

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

# THE MEDALLION



WINTER 2013

## EXPLORING THE WILD FRONTIER

THC's West Texas Forts  
Preserve Pioneer Heritage,  
Promote Rural Visitation



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# THE MEDALLION

WINTER 2013

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The ruins of Fort Lancaster's Company K enlisted men's barracks. Photo by Andy Rhodes.

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The THC's 20 historic properties

**FAST FACTS**

The THC's historic sites are economic catalysts in Texas.



Increase in  
THC's historic  
sites visitation  
from Fiscal Year  
2011 to 2012



People who  
visited the THC's  
historic sites or  
participated in  
educational  
programs in  
Fiscal Year 2012



Volunteer hours  
contributed  
at the THC's  
historic sites  
in Fiscal  
Year 2012



Preservation  
maintenance  
projects  
completed in  
Fiscal Years  
2011 and 2012

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

Dear Friends,

The past two years brought historic change to the Texas Historical Commission. Despite significant losses—including a budget reduction of nearly 50 percent and elimination of 47 employees—we continued our mission to preserve and protect Texas' proud heritage.

In the process, we also helped improve the state's economy. As mentioned in the article on page 4 of this publication, the total economic impact of historic preservation in Texas is more than \$1.7 billion annually, resulting in more than 40,000 jobs, \$890 million in income, and \$445 million in state and local taxes every year. That's a significant economic engine, especially in our state's rural communities.

We're also proud to announce that more than a quarter of a million people visited our agency's 20 historic sites last year. This represents a 40 percent increase since 2009.

The heritage travelers who visit these and other historical attractions throughout the state spend more money than the average traveler, and create income and jobs for Texans.

Our agency may be smaller in size, but our staff has remained dedicated to preserving Texas' special sense of place by identifying and protecting the real places and real stories that are uniquely Texan. From restoring historic county courthouses to developing community outreach efforts to placing historical markers, our agency takes pride in its mission to serve Texans by preserving our state's rich history.

Texans are fortunate to have a distinctive and enduring history like no other state. We look forward to the year ahead and the opportunity it brings for us to protect and preserve the Lone Star State's unique heritage for the benefit of future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Wolfe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "W" and "F".

Mark Wolfe, Executive Director  
Texas Historical Commission



**RICK PERRY, GOVERNOR • MATTHEW KREISLE, III, CHAIRMAN • MARK WOLFE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
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# Preservation Makes Sense

## THC Programs Fuel Economic Growth in Texas' Rural Areas

By Debra Farst, Andy Rhodes, and Matt Synatschk  
THC Staff

These real numbers tell the real story about the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) positive effect on Texas' economy: The impact of historic preservation in Texas is more than \$1.7 billion annually. This results in more than 40,000 jobs, \$890 million in income, \$1.4 billion in gross state product, and \$445 million in state and local taxes every year.

### TEXAS HISTORIC COURTHOUSE PRESERVATION PROGRAM

As public buildings, Texas courthouses are among the state's most widely recognized, used, and appreciated assets. THCPP participants experience numerous benefits, including building functionality, a tourist attraction, and a tangible link to the past.

More than 9,600 jobs have been created since the program's inception in 1999. More than \$22 million in state taxes and an additional \$21 million in local taxes have been generated, and the gross state product has been increased by more than \$367 million.

To date, 63 counties have received full funding for their

construction projects, 56 of which were completed and rededicated by the end of 2012. Another seven courthouse restorations will be completed in 2013–14. Thirteen counties received grants in the most recent \$20 million grant cycle (FY 2011–12), which was announced in January 2012.

The economic impact has been especially significant in Texas' rural communities, where courthouses often anchor a historic downtown district, and the associated heritage travelers—

who spend almost \$400 more per trip than average travelers—bring money to the community.

For example, commercial properties on the square surrounding the Wharton County Courthouse had a 279 percent increase in property values between 2006 and 2010 when the courthouse project was finished. Occupancy rates went from 30 to 70 percent during the same period.

“There are few places that can strengthen and transform an entire community, but a restored cherished courthouse will,” said THC Architecture Division Director Sharon Fleming. “All across Texas, we’ve seen it happen in counties that have joined the program to restore their beloved courthouse. They have made a truly remarkable transformation.”

### TEXAS MAIN STREET PROGRAM

The grassroots, community-empowered Four-Point Approach of the nationwide Main Street effort, which has been utilized in Texas over the past three decades, provides evidence that the economic impact of preservation-based activity is significant.

Since its origination, designated Texas Main Street communities have reported almost \$2.65 billion in overall reinvestment. The largest component of that figure is \$1.73 billion in private reinvestment.

Additionally, 7,425 businesses have been created, expanded, or relocated in Texas Main Street districts. These small, independent entrepreneurial ventures have created 28,729 jobs and are an important factor in each community's economic health.

“These small businesses are largely locally owned and operated, and many have been in existence for generations, some in the same family,” says Brad Patterson, director of the THC's Community Heritage Development Division. “These long-time businesses are a cornerstone not only of their individual community's history, but



THC Executive Director Mark Wolfe speaks at the San Augustine County Courthouse rededication.

The THC oversees more than two dozen preservation programs reaching all corners of the Lone Star State. Although each of them impacts Texas' economy—particularly in rural areas where travelers contribute to local businesses—three agency programs are especially notable for their significant economic impact. They are the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program (THCPP), the Texas Main Street Program (TMSP), and the Texas Certified Local Government Program (CLG).



