

AUSTIN REMEMBERS.

"THE COLLECTIVE MEMORY OF AUSTIN & TRAVIS COUNTY"

WINTER 2017

• FRIDAY, JANUARY 27



DRISKILL BALLROOM •

Eberly Luncheon to Offer Mix of Perspectives on Austin History

As Austin continues to grow and prosper, for many the intersection of Austin's history and culture is still the elaborate inn that cattle baron Jesse Lincoln Driskill built 130 years ago at the corner of 6th and Brazos in downtown Austin. Once again this year, that inn – the legendary Driskill Hotel – will be host for the AHCA's biggest fundraiser of the year, the Angelina Eberly Luncheon Friday, Jan. 27.

The grand dame is still one of Austin's architectural and cultural centerpieces, and the Eberly Luncheon will put the Driskill experience front and center, from the historic elegance of the mezzanine and ballroom to the three course lunch featuring recipes drawn from the Driskill's illustrious past.

"From the moment our guests walk in, I want the experience to be special," said Charles Peveto, chair of the 2017 Eberly Luncheon.

As benefactor for the Austin History Center, the AHCA plans



The three-course meal to be served at the Angelina Eberly Luncheon will feature historic Driskill recipes, drawn from Helen Corbitt's famous cookbook, and the 1886 Driskill Cake, shown above.

its fundraising around the Eberly Luncheon, which the *Austin American-Statesman* calls "an Austin tradition," an event with a reputation for fostering an appreciation for Austin's past with present day residents who have a vision for the city's future. The luncheon is named in honor of Angelina Eberly, whose cannon shot in 1842 led to an uprising that preserved Austin as the seat of Texas government. An underlying theme of this year's luncheon will be the 175th anniversary of that fateful insurgency.

Headlining the Jan. 27 Eberly Luncheon panel is Michael Barnes, who writes about Austin's people, places, culture, and history for the *Austin American-Statesman*. His book, *Indelible Austin*, published by AHCA's Waterloo Press, is now in its second printing. Through his work, Barnes has crossed paths with royalty, renegades, and run-of-the-mill Austin residents. All, he says, have **EBERLY ... PAGE 5 ➔**

Rushing to Capture History

Chairwoman Sets Ambitious Goals for Oral History Committee

If stories and remembrances from longtime Austinites give our city's history a voice, then Ruthann Rushing is the person who gives that voice its volume. For the past year, Rushing has served as chairperson for AHCA's Oral History committee, the group responsible for recording interviews with longtime Austin residents whose stories fill the canvass and create the broader picture of our community. The video and audio recordings of each interview, plus a written transcript, are donated to the Austin History Center.

To be sure, work on the Oral History Committee requires some heavy lifting, figuratively speaking, and Rushing is an active participant in the process from beginning to end. When someone is nominated to be interviewed, Rushing puts together a team of volunteers – one person to

do the interview and another to run the audio and video recording equipment. Working with that team, she then schedules the interview and sometimes sits in as the interview occurs. Once the volunteers produce a transcript, Rushing orchestrates the proofreading of the document and prepares the file that is donated to the AHC. She also arranges for each transcript to be bound into book format, which is then presented to the person who was interviewed.

Under Rushing's leadership, the committee has seen a resurgence of activity. Last year, committee members conducted 28 oral history



▲ Austin native and UT graduate Ruthann Rushing leads the AHCA Oral History Committee. Under Rushing's leadership, the committee has stepped up plans for capturing the stories of Austinites who helped shaped the city we know today.

RUSHING ... PAGE 5 ➔

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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Miller Marks Anniversary, Looks to Future

It's hard to believe it's been 10 years since Mike Miller first came to work at the Austin History Center. In September 2006, Miller was hired assistant manager for the AHC, a position he held for a year before being named as acting manager in October 2007. Nine months later, the city removed "acting" from his title, making him manager. Miller has served as city archivist during that time as well.

"I can say that I feel very privileged to be entrusted to do this job and preserve the story of Austin for current and future generations," Miller recently told a gathering of the AHCA board.

