



Banner Newsletter

Brownsville Historical Association

Volume 8, Issue 4

October 2022

On to the next 75 years!

This publication will end our year-long celebration of our 75-year anniversary and we can't help but feel a little nostalgic. It's hard to believe that the Association has grown to include so many museums and historical properties.

In 2017, the Brownsville Historical Association came to a final agreement with the Historic Brownsville Museum Association and the merger was made official. The Historic Brownsville Museum became our sixth museum in the Mitte Cultural District and we are eager to announce that we have big plans for museum re-interpretation next year. The BHA has also committed to work with the City of Brownsville to make much needed repairs and maintenance to this historic landmark.

More recently, in 2021, we signed our latest merger agreement with the Costumes of the Americas Museum. Last month, we opened the doors to the

museum at its new location and we are delighted to see visitors learn more about the priceless collection of textiles and costumes collected for decades by Brownsville women. Come visit the new museum soon!



HISTORIC BROWNSVILLE MUSEUM



COSTUMES OF THE AMERICAS MUSEUM

We cannot deny that we have plenty of work ahead of us with limited staff and funding. Nevertheless, we are optimistic that the next 75 years will be just as remarkable as the last. Thanks to membership support and donor contributions we are able to continue our all-important mission of preserving and protecting our local history; we truly appreciate your participation over the years.

The BHA wishes you and your family a safe and happy holiday season. Merry Christmas and Happy 2023!

Tara Putegnatt
Executive Director



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We're looking good!
The BHA has adopted a new logo! Influenced by architectural design and features, the logo encompasses the image of a window with a new color palette.

BHA collaborates with the Bullock Texas State History Museum

The Brownsville Historical Association is excited to announce that various pieces from the costume collection are on loan at the Bullock Texas State History Museum in Austin for an upcoming exhibit.

The exhibit, *Hilos de Tradición: Dresses of Mexico*, will be presented in Spanish and English from Oct. 1, 2022 through Feb. 26, 2023 and will feature 37 traditional outfits representing the different states of Mexico.

"Hilos De Tradición marks the first time the Brownsville Historical Association works in partnership with the Bullock Texas State History Museum," said Aubrey Nielsen, collections manager for the BHA. "Before this exhibit, the collection has only been displayed in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. We are excited by this opportunity to share the collection with a larger audience."

The costume collection the Bullock is displaying was formed by the Pan American Round Table (PART) movement that began in San Antonio in 1916. The Table was founded to help promote friendliness and understanding among the women of the Western Hemisphere. In 1932, members of the Brownsville PART began collecting costumes from different parts of the Americas as a method of learning more about these countries and their women. Over the years, the collection has grown to be one of finest costume collections in the Western Hemisphere.

"We're very excited to bring this beautiful collection from Brownsville to the Bullock," said Margaret Koch, Bullock Museum director. "Given the rich Mexican heritage of the State of Texas, we look forward to our visitors connecting with the artistry and culture represented."

The exhibition begins with an exploration of Indigenous and European influences on textiles and the ways in which they have changed. The outfits are organized by themes that help visitors appreciate the weaving and embroidery traditions on display and how the dresses are used in dance, fiesta and ceremonies. Visitors of all ages will also have the opportunity to touch and examine cloth, embellishments, embroidery and woven designs, and try out basic embroidery stitches through interactive elements within the exhibition.

The public is invited to explore the exhibition during its opening weekend at H-E-B Free First Sunday on Oct. 2. Exhibition admission is free from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m., and family activities will take place from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Museum members will celebrate the opening of the exhibition with an exclusive reception on Thursday, Oct. 6 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., and events highlighting the regional food, drink, music and dance of Mexico will be offered throughout the run of the exhibition.

For more information about the exhibit, please visit <https://www.thestoryoftexas.com/.../threads-of-tradition>



Welcome! **NEW BHA MEMBERS**

Martha Blanton
Nancy Davis
Amy Hoag

Bill & Sandy Maxwell
Erica Ramirez
Tracy Stillman

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 for more information.

BROWNSVILLE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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956.541.5560 Fax: 956.435.0028 | www.brownsvillehistory.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

Exhibit: Hidden in Fabric: Stories of Tradition and Culture

Location: Costumes of the Americas Museum, 1004 E. Sixth Street, Brownsville, TX
Duration: Through Feb. 28, 2023
Cost: Regular museum admission prices apply

Shades of Haunted History Walking Tour: Downtown Brownsville

When: Thursday, Oct. 13, 2022
Time: Two separate tour groups: First at 6:30 p.m., the second at 7:30 p.m.
Where: Brownsville Heritage Museum, 1325 E. Washington Street, Brownsville, TX
Cost: \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members. Sorry no refunds.
To register please call: 956-541-5560

Archeology Fair

When: Saturday, Oct. 15, 2022 Time: 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Where: Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park, 7200 Paredes Line Rd, Brownsville Cost: Free and open to the public

Haunted History Tour of The Old City Cemetery

When: Wednesday, Oct. 19, 2022 Time: 6:30 p.m.
Where: Old City Cemetery, 1004 E. 6th St., Brownsville, TX
Cost: Free. Registration required with the Brownsville Public Library; please call (956) 548-1055 or email bpl@brownsilletx.gov.

