



2023 Annual Report

FRIENDS OF THE TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION



Sally Anne Schmidt

Chair

Dear Friends,

The 2022-2023 fiscal year was a banner year for the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission (FTHC), and we are tremendously grateful for all of our donors and supporters who made it happen.

As the philanthropic partner to the Texas Historical Commission (THC), our role has always been to ensure that the projects and programs of the THC find the public-private funding they require to be truly successful. The growth the THC has experienced in recent years has meant that our role has become even more essential. When new sites are added to the roster, capital improvements are often needed to bring them up to the THC's high standard of preservation. Existing sites require attention and care, too, and the THC's public programming initiatives continue to evolve and expand. All of this, as well as the growth of our own internal programs, means we have been busy!

As FTHC chair, I'm excited to share all the ways we worked to preserve the real places and real stories of Texas this past year. From land acquisitions to critical program support, we have helped the THC accomplish its 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." Thank you for being a part of the effort to ensure a lasting legacy for future Texans.

In gratitude,

Greetings!

We are excited to share the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission's Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Annual Report with you. Following a year of resounding successes—capital projects completed and education and stewardship programs supported—we wanted to take this moment to thank you for your support and engagement with our mission.

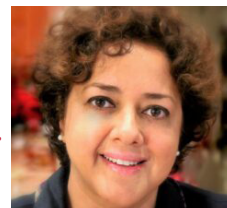
In the pages that follow, we are thrilled to share highlights of the work we did during this past year and recognize the incredible community, partnerships, and collaborations that made it all happen. The 12 months covered by this report saw the FTHC working on some out-of-the-box solutions to help support the THC's preservation mission. From software and applications projects supporting heritage tourism and economic development to transactions acquiring critical properties to expand the THC's historic sites, the FTHC used unique methods and tools to ensure that the real places and real stories of Texas are preserved and shared. Of course, we continued to build philanthropic support for the traditional preservation, education, and stewardship programs across the agency as well.

For all of this work, we are deeply grateful to you—our friends—for your support. It is your generosity and leadership that allows the FTHC to do its work as a strong, nimble, and fully present philanthropic partner to the Texas Historical Commission, and that has helped strengthen the foundation needed for future efforts.

As we continue to preserve and share the stories and histories of all Texans, building community through storytelling, we look forward to your feedback.

Warmly,

Anjali Kaul Zutshi
Executive Director



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John Crain, Dallas
John Liston Nau, III, Houston

FTHC Staff

Traci Anderson, Office and Finance Manager
Danielle Blanco, Development Manager
Kristy Peloquin, Development Manager
Anjali Kaul Zutshi, Executive Director

our mission

is to partner with the Texas Historical Commission to preserve and protect the real places and real stories of Texas and all Texans, securing philanthropic resources to ensure a lasting legacy for future generations.

core values

We operate with authenticity, dependability, and integrity.

We respect the varied and complex stories of Texas.

We believe in inclusive and proactive collaboration. We value all donors and their support.

our vision

Everyone has a place in Texas history.

© 2024 Friends of the Texas Historical Commission.
Photos courtesy Texas Historical Commission unless otherwise noted.



Capital Support

The Friends of the Texas Historical Commission is proud to support the Texas Historical Commission in its efforts to preserve and protect historic sites across the state, ensuring they are robust destinations for place-based education about Texas history. The number of sites under the Texas Historical Commission's stewardship and care has increased year after year. In FY 2023, the total number of historic sites rose to 36, with the state legislature providing significant funds to support improvements, operations, and maintenance at these sites. However, the need for capital funds to improve existing visitor facilities or build new ones, and to create new and improved visitor experiences at the sites far exceeded the available state funding, requiring the FTHC to bring in philanthropic support to complete this work. Working closely with the Historic Sites Division of the THC, the FTHC rose to the challenge on a number of key capital projects.

San Jacinto Battleground SHS (left)
 During FY 2023, the FTHC raised and set aside \$500,000, to match an equal amount in a Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant, for the acquisition of the Almonte Surrender site as an addition to the San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site. We are grateful to THC Chairman John L. Nau, III, The Fondren Foundation, Wortham Foundation, The Meadows Foundation, The Brown Foundation Inc., Albert & Ethel Herzstein Charitable Foundation, Strake Foundation, and Welcome Wilson Jr. for their support of this campaign. In addition, the FTHC coordinated with the San Jacinto Battleground site staff on the completion of a comprehensive archeology master plan for the site. Funding for this master plan was provided by The Meadows Foundation and The Summerlee Foundation.