Miller likes to joke that he gets paid to read dead people's mail, but his job as AHC manager makes him responsible for managing a staff of 14 and an annual budget of \$1.2 million. Though the past is his business, it's the future of the AHC and the move into the John Henry Faulk Main Library building that energizes him.

"This opens up so many possibilities into how we can share and celebrate the story of Austin," Miller observed. "I was talking with (former Austin Mayor) Lee Cooke about this, and we agreed that the planned expansion puts us on the precipice of creating what could be a "top 5" city archives/history center, an institution that when other cities are thinking about the best way to preserve their history, they look to the AHC as the model. I don't know if I can get us there during my time, but I certainly want to try, and at least get us on that path."

The leaders and members of the AHCA are committed to helping Miller as he works toward that goal.



▲ AHCA President Charlie Betts (left) and Executive Director Jeff Cohen (right) present AHC Manager Mike Miller (center) with a cake to mark Miller's 10 years of employment at the Austin History Center. The cake presentation came at the September AHCA Board meeting.

New to the AHC

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

The past few months since the last *Austin Remembers* newsletter have been busy ones for the Austin History Center, with almost 100 donations, totaling over 75 linear feet of new acquisitions for the collections. Here are a few highlights:

- The family of the late Roger Griffin, who wrote his doctoral dissertation in the 1970s on Gov. E. M. Pease, donated a collection of Griffin's research materials. The collection includes all of his research notes and manuscripts for the dissertation.
- The AHC received a large donation of material related to the Bremond Family. This material belonged to the great, great grandson of John Bremond, Sr., William Bremond Houston, and includes financial documents, correspondence, plans, photographs and artifacts.
- Prior to the recent sale of the Elgin-Butler Brick Company, members of the Butler family donated a large collection of the company's records to the AHC. Elgin-Butler Brick Company is one of the oldest businesses in Austin. The donation included the original lease for the Butler Brick plant on the Zilker lands and the meeting minutes from the first Board of Directors' meeting. This donation was made after a recent oral history interview of Russ Butler and Meta Butler-Hunt conducted by the AHCA's Oral History Committee.
- And, in the spirit of keepin' it weird, Red Wassenich, who coined the phrase "Keep Austin Weird" and wrote 2 books on the subject, donated manuscripts, galleys and photos from the book *Keep Austin Weird: A Guide to the Odd Side of Town*.

NEWLY PROCESSED COLLECTIONS

Since the last newsletter, staff at the AHC processed 17 unique manuscript and photograph collections and over 44,000 items. You can view inventories of all of the AHC's processed collections online at: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/browse/browse_ahc1.html. Here are a few collections recently completed:



▲ Councilmember Lowell Lebermann speaking in Austin City Council chambers in Sept. 1976. Image # PICB 13914, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.

Lowell H. Lebermann, Jr. Papers. AR.2016.024

Lowell H. Lebermann, Jr. (1939-2009) was an active member of the Austin political and business communities, as well as the city's cultural scene from the 1970s until his death in 2009.

He was raised in Commerce, Texas where his father, Lowell Lebermann, Sr. practiced medicine. At the age of 12, an accident with a gun left Lebermann with one eye destroyed and vision deterioration in the other, which led to blindness at the age of 23. He graduated from the University of Texas Plan II Honors program in 1962 having served as student body president in 1961.

Throughout his adult life, Lebermann was an active political leader. He was a member of the Austin City Council for six years from 1971 to 1977. He also was elected treasurer of the Texas Democratic Party in 1981, was on the executive committee of the Democratic National Finance Council, and unsuccessfully ran for mayor of Austin in 1983. He was dubbed "the Green Panther" by Mayor Roy Butler due to his environmental efforts as a member of the city council. Lebermann also was a prominent businessman. He was the president of Centex Beverage, Inc. starting in 1981 and on the board of directors of Valero Energy Corporation among many others. He was inducted into the Texas Business Hall of Fame in 2004.

