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NOTE

McGovern Lake at
Hermann Park in Houston



Built to Last

One of my favorite gifts I've ever received is a hammock my best friend gave me for Christmas a few years ago. It now hangs below the 400-year-old oak tree in my backyard. When anyone comes to visit, provided it's not chigger season, I always insist they go lie in the hammock. It's an instant dose of peace and serenity. Often when I sway under the tree's intricate web of leaves and branches, appreciating its beauty and impressive size, I reflect on how long it has persisted, despite Texas' punishing weather; and how many people over the centuries may have admired it while contemplating nature's endurance.

This issue is a celebration of things that have endured. Each story pays homage to a place, landmark, shop, or restaurant that is 100 years or older. Longevity requires perseverance, and care and attention over generations. When anything lasts more than 100 years, it's a testament to the number of people who have loved it and

invested in it. One of the great rewards of that labor and attention is knowing future generations can enjoy the same special places.

On a recent trip to Houston, I visited Hermann Park with my husband, kids, and father-in-law. It was our first time at the park, our favorite place in the city, since we moved from Houston to Austin five years ago. My husband and I had fun pointing out the spot where we got engaged and telling our son about his first visit at 2 months old. I hope our love of the park passes down to them and subsequent generations. We'd love to hear about your family's favorite 100-year-old places in Texas. Email us your picks at letters@texashighways.com.

Emily R Stone

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VOLUME 68 · NUMBER 12

DECEMBER

32

Century Club

Visit these steadfast institutions that have made their marks on Texas for 100-plus years.

42

Deep Ellum Clues

Dallas' Deep Ellum neighborhood harkens back to the Roaring '20s, when bluesman Blind Lemon Jefferson ruled the scene.

*By Clayton Maxwell
Photographs by Amy Scott*

50

Stories Without End

Steeped in a diverse and complex history, El Camino Real offers an education not often emphasized in history books.

*By Irene Lara Silva
Photographs by Kenny Braun*

THE LAKE TOMBIGBEE

Campground on the Alabama-Coushatta reservation in Livingston welcomes guests.



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DECEMBER

7

Merge

8

Sightseer

10

My Hometown

Brackettville's retirement resort on a fort

12

Open Road

From Longview to Austin in search of nature's balm

19

Drive/Detour

The sacred heart of the Segundo Barrio

24

Drive/Ticket

The massive Alamosaurus on display in Dallas

26

Drive/Atlas

Marking history, one plaque at a time



28

Getaway

The Christmas Capital of Texas

61

Plates

The oldest deli in Texas; Galveston's historic African American restaurants; making elusive Chartreuse

72

Texana

The frontier origins of Austin's French Legation

78

Events

Christmas at Fort Concho

85

Daytripper

Explore the Hill Country in Kerrville

87

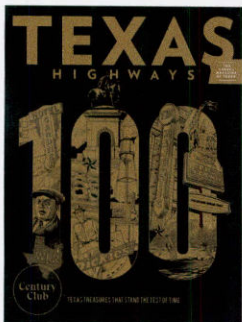
Speaking of Texas

H.W. Brands on writing history

89

Vintage

Taking the show on the road, 1921



ON THE COVER

Illustration by Joe Wilson



61

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Behind the Story



East Texas lends itself to the thriller genre, according to novelist May Cobb. "I grew up there in the '80s, in the era of the satanic panic," says the Austin-based writer. "Everyone used to tell the urban myths that it was populated by devil worshippers." Cobb's novels, including *The Hunting Wives* and her upcoming *My Summer Darlings*, are set in the Piney Woods and grapple with wealth, exclusivity, and solitude. "Growing up, there was a culture of '80s oil wealth and the things that accompany that," Cobb says. "A rich, decadent, adults-behaving-badly vibe was very much present there." Her essay "Out of the Woods" (Page 12), which discusses her son's autism diagnosis and their journey to find healthcare, is a departure from her usual subject matters. While she doesn't think she'll be moving back to Longview again, Cobb concedes that "the barbecue is better in Longview than in Austin." *My Summer Darlings* will be released in May 2022.

Featured Contributors



Christ Chavez

A native El Pasoan, Chavez has photographed West Texas and the surrounding area for 23 years. He shot photos of Sacred Heart Church in El Paso's Second Ward, his childhood neighborhood, for "The Heart of the Segundo Barrio" (Page 19). "It's still my dad's parish, so we go on Sundays with him for Mass," Chavez says. "While photographing the church I noticed the baptismal font, and I wondered if it's the same font my brother and I had been baptized in." Chavez's photos have appeared in *The Dallas Morning News*, *The New York Times*, *The London Times*, *Nylon*, and *L'Obs*.



Joe Wilson

An award-winning illustrator based in England, Wilson specializes in detailed illustrations and print, which he showcases on this month's cover. Working with a combination of pencil, ink, and digital color, Wilson blends traditional and contemporary art styles. "I had a blast illustrating this cover," Wilson says. "Being from the U.K., it's been great to have a chance to learn about the people, places, and things that make Texas so awesome. It's nice to see so many are still going strong after so many years, a real testament to the Texan spirit." Wilson has created illustrations for brands including Adidas and Tommy Hilfiger as well as publications including *The Economist*, *Wired*, and *Vanity Fair*.

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Desert Landing

"Nothing beats the night sky over Texas," says adventure photographer Jason Weingart, who took this space-themed shot a couple of years ago in the Chihuahuan Desert near Big Bend National Park. While teaching an astrophotography workshop, Weingart donned an astronaut costume and pointed the lens at himself. He used a timer connected to his camera to control the shutter and provide a "unique perspective of the landscape and the night sky." Weingart says the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 lunar landing in 2019 inspired the idea for the scene, which is reminiscent of the famous 1969 photo of Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin with the American flag on the moon.





Fort Clark & Brackettville

Russell Nowell explores the history of a legendary Southwest Texas outpost

By Sarah Thurmond



RUSSELL NOWELL hosts Fort Clark Historical Society meetings in the Palisado Building, which was constructed of cedar stakes circa 1869.

When an Army expedition came across Las Moras Spring in 1849, they knew they'd found an ideal spot for a military post. The spring, located about 23 miles northeast of the Rio Grande, had been a strategic water source for the Apaches and Comanches before the U.S. Army built Fort Clark on the site in 1852 to protect the border and the wagon road to El Paso. Fort Clark also drew settlers, and neighboring Brackettville—named for Oscar Brackett, who owned the first general store—thrived as a frontier way station. Factors including the mechanization of the cavalry led the Army to close Fort Clark in 1946, a blow to Brackettville's economy. Twenty-five years later, in 1971, a developer purchased the 2,700-acre fort and transformed it into a retirement resort. Fort Clark Springs took shape among the barracks and officers' quarters with houses, a hotel, spring-fed swimming pool, 18-hole golf course, RV park, and nature trails. Russell Nowell and his wife, Patti, moved to Fort Clark 16 years ago from Bellville, attracted by the solitude and proximity to nearby family. Now semiretired, Russell volunteers as president of the Fort Clark Historical Society and curator of the Old Guardhouse Museum.

Las Moras

"Brackettville started out being called Las Moras because of the springs named by the early travelers here. *Las moras* is Spanish for mulberries. There still are a lot of mulberries along the creek. You can eat them."

Spring-Fed Oasis

"The water comes out of the springs into the pool, then to Las Moras Creek. It runs into the Rio Grande down at Quemado. The temperature is always 68 degrees. It's open to the public. Winter Texans just jump right in it. There are some ladies who meet every morning down there for water aerobics. On holiday weekends, it'll be crowded."

From Here to San Diego

"The Kinney County Heritage Museum in Brackettville is in the Filippone Building. Stonemason Giovanni Filippone built it in 1885. The ground floor was a store, and the family lived upstairs. The store was right on the stagecoach road, where they could fleece the traveler. This is called El Paso Street because it's on the road to El Paso. The stage would come through on its way to San Diego. Unbelievable. It's just hard to fathom that."

John Wayne Country

"When Fort Clark closed, the bottom of the economy here fell out. That's when Happy Shahan came up with the idea for promoting movies in this area. He was the mayor of Brackettville, and he owned land out there where Alamo Village was built [10 miles north of town]. John Wayne got together with him to build it. There've been several movies

made here, the most popular one being [the 1960 Wayne film] *The Alamo*."

Snow Birds

"Come winter, Fort Clark will fill up with Winter Texans from places like Minnesota, Illinois, and Canada. They'll start coming in late October. We really like to see them come because we'll have lots of volunteers—they'll be trimming trees and painting benches, doing all kinds of things. They don't want to just sit. It works out well."

Sleeping it Off

"The museum was the original guardhouse built in 1874. It was the jail. The large cell was the holding cell for when the soldiers went over to Brackettville to the saloons and were a bit intoxicated. They would be sobered up for morning duty. Now, if serious charges were brought against one of them, they'd be transferred to Fort Sam [Houston] in San Antonio for court martial."

Black Seminole Scouts

"The scouts were descendants of the Seminole Indians in Florida and runaway slaves. The Army recruited them as scouts because of their excellence at being trackers and horsemen. They had land designated at Fort Clark, called the Camp, where there were about 23 or 24 homesteads. They lived there from 1872 to 1914, when they were disbanded. Every September, they usually have upward of 200 descendants come to Brackettville to attend the Seminole Day Celebration. A lot of the descendants have roots here at Fort Clark." 🐾



TOWN TRIVIA



POPULATION:

2,100



NUMBER OF STOPLIGHTS:

1



YEAR FOUNDED:

1852



NEAREST BIG TOWN:

Del Rio, 30 miles west



MARQUEE EVENTS:

Frontier Christmas, Dec. 4;
Fort Clark Days, first weekend in March;
Seminole Days Celebration, annually in September



MAP IT:

Fort Clark Old Guardhouse Museum, 152 McClelland Road



Out of the Woods

A life-altering diagnosis sends a family in search of a place to call home

By May Cobb

W

a billboard for the organization Autism Speaks. On it, a giant puzzle piece and a call for parents to look for symptoms. My stomach clenched, though I'd been reassured by his doctor, and by others I trusted, that he was far too young for such a diagnosis.

Finally, at his 15-month well-check, I pressed his pediatrician: Do you think he's autistic? Her normally calm manner turned distressed.

"It's too early to say for sure, but at this point," she said, her face turning the faintest shade of scarlet, "I'm not comfortable with taking a wait-and-see approach."

She wanted him to begin speech and occupational therapy, but we were on a tight budget. My husband, Chuck, was a full-time server at Salt Lick BBQ, and I hadn't returned to work since my pregnancy, staying home with Johnny and trying to forge a path as a writer. His doctor suggested Early Childhood Intervention, a state program that sends therapists out to your house to work with your kid.

Before she retired, my mother had been the director of ECI in Longview, and I had much admiration and respect for the organization. So, for months, therapists would drift in and out of our home, helping Johnny with gross and fine motor skills, and also speech. I would press each one: Do you think he's autistic? Finally, one of them replied, "Would you feel better if you knew he was?"

I think I would have, but I was also leery of attaching a lifelong label to Johnny when I still had hope it was something else.

Not long after Johnny's second birthday, in the scorching summer of 2014, Chuck and I itched to leave Austin. After nearly 20 years, we wanted to move back to Longview, where we both grew up in East Texas.

Perhaps being around family, we reasoned, might help our child blossom in the language department as well as offer us more support. Maybe all Johnny needed was to be surrounded by familiar, loving faces to promote speech and social skills.

When our son, Johnny, turned 10 months old on Mother's Day, he babbled his first words to us: "Mama-mama-mama." It was the most exquisite Mother's Day gift ever.

But soon after that, silence. No words. His pediatrician had detected fluid in both ears, and we theorized that might be the cause. Because surely—I hoped as I lay awake in the middle of the night, my thoughts boiling like a disturbed ant bed—it was only a speech delay and not an indicator of something more serious.

Months later, though, still no speech. And there were other red flags. Not a total lack of eye contact but nothing sustained either. An interest in watching the ceiling fan whirl. Not waving when someone waved to him.

I remembered once driving from our one-story tract home in East Austin down Burleson Road through the industrial district to take Johnny to preschool and seeing

But there was something else nagging at us. Something we were growingly increasingly concerned we wouldn't be able to give Johnny if we stayed in Austin: a free-range childhood that mirrored our own.

We bought our house and postage-stamp-size yard in 2008 and watched as new Austin sprung up all around us. Each day brought more cranes, more incoming U-Hauls, and, with a toddler in tow, more pressure to keep our existence afloat in a rapidly swelling city.

The parks that had once felt verdant and lush had now yellowed from the recent drought and teemed with tight crowds. We grew wary of the harried packs of parents hovering over their young children on the playground.

I started to yearn for the expansive freedom of my childhood in East Texas.

I thirsted, I realized, for Johnny to experience a taste of my own untethered youth, as well as the anti-helicopter style of parenting that my own parents had employed in the late '70s.

Summers spent swimming with my sisters off the dock at the wooded lake while my mother and father relaxed up on the grassy hill in a hammock. Us riding our bikes—unattended by adults—through the tangle of streets in our neighborhood, our calves muddied by the red-clay creekbeds we used to wade through. My best friend and I riding in a flat-bottom boat through marshy Caddo Lake as 10-year-olds, checking trotlines in the middle of the night. Me, at 5, packing blood bait on the sharp edge of my fishing hook at my grandparents' small, stocked catfish pond, while later running free in their horse pasture as my grandmother stood in her galley kitchen breaching and

frying my catch in her cast-iron skillet until the skins of the catfish crisped into a golden shimmer.

None of this seemed possible in Austin, the city I had grown obsessed with and lovingly called home since I first came to college at the University of Texas in 1996.

The lush, hauntingly beautiful Piney Woods of my childhood were calling me. The deeply forested zone of Texas, with its velvet-smooth floor of slick red clay and turrets of pine trees that snuff out the sunlight and shed cones the size of large fists, was grabbing me.

Chuck was also feeling the tug, the siren call of home. On a recent visit back, we'd swum in his brother's pool and watched in longing as his kids roamed their neighborhood, free to come and go as they wanted. We pined for the soles of Johnny's feet to be blackened from running the streets alongside his cousins, to taste the freedom

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that a small town could uniquely give.

We craved what Sara Zaske wrote about in her book *Achtung Baby: An American Mom on the German Art of Raising Self-Reliant Children*, which was a much more relaxed style of parenting that would allow Johnny to be independent.

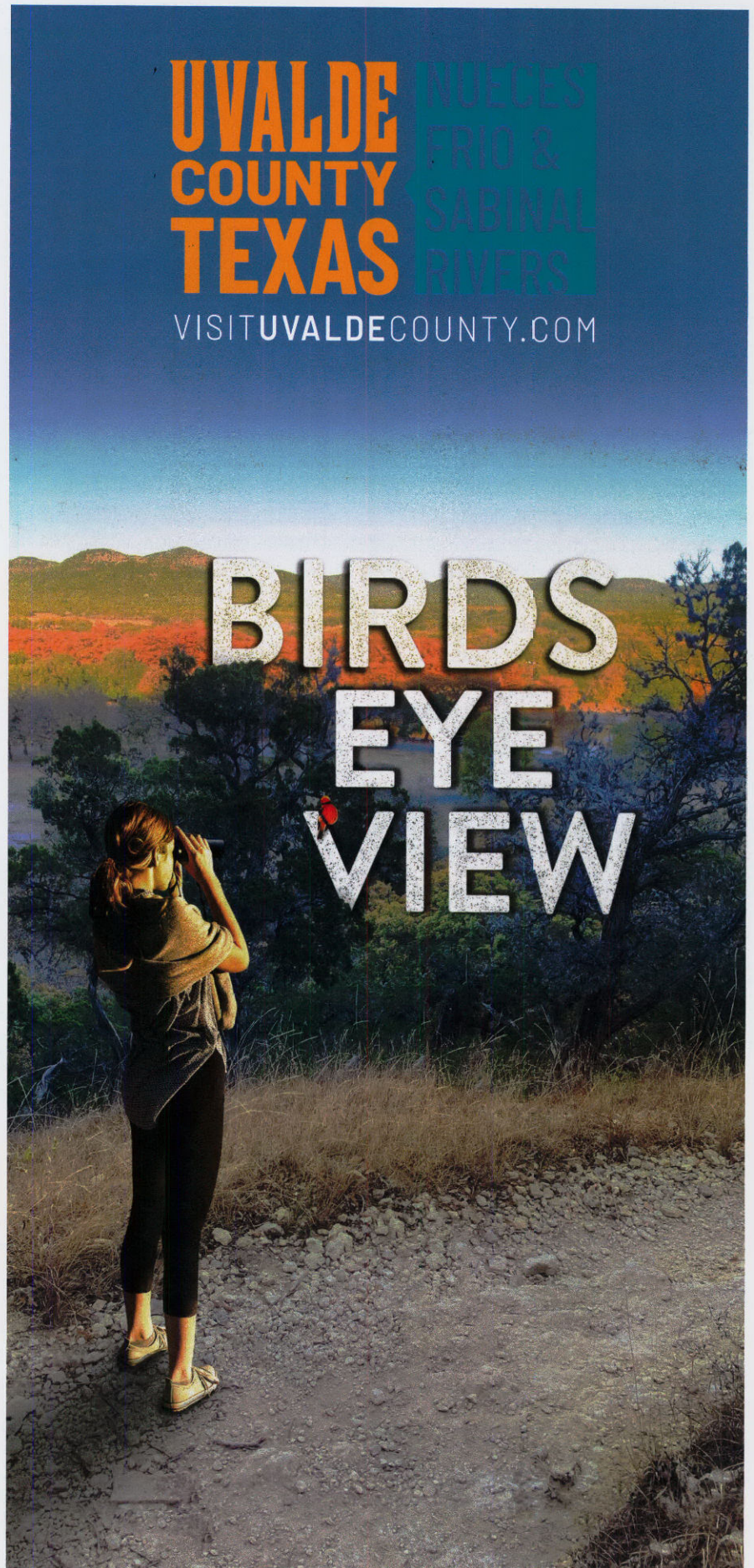
And most of my side of the family was still there, too. My parents, who had divorced, each have their own place. My mother promised to transform her back patio into a preschool playground and my father has an expansive backyard like a park, complete with a swingset he built from a T-bar. Also, my older sister and her husband and their kids live in a log cabin out on the wooded lake of our childhood, Lake Cherokee, just 20 minutes from Longview. Everyone got something out of the deal.

On State Highway 31, along the route from Austin to Longview, there's a shifting point, an invisible veil that one traverses where you're between Central and East Texas.

For me, that moment is a very specific point on the road, where the dove-gray highway curls upward and crests a hill near Hubbard, and the landscape begins to shed itself of craggy scrub oaks and mesquite, giving way to ancient sweet-gum trees and ropes of wild muscadine vines that strangle weathered fences. The atmosphere itself begins to change—the arid climate dissolving into an air so humid, dank, and fragrant that it sticks to your clothes.

That's the point at which, in the fall of 2014, the knot in my chest began to loosen. We were heading home.

We moved into a modest house a mile from my mother. For the first year, being back felt like stepping into a warm bath: calming, relaxing, soothing. Our neighborhoods were connected by Cargill Long Park Trail, a 3-mile walking path through a towering pine forest. I had spent summer days of my teenage years taking this same route to friends' homes. The blacktop path curves over rolling hills and wooden footbridges across gurgling, moss-covered creeks. I could buckle



Johnny in his stroller and in 20 minutes arrive at my mom's front door without having to dodge the bike and jogger traffic of Lady Bird Lake in Austin.

We exhaled. Life was simpler, cheaper, and richer with our family around. We enrolled Johnny in a nearby preschool a few mornings a week and settled into a quiet new routine.

My mom kept Johnny on Wednesdays so I could focus on writing my first novel. She also swung by some afternoons and took him to gymnastics class. When winter arrived, she got him enrolled in horseback riding at a hippotherapy center.

On odd days, I would drop him off at my father's house. This allowed me to run errands while Johnny rambled around the perimeter of my father's sprawling back lawn, which he loved. Being able to explore in nature has always soothed him.

There were 45-minute drives north with cousins to the town of Daingerfield, where we'd spend all morning plucking blueberries in a field the color of jade stone at Greer Farm, a pick-your-own-fruit place featuring a restored 19th-century farmhouse and private cooking classes.

There were outings in my sister's ski boat, Johnny tucked in my lap as we raced across the choppy waters of Lake Cherokee, his strawberry-blond hair whipping in the wind.

Hope bloomed in my chest. I could visualize Johnny's future spreading out in front of us as effortlessly as maple syrup.

He was a star on the balance beam in gymnastics; loved riding his horse, Champ; and most importantly, came to know the faces of loved ones. I could see him thriving in East Texas, and perhaps one day being independent enough to

ride a bike to my mom's or go hiking in the woods with his cousins.

He was also progressing in therapy, but he was still nonverbal. We decided to get him on a six-month waiting list to be evaluated for autism at a center in San Antonio. Call it mother's intuition.

After a year of living back home, something shifted. Johnny began having tantrums.

A friend dismissed this as him being a "three-nager," but I was skeptical. One day while I was shopping with him at Target, he became so agitated that I couldn't physically get him back in the seat of the shopping cart. A woman nearby rushed over and helped me coax Johnny back into the seat.

"My son is autistic," she said, patting me on the shoulder. "He's 16 now, but I remember these moments."



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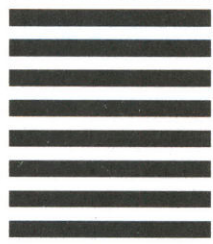
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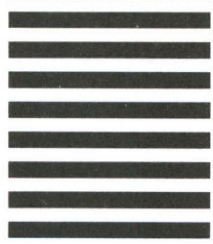
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Hope bloomed in my chest. I could visualize Johnny's future spreading out in front of us as effortlessly as maple syrup.

Then the calls started coming from his preschool. At first, they were minor calls to come and pick him up early. He was fussy, they told us, and wouldn't calm down enough on his plastic mat to settle into a nap.

Then the calls became frequent, more urgent. Johnny had begun to tantrum in the classroom. First, they were only minor meltdowns like any other kid might have, but then they became more intense.

Finally, his teacher, who had been so very wonderful and patient with him, called a meeting with Chuck and me and the director of the preschool.

"I don't think we can serve him anymore," his teacher said, tears wobbling in her eyes.

"But why not?" I asked, not wanting to hear the news that I would have to find him a new school when everything seemed to be going so well.

"I think he needs to be somewhere that's specialized in what's going on with him." Her voice was thin and reedy, and I could tell she was handling this with as much delicacy as she could.

It was a blow that would later turn into a blessing.

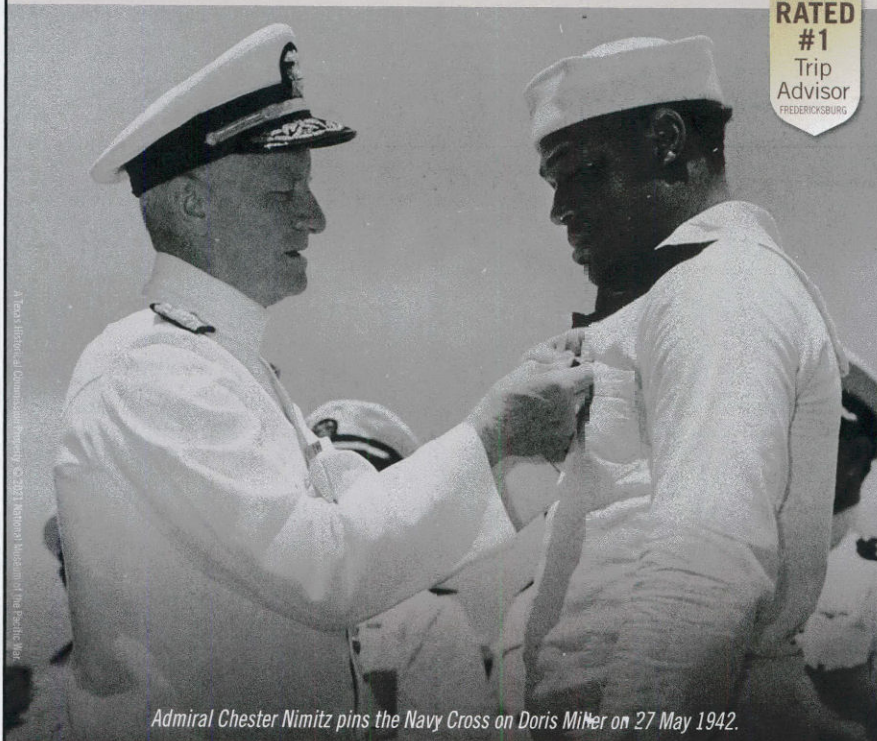
The intensity of the tantrums steadily escalated. Thrashing on the floor when he was upset, striking his head against the hardwoods. It became increasingly challenging for one person to handle him on their own.

So that Chuck could continue working and I could continue writing, my mom volunteered to keep Johnny a few days a week at her house. She'd fill up the pair of blue plastic kiddie pools on her back patio, stock them with water toys, and let him soak in the water while playing with the garden hose.

continued on Page 86

Honoring Our Heroes

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Admiral Chester Nimitz pins the Navy Cross on Doris Miller on 27 May 1942.