Caddo Mounds

The FTHC launched a capital campaign for the construction of Phase 2 of the Caddo Mounds Cultural Center at Caddo Mounds State Historic Site in Alto, and received a grant of \$50,000 from The Summerlee Foundation for design and engineering work.



Goodnight Ranch

In FY 2023, the FTHC began exploring potential acquisitions of land adjacent to the historic site to preserve the viewshed of the Goodnight home and preserve critical archeological resources on what is part of the historic JA Ranch.



Washington-on-the-Brazos Campaign

The FTHC continued to work with the Washington-on-the-Brazos Historical Foundation on its campaign for the capital improvements project at the site.



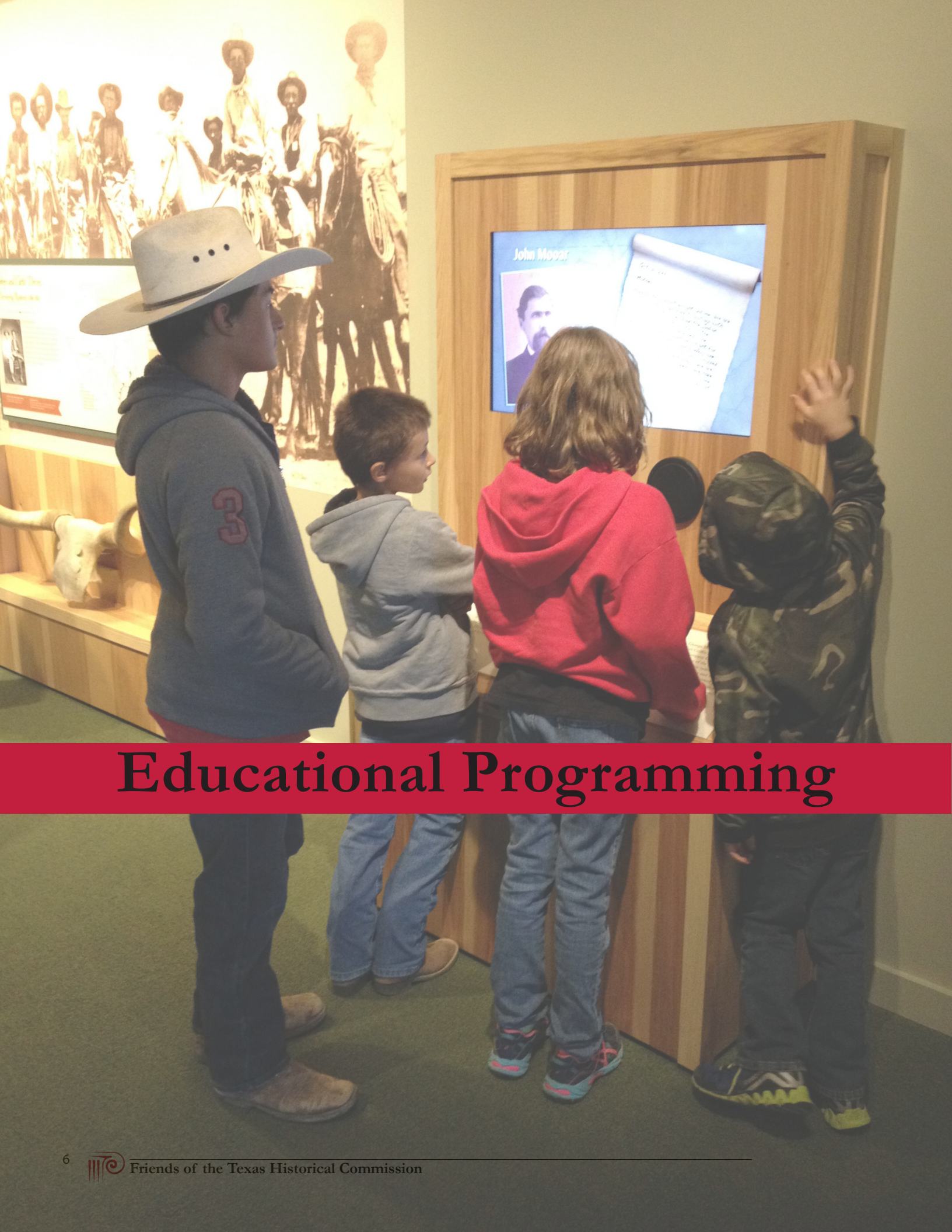
Eisenhower Birthplace

The FTHC continued fundraising for the Eisenhower Birthplace Capital Improvements project with grants received from the Robert E. and Evelyn McKee Foundation and the W.B. Munson Foundation.



Bush Family Home Property Acquisitions

In March 2023, the Friends acquired two properties adjacent to the Bush Family Home State Historic Site in Midland. These acquisitions were made possible by a gift from THC Chairman John L. Nau, III, and the properties were conveyed to the THC in April.