Above: The Crockett Street entertainment district in Beaumont has benefitted from Main Street participation for more than 20 years. Below: Round Rock’s designation as a CLG community has helped the city document and preserve its historic resources.

### CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT

With most preservation efforts occurring at the local level, the federal government developed the CLG program to support and grow local initiatives designed to achieve a community’s historic preservation goals.

also to Texas’ collective history and economy.”

As of fall 2012, about 40 percent of the 83 designated programs had populations of less than 10,000 and had participated in TMSP an average of 13 years. Collectively, these communities recorded reinvestment of almost \$41 million since the start of 2010. During this time, they also reported the creation, expansion, or relocation of 146 businesses, which created 518 jobs.

In mid-November 2012, the city of Georgetown celebrated 30 years of success in preservation-based downtown revitalization. Speaking at a ceremony celebrating the anniversary, Linda McCalla, the program’s first staffer, recalled downtown’s dismal state in 1982: mostly vacant and decaying buildings, with “no place to eat downtown...and a seriously altered courthouse.”

Since then, Georgetown’s population has climbed to almost 50,000, the courthouse has been restored through the THCPP, and more than \$54 million in reinvestments has been reported during its participation. The Main Street effort, McCalla says, gave downtown “transformative new life.”

Texas CLG grants create jobs, allow for the hiring of consultants, and inject money into the local economy for historic preservation projects. In addition, the projects often serve as a starting point for future projects, including building restoration, historic resource designations, and the development of heritage tourism assets. In the previous three fiscal years, the Texas CLG program awarded 31 grants for a total of \$380,500, resulting in the completion of preservation projects totaling more than \$800,000 around the state.

The program, a partnership between the National Park Service, the State Historic Preservation Office (which in Texas is the THC), and local governments, offers opportunities to encourage local preservation efforts.

“CLG grants provide funding for a variety of projects designed to enrich, develop, and help maintain local historic preservation programs,” Patterson says. He adds that eligible CLG projects include historic resources surveys, development of design guidelines, National Register nominations, public preservation programs, and interpretive materials.

For example, Central Texas’ Comal County recently received a \$40,000 grant to help fund a comprehensive resources survey. The grant allowed the county to sign an \$80,000 contract with a Texas consulting firm to conduct the survey. The consulting firm assigned four task members to conduct the survey, and their efforts included purchasing materials in the community, and other activities that supported the local economy.

“These and all of the THC’s programs have had a significant and direct impact on local economies,” says the THC’s Deputy Executive Director Terry Colley, noting that in the past two years, the THC’s Texas Heritage Trails Program and its partners leveraged state funds to access \$8.9 million in federal transportation enhancement grants for heritage tourism efforts. “They are important economic engines, allowing Texans to create new jobs, support their communities, and keep our state’s rich heritage alive through historic preservation projects.” ★



# EXPLORING THE WILD FRONTIER

## THC's West Texas Forts Preserve Pioneer Heritage, Promote Rural Visitation

*By Andy Rhodes  
Managing Editor, The Medallion*

Standing on a rocky bluff overlooking the panoramic oak-lined brim of the Edwards Plateau, it's easy to imagine Fort McKavett in 1852. The site has changed little in 160 years, but there's something beyond the physical landscape that conjures nostalgia. It's the sense of serenity and natural purity that evokes a bygone era, when Texas' frontier was undeveloped and westward wagons dotted the landscape's rolling hills.

Fort McKavett, now one of the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) 20 historic sites, preserves the real stories of the soldiers, and later townsfolk, who lived and worked in the 19 historic structures that still remain at this pleasantly secluded outpost.

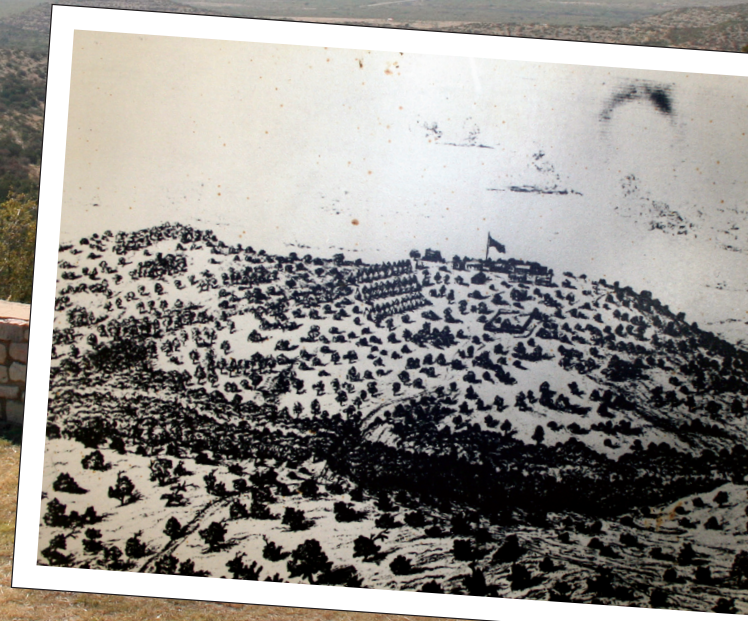
"Our biggest asset and challenge is our remote location," says Site Manager Buddy Garza. "Because we're so far away from development and activity, we're able to maintain our outpost image. This is one of the best-preserved frontier forts in Texas—things look almost exactly as they did when it was active more than 150 years ago, and visitors find that very appealing."

Garza is quick to add that the isolation also presents a challenge, saying "this is not a place people just happen to spontaneously stop by on their way to somewhere else. It's a planned destination, far from most highways and towns."

