



# BHA Banner Newsletter

Brownsville Historical Association

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## The Brownsville Historical Association Launches Online Collection

For decades, museums around the world have been pushing to make their collections more accessible to a global audience by making object records available online. Through digitization, the Brownsville Historical Association seeks to broaden access

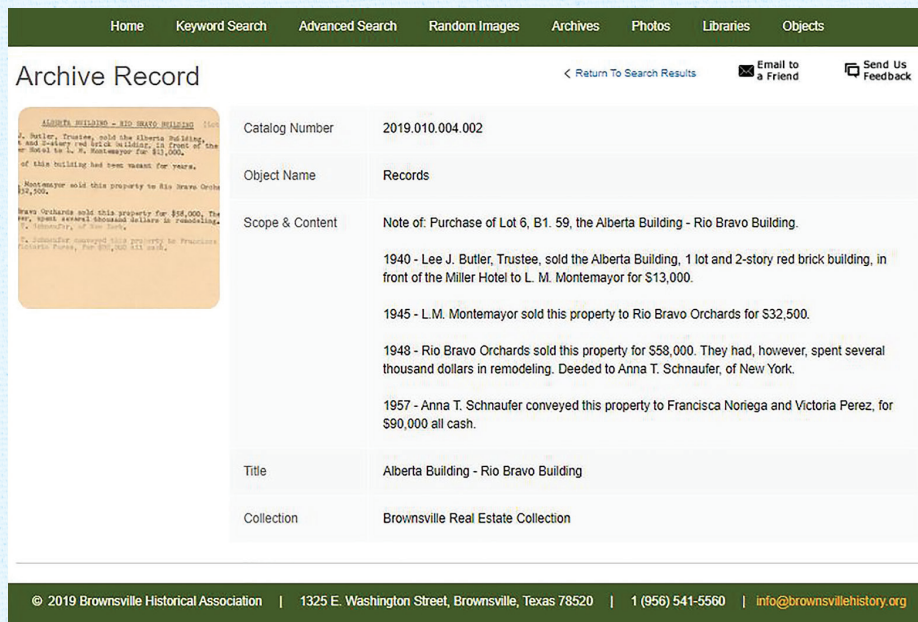
to its collections, safeguard them for future generations, speed research, add meaning, encourage collaboration and integrate its holdings across museum programming. In February, the BHA launched for the first time more than 100 artifacts and images from the museum's collection, including: documents, rare books, textiles and photographs. Smaller collections like the J.G. Fernandez

Real Estate Collection, which details 109 Brownsville property conveyances, and other muniments of title reflecting ownership of real estate, have already been posted on our website. While the museum regularly provides physical access to its collections, this only serves a very small percentage of researchers. Digital access allows anyone, from the casual enthusiast to history scholar, to finally discover the depth of our collections. Our ability to grant researchers access to high-quality images of artifacts online, allows us to serve the public and stay true to our mission of preserving and promoting our local history.

PastPerfect Online is a web publishing tool that allows us to share our collections online while keeping the data safe and

secure. With PastPerfect's Online familiar Google-like searching functionality, online visitors can search across every field in our database, or use the advance fields and filters for more complex investigations. Online visitors can also browse through the collections

using the archives, photos, libraries, or objects search tabs. PastPerfect Online includes e-mail forms that help us solicit feedback on items in our collections and provide online visitors the opportunity to request image reproductions. Additionally, online visitors can share items from the collection with friends and family through the e-mail



The screenshot shows a web interface for an archive record. At the top is a navigation menu with links: Home, Keyword Search, Advanced Search, Random Images, Archives, Photos, Libraries, and Objects. Below the menu is the 'Archive Record' page for 'ALBERTA BUILDING - RIO BRAVO BUILDING'. The page includes a thumbnail of a document, a table of metadata, and a detailed note of purchase.