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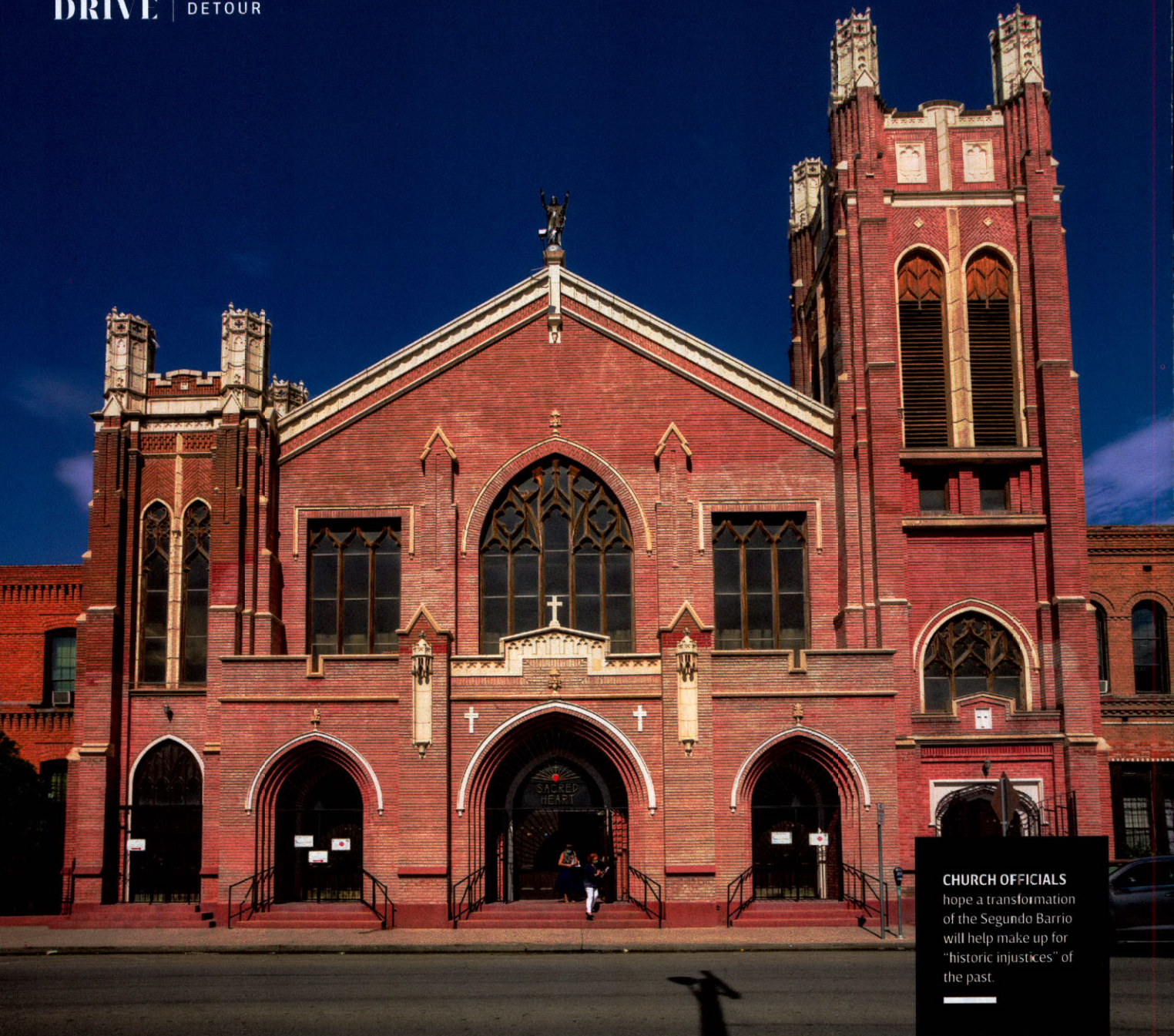
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DRIVE

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in El Paso has served the community of the Segundo Barrio, or Second Ward, for more than a century.



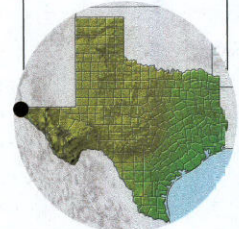
CHURCH OFFICIALS
hope a transformation
of the Segundo Barrio
will help make up for
“historic injustices” of
the past.

The Heart of the Segundo Barrio

A new historical designation advances restoration efforts at El Paso’s Sacred Heart Church

By Roberto José Andrade Franco

SACRED HEART CHURCH
602 S. Oregon St.,
El Paso.
915-532-5447;
sacredheart
elpaso.org



Inside Sacred Heart Church in El Paso's Segundo Barrio, the Rev. Rafael Garcia, SJ, hands out face masks in preparation for a colleague's speech on the significance of the historic grounds we're about to tour. It's a cloudy morning in July, and there are about 80 people here. They wear yoga pants, sweats, and shorts; comfortable shoes; hats and sunglasses. Some have cameras hanging from their necks. Others smell of sunscreen. All are ready to partake in the Segundo Barrio's first architectural walking tour, led by Max Grossman, who holds a doctorate in art history from Columbia University and is an assistant professor of art history at the University of Texas at El Paso.

"Sacred Heart Church is the most important, historic, and iconic building in the Segundo Barrio," Grossman says a few moments after the church bell rings nine times. "It's symbolically important for the poor and underprivileged—it's a symbol of hope." As he talks, a woman sitting in the third row fans herself with a piece of paper she's folded over twice. She briefly pulls down her face mask to wipe the sweat from around her nose and upper lip.

Grossman continues with a quick history of the Segundo Barrio, or Second Ward. He explains how the city of El Paso has often neglected the working-class Mexican neighborhood sandwiched between downtown and the Rio Grande. How in the 1910s the city tried to destroy many adobe homes in the Segundo Barrio, claiming them unhygienic. How after World War II, the neighborhood further deteriorated. Despite these "historic injustices," he is able to end his talk on a positive note, declaring the Segundo Barrio on track to earn status as a national historic district. He is optimistic this will transform the neighborhood and help make up for the past.

Following unanimous approval by the Texas Historical Commission this spring, the Segundo Barrio National Register Historic District is expected to become official by the end of November after final approval from the National Park Service. The designation comes with tax credits

Grossman and Garcia hope will spur building and apartment owners to restore neighborhood structures that are falling apart. Part of the money will go to Restore Sacred Heart Church, a committee formed in 2020 to rehabilitate three buildings collectively known as Sacred Heart Parish. In addition to the current church—opened in 1923 and replacing the original church built in 1893—the parish includes the Sacred Heart School, opened the same year as the original church, and the Jesuit residence, added in 1898. Grossman and Garcia, who co-chair the committee, explain that all money raised from today's walking tour—there was a second tour in late October, with more planned for the future—will go toward restoration efforts.

By extending the life of Sacred Heart, perhaps the Segundo Barrio's soul can survive. The neighborhood and the church have grown interconnectedly. To help one is to help the other.

Felipe Peralta and his family moved to the Segundo Barrio from the Mexican state of Zacatecas around 1958. It didn't take long to realize Sacred Heart's importance. As a teenager, Peralta practically worked there, organizing sports through the church for youth back when they had to stay cautious of which streets they walked through since neighborhoods within the Segundo Barrio had gangs.

"Instead of fighting with each other, we gave them an opportunity to play sports," Peralta remembers. "We would ride around in a pickup truck, go to different neighborhoods, pick them up."

Some places Peralta drove through no longer exist the way they once did. Alamo Elementary School, which Peralta attended, is there physically but has been closed since 2007. Outright gone is Peralta's childhood neighborhood, Rio Linda, which once stood on the northern banks of the Rio Grande. As part of the 1964 Chamizal Treaty, Peralta's home was among the 630 acres the United States returned to Mexico to settle a land dispute, which arose when the river flooded in 1864. The flood shifted the border between Texas and Mexico. When that centurylong

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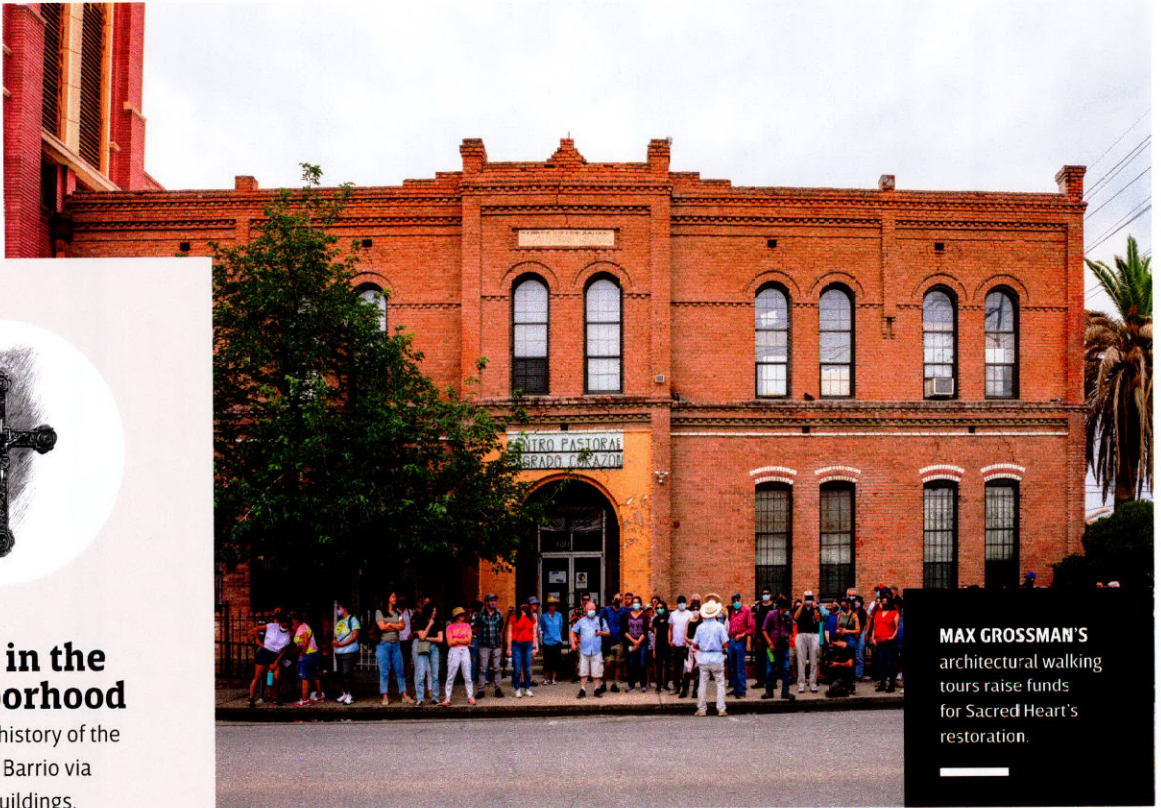
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A Day in the Neighborhood

Explore the history of the Segundo Barrio via these buildings.

Colón Theater

Once one of the most important Mexican theaters in the southwestern United States, it is the only art-deco building in the Segundo Barrio. 507 S. El Paso St.

Teresa Urrea Residence

Folk saint Teresa Urrea lived in the Segundo Barrio while in exile from the Mexican government, which charged her with inspiring rebellion. She survived multiple assassination attempts while living here. 500 S. Oregon St.

Pablo Baray Apartments

Located across the street from Sacred Heart Church, the site is where exiled writer Mariano Azuelo completed and published *The Underdogs*. It remains one of the most influential novels about the Mexican Revolution. 609 S. Oregon St.

Book walking tours of the Segundo Barrio through *The Trost Society*, trostsociety.org.

land dispute got settled, neighborhoods like Rio Linda disappeared.

Despite losing his home, Peralta continued attending Sacred Heart for special occasions—baptisms, marriages, funerals—while performing volunteer work around the Segundo Barrio. Eventually, Grossman and Garcia enlisted him to join Restore Sacred Heart Church. Because maybe better than anyone else, Peralta knows the hurt of losing a community.

“There’s always a fear and threat of what can happen to the barrio,” Garcia says a few days before the walking tour. Like Peralta, Grossman, and 24 other members of Restore Sacred Heart Church, he worries that even if the Segundo Barrio remains in name, its essence will vanish. That more homes will get destroyed and replaced with “a Starbucks or a Gap store or whatever,” Garcia says. “The barrio needs help.”

The church restoration will take three to five years, at a cost of \$6 million to \$7 million. With the money, the brickwork, crumbling in some spots from a century’s worth of wind, sun, snow, and rain, will finally be repaired. The spire and bell tower, too. Bathrooms will become handicap accessible. Floors will get

replaced—and since they have asbestos, it will cost extra. A pipe burst this past winter, so plumbing also needs upgraded. Installing a new air conditioner is a priority because rising summer temperatures have made the church’s evaporative cooling system so useless that even while sitting inside during a cool, cloudy morning, doing little else besides listening, one can’t help but sweat.

As money is raised, repairs will happen in phases. Garcia, who has an infectious high-pitched laugh, jokes that if Jeff Bezos donates all the money, the church’s restoration will happen a lot quicker. But the reality is that apart from grants—in late October, the National Fund for Sacred Places awarded the church a \$250,000 grant for restoration—Sacred Heart will get rebuilt in much the same way the church funded its construction in 1923. According to a December 1929 *El Paso Herald* article: “Weekly collections were chiefly represented in nickels and pennies.”

During the walking tour, Grossman—who wears a cowboy hat that casts a shadow to his chin—points at murals that tell part of the Segundo Barrio’s history. There’s one of the Rev. Harold Rahm, a



THE CHURCH'S restoration is expected to take three to five years, at a cost of \$6 million to \$7 million.

priest who rode his bicycle around the neighborhood. He's the same priest who hired a teenage Peralta to work with the barrio's youth. That decision helped forge Peralta's path, leading him to earn a doctorate in social work from the University of Texas at Arlington. "I like to think of the term, 'It takes a village,'" says Peralta, who continues to work in the neighborhood. "In my case it was the Segundo Barrio that made it all possible for me."

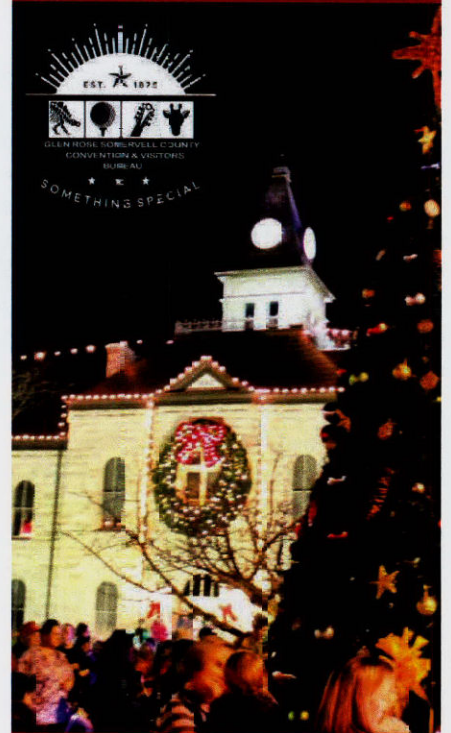
As the tour group walks at a leisurely pace from one place to the next, Garcia often stays behind. He stops to talk with residents who reach their hands out toward him. "There's still a sense of neighborhood. People know each other, sit down to talk with each other. It would be a real travesty to destroy that," Garcia says. "Buildings need improvement, people should be uplifted, slumlords need to be held accountable."

Grossman points at old buildings

he loves as the tour continues. He indicates the general direction where other buildings once stood: hotels, theaters, brothels, saloons, opium dens. He identifies a corner lot just outside the boundaries of the Segundo Barrio. There, Grossman says, the remains of Juan María Ponce de León's adobe house are 15 feet beneath the surface. In 1827, Spain gave Ponce de León a land grant on the northern banks of the Rio Grande. That land became El Paso. And part of Ponce de León's home was buried when the Rio Grande flooded.

But no matter which buildings Grossman points to or what history he shares, it all returns to the church. It's still the reason people are here on this Saturday morning. It's where the tour begins and ends. "Restoring Sacred Heart Church," Grossman says, "is a very beautiful, positive project that I think everybody can get behind." 🐾

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Heritage Christmas
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Bad to the Bones

The world's only full *Alamosaurus* skeleton dominates at Dallas' Perot Museum

By Asher Elbein

Sixty-seven million years ago, the long-necked *Alamosaurus* strode like a moving mountain across the fern-carpeted floodplains of the Big Bend. Among the last of the non-bird dinosaurs to live in North America, this titan may also have been the largest on the continent, at 100 feet long and weighing 50 tons. The first fossilized *Alamosaurus* bones were discovered in New Mexico in 1921, but in the ensuing century most of its fossil remains have been found in Texas. Today, the world's only skeletal mount of the dinosaur stands proudly at Dallas' Perot Museum of Nature and Science. "The Big Bend country has produced more *Alamosaurus* bones than anywhere else," says Ron Tykoski, director of paleontology at the museum.

While most dinosaurs in Texas are known from scraps of bones, the reconstructed *Alamosaurus* model is represented by hefty chunks from three individuals. This includes a specimen from the University of Texas that contains much of the body, from the base of the neck to the first little bit of tail, and an almost complete neck that was discovered in the Big Bend in 1999. About the only portion of the body that's never been found is the head (and first three vertebrae), which isn't unusual: The small heads of long-necked dinosaurs rarely fossilize well. The one at the Perot Museum represents an educated guess.

A herd of *Alamosaurus* dinosaurs would have been quite a sight, Tykoski says. Modern elephants are a major force on the landscape, knocking over trees and digging wells. A herd of adult *Alamosaurus* dinosaurs would have been capable of completely reshaping local ecosystems and powerful enough to make even its contemporary, *Tyrannosaurus*, steer clear. But, as Tykoski cheerfully notes, that wouldn't make for a very exciting display. The reconstructed *Alamosaurus* in the Perot Museum is a hulking skeleton that towers over delighted visitors—and the *Tyrannosaurus* unwisely nips at its flanks. "We wanted something awe-inspiring that nobody else has," Tykoski says. "It's a great way to introduce people to a Texas native from almost 70 million years ago." For more information, visit perotmuseum.org. 🦕





History in the Marking

Official historical markers explore the tales of Texas past

By Julia Jones



Magoffin Home State Historic Site in El Paso

Though Texas is less than 200 years old, it's full of fascinating history, with many stories yet to be told. Thanks to the Texas Historical Commission (THC), the state's diverse and sometimes overlooked past is gaining recognition.

The state agency dedicated to the preservation of historic sites has been working to expand the stories that are told on roadside markers. The Undertold program, started in 2006, promotes the making of markers on historically underrepresented subjects.

"The ones that cover ground we haven't covered before score better [on our internal review]," says Bob Brinkman, the coordinator of the Historical Markers Program. Markers only cover events that happened 30 or more years prior to the application, and they don't list living people. "There are plenty of things that seem significant right now, but the story's not done," Brinkman says.

THC has granted more than 16,000 historical markers to sites around Texas since 1936. These range from the famous—battlefields like the Alamo (No. 13324)—to the less expected—near the site where the remains of the "Leanderthal Lady," who is said to have died 10,000-13,000 years ago, were discovered in Leander in 1982 (No. 9260). The familiar signs feature a black background and polished silver text, topped with a drawing of the 1936 markers placed for Texas' centennial celebration.

The commission is set to release a mobile app in spring 2022 that will allow travelers to learn which historical markers are near them while on the go. In the meantime, the commission keeps a searchable online database, called the Atlas, of all historical markers in the state. Search by name, county, city, keyword, or marker number. If you're in a hurry and can't read a marker, or if you want to find out more information on a site, write down the number and look it up later. atlas.thc.texas.gov



Sign Stealing

A dozen or so historical markers are reported missing each year, according to Brinkman. "People steal them sometimes because it's the same name as their family name, or it's Luckenbach, which has been stolen several times," he says. Folks have reported finding historical markers that have been missing for many years, often in a friend or family member's possession. THC grants amnesty to anyone who brings forward a missing historical marker, so those who have one can leave it at their county courthouse or drop it off with their local historical commission, no questions asked. "[The markers] don't belong to any individual person; they belong to all of us," Brinkman says.

280

Word count of large historical marker

16,000+

Number of state historical markers in Texas

185

Number of marker applications accepted annually



Around the Globe

The 1968 San Antonio HemisFair was the first officially designated international exposition in the Southwestern U.S., bringing 6.3 million people from more than 30 countries to the Alamo City from April to October. Then-governor John Connally—whose Houston home is now designated with historical marker No. 17100—wanted to showcase Texas for the out-of-towners. He helped design the markers and enlisted the Texas Historical Commission to write a few sentences on most every Texas town—totaling hundreds—which were then posted atop large poles in each locale. Many of these markers remain on display in their original locations in rural areas across the state.

Apply Yourself

The Texas Historical Commission accepts historical marker applications each spring. The next application period is from March 1 to May 16. Here's a primer on how to apply.

1. Contact your county historical commission. Members of the commission can assist with research and often have information to add—and they are the ones who submit the application.
2. Do your research. Historical markers require a five- to 10-page research paper on the site, as well as permission from the owners of the land where the marker is to be placed.
3. The county historical commission submits the application by May 16. (The deadline for the Undertold program is Nov. 15.)
4. THC reviews and scores the applications and decides which markers will move on to the inscription stage.
5. The marker is minted at an Indiana foundry and installed several months after the initial application deadline.

The annual **Real Places conference**, hosted by the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission and held in Austin Feb. 2-4, features presentations and networking for those interested in historical preservation. Representatives from the Historical Markers Program are present to answer any questions regarding the application process and other marker-related inquiries. thcfriends.org/realplaces

Rewriting History

Accidents happen, and some are even minted onto permanent signs. The Texas Historical Commission has a few methods to resolve inaccuracies and misspellings on state historical markers. Minor

errors can be corrected directly on the marker. For slightly longer errors, an additional plaque is added to the bottom of the marker explaining and correcting the inaccuracy. If it's a glaring, unfixable problem, the entire marker is replaced.



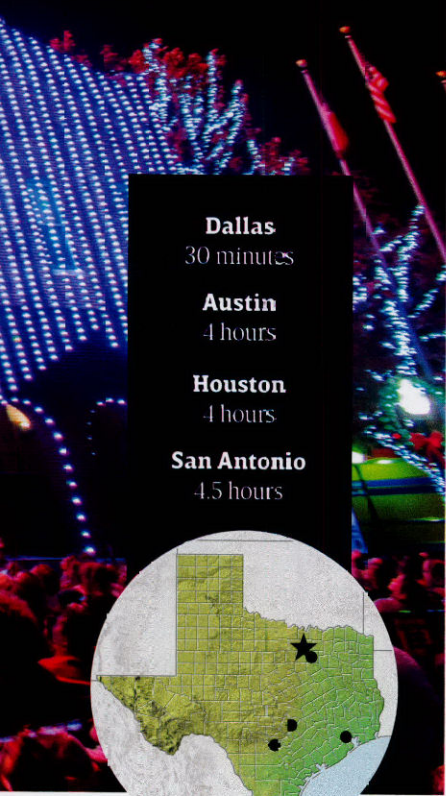
The Carol of Lights takes place in downtown Grapevine every holiday season.

Merry, Very

This North Texas town shines during the Christmas season

By Cynthia J. Drake

Situated a 10-minute TEXRail train ride from the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport, Grapevine is known for its resorts and conference centers, charming downtown area filled with wineries, and sheer enthusiasm for Christmas. In 2009, the Texas Senate honored Grapevine's festive spirit by designating it the "Christmas Capital of Texas" on account of its more than 1,000 annual holiday events. Grapevine still lives up to its reputation of seasonal merriment 12 years later, but the town also offers diverse diversions to enjoy year-round.



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30 minutes
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- San Antonio**
4.5 hours



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Herb Mignery, *Checkmate*, Bronze, 1988.
Gift of Jack and Valerie Guenther and Shannon Michaud



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briscoemuseum.org

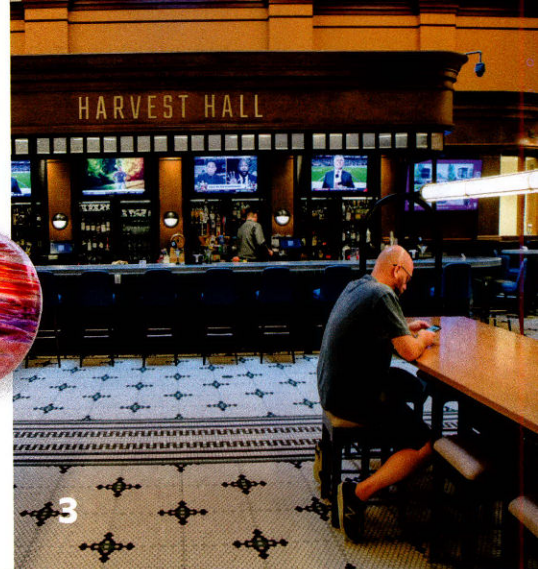
Located on the Historic
San Antonio River Walk.





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WESTERN ART MUSEUM



1 / GRAPEVINE VINTAGE RAILROAD Chug on over to the “North Pole” via the Grapevine Vintage Railroad. Take in the spirit of the holiday with a pajama-clad hourlong train ride with Mrs. Claus, or book an adults-only two-hour journey on the Christmas Wine Train.



2 / VETRO GLASSBLOWING STUDIO AND GALLERY Create your own wine glasses, bowls, or ornaments during a class at the studio. The hands-on experience of firing and sculpting your own glass creations brings out your artistic side and equips you with a new skill.



3 / HARVEST HALL This food hall sets a romantic tone with its Grand Central Terminal-inspired design and live music. Sample a variety of cuisines at different food stalls including Arepa TX, which offers sandwiches made with the Latin American corn-based bread.



4 / GAYLORD TEXAN This resort is an ideal stay for families. The atrium hosts replicas of the Alamo and River Walk, and becomes more magical during winter with programming like “Merry & Light,” a walk-through attraction with more than 400,000 glittering lights.