Invariably, heritage travelers find their plans to visit Fort McKavett are rewarded with unencumbered views and knowledgeable staff transporting them to the past, far away from busy Interstate 10, a 26-mile drive south.

According to Garza, the first soldiers to arrive at the post were with the 8th U.S. Infantry, which established Fort McKavett in March 1852 to protect West Texas settlers and serve as a rest stop for California-bound immigrants. At the time, it was called Camp San Saba in reference to the adjacent river, and the first structures were made of locally quarried limestone and hand-cut oak.

Fort McKavett was abandoned in 1859 after a decline in activity, but served as a Civil War POW camp (October 1861–April 1862) for Federal soldiers, who surrendered at the Battle of Adams Hill west of San Antonio, and were divided among the frontier posts. The soldiers guarding them were



Company E, 1st Texas Mounted Rifles. By the mid-1860s, hostilities escalated with the Comanche and Kiowa tribes. According to the Texas Beyond History website, nearby landowner William McDougall was killed and his stepdaughter severely wounded during a raid on his farm near the fort in 1866.

The following year, the U.S. Army returned to the fort, which had deteriorated into ruins. The dilapidated structures were rebuilt while the troops lived in tents, and the post was reoccupied in April 1868 as Fort McKavett, named for Capt. Henry McKavett, a casualty in the battle of Monterrey during the U.S.-Mexico War. The completed fort had four barracks, 12 officers' quarters, a headquarters building, hospital, bakery, post office, and stables. Many of these structures remain accessible to visitors at the site.

Fort McKavett was also home to soldiers from all four of the Buffalo Soldier regiments. The fort's Sgt. Emanuel Stance of the 9th Cavalry received the first Medal of Honor awarded to an African American soldier after the Civil War.

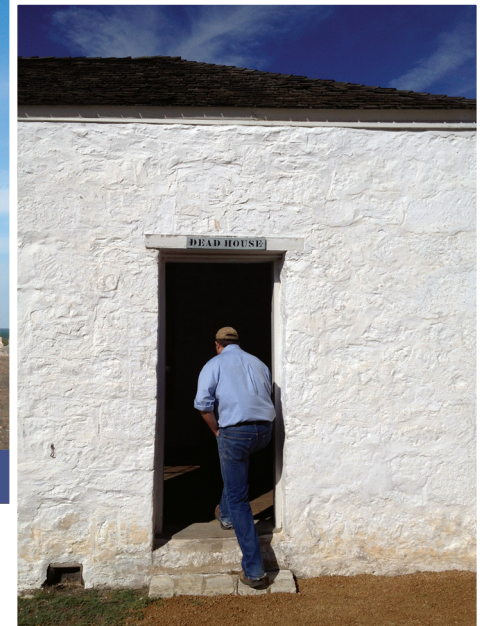
After the Army abandoned the fort in 1883, settlers began to move into the vacant buildings, and the town of Fort McKavett was born. By the mid-1890s the community had 80 residents with three churches, two hotels, a broom and mattress factory, and a weekly newspaper. The population of Fort McKavett was 136 in the early 1930s, and remained at that level through the mid-1960s.

"It wasn't that long ago that we had a state highway running through the middle of this site," Garza says. "Some local residents even remember when the Commanding Officer's Quarters was still a hotel."

Garza adds that he once spoke with a visitor who remembered living at the site when it was a thriving community. The man said the fort buildings were underappreciated for their historical value, with teenage boys "bulldogging" (knocking over) walls and shooting at windows and antique bottles with pellet guns and slingshots. A woman who understood the importance of the site's heritage would offer the boys a penny candy if they brought her an intact bottle.



Left: Fort McKavett's historic parade ground conjures the mid-1800s with a 37-star American flag. Below: the Dead House held deceased soldiers until burial.



"The man just shook his head and said, 'I sure wish I'd have saved a few of those bottles to get some more candy,'" Garza recalls with a smile.

By 1968, Fort McKavett was acquired by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and designated a state historic site. The THC took ownership in 2008 when it received the transfer of 18 historic sites from TPWD.

Despite its remote location, the fort remains surprisingly busy. Garza and his staff have actively pursued outreach efforts and effective methods for drawing much-needed revenue and visitors. The Friends of Fort McKavett organization ([www.fortmckavett.org](http://www.fortmckavett.org)) allow the site to expand its programs and serve more people by sponsoring living history events, stargazing parties, and maintaining a research library.

The site also hosts outings for corporate and church retreats, community meetings, summer camps, and Boy Scout service projects. In addition, staff members network with other frontier forts in the region—including Albany's Fort Griffin, San Angelo's Fort Concho, Jacksboro's Fort Richardson, and Coke County's Fort Chadbourne—to promote each other's resources to similar audiences.

"The preservation effort is out there—we've seen a lot of interest in these frontier forts," Garza says. "Whether it's a kid at a summer camp or senior citizen at a church retreat, it always makes me happy to hear someone say they have a new appreciation for this important piece of Texas history."

Opposite: Cody Mobley, curator of Forts McKavett and Lancaster, reads a historical marker about Old Government Road set against West Texas' panoramic backdrop. Inset: A historic bird's-eye-view drawing of Fort McKavett circa 1868.

## FORT LANCASTER'S LEGACY

A scenic two-hour drive westward takes visitors to Fort Lancaster, another THC historic site. For heritage travelers discovering this underexplored region of West Texas, the fort offers a different view of frontier Texas in the 1850s.