Home	Keyword Search	Advanced Search	Random Images	Archives	Photos	Libraries	Objects
Archive Record		<a href="#">Return To Search Results</a>		<a href="#">Email to a Friend</a>		<a href="#">Send Us Feedback</a>	
Thumbnail	Catalog Number	2019.010.004.002					
Thumbnail	Object Name	Records					
Thumbnail	Scope & Content	Note of Purchase of Lot 6, B1. 59, the Alberta Building - Rio Bravo Building.					
Thumbnail	Title	Alberta Building - Rio Bravo Building					
Thumbnail	Collection	Brownsville Real Estate Collection					
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An example of an archive record on the BHA's digital collections website.

feature. The program tracks key metrics that helps reveal the impact of our collections and the interests of our online visitors. Along with traditional web metrics, PastPerfect's Online data measures collection-specific insights, such as object view counts and the most popular shared images. Based on these analyses, museum staff can identify and prioritize future digitization projects.

We invite you to explore our digital collection at [www.brownsvillehistory.org](http://www.brownsvillehistory.org). Click on the "collections overview" tab to display the drop down menu and select "digital collection". Please contact our Collections Manager, Aubrey Nielsen, for more information at [collections@brownsvillehistory.org](mailto:collections@brownsvillehistory.org).



## From the Executive Director

Dear BHA members,

Just as we were compiling content for our quarterly newsletter in March and busily preparing for our annual Taste of Texas fundraiser, we were hit with the news regarding COVID-19 and the national shut down. Since that time, we've all bore witness to how this insidious virus is impacting our families, our communities and our every way of life.

We closed our museums to the public on March 18 and staff worked to clean, disinfect and re-organize office space and galleries at each site. On March 25 we began to work remotely as mandated by the Cameron County Shelter-In-Place order. Staff kept themselves busy with zoom meetings, webinars for professional development, updating social media, editing videos, scanning documents and various other tasks. Although we are eager to get back to work on site on May 5, we know that the museum world will be forever changed and we are preparing for what the museum experience will look like going forward.

The Brownsville Historical Association needs you now more than ever. Never before has your membership meant so much to us. I know that there are many other charities that need attention, some in your local communities and others far away. It is my hope that now you make the BHA your giving priority.

Please know that we were able to receive our share of funds from the CARES Act, Payroll Protection Program and we are grateful that our staff remain dedicated and safe in this uncertain time. At the moment we have no control over visitor attendance, events, programming and our revenue generating facilities have practically shut down. We do have control over gifts and with your continued support we can overcome the current crisis.

Together we will rise to the occasion to meet the new challenge. We at the BHA, are eager to continue the good work of preserving and protecting our local history for future generations. I hope we can count on your continued support.

My best to you and your families.

Stay safe,

Tara Putegnat

*BHA Executive Director*

## INTERN SPOTLIGHT



*UTRGV spring semester interns on the porch steps of the Laureles Ranch House. From left to right: Yamilee Gonzalez, Matthew Arredondo, Mayra Walters*

*Typically, in our quarterly newsletter, we introduce to you a member of our staff. In this issue we would like to introduce to you our spring semester interns. The three student internship opportunities were made possible thanks to the Rudy de la Garza History Scholarship Endowment at UTRGV. We were grateful to have their help as the interns were hard at work assisting our Collections Manager with digitizing our collections as well as being tasked with the work of curating an exhibit, Lonesome Dove, at the Historic Brownsville Museum.*

**Matthew Arredondo** is a graduate student from UTRGV earning his Master of Arts in History with a focus on borderland history. As a

Brownsville native he finds this topic both interesting and relevant to the local community. Additionally, he feels his studies provide a unique insight to current issues concerning immigration in relation to historical trends. Matthew plans on furthering his studies at law school by applying his background in history to law and policy. During his time with the BHA, he has gained a new perspective on Brownsville and the historic downtown area by learning about its development, significant figures, and the connection to his studies. In addition to enriching his studies, Matthew credits his internship with fostering a closer relationship with some of his professors that are members of the BHA and expanding his network with other members of our community through events and programming.

**Mayra Walters** is a senior at UTRGV majoring in Sociology and History. She enjoys examining the different aspects of society in depth and learning about various cultures in her studies. Mayra hopes to one day work in a museum or as a professor. Given her interests and aspirations, she was very excited to take part in this internship where she felt she would be able to learn about Brownsville's history and culture along with the opportunity to immerse herself in the daily operations of a museum. She found her internship incredibly interactive and learned a lot about how much work goes into managing collections. Her favorite part was meeting with donors and "putting a face to the collection" in learning about the motives for wanting to donate and the sentimental attachment the items may have. Mayra feels her internship brought her two areas of study closer together by experiencing the culture of the BHA and museum life. She has seen the active side of history in daily museum operations and in handling collections. More importantly, she became a part of the BHA community by interacting with staff, members and visitors to the museums through programs and events.