Shades of Haunted History Walking Tour: Downtown Brownsville

When: Friday, Oct. 21, 2022
Time: Two separate tour groups: First at 6:30 p.m., the second at 7:30 p.m.
Where: Brownsville Heritage Museum, 1325 E. Washington Street, Brownsville, TX
Cost: \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members. Sorry no refunds.
To register please call: 956-541-5560

Historical Happy Hour: Halloween Costume Contest

When: Friday, Oct. 28, 2022 Time: 5 - 7 p.m.
Where: Historic Brownsville Museum, 641 E Madison Street, Brownsville, TX
Cost: Free for BHA members, \$10 when you RSVP, \$15 at the door. Sorry, no refunds.

Murder, Mystery, Mayhem Tour

When: Saturday, Oct. 29, 2022 Time: 8 p.m.
Where: Old City Cemetery, Corner of 5th Street & E. Madison Street
Cost: \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members. Sorry no refunds.
To register please call: 956-548-1313

BHA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Historic Brownsville Museum

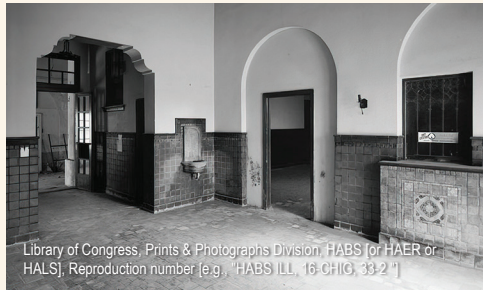
The Spanish Colonial Revival -style depot was designed by architect, Leonard McCoy, from the Houston Southern Pacific Railroad office in 1928. The building's most notable features include a red tiled roof, curved parapets, and a vast array of cast-stone details. After its closure in 1952, the passenger depot served as a cotton storage facility until the late 1970s. The depot remained vacant and neglected until it was acquired by the City of Brownsville in 1982. During this time, the mayor of Brownsville, Ruben Edelstein, appointed a committee consisting of Mary Yturria, Ruby Wooldridge, Tom Fleming, and Robert Vezzetti, to help identify the potential use of the building. Based on findings from the architectural study completed by Richard Myscuc of San Antonio, it was recommended the former depot be rehabilitated as a museum. As a result, a formal committee was established to help develop and promote



Southern Pacific Railroad Depot Facade 1979



Historic Brownsville Museum Facade 2022



Southern Pacific Railroad Depot Interior 1979



Historic Brownsville Museum Interior 2022

the new museum. Individuals such as Otis Parchman, Mary Yturria, and H.E. (Gene) McNair would serve as chairmen of the committee, assisting the Historic Brownsville Museum in receiving its State Charter in 1984. From 1984 to 1985, the Historic Brownsville Museum underwent an estimated \$150,000-\$200,000 restoration. The Historic Brownsville Museum would officially open its doors to the public with a grand opening of over 750 people on March 2, 1986. The museum quickly expanded with the construction of the Mary Yturria Education Center in 1990 and an interior exhibit reinterpretation in 2004. In 2017, after a year of collaboration and negotiation, the Historic Brownsville Museum officially merged and came under the management of the Brownsville Historical Association. Today, the BHA is moving towards a reinterpretation of the Historic Brownsville Museum with the hopes of focusing on the city's rich transportation history.

Costumes of the Americas Museum

In the early 1930s, an honorary member of the Mexico City Pan American Round Table, Bessie Kirkland Johnson, moved to Brownsville, Texas. When she moved to Brownsville, Mrs. Johnson brought with her a collection of authentic Mexican costumes and handicrafts. Mrs. Johnson challenged each member of the Table to acquire a costume from her assigned country. She saw the acquisition of costumes from different parts of the Americas as a method of learning more about these countries and their women. The ladies took up Mrs. Johnson's challenge, and thus began one of the finest costume collections in the Western Hemisphere. In 1997, PART I was approached by the Dean Porter Park Renovation Committee and was offered the opportunity to occupy part of the Mitte Cultural Education Center within the park. In order to protect the Table's collection, the Pan American Round Table I Costume Corporation, a recognized tax-exempt corporation, was formed. The Table transferred the entire collection to the Corporation for safekeeping and



Costumes of the Americas Museum Exterior 2005



Costumes of the Americas Museum Interior 2018

for exhibit display in the museum. The museum opened its doors in 2005. Over the years, the collection has grown - the result of acquisitions and gifts from those belonging to PART I and local Brownsville PART II members, from private collections, from friends of the Table, and bequests. After many successful years in Dean Porter Park, the CAM came to an agreement with the Children's Museum of Brownsville, who desperately needed space for expansion, to move the collection and its museum to a new location. As a result, in 2021, the Costumes of the Americas Museum reached a merger agreement with the Brownsville Historical Association. From June 2021 to August 2022, the BHA began an estimated \$200,000 renovation of the Old City Cemetery Center for the relocation. The project consisted of roof repairs, window replacements, HVAC upgrades, and landscaping improvements. On September 11, 2022, the museum opened its doors once again to the public at its new location.



Costumes of the Americas Museum Facade 2022



Costumes of the Americas Museum Interior 2022



CAM Grand Opening



CAM Grand Opening



CAM Grand Opening



CAM Grand Opening

HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS

CAM Grand Opening
Lunada Artisan Market 2022
Cocktails with a Curator



Cocktails with a Curator



Cocktails with a Curator



Lunada Artisan Market 2022



Cocktails with a Curator



Lunada Artisan Market 2022



Lunada Artisan Market 2022



Lunada Artisan Market 2022

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