It is the views, in fact, that bring many travelers to the fort. Although the original adobe structures were claimed by the elements decades ago, the sweeping vistas of the Trans-Pecos region are an undeniable attraction.

"Occasionally we'll have someone ask why we don't have any buildings left out here to take a look at," says Cody Mobley, the fort's curator. "But as soon as they step out onto that parade ground and see the surrounding landscape, they understand the appeal of this special place."

Mobley adds that the site attracts a significant number of visitors from nearby Interstate 10 (11 miles north), allowing them to stretch their legs and soak up the fort's history. Other visitors are historic forts enthusiasts, who value the site's unique heritage.

According to Mobley, Fort Lancaster was one of the most isolated posts in Texas. Soldiers constructed the buildings in the mid-1850s using a combination of limestone blocks and adobe, with the exterior surfaces plastered to resemble dressed masonry.

"Adobe materials were readily available around here, and the structures actually lasted for quite awhile since there isn't much rain or water to wash them away," Mobley says. "Unfortunately, most of these structures eventually weathered away—the wind and sun take their toll."

While stationed at the fort, soldiers protected mail and freight trains, pursued and tracked Native Americans, and provided life-saving security for travelers. The most memorable visitors, however, were camels.

In 1855, the U.S. Army began a unique experiment using the desert animals for military transportation in the southwest. Two shipments totaling 74 camels were sent to the camp and were successfully tested in the arid western regions. The camels carried extremely heavy loads, traveled long distances without water, and subsisted on desert vegetation.

"Fort Lancaster is the only state-owned fort to host these military camels," Mobley explains, adding that visitors can see how the camels were used during springtime living history events at the fort and at its visitor center exhibit.

Aside from the camel visits, life at Fort Lancaster was mostly uneventful, with soldiers routinely performing fatigue duties (hauling water, posting guard, and repairing the fort). To make extra money, some soldiers would perform duties such as working in the bakery and masonry. Many soldiers also spent time in the fort's jail for drunk and disorderly conduct.

"The highlight of the month was when they'd get paid and buy a bottle of whiskey," Mobley says. "They'd celebrate and often do something foolish that would cause them to spend the next couple nights in the jailhouse."

He adds that the fort was abandoned in 1861 because of the Civil War, but served as a staging point for the Texans mobilizing for the invasion of New Mexico in early 1862. It was revived in 1867 when it served as a sub-post for the Buffalo Soldiers' 9th Cavalry. In December 1867, more than 100 soldiers and officers held off roughly 1,000 Kickapoo Indians with only three casualties. Today, Fort Lancaster remains the only Texas fort that was attacked by Native Americans.

By 1874, the fort was permanently abandoned, and much of the masonry was removed to construct new buildings in the nearby town of Sheffield. For nearly a century, the site was unoccupied until Crockett County representatives donated the property to the TPWD in 1968.

With the THC's 2008 acquisition, the fort received much-needed attention to control invasive vegetation, improve paths and outdoor interpretation, and develop a picnic area for visitors. Future objectives include an expanded visitors center and new exhibits.



Above: The stone chimney of Fort Lancaster's Company K barracks was built in 1857. Below: The U.S. Army's camel corps passed through Fort Lancaster in 1855.







Sonora's Old Ice House Ranch Museum showcases the city's pioneer heritage.

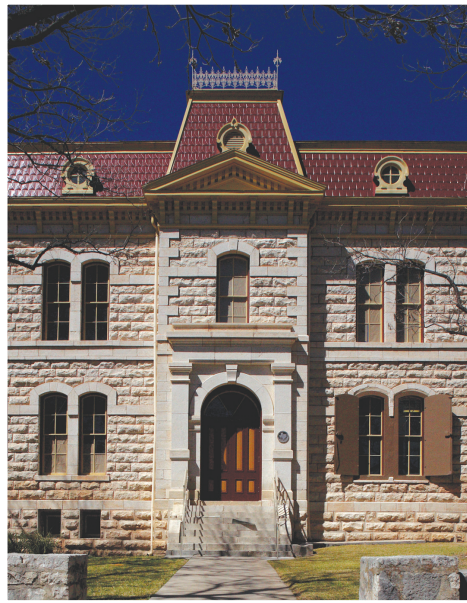
## WANDERING WEST TEXAS

Travelers should consider planning a long weekend to visit the frontier forts, allowing at least an extra day to discover other heritage attractions in the area. Visitors who step inside a local shop or restaurant in the Sonora vicinity are invariably greeted with a genuine welcome and appreciation for supporting community businesses.

For travelers interested in the region's frontier heritage of centuries past, Menard's **Presidio de San Saba** (one mile west of Hwy. 83 on Hwy. 190) is a must-see. Located just 20 miles northeast of Fort McKavett, the presidio, established in 1757, is the largest Spanish Colonial fort in Texas. Less than a year after the fort was built, its nearby mission site was attacked and destroyed by Comanche Indians and their allies. Although the mission was never reestablished, the presidio remained open for nearly a decade before it was abandoned due to hardships associated with its isolated location.

The site's previous century of existence also has historical interest—it was inaccurately "reconstructed" in the late-1930s, and even served as a fairway on a county-owned golf course for many decades. In 2011, the THC assisted with a major restoration project at the presidio to address critical structural problems from the 1930s project and relocate the road and golf course.

In nearby Sonora, heritage travelers can experience the region's frontier past on the historic downtown square, anchored by the stately 1891 **Sutton County Courthouse** (300 E. Oak St., 325.387.3815), restored through the THC's Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program. Boasting a National Register of Historic Places listing and THC historical marker, the modest two-story structure of native stone is considered one of the finest examples of 19th-century architecture on the Edwards Plateau.



