasured landmarks, Commissioner Gorman's activism ensures that our state's history will continue to enrich the lives of future generations."

THC Receives West Texas Cemetery Preservation Grants

The THC's Historic Texas Cemetery Program, which officially recognizes historic cemeteries and highlights their significance as

landmarks worthy of preservation, recently received support via grants from the Dodge Jones Foundation, the Permian Basin Area Foundation and former THC Chair and Commissioner Clifton and Shirley Caldwell. These three grants will target counties in West Texas, an area that has very few designated historic cemeteries.

The West Texas Cemetery Preservation Initiative seeks to engage and train individuals and organizations in 70 counties in the West Texas and Panhandle regions that do not contain a designated Historic Texas Cemetery by encouraging them to begin the application process.

"We are grateful for the support from the Dodge Jones Foundation, Permian Basin Area Foundation and Clifton and Shirley Caldwell," said THC Executive Director Larry Oaks. "These benefactors are passionate preservationists dedicated to saving the real places of Texas and the stories they tell."

National Register News

The National Register of Historic Places is the country's official list of cultural resources deemed worthy of preservation, including more than 3,000 listings in Texas. Listing affords properties a measure of protection from the impact of federally funded projects, as well as access to technical expertise and grant funds to facilitate preservation. Income-producing properties are also eligible for federal tax benefits for sympathetic rehabilitation work.

Texas' recently listed historic properties represent real stories reflecting the state's diverse cultural heritage. They include:

Fayetteville Historic District, Fayetteville, Fayette County

Located in south central Texas, Fayetteville features a cohesive group of commercial and residential buildings surrounded by rolling hills dotted with small farms. The district encompasses the majority of Fayetteville's built environment within city limits. The commercial and social center of the district is the town square, centered on the former precinct courthouse surrounded by wood-frame and brick commercial buildings. The remainder of the district is primarily residential in character, with late 19th- and early 20th-century homes predominating. The town's development and character were heavily influenced by the large number of Czech and Moravian families that immigrated to the area beginning in the late 19th century.



National Register of Historic Places Listings in Texas, 2008

- 3525 Turtle Creek, Dallas
- 4928 Bryan Street Apartments, Dallas
- American Airways Hangar and Administration Building, Fort Worth
- Beaumont Downtown Historic District (amendment), Beaumont
- Brauntex Theater, New Braunfels
- Bromberg House, Dallas
- Chambers County Courthouse, Anahuac
- Fayetteville Historic District, Fayetteville
- Greenway Parks Historic District, Dallas
- Hall County Courthouse, Memphis
- Lipscomb County Courthouse, Lipscomb
- M and J Nelson (J. C. Penney) Building, McAllen
- Marconi Tower at Lamar State College, Port Arthur
- Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District, Nacogdoches
- Pettey House, San Marcos
- R. L. White Ranch, Helotes
- Roanoke Commercial Historic District, Roanoke
- Santa Rita Courts, Austin
- St. Louis Hall at St. Mary's University, San Antonio
- Texas Co. Building (Period of Significance amendment), Houston
- Texas State Hotel, Houston
- *USS Cavalla*, Galveston
- Waco Drug Company, Waco
- Warren School, Warren
- Washburn Tunnel, Houston

Texas Main Street Program Receives Preserve America Grant

The Texas Main Street Program was recently honored with a \$218,615 grant from Preserve America to enable strategic reassessments of Main Street cities throughout the state. The grant will be utilized over the next two years to conduct site visits to participating communities to enhance their existing preservation

ethic that has developed under the national Main Street model. Preserve America is a White House initiative that encourages and supports community efforts to preserve and enjoy priceless cultural and natural heritage.

"Preserve America grants help communities learn about their history and share it with visitors. These grants make the story of America come alive and create a better

understanding of our diverse and rich cultures," said John L. Nau, III, chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

For more information on the Texas Main Street Program, contact State Coordinator Debra Farst at 512.463.5758 or debra.farst@thc.state.tx.us. To learn more about the Preserve America program, visit www.preserveamerica.gov. ★

Magoffin Home Collection Reflects Family and Community

Tucked away in downtown El Paso just off Interstate 10 lies an unexpected treasure — the city's only house museum, the Magoffin Home State Historic Site. The striking adobe home, surrounded by olive and cypress trees, is barely visible from the road and does not look like the average house museum.