Educational Programming

K - 12

In FY 2023, we continued to support the Texas Historical Commission in bringing Texas history to life for K-12 children through place-based education programs at historic sites. We launched the THC Virtual Learning Portal, a free and interactive platform for discovering the real stories of Texas history from anywhere in the world (learning.thc.texas.gov). The Virtual Learning Portal offers lesson plans and virtual field trips for several THC historic sites, providing students an opportunity to learn about Texas history through focused themes such as Indigenous Texas and Exploration, the Texas Revolution, the Republic of Texas, the Civil War and Reconstruction, Entrepreneurial Texas, and World War II.



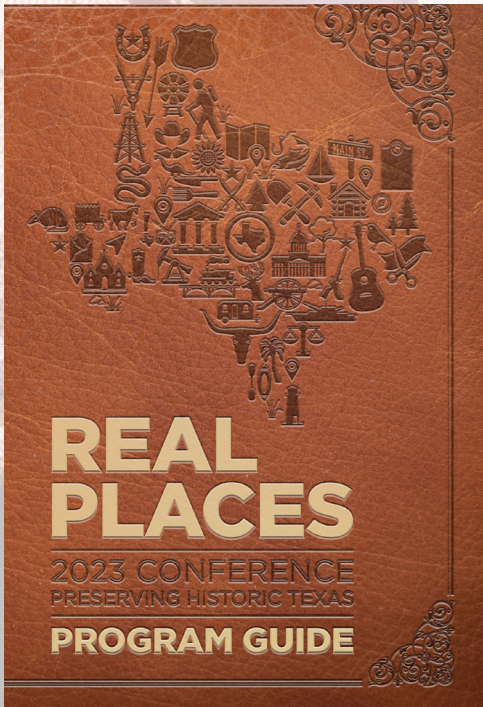
post secondary



Ensuring that varied voices and stories are included in the work of historic preservation in Texas requires us to examine not only the stories we are discovering and telling but also who is doing that work. In order to tell the full and rich stories of our past authentically, the FTHC is committed to bringing all voices and perspectives to our work to study, interpret, and preserve.

Since 2006, the FTHC's Preservation Scholars program has connected students from underrepresented ethnic and cultural communities with internship opportunities with the THC, providing an opportunity for these students to learn about the work of preservation in Texas and to lend their unique voices to the effort. The 2023 cohort of Preservation Scholars included Algae Guzman (Texas A&M University), Christine Sanchez (University of Texas at Austin), Dzifa Tse (Sam Houston State University), Gilbert Martinez (University of Texas at San Antonio), Lauren Huffmaster (Rice University), Logan Dovalina (University of North Texas), and Miriam Chen (Texas A&M University).

professional development



The FTHC, in partnership with the Texas Historical Commission and with support from title partner Phoenix 1 Restoration and Construction, LLC, co-hosted the seventh annual Real Places Conference in Austin on February 1-3, 2023. As the state's premier historic preservation conference, Real Places provides a vital opportunity for preservation professionals and volunteers—county historical commissions, historic preservation officers, architects and engineers, historians, archeologists, curators, interpreters, managers of museums and historic sites, scholars, students, as well as THC staff and partner organizations—to hear and learn from national experts as well as their own colleagues and partners about preservation best practices. With both in-person and virtual offerings, 2023's robust schedule included renowned keynote speakers, workshops, technical preservation sessions, and more.

The Real Places 2023 Conference was a resounding success, despite a significant weather event, with a total of 796 registrations (a Real Places record since its inception in 2016).

Real Places 2023 Keynote Speakers

Clockwise from top left: Sara Bronin, Chair of the U.S. Advisory Council on Historic Preservation; Joe Veneto, founder and principal of Veneto Collaboratory; Caroline Klibanoff, Executive Director, Made By Us; Dan Goodgame, Editor in Chief, Texas Monthly; Kelli Phillips, Executive Producer and Co-Host, "Texas Country Reporter"; John Phillip Santos, University Distinguished Scholar in Mestizo Cultural Studies, University of Texas at San Antonio; and Jeff Greene, Executive Chairman and Founder, EverGreene Architectural Arts.



“ I attended the **‘Together in the Sandbox’** training last year and learned so much! One of the most memorable things that stuck was the concept of really thinking about what kind of board you want and trying to make it representative. I was new to being on a board and I really appreciated the insights I gained from this training. ”

Workshops



Our nonprofit and development workshops are a way for the FTHC to pay it forward by supporting others in the nonprofit field with training resources. In FY 2022-2023, we hosted four workshops on topics ranging from fundraising to budgeting and stewardship. In September 2022, we welcomed Abeja Solutions for a virtual master class in year-end appeals called “The Power of Pitch—Master Your Year-End Appeal.”