Just across the street is the welcoming **Old Ice House Ranch Museum** ([www.old-ice-house-ranch-museum.com](http://www.old-ice-house-ranch-museum.com), 325.387.5084), showcasing the community's history with an impressive array of pioneer-era artifacts in the 1923 namesake icehouse. Operated by knowledgeable staff from the Sutton County Historical Society, the museum's hallmark exhibit is dedicated to the legacy of Will Carver, a member of Butch Cassidy's famous Wild Bunch gang, who found himself on the losing end of a shootout on the streets of Sonora in 1901.

Fifteen miles west of town is an undeniably historic attraction, the approximately 2 million year-old **Caverns of Sonora** ([www.cavernsofsonora.com](http://www.cavernsofsonora.com), 325.387.3105). The colossal and breathtaking caverns were discovered by ranchers in the 1930s and extensively explored in the early 1960s, resulting in an official designation as a National Natural Landmark. Descending more than 150 feet below ground, visitors are transported into an otherworldly landscape, surrounded by cream-colored calcite formations resembling bulbous outcroppings, dripping mountains, and the cavern's famous formation resembling a glass butterfly.



For information about the THC's frontier forts, go to [www.visitfortmckavett.com](http://www.visitfortmckavett.com) and [www.visitfortlancastr.com](http://www.visitfortlancastr.com). To learn about other heritage destinations in the area, order a free copy of the THC's *Texas Pecos Trail Region* and *Texas Forts Trail Region* travel guides by calling 866.276.6219 or visiting [www.thc.state.tx.us](http://www.thc.state.tx.us). ★

At left: The 1891 Sutton County Courthouse. Above and below: The mystical Caverns of Sonora.



# Good Will Ambassador

## THC's Military Sites Coordinator Discusses Recent Trip to Germany

By *Andy Rhodes*  
Managing Editor, The Medallion

William McWhorter, the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) Military Sites Program coordinator, was a featured guest speaker at a panel discussion in Frankfurt, Germany, last October. While there, he discussed the history of German civilian internees held in Texas and other U.S. locations during World War II. Upon his return, McWhorter shared details about his unique and inspiring experience overseas.



THC's William McWhorter (right) in Frankfurt, Germany, with his hosts.

**How did this opportunity come about?** I met Dr. Heidi von Leszczynski, a former Crystal City Family Internment Camp internee, in 2010 when she took a tour of the Crystal City camp remains in Zavala County. Two years later, Heidi extended an offer for me to travel to her home city of Frankfurt and talk to the Steuben-Schurz Society (SSG) about the THC's efforts to preserve the history of Enemy Alien and German American internment sites in Texas during World War II. Knowing that a lack of travel funds prevented me from attending, she offered to pay for my plane ticket to Frankfurt, provide a place to stay at her daughter Susanne's home, and essentially offer me VIP treatment in her home city. I gladly accepted.

**What did you discuss during your presentation?** The SSG asked me to provide its learned membership with a vivid discussion of the history of German American civilian internees in U.S. camps during World War II. They designed the event as a panel discussion with a moderator, and afterward the

audience posed questions to each panelist. My role was to give an academic historical point of reference for not only the Texas internment sites (Camps Kenedy, Seagoville, Dodd Field at Fort Sam Houston, Fort Bliss, and Crystal City), but on the entire Department of Justice internment camp system in the U.S. during the war.

**Did you have any interesting interactions with your German hosts?** What I appreciated and found quite refreshing was the vivid collective memory expressed by two of my fellow panelists, each former child internees (of which Heidi, my host was one), as they discussed their memories of life in the camps and the impact internment had on the course of their families' lives. Outside of the panel discussion, my host family members were terrific ambassadors. Frankfurters enjoy the rich history of their western German city, as well as its contemporary growth, which has earned a self-nickname of "Mainhattan" for its modern skyscrapers along the Main River.

I'd also like to note the warm reception I received on my first night there. That evening, Heidi took me to the German-American Friendship Day ceremony at the historic town hall. At the banquet that followed, I met U.S. Consul General Kevin Milas, who is serving in Frankfurt. He expressed sincere interest in the THC's preservation efforts of internment camp history, and we have remained in touch about the THC's plans for 2013, including a new brochure on all five camps,

four new historical markers, and an archeological survey and accompanying National Register nomination for Crystal City Family Internment Camp.

**What did the group members say about the THC's efforts to preserve this aspect of our shared heritage?** The SSG's membership truly enjoyed the lively discussion regarding topics of our shared American and German history. A frank and honest discussion about the Department of Justice's internment camps' history evolved during the night. Many attendees came up and shared their reactions to what essentially amounted to new information, as they processed the details throughout the night. Without fail, each left me with their impressions and gratitude for the THC's efforts to take on this difficult part of American World War II history and present it fairly to contemporary audiences. As the agency's Military Sites and Oral History Programs Coordinator, this has been one of my most rewarding projects—documenting and sharing this truly untold part of Texas' World War II history. ★

# Camp Preservation

## Austin Army Post Touts Benefits of THC's Project Reviews

By A. Elizabeth Brummett

THC State Coordinator for Project Review

Just beyond the blur of rushing cars on a west Austin expressway lies Camp Mabry, the oldest state-owned military facility, and Texas' third oldest active military post, established in 1892. The 368-acre site contains nearly 50 historic features, including an 1892 parade ground, wood-frame and brick World War I-era buildings, and limestone-clad structures built by the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

Recent rehabilitation projects at the site required the Texas Military Forces (TXMA) to comply with the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) review process. The TXMA oversees the Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air National Guard, and Texas State Guard under the Texas Adjutant General. Federal employees at TXMA facilities

contribute federal funds for maintenance, thus triggering compliance with Section 106. Also, the historic core of the Camp Mabry campus is designated as a State Archeological Landmark, requiring a state-issued permit for work to the buildings or grounds (see sidebar).

