

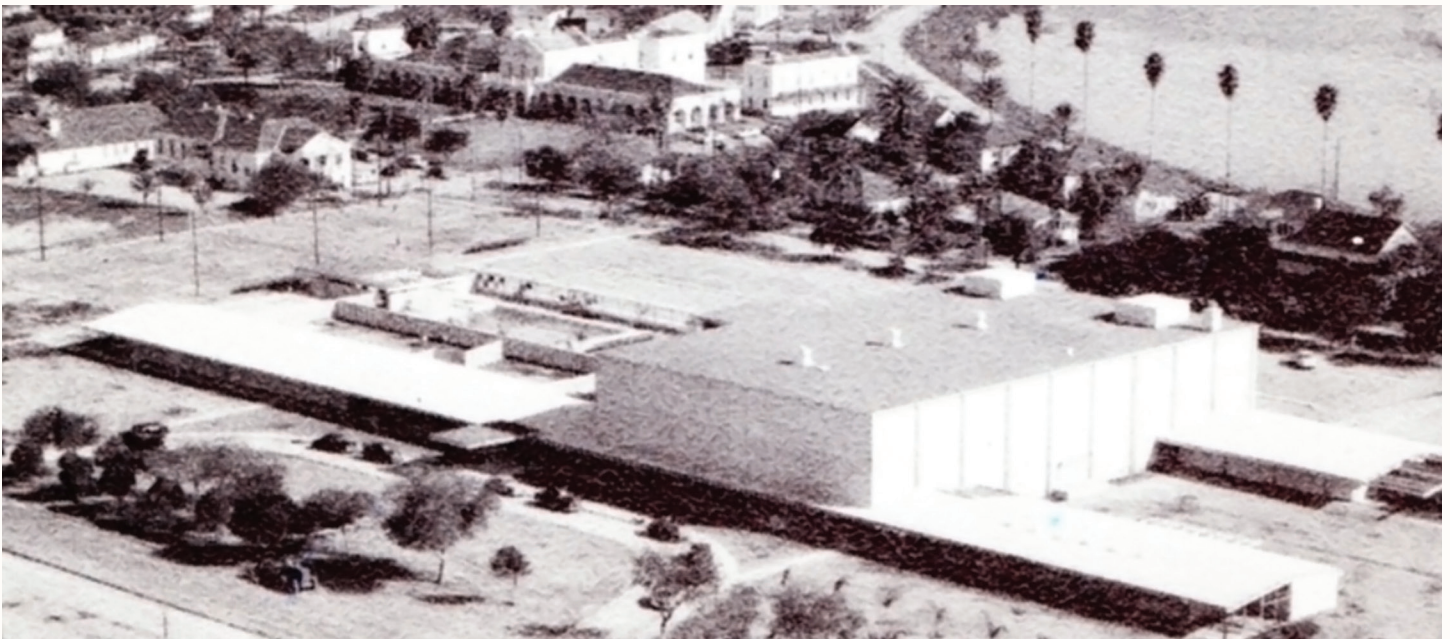
BHA Banner Newsletter

Brownsville Historical Association

Volume 4, Issue 3

July 2018

The Campaign for the Fort Brown Memorial Center (Part 2)



BHA Archives

City officials ultimately decided to fund some of the city projects with revenue bonds, which would be repaid through increased user fees (higher electricity charges, for example), and the remainder through an increase in the ad valorem property tax. The civic center bonds would be among those requiring a tax increase. The property tax would rise twenty-five percent, while electricity, water, and sewer fees would increase significantly. The city commission approved a vote on all projects, including the civic center, was set for December 9, 1950.

City leaders, especially Mayor Herbert L. Stokely and City Manager E. W. Watts, campaigned vigorously for the bond proposals, giving speeches and interviews, and mailing out “fact sheets”. *The Brownsville Herald* gave its editorial support, asking, “Who, lacking a selfish motive, can be against progress?” The League of Women Voters and the Brownsville High School Key Club weighed in on behalf of the projects. Future Mayor Antonio Gonzalez gave a speech over the radio endorsing the bonds the night before the election.

Bond supporters did not go unchallenged. Jose Cantu, a commentator on radio station KBOR, organized an anti-bond rally at the county court house, claiming that it was not “the time for taxpayers to assume more debts than we already have.” But the big news was the opposition of noted photographer and former

Mayor Robert Runyon, the “stormy petrel of Brownsville politics” (according to the *Herald*). Before a crowd of 400 at Missouri Pacific Park a week before the election, Runyon asserted that the improvement issues were not needed and that the city manager was guilty of mismanagement. Runyon had a long history of opposition to what he viewed as the elite establishment of the city, particularly Mayor Stokely. Jose Cantu revealed the extent of factional bitterness when he acknowledged that he would vote for the bonds if the city administration were in the hands of Runyon.

The heavy turnout on election day came as a “pleasant surprise” to the *Herald* and resulted in an overwhelming victory for supporters of the bond issues. The closest vote came on the civic center proposal, which passed by 1267 to 796. The voters had decided to make a major investment in the development of Brownsville.

