



Washington County  
Courthouse  
1939

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.



G. Hermann  
Furniture Store  
1885

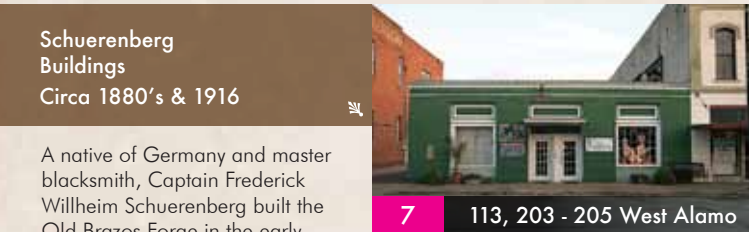
In 1876, the first furniture store in Washington County was founded on this site, and the original family still operates today as Hermann Furniture Store. Its original owner, Gottlieb Hermann, was a native German who rebuilt and remodeled continuously to keep the property updated. The building's current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



Healy-Wilder  
Building  
1887

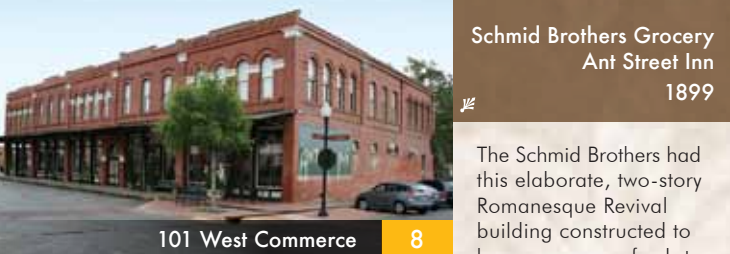
This fine commercial Victorian building boasts one of the few pressed metal cornices still intact in Downtown Brenham.

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.



Schuerenberg  
Buildings  
Circa 1880's & 1916

A native of Germany and master blacksmith, Captain Frederick Willheim Schuerenberg built the Old Brazos Forge in the early 1880's with his sons, at the location of this one-story brick building. 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 Schuerenberg Company built the massive two-story brick building east of the alley.



Schmid Brothers Grocery  
Ant Street Inn  
1899

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.



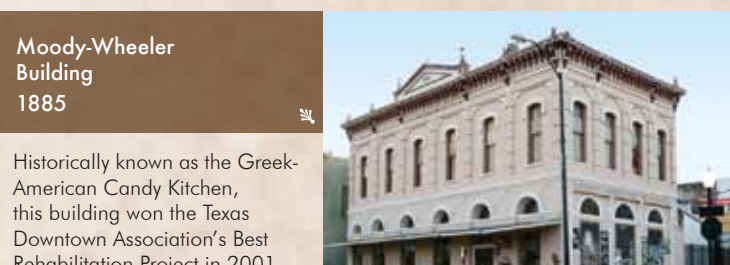
Brenham  
Opera House  
1872

This two-story building was once home of 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.



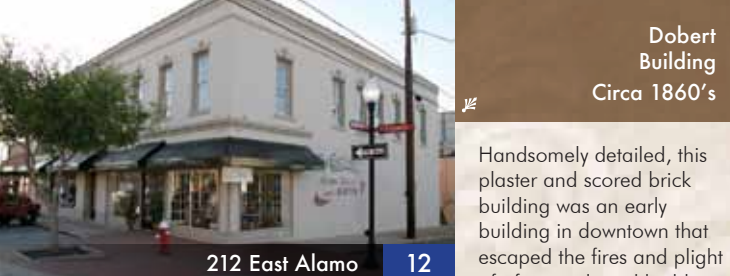
Giddings & Giddings  
Bank Building  
1872

Built by one of the most influential families 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 represents the high stature of the Giddings family, with an exquisite iron storefront. The columns in front are slender, with fluted shafts, decorative floral motifs and Corinthian capitals.