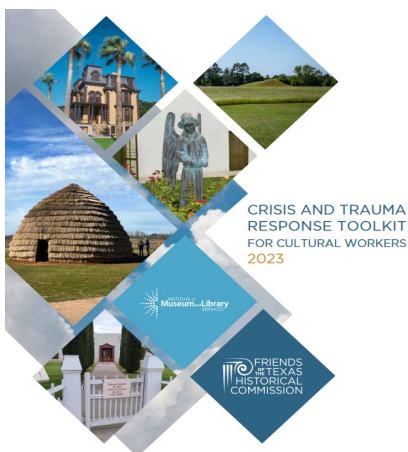
Virtual Events

The COVID-19 pandemic encouraged the FTHC, as it did other organizations, to think outside-of-the-box to reach our constituency. The result was the FTHC Virtual Events Program, which has blossomed into a widely respected and much cherished initiative. These casual and free educational events have reached thousands of individuals across Texas, much of the United States, and even abroad, with an emphasis on telling the real stories of Texas. Our programming often sheds light on stories reflecting and celebrating the rich and complex nature of Texas’ historical narrative, and the broad variety of cultures in our state. FY 2022-2023 programming covered 15 virtual events on topics including the Painted Churches of Texas, the Green Book and Historically Black Colleges and Universities in Texas, and Crossing Borders and Cultivating Culture: Exploring the Movement of Creole Zydeco Music.



Crisis Toolkit

Made possible with funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Studies (IMLS) through the 2021 CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act), the FTHC, in collaboration with THC staff and community members at Caddo Mounds, Magoffin Home, and Fulton Mansion State Historic Sites, developed the Crisis and Trauma Response Toolkit for Cultural Workers, which was published to the THC Virtual Learning Portal in spring 2023. Designed for those working in public service as cultural workers, it provides tools to address crises and disasters (natural as well as man-made) that impact cultural sites and organizations, with a focus on education and community engagement.



Our History



LA BELLE EXCAVATION
Fundraising for this project and the ongoing preservation of La Belle continued through 2000. This was the FTHC's first major fundraising effort after its incorporation as a nonprofit.



RED RIVER WAR BATTLE SITES PROJECT
Surveys and documentation of Red River War battle sites published in a book by the THC's Brett Cruse.



TEXAS LAND TITLE ASSOCIATION PARTNERSHIP BEGINS
The TLTA has since provided over \$430,000 in support for the Courthouse Stewardship Program.



TEXAS HEROES ENDOWMENT ESTABLISHED
The Texas Heroes Endowment has grown to over \$130,000 and supports the education programs of the THC.



CADDO MOUNDS GRASS HOUSE
Fundraising begins for the construction of the Caddo Mounds grass house and the production of a PBS documentary.

1996—2000

1999—2001

2006

2004—2010

2010

2014—2015

1999—2001

2007

2013—2014

THE TEXAS FLAGS 1936-1945 PROJECT
Over \$389,000 raised to restore and preserve 34 historic Texas flags exhibited in the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston. State Library and Archives Commission.



TEXAS IN WWI & WWII
The World War I project and campaign began. The Ed Rachal Foundation, the Effie and Wofford Cain Foundation, and the Houston Endowment provided support for World War II site surveys and an oral history project.



PRESERVATION SCHOLARS PROGRAM ESTABLISHED
Originally founded in 2007, this program was renamed the Preservation Scholars Program in 2016.



FULTON MANSION PROJECT
The FTHC partnered with the Friends of Fulton Mansion to raise funds for a \$2.3 million restoration of the 1877 bayside mansion.



The story of the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission began in 1996, with the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) discovery of the famous French explorer Robert Cavalier Sieur de La Salle's ship La Belle, which sank during his ill-fated 1684 expedition to establish a French colony on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. Dr. Jim Bruseth (then Director of the Archeology Division of the THC and a current Commissioner) led the extensive and costly excavation project. As the State Historic Preservation Office, the Commission had some funds available for this unique project but required additional investment from the philanthropic community to pull this incredible find from the floor of Matagorda Bay, and eventually take it all the way to the Bullock Texas State History Museum where it is housed today. And so, the FTCH was established as the nonprofit partner to the Commission to help raise private philanthropic support for this extraordinary project.

In the years since, the FTCH has gone on to play a vital role in the completion of many THC projects. From capital campaigns for historic site improvements to research initiatives and education programs, the FTCH has proven itself time and again to be an ally for historic preservation in Texas, which has led to phenomenal growth. The THC now has 39 historic sites in its portfolio, and the Friends of the Texas Historic Commission is actively engaged in current or proposed capital projects on at least five of them, in addition to continuing to support other education and stewardship programs.