5 / TEXAS STAR DINNER THEATER The cast at this theater performs hilarious whodunits while guests enjoy a three-course meal and solve a murder mystery. Performances of *A Cold Hearted Christmas* run Friday and Saturday nights from Nov. 19 through Dec. 26.



6 / HOTEL VIN Located near the Grapevine Vintage Railroad, this luxe, 120-room lodging is attached to Harvest Hall food court. The hotel’s restaurant, Bacchus Kitchen + Bar, offers wine tastings that complement family-style dishes like ricotta ravioli and the 18-ounce rib-eye steak.

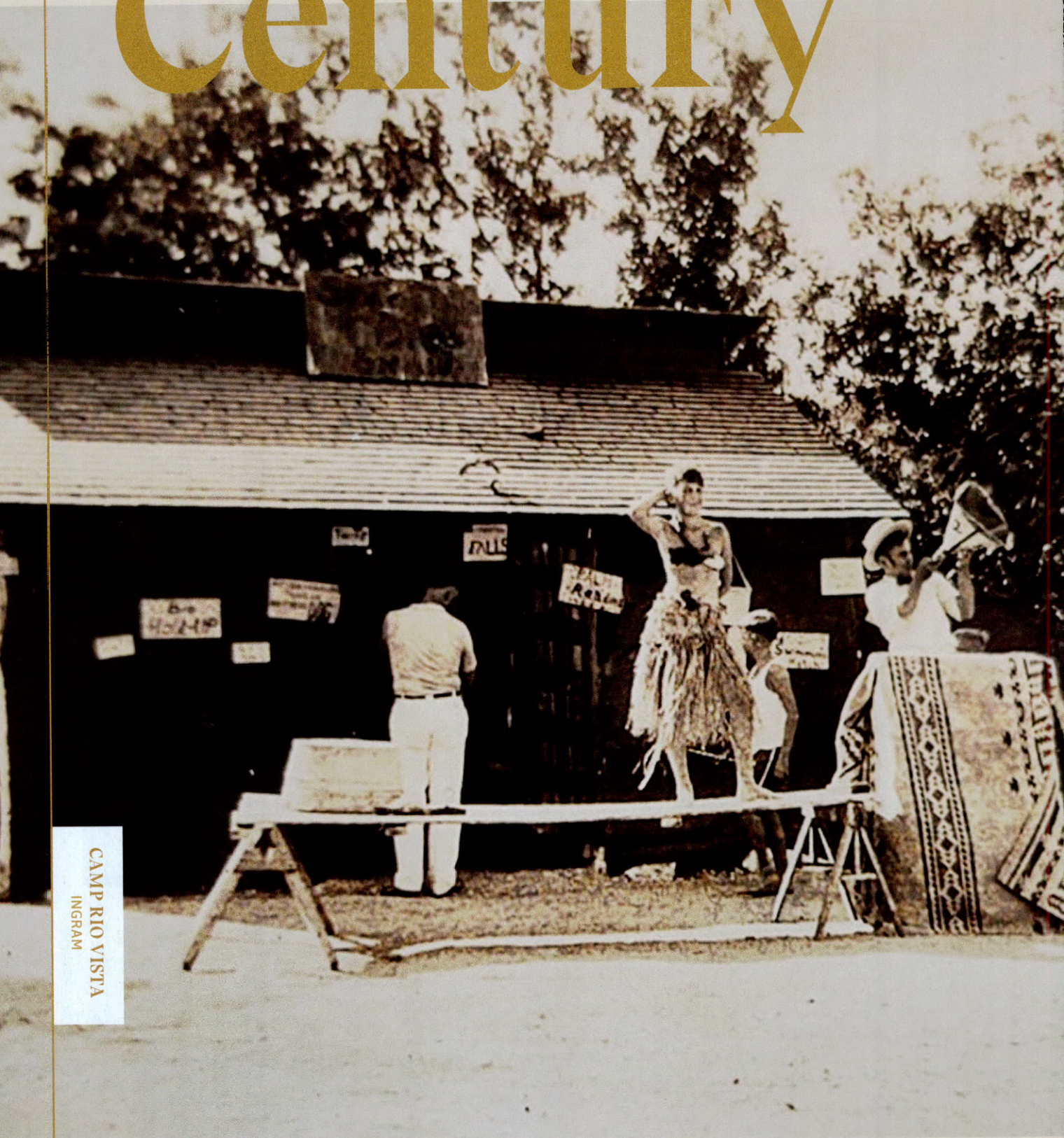


7 / HOUSE OF SHINE Claudia Beeny, who spent her career in education, opened her interactive self-discovery museum “dedicated to the study of you” in 2020. The cheery yellow space has exhibits to help guests find their strengths and interests, while monthly events offer guidance on topics like journaling.



8 / SEA LIFE AQUARIUM Though Grapevine is not close to an ocean, you can still learn about sea creatures at this locale, which features a 360-degree sea tunnel. During Christmas, the Scuba Diving Santa invites children to make wishes while he checks his list inside the aquarium tank. 🐬

Century



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100
YEARS



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VISITORS TO STEP INTO THE PAST

100

Texas is a relatively young state. In 1836, when the first wave of settlers gained independence from Mexico and established the Republic of Texas, America's East Coast colonies had already been populated for more than 200 years. Texas was forced to grow up quickly as it faced countless challenges—from the Civil War of the 1860s, to the Great Depression and Dust Bowl of the 1930s, to the more recent trials of the COVID-19 pandemic and Winter Storm Uri. But Texans have stood strong, proving both adaptable and innovative. As we reflect on Texas' resilience, we're shining a spotlight on locales that have been around for at least 100 years, such as Pig Stand in San Antonio, America's first drive-in restaurant chain; and the Majestic Theatre in Dallas, which played host to jazz great Duke Ellington. These places aren't relegated to black-and-white photos or historical markers—they're still open and operating today. Visiting these century-club institutions inspires appreciation for Texas' past and the people who preserve these treasures for Texas' future.



The Majestic Theatre



Over the last 100 years, the Majestic Theatre has hosted performances by Harry Houdini, Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, Conan O'Brien, and the Moscow Ballet. While businesses have come and gone in downtown Dallas, "the Majestic has been there all along," says Jennifer Scripps, director of the Office of Arts and Culture Dallas, the organization that runs the theater.

Karl Hoblitzelle opened the opulent 1,700-seat theater on April 1, 1921, as the flagship for his Interstate Theatre company, a chain showcasing vaudeville acts and silent films. The marble floors, glittering chandeliers, red velvet seats, and air conditioning (a luxury for most Texans at the time) attracted white-gloved visitors for decades. It



HERMANN PARK



celebrations were postponed last spring, but the theater plans to celebrate its anniversary throughout 2022 with events and concerts. —Dina Gachman
1925 Elm St., Dallas. 214-670-3687; majestic.dailasculture.org

Hermann Park



The early months of the COVID-19 pandemic prompted many Houstonians to rediscover Hermann Park, the crown jewel of the city's park system. The 445-acre public space, which borders the Museum District, the Texas Medical Center, and Rice University, provided an outdoor refuge in the middle of America's fourth largest city. "Everybody was so stressed, so people appreciated the chance to stroll someplace that was beautiful and calm, where it was safe to let their kids run around," says Doreen Stoller, president of the Hermann Park Conservancy, a nonprofit dedicated to improving the park. "We got so many thank-you notes from visitors."

The park was founded in 1914, with a gift of land to the city of Houston by real estate investor and industrialist George H. Hermann. Designed by landscape architects Hare and Hare, the park took shape in phases—it now includes a zoo, an 18-hole golf course, an outdoor amphitheater, a Japanese garden, an artificial lake, and a miniature train that remains the hottest ticket in town for children. The conservancy is always adding new features, with plans currently underway for a dog park and a newly landscaped entrance from the medical center. As one of the oldest public

later became a "movie palace" that showed some of Hollywood's biggest films, like John Wayne's *Hatari!* and *The Great Escape* with Steve McQueen.

"The Majestic exemplifies where Dallas came from and where it is today," Scripps says. As neighborhood movie theaters became more common, and downtown's once-bustling theater scene went dark, the Majestic closed its doors in 1973 after a showing of the James Bond film *Live and Let Die*. In 1976, The Hoblitzelle Foundation gifted the theater to the city of Dallas, with the caveat that it would restore the historic venue. The marquee lit up again in 1983, when the doors reopened for a gala headlined by Liza Minnelli. The Dallas Black Dance Theatre became the first resident company at the theater in 1984, and has performed there more than 500 times. Many centennial performances and



parks in Texas enters its second century, the verdant oasis remains at the heart of Houston's civic life. —Michael Hardy
6001 Fannin St., Houston. 832-395-7100; hermannpark.org

Old Spanish Trail Restaurant



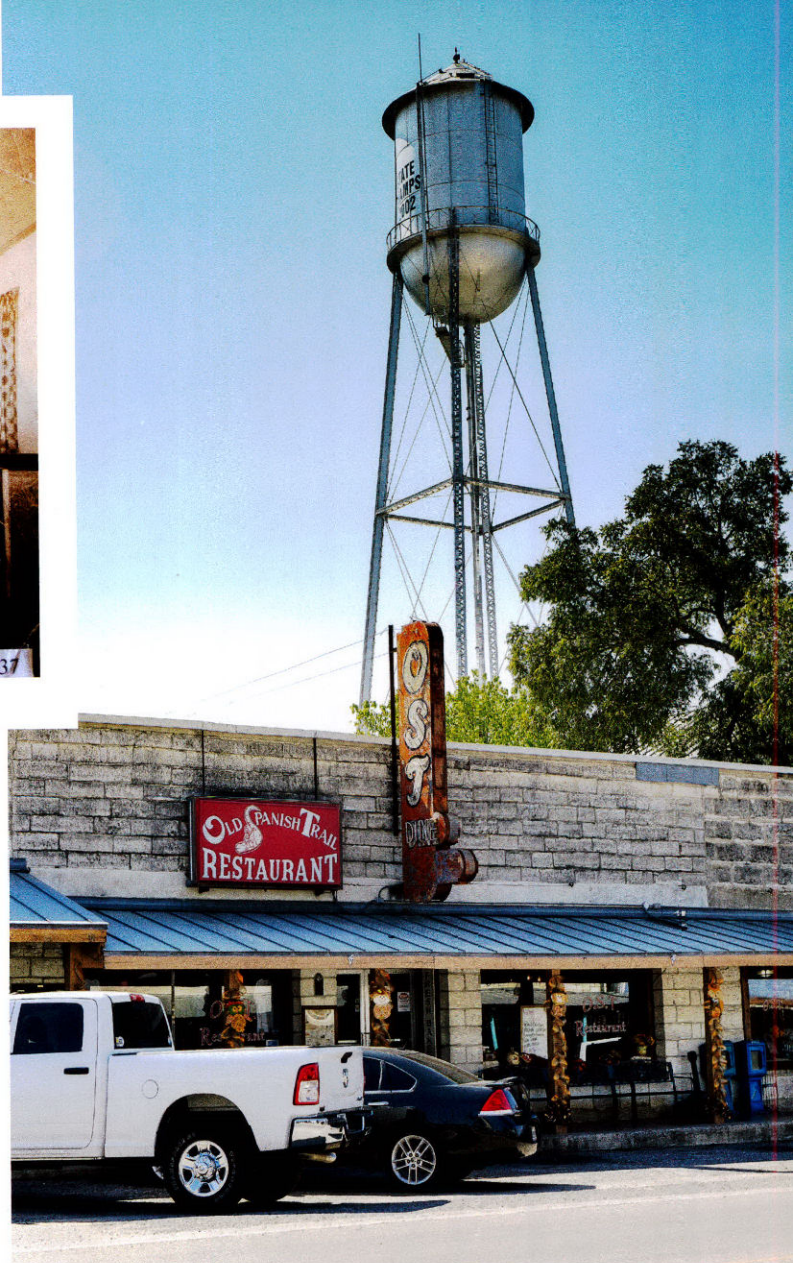
Though Brackettville's Alamo replica from John Wayne's 1960 film *The Alamo* is crumbling into ruins, the spirit of the Duke lives on at Old Spanish Trail Restaurant two hours east of Brackettville in downtown Bandera.

A trophy elk presides over a bar lined with saddle stools in O.S.T.'s older half—a former grocery that opened in 1921. (Though O.S.T. resembles a saloon, to imbibe you must BYOB.) Later, the owners expanded into the former horse corral next door, parked a chuckwagon along one wall to serve as a buffet and salad bar, and festooned the walls with posters chronicling Wayne's long career, focusing, naturally, on the Westerns, and of course *The Alamo*.

Fare here is down-home Texas-style grub done to perfection and served with a smile. As befits the world's Cowboy Capital, the beef dishes—chicken-fried steak, burgers and patty melts, and cheese enchiladas bathed in house-made chili—rule. Try to save room for owner Gwen Janes' chocolate fudge cake or blueberry buttermilk pie—it's "what dreams are made of," the menu aptly proclaims.

"I have seen many restaurants come and go trying to be the next best thing, but I have found that staying the course and changing up our menu a little is what keeps customers coming back," Janes says. "Being good to my employees is why some have been here for 20 and 30 years. They do become a part of your family."

After 43 years at the helm, Janes is selling the restaurant. One bite of those enchiladas, and you might be inspired to buy this shrine to Western dining. —John Nova Lomax
311 Main St., Bandera. 830-796-3836; ostbandera.com



Hruska's



Located almost exactly halfway between Houston and Austin, on State Highway 71 in Ellinger, Hruska's is one of the state's most beloved highway stops. Here, weary travelers can fill their fuel tanks, empty their bladders, do some shopping, and even sit down for a hamburger at one of the half-dozen dining tables. But the family-owned store is best known for its house-made Czech pastries—both kolaches (filled with fruit, cream cheese, and/or poppy seed) and klobasniky (filled with sausage, cheese, and/or jalapeños). The kolaches alone come in 16 varieties, many of which sell out by early afternoon.

The F.J. Hruska General Merchandise Store opened on Main Street in downtown Ellinger in 1912, with owner Frank J. Hruska selling everything from groceries to furniture; he even provided local ambulance and undertaking services. In 1952, Frank's son and daughter-in-law opened a separate service station on SH 71, eventually consolidating the service station and general store into the Hruska's of today. The kolaches were introduced in 1962 by local Czech baker Adolphine Krenek, who made the pastries from her own recipe, which Hruska's still uses. —MH
109 W. SH 71, Ellinger. 979-378-2333; hruskas-bckery.com



HRUSKA'S KOLACHES

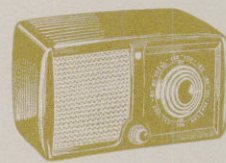
Pig Stand



It's hard to miss the pink pig sign high atop a mint-and-fuchsia pole, rising high over Broadway, in the shadows of downtown San Antonio. And the old-school coffee shop script in neon over the front door proves irresistible, too. Both promise a trip to yesteryear, as the Pig Stand—America's first drive-in restaurant chain—seems little changed in many decades.

The Pig Stand chain's last remaining location in San Antonio was one of dozens opened quickly after the original restaurant debuted in Dallas in 1921, serving sandwiches, breakfast, and burgers. Best of all, this Pig Stand—out of the 130 that once stood from coast to coast—also delivers food and mood from a bygone era. The car-hop service was terminated decades ago, but guests nostalgic for a different time can find comfort in the red vinyl booths that feature individual mini-jukeboxes with tunes by Johnny Cash, Elvis Presley, Willie Nelson, and Frank Sinatra. Handmade

Photos: Melanie Grizzel (left and inset); Nathan Lindstrom (right)



Don't Touch That Dial

In addition to the good that firefighters do daily—like putting out flames and saving people's lives—we can also credit them as the original Texas disc jockeys. The first radio station in Texas—the second in the country after KDKA in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania—was WRR, owned by the city of Dallas and licensed in August 1921. It was created so dispatchers could communicate with police and firefighters in the field from the second floor of downtown's Central Fire Station. To ensure continuity of connection during downtime, the blaze busters would tell jokes and stories, read from the newspaper, and play records.

This new form of entertainment cost the city \$250 for a radio transmitter, which was built by a pair of Western Union telegraph experts in conjunction with Henry "Dad" Garrett, a public safety official who designed Dallas' first traffic lights.

In 1926, WRR started selling advertising slots to pay for upgraded equipment and adapted a programming mix of music and news to be in line with other commercial radio stations. By 1931, the Dallas police and fire departments had their own wireless transmitters, but WRR still supplied and maintained all radio equipment for the city until 1969. The station, which has never used taxpayer money, was especially profitable from 1946 through 1968, when the advent of television demanded radio become more engaging.

WRR added FM station 101.1 in 1948, which is now a classical music station, still owned by the city, operating out of a building at Fair Park. The original AM station—sold to a private company in 1977—has become KTCK, "The Ticket," a multiyear honoree as the best sports station in America by the National Association of Broadcasters.

"WRR is a very special place with so much history," general manager Mike Oakes says. "We don't dispatch the fire department any longer but having been a classical music station for 57 years, our commitment of service continues." Until COVID, WRR aired Dallas City Council meetings every other Wednesday. But due to bad audio from online meetings, the station best serves the community these days as a valued source of local arts information. —Michael Corcoran



chocolate malts and root beer floats (both garnished with whipped cream and cherries) are just the beginning; chicken-fried steak sandwiches with big, crunchy onion rings and the signature pig sandwich—tender sliced smoked pork slathered in barbecue sauce—make for satisfying meals.

You'll want to linger to inspect the hundreds of pink pig figurines, all gifts from loyal customers over the past century. "All the pigs have their own stories, some of them very sweet," says owner Mary Ann Hill, who began her tenure as a server in 1967 and eventually bought the business out of bankruptcy with an angel investor in 2007. Even as development encroaches on Pig Stand's last location, Hill hopes the landmark will hold on. "San Antonio's faithful customers keep us going," she says. "I always tell people: We own the business but not the property. If you see me dragging this building down the road, you'll know we're moving." —June Naylor 1508 Broadway St., San Antonio. 210-222-9923

Camp Rio Vista



When Camp Rio Vista opened in 1921 as a Hill Country summer camp for boys, the inaugural activities included reading books in the camp library, listening to visitor talks on character development, and taking riverside hikes. A century later, the diversions are slightly more modern. But the oldest summer camp in Texas still maintains its charm against the backdrop of the Guadalupe River.

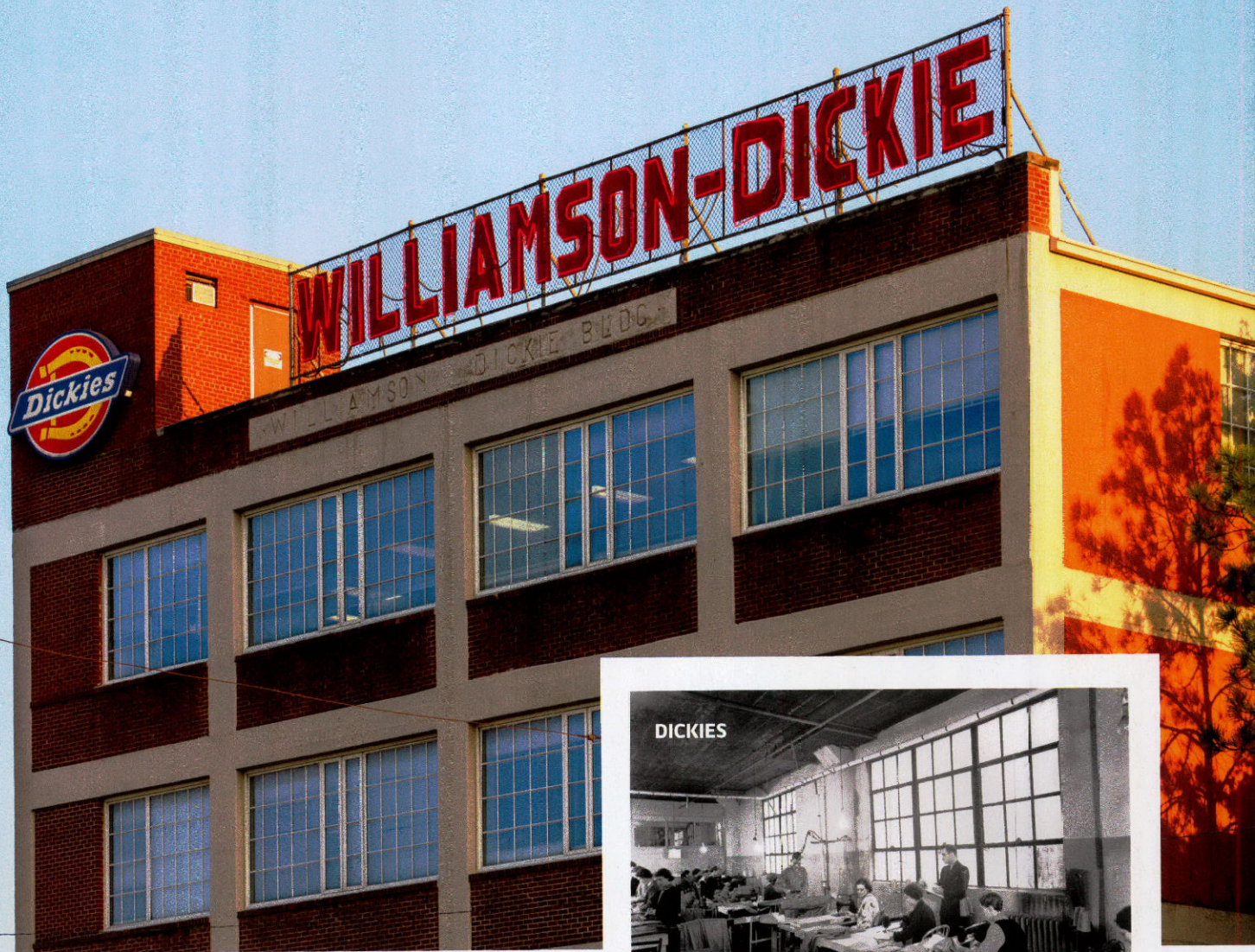
Camp Rio Vista was the brainchild of former Houston YMCA CEO Herbert Crate, who bought 1,000 acres of riverfront property between Hunt and Ingram. A dining hall, which is currently the oldest building on the grounds, came along in 1927. In 1936, Crate sold the camp to George and

Carlotta Broun, a couple from Kerrville who ran it as a private family camp while rebuilding the still-standing cabins. The Brouns welcomed the public back to the site in the early 1940s, even running the camp in 1941 despite a lack of young men to serve as counselors due to World War II. During this era, activities included motorboating, horseback riding, riflery, archery, hiking, arts and crafts, and the start of camp traditions such as the Mystic Dance. The last was held with the girls from nearby Camp Mystic, which was established in 1926.

In 1977, Camp Rio Vista landed in the hands of Carl and Diane Hawkins, who had previously owned nearby Heart O' the Hills Camp for girls. They continue to run Rio Vista today as an all-boys camp and started Camp Sierra Vista for girls on the same property. "We have always done summer camp," says part-owner Justin Hawkins, Carl and Diane's grandson. "And we love it. We think summer camp nowadays is probably more important than ever because camp is one of the last places kids can just come and be kids." —Jacqueline Knox 175 Rio Vista Road South, Ingram. 830-367-5353; vistacamps.com

A scenic view of a hillside covered in dense, lush green trees. A blue sign with white text reading "RIO VISTA" is mounted on a ridge in the upper middle section. In the lower foreground, a stone building with a dark roof and a stone wall is partially visible, surrounded by more trees and a grassy area. The sky is clear and blue.

RIO VISTA



Dickies



Nearly 100 years ago, when hat salesman E.E. “Colonel” Dickie went into the workwear trade making denim overalls in Fort Worth, he probably didn’t envision the company’s attire becoming a fashion staple in the hip-hop world and beyond. But that indeed is what Williamson-Dickie Manufacturing—cofounded by Dickie’s cousin C.N. Williamson—accomplished.

Over the course of its existence, Dickies has never been favored by one group or another, says Rachel Couris, Dickies’ director of global communications.

“Our brand easily transcends all decades, social dress codes, and demographics,” she says. “Our workwear allows [people to] express themselves.”

During the Great Depression, as Texas’ economy shifted from agriculture to oil, Dickies became the top choice in pants, shirts, and coveralls for generations of tool pushers, roustabouts, and roughnecks. World War II brought more boom times. The U.S. government contracted with the company for military uniforms by the freighter-load, with the khaki “chino” pants winning enduring popularity not just with soldiers but with suburban dads, golfers, and college professors.

As the Texas oil industry went global, Texan oil field workers brought steamer trunks full of Dickies with them to places like Venezuela and the Middle East, igniting the company’s expansion. As with Levi’s a few decades earlier, the late ’70s and early ’80s saw this reliable line of work clothes become adopted as streetwear. Beginning with Mexican Americans in East Los Angeles, Dickies caught on with West Coast rappers like NWA and Texas group UCK, whose late member Pimp C once dedicated a song to the brand, rapping, “Got red Dickies, white Dickies, orange Dickies too / And I even got the blue for when I represent for Screw.” —JNL *Dickie’s Flagship, 521 W. Vickery Blvd., Fort Worth. dickies.com*

The Gardner Hotel



The Gardner Hotel, turning 100 in May 2022, is El Paso’s oldest continually operating hotel. It has been frequented by the likes of gangster John Dillinger—who checked in under the alias John D. Ball—and author Cormac McCarthy. “He mentions the hotel in a lot of his books,” general manager Stephanie Nechan says.



