2016 Panhandle Regional Meeting

Thursday, May 26, 2016
Texas Tech University Museum
3301 4th Street, Lubbock, Texas

Join us for preservation workshops and a tour of the Ranching Heritage Center and a closing reception.


Spirit of the West Spurs
Dickens County Preservation
CONTENTS

4 Letter from the Executive Director / Board of Directors
5 PT News and Events
6 Most Endangered Places Update
7 Bring Back the Mulkey
11 Louis Curtiss and the Snyder Depot
13 Stories from the Snyder Depot
14 Spirit of the West Spurs Dickens County Preservation
16 I Brake for Old Buildings
17 Architectural Styles of Texas Panhandle Courthouses
18 Preservation in Print
19 The Bassett House Front Porch
22 Professional Resource Directory
THIS MONTH, PRESERVATION TEXAS TRAVELS TO Lubbock to convene preservationists in the Panhandle for a day of workshops and networking. There is an increasing awareness of the importance of historic resources in Lubbock, Amarillo and many of the smaller communities in the region. In this issue, you will learn more about several historic places that are deserving of continued support and advocacy including the Mulkey Theatre in Clarendon, the Santa Fe Depot in Snyder and the very special historic places of Dickens County.

In this issue we inaugurate a new feature, spotlighting three new books that expand our understanding of historic buildings and places in Texas. We encourage your submission of recently published works to include in future issues. We are also building our resource library, and we thank Preservation Texas member Roger Waguespack for his donation of several dozen volumes on late 19th century architecture and its preservation. The printed word is, in some respects, an endangered part of our heritage that we must keep alive.

Over the next few months, we will be busy planning our East Texas Regional Meeting in Marshall in August, with a special focus on the preservation of historic railroad sites and structures. And we will continue planning for our 2017 Preservation Texas Conference, tentatively scheduled for February 27–March 1 in historic downtown Waco.
On February 18th, Preservation Texas hosted the 2016 Preservation Summit and Honor Awards Ceremony in Austin, Texas. With over 200 Texas preservationists in attendance, the event was a huge success.

The Summit included a series of education sessions at the Central Christian Church (1929) on a diverse range of topics including Texas Freedom Colonies, organizational sustainability and hands-on preservation training, as well as the announcement of our 2016 Most Endangered Places List at the historic bandstand in Wooldridge Park (1909). The Summit was followed by our 2016 Honor Awards Ceremony at the State Theater (1935), at which 19 awards recognized projects and people who represent the best of Texas preservation.
Most Endangered Places Update

Since 2004, Preservation Texas has announced an annual list of Most Endangered Places to rally Texans to step up and save them. Here is a progress report.

**North Region**

1 / Bluff Dale Bridge  
_Buff Dale, Erath Co. (2009)_

In January, the National Park Service approved additional documentation in support of the Bluff Dale Bridge (1891) National Register of Historic Places designation.

2 / Collinwood House, Plano, Collin Co. (2016)

Threatened with demolition to make way for a new park pavilion, the Plano City Council voted in April to delay demolition of the Collinwood House (c.1870) until August to allow proponents time to raise $1.5 million to save it.

**West Region**


After El Paso City Council rejected grant money to fund a downtown historic structures survey in 2015, local advocates secured County funding for the survey. It will document the diverse historic architecture of downtown El Paso including the Caples Building (1909) and Segundo Barrio (c.1880).

**Central Region**

4 / Magnolia Hotel, Seguin, Guadalupe Co. (2012)

Erin and Jim Ghedi discovered the Magnolia Hotel (c.1847) thanks to its listing as a 2012 MEP. Since that time the couple has purchased the Hotel, restored the exterior, made extensive repairs and opened it to the public for tours and events. Their rehabilitation of the old hotel is a model of collaborative preservation.

**South Region**

5 / Noah Cox House, Roma, Starr Co. (2011)

During a February visit to Roma, Preservation Texas staff found the drainpipe from a city-managed water facility draining onto the grounds of the Noah Cox House (c.1853), potentially undermining its foundation. PT posted the problem to social media, and within hours the water drainage had been stopped and the city manager committed to finding a permanent solution that does not impact the property.