Invitations, programs, pamphlets, articles, campaign materials, correspondence, and certificates in this collection document his active role in Austin politics as well as his charity work and community involvement.

Liatris Media Records. AR.1996.010

Liatris Media was formed in Austin in 1986. It was a women's collective

designed to promote, exhibit and distribute media works made by women, Third World artists, gay/lesbians and other "outsider" artists with the intent to educate, enlighten and inform the public of those perspectives.

The collective was sponsored by Women and Their Work, a multidisciplinary arts organization whose purpose is to promote greater recognition of women's contributions to cultural life. The collective's original members were Linda Farin, Kitty Henderson, and Kathy Korniloff. Donna Shepard was added in 1988.

The group founded the Animating Women: A Film Feast, The Women's Visions: An International Film Festival and the Third Wave International Women's Film and Video Festival. The Third Wave festival ran from 1986 through 1990. The collection (1987-1990) includes correspondence, an NEA grant application narrative, entry forms, a financial document, flyers, programs and a poster.

Brackenridge, LaPrelle, and Talbot Family Papers. AR.D.009

These three families were related by marriage and the collection documents the lives from 1839 to 1955.

The Brackenridge family, which represents the bulk of the collection, came to Texas from Indiana in the 1850s. In Austin they were involved with the First National Bank of Austin and the Lone Star Ice Company. The family also raised the funds to build Brackenridge Hospital.

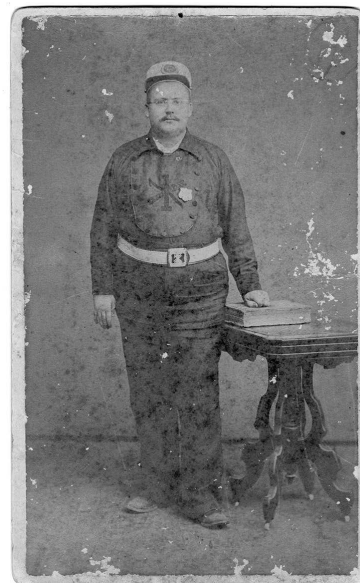
Members of the LaPrelle family were prominent greengrocers and business people in Marlin, Texas. The third family, the Talbots, were originally from Georgia and their daughter married into the LaPrelle family.

The papers in this collection contain business ledgers, legal materials, property records, personal correspondence, photographs, genealogical, and biographical materials.

NEWLY DIGITIZED COLLECTIONS

The AHC recently finished a project to digitize selected images from the Frank Caldwell Collection and place them on Portal to Texas History, adding over 250 digital images to the collections the AHC offers on the Portal.

Frank Caldwell (1883-1962) was a lifelong resident of Austin. Though he worked as a traveling salesman, his passion was Texas history and he spent much of his time collecting materials on the topic. His collection contains hundreds of photographs documenting various sites, towns, events and people of Texas from about the 1880s through the 1930s. The Caldwell photos can be seen at: https://texashistory.unt.edu/explore/partners/ASPL/browse/?fq=untl_collection%3AFRANKC.



▲ An Austin firefighter from 1884. Image # AR.X.016(D052), Frank Caldwell Collection, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.

New Exhibit to Open at the AHC

Mark your calendars for the opening of the Austin History Center's upcoming exhibit *Finding Refuge in Austin, 1848 to 1980*. The exhibit opens February 21 at 6:30 p.m. A series of three programs will follow.