Seemingly everywhere you look inside the hotel built by Preston E. Gardner on the corner of Franklin Avenue and Stanton Street, hints of decades past abound. There's an old yet nonoperational phone booth, actual keys (instead of cards) to get into the 46 rooms, and the original marble stairway with wooden handrails. The hotel also has four hostel rooms, each with four beds.

"We've done a lot to keep it original," Nebhan says. "But we've done upgrades too. Before, they didn't have showers in any of the rooms, so we've installed showers."

The Gardner's private rooms start at \$69.99 a night and are appointed with original antique furniture and a vintage-style bathroom from the hotel's early years. It also has renovated rooms that include flat-screen televisions. The hostel section, starting at \$24.99 a night, is pared down with bunk beds and a communal kitchen.

Since the hotel features a lot of touches and décor from its early days, it's easy to imagine Dillinger and his cronies laying low there during the Great Depression. He became known as Public Enemy No. 1 during his stay at the Gardner. —Roberto José Andrade Franco 311 E. Franklin Ave., El Paso. 915-532-3661; gardnerhotel.com



Out of the Park

As an adolescent, Andrew "Rube" Foster was singularly focused on baseball and so confident in his talented right arm that he joined the Waco Yellow Jackets semipro team in 1897 after turning 18. Over the next three decades, the Calvert native would have no occupation or interests outside of baseball as he became a dominant pitcher, an innovative manager, a shrewd team owner, and a visionary league president who would be remembered as the "Father of Black Baseball."

"I am partial to baseball, have followed it since a child and have never been identified with any other [pursuit]," Foster said in a 1924 interview with the *Chicago Defender*. "I have found the one thing that gives me more pleasure than anything else."

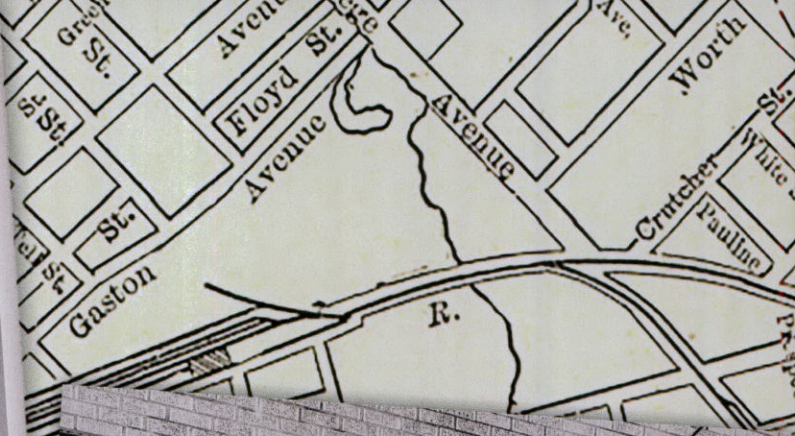
Baseball also afforded him historic levels of success. In a 20-year span from 1897 to 1917, Foster was the best pitcher among Black baseball's independent barnstormers and then league-affiliated teams. He tossed eight no-hitters. When he bested Hall of Fame Philadelphia Athletics pitcher Rube Waddell in a 1902 exhibition game, Foster was tabbed "the Colored Rube Waddell," which he proudly acknowledged in Robert Cottrell's book *The Best Pitcher in Baseball: The Life of Rube Foster, Negro League Giant*.

In that same year, Foster won 44 games in a row for the Chicago Union Giants. In 1910, as a player-manager with the Chicago American Giants, he led the team to an astonishing 128-6 record.

Foster's legend was solidified in 1920 when he stepped up as the guiding and domineering force in establishing and running the eight-team Negro National League, which prospered throughout the decade though he never reached his goal of integrating Major League Baseball.

"The Negro National League was the first all-Black league to survive a full season, and all the credit goes to Rube Foster," says Larry Lester, author of *Rube Foster in His Time*. "He would say, 'I'm going to put a team on the field that white Americans cannot ignore. They will have to accept us as equals, as a professional team, and eventually as a league.'"

Foster died from a heart attack on Dec. 9, 1930, at age 51. He has been inducted into the Texas Sports Hall of Fame, the Texas Baseball Hall of Fame, and the National Baseball Hall of Fame. A marker honoring Foster is located at Calvert's Payne-Kemp Park. —Michael Hurd



Deep Ellum Clues

Searching for the spirit
of Blind Lemon Jefferson and
the 1920s in Dallas' Deep Ellum

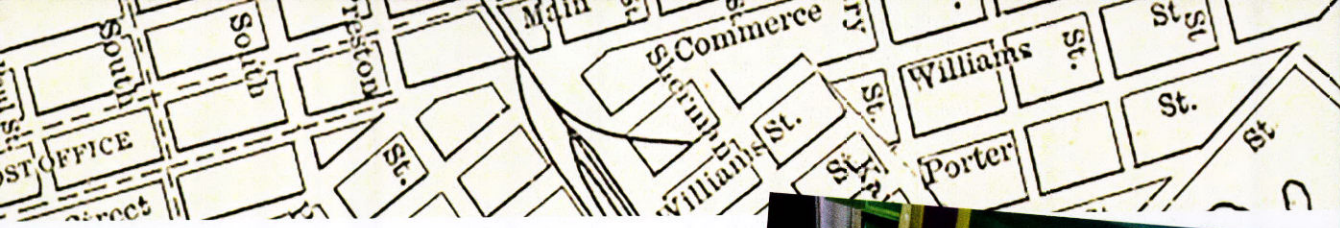
BY CLAYTON MAXWELL
PHOTOGRAPHS BY AMY SCOTT





PSHEY

STAFF



The 1920s

were a time of exuberant reinvention. Jazz pioneers in Harlem revolutionized music. Flappers unleashed new dances and hemlines. And speakeasies vibrated with all-night parties, defying the best efforts by prohibitionists to make everyone behave. Perhaps most notable for us in the 2020s, the world of a century ago was also recovering from a devastating pandemic, the Spanish Flu.

An unlikely epicenter of Texas' vitality during the 1920s was Deep Ellum, the historic Dallas entertainment district that has been mythologized as an enclave of good times. But the true story is far richer and more complex than the myth. If there's a central figure in the story of Deep Ellum's rising, it's enigmatic bluesman Blind Lemon Jefferson, whose success inspired other musicians to flock to the neighborhood. While few details are known about his life, I've set out to Deep Ellum in search of clues about his legacy.

Founded in 1873—some believe as a freedman's town for the formerly enslaved—Deep Ellum had grown into a hub of commerce and entertainment for African Americans by the '20s. It was known as Dallas' "black downtown," according to the book *Deep Ellum, The Other Side of Dallas*, by Alan Govenar and Jay Brakefield. Shunned by much of white commerce, African Americans, along with Jewish and European immigrants, built their own department stores, theaters, domino parlors, and dance halls. Musicians busked along the railroad tracks that brought industry to Elm Street, the source of the neighborhood's "Ellum" nickname.

It was along the railroad tracks that Jefferson once played the blues. In the 1920s, the musician from Freestone County rose to prominence in Deep Ellum. His local popularity propelled him to a successful recording career with Paramount Records, unprecedented for a down-home Texas bluesman.



OPENING SPREAD, CLOCKWISE: Kimpton Pittman Hotel; Deep Vellum Books; Truth & Alibi night club; Blind Lemon Jefferson; old railroad tracks on Trunk Avenue.
THIS SPREAD, CLOCKWISE: The candy shop facade of Truth & Alibi; Truth & Alibi; Blind Lemon Jefferson.



While musicians in Harlem introduced the world to jazz, Jefferson brought Texas country blues to the world.

It's a hot Friday night in June.

We're in a lull of the pandemic; virus cases are dwindling, and the delta variant is not yet making headlines. With bars and over 20 live music venues, Deep Ellum feels like an exultant street party.

Rap and salsa music blast from terraces packed with weekend carousers. A couple on a vintage Harley cruise by blaring hip-hop. A posse of young men preach about Jesus from a podium on the sidewalk. Friends tend to a woman, sitting on a curb, who's had too much fun. I am reminded of a quote by J.H. Owens, a columnist writing in *The Dallas Gazette*, a Black weekly newspaper. In 1937, he described this Dallas neighborhood as "the only place recorded on earth where business, religion, hoodooism, gambling, and stealing goes on at the same time without friction."

In the 1920s, Deep Ellum didn't have speakeasies, per se, but there were "chock houses," informal roadside joints selling bootleg liquor. Today, Deep Ellum is home to speakeasy-themed clubs that play up Prohibition-era

intrigue. One of them, Truth & Alibi, hides behind a facade of a vintage candy shop.

I find the shop and give the day's password, which I'd found on the club's Facebook page, to the bouncer: "Twizzlers." He smiles and pushes open a wall of candy dispensers to reveal a chandelier-lit lounge within. Prohibition-era portrait paintings in thick gold frames hang against a backdrop of damask wallpaper. Waitresses in black micro-dresses serve 1920s-style cocktails to guests seated in oversized leather chairs. The crowd at Truth & Alibi is friendly and diverse, yet this is just a fun facsimile of a 1920s bar. I find no hint of Blind Lemon here.

Blind Lemon, who was at least partially blind, traveled from his home near Wortham, northeast of Waco, in the early 1920s to perform on the streets of Deep Ellum. His soulful country blues grabbed the attention of Paramount Records, which invited him to record in Chicago. With songs that tell stories of love and hard living in the cotton-farming communities of Texas, Blind Lemon would later be emulated by the likes of Robert Johnson, B.B. King, and the Beatles.

"Blind Lemon was giving voice to his times," says Alan Govenar, a Dallas-based author and filmmaker who's co-authoring a biography of Jefferson. "What made singers like him appealing to their public was that they were really connecting with the spirit of the day and what people were feeling."



If his lyrics express the spirit of the day, that spirit was full of hard times, desire, heartbreak—and critters. In “Tin Cup Blues,” Blind Lemon describes a hand-to-mouth existence: “I couldn’t earn enough to buy me a loaf of bread / My gal’s a housemaid, and she earns a dollar a week / I’m so hungry on payday, I can hardly speak.” In “Elder Green” we hear about a lover who will “make a panther squall.” In “Mosquito Moan,” he evokes the ubiquitous vexation of Texas bugs.

Blind Lemon’s music spoke to people. According to his fellow busker Huddie Ledbetter, aka Lead Belly, he and Blind Lemon were so popular when they’d play in Dallas “the women would come running, Lord have mercy. They’d hug and kiss us so much we could hardly play.” A musician’s dream regardless of the century.

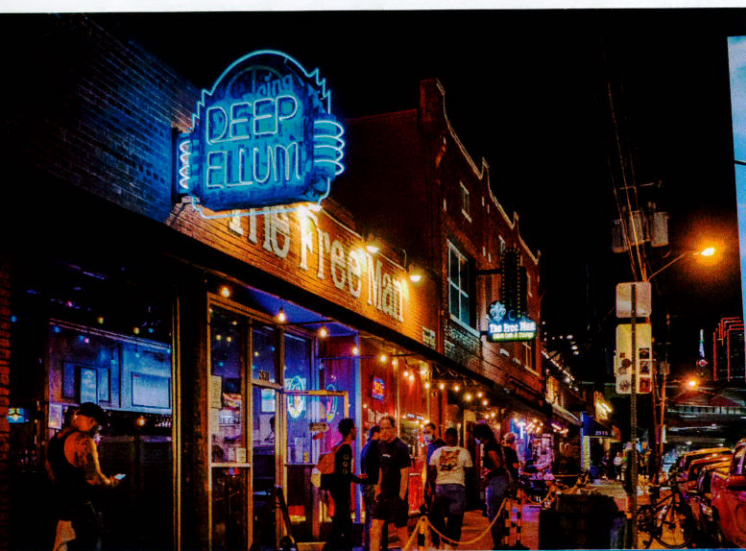
The train lines that led Blind Lemon to Deep Ellum are a critical part of the neighborhood’s history, says Clarence Glover Jr., the CEO of Sankofa, an African American education and cultural diversity consulting agency. The business takes its name from a West African word that means “it is not taboo to fetch the past for the future.”

Glover says the Continental Gin Company, located on the edge of Deep Ellum, manufactured gin machinery that was shipped by train to cotton plantations. Built by cotton gin entrepreneur Robert Munger in 1888, the 70,000-square-foot factory has been partly redeveloped into a stylish community workspace.

African American cotton pickers from the countryside followed the train tracks to Deep Ellum. “All the tracks, you see, connected to the cotton plantations,” says Glover, a former adjunct professor of African American Studies at SMU. “You can’t talk about Deep Ellum in the 1920s without talking about cotton. Blind Lemon, his blues, spirituals—all of that music grew out of cotton.”

I head to a spot where the railroad tracks used to run, now where Deep Ellum transitions into downtown Dallas under the North Central Expressway. Jefferson and Lead Belly used to play here. “The ghost of Deep Ellum lives there,” Govenaar says. Standing under the expressway, I hear cars rumbling overhead, but I can’t feel the spirit of Jefferson wooing passersby with his soulful songs.

Just down the street, on the corner of Elm and Good Latimer Expressway, the Kimpton Pittman Hotel harkens to the history of 1920s Deep Ellum and the Black culture that thrived there. With a restoration completed in 2020, the hotel preserves the work of William Sidney Pittman, an African American architect and son-in-law of



Booker T. Washington. "It is the premiere building in Deep Ellum," Govenar says.

Pittman designed the seven-story Beaux Arts redbrick beauty with arched neoclassical windows in 1916. He was commissioned to do the project by the Knights of Pythias, a Black fraternal organization that served as a life insurance company and hub for Black business owners.

"Pittman created a building that's beautiful in proportion," says John Strasius, a project manager at Perkins Will, the architecture firm that oversaw the rebirth of the Knights of Pythias Temple. "What's really significant is the building's cultural history. This is the first African American financed, built, designed, and occupied building in Dallas."

Pittman, who built numerous churches throughout Dallas, is little known in architectural history, even though he was an accomplished architect and scholar who studied and taught at the Tuskegee Institute. Glover helps keep his memory alive. He puts flowers and flags on Pittman's grave in Dallas' Glen Oaks Cemetery, along with some of the original red bricks from the Knights of Pythias building.

"I am a minister, so as a spiritual commitment I do this as well," Glover says. For Pittman's birthday, Glover threw a

small party at the hotel, and he often brings friends to eat breakfast on Sundays at Elm & Good, the airy restaurant on the hotel's ground floor. From there he occasionally leads tours through Deep Ellum, walking to the Continental Gin, about a 15-minute stroll away.

Glover also consulted with hotel management about hanging up Pittman's portrait and other images of Deep Ellum's history on the walls. The hotel's design team is currently working with an artist on Pittman's portrait. Glover appreciates that the Kimpton chain has named its boutique hotel after Pittman. "They didn't have to do that," he says. "And well, it does beg a deeper awareness, you see. In light of gentrification, the historic identity and dignity of William Pittman and the African American culture should not be lost."

Back in the 1920s, the hotel's fourth floor ballroom was the epicenter of Deep

FROM LEFT: The Free Man Cajun Café and Lounge; artist Teal Suns with his mural depicting Blind Lemon Jefferson and Blind Willie Johnson; STIRR restaurant; writers Alan Govenar and Akin Babatundé; the Continental Gin Company building.





Deeper Ellum

"If you go down to Deep Ellum, to have a little fun..." As the classic song "Deep Ellum Blues" suggests, there's plenty of fun in Deep Ellum. Here are options for fun that go a little deeper:

The Undermain Theatre: This company features plays that capture the neighborhood's spirit. In the summer of 2022, it will stage *Lonesome Blues*, a musical about the life of Blind Lemon Jefferson, written by Ak'n Babatundé and Alan Govanar. undermain.org

Sankofa Deep Ellum Tour: Tours that recount the neighborhood's African American history. sankofaeducationervices.com

Deep Vellum Books: Indie shop and publishing house with books by local authors. deepvellum.com

The Deep Ellum Foundation: A group that hosts neighborhood events and tours. deepellum-foundation.org

The Kimpton Pittman Hotel: Lodging in a restored 1916 building designed by architect William Sidney Pittman. pittmanhoteldallas.com

Truth & Alibi: A speakeasy-style bar hidden behind a candy shop facade. truthandalibi.com

R.L.'s Blues Palace 2: An authentic Texas blues club located a couple miles southeast of Deep Ellum. facebook.com/rlbluespalace2



CLOCKWISE: A banner depicting William Sidney Pittman; Kimpton Pittman Hotel; R.L. Griffin performing at his Blues Palace; Chris Bingham mural of Freddie King, Blind Lemon Jefferson, and T-Bone Walker.

Ellum's intellectual and cultural life. In 1919, the Fisk Jubilee Singers sang Black spirituals here. In the 1920s, George Washington Carver lectured about sweet potatoes, and Marcus Garvey spoke about the Back to Africa movement. A large chandelier once dangled from the ballroom's ceiling, presiding over a space alive with dance and fellowship.

When I pull on the door handle of the ballroom, I see Pittman's towering arched windows. Strasius says he encountered collapsed ceilings during his first walkthrough before the restoration, and Pittman's grand windows were boarded up. Now, carefully restored, they shine with light.

Like Blind Lemon Jefferson, the entertainers and intellectuals of the Knights of Pythias ballroom were expressing the vitality of Deep Ellum in the 1920s. But now it's time to hear from the 2020s. My husband and I hop in a cab to R.L.'s Blues Palace 2, a club in nearby South Dallas owned by musician R.L. Griffin, aka "The Right Reverend of the Blues." The title of his 1999 LP, *Too Hot To Stop*, is an apt description of a man known for wearing flashy suits and igniting the crowd when he sings.



"R.L. not only runs the finest and most authentic blues club in Texas, but he's also been a brilliant bridge to the state's rich musical heritage," says Bill Minutaglio, a journalist and author of the PEN Award-winning book *Dallas: 1963*. "Whenever I've walked into his place, he serves as a genius guide to the very best of Texas."

As we wait in line, I can see over the bouncer's shoulder—something genius could be happening here. What looks like an inconspicuous cinder block bar from the outside is a thumping, dancing house of happy people on the inside.

We sit next to a woman in a tiara at a long table loaded up with chocolate-covered strawberries and pink cupcakes. It's her 60th birthday, and now we are part of it. Our tablemates introduce themselves and pass us plates of meatballs and chicken wings. They also offer me cupcakes. We are literally breaking some very sweet bread together. When the band starts with Johnnie Taylor's funky "Who's Making Love," a large man in a fiery red suit with a microphone struts in from a side door, and the crowd, with their arms aloft, parts to make way. Griffin has arrived.

As Griffin sings his way through the crowd, his husky voice overtakes the room. A lady next to me in a short

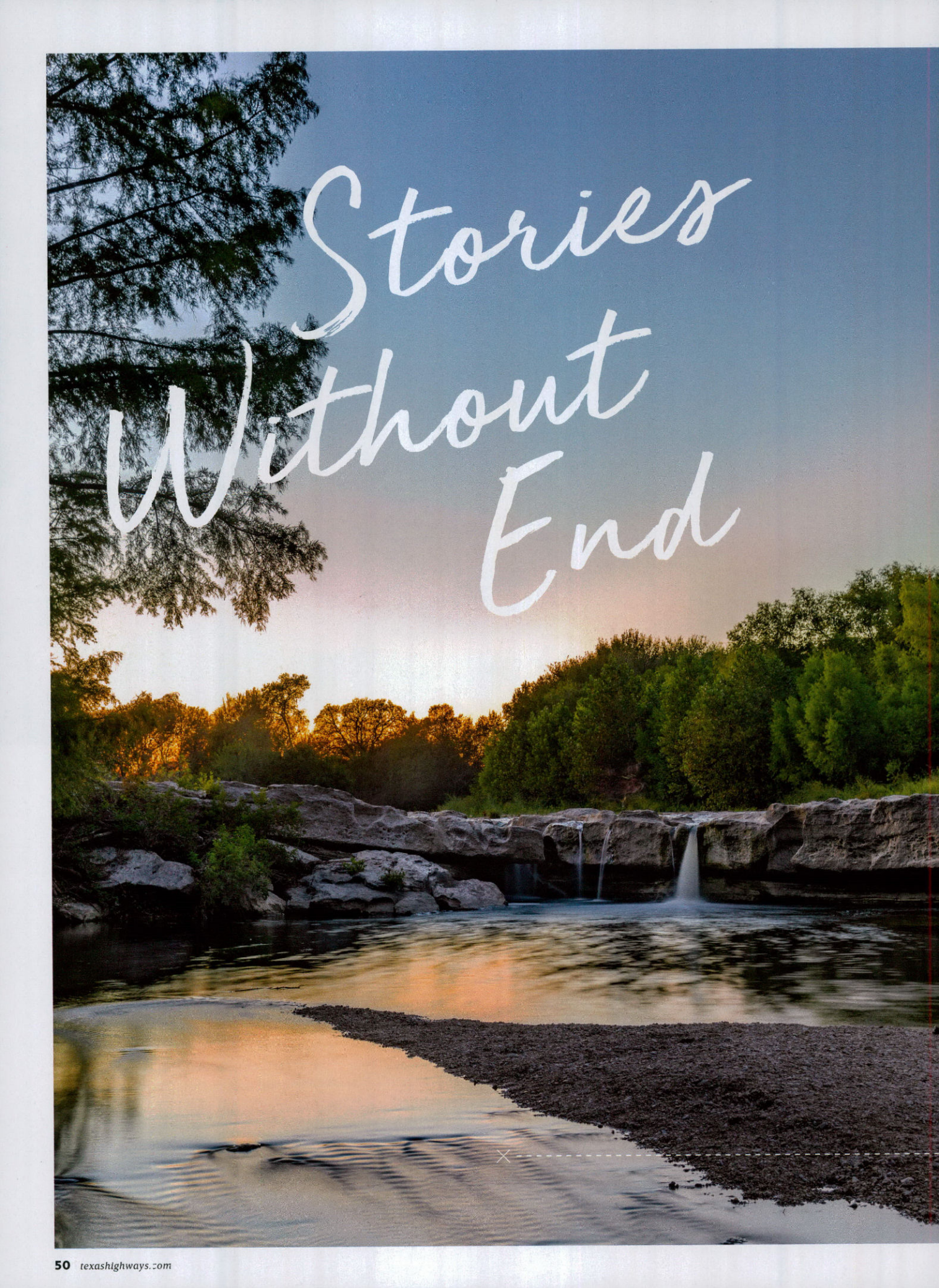
sequined dress and Bambi-thick fake eyelashes high-fives me. Griffin, blues alchemist, has transformed us into a dancing, singing gestalt.

For the next hour, The Right Reverend of the Blues leads us in a communal celebration, with moments of high-energy call and response. While dancing and sweating with the generous, welcoming souls of the Blues Palace 2, I realize I've found my best local link to Blind Lemon Jefferson.


"R.L. was schooled as a blues musician, but he wants to present a vibrant contemporary sound," says Govenar, who interviewed Griffin for his book, *Texas Blues: The Rise of a Contemporary Sound*. "He wants to connect the past to the present. Blind Lemon was trying to give voice to the people who listened to him. R.L. is trying to give voice to the people who are listening to the music that's performed in his Blues Palace. And there is a message of hope there."

By connecting us through music, Griffin is making art that reasserts our better selves, reminding us how good it feels, no matter how old we are, to be in communion, to shake it, to sing along, and to invite others to sing.

One-hundred years ago, the 1920s in Deep Ellum roared with their own momentum—in commerce and street life, in the birth of the Knights of Pythias Temple, in Blind Lemon Jefferson bringing Texas country blues to the world. While it remains to be seen if or how our '20s will offer new possibilities, we would be lucky if they sound a lot like a Texas bluesman in his colorful suit, bringing us hope. **L**



Stories Without End

A woman with dark hair, wearing a traditional Mexican embroidered dress with red and white patterns and a pink sash, stands in the center of the frame. She is positioned under a concrete highway overpass with multiple support pillars. The background shows a clear blue sky and some distant buildings. The lighting is bright, suggesting daytime.

*Communing with
Indigenous cultures
along El Camino Real
de los Tejas*

By ire'ne lara silva

Photographs by Kenny Braun



It's best to begin

both journeys and stories in places without roads, preferably with at least one knee and one hand touching the earth. Walk away from the car, away from asphalt, away from campsites and picnicking families, away from signs and trails. Go where the air is sweet and smells only of green; where the trees are swaying and you can hear the wind moving through the leaves; where you can see water rushing and falling and pooling; where if you're still enough, you'll see small animals wandering around. Oak trees and bald cypress trees abound. The best journeys and stories not only span distances but also time. The difficult thing is some people think the past is done and gone, that history is dead, that it no longer lives and breathes around us—and not that what was, still is, and will go on.

McKinney Falls State Park, about 10 miles outside of Austin, where Onion and Williamson creeks meet, was where I decided to begin my story. I knew I wouldn't only be learning about the history of El Camino Real and visiting related historical sites, I would be *feeling* the history. History

is neither distant nor objective; history lives in us. My identity and the history of my ancestors is a layered and complicated thing, but to me that only emphasizes the need to honor their struggles. And where else to begin my journey but at the point closest to my home?

The stone marker at the entrance of McKinney Falls proudly proclaims it as being part of El Camino Real de los Tejas, now a designated national trail. The 2,500-mile route, used most heavily by the Spanish from the 1600s through the 1800s, leads from Mexico City, Mexico, to Natchitoches, Louisiana, the earliest non-Indigenous settlement in Louisiana. The best way to traverse the Camino Real in Texas on current roads is to start in Laredo. There, you can forge your own journey by experiencing Los Matachines de la Santa Cruz de la Ladrillera perform every December and dance a variation of the traditional *matachin*, a ritual brought by the Spanish that over time incorporated Mexican, Indigenous, and American symbols. From Laredo, drive Interstate 35 to San Antonio and Austin, and then continue on State Highway 71 and SH 21 to Nacogdoches. Along the way, enjoy Texas' different climates: arid desert, tumbleweed and ocotillo country, hills and canyons, green forests, wide rivers, farmland, ranchland, swamps, and as always, the open sky.