REAL PLACES CONFERENCE
A successful partnership with the THC begins with the Real Places conference, which has now grown to be Texas' premier historic preservation conference with over 825 participants.

2016



DOING HISTORY SUMMER CAMP LAUNCHES
These educational camps are supported through funding from the THC Education Fund.

2018—2019



ALMONTE SURRENDER SITE
The FTCH begins raising funds to support the acquisition of 50+ acres of the Almonte Surrender Site near the San Jacinto Monument.

2020—2023



LEVI JORDAN MUSEUM/ VISITORS CENTER
The FTCH begins participation in the Advisory Committee to develop the vision and plan for the museum and visitor center.

2023—PRESENT



ENDOWMENTS
The FTCH receives a \$525,000 gift to establish the Lana Hughes Nelson Endowment Fund for cemetery preservation and a \$450,000 gift to establish the DGIC Preservation Scholars Endowment.

SAN FELIPE DE AUSTIN MUSEUM AND VISITOR CENTER
A \$6 million capital campaign launches for the construction of a state-of-the-art museum, with implementation partnership ongoing from 2018 to present.



RESTORATION OF THE FRENCH LEGATION
The FTCH receives over \$355,000 in support grants from Visit Austin and the City of Austin Heritage Grants Program.



EIDEMAN HOUSE ACQUISITION AND VILLA DE AUSTIN EXHIBIT
The historic Eideman House is acquired and Villa de Austin exhibit construction is completed.



CADDO MOUNDS EDUCATION CENTER
The FTCH begins a fundraising campaign for construction of an education center at Caddo Mounds.



BUSH FAMILY HOME
Properties adjacent to the state historic site are acquired and donated to the THC.





Stewardship Programs

Courthouses

Our state's historic courthouses stand as true architectural treasures. Preserving them requires the help of local partners in each county. While the state legislature generously provides funding for courthouse restorations each year through the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program (THCPP), ongoing care and maintenance of these buildings is needed to protect the crucial investment of state funds. The **Texas Historic Courthouse Stewardship Program** (THCSP) supports a network of volunteers dedicated to preserving these historically important buildings. Together with partners like the Texas Land Title Association, who have supported the THCSP since 2007, we are able to ensure that these dedicated volunteers receive the technical assistance and annual training they need to apply the best maintenance practices in their work.



Cass County courthouse in Linden is the longest serving county courthouse in the state.

Archeology



Archeology project at San Felipe de Austin

The **Texas Archeological Stewardship Network** is an educational outreach program founded in 1984 to train and certify volunteers across the state to assist with protecting archeological sites. As the responsibility for a public archeology program dedicated to preserving and interpreting the terrestrial and marine archeology falls largely on the THC, the agency has developed a network of volunteers to augment the work of its small professional archeology staff. The Stewards are highly trained avocational archeologists from communities across the state who engage private landowners in preservation efforts and to serve as ambassadors within their communities, offering education and outreach to students and the community at large. Ensuring that we have the resources to help these volunteers receive training and education to effectively help the Texas Historical Commission carry out its mission remains a central goal for the FTHC.

Friends Alliance Program

As part of our ongoing efforts to support the THC's Historic Sites Community Engagement Program, the FTHC has developed the **Friends Alliance Program**—a series of initiatives aimed at supporting local THC Historic Sites "Friends" groups. As part of this program, the FTHC offers nonprofit management and development training to the local friends groups, provides fiscal sponsorship support to groups that are not individual 501(c)(3) organizations, and presents the annual **Friends Alliance Award** to historic site friends organizations or volunteers. This award recognizes their work in building civic engagement and impact through education, outreach and stewardship, and their outstanding commitment to historic preservation.

2023 Friends Alliance Award recipients



Left: Lareatha Clay, FTHC Trustee, and Edgar Garza, Treasurer, Friends of Fort McKavett

Right: Lareatha Clay, FTHC Trustee, Sandra Jean Salina, founding member, Friends of Casa Navarro

Not pictured: David D. Herrera, Jr., volunteer, Magoffin Home State Historic Site and Doug Dukes, President, Friends of Fort McKavett