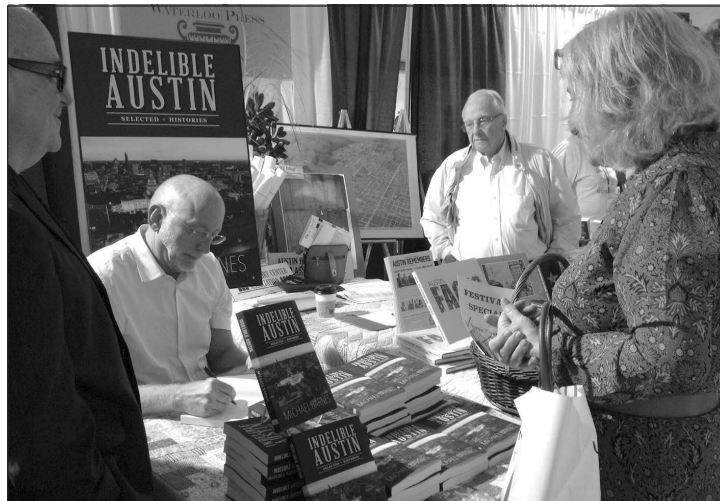
Finding Refuge in Austin explores the experiences of displacement, forced migration, and resettlement among various communities in Austin from 1848 to 1980.

Whether it was serving as a temporary refuge for families displaced by war or natural disaster, or engaging in activism to support the safe passage and resettlement of refugees around the world, Austin has provided space for new communities to flourish. Yet, refugees have also faced discrimination when claiming Austin as their new home. *Finding Refuge in Austin* uses documents, photographs, and objects from the AHC's collections to show how refugees in Austin have grappled with these challenges and worked to empower themselves and their communities. With Texas leading the nation in refugee resettlement, this exhibit is timely and an important reminder of the historical roots and contributions of refugees in Austin and Travis County.

Finding Refuge in Austin will be on exhibit in the Grand Hallway and Lobby of the AHC February 21 through August 27, 2017.



▲ Children from Corpus Christi arrive in Austin after fleeing Hurricane Carla in 1961. Image # AS-61-33162-001, *Austin American-Statesman* Photographic Morgue, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library



Waterloo Press Shines at Texas Book Festival

Texas Book Festival patron Barbara Stough waits as Michael Barnes signs his book *Indelible Austin* at the Waterloo Press booth at this year's Texas Book Festival. Waterloo Press is the publishing arm of the AHCA and again drew the attention of numerous book festival participants looking for books on Austin and Texas History. Also pictured are AHCA Board Members Dr. Brooks Goldsmith (right) and Charles Peveto (left).

Judith Kay Pegues Hart

September 25, 1940 – August 28, 2016

The Austin History Center and AHCA lost a true friend, former board member, and source of inspiration with the passing of Kay Hart on August 28, 2016. Kay's love for Austin history left an indelible mark on AHCA and those who follow in her footsteps. She tirelessly raised money to help fund the purchase of a large cache of papers from Texas Governor E. M. Pease to add to the AHC's Pease Family Papers collection. Kay also raised money to produce events focusing on Pease, the architecture and music of the Depression era, and the love letters of Walter Prescott Webb and Terrell Maverick.

We remember Kay for her tireless work, warm smile and her passion for Austin History.



▲ Kay Hart speaking at the Guy Forsyth event at Sweet Home Baptist Church. This was one of the many events that Kay helped plan to celebrate Austin's history. AHC Photo by Grace McEvoy, 2010.

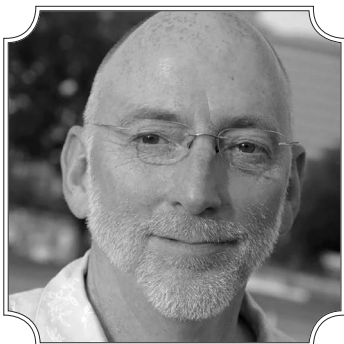
►...**EBERLY** stories to tell about Austin based on their own experience and memories. His Eberly panel, "Other People, Other Places," will feature stories of Austin's families and communities from the perspective of home-grown Austinites who have faced unique challenges to blend into the city's evolving social fabric.

"History is remembered through the prism of personal experi-

ence," said Barnes. "The memories of Austin's African-American, Asian-American, Latino and LGBT communities, by definition, differ in some ways from the most often told tales of our city."

Joining Barnes on the panel will be Lonnie Limon, Sandra Kirk, and Evan Taniguchi, all life-long Austin residents with deep roots in the community, each with a unique experience to share.