"Although not as well-known as the Lewis and Clark Trail or the Oregon Trail, El Camino Real de los Tejas is the second



OPENING SPREAD, FROM LEFT: McKinney Falls State Park in Austin; Liliana Patricia Saldaña under Interstate 35. **THIS PAGE:** Spanish settlers forging El Camino Real. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** McKinney Falls State Park.





oldest route of European travel in the country,” says Steven Gonzales, executive director of El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail Association, a nonprofit that preserves, promotes, and interprets the U.S. portion of the trail. “It’s second only to its sister trail, El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro,” a former trade route between Mexico City, Mexico, and San Juan Pueblo, New Mexico.

Artifacts found in McKinney Falls State Park in Austin show Indigenous people inhabited the area starting 9,000 years ago. The names of the early groups are unknown, but it is believed the Tonkawa, among others, descended from them. Although very few Native Americans in Texas live on reservations, the total population of Native Americans living in the state is close to 350,000. But this does not include the millions of Texans of Indigenous descent.

I count myself among them. When I’m asked for a label, I say I’m an Indigenous-identified Mexican American even though I only have one grandparent who came from Mexico and I can’t tell you which tribal nations I’m descended from. But it would be as much of a lie for me to say I wasn’t Mexican as it would be for me to say I wasn’t Indigenous. Beyond blood, it is culture and food and language and storytelling and history and spirituality and worldview. I know who I am—the convergence of the history of my family and the history of this land, of Texas. My whole life. I’ve been fascinated by how Indigenous beliefs embedded themselves in Catholicism in the Americas, how Indigenous language and culture shaped Mexican and Texan language and culture.

“The Camino Real connects people, places, and cultures,” Gonzales says. “Without it, we would not be calling Texas

Texas today.”

Most accounts of the Camino Real span the history between its establishment by the Spanish and its use by U.S. immigrant settlers to enter Texas—which-was-then-New-Spain or Texas—which-was-then-Mexico and convert it into Texas-as-its-own-nation. What is also true, however, is the Camino Real was built upon Indigenous trails and trade routes, and Indigenous culture is still alive and present in Texas.

“The sense is that Indigenous people are people of the past,” says Liliana Patricia Saldaña, who holds a doctorate in human development and family studies from the University of Wisconsin and is a Chicana activist and scholar at the University of Texas at San Antonio. “This is not the case. It’s important for all people in this state to acknowledge that we are working, teaching, and learning in occupied territory, and



that we are living and breathing on the ancestral lands of Indigenous people.”

WHENEVER I'M DRIVING, I always think about the names of things: ranches, towns, creeks, rivers, counties, bridges, and parks. I wonder sometimes what visitors to Texas make of the jumble of languages these are made of—mostly Spanish, English, and different Indigenous languages. I think of curious things like how the names of certain places are a combination of languages and time—like the town of Buda, which is an English adaptation of the Spanish word *viuda*, or widow, the town's original name. The number of place names in Spanish are beyond counting, but there are also many places that are still known by their original Indigenous names—Waco, Anahuac, Nacogdoches, Caddo, Tahoka, and

Tehuacana, among others. And, of course, “Texas” is derived from the Caddo word *Tayshas*, which the Spanish interpreted as *Tejas*. I often wonder if visitors and residents register how the names capture something essential about the history of this state, the history of this land.

Indigenous people who made Texas their home included the Alabamas, Apaches, Aranamas, Atakapans, Bidais, Caddos, Comanches, Choctaws, Coushattas, Hasinai, Jumano, Karankawas, Kickapoos, Kiowas, Tonkawas, and Wichitas, among others. Texas' second president, Mirabeau B. Lamar, believed there could be “no compromise” between white settlers and Indigenous people “except in their total extinction or total expulsion” he wrote in a letter to the Texas Congress dated Dec. 20, 1838. While the remains of 6,509 children have been identified at





CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The campground on the Alabama-Coushatta Reservation near Livingston; a view from the reservation's campground; the Payaya tribe near present-day San Antonio; Bryant Celestine, archivist for the Alabama-Coushatta tribe.

“residential schools” across Canada and the U.S., Texas never had residential schools—schools established by the respective governments to both educate and indoctrinate native children. Instead, in Texas, Indigenous people were killed or removed to Oklahoma. In my research, I came across many references to “hostiles,” as well as many mentions of “Indian raids and attacks,” but the history books sometimes fail to acknowledge that Spanish, French, Mexican, and immigrant U.S. settlers were claiming lands that were already inhabited.

As a consequence of centuries of religious conversion, cultural assimilation, and violence, only three Native American reservations exist in Texas today: the Alabama-Coushatta Reservation in Livingston, between Houston and Nacogdoches; the Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas in Eagle Pass, south of Del Rio; and the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo in El Paso. While all three offer gaming facilities that are open to the public, the Kickapoo do not grant any further access to nonnatives. The Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, however, have a cultural center, a smoke shop, and other offerings that are open to the public. And the



Alabama-Coushatta, the only one of the three located directly on the Camino Real, hosts a powwow every June and offers camping and dining facilities to visitors.

“It’s important to preserve and revitalize our culture and traditions to ensure that future generations can learn and engage in these types of events, and to teach how our people relied on natural resources as provided by the creator,” says Bryant Celestine, archivist for the Alabama-Coushatta tribe. To combat the way “Native Americans have been erased from the textbooks,” according to Celestine, the Alabama-Coushatta organize school programs and presentations to educate kids.

Centuries of violence and shame have not erased the Indigenous identification or cultural reclamation efforts of many Mexican Americans, Tejanos, or Mexican-Texans.

“Our mission is to reeducate people who identify as Hispanic or Latino to reclaim their indigeneity,” says Mario Garza of the Indigenous Cultures Institute, an organization in San Marcos that hosts an annual powwow and has a summer program that uses the arts to teach children about Indigenous culture and the Coahuiltecan language. “Ashamed of being considered a second-class citizen, many Indigenous people claimed Tejano/Mexican as their only identity.”

BETWEEN 1632 AND 1793, Spanish settlers built missions, presidios, and settlements along much of the Camino

Real. In addition to their attempts to displace Indigenous people and convert them to Catholicism, the Spanish also used the Camino Real to investigate rumors of French colonization attempts in Texas. In 1996, Fort St. Louis, the French fort La Salle established in 1685, was rediscovered by historians and declared an archeological site. Their findings are viewable at the Bullcock Texas State History Museum in Austin.

Most of the multiple roads that formed the Camino Real ran through Yanaguana, the name of the Payaya tribe’s village, which became San Antonio. Five of the 26 missions that were built in Texas still stand in San Antonio—Mission Concepción, Mission San Juan, Mission San José, Mission Espada, and Mission San Antonio de Valero (otherwise known as The Alamo). The

475-acre San Antonio Missions National Historical Park includes the first four missions as well as various irrigation resources, agricultural fields, and pre- and post-colonial historical sites. You can learn more about the missions through programming and events offered by American Indians in Texas at the Spanish Colonial Missions, a nonprofit formed by the Tap Pilam



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

LEFT: The road to Sugarloaf Mountain, considered the site of the origins of the Tonkawa tribe, near the confluence of the Little and Brazos rivers; **Mario Garza of the Indigenous Cultures Institute in San Marcos;** Sugarloaf Eridge, leading to Sugarloaf Mountain; the Caddo tribe in East Texas.





Coahuiltecan Nation.

In San Antonio, I spent some time at Mission Concepción before making my way to the other missions. My maternal grandmother's name was Concepción, and so I thought of my mother while I was there. She never had any doubts about our identity. We were *Indios*, of Indigenous descent from both sides of the border. My father was much more conflicted: In one breath he would bring up his pure-blooded Native American great-grandmother, and in the next he would point to his own pale skin and his blonde-haired blue-eyed sister as proof that he was wholly Spanish. While my parents were Catholic and regular attendees at Sunday Mass, I never felt any sense

of spirituality there. When my mother really needed to pray, she never went inside a church. Her favorite place was the grotto and garden at San Juditas Tadeo (St. Jude Thaddeus) in Pharr, near where we once lived. Neither rain nor 100-degree heat would keep her from praying in a space open to the sky, surrounded by greenery.

I wondered what she would make of the missions, where the buildings and stone walls bear a sense of immense age. What would she say if I told her about the remains of Indigenous bodies there, that mission records from 1762 show that, in the same year, 792 Native Americans were baptized while 596 were buried?

My heart heavy, I made my way to

Mission San Juan, with its imposing walls, and then the much more welcoming Mission San José. I spent the most time at Mission Espada, as it was so incredibly peaceful, and the creek and aqueduct drew my eye. I couldn't resist stopping in the middle of the small bridge on the way to Mission Espada. On one side, the water was a calm and luscious green. On the other, a melodic white froth falling downward. Everywhere: wide-branched mesquites, cottonwoods, retarnas, and more. The bridge was small and unprepossessing, but I felt a palpable sense of crossing between one world and another. I don't know if I'll ever be able to step foot in San Antonio again without wanting to visit that bridge.

In the few miles between the Alamo and Mission Espada, it seems like you see all of San Antonio—the River Walk and downtown office buildings, residential neighborhoods and schools, condos and golf courses, strip malls, fast-food chains, taquerias, and houses with abundantly flowery gardens with forests and farmland in the distance. Roadside banners mark the way from one mission to another, so it's impossible to get lost. It's not many miles long, but you can't help but think about how long it would have taken someone on

Interpreting the trail

El Camino Real runs northeast through Texas. In addition to historical and cultural sites like missions, forts, and settler homes, there is a wealth of museums and parks to visit. Keep in mind that some sections are not accessible because they are on private lands, have been destroyed or farmed, or are part of Native tribal reserves. The following sites invite travelers to enjoy the natural beauty along the trail and learn more about its complex history.

Alabama-Coushatta Reservation

571 State Park Road 56, Livingston-New Willard. 936-563-1100; alabama-coushatta.com

Bullock Texas State History Museum

1800 Congress Ave., Austin. 512-936-8746; thestoryoftexas.com

San Antonio Missions

National Historical Park
6701 San Jose Drive, San Antonio. 210-534-8875; nps.gov/saan

American Indians in Texas at the Spanish Colonial Missions

1313 Guadalupe St., San Antonio. aitscm.org

Caddo Mounds State Historic Site

1649 SH 21, Alto. 936-858-3218; thc.texas.gov

Gaines-Oliphint House

Commodore Drive, Hemphill. 512-339-1997; drtinfo.org

Durst-Taylor Historic House and Gardens

304 North St., Nacogdoches. 936-560-4443; nactx.us





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Mission Concepción in San Antonio; a Caddo Mound earthwork near Nacogdoches; an interpretive sign at Caddo Mounds State Historic Site.

foot or horseback to travel that distance 300 years ago.

BEFORE MY EL CAMINO REAL

journey, I'd never heard of Caddo Mounds State Historic Site. More than 1,200 years ago near present-day Nacogdoches, close to the eastern end of the Camino Real, the Hasinai built a village that became the southwesternmost ceremonial center of the Mound Builder culture. Mound Builders were Indigenous people located in the regions around the Great Lakes, Ohio River Valley, and Mississippi River and its tributaries. Over a period of 5,000 years, they built earthworks, also known as mounds, many of which can still be seen today. Mounds were dedicated to purposes ranging from ceremonial to religious. Three earthen mounds can still be viewed at the Caddo Historic Site: the Temple Mound, the Low Platform Mound, and the Burial Mound. A 2019 tornado tore down the Grass House and the visitor center, but

rebuilding plans are underway. "We are on the highest plateau—a perfect place for the Caddo Indians to build a village and ceremonial center—away from the flood plain," says Anthony Souther, site manager at Caddo Mounds State Historic Site. Abundant sunshine blankets the forests on the 375-acre property that includes markers for the sections of the Camino Real that run through it.

While the Camino Real facilitated travel for the Spanish northward, it also facilitated travel southward and westward for immigrant U.S. settlers. In Nacogdoches, you can visit the Gaines-Oliphint House and the Durst-Taylor Historic House and Gardens, two of the earliest pre-Republic white settler structures built in Texas. The Austin area, originally named Waterloo, saw white settlers in the early 1830s.

Researching the Camino Real induced weeks and weeks of deep grieving. As a poet and fiction writer, I write grief. I write Texas. I also write love and nature and transformation and creation, but all of that

is always rooted in both grief and Texas. I'm Texan to the very tips of my fingers—*hasta las puntitas de mis dedos*. I was born here, I've lived almost all my life here, and I plan to die and be buried here. There is no sky I love as much as this sky, no earth I love as much as this earth. I swear, even the sun shines differently here.

But that doesn't mean I'm blind to the truth of Texas' past and present. Obscuring history does nothing to help us understand the Texas we are, the Texas we've been, or the Texas we'll someday be.

I traveled no further on the Camino Real than the Caddo Mounds. It felt like a fitting bookend to my journey as I took in the sunshine, the wind, watched the tall grass sway, touched the earth that in some ways was inviolate—to be able to touch that which was inviolate within me. I sat under the blue sky and felt in my body and on my skin how time had not passed. I wanted to sit there and think about history and the Camino Real. Traveling it from one end to the other, or sampling it in parts, exposes you to centuries worth of stories and events. There is always a *before*. The story of Texas is a story of layers, of people and cultures through time, of what endures or doesn't from earlier layers.

Driving back to Austin from the Caddo Mounds, I thought about how the best stories and journeys have no endings. We're taught to think all stories must end, either tragically or with "happily ever after." But then there are the stories that even after the last page, or the last spoken word, leave you knowing that the story has not ended, that the characters are still living their lives, and you might hear more about what else happened.

I kept hearing the words of my fellow Indigenous-identified Mexican American, the writer Gloria Anzaldúa, who was born and buried in Hargill: "This land was Mexican once, was Indian always and is. And will be again." 🌱

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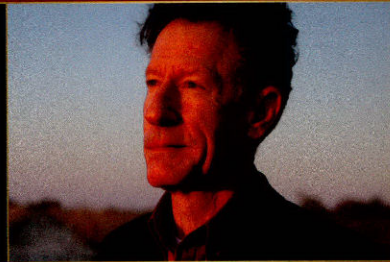
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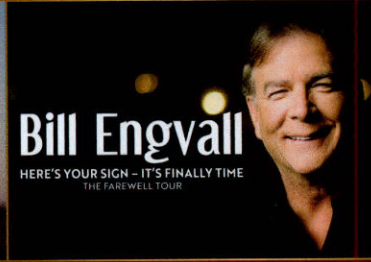
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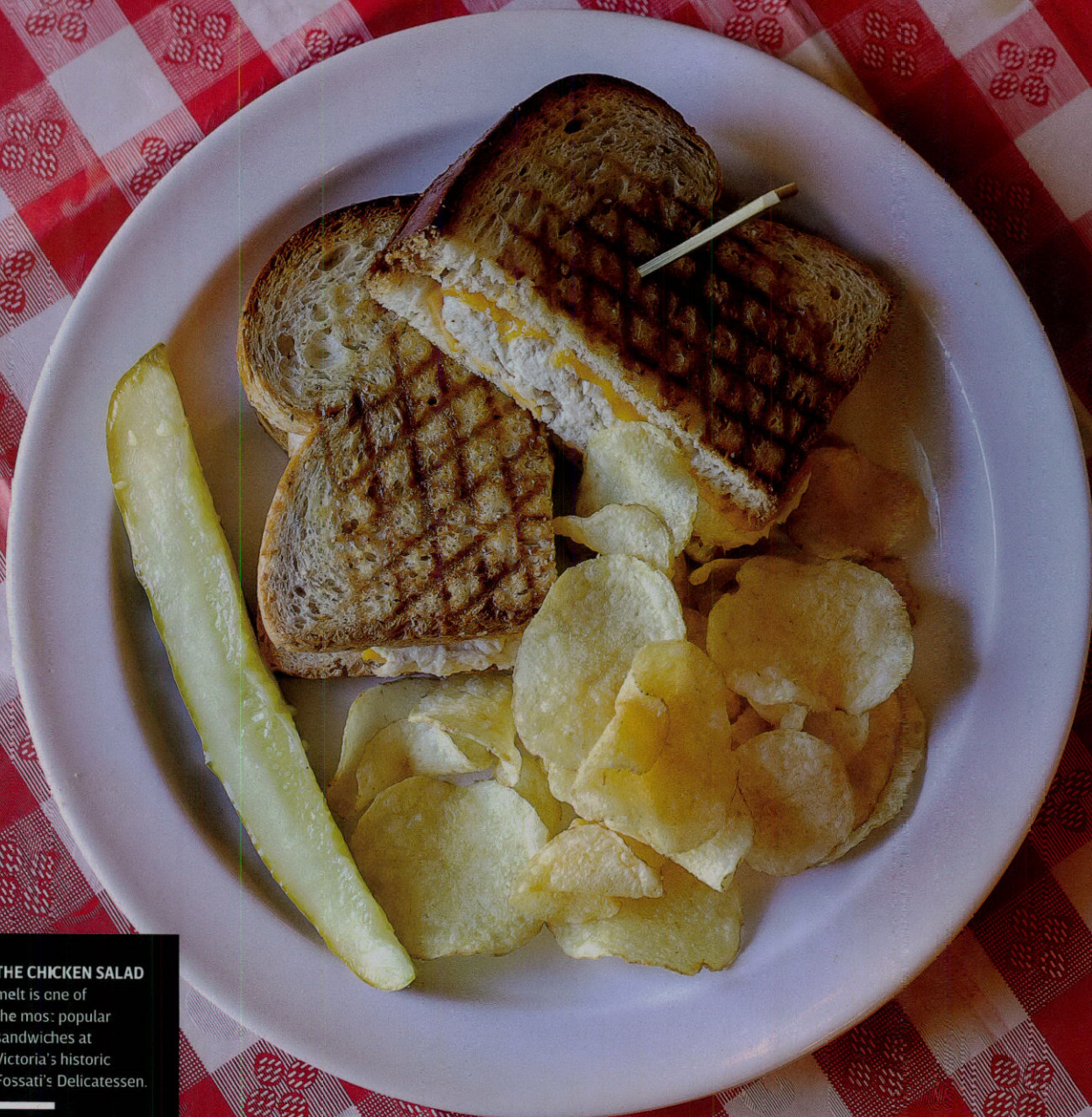
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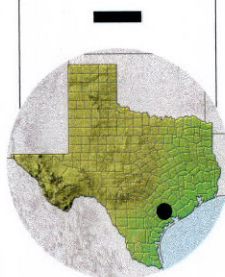
stop by Fossati's Delicatessen during lunch time for sandwiches and soups.

Sandwiched in History

The tenacious Fossati family keeps the oldest deli in Texas going

By Joe Nick Patoski

FOSSATI'S DELICATESSEN
 302 S. Main St.,
 Victoria,
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Fossati's Delicatessen in downtown Victoria still looks like it did 140 years ago. The tail facade, white clapboard siding, and iron rings—once used to tie up horses—protruding from the sidewalk testify to Fossati's 19th-century origins.

Although it's gone through many evolutions and its share of financial troubles, the business is still in operation thanks to a long line of Fossatis who fought to preserve what is now the oldest deli in Texas.

The first iteration of the business was a chili stand, opened in 1882 by Frascio “Frank” Napoleon Fossati, an Italian immigrant who previously worked as a stone cutter. He took on a partner and transformed the stand into a saloon called the Cosmopolitan Bar, which stayed open 24 hours a day.

Frank moved the saloon building across the intersection to the corner of Juan Linn and Main streets and settled there in 1905. Soon after, he began making sandwiches for the drinking crowd. On weekends he’d prepare food for people who’d come to do their shopping downtown, according to John Fossati, one of Frank’s great-grandsons. Those small gestures led to the Cosmopolitan Bar eventually becoming Fossati’s Delicatessen.

Today, the deli serves lunch Monday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Menu items lean more Texan than traditional New York-style and include the standout chicken salad melt and daily specials such as King Ranch chicken in addition to salads, soups, drinks, and desserts. A remnant from the saloon days, Kite’s Kalteraufschnitt, or Dutch Lunch, is a create-your-own-sandwich platter of four types of sandwich meat, bread, a pickle, coleslaw, and hot beer mustard from Frank’s original recipe.

The bar—with its mahogany mantle, glass cabinets, black leather stools, and spittoon trough running alongside the base—remains the centerpiece of the dining room. The framework of the building was constructed from timber from the toll bridge over the Guadalupe River in Victoria in the 1850s.

Keeping Fossati’s in the family has been difficult. In 1902, Frank was joined by his eldest son, known as Uncle Kite, a cherubic, charismatic figure. Uncle Kite took over the business when Frank retired in 1910 and operated Fossati’s until 1968.

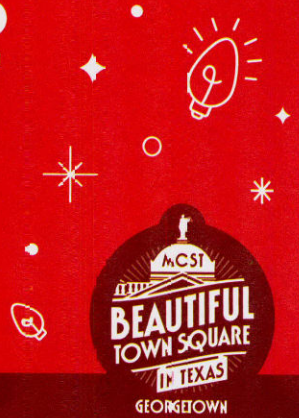
Kite intended to sell the business but decided to hold on to the building and lease the deli to new operators who promised to keep the name. At one time the new venture served pizza, but it



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According to John, a local banker turned down their application for a loan, informing them, “Whataburger has you licked.” They got a few more family members involved to secure the funds.

1985,” family historian Susan Darshad says. They incorporated with 33 family-member shareholders. Susan’s mother, Catherine Fossati Wyatt, and her twin sister, Therese Fossati Bomersbach, managed the deli until Catherine passed in 2012 and Therese retired in 2018.

Today, Fossati’s Deli is managed by Farshad Darshad and assisted by Faramarz Darshad, siblings with Fossati family connections. The board stays in communication with management, dealing with issues such as menu selection, operating hours, and renovations, including fixing the roof. That repair is being partially underwritten by a grant from the nonprofit Main Street Texas. Any and all changes made to the building are done under the scrutiny of the Texas Historical Commission, which added the business to the National Register of Historic Places in 1991. The upkeep of Fossati’s is key to the city of Victoria’s revitalization efforts downtown, which was abandoned by retailers in the 1980s, favoring locations near the US 59 bypass north of town.

“You’ve got to have good food, constant quality, and a very good staff,” says John, who is the president of the family corporation and has also run his own gardening and landscaping business in Victoria for 36 years.

Fossati’s survived the significant decline in business during the pandemic

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:

Fossati family members from left are John Fossati, Susan Darshad, Bridget Bomersbach, Therese Bomersbach, Margie Birdwell, and Xavier Fossati (seated); manager Farshad Darshad; blueberry and pear bread pudding with ice cream.



eventually folded in 1980. The building remained vacant for several years—long enough for the city of Victoria to threaten to condemn it and tear it down. That led several third- and fourth-generation Fossatis to pool their money to revive and rehabilitate the building and reopen the business. According to John, a local

banker turned down their application for a loan, informing them, “Whataburger has you licked.” They got a few more family members involved to secure the funds.

“My mother, my mother’s sister, and my mother’s brother got together to buy the building from one of Uncle Kite’s sons and reopened the restaurant in

by stepping up its existing delivery and pick-up services. "That's what pulled us through," John says. Outside of its regular hours, Fossati's opens for the city's monthly Saturday market and other special events like the quarterly Art Walk. The restaurant's board is pondering restarting live music on Friday nights, a tradition begun by Therese that ended at the start of COVID-19. The building is also occasionally rented out for birthdays, weddings, and other private events.

Torin Bales, a commercial real estate developer who lives and works in downtown Victoria, is a Fossati's regular. His favorite dishes are the jalapeño soup and Frank Napoleon sub with ham, turkey, cheddar, and provolone. "The staff is very proud of what they serve and of the history of the place," Bales notes.

It's that pride that keeps the deli going, despite all the challenges of



operating and maintaining a historic business and building. "My father loved this business, loved his father, loved his grandfather," John says. "He came to me and asked, 'Will you take my place and make sure the deli keeps going?' Next

year, we'll be celebrating 140 years, still in the same family. That wouldn't be the case if not for Susan, my Aunt Gloria, Catherine, Therese, and other Fossatis, and their love of the business and the family." 🍷



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DIANE HENDERSON

preserves her family's baked crab recipe, which is said to have originated with her great-grandmother Florence Scull (inset, right).



Lost but Not Forgotten

A new book highlights the stories of the African American culinary community in Galveston

By Kimya Kavehkar

When Diane Henderson was a child growing up in 1960s Galveston, she and her siblings went crabbing with their grandmother in the summer. They would wake up before the sun rose and make their way down to the beach, where their grandmother would hang a chicken neck from an old broom handle and wade into the water to attract crabs. When she felt a tug, she would scoop a net underneath the crab and eventually take her catch home to make baked crab. “We had a ball,” Henderson remembers.

That baked crab recipe, which originated with Henderson’s great-grandmother, appears in the new book *Lost Restaurants of Galveston’s African American Community*. Released in May, the book is an effort by members of Galveston Historical Society’s African American Heritage Committee and contains stories of eateries that have come and gone over the years as well as recipes contributed by committee members, including Henderson.