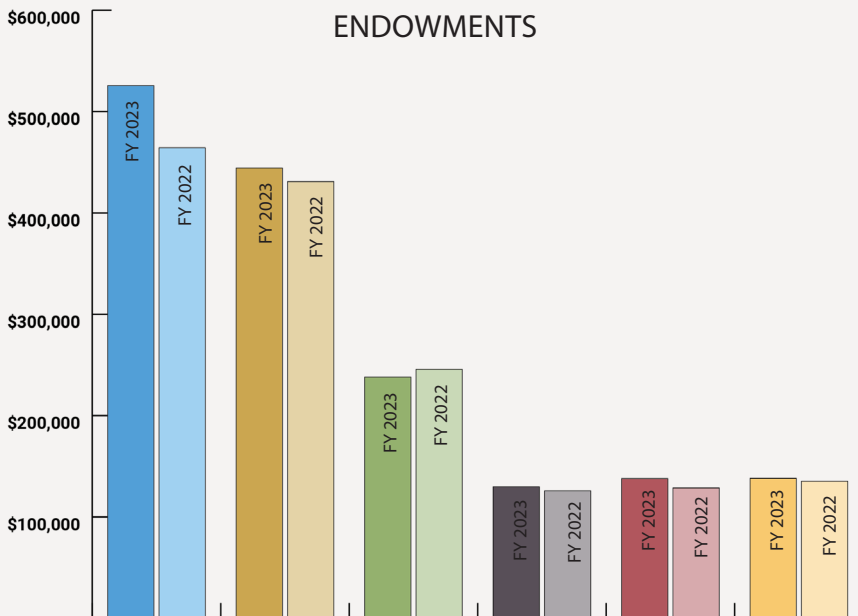
Financial Report

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	FY 2023	FY 2022
ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$596,478	\$952,034
Non-endowed Investments	\$2,351,339	\$1,672,349
Grants and Contributions Receivable		\$40,000
Prepaid Expenses and Other Assets	\$78,126	
Endowed Investments	\$1,464,119	\$1,254,921
TOTAL ASSETS	\$4,490,062	\$3,919,304
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
LIABILITIES		
Grant Payable	\$500,000	
Deferred Revenue		
Line of Credit		
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$500,000	
NET ASSETS		
Without Donor Restrictions	\$1,598,794	\$1,338,147
With Donor Restrictions	\$2,391,268	\$2,581,157
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$3,990,062	\$3,919,304
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$4,490,062	\$3,919,304

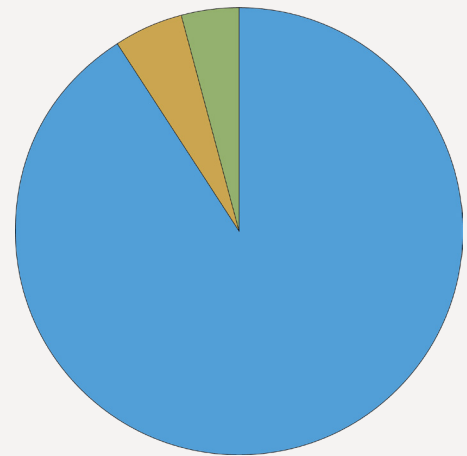
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES

	FY 2023
REVENUES AND GAINS	
Grants and Contributions	\$1,057,825
In-kind Contributions	\$442,421
Real Places Conference	\$337,159
Return On Investment	\$181,751
Gala Dinner and Auction	\$0
Other Revenue	\$50,188
TOTAL REVENUE AND GAINS	\$2,049,344
EXPENSES	
Program Services	\$1,803,141
General and Administrative	\$101,611
Fundraising	\$73,834
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,978,586
NET ASSETS BEGINNING OF YEAR	\$3,919,304
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	\$70,758
NET ASSETS END OF YEAR	\$3,990,062



Lana Hughes Nelson Endowment for Cemetery Preservation
 DGIC Preservation Scholars Endowment
 The Bob and Kathleen Gilmore Fund for Spanish and French Colonial Archeology
 Texas Heroes Endowment Fund
 FTHC Preservation Scholars Endowment
 The Matthew Honer and Larutha Odom Clay Preservation Scholars Endowment

EXPENSES



Program Services \$1,803,141
 General and Administrative \$101,611
 Fundraising \$73,834

Looking to the Future...

Twenty-eight years into its existence, the FTHC has grown and matured as an organization, establishing its position as a true partner to the THC, supporting the Commission's 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. In doing this, we have actively built and expanded our "toolkit," going beyond traditional fundraising and thinking creatively as we build resources to support the preservation work of the Commission.

As a result, FTHC leadership and staff engaged in a strategic planning process in early 2024 to help define and lay out the roadmap for the next three years. In January 2024, the FTHC Board of Trustees, staff, and key THC leadership spent a day together discussing and reaffirming our mission, restating our vision and values to reflect the state that we serve, and outlining our priorities.