Moody-Wheeler  
Building  
1885

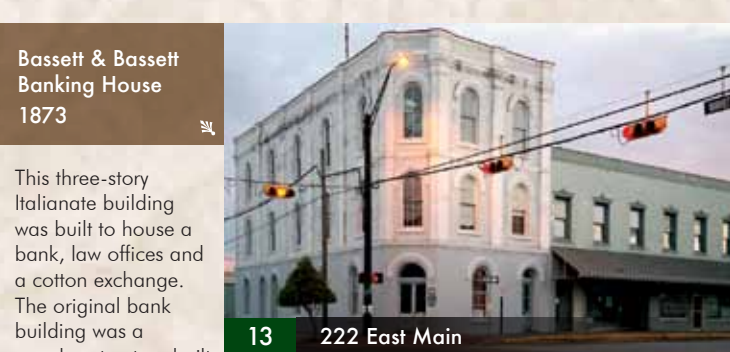
Historically known as the Greek-American Candy Kitchen, this building won the Texas Downtown Association's Best Rehabilitation Project in 2001. It was built during prosperous times, but multiple remodeling efforts left the building looking forlorn for years. The present owner restored this treasure to its original design. It 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.



Dobert  
Building  
Circa 1860's

Handsomely 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 sky light above the second floor lobby area. An ornate, pressed metal ceiling graces the first floor retail spaces.



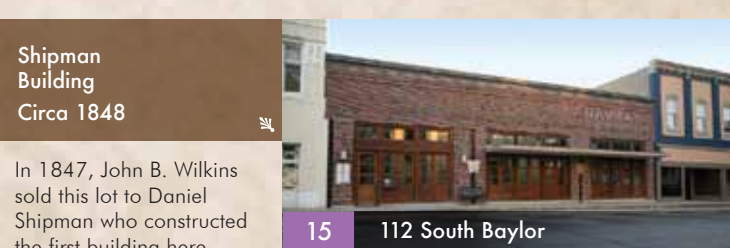
Bassett & Bassett  
Banking House  
1873

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 1866, and it 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.



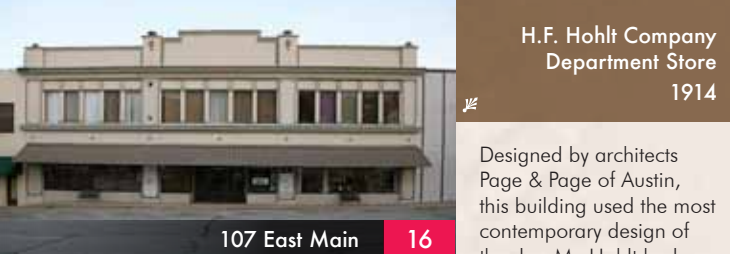
Farmers National Bank  
Building  
1870

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.



Shipman  
Building  
Circa 1848

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 restaurant.



H.F. Hohlt Company  
Department Store  
1914

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.



Winkelmann & Bohne  
Building  
1899

Originally built as the Winkelmann & 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. The current owners removed the siding, restoring the building to its original design.