With over 100 restaurants featured, the breadth of the list speaks volumes about the contributions of Black citizens to the

culture and history of the island. The first Black person to reach Texas’ shores was Estevanico, an enslaved man who arrived on Galveston Island after a shipwreck in 1528. Galveston was also where a U.S. general announced the abolishment of slavery two years after President Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation, celebrated as Juneteenth on June 19, now a federal holiday. According to the book, from the 1920s to the 1960s, Black-owned dining establishments thrived. But after integration—and thus more restaurants serving Black and white customers—competition increased, and the numbers dwindled. Today, African Americans make up about 17% of the island’s population, but only a few restaurants in Galveston are Black-owned.

Beyond just listing notable establishments, the book delves into the stories of the owners, using interviews from family and friends, newspaper articles, obituaries, and directories. “Up until the late 1940s, [Black-owned restaurants] always had a

RECIPE

Baked Crab

This recipe by Diane Henderson appears in *Lost Restaurants of Galveston's African American Community*.

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 slices bread (day-old is fine)
- 1 small white onion, diced
- 1 stalk of celery, diced
- 1 small bell pepper, diced
- 3 tablespoons margarine
- 1 pound crab meat
(mixed or claw meat preferred)
- 1 egg
- Dash of salt and pepper

DIRECTIONS:

Set aside two slices of the bread for topping. Place them in the oven at a low temperature until crisp enough to roll into crumbs using a rolling pin. (If you prefer, ready-to-use breadcrumbs can be bought.) Sauté the onion, celery, and bell pepper in the margarine until tender. The onion should be golden or tan in color. Meanwhile, put the remaining bread in a mixing bowl and wet completely. Squeeze out excess water. Mix soggy bread with the crab meat, sautéed vegetables, and egg. Season to taste and fill glass baking dish with the mixture. Cover the mixture with the breadcrumbs and bake at 400 degrees F for about 10 minutes. Serve warm.



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'C' by their name for 'colored' in the directory—that's how we identified a lot of the restaurants," says Tommie Boudreaux, one of the writers and the chair of the African American Heritage Committee.

One entry relates the story of Mary Richardson, owner of the Squeeze Inn. Richardson got started by selling food out of her home, "and it got so popular, she turned it into a little restaurant," Boudreaux explains. She literally turned the living room of her home in downtown Galveston into the Squeeze Inn—and with its location near city hall, the police headquarters, and the fire department, it often bustled with customers dining on fried chicken, meatloaf, and crab cakes. "If you didn't get there early you weren't going to get anything," Boudreaux says. "When the food was gone, it was gone." The Squeeze Inn closed in the '90s after Richardson fell ill.

Another entry tells the story of Courtney Bernard Murray, the owner of the Tip Top Café. Murray was a manager and greeter who positioned his restaurant, which sold hamburgers, biscuits, and pork chops, as a community gathering place. During World War II, he provided soldiers stationed at nearby Camp Wallace with free entertainment—live acts played some nights—and discounted meals. At the café, Murray sold tickets to local concerts and high school sporting events, and customers could even pay their poll taxes, required by some states for African Americans to vote until 1966. Although the restaurant closed in the 1960s, Murray continued his community efforts for the remainder of his life, and in 1988, Governor William Clements honored him with a humanitarian award.

These two examples are just a small fraction of the fascinating histories recounted in the book, which took four

writers four years to produce. "The descendants of these restaurant owners were so happy we highlighted their families," Boudreaux says. "It's the fact we were able to share more about the person. Once the restaurants closed, there was little mention of them at all." Their legacies have been recovered and available to share for future generations, and Boudreaux hopes readers take away the simple fact that the restaurant owners "found a way to survive," she says. "They used their skills to improve the lives of their families and help support the community."

Lost Restaurants of Galveston's African American Community can be purchased for \$21.99 at galvestonhistory.org. All sales of the book are earmarked for maintenance of the 1911 Rosewood Cemetery, the first Black burial ground in the city. **L**

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Seeing Green

A Corpus Christi distillery creates a version of the historic and secret Chartreuse

By Ruvani de Silva



THE LAST WORD. made here with Aerodrome Génépi, is a Prohibition-era cocktail that's seen a recent resurgence.

The green glow and herbaceous taste of Chartreuse are more likely to conjure up images of Paris' Montmartre district than the Texas Gulf Coast. But Corpus Christi distiller Nathan Bitz may change that with his Chartreuse-inspired liqueur.

The history of Chartreuse is as intriguing and dramatic as the drink itself. The original recipe has mysterious origins, but some say it was developed by an alchemist in the 16th century. The recipe for the "elixir of long life" was gifted to the strictest order of French Catholic monks—the Carthusians—in 1605 by François-Annibal d'Estrées, marshal of King Henri IV's artillery. The monks have held this clandestine handwritten document ever since. During the French Revolution, when religious leaders were incarcerated, one monk smuggled it out of prison—just one example of the various near-disasters the document has survived.

The spirit has such cultural cachet that it is sipped by genteel young playboys in *Brideshead Revisited* and *The Great Gatsby*, appears in Hitchcock's *The Lady Vanishes*, and is bartender Warren's drink of choice in Quentin Tarantino's *Death Proof*. Legendary Texas rockers ZZ Top even have a song named "Chartreuse."

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“Yes, the recipe is a closely guarded secret, but with enough research, one can uncover quite a bit.”

The recreation of such a high-profile yet mysterious liqueur originating in the French mountains sounds like a daunting task for any distiller, but Bitz’s technical proficiency, language skills, and sheer tenacity prepared him for the task.

“Yes, the recipe is a closely guarded secret, but with enough research, one can uncover quite a bit,” Bitz says. A retired Navy helicopter pilot, Bitz’s knowledge of Spanish, French, and Latin enabled him to study historic dissertations on French distilling until he hit upon a “little golden nugget” of information that formed the basis for his take on Chartreuse. Because copyright law prevents Bitz from naming his creation after the original, he settled on the moniker of *génépi*, the family of liqueurs to which Chartreuse belongs. “Let’s say it’s green-Chartreuse-leaning *génépi*,” Bitz says with a grin.

Despite this early breakthrough, there were bumps along the way. “The recipe is so old that some ingredients—for example, arnica flowers and calamus—are not considered food-safe by the FDA and had to be removed,” Bitz explains. “I had to wild-goose-chase all over to find the correct botanicals, and French terminology from the 1800s meant many names had changed over time.” Fortunately, between his regular botanicals supplier, Mountain Rose Herbs in Oregon, and numerous herbalists on Etsy, Bitz was able to gather the necessary supplies to create a near-perfect replica.

Bitz’s company, Aerodrome Distilling, which also produces whiskey, rum, and gin, opened in 2019. The midcentury-

Spirited

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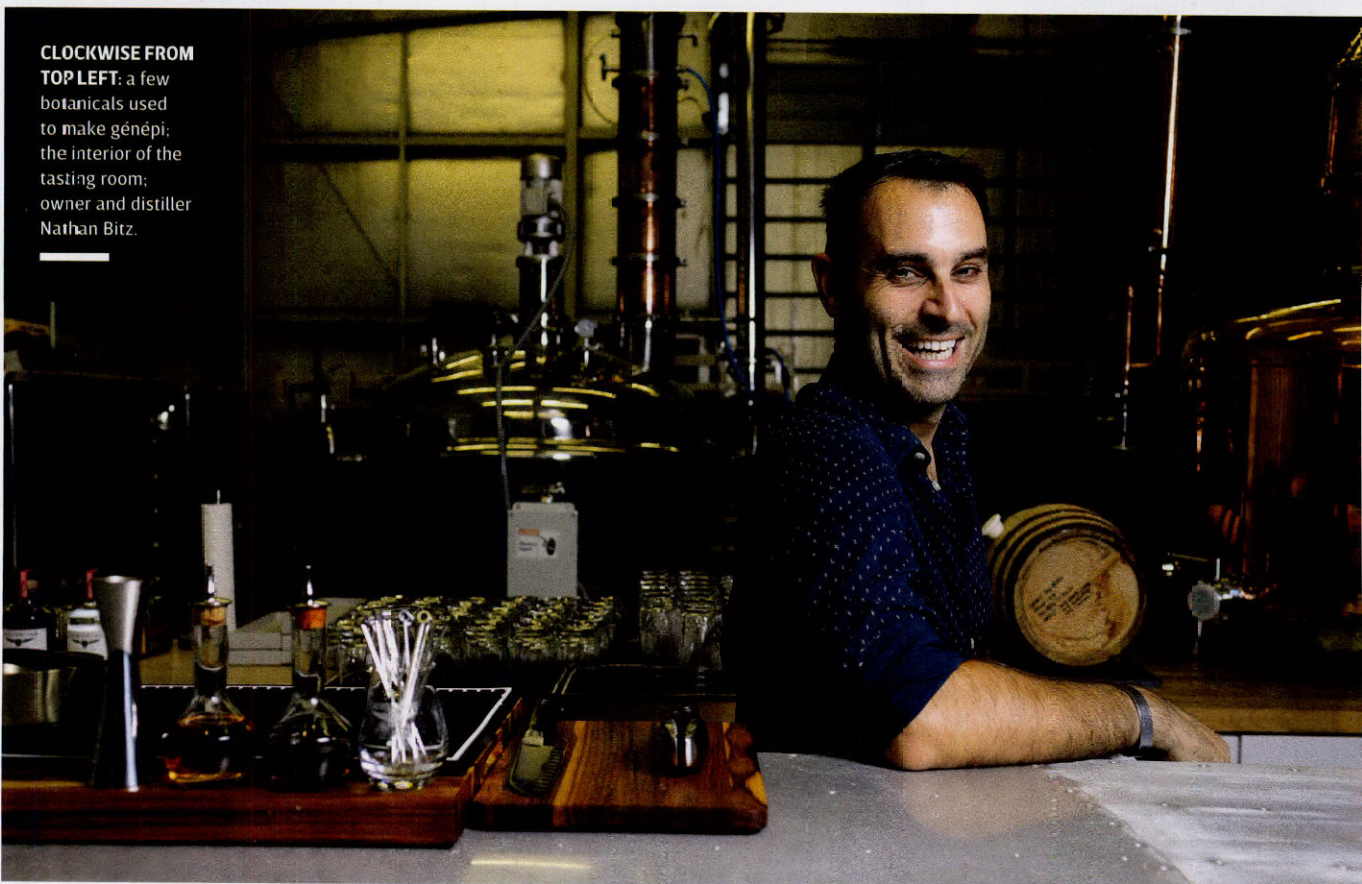
Spirited explores the history of Prohibition, from the dawn of the temperance movement to the unprecedented repeal of a constitutional amendment in 1933. Visitors will learn about the amendment process, the role of liquor in American culture, the cultural revolution of the roaring '20s, and how liquor laws vary from state to state today.






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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: a few botanicals used to make g n pi; the interior of the tasting room; owner and distiller Nathan Bitz.

decorated tasting room is open to the public and serves cocktails—and it’s the only place to sample Aerodrome G n pi. The tasting room was hand built by Bitz and overlooks the naval base where he was once stationed. Eitz aims to create house-distilled spirits for classic cocktails like The Last Word, a Chartreuse-based Prohibition-era cocktail that has enjoyed

a resurgence since the mid-2000s.

“Distilling g n pi exemplifies what I want to do with Aerodrome: create my own version of a historic spirit and also encourage craft cocktail culture locally,” Bitz says.

A few minutes down the road from Aerodrome is Crelei Brewing Co., a craft brewery with an aquatic theme. Sales and

taproom manager Quinn Hendrick is full of praise for his neighbor.

“We love bouncing customers back and forth who enjoy and appreciate our crafts,” Hendrick says. “He fills a very unique piece of our craft scene here in town, and his different products are a clear example of the care and attention he puts into creating each one.”

TEXANA



Vive la French Legation!

Built when Austin was brand new,
this historic home has stories to tell

By James L. Haley

THE TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION recently completed a restoration of the French Legation, which was commissioned by a French diplomat in 1840.

As capitals go, Austin was built fast and on the cheap. Republic of Texas President Mirabeau Lamar, upon taking office in December 1838, was eager to undo the work of his predecessor and political enemy, Sam Houston. After changing the republic's flag and seal from those designed by Houston, Lamar also orchestrated moving the capital out of the city named for Houston. In quick succession, he selected a village called Waterloo on the Colorado River, renamed it Austin, laid out a new city, constructed essential log buildings, and transferred the government—all before the end of his first year in office.

The buildings were shoddy; even Lamar's two-story President's House was built of green lumber and began to pull apart as the boards dried. Here the frontier was still raw. Citizens who strayed beyond the town limits were at risk of Comanche attacks. A cannon was kept loaded and primed on Congress Avenue to raise an alarm in case of a raid.

With its status as the newly minted Republic of Texas capital, Austin was also the required posting for a small diplomatic corps. Jean Pierre Isidore Alphonse Dubois arrived in January 1840 as France's *chargé d'affaires*—a diplomatic representative for nations that didn't merit an ambassador. Dubois took up a brief residence in Richard Bullock's hotel at Congress Avenue and Pecan Street, but the bare-bones conditions horrified him. He was a man of cultured taste, and so he bought a 21-acre site just east of town and commissioned a 1½-story residence, including a suitable wine cellar, to serve as the French Legation and home for himself; his butler, Eugene Pluyette; and his chef, Charles Baudouin.

Dubois didn't last long in Texas, but his solidly built residence, completed in 1841, stands to this day in East Austin. Managed by the Texas Historical Commission, the French Legation State Historic Site is one of Austin's oldest surviving houses on its original site. In November 2020, the commission completed a yearlong, \$2

million restoration of the property, followed by a grand reopening in October.

"The whole reason the house is here is France was trying to assist Texas in retaining its independence," says Cynthia Evans, the former site manager. "The house is a testament to both France and Texas working toward that goal, but unfortunately, Dubois ended up leaving Austin pretty early."

Dubois hired Thomas William

Ward, chief clerk of the House of Representatives, to design and construct the French Legation. Ward also built the much larger Texas Capitol in Houston—a structure that is long gone. He designed the residence in the French Creole style with just a dash of Greek Revival, including a columned veranda in front of the house and two rooms on either side of a broad hall. Steep narrow stairs followed the roof line up to an attic probably intended for Pluyette and Baudouin to share.

While waiting on his house to be finished, Dubois moved out of Bullock's hotel and rented a place further west on Pecan Street. He was 32, and from his previous postings in Germany, Greece, and the U.S., he already had the reputation of an *enfant terrible* of the French foreign service, egotistical and pushy. In Texas, he began styling himself as the Count of Saligny, although he was, in

"The whole reason the house is here is France was trying to assist Texas in retaining its independence."



The Rebirth of the French Legation

With its grand reopening this fall, the French Legation State Historic Site aims to expand from being a historical artifact to a community gathering place rooted in Austin's earliest history.

The Texas Historical Commission recently completed a restoration of the 1841 house and added the French Legation Café, which serves a menu of coffee and grab-and-go breakfast and lunch foods. Along with guided and self-guided tours, the legation also hosts rotating exhibits inside the historic house and various programs on the grounds. This includes the house's traditional Bastille Day celebration in July; the long-standing pétanque club that plays a French version of lawn bowling; and a lawn for lectures, author readings, and small concerts.

"Our goal is to integrate the legation into the life of the surrounding community, which is still one of Austin's most diverse," says Kyle Walker, an outreach specialist with the historical commission. "The pétanque club has been competing on the grounds for more than 20 years. We envision the house becoming gallery space to show the work of local artists."

The new concept is a departure from the property's past as a static "house museum" and has struck a chord in the community. "We have been getting a stream of people from the condo development next door offering to volunteer, which is great," Walker says.

The French Legation State Historic Site, 802 San Marcos St. in Austin, opens 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Tue-Sat. Call 737-226-1399; thc.texas.gov/historic-sites/french-legation-state-historic-site

THE FRENCH LEGATION'S recreation of Chef Charles Baudouin's kitchen features authentic period kitchen equipment.

fact, not part of the French nobility.

In Austin, Dubois promoted an ambitious French colonization scheme on the young nation's western frontier that would have recruited 8,000 French families and built 20 new forts, housing 10,000 French troops, to protect the settlers. Texas' own military was less than one-tenth that size. The Texas Congress smelled a scheme to take control of the whole country and turned it down flat.

Dubois also proved to be a deadbeat tenant, refusing to pay what he said was an inflated bill from Bullock's hotel. Around Austin, residents jokingly called him the "No-Account de Saligny." Worse still was the so-called Pig War. Hogs belonging to Bullock found their way into Dubois' rented house and chomped down on his bed linens and official papers. Dubois ordered Pluyette to kill the offending pigs and Baudouin to cook them for dinner.

Bullock confronted Dubois and bloodied his nose, which Dubois decried as an assault upon the dignity of France and a crime above the authority of the local sheriff. Eventually Texas Secretary of State James Mayfield returned his passport, and Dubois stormed out of town in April 1841, having never spent a night in

"Our goal is to integrate the legation into the life of the surrounding community."

the French Legation. He moved to New Orleans, where he found the French culture more to his liking, and began conducting his Texas diplomatic duties from afar.

Before his departure, Dubois sold the French Legation house to Jean-Marie Odin, a papal emissary who later became bishop of Galveston. Odin had hoped to open a parochial school in the building, but he ended up selling it to Moseley Baker, a revolutionary firebrand who served in the Republic of Texas Congress. A short time later Baker passed it on to local doctor Joseph Robertson, whose family occupied the residence for some nine decades. Robertson expanded the house with an attached kitchen and bathroom to accommodate his wife, Lydia Lee, and their 10 children,

with nine enslaved persons living on the grounds.

Over time Robertson sold off most of the original 21 acres in small parcels, and the neighborhood that grew around "Robertson Hill" became one of the most diverse in the city during the late 1800s and early 1900s. "There were not just African Americans and Mexican Americans in the area, but Italians, Germans, Irish, Swedes, Lebanese, and Anglos," Evans says.

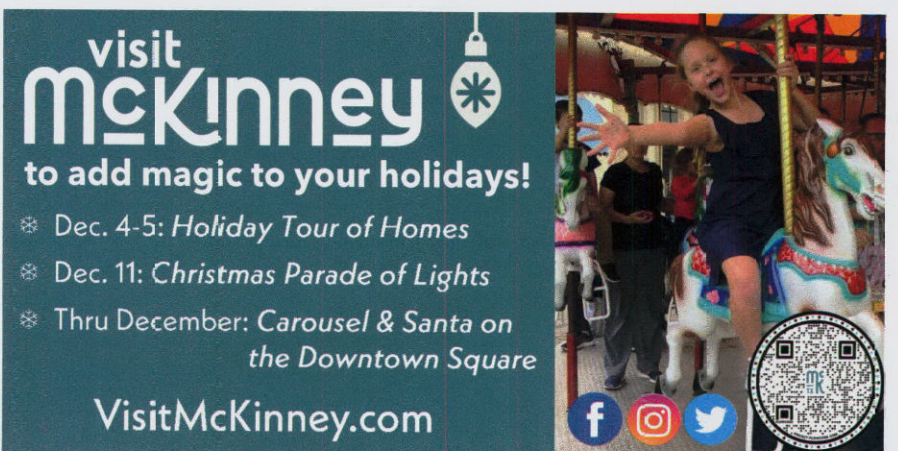
Though it was their family home, the Robertsons honored the house's history, including occasional public tours of the home, referring to it as the "old French embassy." At the urging of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, the state acquired the house in 1949 and transferred management to the Daughters. The group set about removing the Robertson additions, restoring the building to its original appearance, and opening it as a house museum in 1956. Over the following six decades, the neighborhood grew around the historic site, Interstate 35 sliced through town less than 600 feet away, and apartments sprouted on adjacent lots. In 2017, with the building in need of repair, the state transferred the property to the Texas Historical Commission. The commission's ensuing project included restoring the original doors and floors, reproducing the original windows, and updating the utility infrastructure.

Dubois, no doubt, would be thrilled with the care and attention devoted to the home he conceived. Though he never got to live in what was once Austin's finest house, you could say he got the last laugh. As Dubois carried out his diplomatic duties from New Orleans, Texas was flirting with bankruptcy thanks to Lamar's schemes to relocate the capital, annex New Mexico, and wage war against the native tribes. The republic sought a \$5 million loan from France, but the finance minister was Dubois' brother-in-law—and the deal never happened. That helped push Texas to seek annexation to the United States—Houston's dream and Lamar's dread. 🐾



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EVENTS



A Pioneer Christmas

In San Angelo, the holiday season takes a step back in time

From Dec. 3-5, Christmas at Old Fort Concho recalls 19th-century gatherings known as “winter rendezvous” by bringing the San Angelo fort’s 40 acres and 24 buildings back in time.

At the 39th annual event, re-enactors in outdoor camps depict frontier soldiers, Native Americans, Texas Rangers, scouts, explorers, and settlers. “It really brings the history books to life,” says Bob Bluthardt, the site manager at Fort Concho.

Established in 1867 along the Concho River, Fort Concho protected Texas settlers as they moved into territories of multiple Native American tribes after the Civil War and mapped and patrolled the western part of the state. Up to 500 men lived at the fort at any given time until it closed in 1889, including notable military commander William “Pecos Bill” Shafter. Buffalo Soldiers made up about half of the fort’s soldiers over its two decades of operation.

Shoppers can visit the period traders, who sell replica clothing and toys, plus the 50 to 75 vendors on-site selling jams, jellies, jewelry, baked goods, handcrafted wooden items, and gifts. Food trailers offer a variety of options, a root beer stand delivers an authentic version of the soda, and a kettle corn stand offers another sweet treat. Three historically accurate bands and other more modern groups play music throughout the weekend, and demonstrations keep the entertainment going with re-enactors firing artillery and playing baseball.

“With all of the fires going and outdoor cooking and guns going off, you’re truly getting a glimpse of the sights, sounds, and smells of the period,” Bluthardt says. —Amanda Ogle

Christmas at Old Fort Concho
Dec. 3-5
630 S. Oakes St., San Angelo.
fortconcho.com/
christmas-at-old-fort-concho

BIG BEND COUNTRY

DEL RIO

Christmas Parade and Tree Lighting

Dec. 3

Get in the Christmas spirit with a holiday parade and tree lighting in downtown Del Rio.