MEET THE PANELISTS FOR THE 2017 ANGELINA EBERLY LUNCHEON



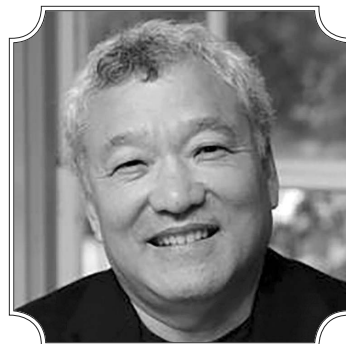
Michael Barnes, reporter and columnist for the *Austin American-Statesman* and author of *Indelible Austin*, leads an Eberly Luncheon panel discussion about the triumphs and challenges of growing up and living in Austin, from the perspective of native Austinites in the African-American, Asian-American, Latino and LGBT communities.



Sandra Kirk is a native East Austinite and currently a community service volunteer. She worked 40 years in California and Texas as a counselor, writer, program director, facilitator, performance improvement training professional, consultant, conference and seminar presenter, and public speaker.



Lonnie Limon is an advertising executive with over 18 years of experience with companies such as AT&T, Pepsi, McDonald's, Anheuser-Busch and others. Limon was born and raised in East Austin. The first members of the Limon family arrived in Creedmoor in 1889.



Evan Taniguchi has lived in Austin since 1963 and is principal of Taniguchi Architects. He currently chairs the City of Austin Design Commission and serves on the board of the Zilker Botanical Garden Conservancy. He also has been a board member of the AHCA for many years and served as president in 2013.

►...**RUSHING** interviews, which included recordings of stories from nine former mayors of Austin, and 37 more interviews are on the schedule for completion this year. But Rushing insists the work of her committee is not limited to the powerful, rich and famous.

"When I started working on the committee, I got the impression – perhaps wrongly – that when this was initially thought out, it was a way to reach out to very important people and try to draw them into the History Center. And I respect that, but that is not me. I want to find people that can tell really interesting stories about their time in Austin."

Indeed, rather than a list of "Who's Who" in Austin, the roster of upcoming oral history subjects includes people who have stories about day-to-day life in the capital city. Recent interviews have included longtime artist Ada McElhenney, members of the East Austin Breakfast Club, and Fannie Sneed Simnacher, who recently passed away, but not before sharing her stories of growing up and living near Del Valle.

"She talks about growing up over there on the banks of the Colorado and renting boats to people and having cabins. Those are the stories I love. Of all the ones we've done so far, I have yet to hear

one that wasn't fascinating. They're all different."

To be sure, there are luminaries as well, including former Texas Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby and longtime Austin newsman and civic leader Neal Spelce, but Rushing laments there are far more stories than the committee has resources to capture them.

"We're really racing against the clock with a lot of these people," she said, adding that the committee is always on the lookout for more volunteers to capture the stories of the people who have made Austin what it is.

If you'd like to participate in the recording of oral history interviews, contact AHCA Executive Director Jeff Cohen at jcohen@austinhistory.net, or you can attend the next Oral History Committee meeting from noon to 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 7 in the O. Henry Room of the AHC.

To nominate someone to be interviewed, visit www.AustinHistory.net and click the Community tab to find the nomination form. The online form requires the following information about the person being nominated: Name, contact information, and a brief statement about why the person would be a good candidate for an oral history interview.

Tower Discussion Generates Observations, Emotions



▲ A full house, including survivors of the Tower shootings and their relatives, attended the Oct. 18 event in the David Earl Holt Photo Gallery of the AHC.

It's rare to see a legendary news journalist overcome with emotion while talking about an event they've covered. We saw it when Walter Cronkite told the nation of the passing of President John F. Kennedy. Those of us who were at the Austin History Center the evening of October 18 saw it as veteran TV newsman Neal Spelce talked about his experience covering the mass shootings at the UT Tower August 1, 1966. Spelce was part of a panel discussing *Tower*, a new documentary about that dark day in Austin's not-too-distant past. Spelce, of course, became the first, and maybe the only local TV news reporter to lead all three major network newscasts that evening after spending most of that afternoon broadcasting a live, eyewitness account of the shootings, which claimed the lives of 17 people, inflicted physical wounds on 32 others, and leveled emotional damage on countless others who were drawn into the drama that gripped the UT campus that day.

