

AUSTIN REMEMBERS.

“THE COLLECTIVE MEMORY OF AUSTIN & TRAVIS COUNTY”

SPRING 2015

AUSTIN HISTORY CENTER HOSTS HISTORIC “FIRST”

BY GEOFF WOOL

It was another “first” for the Austin History Center Association, a “first” for Austin’s incoming City Council members, and a “first” for the city of Austin for that matter.

On January 3, less than a month after runoff elections, members of Austin’s newly-elected but not-yet-sworn-in City Council gathered at the Austin History Center to meet with AHCA’s Past Mayors Advisory Council, members of which are Austin’s former mayors. Because of the change in council structure from members elected at-large to members elected from districts, the eight of the ten council members-elect who attended were all preparing to serve on the council for the first time, which added significance to the meeting. This “passing of the torch” event gave the incoming council members a chance to sit down together as a group for the first time and get guidance from seven people who have the experience to offer it – those who have served as Mayor of Austin.



▲ Former Austin mayors, the then-current mayor, and the incoming mayor pose for a rare group photo in the David Earl Holt Gallery of the Austin History Center on January 3, 2015. From left to right are Lee Cooke, Kirk Watson, Frank Cooksey, Lee Leffingwell, Steve Adler, Ron Mullin, Bruce Todd, and Gus Garcia.

Serving up wisdom and guidance were the outgoing mayor, Lee Leffingwell, and former mayors Gus Garcia (2001–2003), Kirk Watson (1997–2001), Bruce Todd (1991–1997), Lee Cooke (1988–1991), Frank Cooksey (1985–1988), and Ron Mullen (1983–1985). Though each new council member was elected from a district, the former mayors encouraged the group to work as a team by keeping open clear lines of communication, setting goals and priorities independent of

city staff, and serving the entire city, not just the home district.

Incoming mayor Steve Adler might have had the most to gain from the insight of the former mayors but each of the incoming council members engaged in the conversation, asking questions and taking notes.

The Past Mayors Advisory Council is an ad hoc committee of the Austin History Center Association, which advises the association’s board on matters related to city government. ●



Spring Fling to Benefit AHCA

What’s spring without a fling? What’s a fling without some zing? Throw in a Guy who sings, a furniture king, and some fashionable bling and you’ve got a party!

Mark Friday, May 15 on your calendar. That evening, Austin Business Furniture magnate Jay Femal will host the 2nd Annual Spring Fling, a party/art show/and

performances by Guy Forsyth. Tickets are \$25 per person and all proceeds from the event will benefit the Austin History Center Association.

“Last spring we put together the first Spring Fling and featured artwork by Escape Artist Studio,” Femal said. “It was a great success and a lot of fun, but I thought it would be even better to use this event to benefit the important work of the AHCA.”



▲ Guy Forsyth and his band will play two sets at the May 15 Spring Fling.

**Austin History Center
ASSOCIATION**

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The mission of the Austin History Center Association is to help the community value our past and build a better future - by supporting the Austin History Center to achieve excellence in its efforts to serve as the collective memory of Austin and Travis County.

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AUSTIN REMEMBERS.

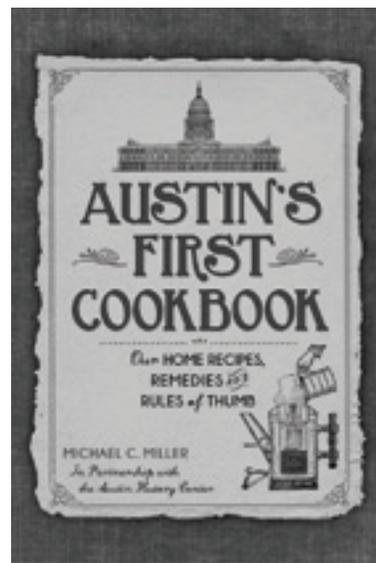
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From the Archivist

With this issue's column, I am pleased to announce the release of a new book from the Austin History Center - *Austin's First Cookbook: Our Home Recipes, Remedies and Rules of Thumb*, published by The History Press. This book project grew out of the previous AHC exhibit, "How to Prepare a Possum: 19th Century Food in Austin." The book is a new edition of the first cookbook published in Austin, *Our Home Cookbook*, compiled by the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in 1891. Here's the book cover blurb from the publisher:

"Tacos and barbecue command appetites today, but early Austinites indulged in peppered mangoes, roast partridge and cucumber catsup. Those are just a few of the fascinating historic recipes found in this new edition of the first cookbook published in the city. Written by the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in 1891, *Our Home Cookbook* aimed to "cause frowns to dispel and dimple into ripples of laughter" with myriad "receipts" from the early Austin community. From dandy pudding to home remedies "worth knowing," these are hearty helpings featuring local game and diverse heritage, including German, Czech, and Mexican. With informative essays and a cookbook bibliography, City Archivist Mike Miller and the Austin History Center present this curious collection that's sure to raise eyebrows, if not cravings. All proceeds from the sale of the book go to the Austin History Center."

Publishing a book like this does a number of things for an archival institution such as the AHC, in addition to providing a small revenue stream. For one, it's a great way to bring to light hidden treasures in the archives, such as a long forgotten cookbook that exemplifies much of Austin's early culinary history. It is also a good way to preserve these treasures, as our copy of the cookbook is in very poor shape. Now, researchers can access all that it has to offer, with the original now safe from the harm of continued handling.



▲ Front cover of *Austin's First Cookbook*, published by The History Press for the Austin History Center on April 13, 2015.

Our new book is one of dozens of books, along with numerous documentary films, magazine articles, and other "finished" products that relied on the archival collections of the AHC to be completed. In fact, in 2014, approximately 22 books, 3 documentary films, and countless newspaper stories, TV news broadcasts, websites, and public displays/exhibits were produced using AHC materials. This is not mere bragging, but evidence of how important, and pervasive, that archives are in the daily lives of people who would otherwise not consider themselves "archives users." Potentially tens or hundreds of thousands, maybe even millions of people will read these books and see these films, in effect making themselves users of our collections! So, even if you never set foot in our Reading Room and ask for a manuscript box, you can likely still consider yourself an AHC user. This is especially true if you pick up one of our new cookbooks, available from the AHCA and most bookstores.

-Mike Miller

Spring Fling 2015 - Register at AustinHistory.net

New to the AHC

RECENT ACQUISITIONS—

The Austin History Center received two collections donated by members of the Austin dance community. One collection is from the former director of the Austin Contemporary Ballet, Greg Easley. The other came from Tim Hurst, the founder of Movin' Easy Dancewear. These collections augment a growing interest in preserving the history of the dance community in Austin, joining other dance related collections at the AHC such as the Maline McCalla Papers, the Austin Ballet Theater Records, and the Roy Lozano's Ballet Folklorico de Texas Records, among others. Also, the AHC has had discussions with Ballet Austin to become the future home for their archives. Researchers interested in this aspect of our community's cultural history can find a treasure trove of information at the AHC.

The AHC also received a donation from Amalia Rodriguez-Mendoza, outgoing Travis County District Clerk, documenting her involvement with various local organizations such as Austin Museum Association, Austin Public Library Foundation and Mexican American Business and Professional Women's Association. This adds to her existing collection (AR.2002.025).



▲ **AR.2002.025(012), Amalia Rodriguez-Mendoza Papers, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.** Former Travis County Clerk and AHCA Board President Amalia Rodriguez-Mendoza has done much to preserve Austin's history, including donating her papers to the Center.

NEWLY PROCESSED COLLECTIONS—

Since the last newsletter, staff at the AHC processed 23 unique manuscript and photograph collections and over 30,000 items. Here are a few collections recently completed:

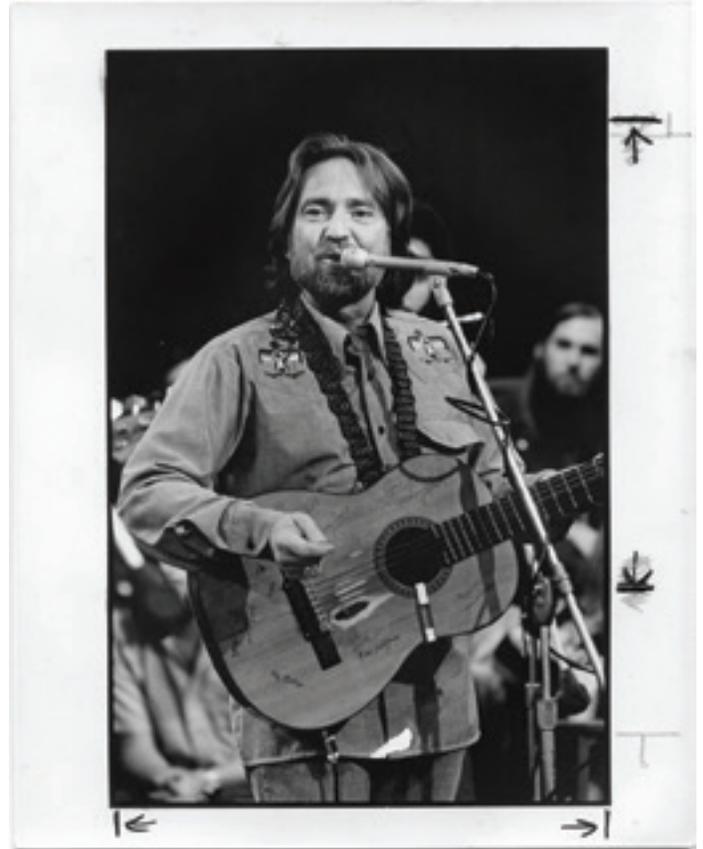
AR.2014.037. Belinda Acosta Papers

Belinda Acosta is a writer, performer, and journalist who lived and worked in Austin for more than two decades. Acosta's interest in theater started in high school when she was encouraged to try out for the role of a witch in the play *Dinny and the Witches*. She studied theater and journalism and launched a career in both. She wrote and produced plays for University of Nebraska-Omaha, INTAR Theater in New York, as well as various theaters in Omaha, San Antonio, and Austin. She also was a regular contributor to the *Austin American Statesman*, *Austin Chronicle*, and the *Texas Observer*, covering topics related to Mexican American culture. Acosta also published two novels about the traditional quinceañera celebration. The collection of her papers dates from 1984 to 2010 and contains manuscripts, scripts for plays, performance programs, correspondence, notes, working files for articles and scripts, newspaper clippings, illustrations, meeting records, journals, photographs, and audio and video recordings.

AR.1996.022. Robert Godwin Photograph Collection

Robert Godwin is a professional photojournalist who has been actively photographing social and philanthropic events in Austin since 1976. The photographs in the collection highlight Godwin's freelance photojournalism career and his involvement with several Austin

publications: the *Austin Citizen*, *Austin Homes and Gardens*, and the *West Austin News*. The subjects of the photographs are predominantly charity and society events, local news, sports, live music, and commercial advertisements. In 2013, Godwin published a book of his work, *Austin: The Faces of Philanthropy 1976-2012*, a pictorial history covering nearly four decades of Austin's philanthropic scene. By 2014 he had recorded more than 20,000 events and amassed almost a half-million photographs of Austin's philanthropic citizens, including members of the Austin Country Club, and their charitable activities and events. Godwin currently serves on the Board of Directors of the AHCA.



▲ **AR.1996.022(001), Robert Godwin Photograph Collection, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.** Willie Nelson at a 1977 Austin concert. Photo by Robert Godwin.

AR.2014.051. Greg Easley Papers

Easley is a native of Austin, Texas, and began his training with Eugene Slavin and Alexandra Nadal and continued his studies with Stanley Hall at Austin Ballet Theater. Easley performed throughout Texas, including premieres with Ballet Austin under the directorship of Lambros Lambrou. He has instructed ballet technique classes since 1980 and choreographed for ballet and other dance companies.

Easley's collection of papers covers the time he spent with the Austin Contemporary Ballet. ACB was founded in 1986 as a non-profit focused on presenting contemporary and innovative works. It was known for its ingenuity and originality. ACB staged free annual performances at the Zilker Hillside Theatre and had an outreach program for the Austin Independent School District. In 1993, Easley took over as artistic director, bringing with him a firm belief that ballet could appeal to the masses. Easley's collection is comprised of materials documenting ACB performances during the 1990s. ➔

**AR.1992.014. Austin (Tex.). Economic Development Department.
Sister and Friendship Cities Program Records.**

The City of Austin's involvement in the Sister Cities Program began in 1965 with the establishment a formal relationship with Belo Horizonte, Brazil. Though that relationship was deactivated in 1991, Austin has been prolific in its participation in the Sister Cities Program. In 1968, Austin set up a sister city relationship with Saltillo, Mexico. Through the years, additional sister cities were added. The City of Austin has participated in educational exchanges with its sister cities at every grade level; building career skills for Austinites through apprenticeships; humanitarian aid projects; and cultural, sustainable development and business/economic development exchanges.