The broad theme that emerged during our discussions was that of ensuring that the stories we help preserve and pass along to future generations are full of the richness, depth, complexity, and variety of Texas and Texans, and are ones that the full spectrum of our future generations can identify with and see themselves in. To that end, the modified and reaffirmed mission and vision statements reflect our continued commitment to preserving all Texas history for posterity. And as we preserve and protect the stories of Texas and all Texans, we hold our organization's vision as our north star—that everyone has a place in Texas history.

Following the successes we have had over the last 12 to 18 months, the FTHC continues into the next few years with some key strategic goals. The first is focused on continuing to build strength in the relationship the FTHC has with the Commission it supports. We will continue to be a strong and present partner in the THC's mission and will strategically strengthen our alignment with the agency to define and develop the full Texas story.

The Texas Historical Commission places high value on place-based education for students (K-12 as well as post-secondary) and adults. This focus manifests in a variety of educational programming led by historic sites, as well as the History Programs and Archeology divisions of the THC. The FTHC will continue to help grow and support these programs under an overarching "THC Education Programs" umbrella and will work on building key partnerships across the state in support of this goal.

In doing all of this work, stewardship of the critical historic resources across the state—the sites, the architecture, the archives, and research—will be key. To that end, we will continue to engage and connect with communities and organizations across the state and amplify the mission and messages of the THC.

In order for us to be effective in all of this, we have to continue to secure and bring financial investments into the work of preservation. We will do this through strong and effective governance, financial transparency and integrity, nimble and creative problem-solving, and by continuing to build strong and lasting relationships with our supporters.

As we continue to build sustainability in our operations and programs, we look forward to bringing updates on these goals to you, and look forward to our continued partnership with you, our supporters and champions, to preserve the stories and histories of all Texans.



Thank You to Our Donors



\$250,000+

Cheniere Foundation
John L. Nau, III

\$100,000 - \$249,999

Institute of Museum and
Library Services
National Park Service - Save
America's Treasures Program

\$10,000 - \$99,999

Carolyn and Preston Butcher
Humanities Texas
National Trust for Historic
Preservation
Neely Hughes Trust
Robert E. and Evelyn McKee
Foundation
Phoenix I Restoration and
Construction, LLC*
State of Georgia
Texas Historical Commission
Texas Land Title Association*
W.B. Munson Foundation

\$1,000 - \$9,999

Beverly † and Killis Almond
Amegy Bank*
Architexas*
Artisan Hardwood Floors
Corporation*
Jane and John Barnhill, Jr.
Joseph Bell
Barbara Blackman
Brazoria Telephone Company*
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Rowena and Kevin Dasch
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Lucy Dubose
Mary S. and Thomas E. Duncan
Environmental Fund For Texas
Sarah Zenaida Gould, PhD
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Randal Hankla
Meta and Albert "Boo" Hausser
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Debra and Brian Shivers
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Texas Dow Employee
Credit Union*
Texas Historical Foundation
The Summerlee Foundation
Joe Thrash and Kay Trostle

Cynthia "Kay" Timme
Dianne and Eliot Tucker
Glenna Wagenschein
Ann Westbrook
Brenda Whorton
Anita and Welcome Wilson, Jr
Laura and Rodney "Bo" Wilson

\$100 - \$999

Cara Abazari
Austin Genealogical Society
Wendy Autio
Betty Dooley Awbrey
Margaret Bailey
Amanda Beck
Dan Beto
Scott Betton
Brian Biggs
William Blackwell
Minnette Boesel
Nanacy Brazzil
Danelle and Connor Brown
Kathleen Bryan
Monica and Russell "Ray"
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Katherine Carroll
Sehila Mota Casper
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Mark Homer
Patty Horridge
Don Hoyt
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Hull Millworks*
Meta Butler Hunt
Michael Hurd
Irving Arts Center
Joseph Kilchrist
Karen Kossie-Chernyshev
Andreas Kronenberg
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Frances Lawerence
Dedra Lemon Frazier
Tyron and Trudy Lewis
Alvin Lynn
Philip T. Mackey
Karen and Charles Matthews
David McAlexander
Mark Wolfe and Alyson McGee
Catherine McKnight
Deborah and Russell McLaughlin
Mary Jane McReynolds
Julie and Kirk Michaux
Judy Moody
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Jean-Edward Parent
Ted Paup
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Legacy Giving



“A Legacy for Texas Archaeology”

by Dr. Jim Bruseth and Toni Turner



In July 1995, the La Salle Shipwreck Project riveted the world’s attention on Texas. The discovery and subsequent excavation of the remains of La Belle , the last ship in La Salle’s ill-fated convoy to the New World, became one of the most important archeological projects in North America. The project was featured on NOVA, and in National Geographic, The New York Times, The London Times, Smithsonian Magazine, Texas Highways, and myriad other publications across the globe. Archeologists came from as far away as China to view the excavations and witness daily revelations of life during the 17th-century era of exploration. More than 25,000 visitors came to view the excavation and marveled at the trove of treasures salvaged from the bottom of Matagorda Bay. La Belle changed the face of Texas archeology forever.