Spelce's partners on the panel were Keith Maitland, who directed *Tower*, and Susan Rittereiser, AHC's Curator of Archives and Manuscripts. Maitland talked about the early success of the film and the years of research he and his team put into the project, with the intent on making the documentary as authentic as possible. Though actors provide the movement for the rotoscopic animation, the story is told through first-person testimonies from witnesses, survivors and others who were unwitting participants in what unfolded that day. Much of Maitland's research was done at the AHC, which Rittereiser pointed out has oral histories of survivors and the complete case records of the event from the Austin Police Department.

"This project wouldn't exist without the History Center," Maitland stated. "There were a lot of days where I thought I might not make this film," he went on, "but even if I hadn't made this film, my life has been enriched by digging through the history. The film is very personal and humanistic, and so there are a lot of facts and details that are not in the film by design. And I tell people, 'the information's out there' and this is one of the best places to find it."

But Maitland also acknowledged the invaluable role Spelce played through his reporting during the shootings. A recording of Spelce's live broadcast weaves through the other first-person accounts to move the story forward.

Though Spelce has recounted the events of August 1, 1966 countless times, the *Tower* event at the AHC had the feel of a reunion of sorts, with survivors and their relatives in attendance. The former newsman talked about the heroics of the Austin police officers who responded to the shootings, and the bravery shown by news reporters and photographers who risked their lives to cover the event and keep the public informed. He told of ordinary citizens who set their own safety aside to pull others from the line of fire. Emotions came rushing to the surface, though, when Spelce talked about an aspect of the tragic event that continues to haunt him.

"It's been years since I've broken up talking about this," said an emotional Spelce as he recounted part of the news coverage he was immersed in that day, "but it's because of Paul Bolton Sonntag." Spelce's voice cracked as he gestured to a photo of the 18 year-old Sonntag on the wall of the History Center, part of an exhibit marking the 50-year anniversary of the murders. "Our station, and most other news organizations, had a long-standing policy of not releasing the names of victims until kin were notified," Spelce explained. "But this was Austin in 1966, a town of a couple of hundred thousand people and almost everyone knew someone who was associated with what happened that day, so we broke with policy and read the names of the victims." Spelce went on to explain that the man who had hired him at KTBC, former news director Paul Bolton, was semi-retired but had been at the station helping produce coverage of the event and was on the air with reporter Joe Roddy as Roddy read the names of the casualties from the emergency room at Brackenridge Hospital. Spelce recalled that after Roddy got to the end of the list, Bolton asked him to read the names again – "I think you've got my grandson

on that list,” Spelce quoted Bolton as saying. “That part of the story really gets me,” Spelce revealed, “because I’ve got grandkids now. It really hits close to home.”

Maitland called out people in the audience who are connected to the story – John Fox, aka Artly Snuff, who was 17 years old the day of the shootings and helped rescue Claire Wilson and carry her to safety, and Cliff Martinez, nephew of Ramiro Martinez, one of the two Austin Police officers who made their way to the top of the tower and killed the sniper.

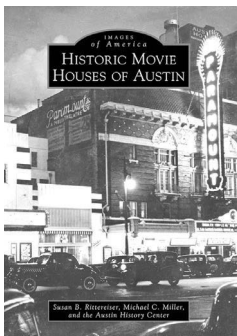
“We wanted the film to be an opportunity for healing, but we didn’t know that going into it,” said Maitland. “What we realized along the way is that by focusing on perspective and by keeping it about the individual reaction, that even though they’re specific stories, they could have a universality to them,” which he says makes the film relatable to audiences all over the world that have seen it – from Russia to Australia to Iran.

“The film’s about individual people and their feelings,” said Maitland, and the real-life stories in *Tower* promote the human spirit that connects us all.