According to TXMA representatives, the effort to rehabilitate Camp Mabry's historic facilities was rewarded by a renewed sense of pride.

"A historic campus provides a visual representation of the history of the military," says Chantal McKenzie, TXMA's architectural historian. "Soldiers feel a connection with the past and pride in working in a place that also supported soldiers through World War I and II."

Recognition of the historic significance of Camp Mabry and THC oversight resulted in a shift in approach to the aging building stock, which required renovation to continue in useful service. While changing military needs drive adaptive use of these facilities, recent projects sensitively treat the historic fabric.

One of the first major projects was rehabilitation of the 1918 infirmary, which restored the exterior by removing an addition and asbestos siding, while adapting the interior for use as officers' quarters. Recently, Camp Mabry received the Travis County Historical Commission's first Award of Merit for its rehabilitation of two 1918 barracks (see photo at right).



Camp Mabry, established in 1892, is Texas' oldest state-owned military facility.

Current work includes the rehabilitation of a 1941 warehouse and reconstruction of a World War I temporary workshop associated with the School of Automobile Mechanics.

While undertaking these projects, representatives of the TXMA's Cultural Resources Management Office have made a point to educate their colleagues in the Construction Facility Management Office about cultural resources requirements.

"Education makes historic preservation relevant to the audience," says McKenzie, noting that in addition to the strong sense of place imparted by historic facilities, "these projects support other goals, including sustainability objectives. It's important to build an argument for rehabilitation versus replacement." ★



### PROJECT REVIEW OVERVIEW

The terms Section 106 and State Archeological Landmark are well known in Texas' preservation community, but they can sometimes be misunderstood by those who are unfamiliar with the origins, application, and benefits. In the late 1960s, two related forces—damage to significant historic sites and the burgeoning American preservation movement—led to state and federal laws safeguarding historic properties. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 was enacted in response to major government construction projects, like the interstate highway system and urban renewal, proceeding without regard for their impact on historic communities and archeological sites.

One of the most important provisions of this law, Section 106, establishes a process ensuring historic properties are given due consideration during planning for federal projects or those that receive federal funds, licenses, or permits.

The Antiquities Code of Texas requires project review prior to ground-breaking on state or local public land and establishes the State Archeological Landmark designation for significant historic and archeological sites.

The THC acts as a consulting party under Section 106 for projects in Texas, and is responsible for implementing the Antiquities Code. Under both laws, staff reviews approximately 15,000 projects a year and plays a critical role in advocating for historic properties throughout the state.

# Introducing a New THC Website

Agency Unveils Engaging Online Resources

By Barbara Putrino,  
Senior Projects Coordinator

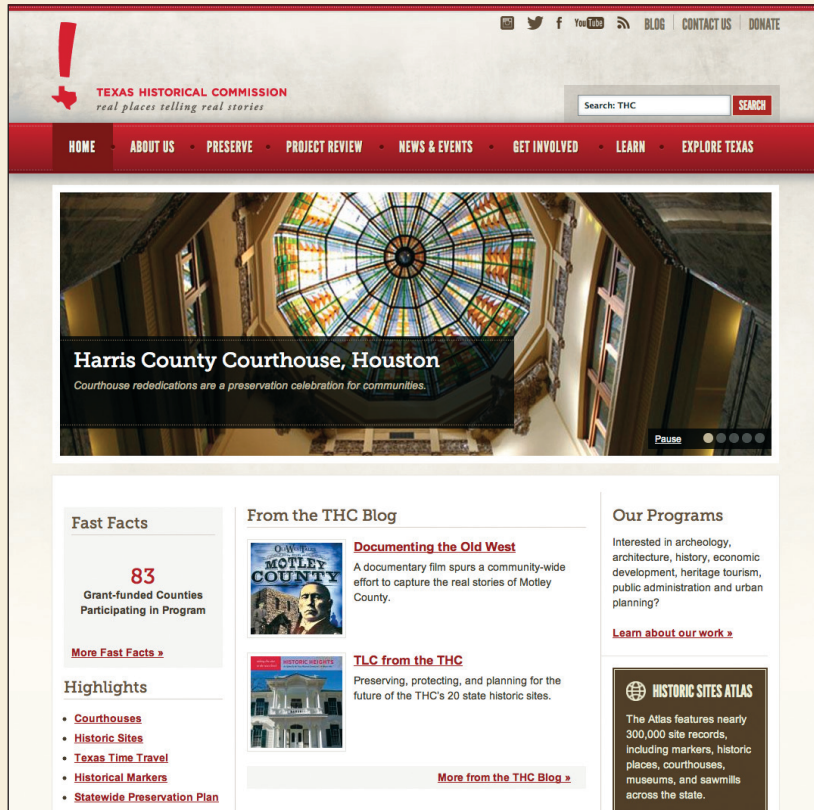
In preservation, we work to restore or repurpose buildings or objects when they need a boost or have outlived their usefulness.

At the Texas Historical Commission (THC), we've applied that same approach to our web presence. We spent the past year exploring a new way to tell you about our work through our website and social media.