**Yamilee Gonzalez** is a senior at UTRGV majoring in History. Yamilee sees the value in learning about our past and its impact. She hopes to become a history professor, preferably in the area of Mexican American History or become a museum professional. She found her internship interactive and was excited that every day brought a new adventure! Yamilee experienced handling collections firsthand and was able to curate an exhibit with her peers under the direction of our Collections Manager. The favorite part of her internship was helping digitize our collections knowing that her efforts would make collections accessible to the public and help future researchers. In addition to feeling her work was rewarding she hopes the experiences and knowledge she acquired during her time with the BHA is something she will carry with her into her professional life.

## Welcome!

### NEW BHA MEMBERS

Mariela Garcia  
Carlo Flores  
Kara Capistrano  
Martha E. Castanuela  
Tom & Cheryl Cox  
Viola R Currier  
Hill & Donell Dishman  
Joe & Nancy Gayman

Dennis & Faith  
Johnson  
Stephen Kayota  
Joseph P Linck  
Jessica Majors  
Pat McGrath-Avery  
Pat & Beth Pace  
Shannon Pensa

Abigail Pozulp  
Evelyn Staatz  
Andrea V Ressler  
Rita Vargas  
Jeffery L. Wilde  
Oscar Zertuche





**1. "Remembering UTRGV/TSC"**

Photo submission by Juan Aguilar

**2. Dancy Building-Cameron County Courthouse**

Photo submission by Angel Lee

**3. Market Square**

Photo submission by Sergio Lara

**4. Charro Days-Night Parade**

Photo submission by Carlos Nuñez

**5. Colonial Hotel**

Photo submission by Alyssa Garcia

**6. Immaculate Conception Cathedral**

Photo submission by Gilbert Hernandez

**7. Cueto Building**

Photo submission by Janet Evans

**8. Present day UTRGV/ TSC- Commanding Officer's Quarters of Fort Brown (1868)**

Photo submission by Jocelyn Delgado

**9. Resaca view from the Gladys Porter Zoo**

Photo submission by Graciela Alonso



## Historic Brownsville Photo Contest

May is National Historic Preservation Month and the Brownsville Historical Association was excited to invite the community to participate in a social media based photo contest to celebrate the historic resources that make our city a special place. We wanted to see how our community could capture the character of these places! The winner was determined by the greatest number of likes by 4:00pm, April 30, 2020. Presently, Brownsville has 15 National Registered designations, 21 Recorded Texas Historical Landmarks, 2 State Archeological Landmarks and 25 local designated primary resources belonging to public entities. In addition, 15 National Registered Historic Place designations, 22 Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks, and 32 local designated primary resources belonging to private owners. Brownsville also has been recognized for 4 Historic Districts and 2 National Registered Historic Districts.

We want to congratulate Graciela Alonso for her entry "Resaca View from the Gladys Porter Zoo" for receiving the most number of likes. Thank you to everyone who participated and made this contest a success!

**Sponsorships help make this newsletter possible!**

Please call us at 956-372-1515, to inquire about newsletter sponsorship opportunities, or visit our website at [www.brownsvillehistory.org](http://www.brownsvillehistory.org) for more information.



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*Thank you Order of the Brush, Dr. Tony Knopp and the Mexican Consulate in Brownsville for making our Winter programming successful!*

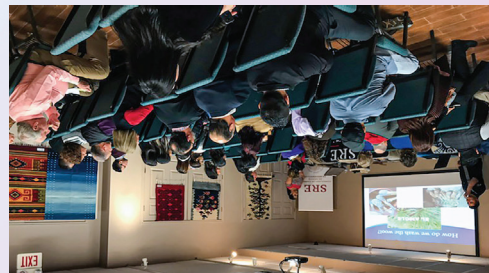
*Coffee and Culture Series: History of Mexico, from Independence to Present*



*Book signing with James Kahn*



*"Artisanal Wool Rugs from Oaxaca" Presentation*



*Winter Walking Tour: Fort Brown*



*Historical Happy Hour: Viva Charro Days!*



**Historical Happenings**