Bring Back the Mulkey
BY ROGER ESTLACK

Clarendon’s Mulkey Theatre has come a long way since it was named to Preservation Texas’s 2011 Most Endangered Places List.

OR MORE THAN TWO DECADES, THE 1946 streamline moderne style theatre had been dark. Its neon was destroyed by man and the elements. Glass panels of its marquee were missing or broken, ceramic tiles on its front were cracked, doors were weathered beyond repair, and the building’s once gleaming façade was showing the signs of years of neglect. Inside, the theatre was a bleak shadow of its former self.

But today the Mulkey has a fresh new look and its modern LED and neon lighting creates an inviting glow in downtown Clarendon that serves as a beacon of hope for the future of the theatre and the town.
Following the publicity of its “endangered” status, the Clarendon Economic Development Corporation (CEDC) led efforts to raise funds to restore neon lettering on the theatre’s marquee in the summer of 2011 and then remodeled a former barbershop in the front of the building in 2012 to serve as the city’s official Visitor Center housing the CEDC and Chamber of Commerce office.

That same year, an architect was secured—Playa Design Studios—and soon work was underway on Phase One, the exterior renovation of the Mulkey. Pioneer General Contractors began the overhaul as stucco under the marquee was ripped out and replaced, the marquee itself was reinforced and raised, and the building’s electrical service was brought up to modern standards. Reproductions of the original wooden doors were installed, and a modern storefront window and door were added to the old barbershop. The sidewalk was replaced, the original poster boxes were refurbished, and the entire stucco façade was resurfaced with a modern material with the paint color embedded.
In addition to restoring the lights and neon on and under the marquee, the CEDC decided to “kick it up a notch” and add new neon encircling porthole windows on the façade and running across the top of the building and a new LED floodlight system that can bathe the building in literally thousands of programmable colors to match the season or the occasion.

With Phase One completed in 2013 and dedicated at the first annual Mulkey Block Party during Memorial Day weekend, Phase Two quickly got underway focusing on the refurbishment of the lobby.
and concession area and the re-plumbing of the original restrooms, including refinishing original doors and woodwork in time for the second annual block party in 2014.

Phase 3A included further electrical upgrades and the conversion of the old “cry room” as a handicapped accessible bathroom in 2015, and then Phase 3B continued that same year with the restoration of house lights and auditorium cove lights, the creation of handicapped seating area, and the extension of the theatre’s stage in order to accommodate future live performances.

To date, more than $515,000 has been spent to Bring Back the Mulkey Theatre, and supporters say another $500,000 is needed to complete the project, including the installation of heating and cooling systems, stage lighting, sound systems, a modern projection system, and theatre seating.

Already the Mulkey has played host to elementary school parties and high school class reunions and other community activities in addition to the annual Block Party. The goal is to not only restore the Mulkey as a functioning movie theatre but also rehabilitate it for use as a conference center and performance hall. In addition, the Mulkey will serve as a training facility for numerous groups that need adequate seating and access to such technologies as PowerPoint capabilities and sound systems, and it will also be available for public meetings.

With persistence and support there is no doubt that the Mulkey’s complete rebirth and reopening will be “coming soon.”

In 2007, Preservation Texas named Historic Small Town Theatres to its Most Endangered Places list. Theaters are local landmarks, often lavishly detailed and in the center of town, that deserve to be protected and restored.
THE 1911 SANTA FE RAILROAD DEPOT IN SNYDER, TEXAS IS one of the few surviving works of an under-recognized pioneer of American architecture, Louis S. Curtiss (1865–1924). The Canadian-born Curtiss was based in Kansas City, Missouri, where he designed over 200 works of architecture, many in an innovative yet idiosyncratic design style.

