

1. Simon Theatre & Washington County Visitor Center 1925
111 West Main Street



Architecturally important, this building was designed by the famous architect Alfred C. Finn in the early 20th century Classic Revival style. It was plush and popular in its time, with an upstairs ballroom used for events. The lower floor had a lobby, retail space, a vaudeville stage and movie theater

with seating for 739, including the balcony. The handsome Simon Theatre now serves the community again as an entertainment and event venue.

4. Washington County Courthouse 1939
110 East Main Street

The courthouse is an Art Deco style that was popular in 1939 when it was built. Notice the streamlined forms in the metal grillwork over the entrances and the cut stonework on each of the corners. The gazebo, on the Courthouse Square at the corner of Alamo and Park Streets, is a replica of an earlier auction stand. It serves the community for many downtown events.



The original courthouse, built in 1844 when Brenham became the county seat, was made of local cedar. In 1855 a larger courthouse was built of locally-made bricks. A third courthouse was built in 1884, the grandest in scale and architectural detail. It was crowned with a central bell tower, a visual landmark for miles around.

5. G. Hermann Furniture Store 1885
213 West Alamo Street

In 1876, the first furniture store in Washington County was founded on this site, and the original family still operates it today as Hermann Furniture Store. Its original owner, Gottlieb Hermann, was a native German who continuously rebuilt and remodeled in order to keep the property updated. The building's current cast stone face and details are the classical Beaux-Arts Period of the 1920's.

6. Healy-Wilder Building 1887
208 West Alamo Street

This fine commercial Victorian building boasts one of the few pressed metal cornices still intact in Downtown Brenham. The brick detail work is also notable, as are the old garage doors. Skylights were used to light the long dark spaces that otherwise had limited street-front exposure for natural light.

7. Schuereberg Buildings Circa 1880s & 1916
113, 203-205 West Alamo

At the location of this one-story brick building, a native of Germany and master blacksmith, Captain Frederick Wilhelm Schuereberg, built the Old Brazos Forge in the early 1880s with his sons. The private bricked alley was used to assemble buggies. The building at 205 W. Alamo was later erected to house the first Ford Dealership in Washington County. An adjoining building to the west was added for space to assemble automotive parts — it included a hand-crank elevator to move vehicles between floors. In 1916, the Schuereberg Company built the massive two-story brick building east of the alley.

8. Schmid Brothers Grocery/Ant Street Inn 1899
101 West Commerce Street



The Schmid Brothers had this elaborate, two-story Romanesque Revival building constructed to house a grocery, feed store and upstairs saloon. Its architecture is especially noteworthy, including ornate metal leafed capitals above the columns on the second floor. The first-floor storefront is original and typical of its period, and the building still has a hand-crank freight elevator.

9. Brenham Opera House 1872
101 West Alamo Street

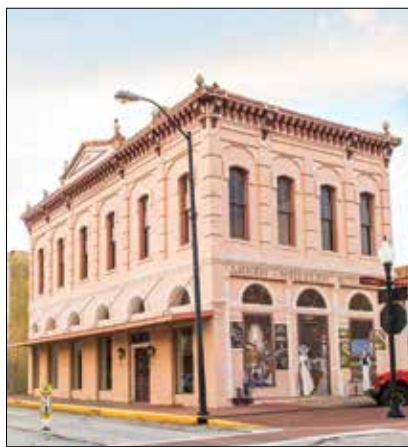
This two-story building was once home to a fine opera house on the second floor, and Alex Simon's general mercantile on the first floor. The upstairs opera house had a large stage, orchestra pit, a dress circle, dressing rooms, and box seats with gilded and velvet upholstered seating. It is rumored that deceased opera performers still haunt the building today.

10. Giddings & Giddings Bank Building 1872
116 South Park Street



Built by the Giddings family, one of the most influential in Brenham history, the building housed the first bank in Washington County. The third floor was the meeting place of the local Mason Lodge led by brothers J.D. and D.C. Giddings. The elegant Victorian building with an exquisite iron storefront represents the high stature of the Giddings family. The front slender columns have fluted shafts, decorative floral motifs and Corinthian capitals.

11. Moody-Wheeler Building 1885
205 East Alamo Street



Historically known as the Greek-American Candy Kitchen. This building was built during prosperous times but multiple remodeling efforts left the building looking forlorn for years. This treasure, restored to its original design, is Victorian style with brick relief work punctuating the decorative details. An ornate, pressed metal cornice crowns the building with multiple brackets and a dated pediment over the entrance.

12. Dobert Building Circa 1860s
212 East Alamo Street

Handsome detailed, this plaster and scored brick building was an early building in downtown that escaped the fires and plight of often neglected buildings. The second floor has a separate entrance from Alamo Street and is well-lighted by a skylight above the second floor lobby area. An ornate, pressed metal ceiling graces the first floor retail spaces.

13. Bassett & Bassett Banking House 1873
222 East Main Street

This three-story Italianate building was built to house a bank, law offices and a cotton exchange. The original bank building was a wooden structure built in 1899, and was rebuilt using local brick. In 1907, renovations were made for the owner's cotton brokering business, and the building's classic details were carefully re-crafted. A third floor with a skylight was added to provide the natural light needed to grade cotton — the longer the fiber, the more valuable the cotton.