Our staff members met in small teams and large groups to discuss how we could better serve you through our website. We asked the staff of TradeMark Media in Austin to guide us through the process of creating a more functional and visually pleasing site—our fourth version to date. We wanted to make it easier for our staff to post the latest preservation information and offer assistance when needed.

The result? We developed a website with new menus to help you find information quickly. We categorized our information under themes of **Preserve**, **Project Review**, **Get Involved**, **Learn**, and **Explore**. We gathered **Fast Facts** to explain the impact of our work in a flash. We added places to highlight projects and programs and a spot for our latest news and events.

We put our communication tools front and center: a new blog and *The Medallion*. But wait! What happened to *The Medallion*? In addition to our print



The THC's updated website features new menus and improved navigation to help users find information more quickly.

and download versions, we added an e-magazine for those who enjoy a more visual online format.

Our new blog focuses on telling the stories behind our programs, bringing to life our tagline: real places telling real stories. It incorporates all the agency's stories, as well as a few about our partners. We rolled existing THC blogs that focused on specific programs (such as the See the Sites blog) into this agency-wide platform.

Our website changes are numerous. One important feature is **Need Help? Ask Us**. Now you can ask our experts a question online and receive a timely response. We also presented our current

projects and programs in two menus: under the **Preserve** menu topic and as a side list. The list will change as we do, of course. Plus, you can still use our Texas Historic Sites Atlas database of historic properties, which is undergoing enhancements and will be better than ever.

In our **Explore** section we gathered information about all our travel-oriented programs such as historic sites, heritage tourism, museums, and Texas Main Street. We emphasized how developing a travel and history focus for your community helps generate economic development

opportunities. Throughout the website we highlighted our program successes in archeology, courthouse and cemetery preservation, designating resources, and county historical commission outreach. We added photo and video galleries, too.

We want to better tell the story of what we do so you can join us in saving and sharing the real places and real stories of Texas. Rather than tell you everything about the website, please take a look. Escape to a historic site and read **Our Stories**. Share a page with a friend.

Let us know what you think. Send comments to [barbara.putrino@thc.state.tx.us](mailto:barbara.putrino@thc.state.tx.us). ★

# Fulton's Finishing Touches

## Mansion Celebrates New Facility, Plans Restorations

By *Andy Rhodes*  
 Managing Editor, The Medallion

Last summer, a packed house celebrated the grand opening of Fulton Mansion's new Education and History Center in Rockport. The event represented the culmination of more than a decade's worth of planning and development at the mansion, one of the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) 20 historic sites.

With its distinctive mansard roof and ornate trim, Fulton Mansion has represented the aristocratic Victorian world of a prominent South Texas family since its completion in 1877. The site's new Education and History Center showcases stories about the Fultons, their stately home, and their life in Aransas County, while providing visitors with improved amenities and services. The facility contains interactive exhibits and offers a comfortable place to wait for tours of the mansion.

"The Fulton Mansion is a significant heritage tourism attraction in Texas, and we're very proud of the new Education and History Center," said Mark Wolfe, the THC's executive



Top: Dedicating Fulton Mansion's new Education and History Center. Above: The 1877 mansion was the home of a prominent South Texas family.

director. "Heritage destinations like this help increase visitation to historic sites and stimulate local economies across the state."

The new building also serves as a community gathering place, with a multi-purpose room, to accommodate groups and serve as a public event space. The Friends of Fulton Mansion, which has been the site's support group for nearly two decades, was an important partner in the development of the center.

"The Education and History Center will be a vital component in the mission of this site by bringing to life the stories of the Fultons and their contributions to Texas history," said Donna Williams, director of the THC's Historic Sites Division. "We look forward to welcoming more visitors to the mansion and to providing an enhanced experience while they're here."

To learn more about the mansion and the new facility, see [www.visitfultonmansion.com](http://www.visitfultonmansion.com). ★

### FULTON MANSION RESTORATION PROJECT

The Fulton Mansion will undergo extensive preservation work this year to address serious long-term foundation and structural issues, basement water infiltration, deterioration of original wood windows, and major roof leaks. The project will preserve and protect the historic materials, prevent further structural damage, and integrate upgrades to better protect historic collections from the harsh coastal climate. This work is funded through THC bond funds.

The mansion also needs extensive repairs to the exterior wood siding, decorative wood trim, doors and siding, and total exterior repainting to return the building to its original luster. Public support is needed to allow the additional work to be completed simultaneously, ensuring the mansion's collections and the structure itself are preserved for the education and enjoyment of its visitors.

So far, \$150,000 of the needed \$450,000 has been secured. Fulton Mansion supporters are seeking additional donations to help complete this vital work. For more information or to contribute, please contact the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission at [www.thcfriends.org/special-projects/historic-sites](http://www.thcfriends.org/special-projects/historic-sites) or 512.936.2189.



# THC Names New Texas Main Street Cities



Cuero Heritage Museum

The Texas Historical Commission (THC) has designated Childress and San Augustine as 2013 official Texas Main Street cities, and Cuero will return as a re-certified city.

The Texas Main Street Program currently provides services to 83 communities across the state. Each city receives free technical and design assistance from the THC's Texas Main Street Program staff as long as the city participates in the program.

"The Main Street effort in Texas has widespread economic impact in towns of all sizes," said THC Chairman Matthew Kreisle. "We are pleased to welcome these new participants into the flagship program."