Glissmann  
Pharmacy  
Circa 1860's

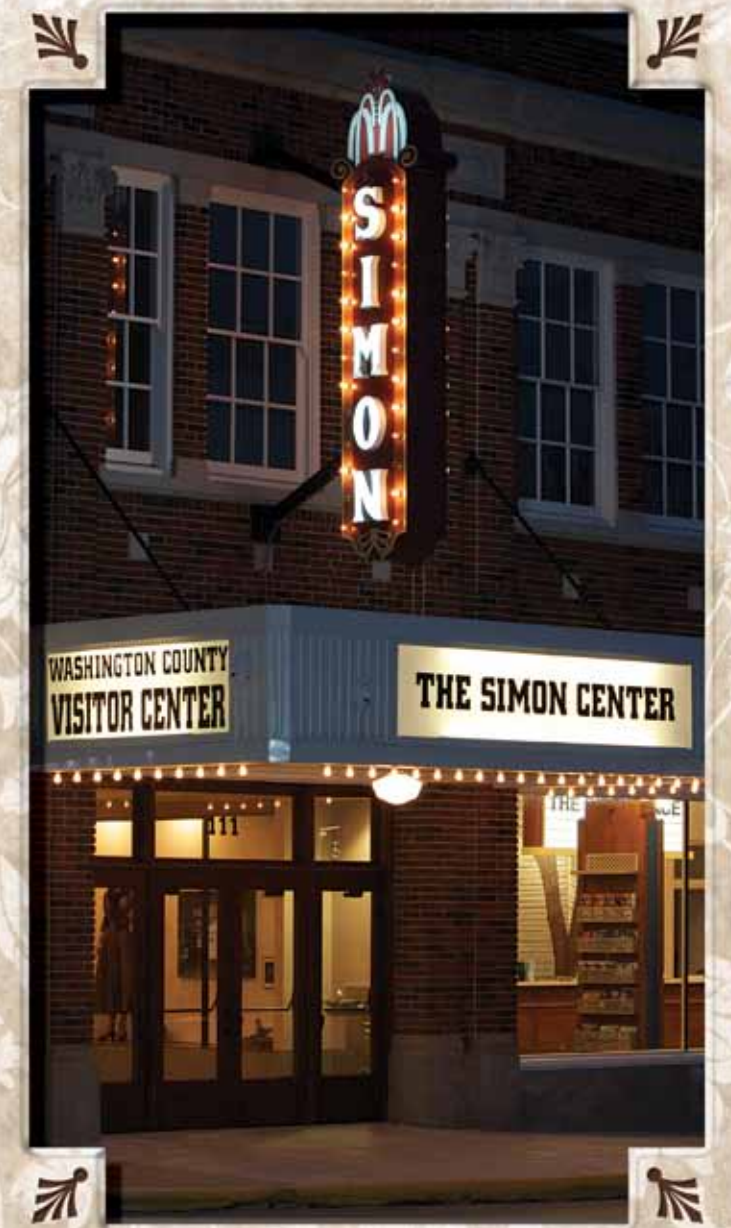
This grand building was originally used as a pharmacy, very important in its time. Ornate cast iron was used to dress-up the masonry structure, although the brick detailing along the sides and rear are very fine. The second floor space is lit by an elongated, octagonal skylight.



Dunlap  
Buildings  
Circa 1870

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 1900's this was the site of a bank, a dry cleaners and a grocery. Since then, the two buildings have been used for up-scale restaurants.

# DOWNTOWN BRENNHAM HISTORIC DISTRICT WALKING TOUR







109 West Main

1

**Simon Theatre & Washington County Visitor Center 1925**

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 will soon serve the community again as an entertainment and event venue.



208 South Park

2

**Toubin Park Circa 1880**

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.



Photography by Ron Werchan



**P** Public Parking is available throughout the downtown area.  
**Restroom** Public Restrooms are located on Douglas Street, between Alamo Street and Main Street.



105 South Market

3

**Brenham Heritage Museum 1915**

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.

**How History Shaped Downtown Brenham**

The quaint, picturesque charm of Downtown Brenham is defined by its magnificent historic buildings. This fun walking tour will help you step back in time to 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 its new railroad and abundant supply of cotton, which was treated much like cash in those days.

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

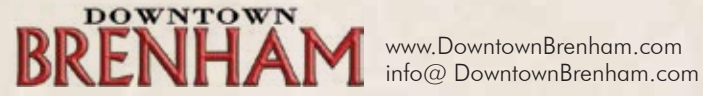
During the early 1900's, many Downtown buildings were remodeled. Store fronts were newly faced with marble or brick, and decorative awnings were added.

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



Downtown revitalization and historic preservation began taking shape in the 1980's, 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 again the heart of the community.



[www.DowntownBrenham.com](http://www.DowntownBrenham.com)  
[info@DowntownBrenham.com](mailto:info@DowntownBrenham.com)

All photography, unless otherwise noted, courtesy of Scott Hill, Brenham Portrait Gallery