14. Farmers National Bank Building 1870
110 South Baylor Street

This building was originally built in 1870 as a mercantile store and was renovated for the Farmers National Bank in 1916. The original building on this site had a second-story ballroom where community dances were held. Legend has it that a fight was started here in 1866 that led to Federal troops burning much of the downtown area.

15. Shipman Building Circa 1848
112 South Baylor Street

In 1847, John B. Wilkins sold this lot to Daniel Shipman who constructed the first building here. Shipman owned the property for 20 years, but its earliest use is not known. It has since been used for a clothing manufacturer, a five-and-dime store, Navratil's music store and a popular restaurant.

16. H.F. Hohlt Company Department Store 1914
107 East Main Street

Designed by architects Page & Page of Austin, this building used the most contemporary design of the day. Mr. Hohlt had cofounded a feed store at this same location in 1883. He accepted "Hohlt Tokens" as well as U.S. currency. The opening of Walmart led to the closing of this store in 1978. Later renovations introduced a new atrium-lit mall interior.

17. Winkelmann & Bohne Building 1899
100 West Main Street

Originally built as the Winklemann & Bohne Dry Goods Store, the business operated until 1932. It became City Food #1 and was later leased by JC Penney Company, when a gold aluminum siding covered the building facade. Later, the siding was removed, restoring the building to its original design.

18. Glissmann Pharmacy Circa 1860s
106 West Main Street

This grand building was originally used as a pharmacy, very important in its time. Ornate cast iron was used to dress up the masonry structure, although the brick detailing along the sides and rear is very fine. The second floor space is lit by an elongated octagonal skylight.



19. Dunlap Buildings Circa 1879
205 South Baylor

S.M. Dunlap bought this property in 1870 and constructed the buildings. A saddle-making shop was the first known business here. A later tavern was the site of many fights and arrests. In the mid-to-late 1900s this was the site of a bank, a dry cleaners and a grocery store. Since then, the two buildings have been used for upscale restaurants.

20. Beaumier Iron Works Circa 1885
321 South Baylor



Beaumier Iron Works consists of several buildings constructed at various times, starting as early as 1885. The commercial brick building was constructed around 1925 and shared a rear wall and internal passage into the earlier buildings. It includes a steel-truss roof and plastered interior walls. The complex remains intact.

DOWNTOWN
BRENHAM
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*A Guide to
Downtown Brenham's
National Register
Historic District*





2. Toubin Park Circa 1880
208 South Park Street

Beneath Brenham streets is a State Archeological Landmark, the only system of historic public cisterns found in Texas. Learn how they were built and supplied with water by private businesses. It's a Wild West tale of an early railroad, a rough Boom Town, and inventive citizens who banded together in adversity.

See a large private cistern and learn how it was used. Find out about present-day cisterns and how they can help you.

Freedom Colonies Exhibit/Belle's Alley

In Belle's Alley, learn the untold story of Freedom Colonies where, between 1865-1930, the formerly enslaved congregated and began to develop communities built around churches, schools, businesses and cemeteries. Freedom Colonies were established during a volatile time of our history and became places where Blacks could feel safe and begin living their lives as freedmen.



How History Shaped Downtown Brenham

The picturesque charm of Downtown Brenham is defined by its magnificent historic buildings. Take a walk, be transported back in time and experience the history of a bygone era.

Downtown Brenham was platted around the Courthouse Square in 1844 when it was selected as the county seat of Washington County. In 1861 an early railroad was completed to Brenham from Galveston and Houston, bringing a surge of people and prosperity. The community flourished during and after the Civil War due to the new railroad and abundant supply of cotton, which was treated much like that of cash in those days.

Immigrants from Europe flooded into Washington County through the late 1800s. They had industrial skills and began manufacturing popular products. Countless new homes and 'business houses' were erected between 1860 and 1900 making Downtown Brenham the heart of the community. Many buildings from that era still stand today.

During the early 1900s many downtown buildings were remodeled. Store fronts were newly faced with marble or brick and decorative awnings were added.

The 1950s and 1960s brought many more renovations. Some historic building features were actually covered for the sake of "modernization." Shopping centers were built along the highways and the downtown area evolved to a mostly business and government center.

Downtown revitalization and historic preservation began taking shape in the 1980s through the efforts of Main Street Brenham working with property owners. Since that time over \$35 million has been reinvested in Downtown Brenham, and many historic Buildings have been restored to their original grandeur.

Now a center for business, retail and entertainment, Downtown Brenham is once again the heart of the community.



Scan for more things to do and see in Downtown Brenham.



3. Brenham Heritage Museum 1915
105 South Market Street

This stately Classical Revival building was originally a Federal building that housed the United States Post Office. Several renovations through the years have kept it modernized, and it now belongs to the City of Brenham. Many museum displays tell the story of Texas and Washington County. Also part of the Brenham Heritage Museum complex are two buildings that were added later to display Brenham's antique fire trucks.

Brenham Fire Museum

The Brenham Fire Department was formed in 1867 to protect lives and property in the face of adversity. Shortly after, an extensive system of public cisterns was built under the streets to provide water for fighting fires. This modern day facility was built with a nod to the past and houses Brenham's rare Silsby Fire Engine that operated with cisterns as its water source, as well as Samanthe, purchased in 1923, which is one of only three in the world today. Invader, purchased in 1950, is also on display.



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