Dr. Jim Bruseth (above) and Toni Turner (below), authors of *From a Watery Grave: The Discovery and Excavation of La Salle’s Shipwreck, La Belle*.



This beautiful little ship also changed the course of history for our state, our nation, and the world. The discovery, recovery, and preservation of La Belle offered a new and broader understanding of the peoples who shaped our state’s cultural legacy. The story of La Salle’s expedition is one of history’s most dramatic and exciting chapters, but it also represents state-of-the-art science and conservation technology. La Belle was a case study in how we preserve, understand, and interpret the material evidence of the past. And the Texas Historical Commission was at the helm of this world-class project for almost two decades.

We first worked together at SMU’s Archaeology Research Program and later for the THC, so archeology has been a part of our lives for almost 50 years. Our service to the Commission—on the staff, as volunteers, and with Jim’s role as a Commissioner—totals more than 35 years. Working on projects like La Belle, Fort St. Louis, Bernardo Plantation, and the lost grave of Texas Ranger James Coryell allowed us to make exciting and valuable contributions to the story of Texas. And we have helped to raise millions of dollars to support the work of the Friends in a wide variety of programs and projects like these.

But there has never been enough money to fund everything the agency wanted or needed. And funding for state agencies is always subject to legislative budget priorities and can vary immensely from session to session. So when we finalized our estate plans, we wanted to leave a legacy of support through the Friends for archeology. Part of our estate is designated for archeology in Texas, surrounding states, and northern Mexico. We are pleased to know that our funding will be available for future generations to continue the work to which we have dedicated so much of our lives.

Building Sustainability in Preservation

Over the years, the FTHC has been privileged to be the recipient of legacy gifts—articles of faith from our supporters in the FTHC’s ability to steward their once-in-a-lifetime gift towards building long-term sustainability in the work of preservation at the THC. These gifts have helped establish endowments that provide annual and ongoing support for several programs as detailed below:

- The **Bob and Kathleen Gilmore Fund for Spanish and French Colonial Archeology**, created in 2011 through a legacy gift from renowned archeologist, the late Dr. Kathleen Kirk Gilmore, provides grants for Spanish and French Colonial archival and archeological research projects in Texas.
- The **Mathew Honer and Larutha Odom Clay Preservation Scholars Endowment**, established in 2016 by a generous endowment gift from the Clay Family Trust, supports the FTHC’s Preservation Scholars Program.
- The **DGIC Preservation Scholars Endowment Fund**, established in 2022 by a gift by DGIC, LLC, also supports the Preservation Scholars Program.
- The **Lana Hughes Nelson Endowment Fund for Cemetery Preservation**, established in 2022 with a legacy gift from the Neely Hughes Trust, provides support for the work of cemetery preservation in Texas, and provides annual funding for education programs specific to the work of cemetery preservation.

With this same vision for sustainability in mind, the FTHC Board of Trustees have also directed funds toward the establishment of two board-directed endowments:

- The **FTHC Preservation Scholars Endowment**, established in 2011 to support its namesake program, the Preservation Scholars Program; and
- The **Texas Heroes Endowment**, also established in 2011, and which, since 2016, has provided annual support for education programs across the Commission.

Please consider joining the Legacy Circle and becoming a part of our mission that honors the past and inspires the future! Contact Danielle Blanco at Danielle.Blanco@thc.texas.gov for information.

FRIENDS



PO BOX 13497
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leave a legacy

For more than 28 years, the FTHC has partnered with the THC to preserve the real places and real stories of Texas. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we can continue to protect the historic sites and narratives that are integral to understanding the rich heritage of Texas.

Did you know you can support the preservation of Texas history by including the FTHC in your financial planning? By including a legacy gift (a bequest in your will or trust) to the FTHC in your estate planning, or by including the FTHC as a beneficiary of your retirement, investment, or bank accounts, or your life insurance policy, you help safeguard the stories, landmarks, and cultural heritage that define Texas.

This forward-thinking philanthropy ensures that future Texans can experience and learn from the state's vibrant past. Planned giving not only reflects your values but also offers potential tax benefits and the satisfaction of knowing your legacy supports a cause you feel passionate about.

To learn more about the many ways you can support the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission with a legacy gift, please reach out to Danielle Blanco at Danielle.Blanco@thc.texas.gov.