South Main Street. 830-774-8558; cityofdelrio.com

EL PASO

Sun Bowl and Fan Fiesta

Dec. 31

Held a day prior to the Sun Bowl, the Fan Fiesta is a free, family-friendly event that features a fireworks display, musical performances by local bands, university pep rallies, and a battle of the bands. Sun Bowl Stadium, 2701 Sun Bowl Drive. 915-533-4416; sunbowl.org

MARATHON

Fiesta de Noche Buena

Dec. 4

Marathon’s holiday party, Fiesta de Noche Buena, takes place the first Saturday every December on the main strip. First Street. marathontexas.com/events

MONAHANS

Christmas and Chili Market

Dec. 4

Sample chili and cornbread while shopping from various vendors. Pictures with Santa and concessions are available. Ward County Event Center, 1525 E. Monahans Parkway. 432-943-2187; monahans.org

MONAHANS

Lighted Christmas Parade

Dec. 6

Lighted Christmas floats feature in this holiday parade. Santa rides by on his sleigh before heading back to the North Pole to prepare holiday gifts. Monahans High School, 809 S. Betty Ave. 432-943-2187; monahans.org

VAN HORN

Lighted Christmas Parade and Show and Sell

Dec. 4

Activities include the lighted parade along Broadway and an open

house with vendors, food, arts and crafts, a pecan dessert contest, entertainment, and the lighting of the Christmas tree. 1801 W. Broadway. 432-283-2682; vanhornatexas.org

GULF COAST

BAYTOWN

Christmas on Texas Avenue Festival

Dec. 4-5

Festivities on the coast include photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus, local entertainment, food trucks, merchandise booths, a petting zoo, a car show, arts and crafts, ice skating, and music by Texas country artist Cory Morrow on Saturday and the Skyline band on Sunday. Town Square, 213 W. Texas Ave. 281-810-2990; acedistrictbaytown.org/events

CLUTE

Christmas in the Park

Dec. 10-11

Celebrate the holiday season with two days of Christmas activities and fun, featuring a lighted Christmas trail and seasonal photo opportunities. Clute Municipal Park, 100 Parkview Drive. 979-265-8392; clutetexas.gov

CORPUS CHRISTI

Holly-Days at the Gardens

Dec. 3-4, 10-11, 17-18

Four holiday weekends honor the joys of the season around a 20-foot fresh-cut lit fir tree. View lighted displays and trees and partake in singalong carols, cocoa, cider, and s’mores over fire pits. Santa is on-site Saturdays for photos, and there are hayrides, storytelling, and kids’ crafts. South Texas Botanical Gardens and Nature Center, 8545 S. Staples St. 361-852-2100; stxbot.org

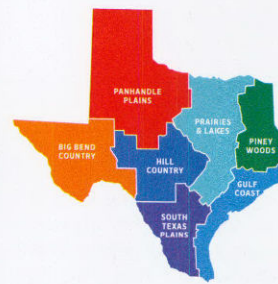
FREEPORT

Holiday on the Brazos

Dec. 5

Enjoy holiday festivities on the banks of the Old Brazos River in Freeport including a special appearance from Santa Claus and a lighted boat parade. Freeport Municipal Park. 979-233-6061; freeport.tx.us

FREE EVENTS GUIDE For a free subscription to the quarterly *Texas Highways* Events Calendar, go to texashighways.com/eventsubscription



FULTON

Christmas in Fulton

Dec. 15-16
This Christmas celebration includes hot chocolate, cookies, entertainment, and Santa. *Fulton Harbor*. 361-729-2388; fultontexas.org

GALVESTON

Polar Express Train Ride

Through Dec. 23
Set to the soundtrack of the motion picture, the *Polar Express* train ride theatrically recreates the sights, sounds, and intrigue of the classic children's tale for an immersive experience. Guests embark on a trip to meet Santa. *Galveston Railroad Museum*, 2602 Santa Fe Place. 409-765-5700; galvestonrrmuseum.org

GALVESTON

Dickens on the Strand

Dec. 3-5
On the first weekend in December, the iron-front buildings found in Galveston's historic downtown district form the backdrop of the 48th annual Dickens on The Strand event. This holiday street festival transforms the area into Victorian London, complete with costumed characters, street performers, vendors, parades, and holiday food and drink. *Historic Downtown Galveston, Strand Street*. 409-765-7834; galvestonhistory.org

GALVESTON

Holiday with the Cranes

Dec. 11-12
Galveston is located on a prime bird migration route. Among the visitors to the island are sandhill cranes, who arrive during the fall and winter seasons. The Galveston Island Nature Tourism Council presents this event to give bird-watchers a chance to learn about the birds and see them up close. *Galveston West End*. 409-789-8125; galvestonnaturetourism.org

HUMBLE

Home for the Holidays Market

Dec. 3-4
This event features two days of holiday shopping with more than 100 local merchants. Parking is free. *Humble Civic Center*,

8233 Wil Clayton Parkway
281-788-4297;
homefortheholidaysgiftmarket.com

INGLESIDE

Light Up Live Oak Park

Dec. 3-4
Drive through Live Oak Park to view Christmas lights and décor. Saturday brings food trucks, craft vendors, a gingerbread house contest, and Santa. *Live Oak Park, 2020 Parkview Place*. 361-776-2906; inglesidetxchamber.com

LAKE JACKSON

Christmas with the Fishes

Dec. 4
"Sandy Claws" dives with the Sea Center Texas fishes to hear their Christmas wishes and to make sure the aquarium gets a good cleaning in preparation for Santa's Christmas visit. Children can drop off their letters to Santa, and "Sandy Claws" makes sure they get delivered to the North Pole. *Sea Center Texas, 302 Medical Drive*. 979-292-0100; tpwd.state.tx.us/seacenter

NEDERLAND

Christmas on the Avenue

Dec. 4
This family-friendly event includes food and craft vendors, games for kids, music, and the Christmas tree lighting at dusk. *Downtown Nederland, 1500 Boston Ave*. 409-724-0773; nederlandtx.com

PALACIOS

Seaside Holiday

Dec. 4
Santa arrives for photos in Palacios on a shrimp boat. There are also carolers, refreshments and a complimentary book and goody bag for each child. *Luther Hotel, 408 S. Bay Blvd*. 361-972-2615; palacioschamber.com

PORT ARANSAS

Lighted Boat Parade

Dec. 4
Decorate your boats and light up the marina for a chance to win prizes and money. Spectators are encouraged to watch from the pavilion bulkhead, along dock walkways, or from bars and restaurants along the marina. *Roberts Point Park, 301 JC Barr Blvd*,

361-749-5919; portaransas.org/event/lighted-boat-parade/733

ROCKPORT

Tropical Christmas

Dec. 4
Rockport's downtown and harbor areas host this free daylong event featuring food, vendors, arts and crafts, entertainment, games, and Santa Claus, along with the evening festivities that include an illuminated parade, lighting of the Christmas tree, and fireworks. *The Festival Grounds at Rockport Harbor, 100 Seabreeze Drive*. 361-729-2213; cityofrockport.com

ROCKPORT

Christmas on the Beach

Dec. 5-Jan. 2
Rockport-Fulton presents Christmas on the Beach with drive-thru displays on and around the water. *Rockport Beach Circle, 210 Seabreeze Drive*. 361-729-6445; rockport-fulton.org

ROCKPORT

Lighted Boat Parade

Dec. 11
Rockport Yacht Club hosts a parade of decorated vessels that are judged in several classes including powerboats and sailboats. *Rockport Yacht Club, Rockport Harbor*. 361-729-6445; rockportyachtclub.org

SURFSIDE BEACH

Island of Nighttime Kites

Dec. 11
Enjoy the lighted kites of the Surfside Flyers Kite Club at this fourth annual event. *Surfside Beach Main Entrance*. 979-233-1531; surfsidetx.org

SURFSIDE BEACH

Surfing Santas

Dec. 18
Watch a group of Santas catch waves and hang 10 at this fourth annual holiday event. *Surfside Beach Pedestrian Beach*. 979-233-1531; surfsidetx.org

TOMBALL

German Christmas Market

Dec. 10-12
This event celebrates the holiday season as Germans in Texas do with more than 200 vendors, music

from four stages, ethnic and festival foods, German souvenirs and clothing, strolling street performers, and kids' activities. Saturday includes the parade, the tapping of the keg, and free shuttle rides. Admission and parking are free. *Tomball Depot, 401 Market St.*; tomballgermanfest.org

VICTORIA

Christmas on the Square

Dec. 3
'Tis the season for Victoria's Christmas on the Square gathering. The 30-foot animated Christmas tree lights up for the holiday season, and kids can have their photo taken with Santa and enjoy cookies and hot cocoa, plus activities. *De Leon Plaza, 101 N. Main St*. 361-485-3200; explorevictoriatexas.com

WHARTON

Snow on the Square

Dec. 17
The courthouse lawn is full of festivities including snow, food trucks, face painting, and Santa. *Wharton County Courthouse Lawn, 100 S. Fulton St*. 979-532-1862; whartonchamber.com

HILL COUNTRY

AUSTIN

Blue Genie Art Bazaar

Through Dec. 24
A fixture of the Austin holiday season, with in-person and virtual shopping, the art bazaar allows shoppers to browse thousands of original works ranging from serious art to kitschy items. This is a hassle-free way to buy holiday gifts while supporting local artists. *Blue Genie Art Bazaar, 6100 Airport Blvd*. 512-222-7303; bluegenieartbazaar.com

AUSTIN

Trail of Lights

Through Dec. 31
The 57th annual Austin Trail of Lights, the longest-running holiday tradition in the state capital, returns to Zilker Park. The setup features 2 million lights illuminating the park, 90 lighted holiday trees, and more than 70 other holiday displays and lighted tunnels. *Zilker Park, 2100 Barton Springs Road*. austintrailoflights.org

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AUSTIN
Austin Fashion Week
Dec. 2-5

The annual Austin Fashion Week returns for in-person, outdoor runway shows. This year's shows are shorter than past years' with fewer designers in each show. Shows run approximately every 90 minutes with a new ticketed audience. Restaurants and bars offer special menus and items for Austin Fashion Week ticket holders. *The Domain, 11410 Century Oaks Terrace. 512-795-4230; fashionbyevents.com*

AUSTIN
Luminations
Dec. 2-Jan. 30

Enjoy the natural wonders of winter in the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center's Texas Arboretum. "Luminations" features thousands of luminarias, seasonal food and drink, and the light-splashed forts of Fortlandia. *Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, 4801 La Crosse Ave. 512-232-0100; wildflower.org/luminations*

AUSTIN
Armadillo Bazaar Outside
Dec. 17-19

For more than 45 seasons, the Armadillo Christmas Bazaar has showcased the fine art of national and local award-winning artists alongside live music. This year, the Armadillo features local and national award-winning art, local live music, and food. *Palmer Events Center, 900 Barton Springs Road. 512-447-1605; armadillobazaar.com*

BANDERA
Cowboy Christmas
Dec. 4-31

The sights and sounds of Christmas take a Western spin in the Cowboy Capital of the World. Previous years have seen lighted Christmas displays, lighted hayrides with hot chocolate and caroling, cowboy songs, kids entertainment, and goat roping. *Various locations, Main Street. 830-796-3045; banderacowboycapital.com*

BOERNE
Kinder Fest
Dec. 17-18

Retailers located at the Hill Country Mile, a stretch of locally owned specialty shops and restaurants along Main Street in the heart of historic downtown Boerne, offer a day of fun with kids' activities and shopping. *Hill Country Mile. 830-431-5833; facebook.com/*

hillcountrymile

BOERNE

Christmas Market Days

Dec. 18-19

Shop for one-of-a-kind gifts at this holiday-themed market near the Hill Country Mile in Boerne. Main Plaza, 100 N. Main St. 210-844-8193; boernemarketdays.com/boerne.html

BROWNWOOD

Christmas Under the Stars Festival

Dec. 2-4

Celebrate the holidays at this annual tradition, which has included Santa Claus, "snow," children's activities, an inflatable obstacle course, and big wheel races for kids of all ages. Brownwood Depot Civic and Cultural Center, 600 E. Depot St. 325-646-9535; brownwoodchristmas.com

BURNET

Christmas On The Square

Dec. 11

Snow kicks off a grand day of events for Christmas on the Square. A truck dumps 40,000 pounds of snow for children to play in with a snow slide and two play areas. There are artisan vendors and food booths as well as a parade and visits with Santa. Burnet Historic Square, 220 S. Main St. 512-756-4297; burnetchamber.org

CEDAR PARK

World Championship Ice Racing Series

Dec. 4

Witness fearless racers shred the arena's solid ice track with over 2,000 razor-sharp studs in their tires. Racers hit off-the-chart speeds while going from 0 to 60 mph in less than 3 seconds, competing for the most prestigious world championship ice racing title. H-E-B Center at Cedar Park, 2100 Avenue of the Stars. 512-600-5000; hebcenter.com/events/detail/world-championship-ice-racing

FREDERICKSBURG

A Ranger Christmas Wonderland

Dec. 4

Come see Santa in Ranger Wonderland at the Texas Rangers Heritage Center. Enjoy crafts, cookies, cocoa, wagon rides, and other holiday festivities. Texas Rangers Heritage Center, 1618 E. Main St. 830-990-1192; trhc.org

FREDERICKSBURG

Kinderfest

Dec. 4

Children ages 10 and under are invited to bring a stocking to hang on the fireplace. While the children aren't locking, Santa and his elves work to fill the stockings according to German tradition. Pioneer Museum, 325 W. Main St. 830-990-8441; pioneermuseum.net

FREDERICKSBURG

Countdown to 2022

Dec. 31

Ring in the New Year in downtown Fredericksburg. The city hosts two events: one earlier in the evening for kids and a later event for all-ages featuring the ball drop on the Square. Markplatz, 100 block of West Main Street. visitfredericksburgtx.com

FREDERICKSBURG

Luckenbach New Year's Eve Celebration

Dec. 31

The annual New Year's Eve dance takes place in the historic Luckenbach Dancehall. 412 Luckenbach Town Loop. 830-997-3224; luckenbachtexas.com

FREDERICKSBURG

USO-Style Hangar Dance

Dec. 31

Ring in the New Year dancing to the sounds of a 1940s-style big band. Take swing dance lessons and wear your best 1940s-inspired outfit to take part in the costume contest. A portion of the proceeds are donated to the United Service Organizations in Fort Hood. Pacific Showroom at the Hangar Hotel, 155 Airport Road. 844-596-2300; hangarhotel.com

KERRVILLE

Running Home for the Holidays 5K

Dec. 4

At this annual 5K run, families come dressed up as their favorite Christmas characters. Louise Hays Park, 202 Thompson Drive. 830-257-7300; kerrvilletx.gov

LAMPASAS

Christmas on the Creek

Dec. 11

Food trucks, s'mores, a photo booth, hot chocolate, a light display, sleigh rides, and a stroll through Santa's Village are all part of the fun. W.M. Brook Park, 310 US 281. 512-556-5172; lampasaschamber.org

LEANDER

Old Town Christmas Festival

Dec. 4

Every first Saturday of December, Old Town Leander comes alive to spread Christmas joy throughout the community. This event includes the Old Town Rudolph Run 5K and local vendors offering holiday gifts and goodies. Old Town Leander, 100 N. Brushy St. 512-259-1907; visitleandertx.com

LLANO

Snow Day

Dec. 11

Winter fun comes to the Texas Hill Country with sled riding in Badu Park. The entire family is welcome to zip through the snow and participate. Badu Park, 300 Legion Drive. 325-247-5354; llanostarrystarrynights.com/snow-day.html

MARBLE FALLS

Christmas Market on Main

Dec. 4

Come to Main Street to experience the works of more than 70 craft makers, bakers, and style creators from around the Hill Country area. Main Street. 830-693-4449; visitmarblefalls.org/christmas-in-marble-falls

NEW BRAUNFELS

Christmas Market Days

Dec. 4-5

Nearly 100 vendors offer Christmas gifts, uniquely crafted items, packaged Texas foods, and other merchandise. Market hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and admission is free. Gruene Historic District, 1724 Hunter Road. 830-832-1721; gruenemarketdays.com

NEW BRAUNFELS

Pony Express Ride

Dec. 4

See a Pony Express rider from the Heritage Trail Ride Association of New Braunfels come through the Gruene Historic District at 10 a.m. Relay riders carry a "Christmas Greetings" message from the governor of Texas. Bring your Christmas cards to have the stamps canceled with the 2021 commemorative stamp representing Gruene at the temporary post office set up next to Gruene Outfitters. Gruene Historic District, 1612 Hunter Road. 830-629-5077; holidaysingruene.com

NEW BRAUNFELS

Jingle Bell Run/Walk

Dec. 11

Held in Gruene Historic District, this 29th annual 5K run/walk and

kids K benefit St. Jude's Ranch for Children. Awards are given to the top male and female finishers, the top male and female masters, the top three finishers in each age group (all ages in five-year increments through 75-plus), and the top three wheelchair athletes. Gruene Historic District, 1281 Gruene Road. 830-708-2991; gruenetexas.com

OZONA

Crockett County 4-H Junior Livestock Show

Dec. 11

Area youth bring their best livestock for the judges to review. The event is open to the public from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the 4-H barn. Crockett County 4-H Barn, 1303 Ave. AA. 325-392-2721; ozona.com/events-calendar

OZONA

New Year's Eve Dance

Dec. 31

Enjoy an evening of entertainment and fun as the community rings in the New Year. Proceeds benefit local charities. Crockett County Fair Park Convention Center, 1303 Ave. AA. 325-226-4944; ozona.com/events-calendar

TAYLOR

Christmas Fair

Dec. 4

This arts and crafts event welcomes guests to two locations for holiday shopping. Heritage Square, 400 N. Main St. 512-352-3675; taylortx.gov

UVALDE

Briscoe Ranch Barbecue Cookoff

Dec. 10-11

Sanctioned by the Champions Barbecue Alliance, this competition brings barbecue teams to compete for cash and prizes. Categories include brisket, pork ribs, pork butt, chicken, and a jackpot rib-eye steak cookoff. Uvalde County Fairplex, 215 Veterans Lane. 830-486-7055; uvaldebbaq.com

PANHANDLE PLAINS

ABILENE

Abilene Zoo Christmas Celebration

Dec. 17-23

The zoo celebrates Christmas with festive lights, real reindeer, hot toddies, Santa, s'mores stations with fire pits, cookie decorating, and Christmas memories. Abilene Zoo, 2070 Zoo Lane. 325-676-6085; abilenezoo.org

FREE EVENTS GUIDE

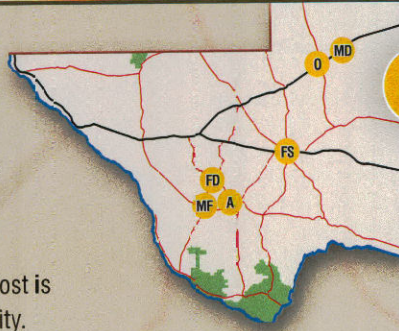
For a free subscription to the quarterly Texas Highways Events Calendar, go to texashighways.com/eventssubscription

WEST TEXAS ROAD TRIP



As you explore, you'll find an amazing range of relaxation and adventure, natural beauty and urban culture, fine art, fine dining, small-town charm and big-city amenities...

but what you will remember most is the warm, West Texas hospitality.



FS FORT STOCKTON

Standing at 11 feet tall and 22 feet long from beak to tail – “A True Texas Town Mascot” as *Texas Highways*’ September 2011 issue proclaimed him, **Paisano Pete** continues to be Fort Stockton’s number one photographed attraction. Paisano Pete celebrates his 40th Birthday in 2019 with a community celebration to be held on November 30 at the Pecos County Coliseum.

historicfortstockton.com

December 3 - Christmas Parade

January 8 - Pecos County Livestock Show

February 10-13 - Fort Stockton Sheepdog Trials

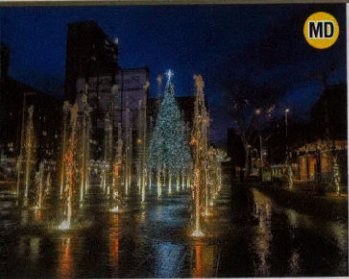
MD

MIDLAND—Drop by Midland’s trendy downtown for a cocktail, luscious pizza, stylish shops or a game of chess in Centennial Park. There is no end to what downtown has to offer.

visitmidland.com

Dec 4 - *Sound of the Seasons*: Midland-Odessa Symphony and Choral POPS

Dec 12 - A Celebration with ZZ TOP



O

ODESSA—Known for breathtaking sunsets, wide-open spaces and warm West Texas hospitality; you’ll enjoy shopping, dining, unique cultural attractions and events. Discover Odessa! discoverodessa.org

Dec 2-Jan 2 - Starbright Village (McKinney Park)

Dec 3-12 - *It’s A Wonderful Life* (Permian Playhouse)

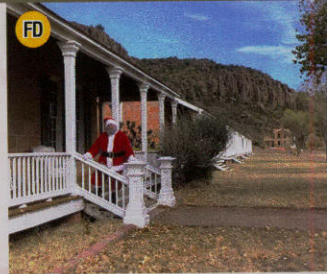


FORT DAVIS—Experience the mile-high climate in the Texas mountains! Award-winning State and National Parks offer excellent nature activities and star-gazing under the “Darkest Skies in North America!” fortdavis.com

Dec 7 - Frontier Christmas

4:00pm Parade

4:30pm Photos with Santa

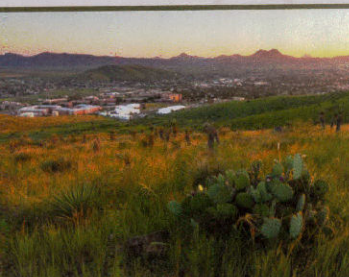


MF

ALPINE—Natural beauty, unique nightlife and shopping, and a grand array of hotels and guest lodging make this the perfect staging grounds for your West Texas adventure. visitalpinetx.com

Dec 3-4 - Mountain Country Christmas Bazaar

Dec 4 - Christmas in Alpine: parade, progressive holiday party, Sul Ross lighting



MARFA—It defies easy explanation, yet any google search yields thousands of opinions. Marfa is tough to get to—tougher still to explain. But once you arrive, you get it. visitmarfa.com

Dec 11-12 - Marfa Holiday Bazaar: Santa, local vendors and makers, live music, crafts, and more set in Marfa’s historic downtown



ANSON

The Texas Cowboys' Christmas Ball
Dec. 16-18
Originating in 1885, this ball includes dances in a frontier atmosphere. This year's lineup includes music from Michael Martin Murphy, Jody Nix and the Texas Cowboys, and Jake Hooker. *Pioneer Hall, 2301 Avenue G. 325-696-9040; texasccb.com*

LUBBOCK

Candlelight at the Ranch
Dec. 10-11
This annual event recreates a frontier holiday similar to those on the open prairie from 1780 to 1950. Volunteers dress in period clothing to recreate holiday scenes from another era. Enjoy kettle corn, hear Christmas carols, and walk park trails. All lighted pathways are stroller and wheelchair accessible. *National Ranching Heritage Center, 3121 Fourth St. 806-742-0498; ranchingheritage.org/nrhc-events/candlelight-at-the-ranch*

SWEETWATER

Parade of Lights and Christmas on the Square
Dec. 6
Experience a Christmas parade, free hot cocoa, a tree lighting, pictures with Santa, food, and games. *Various locations. 325-235-5488; sweetwatertexas.org*

TUSCOLA

Fa La La in the Forest
Dec. 11
Campers adorn their campsites, screened shelters, and yurts with lights and decorations. The public is invited to take a drive-thru tour of the park. The park is a donation drop-off location for Toys for Tots and the Abilene Food Bank. *Abilene State Park, 150 Park Road 32. 325-572-3204; facebook.com/events/523191508887947*

PINEY WOODS

HENDERSON

Christmas Parade
Dec. 2
Feel the spirit of Christmas at the annual Henderson Christmas Parade. The parade route goes through historic downtown, which is decorated to mimic a Hallmark movie set. The buildings outlined in lights, a 20-foot lighted Christmas tree, Santa's house, and decorated windows create a setting for the parade. *Downtown Henderson, 101 E. Main St. 903-392-8232; visithendersontx.com*

HUNTSVILLE

Christmas Fair and Winter in the Park
Dec. 4
Vendors line the streets with gifts for the holiday season. From crafts to food, there are a variety of gifts available for purchase. Enjoy photo opportunities and kid-friendly activities at Winter in the Park at Rather Park. *Historic Downtown Huntsville, 1203 University Ave. 936-251-5920; huntsvillemainstreet.com*

HUNTSVILLE

Gingerbread House Reception
Dec. 4
Completed gingerbread houses are on display as part of the annual gingerbread house contest. *The Wynne Home Arts and Visitor Center, 1428 11th St. 936-251-5424; thewynnehome.com*

HUNTSVILLE

Houston Family Christmas
Dec. 11
Kick off your holiday season with a visit to Gen. Sam Houston's homestead for historical demonstrations, refreshments, crafts, and photos with Santa. *Sam Houston Memorial Museum, 836 Sam Houston Ave. 936-294-1832; samhoustonsmemorialmuseum.com*

PALESTINE

The Polar Express Train Ride
Through Dec. 26
The Polar Express journey to the North Pole on the Texas State Railroad brings the classic children's story to life with the full cast of characters, including conductors, elves, waitstaff, cocoa chefs, and Santa Claus. Everyone gets to wear their pajamas out in public. *Texas State Railroad Palestine Depot, 789 Park Road 70. 855-632-7729; texasstaterailroad.net*

PALESTINE

Dogwood Jamboree
Dec. 11
Hear a Branson-style country music show filled with comedy and classic country music from some of the best artists anywhere. This show has Christmas tunes, too. *Palestine High School Auditorium, 1600 Loop 256. 903-723-6291; dogwoodjamboree.com*

PRAIRIES AND LAKES

ARLINGTON

Holiday Lights Parade
Dec. 11
Set up camp along the parade route and enjoy hot chocolate and the sounds of the season. A tree

lighting follows the parade. *Downtown Arlington, West Abram Street. 817-265-7721; holidaylightsparade.com*

BELLEVILLE

Small Town Christmas
Dec. 3-4
The 39th annual, two-day event features a lighted parade on the square, the lighting of the tree, Santa, and a communitywide celebration in the park. There's "real" snow, a petting zoo, train and carriage rides, a movie in the park, food, drinks, live music, and a Christmas market on the square. *Jim Bishop Pavilion at Chesley Park, 100 E. Palm St. 979-865-3407; bellvillesmalltownchristmas.com*

BELTON

Sami Show Marketplace
Dec. 11-12
Since 1975, the Sami Show Marketplace has provided a unique shopping experience. Visit many small businesses all under one roof, including artists, craftsmen, jewelers, boutiques, gourmet foods purveyors, home décor shops, and bath and body specialists. *Bell County Expo Center, 301 W. Loop 121. 512-441-7133; samishow.com*

BONHAM

Holiday Wine Stroll
Dec. 4
Taste local and regional wines from across North Texas while shopping for special holiday gifts. *Creative Arts Center, 200 W. Fifth St. 903-583-9830; fannincountytexas.com*

BRIDGEPORT

Holidays on Halsell
Dec. 4
At this holiday shopping event in historic downtown Bridgeport, browse the wares sold by street vendors, local farmers, and artists, including arts and crafts, holiday décor, and gift items. *Bridgeport Main Street District, Halsell Street. 940-683-3411; cityofbridgeport.net*

CELINA

Christmas on the Square
Dec. 1
This year's theme is "Candy Cane Lane," and participants are encouraged to come dressed in festive clothing. The 30-foot-tall Christmas tree is lit for the season, and live reindeer and lighted angel wings are on the square for photos. Holiday performances are held near the pavilion on the square. *Downtown Celina, 142 N. Ohio St. 972-666-3659; lifeincelina.com/christmas*

CLIFTON

Norwegian Country Christmas Tour
Dec. 4
In the 1850s, Norwegian immigrants moved into Central Texas. They settled in an area near Clifton that became known as Norse. Since that time, settlers have celebrated their heritage in many ways. Tour historical homes, learn about the area's history, and see unique pieces of art. *Various locations, 115 N. Avenue D. 254-675-3720; visitclifton.org*

COLUMBUS

Santa Claus Museum Open for Season
Dec. 1-18
See more than 2,500 Santas at the only Santa museum in Texas. Kids may drop off their letters to Santa—and sometimes Santa even stops by for a surprise visit. On the first three Fridays and Saturdays of December, admission is free. *Santa Claus Museum, 604 Washington St. 979-732-8385; santamuseum.org*

CORSICANA

Artist and Writer Studio Tour
Dec. 11
Meet visiting artists and writers from around the world as they showcase the culmination of their residency work with the Corsicana Artist and Writers Residency. *100 West and Samuels buildings, 100 W. Third Ave. 480-824-3015; corsicanaresidency.org*

DALLAS

Enchant Christmas
Through Jan. 2
Glide down the Ice Skating Trail, sample gourmet holiday treats from around the world, visit the artisan Christmas market on your way to meet Santa, and step into the Christmas light maze. *Fair Park, 3809 Grand Ave. 214-728-5573; enchantchristmas.com*