The collection now available for review covers 1963 to 2004. It contains meeting minutes, festival and event fliers, certificates, travel itineraries, correspondence, newspaper clippings, reports, memorabilia, and photographs documenting the activities of the Austin Sister Cities Executive Committee and the individual committees of each sister city. ●



▲ PICA 34208, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library. Sister City Delegation from Saltillo, Mexico, with city officials and staff.

►►...**SPRING** The Escape Artist Studio will be back for this year's Spring Fling with new artwork. Ten percent of each piece sold will be donated to the AHCA. Award-winning vocalist Guy Forsyth will perform two sets – one earlier in the evening and one later – mixing songs and stories that tap the rich history of American music. Austin Catering, known for exquisite cuisine, will serve a feast of grilled quesadilla bar with smoked brisket, charred tomatillo salsa, shaved elotes, and more. Waterloo Press authors will also be on hand signing books about Austin history.

It'll be a night of great food and drink, innovative art, and music, shared with people like you, who have an appreciation for Austin history. To purchase reservations, visit AustinHistory.net and click on the Spring Fling link under the rotating photos on the home page. ●

Crowd Drawn by Stories of Indians in Central Texas

The subject of Indians, primarily Comanches, in and around Austin and Central Texas drew a sizeable and enthusiastic crowd the evening of March 10th.

That could have been the lead line from an Austin newspaper 175 years ago, but it actually describes a recent event hosted by the Austin History Center and the AHCA featuring two noted author/historians.

Sam Gwynne is the well-known author and award-winning journalist who wrote *Empire of the Summer Moon: Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanches, the Most Powerful Indian Tribe in American History*. He was interviewed by Dr. Jeffrey Kerr, author of Waterloo Press's *The Republic of Austin*. Kerr was an appropriate interviewer, given that *The Republic of Austin* featured stories about encounters with Native Americans – mostly Comanches – in the burgeoning, but still vulnerable settlement of Waterloo/Austin in the 1830s and 1840s. Prompted by Kerr, Gwynne told engrossing stories and shared many historic details derived from both his research and the content of his book.

Both Kerr's and Gwynne's books are available at Book People, which generously provided copies for AHCA's program. ●



▲ Dr. Jeffrey Kerr (foreground) and Sam Gwynne (center) sign copies of their books at a March 10 Austin History Center event. To the right of Gwynne is AHC Archivist Mike Miller. Kerr, himself a noted historian and author, interviewed Gwynne at the event, giving Gwynne a chance to share stories about the days when Comanche Indians ruled the southern plains, including central Texas.



▲ The West 6th Street bridge opened West Austin to development and expansion and continues to serve today as an integral part of one of Austin's busiest thoroughfares.

West 6th Street Bridge Officially "Historic"

Few of the thousands who daily traverse the West 6th Street bridge over Shoal Creek realize how old it is, or its historical importance to Austin. At 127-years old, the bridge is older than the Capitol Building, and when it was hand built with local limestone in 1887, it opened west Austin for development and city expansion. The West 6th Street bridge may be one of Austin's most significant yet unknown historic, architectural and engineering landmarks.

For these reasons, the Shoal Creek Conservancy submitted the bridge for induction into the National Parks Services' National Register of Historic Places, and, late in 2014, the nomination was accepted. At a plaque dedication and interpretive tour on January 30, members of the Shoal Creek Conservancy marked the official recognition of the West 6th Street bridge as one of America's most revered spaces.

Austin Renovators Share Stories of Rebirth, Restored Purpose

With thanks to a sampling of our sponsors, presenters, president & past presidents, board & Past Mayors Advisory Council

“Without our past, how are we going to know it’s us?” Quoting one of the tenant women in John Steinbeck’s *Grapes of Wrath*, Wayne Bell, Professor Emeritus of the University of Texas School of Architecture, set the tone for the panel discussion at the 2015 Angelina Eberly Luncheon this past January at Austin’s Driskill Hotel. Bell and an all-star panel of architects, designers, and renovators of historic Austin properties shared first-hand experiences of what it was like to restore the Governor’s Mansion after it burned, rescue from demolition the Driskill Hotel and Walter Tips Home, and restore for generations the Hirshfeld Mansion & Cottage.