Just over three years later on January 24, 1954, with Texas Governor Allan Shivers in attendance, the citizens celebrated the dedication of the Fort Brown Memorial Center and began to enjoy the fruits of that investment.

*By Dr. Anthony Knopp,
BHA Board member and UTRVG professor emeritus*

From the Executive Director...



This summer we have some great programs and exhibits at the Brownsville Historical Association's museums. In July, we host a wine

sampling at the Historical Happy Hour in partnership with Jones Liquor and L&F Distributors. We also begin a new program series every quarter, "From the Vaults". This program allows visitors an exclusive viewing of archives and artifacts on temporary exhibit from the Market Square Research Center on display at the museums. Additionally, the second part of the Brownsville's Pioneering Families exhibit will be on display at the Historic Brownsville Museum. Please see our calendar insert in this newsletter for more details.

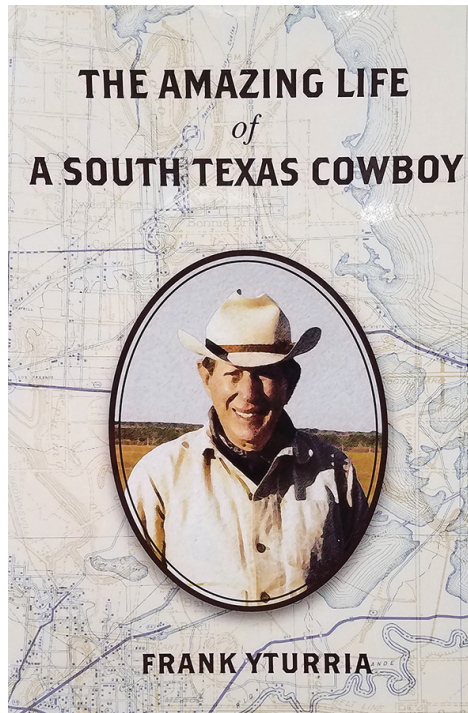
I would like to welcome new members to our Association and thank our dedicated sponsors for our various programs throughout the year. Your support allows the BHA to continue the important work of preservation, education and life-long learning experiences for visitors to our museums.

We plan to launch our newly designed website this summer with added features including: event registration, membership renewal, collections information, rental materials, videos, photographs and much more. You may also visit our Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts for updates and the latest news from the BHA. Hope to see you all soon.

Best wishes for an enjoyable summer!

Tara Putegnat

Executive Director



"The Amazing Life of a South Texas Cowboy"

by Frank Yturria.

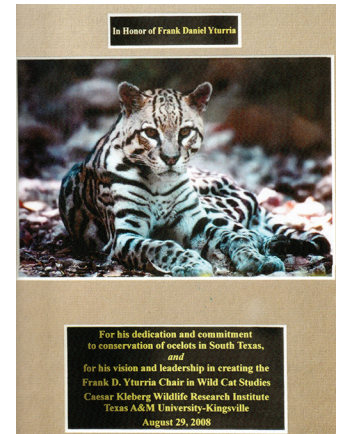
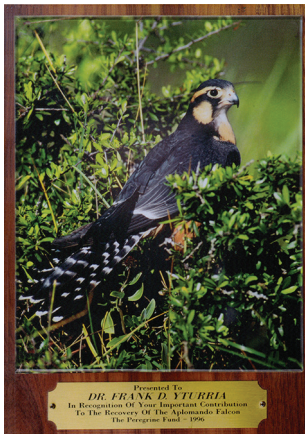
"The Amazing Life of a South Texas Cowboy", is the chronicle of the life and times of Frank Daniel Yturria.

While it may read like fiction, this book is the true story of a man whose tale is as inspirational as it is exciting--and often bigger than life.

Frank Yturria has worn many hats in his long and fascinating life: that of oilman, banker, soldier, public servant, restaurateur, Air Force officer, scholar, world traveler, and conservationist.

"The Amazing Life of a South Texas Cowboy" presents a history of the century through the story of Frank's life.

The book chronicles his generous support for the study and protection of South Texas wildlife, especially the endangered ocelot cats that now thrive on the Yturria Ranch under a perpetual wildlife easement. The BHA would like to thank Dr. Yturria for his generous donation of his autobiography available for purchase in our gift shops.



Welcome!

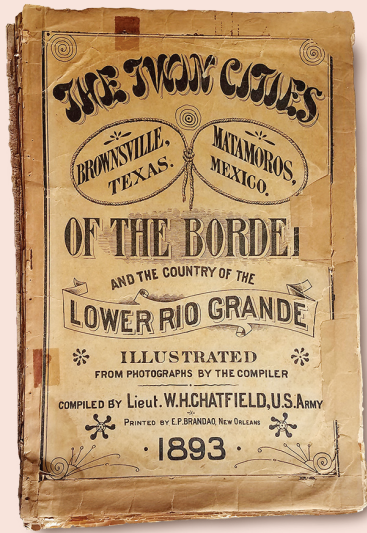
NEW BHA MEMBERS

Carmen Aldape	James & Frances McAllen	Kevin Shropshire
Briana Boughter	Monica Mendiola	Victoria Vasquez
Toni Garza	Billy Putegnat	Charles Waite
Tony & Gracie Gonzalez, Jr.	Emilio Sanchez	Lewis Yeargan
Crystal Martinez	Stefanie Saxton	

Sponsorships help make this newsletter possible! Please call us at 956-541-5560, to inquire about newsletter sponsorship opportunities, or visit our website at www.brownsvillehistory.org for more information.