Curtiss is best known as the creator of the world’s first glass “curtain wall” office building, the 1909 Boley Clothing Company Building of Kansas City, considered by scholars to be a landmark in architectural history. Curtiss’s revolutionary curtain wall construction technique became a standard for multistory office buildings around the world, as reflected in the “glass box” skyscrapers of the latter half of the 20th century. In Texas, Curtiss is best remembered as the co-architect of Fort Worth’s Tarrant County Courthouse, a majestic Renaissance Revival design constructed in 1893–95, as well as several lost structures in Kingsville including the remarkable Casa Ricardo Hotel.
During his 30 years of practice, Curtiss developed an architectural language all his own rooted in the traditions of the 19th century but expressive of new 20th century innovations. His mature work of 1900-1920 exhibits a rich hybrid of influences, ranging from Art Nouveau, the Arts & Crafts Movement, as well as the Prairie Style of Frank Lloyd Wright. In fact, many of Curtiss’s designs are so unique that historic architectural surveys use the term “Louis Curtiss Style” to describe the structures.

The Snyder Depot was one of the four Texas commissions that Curtiss received from the Santa Fe Railroad. (More specifically the Pecos and Northern Texas Railway, a subsidiary of the Santa Fe.) All four depots matched in design and were constructed during the same period of 1909–1911. The construction method of the Texas depots was reinforced concrete, a relatively new building system that became commonplace during the new century. Architectural scholars have pointed out that Curtiss used concrete to his advantage not only in the building’s structure, but also in its ornamentation. Most of Curtiss’s commercial projects from this period were embellished with bold, angular exterior details that were made possible because of concrete’s elastic properties.

Of the Texas quartet of depots, only the Snyder and Post locations survive, with the Lubbock and Sweetwater structures having been lost, respectively, to fire and demolition. The Post Depot was rehabilitated as the site of the Post Chamber of Commerce in 2011 while the Snyder Depot remains shuttered and unused, with an uncertain future. Of all Curtiss’s 200+ buildings, only about 30 remain, many in endangered status.

As the preserved Boley Building continues its life as a beloved gem in the heart of Kansas City and the restored Tarrant County Courthouse endures as downtown Fort Worth’s central landmark, the Santa Fe Depot more than deserves an opportunity to be renewed as a landmark for the town of Snyder.

Larry Harris is an architect and photographer who lives in Houston. His website www.narrowlarry.com is dedicated to the documentation and public awareness of both modern architecture and folk art environments throughout the United States.
In 2011 the Santa Fe Depot in Snyder, Texas turned 100 years old. She saw the glory days of train travel. There were vacations and family visits that began from the depot. Many hellos and good-byes were said on the platform. She also saw her fair share of the “troop trains” coming through during World War II.

Homer Godair was a cashier for the Santa Fe in the 1950’s. He told us in 2011 that, “Those days were hectic. We’d be billing out 260 oil tanks every 24 hours. Snyder went from 9,000 people to 22,000 people overnight.” Despite the long, busy hours of billing, servicing the passenger trains, and monitoring the large bags of mail, both said they enjoyed their work and the city so much that they decided to stay.

Rona Sikes, longtime Snyder resident, remembered taking train trips to visit her grandparents in Bonham. It was during WWII, and with rations on tires and gas her family would board the train at midnight and arrive in Fort Worth in the early morning hours to make their connection to Bonham. The train cars would be crowded with troops but she vividly recalled them willing to give up their seats for others. At the age of 10 or 11, John Fenton, former resident of Snyder, recalled would ride the train with his cousin by themselves to visit their aunt and uncle in Hico.

Like many towns across the state and across our nation we lose valuable history when our buildings are torn down or fall down due to neglect. After years of conversation with BNSF amid intermittent pauses, the Depot is waiting patiently for a reprise, for new life, for a new purpose. Her fate hangs in the balance.

Paula Hatfield is Chair of the Scurry County Historical Commission.

“Those days were hectic. We’d be billing out 260 oil tanks every 24 hours. Snyder went from 9,000 people to 22,000 people overnight.”