The Angelina Eberly Luncheon, held each winter at Austin’s historic Driskill Hotel, is the signature event of the Austin History Center Association. The luncheon brings together close to 200 guests, business associates, coworkers and city leaders, as well as newcomers and longtime residents who share their love of Austin history at an event the *Austin American Statesman* has called “An Austin Tradition.”

To see more photos, go to AustinHistory.net and click the “About Us” tab, then click “Photo Gallery.”



▲ Jay Femal



▲ Adam Friedman



▲ Robert Sullivan & Debbie Martin



▲ John Street, Anne Wheat, Mike Buls



▲ Larry Graham, Will Wynn



▲ Beth Fowler, Board President & 6-year Event Chair



▲ Kathleen Neindorff, Evan Taniguchi



▲ Ron Oliveira



▲ John-Michael Cortez



▲ Candace & John Volz, Wayne Bell



▲ Charlie Betts

Revamped AustinHistory.net Features Fun, Functionality

A major renovation has been completed at the digital address www.AustinHistory.net, the Internet home of the Austin History Center Association. The AHCA website has been restructured and repackaged in a clean, bright format that's easy to navigate.

Through the new website you can take care of business by purchasing or renewing your AHCA membership or tickets for upcoming events, like the May 15 Spring Fling. You can browse the virtual shelves of the Waterloo Press bookstore and make purchases. Want to volunteer? You can sign up for that on the new website, too.

In addition to handling those business functions, AustinHistory.net has its fun side, too. AHCA members can set up a username and password and access a social networking section where you can set up a profile and network with other Austin history buffs. Browse through the Photo Gallery to see pictures from activities at the Austin History Center as well as events hosted around town by the AHCA. And speaking of events, you can check the Calendar on AustinHistory.net to see what's coming up.



▲ The newly redesigned AustinHistory.net website features a bright, new digital format with simple-to-use features and easy-to-read text.

For business or pleasure, if you haven't visited lately, come by and see what's new at AustinHistory.net. ●

Austin History on Display During South by Southwest



▲ Daniel Schlomer, Kyle Reed, and Rebecca Gates (left to right) pore through Austin Police Department call logs from 1885 in the Austin History Center Reading Room. The AHC was a stop on an interactive walking tour during South by Southwest.

Serial killings from 130 years ago paired with 2015 smart phone technology made the Austin History Center part of the buzz at this year's South by Southwest festivities.

Many Austin residents may not be aware, but during the course of 1885, when Austin streets were still bathed in gaslight, six women and one man – the boyfriend of one of the victims – were killed by an unknown assailant. This grisly chapter in Austin's history became known as “the servant girl murders,”

a reference to the fact that most of the victims were female household servants. To this day, the murders remain officially unsolved.

Fast forward to March 2015. Radiolab, a National Public Radio franchise, partnered with Detour, an emerging producer of audio-driven walking tours, to create a special smart phone app for South by Southwest focusing on the servant girl murders. Through the app, participants are transported back to the year in which the murders took place by visiting sites that hold clues to help solve the mystery. “It does a really good job of setting the historical context,” said Kyle Reed, a University of Texas junior who took the tour the last Sunday of South by Southwest. “You get a really good feel for the time period. It has sounds and you can almost picture it in your head. That's really good for historical storytelling.”

The Austin History Center provided much of the information for the story and became a stop on the tour. In the AHC Reading Room participants got to comb through Box 19 of the Laws Papers (AR.P.001), which contained copies of the 1885-1886 Austin Police Department calls logs.

The app was free for download during SXSW but is still available as part of the subscription package at Detour.com. ●

Food Trailer Craze Hits Wooldridge Square Park

Do you ever find yourself at the Austin History Center around lunchtime? A new food option offers the culinary quality of a four-star restaurant and the open-air ambiance of Wooldridge Square Park.

Nestled between the Travis County Courthouse and the Austin History Center, King & Country Food Co. is a beautifully-restored 1964 Airstream that is a fully functioning commercial kitchen on wheels. Chef Brett Moore, an Austin native and owner of King & Country, serves classic American specialties, using quality ingredients and modern techniques. The King & Country menu changes daily but you can always count on carefully-crafted espresso drinks using coffee from Casa Brasil, a local Austin coffee roaster.