One of 20 properties managed by the Texas Historical Commission (THC), the 20-room home contains vestiges of the Territorial, Mexican and Victorian styles common during the time period, making it a prime example of Territorial architecture. Three-foot-thick exterior walls and 14-foot-high ceilings are accented by wood trim, stained glass and Victorian details.

“This is not an ordinary adobe structure. Notice the decorative wooden window surrounds and subtle score lines in the stucco — the warmth and richness of the interior finishes and furnishings are still quite surprising,” said Glenn Reed, chief architect of the THC's Historic Sites Division.

Equally as compelling is the story of the home's occupants. Joseph Magoffin, a pioneer, civic leader and politician, built the home circa 1875. The Magoffin family's history encompasses Southwestern borderlands, the Mexican-American War, the Civil War and the economic, political and social development of El Paso.

Joseph's father, James Wiley Magoffin, was a trader on the Santa Fe and Chihuahua Trails and the founder



of Magoffinsville, one of the first settlements in El Paso County. Joseph was born in Mexico and, after serving in the Civil War, moved to El Paso to reclaim his father's land. He served in many civic capacities, including four terms as mayor. His wife Octavia, daughter Josephine and son James were also active in the community.

Josephine married Gen. William Glasgow, a graduate of West Point, and numerous family members served as Confederate soldiers during the Civil War. In the late 19th century, Joseph was instrumental in the relocation and expansion of the U.S. Army's Fort Bliss. Military uniforms, medals and letters

from family members are included in the Magoffin Home collection.



“The Magoffin Home is important because it allows us not only to help visitors understand the history and heritage of El Paso, the state of Texas and the entire Southwest Borderlands, but it also encourages them to preserve their own family history,” said Leslie Bergloff, site manager of the Magoffin Home. “After all, history is really about identity. When you know where you came from, you know who you are. Families are a microcosm of what happens at a local, regional, national and international level.”

The Magoffin Home intrigues visitors with the real stories of people who lived there. Much of the site's collection includes personal items of family members who lived in the home over a span of 111 years. Five of the rooms have been renovated with wallpaper, carpets and furnishings reflecting the lifestyle of the late 1800s when Joseph Magoffin and his family were El Paso community leaders.

“Our goal is to enrich the lives of our community members and visitors through history,” said Bergloff. “We welcome everyone to visit our unique home, or as we say around here, ‘¡Venga a visitarnos!’” ★

Site Spotlight is a new Medallion feature focusing on the history and attractions of the THC's state historic sites. This article was written by Kristie Lawler of the THC's Marketing Communications Division.

Above: The Magoffin Home's interior reflects its unique design. Left: Reenactors at a recent Magoffin Home event.

Location: 1120 Magoffin Ave. in El Paso
Phone: 915.533.5147
Web site: www.visitmagoffinhome.com
Open: Tuesday–Sunday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.



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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.

County Historical Commission
TIPS & TOOLS

Welcome to *The Medallion's* newest feature, CHC Tips & Tools, containing recommendations by Texas Historical Commission (THC) staff to assist preservationists in their efforts to save the real places of Texas. Although the THC's County Historical Commission (CHC) Outreach program is compiling the following brief items to address frequently asked questions, the information is useful to anyone interested in the care and handling of historic and cultural resources. To learn more about specific CHC issues, contact CHC Outreach staff (amy.hammons@thc.state.tx.us or amber.nunez@thc.state.tx.us).

■ Review Chapter 318 of Texas' Local Government Code. Through Chapter 318, the Texas Legislature established the creation of CHCs. Each county commissioners court may appoint a CHC for the purpose of preserving the county's historic cultural resources (for more information about this statute, visit <http://tlo2.tlc.state.tx.us/statutes/gv.toc.htm>). CHCs and county officials are encouraged to review the code to better understand the preservation work allowed within this statute. Additionally, county officials and CHC members should review CHC bylaws on a regular basis to have a better understanding of organizational makeup agreed upon by the county commissioners court.

■ Develop a written collections management policy to ensure decisions regarding your collections are made responsibly, consistently and in accordance with your organization's mission. Not only will



During an unplanned visit to Concordia Cemetery in El Paso, CHC Chair Bernie Sargent (wearing hat) took time to speak with visitors at John Wesley Hardin's grave.

it help you meet certain museum standards and best practices, it is a required addendum to many grant applications. The THC's Museum Services Program can provide sample documents and other resources for developing a collections management policy for your organization (contact history@thc.state.tx.us or 512.463.5853).