—HOMER GODAIR
EWER THAN 3,000 RESIDENTS LIVE IN HISTORIC DICKENS COUNTY, WHICH includes Spur (the largest city), Dickens (the county seat), and a number of rugged ranches and scenic farms. Because of widespread decay and deferred maintenance following periods of economic depression, drought, and agricultural consolidation, the county’s threatened historic structures as a whole were named to Preservation Texas’s Most Endangered Places (MEP) list in 2015.

John and Malinda Askins (inset), first settlers of Dickens County, built the historic Askins Dugout at Dickens Spring (above).
Dickens County offers significant opportunities for historic preservation.

Progress on the restoration of the Dickens County Courthouse (1893), originally built by contractor E.L. Aiken, is stalled as a result of reduced funding. County Judge Kevin Brendle hopes that success in the Texas Historical Commission’s Courthouse Preservation Program Round IX Grant Cycle will fund the stabilization of the second floor and foundation footings, and put the courtroom back into service with the installation of an elevator.

Meanwhile in Spur, the restoration of the Palace Theater (1929) façade is nearly complete thanks to grant monies received from the Rachael Foundation. The ultimate goal of the restoration is to keep the Palace as an entertainment venue. Preservation Texas listed Historic Small Town Theaters to its MEP list in 2007, highlighting the threat to, but also the great potential of, these glorious buildings.

Spur’s dedicated citizens have been quick to replace the popular Quanah Parker historical exhibition, lost in a 2014 fire. A new display was built in the front windows of the Spur/Dickens County Museum so that it may be viewed by the public even after hours. A grant from the Texas Plains Trail Region helped with installation.

Spur is also planning to renovate the city’s Swenson Park Bathhouse and Swimming Pool (1937), possibly with a modified purpose. The Bathhouse, a 2010 MEP, was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps from local stone and petrified wood. The city is setting aside monthly contributions to match hoped-for grant funds. Their account stands at $21,000 towards a $50,000 goal.

Along Spur’s main commercial street, Burlington Avenue, several owners have made impressive repairs and improvements to existing buildings. The city boasts three permanent residences with combined work space located in historic buildings on Burlington. The City Council has been supportive of entrepreneurs with new creative ideas to mix business and residential use.

Dickens County offers significant opportunities for historic preservation, and the welcoming spirit of local residents promises a new era of investment much as the county experienced when the area was first settled more than a hundred years ago.

Barbara Brannon is the Executive Director of the Texas Plains Trail Region, part of the Texas Historical Commission’s Texas Heritage Trails Program, a heritage tourism initiative.

Spurr is a Tiny House-Friendly Town

In July 2014, the Spur City Council declared the community America’s first “Tiny” House-Friendly Town. The City created an ordinance that sets a few standard rules for building foundations and connections to city services, but there is no size stipulated for houses—contrasted to minimum square footage requirements of most larger cities. “The owners of these homes are excited to live in Spur because of the small hometown experience and the great Western heritage,” says city secretary Nancy Hale. The city’s motto, in fact, is “Spirit of the West.” And while newly constructed tiny houses and their new residents don’t immediately address Spur’s preservation challenges, they are bringing a healthy dose of attention to the community and, surely, some preservation-minded folks with it.
From Snyder to Clarendon: A Tour of Endangered Places in the Panhandle

With breathtaking natural vistas and the opportunity to explore historic towns between Snyder and Clarendon, Routes 208 and 70 also afford the chance to see several sites listed as the Most Endangered Places by Preservation Texas. For more information, visit PreservationTexas.org/Brake.

I brake for old buildings bumper stickers are free with Preservation Texas membership. Join or renew today! Take a picture of your car with the sticker visible at a historic place and it might be featured in a future newsletter. Email to info@PreservationTexas.org.
Architectural Styles of the Texas Panhandle Courthouses

BY LYMAN LABRY, AIA

The architectural styles of the courthouses in the Panhandle are varied.