King & Country is located on the northwest corner of Wooldridge Square Park. The trailer is generally open for business from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, and occasionally for weekend brunch, depending on the weather.



▲ King & Country serves gourmet-quality meals, fast food style, from an Airstream trailer-turned kitchen located at the northwest corner of Wooldridge Square Park, near the Travis County Courthouse, the Austin History Center, or the Faulk Central Library.

Austin Women Take Center Stage at AHC

Aralyn Hughes fancies herself as an entrepreneur, a visionary, and a "crone" with wisdom. For more than 33 years, Hughes has been an Austin icon, helping to keep the city as bright, colorful, and unique as she is. Now, you can add "editor" to her list of skills and attributes.

In celebration of Women's History Month, the Austin History Center hosted Hughes and other Austin writers for readings from *Kid Me Not*, a collection of essays by women in their 60s who were raised in the '60's and, with the advent of birth control, chose not to have children. The 15 essays in the book highlight the social upheaval and changing attitudes toward women during the 1960s and '70s.

For a list of events coming up at the Austin History Center, as well as a listing of AHCA events, click the "Calendar" tab on the AustinHistory.net website. ●



◀ (Left to right) Kathleen Clark, Norma Inman, Aralyn Hughes, Annie Borden, CK Carmen (on floor) Karen Kreps and Jane Burkett read from their book, *Kid Me Not* in the David Earl Holt Gallery at the Austin History Center.

▶ It was easy to spot Austin icon Aralyn Hughes' car outside the Austin History Center on March 28. Hughes and other Austin writers read from their essays featured in the new book, *Kid Me Not*.



Legendary Watering Hole Hosts AHCA

**DEEP
EDDY
CABARET**



Since 1951, the Deep Eddy Cabaret has been the quintessential neighborhood bar, perfect for Austinites looking for good conversation and a cold beer. On March 5, this jewel on the Colorado hosted AHCA's Amplify Austin event.

Amplify Austin is an around the clock day of city-wide events that provide an easy and fun way for Austinites to collectively donate to non-profits in the community.

Thanks to Will and Noel Bridges, owners of Deep Eddy Cabaret, and to all who donated and helped make AHCA's Amplify Austin experience both fun and successful!



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You Need to Get Out More

BY GEOFF WOOL

The Austin History Center Grand Hallway was a good place to escape the cool, wet evening of January 14. Inside, about 50 history enthusiasts were treated to the opening of "Divided City: Civil War and Reconstruction in Austin," the AHC's tribute to the 150th anniversary of the end of America's Civil War. The free exhibit features hundreds of photographs and original documents that tell the story of the significant effects the war had on Austin and its citizens despite the fact no battles were fought here.

To help transport people back to the 1860's, the exhibit opening featured four Civil War-era dishes reimaged by the students of Austin's Escoffier School of Culinary Arts. Under the watchful eye of Chef Gregory Dishman, who also serves as the school's culinary instructor, the students set a tantalizing table. "Johnny Cakes" never tasted better, topped with a sweet/spicy combination of bacon and butter.

The delicious food was a one-time offering for the exhibit's opening night but exhibit itself continues its run through May and wraps up June 21. It's free and open to the public during the Austin History Center's normal business hours. ●



▲ The Escoffier School of Culinary Arts set a table of four Civil War-era-inspired dishes at the January 14 opening of "Divided City: Civil War and Reconstruction in Austin," the AHC's tribute to the 150th anniversary of the end of America's Civil War. Photo by Grace McEvoy, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.



▲ A mother and her son explore "Divided City: Civil War and Reconstruction in Austin" at the exhibit's opening January 14. Photo by Grace McEvoy, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.

SAVE THESE DATES AUSTIN HISTORY CENTER (AHC) - 810 Guadalupe (at 9th) Open Tue.–Sat. 10am – 6pm & Sun. 12pm – 6pm

MAY 2

3rd Annual Beer Garden Social
with Music of the Civil War
Scholz Garten

MAY 15

Austin Spring Fling
AHCA Party and Fundraiser
Austin Business Furniture

MAY 29

AHCA Annual Meeting
David Earl Holt Gallery, AHC

JUNE 21

Last day for Divided City: Civil
War & Reconstruction in Austin,
AHC

Visit AustinHistory.net for more specific information about these and other upcoming events.

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