■ Report unlawful looting of archeological sites and encourage your community to respond. If the site is on public property, law enforcement authorities can prosecute the offenders. If the site is on private property, the landowner should be informed. The THC's regional archeologists are also available to consult with landowners about protective measures. For assistance, contact the THC's Archeology Division at 512.463.6096 or archeology@thc.state.tx.us. ★

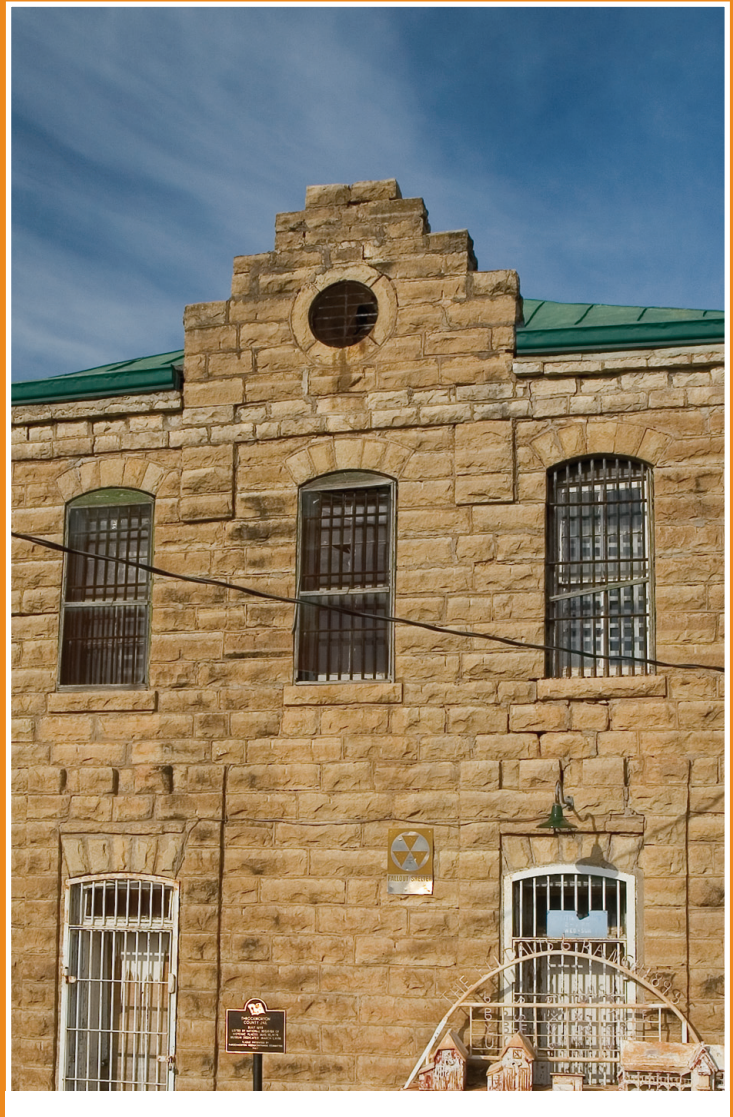
Where on Earth? You tell us! Write to the Texas Historical Commission, P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711-2276. You also may fax your answer to 512.463.6374 or email it to medallion@thc.state.tx.us. The first three people who correctly guess the site will be named with the answer in the March/April 2009 issue of *The Medallion*. The first correct mail answer will be counted, even if correct emails and faxes arrive first. Limit one prize annually per contestant.

Want a clue? This 1893 Recorded Texas Historic Landmark, located in the Texas Forts Trail Region, currently houses a county museum.

Answer to the photo from the last issue: Weslaco City Hall (pictured below) was designed with Spanish colonial style detailing by prominent

Weslaco architect R. Newell Waters in 1928. Congratulations to the following readers who submitted the correct answer: George Edwin of Irving, Marjorie Johnson of Weslaco and Becky Larson of Bellville. They will receive prizes

from our Texas Heritage Trails Program, the Texas Historical Commission's regional tourism initiative, as tokens of our appreciation for taking part in the fun. Thanks to all participants! ★



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