ELGIN

Hot Cocoa Stroll and Holiday by the Tracks
Dec. 4
At the Hot Cocoa Stroll, held the first Saturday in December, select a limited-edition holiday mug, and enjoy a day of shopping at the local businesses in historic downtown Elgin. *Historic Downtown Elgin. elgintx.com*

FRISCO

Merry Main Street
Dec. 4
Ring in the holiday season with Frisco's official tree lighting

FREE EVENTS GUIDE

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ceremony, pictures with Santa, a holiday gift market, and other festivities. *Simpson Plaza, 6101 Frisco Square Blvd.* visitfrisco.com

GRANBURY

Candlelight Tour

Dec. 3-5

This year, Texas historical sites include the Hood County Courthouse, the Granbury Opera House, and the Nutt House Historic Hotel, along with Granbury museums and historic churches. Tickets can be purchased at Red on the Square. *Various locations.* 817-573-3300; granburycandlelighttour.com

GRAND PRAIRIE

Prairie Lights

Through Dec. 31

Drive through more than 5 million lights that shine across the 2-mile path inside Lynn Creek Park by Joe Pool Lake. Don't miss the world's longest light tunnel and the Holiday Village out-of-car experiences. *Lynn Creek Park, 5610 Lake Ridge Parkway.* 972-237-4120; prairielights.org

GRAPEVINE

Grapevine Vintage Railroad: North Pole Express

Through Dec. 23

Throw on your pajamas and enjoy a fun-filled ride on the Grapevine Vintage Railroad. Join Mrs. Claus on a journey to pick up Santa and bring him to the Christmas Capital of Texas. *Cotton Belt Depot, 705 S. Main St.* 817-410-3185; grapevinetexasusa.com

GRAPEVINE

Christmas Wine Trains

Dec. 2, 9, 16

Escape the hustle and bustle of the season inside the beautifully decorated coaches of the Grapevine Vintage Railroad. This holiday train ride features festive treats and Texas wine. The Christmas Wine Trains are open to adults over 21 years old. *Cotton Belt Depot, 705 S. Main St.* 817-410-3185; grapevinetexasusa.com

GRAPEVINE

Parade of Lights

Dec. 2

The 42nd annual Parade of Lights features more than 100 lighted floats and marching bands. Look for Santa Claus on the last float. Come early to claim your spot along historic Main Street to watch the event unfold at 7 p.m. *Main Street.* 817-410-3185; grapevinetexasusa.com

GRAPEVINE

Victorian Christmas Tours at Nash Farm

Dec. 4

Step back in time to the late 1800s, and experience a traditional Christmas on the farm. Gather at the Pole Barn before taking a tour through the historic barn and around to the farmhouse ending at the campfire with cider and cookies. Wear appropriate shoes for walking on gravel and grass. *Nash Farm, 626 Ball St.* 817-410-3558; grapevinetexasusa.com

HEARNE

Christmas Parade and Market

Dec. 11

Downtown Hearne celebrates the holidays with craft and food vendors lining the streets and selling gift items and tasty treats. Christmas music plays throughout downtown, and the parade includes all sorts of cars, motorcycles, trailers, dance teams, and bands decked out in holiday themes. After dark, the Christmas tree lighting takes place and includes pictures with Santa. *Downtown Hearne, Fourth Street and Magnolia Street.* 979-595-8150; facebook.com/hearnechamber

HEARNE

Polar Express Train Ride

Dec. 11

All aboard for a Polar Express-themed train ride. Kids hear a story along the way, see Santa, and receive a special gift. *Hearne Depot, 139 W. Ninth St.* 979-383-4105; hearnedepot.org

HEARNE

Santa in the Park

Dec. 20

Santa greets children while handing out goodies and listening to wish lists. He's also available for photos. *Guy Chandler Park, 109-201 Fourth St.* 979-595-8150; hearnechambertx.com

ITALY

Christmas Festival

Dec. 4

Food and craft vendors, carolers, a Christmas parade, live music, and face painting are just part of the fun at this downtown holiday festival. *Cargill-Callman Pavilion, 101 E. Main St.* 972-483-7329; ci.italy.tx.us

MCKINNEY

Holiday Art Bazaar

Dec. 4

More than 40 local vendors sell their handmade goods. It's a chance to get outside, drink local

Tupps Brewery beer, and support a great group of artists. Lelo's Coffee is on-site with hot coffee, and Barley by Rye is open for lunch and dinner. There is live music inside the brewery. *Tupps Brewery, 721 Anderson St.* 214-856-7996; tuppsbrewery.com

MCKINNEY

Santa's Workshop Gift Making

Dec. 4, 11

This annual gift-making event has over a dozen gifts for kids to create. The studio has many materials to work with during the 90-minute workshops. Everyone completes eight gifts and brings home tissue paper and ribbon to wrap the gifts. *Jump Into Art, 404 N. Church St.* 214-937-9153; visitmckinney.com

MESQUITE

Christmas on the Corridor

Dec. 11

This holiday-themed event offers yard games, crafts for children, and inflatables. *Vanston Park, 2913 Oates Drive.* 972-216-6499; visitmesquitetx.com

MESQUITE

Florence Ranch Homestead's 150th Celebration

Dec. 11

Join Historic Mesquite Inc. as the organization celebrates 150 years of history at Florence Ranch Homestead, built by David W. and Julia Savannah Florence between 1871 and 1890. Wood trim decorates the gallery of the simple frame structure. At one time, the Florence Homestead covered 730 acres. *Florence Ranch Homestead, 1424 Barnes Bridge Road.* 972-216-6468; visitmesquitetx.com

MONTALBA

A Walk Through Bethlehem

Dec. 10-12

Guided tours through Bethlehem begin with a hayride to the gates. Walk through the streets, complete with live animals and local Bethlehem vendors. *Montalba Baptist Church, State Highway 19 North at FM 321.* 903-764-8048

MUENSTER

Winter Wonderland Synthetic Ice Skating

Dec. 11

The third annual Winter Wonderland is a large family event with a synthetic skating rink (not made from ice), bounce houses, an obstacle course, cookie decorating, ornament making, arts and crafts vendors, food vendors, and dance and musical performances. Santa stops by for a visit as well. *Heritage Park,*

301 N. Ash St. 940-759-5299; heritageparkmuenstertx.com

NOCONA

Small Town Christmas

Dec. 4

Stroll through historic downtown Nocona, which is lit up for the season and decorated with Christmas trees. Carolers, a parade, concerts, and classic cars are part of the fun while everyone awaits the arrival of Santa. *Downtown Nocona, Clay Street.* 940-825-3526; nocona.org/events

SALADO

Christmas Stroll

Dec. 3-12

The Village of Salado hosts its 61st annual Salado Christmas Stroll, held the first two weekends of December. This year's stroll kicks off with a lighted Christmas parade. The lighting of the trees at the Salado Civic Center takes place at the close of the parade. Stay after the parade to get a jump on your Christmas shopping. Sip hot cocoa while strolling down Main Street, where you're serenaded by strolling carolers. *Village of Salado, Main Street.* 254-947-5040; salado.com

SEGUIN

Mid-Texas Symphony Concert: Home for the Holidays

Dec. 12

A jazzy take on Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker," a powerful rendition of "O Holy Night" by tenor Rick Novak, and the angelic voices of the Children's Chorus from New Braunfels come together for a festive holiday program. *Jackson Auditorium at Texas Lutheran University, 1000 W. Court St.* 830-463-5353; mtsymphony.org

SHERMAN

Snowflake Festival and Christmas Parade

Dec. 4

The city of Sherman's Snowflake Festival is a family-friendly event that leads up to the town's Christmas Parade in historic downtown Sherman. Join the fun at this free event starting at 2 p.m., and stick around for exciting annual traditions including the big tree lighting and parade. *Grayson County Courthouse Square, 100 W. Houston St.* 903-892-7230; shermantx.org

TEMPLE

Bend of the River Christmas

Dec. 18

Join in a hometown holiday event with snow slides and a snow party, a cowboy Santa, and tasty treats from vendors. *Reuben D. Talasek*

Bend of the River, 7915 S. General Bruce Drive. 254-298-5690; templeparks.com

THE COLONY

Holiday in the Park

Dec. 4

Enjoy the most wonderful time of the year with an evening of festive holiday activities, classic Christmas tunes, and magical light displays. Festivities start with the Parade of Lights and lead up to a night of live performances, carnival games, rides, and a holiday baking contest. *Perryman Park*, 4930 S. Colony Blvd. 972-625-1106; thecolonytx.gov/832/holiday-in-the-park

WAXAHACHIE

Bethlehem Revisited

Dec. 3-12

Walk the streets of ancient Bethlehem as Mary and Joseph did on the night of Jesus' birth. Meet innkeepers, merchants, craftsmen, tradesmen, clergy, and other citizens as they portray daily life in the city of Bethlehem, complete with sheep, camels, and donkeys. You can also visit Herod's Court and await the nightly parade of the three kings bringing their treasures to Bethlehem's newest citizen. *Central Presbyterian Church*, 402 N. College St. 469-309-4040; waxahachiecvb.com/events/2021/bethlehem-revisited

WAXAHACHIE

Sparkle and Sleigh Christmas Market

Dec. 3-4

This market offers a unique shopping experience with over 100 vendors featuring a wide variety of gifts, including holiday décor, clothing and accessories, home accents, and children's clothing and toys. *Waxahachie Civic Center*, 2000 Civic Center Lane. 469-309-4040; waxahachiejsl.org

WAXAHACHIE

Santa Run

Dec. 11

At this 5K Race and fun run, participants receive a five-piece Santa suit to wear during the run. Those not feeling festive can sign up for a Grinch costume and run the course backwards. *Railyard Park*, 455 S. College. 972-938-9826; waxahachiecvb.com/events/2021/santa-run

WEIMAR

Down Home Christmas

Dec. 9

Kids can visit with Santa and enjoy kid-friendly events, while dance performances keep the festivities

going. At night, a lighted Christmas parade brings yuletide cheer. *City Hall*, 106 E. Main St. 979-725-9511; weimartexas.net

YOAKUM

Christmas on Grand

Dec. 4

Grab your friends and family and head to Yoakum's annual Christmas on Grand celebration for family-friendly festivities including holiday goodies for children, Santa photo-ops and real snow to play in. There is also a lighted Christmas parade and a Christmas movie showing. *Downtown Yoakum Railroad Park*, 501 Front St. 361-293-2309; yoakumareachamber.com

SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

EDINBURG

Night of Lights Parade

Dec. 3

On the first Saturday of December, downtown Edinburg sparkles with a lighted parade full of brightly decorated floats. Santa stops by for a visit, and guests can expect live family entertainment, music, food booths, and games. *Edinburg Downtown District*, 602 W. University Drive. 956-383-4974; edinburg.com

GEORGE WEST

Live Oak County Courthouse Centennial Celebration

Dec. 4

Learn the history of the Live Oak County Courthouse and celebrate its 100 years of service to the county with history tours, exhibits, music, stories, and food trucks. *Live Oak County Courthouse Square*, 301 Houston St. 361-319-3067; liveoakchc.com

WESLACO

Alfresco Weslaco

Dec. 16

Downtown businesses are open late alongside more than 60 vendors lining the street. There is also a car show with classic cars on display. *Downtown Historic Weslaco*, 200 S. Texas Blvd. 956-969-0838; facebook.com/alfrescoweslaco

DON'T SEE YOUR

EVENT? If you think your event might be of interest to *Texas Highways* readers, submit your information at texashighways.com/submitevent

THE DAYTRIPPER'S TOP 5



Kerrville

Folkin' fun

BY CHET GARNER

As the local saying goes, "Kerrville is the new Kerrville"—there isn't another place like it. For over 165 years, the town one hour northwest of San Antonio has established itself as a true relaxation destination. Whether you're looking to stick to tradition or try something new, Kerrville is the ideal locale to explore the Texas Hill Country.

Downtown Kerrville

As you walk the historic streets, you'll notice a common name on many of the buildings: Schreiner. Charles Armand Schreiner was a Texas Ranger-turned-banker/rancher/shopkeeper who brought affluence to Kerrville. Even today, the Schreiner Goods store is so well appointed that it would fit on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan. History buffs can tour the castle-like Schreiner Mansion next door. And anyone who needs some extra pep in their step should grab an espresso from the artsy and delicious PAX Coffee and Goods across the street.

Pint & Plow Brewing Co.

At this coffee and beer garden, you can grab a pint of incredible craft beer and indulge in a plate of locally sourced food. Try the La Madrugada brown porter, named after the darkest part of the night, and a Hen House pizza with white sauce, spinach, mushrooms, and roasted chicken. As soon as you take a seat, the sounds of a local troubadour playing on the outdoor stage fill the air.

James Avery Headquarters

Now a national jewelry brand, James Avery started in a small garage workshop just outside of town. Visitors to the sprawling campus can shop the flagship retail store and walk through an exhibit dedicated to the legacy of Avery. The displays follow his life from his days as a World War II pilot to the first pieces of jewelry he sold to local campers.

Guadalupe River

This popular Texas river flows right through the heart of Kerrville. You'll find plenty of places to swim and fish at Louise Hays Park, but if it's too cold for a dip, just bring your hiking shoes or bike and follow 6 miles of paved paths on the River Trail. Don't miss the Riverside Nature Center's hands-on displays about the plants and animals that call the river corridor home.

Grape Juice

While this restaurant's name seems like it's dedicated to kids' tastes, it actually refers to its specialty—wines. The extensive wine list is upstaged only by the excellent menu that puts new spins on classic dishes. Try a chicken sandwich topped with honey and jalapeño bacon, or mac and cheese mixed with antelope chili and Fritos. Whatever you order, save room for something off the rotating dessert menu.

So whether you follow my footsteps or forge your own path,
I hope to see you on the road.

Chet Garner is the host of *The Daytripper*® travel show on PBS. To view the Kerrville episode visit thedaytripper.com. Follow along on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter @chetripper.

OPEN ROAD | continued from Page 17

But one day while he was having his snack of dried cereal, he hurled the ceramic bowl against my mom's wall, where it exploded into pieces.

She called us over to the house. She was shaken. The three of us sat around her living room contemplating what to do next while Johnny dozed on the love seat. My mother couldn't handle him on her own anymore. Neither could my father.

At our appointment in San Antonio, we got the dreaded, though no longer surprising, diagnosis. After that morning at the autism clinic, we traveled to Austin for the night. We took Johnny to a park just south of downtown. Even though I knew the diagnosis had been coming, the news still shook me hard. While Chuck carried Johnny around the park on his shoulders, trying his best to keep the mood buoyant for Johnny's sake, I took a moment and stood on the grassy mound in the park, gazing over Lady Bird Lake, letting the tears fall.

That night, back at our Airbnb, Johnny started banging his head against the wall with a force Chuck and I had never witnessed before. It was terrifying.

Dismayed and not sure how to handle it, we headed back to Longview the next day. Halfway home, Johnny's skin boiled with fever, and he began to have diarrhea.

Lab work at a doctor's office in Longview would confirm he had a gut infection, the pain of which had triggered the extreme headbanging, which escalated once we got back to East Texas. We'd only learn later about the connection between the self-injurious behavior and the gut pain. And how, with autism, if one doesn't know how to properly manage the behavior—like us, who were so new to it all—it can become reinforced, become a pattern.

When we received his diagnosis at the clinic in San Antonio, the doctor recommended 40 hours per week of intensive ABA therapy (Applied Behavioral Analysis). In Longview, though, there was only one clinic that offered such services, and

it was brand new.

In Austin, there were at least 20 therapy centers to choose from at the time, and it became startlingly clear that we needed to get back there as soon as possible. Our dream of giving Johnny the childhood we longed to would be limited by the scarcity of services in rural Texas. My once lofty notion of raising him in an unhelicopter-parenting way was nothing more than cruel irony at this point.

We would not be able to *not* hover over him like we had witnessed parents at Austin's playgrounds doing with their own kids. Instead, we needed to rethink our whole approach to what his childhood would look like. Such a diagnosis calls for intensive parenting. This meant keeping Johnny safe from self-harm, while also learning how best to address his acute developmental delays and guide him forward.

While Chuck carried Johnny around the park on his shoulders, trying his best to keep the mood buoyant for Johnny's sake, I took a moment and stood on the grassy mound in the park, gazing over Lady Bird Lake, letting the tears fall.

Still in Longview, Johnny was banging his head for several hours a day while we raced to block it or drove him on endless car rides so that he was safely nestled in his car seat. Soon, we began packing to move back to Austin.

It was heartbreaking to say goodbye to family when it felt like we'd just arrived, but we were medical refugees.

When we arrived back in Austin, there was still a six-week delay until insurance kicked in to cover his therapy. So, Chuck and I sought the one thing that had always

been healing for Johnny: nature. It's long been known that being outdoors has a beneficial effect on everyone. Being in nature can help give kids with autism and sensory processing disorder the space they need to collect and recenter.

This time, we hunted for secret spots, hidden parks that weren't so highly trafficked. The small park on the banks of Shoal Creek just south of Seton Hospital is so green it looks jewel toned. We found Commons Ford Ranch (which has since been discovered by everyone), with its open skies and endless trails, on the banks of Lake Austin. And Johnny's favorite, the backside of Mayfield Preserve, where a palmetto-dotted walking trail leads down to the shores of Lake Austin. Johnny sat peacefully for hours on the shore, nestled against the hollow trunk of a cypress tree.

Because we were forced to get creative to avoid the crowds that were becoming increasingly overwhelming for Johnny, we were able, in our own, modified way, to recreate a semblance of the exploratory existence we had for him in East Texas. Dealing with Johnny's condition was teaching us how to make the most of our inconvenient circumstances.

But being in therapy-forward Austin hasn't been without its challenges. One fall day a year after we moved back, we took Johnny to the newly completed Lady Bird Lake boardwalk just east of Interstate 35. He had a remarkably successful trip there—no outbursts or meltdowns—but a group of women dressed in chic yoga attire phoned the police on us because of Johnny's messy hair and the high-water pants he had selected to don that day. They told the officers they thought he was neglected.

In moments like these, I pine for the less-crowded environs of East Texas—the home of my childhood and my dreams for our family. But Austin is now our forever home—our reality.

After a solid year of receiving the therapy we had moved to Austin to attain, Johnny, at 4 1/2 years old, just weeks shy of Mother's Day, would utter his first words since going silent: "Mama-mama-mama." **L**

On Fertile Ground

Historian H.W. Brands cultivates the connections of American history

By Matt Joyce



Ideas for new books bubble to the surface when historian H.W. Brands talks about his work. But that's no surprise considering Brands, a history professor at the University of Texas, has written more than 30 books on U.S. history, economics, and foreign affairs. With subjects ranging from Benjamin Franklin to the Cold War, Brands' work examines the building blocks of America as we know it today.

A native of Oregon, Brands moved in 1981 to Austin, where he earned a Ph.D. in history from UT. He toyed with the idea of also pursuing a doctorate in mathematics, building upon the master's degree in math he had attained at Portland State University. But he decided to focus on history, teaching at Texas A&M from 1987 to 2004 and returning to UT as a faculty member in 2005. Brands' dedication to the craft has been honored with numerous bestsellers and awards, including twice as a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize.

"His knowledge of American history, as far as I can tell, is almost seamless," says Stephen Harri-gan, a friend and author of the 2019 Texas history,

"There was a feeling in the 1920s that we've embarked on this new era in American life. There are parts of it we like, but there are parts of it that make us feel things are getting out of control."

Big Wonderful Thing. "But maybe the real key to his prolific output is his attitude. Writing isn't a task for him, it's a sunny occupation. He doesn't fret about writing his books, he just writes them."

TH: *You commuted between your home in Austin and your teaching job at Texas A&M for 17 years. Did you have any favorite roadside stops?*

HWB: I tended to not stop, but it inspired the first book I wrote on Texas, which was *Lone Star Nation*. I discovered while making that commute that I was taking the old Camino Real. When I would drive from Bryan back toward Bastrop [State Highway 21], I was essentially following the same route Stephen F. Austin himself took on his first visit to Texas.

TH: *How did that lead to a book?*

HWB: I was reading Austin's diary, and I was struck by the number of times he described this Texas he was seeing for the first time as beautiful. What Austin was looking for was whether this was a place where

people could actually make a living. Will farmers be attracted to come to Texas? He wanted to establish this colony to attract Americans to Mexican Texas. It was very interesting to feel I was seeing the Texas that Austin was seeing, and it intrigued me enough to pursue it for a book I wrote on the founding of American Texas.

TH: *When you think of the 1920s, what historical relevance would you note for readers a century later?*

HWB: I've been making a pitch to my publisher that I ought to write a book on the 1920s because there are connections. The first thing I will say as a historian is every era has its own importance and interest, but I realize most people want to see a connection. So, the 1920s was a time when the hottest issue in politics was immigration. And we have been arguing about immigration ever since. There was also a great concern the American economy was leading to some really big winners, and everybody else was just having to get by. And this, sometimes called the "new inequality," is with us again. And the 1920s was a time when the United States was debating very deeply the role of the U.S. in the world. There was a feeling that America had been overextended in Europe in World War I. And so there was a strong movement toward let's just pull back and deal with what's happening in the United States itself. And we see a lot of that right now—a feeling America, by 2020, was overextended in Afghanistan. And there was definitely a feeling in the 1920s—and this is not confined to these two decades by any means—that we've embarked on this new era in American life. There are parts of it we like, but there are parts of it that make us feel things are getting out of control.

TH: *Why has Texas had a relatively significant influence on the presidency in the past several decades?*

HWB: A lot of it has to do with the fact that there are just a lot of Texans. Texas is the second largest state in the union, and therefore it has the second largest number of electoral votes. But it's important to note something that Lyndon Johnson was fully aware of—that as long as Jim Crow

segregation existed in the South, including Texas, there weren't going to be any Texas presidents because Americans as a whole didn't like that system. When Johnson became president by the assassination of John Kennedy, he was in a position to do something no one had been able to do before—cajole and shame the South into tolerating the end of the Jim Crow system. He realized it had to be a southerner to do that. Johnson dragged us out, kicking and screaming, into the 20th century.

TH: *And this opened the door for others, such as the Bushes?*

HWB: That's right. Once the South abandons Jim Crow, then all of a sudden southerners become acceptable. And Texas, and more broadly the South, becomes a player in national and presidential politics in a way it wasn't before.

TH: *You've said you don't consider yourself a Texan. Why?*

HWB: I'm not a Texan in the sense that it's not my identity. I've lived in Texas longer than I've lived anywhere else, but I think it's where you grow up that really matters. And in the case of Texas, I think it's whether you're here in time to take the seventh grade Texas history class. Because that's when you learn what it means to be Texan. It's really a rite of passage. That's one of the reasons that what they teach in that class has been such a big deal over the years.

TH: *Has your mathematics background influenced your work as a historian?*

HWB: There are people who apply data analysis to history, but to me that spoils the charm of history, which is the unique, rather than what you can work into a numerical model. If there's a way the approach of mathematics has influenced my approach to history it is to make me impatient with what I consider to be lazy or casual reasoned arguments. One of the things a mathematical mindset insists on is showing the reasoning. Higher mathematics is entirely reason. You prove theories. Just today, I was talking to a student about a paper and I said, "You have to make clear the logical basis of your argument; show me your evidence."

I stress this because these students are going into a world where a lot of what passes for reasoning is utterly specious.

TH: *How do you make time to teach and write all your books?*

HWB: My teaching actually reinforces my writing, and vice versa. I have insisted from the beginning that I teach every semester an introductory course on American history. In the fall it's a course that covers colonial times to the Civil War, and in the spring it's from the Civil War to the present. So I'm always thinking in broad terms about American history. When I decide to write a book on some facet of American history, I already know the concepts; I already know where it fits in the broad scheme of things. I usually know what the documentary evidence is going to be. I like to think I have about a 75% head start when I start writing these books. I like almost every aspect of the craft of writing. I also like the research. I don't employ research assistants because it's just as much fun to discover this stuff myself. I never know exactly what I'm looking for until I find it.

TH: *What is a favorite of the hundreds of haikus you wrote for Haiku History: The American Saga, Three Lines at a Time?*

HWB: I don't know that I have a particular favorite, but one various people responded to is early in the book, when Indians on the East Coast see these ships coming. It's this dawning: Oh wait, there's a world out there; there are other people.

*The white ships appear
The bearded ones come ashore
Who the hell are they?!*

Keep up with H.W. Brands' work and historical poetry on Twitter, @hwbrands. His latest book, *Our First Civil War: Patriots and Loyalists in the American Revolution*, was published in November.

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VINTAGE

BY JAC DARSNEK, TRACES OF TEXAS



A Traveling Show

BRECKENRIDGE, 1921

In the 1920s, regular folks didn't travel much because it was too expensive. But Texans have always loved a good show, so entertainers came to the people. The H.W. Campbell United Show was on a 40-week tour of the South when it rolled into the North Texas town of Breckenridge in 1921 with a band, carnival rides, a Wild West show, and animal acts. Such traveling shows—circuses, vaudeville acts, theater companies, and even baseball teams—toured from town to town, setting up stages and arenas, performing, and then packing up and moving along. Based in Augusta, Georgia, the H.W. Campbell United Show traveled on 25 train cars and, per a recruiting advertisement of the day, employed “horse riders, a boss hostler, electricians, a trainmaster, polers, workingmen, door talkers and grinders, and a lot superintendent.” Featuring performers of diverse backgrounds, companies like the H.W. Campbell United Show brought worldly entertainment to small-town Texas. ■

Know of any fascinating vintage Texas photographs? Send copies or ideas to tracesoftxphotos@gmail.com.

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