1 / WHEELER COUNTY COURTHOUSE (Wheeler, 1925) displays a style that is Classical Revival with Georgian influence, and is the only known courthouse to be designed by architect E.H. Eads of Shamrock, Texas. The Courthouse accommodated and implemented new technologies—electricity, running water, gas, sewer—long before the rest of the county. Wheeler was the first of the 54 counties created out of the Bexar and Young Territories in 1876 by the Texas Legislature. Wheeler County Courthouse was re-dedicated October 16, 2004, as a restored courthouse through the Texas Historical Commission Courthouse project.

2 / ROBERTS COUNTY COURTHOUSE (Miami, 1913) is also Classical Revival style. It was designed by Architect Elmer George Withers and was constructed in 1913. Withers had 13 courthouses built in Texas and 12 of them survive. Roberts County Courthouse reflects the new technologies and formal aesthetic characteristic of courthouses built in the area.

3 / GRAY COUNTY COURTHOUSE (Pampa, 1929–30) is a Beaux-Arts style featuring carved garlands, shields and columns topped with elaborate capitals. The materials used are terra cotta, terrazzo and marble. The cornices at the roofline and pediments are intricate and detailed. Designed by architect W.R. Kaufmann, this is one of the finest and best-preserved examples of Beaux-Arts architecture in the area, reminiscent of the City Beautiful movement of the early 20th century. On April 12, 2003, Gray County Courthouse was rededicated after restoration through the THC Courthouse project.

4 / RANDALL COUNTY COURTHOUSE (Canyon, 1909) combines Renaissance Revival, Classical Revival and Italianate to form a style that is Texan in origin, Texas Renaissance style. Architect Robert George Kirsch, a Wisconsin native, designed the Randall County Courthouse that marked a dramatic stylistic switch from his Romanesque Revival courthouse designs to a more subtle and refined style.

5 / POTTER COUNTY COURTHOUSE (Amarillo, 1929) is one of the finest examples of Art Deco–Moderne courthouses in Texas. The architect, William C. Townes, drew on the latest vertical line design creating a simple yet graceful visage.

6 / DONLEY COUNTY COURTHOUSE (Clarendon, 1892) is a Romanesque Revival style, with heavy stone arches, and rusticated stonework particularly at the base. The Courthouse is asymmetrical as no two sides of the building are alike. It was designed by architects Charles Burger (later of Galveston) and Isaac H. Rapp of Trinidad, Colorado. Donley County Courthouse is the oldest functioning courthouse in the Texas Panhandle. Charles Goodnight was a prominent early citizen and one of the first County Commissioners. On July 4, 2003, Donley County Courthouse was re-dedicated as one of the THC’s restoration projects.

This article was reprinted from the November 2004 edition of the Preservation Texas Reporter.
Preservation in Print

Recently published works on historic preservation, architecture and cultural heritage in Texas.

The Garden of Eden: The Story of a Freedmen’s Community in Texas
DREW SANDERS, Texas Christian University Press (2016)
Tucked in a bend of the Trinity River a few miles from downtown Fort Worth, the Garden of Eden neighborhood has endured for well over a century as a homeplace for freed African American slaves and their descendants. Among the earliest inhabitants, Major and Malinda Cheney assembled over 200 acres of productive farmland on which they raised crops and cattle, built a substantial home for their children, and weathered a series of crises including false accusations of rape, attempted lynching and the murder of their eldest son. Major and Malinda Cheney’s great-great-grandson, Drew Sanders, recounts engaging tales of the family’s life against the backdrop of Fort Worth and Tarrant County history.

The Courthouses of Central Texas
BRANTLEY HIGHTOWER, University of Texas Press (2015)
The county courthouse has long held a central place on the Texas landscape—literally, as the center of the town in which it is located, and figuratively, as the symbol of governmental authority. As a county’s most important public building, the courthouse makes an architectural statement about a community’s prosperity and aspirations. In this in-depth, comparative architectural survey of fifty county courthouses, Brantley Hightower tells a compelling story about how society’s relationships with public buildings and government have radically changed over the course of time, as well as how architectural tastes have evolved through the decades.