PAGES FROM THE PAST

The Twin Cities of the Border and the Country of the Lower Rio Grande



Behind a locked vault at the Brownsville Historical Association's Market Square Research Center lies an original 1893 print of *The Twin Cities of the Border and the Country of the Lower Rio Grande*. Composed by Lieut. W. H. Chatfield of the United States Army, the pamphlet provides a compendium of information regarding the Brownsville-Matamoros area and its early history and

commerce. This artifact serves as a valuable reference guide for locals and researchers alike. Today, the BHA is seeking financial support for the conservation, restoration, and reproduction of the original 1893 pamphlet. For information on this artifact, please call 956-541-5560.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

We are excited to proudly highlight a staff member in each newsletter and introduce you to our committed team.

In this issue we introduce you to Jason Walker, Grant Writer/Museum Assistant.

Jason spends most of his time at the Association researching various grant opportunities. He also helps with research requests and is always eager to help at the reception desk and at various programs and events. Jason first came to the BHA as a volunteer and we are grateful for his commitment.



Jason Walker
Grant Writer/Museum Assistant

Since then, Jason helped successfully write the grant to the Brownsville Community Improvement Corporation (BCIC) for the Market Square building second floor restoration project in the amount of \$180,000.00. Jason has helped the BHA with various other grants awarded over the past year. His hard work and positive attitude is reflected in everything he does for the Brownsville Historical Association.

Thank you for all that you do, Jason!

UPCOMING EVENTS

August Historical Happy Hour: Game Night

When: Friday, August 17, 2018 – 5 to 7pm

Where: Historic Brownsville Museum, 641 E Madison Street

Cost: Free for BHA members, \$5 pre-pay, \$10 at the door

For more information call: 956-548-1313

It's game time! Join us at this month's happy hour for a night filled with your favorite board games. Feel free to bring your own as well. Be sure to check our Facebook event page for this month's featured beers. Attendees must be 21 years & older. Thank you L&F Distributors for making this program possible!

September Historical Happy Hour: Lotería

When: Friday, September 21, 2018 – 5 to 7 pm

Where: Historic Brownsville Museum, 641 E. Madison Street

Cost: Free for BHA members, \$5 pre-pay, \$10 at the door

For more information call: 956-548-1313

In celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, this month's theme will be "Lotería". Be sure to check our Facebook event page for this month's featured beers. Attendees must be 21 years & older. Thank you L&F Distributors for making this program possible!

THANK YOU!

3rd Annual Father's Day Classic Car Show

The Brownsville Historical Association would like to thank our sponsors McNair & Company, Daniel Tijerina, Tipton Auto Group, Fernando San Miguel, and Pep Boys.

UPCOMING EXHIBITS

Brownsville's Pioneering Families Exhibit, Part II Brownsville into the 21st Century

When: July 10, 2018 – September 29, 2018

Where: Historic Brownsville Museum
641 E Madison Street

Cost: Exhibit is included with paid museum admission.

For more information call: 956-548-1313



From New Year's Day 1900 to December 1950, Brownsville, much like the rest of the US, was focused on the science of transportation. Civic groups assembled around the call for railroad service, and

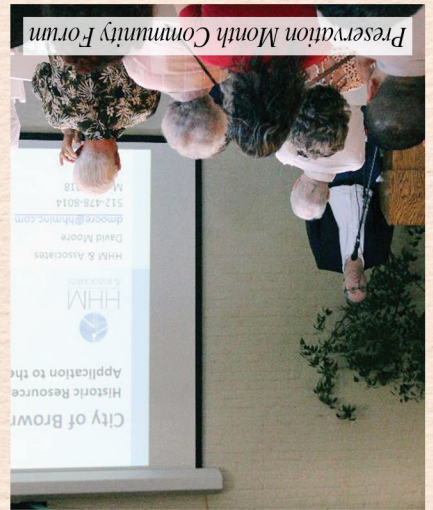
in 1904, the goal was brought to fruition. Efforts were then turned to the skies, and within the following twenty-five years that dream became a reality. Another five years beyond that, Brownsville had a world-class seaport. The BHA is proud to spotlight the individuals who contributed to these developments in our latest exhibit *Brownsville into the 21st Century* (Brownsville's Pioneering Families Exhibit, Part II). Curated by Eugene Fernandez.

Brownsville Historical Association
1325 E. Washington Street
Brownsville, Texas 78520
956.541.5560 Fax: 956.435.0028
Email: info@brownsvillehistory.org
www.brownsvillehistory.org

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage

PAID

Permit No. 47
Brownsville, TX



Preservation Month Community Forum



Market Square Lecture with Roberto Ruiz

Historical Happenings



Father's Day Classic Car Show



Frank Yturria Book Signing



Historical Marker Dedication ceremony



Old Fashioned Ice Cream Social