Kreisle adds that the program stimulates private sector downtown reinvestment, and helps retain, expand, and recruit businesses, creating new jobs in Texas. Since its inception in 1981, the Texas Main Street Program has worked with more than 160 cities across the state.

For more information about the program, contact State Coordinator Debra Farst at 512.463.5758 or [debra.farst@thc.state.tx.us](mailto:debra.farst@thc.state.tx.us).



U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison attended a sign-unveiling event in Rockdale for El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail.

## FIRST ROAD SIGNS ON EL CAMINO REAL DE LOS TEJAS UNVEILED

The first signs marking the El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail were recently unveiled at Apache Pass outside Rockdale in a special presentation hosted by El Camino Real de los Tejas National Trail Association and the National Park Service. U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison was a featured speaker.

El Camino Real de los Tejas once connected a series of Spanish missions and posts from the Rio Grande to what is now northwestern Louisiana. Native Americans first developed trade routes that linked villages along the trail that was later traveled and influenced by Spanish explorers beginning in the 1680s. Congress designated El Camino Real de los Tejas as a National Historic Trail in 2004 as part of the National Trails System.

For more information about the trail, visit [www.nps.gov/elte](http://www.nps.gov/elte) or call 512.850.9073.



## AWARD RECOGNIZES HISTORIC TEXAS BUSINESSES

The THC encourages Texans to nominate a historic business in their community for special recognition. The Texas Treasure Business Award pays tribute to Texas' well-established companies that are more than 50 years old. The award recognizes their exceptional historical contributions toward economic growth and prosperity to the state.

The THC is expanding on the program, offering special recognition through a public display decal identifying the business as a Texas Treasure. Consumers will know when they spot the familiar Texas Treasure business icon, that they are doing business with a Texas-owned-and-operated business.

Visit the THC website at [www.thc.state.tx.us](http://www.thc.state.tx.us) to download a nomination form. For more information, call 512.463.6092.

# Making Your Case

## Cultivate Support in Tough Economic Times

By Amy Hammons, County Historical Commission Outreach Coordinator

CHCs invest time and energy in the livelihood of Texas communities. However, CHCs must be able to explain how their work results in community revitalization so others understand the value of CHC service in these challenging economic times. The following questions address timely issues that CHCs must be able to answer.

### What are some ways that CHCs promote economic development?

CHC grant programs typically supplement larger efforts, which means the grants enable and encourage historic rehabilitations and other projects that may not otherwise occur. Likewise, stewardship of historic resources promoted by CHCs enhances the livability of a community, attracting new residents and visitors.

**How do CHCs support Texas' tourism industry?** CHC events—tours, festivals, and homecomings—engage residents and visitors, and create opportunities to highlight local organizations and businesses. Also, experiencing the sites



Pecos CHC appointees (from left) Barbara Kipgen and Betty Cash, along with Dwayne Cash attend a regional workshop in Fort Davis.

CHCs protect and promote are the reasons many people decide to spend weekends and vacations exploring Texas.

**Why should counties allocate funding for CHCs?** Here is a handy bit of information that may bolster your confidence when discussing the value of CHC service. The 2011 CHC annual reports showed that for every \$1 counties invested in CHCs, a statewide average of \$5 worth of service was returned. These numbers were determined by applying the Internal Revenue Service's volunteer rate to the cumulative CHC volunteer hours

reported for the 2011 year of service. Increasing this rate of return are the many grants, donations, fundraisers, and in-kind services contributed to CHCs by their partners. These numbers show that CHCs are a good investment.

**How can CHCs convince others that preserving history benefits everyone?** CHCs can expand their support base by discussing the impacts of their work in a region, county, city, business, or industry. CHCs

should also find ways to enhance local events by providing a history component, activities, and expertise to other organizations.

People do not have to have a passion for history to be a passionate supporter of your CHC; they can be interested in diversifying the way a community generates economic development, or be interested in promoting tourism opportunities in connection with a CHC event. CHCs must communicate this connection and persuade others why their interests align with your accomplishments. ★

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### Our Mission

To protect and preserve the state's historic and prehistoric resources for the use, education, enjoyment, and economic benefit of present and future generations.

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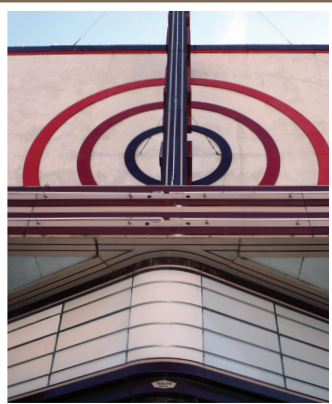
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## WHERE ON EARTH...IN TEXAS

**Know your Texas history?** Put your skills to the test by identifying the pictured site! The first three people who correctly identify the location will receive a prize and be named in the next issue of *The Medallion*. Send your answer to: *The Medallion*, P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711-2276; via fax to 512.463.6374; or email to [medallion@thc.state.tx.us](mailto:medallion@thc.state.tx.us). Limit one prize annually per contestant.

**Need a clue?** In honor of February's African American History Month, this image at right depicts a Texas institution that flourished as a result of the large number of freedmen in the area after Emancipation. Name the specific building.



**Answer to the photo from the last issue:** The site pictured (at left) is the Wichita Theater and Opera House in Wichita Falls, which opened in 1908 and hosted notable celebrities of the time such as William Jennings Bryan and Anna Pavlova. Congratulations to

the first three readers who submitted the correct answer: Nadine McKown of Wichita Falls, Eric Ray of Victoria, and Dick Smith of Bastrop. Thanks to all participants! ★