▲ Neal Spelce (center), former anchor and news reporter for KTBC-TV, shares his observations about the UT Tower shootings of August 1, 1966. A 1966 photo of Spelce, who did a live broadcast from the scene of the shootings, is projected in the background. Susan Rittreiser (left), who oversaw production of the AHC's exhibit of the Tower shootings and Keith Maitland (right), who produced the documentary *Tower*, also shared their stories. Photo by Cliff Martinez.

Historic Movie Houses of Austin is One-of-A-Kind Gem



Austin’s emergence as a hub for TV and film production is a fairly recent phenomenon, but the city’s love affair with motion pictures goes all the way back to the late 19th century.

Susan Rittreiser, Curator of Archives and Manuscripts for the Austin History Center, and Mike Miller, City Archivist, worked together to produce *Historic Movie Houses of Austin*, a new book in Arcadia Publishing’s Images of America series.

This comprehensive look at Austin’s historic movie theaters is the first book ever to be published on the subject.

Historic Movie Houses of Austin focuses on the places – the movie houses and theaters—where people gathered to see

the latest offerings in film. As the city’s population grew and motion picture technology changed, so, too, did Austin’s movie houses. Through their research, Rittreiser and Miller tell us that motion pictures came to Austin on October 10, 1896, debuting downtown at the Hancock Opera House on West 6th St. The book takes us to the first kinetoscope parlor on Congress Ave., and to the city’s first multi-screen theater, the Aquarius 4, in southeast Austin.

Through the rich archival collections of the AHC, *Historic Movie Houses of Austin* explores the stories of these important historical spaces and those who were connected with them. Copies of the book are available at area book stores and can be purchased from the AHCA either online at www.AustinHistory.net or at the O. Henry Room in the AHC.

All proceeds from the book directly benefit the Austin History Center.

AHC Puts Museum Day Spotlight on Six Square

The Austin History Center marked the city’s annual Museum Day festivities Sept. 18 by showing new short-form documentaries about special places in historic East Austin.

AHC had partnered with Six Square - Austin’s Black Cultural District, a dynamic non-profit organization dedicated to “cultural place saving,” to produce four films, one each on Old Anderson High School, Victory Grill, Rosewood Courts, and Emancipation Park. The short documentaries are “teasers” for what the group hopes will develop into longer videos.

Learn more about Six Square at the sixsquare.org website.



▲ AHCA Board Members Steve Manning, Charles Peveto, and Cynthia Brandimarte in attendance at the District Docs presentation on Museum Day. Photo by Mike Miller, 2016.

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AHCA Looks to Reconnect with Previous Members

With so much to keep track of these days, it's not surprising that some who have been members of the Austin History Center Association have let their membership lapse.

AHCA's Membership Committee is looking to rectify that. Committee members have done research on lapsed memberships and developed a contact list. AHCA Board members are making phone calls and sending

emails to reconnect with those past members, with a goal of reengaging as many as possible.

If you're on that list of lapsed members, or if you want to join AHCA for the first time, visit www.AustinHistory.net and click the "Become a Member" tab at the top of the home page. Memberships start at just \$50 a year and can be paid online through the secure PayPal system.

Thank you for helping us support the work of the Austin History Center!

SAVE THESE DATES AUSTIN HISTORY CENTER (AHC) - 810 Guadalupe (at 9th)
Open Tue.-Sat. 10am – 6pm & Sun. 12pm – 6pm Call 512-270-0132

JANUARY 10

"The Last of the Moonlight Towers"

Screening of a new documentary film
by Jeff Kerr and Ray Spivey, AHC.

JANUARY 27

Angelina Eberly Luncheon

Austin American-Statesman columnist
Michael Barnes keynotes our annual
fundraiser at the Driskill Hotel.

FEBRUARY 19

"Celebrating The Rag"

Film screening, panel discussion,
and book signing on the 50th
anniversary of *The Rag*, AHC.

FEBRUARY 21

"Finding Refuge in Austin"

Opening reception for the
newest AHC exhibit.

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