A Guide to the Historic Buildings of Fredericksburg and Gillespie County
KENNETH HAFERTEPE, Texas A&M University Press (2015)
The architectural charm of the German Hill Country in Texas has attracted tourists and new residents alike for decades. In this guide to the historic buildings of Fredericksburg and Gillespie County, author Kenneth Hafertepe opens residents and visitors’ eyes not only to the rich details of the buildings, but to the stories and cultures of their designers, builders, and residents. This heavily illustrated book tracks the evolution of Fredericksburg architecture and guides readers through the streets of this once-westernmost German settlement, pointing out the log, fachwerk, and stone buildings that housed the town’s full-time residents, the weekenders, and the businesses of the nineteenth century.
The Bassett House
Front Porch

BY EVAN THOMPSON

We continue to learn a great deal about the Bassett House, a rural Texas landmark constructed in 1875 and quite possibly the oldest two-story brick structure in Limestone County.

Built during the political, social and cultural turmoil of Reconstruction, the house sits back from what is today a sleepy, unpaved road but that in earlier days was a much busier principal route connecting the small railroad community of Kosse with Marlin, the Falls County seat.

The Bassett House was, and still is, an impressive house constructed at a time when dwellings on neighboring farms were predominantly small, one-story, timber-framed structures. Yet one feature which the Bassett House had in common with most early Texas houses in the region was a porch.
Oriented to the south, the Bassett House porch was a response to the Texas climate, shading south-facing rooms from intense summer sun and providing a warm space to sit outside during the winter when the sun is lower on the horizon.

The current 2-story porch at the Bassett House was completely reworked in the 1960s. Fortunately, the discovery of an early family photograph album from the 1920s and 1930s provides evidence of the physical characteristics of two earlier porches. The first and likely original porch was a modest, one-story structure with a shed roof covered in wood shingles. At the time the photograph was taken, the porch was in disrepair, with its disintegrated shingles and buckled porch floor presenting a somewhat worn face to the public road (image 1).

The coming of the Kosse oil boom in 1922 meant that the Bassett family’s extensive property holdings were prime targets for oil leases, and an influx of cash provided them with the capital needed to replace the porch (image 2). The Bassetts replaced the one-story porch with a two-story structure that reflected early 20th century tastes, with brick piers supporting the tall porch columns and simple wood balusters arranged to decorative effect. The new porch also expressed a more direct architectural lineage to the plantation dwellings of antebellum southern aristocracy, reinforcing the family’s social standing in rural Texas.
The new two-story porch was functional. The center window on the second floor was converted to a door to provide access to the new second level, which served as a cool place to sleep on hot summer nights. One of the earliest photographs reveals that two iron beds were placed on the porch, but it probably did not take long to discover the merits of installing screens to protect sleeping Bassetts from mosquitoes. The second story was screened almost immediately after the porch was built (image 3).

The porch also became a place to pose for photographs, and those photographs provide excellent, detailed views that will allow us to accurately return it to its 1920s appearance. The 1960s porch is structurally failing, and extensive alterations resulted in the loss of the old brick piers, wood decking and columns. While we will be able to preserve some of the historic porch roof framing (most of which dates from the 1920s), the historic photographs will guide the way as we reconstruct lost elements (images 4 & 5).

Reconstruction of the earlier two-story porch will enable us to interpret the exterior of the Bassett House and its cultural landscape to reflect the farm and ranch’s 1920s heyday. It is during this decade that all three generations of the Bassett family were living in the house, the effects of the 1922 oil boom were in evidence, cotton tenant farming was nearing its peak on the Bassett family’s extensive acreage focus on breeding polled herefords intensified.

Historic architecture has much to say, and the Bassett House porch tells many stories.
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Watch a 30-minute film titled Restore, featuring a few of our historic projects: https://vimeo.com/142012361

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2016 EAST TEXAS REGIONAL MEETING

Join us on August 11, 2016 for our East Texas Regional Meeting in Marshall. We are planning a full day of historic preservation stewardship and advocacy training sessions focused on historic railroad sites and structures. For updates and registration details visit www.PreservationTexas.org/Marshall2016