



Full Steam Ahead! The BHA Unveils the the Simon Celaya Railroad Gallery

This September, the BHA opened the Simon Celaya Railroad Gallery at the Historic Brownsville Museum. A special grand opening reception was held on the evening of September 11th. Attendees celebrated the completion of this long awaited project and had an exclusive first-look at the new gallery features. In keeping with the railway theme, BHA board members drove a ceremonial golden spike into a railroad tie to mark the inauguration of the new gallery. This vibrant new space invites visitors of all ages to learn, play, and discover through exciting new exhibit features and hands-on interactives.

The Simon Celaya Railroad Gallery is one of two phases of the larger reinterpretation

project “Brownsville on the Move: A New Vision for the Historic Brownsville Museum.” The goal of “Brownsville on the Move” is to produce a complete reinterpretation of local transportation history as a new way to engage visitors, explore historical archives and collections, and educate students of all ages.

“The new gallery puts a spotlight on one of the museum’s most beloved artifacts: the 1872 Rio Grande Railroad locomotive,” said Tara Putegnatt, BHA Executive Director. “We are delighted to open the new exhibits surrounding the locomotive that will engage young visitors through sight, sound, and hands-on experiences.”

From exploring how a steam engine



BHA Board President, Harry E. McNair, Jr., placing ceremonial golden spike at the opening reception.

works and how a piston drives a locomotive’s wheels, to hypothesizing whether a horse or a train would arrive first, at every turn our young learners will be prompted to ask “Why?” and “How?”

Key features of the new gallery include:

Dress-up Station: Visitors can don an engineer’s uniform and climb into the cab of our historic Rio Grande Railroad locomotive.

Conductor’s Climb: Ascend the steps to the locomotive cabin for a unique photo op from the engineer’s point of view.

Activity Trunk: School field trips and guided tours can choose from a wide variety of fun and educational activities.

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First-look at the new displays around the 1872 Rio Grande Railroad locomotive.

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New interactives and games in the Simon Celaya Railroad Gallery



Hands-on Activity Stations: Interactive learning stations featuring quick facts and highlights of transportation history.

Game Station: Choose your journey and race against others while considering the challenges of travel.

The Simon Celaya Railroad Gallery is now open at the Historic Brownsville

Museum located at 641 E. Madison Street, Brownsville, Texas. The gallery is included with general admission and is open during regular museum hours: Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00am to 4:00pm.

The reinterpreted Simon Celaya Railroad Gallery was made possible in part by The Brownsville Community Improvement

Corporation (BCIC) Community Placemaking Grants for Quality Of Life Projects and MuseWork. Special thanks to Juan Velez for providing the spanish translation for the exhibit panels.

For more information about the Simon Celaya Railroad Gallery or to plan your visit, go to www.brownsvillehistory.org

Welcome!

NEW BHA MEMBERS

Arlene Binder
Elizabeth Groff
Debbie & John Kilroy
Jose Lozano

Cristobal Ortiz
Tony Rodriguez
Amelia Yznaga

Thanks for your membership renewal!

Blake Bowen
Mellena Conner
Mary Elizabeth & Larry Hollmann
Model Laundry, LLC.
Joseph Linck
Jim & Beatriz Mills

Walter A. & Ginger Pawkett
Bruno Sanchez
Tim Snyder
Eliza Vasquez
Karen Wilkins & Royall Clark

Sponsorships help make this newsletter possible!

For more information, please call us at (956) 372-1515, to inquire about newsletter sponsorship opportunities, or visit our website at www.brownsvillehistory.org

BROWNSVILLE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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956.541.5560 Fax: 956.435.0028
www.brownsvillehistory.org

SHADES OF HAUNTED HISTORY TOURS

Fort Brown: Thursday, Oct. 9, 2025 and Thursday, Oct. 23, 2025

Time: Two separate tour groups: First at 6:15 p.m., the second at 7:15 p.m.

Where: Brownsville Heritage Museum, 1325 E. Washington Street

Cost: \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members. Sorry no refunds.

To register please call: 956-541-5560

Fort Brown was an important military post on the US-Mexican border. This fort saw various conflicts including the Mexican American War and the Civil War. The first tour begins at 6:15 pm and will be led by Dr. Anthony Knopp, professor emeritus at UTRGV. The second tour begins at 7:15 pm and will be led by Michael Rodriguez. There is a 25-person limit, be sure and register early - spots will fill up fast!

Downtown Brownsville: Thursday, Oct. 16, 2025

Time: Two separate tour groups: First at 6:15 p.m., the second at 7:15 p.m.

Where: Brownsville Heritage Museum, 1325 E. Washington Street

Cost: \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members. Sorry no refunds.

To register please call: 956-541-5560

Want to uncover the spooky past of our border city? We are offering a downtown tour this fall. The first tour begins at 6:15 pm and will be led by Dr. Anthony Knopp, professor emeritus at UTRGV. The second tour begins at 7:15 pm and will be led by Michael Rodriguez. There is a 25 person limit so be sure and register early - spots will fill up fast!

Murder, Mystery, Mayhem Tour

When: Saturday, Oct. 25, 2025

Time: 8 p.m.

Where: Old City Cemetery, Corner of 5th Street & E. Madison Street

Cost: \$15 for members and \$20 for non-members. Sorry no refunds.

To register please call: 956-548-1313

Are you in for a night full of spooky history and surprises around every corner? Join the BHA as we explore the Old City Cemetery. Inhabitants of the cemetery will come alive and share their stories of love, deceit, and horror. Attendees should meet at the Old City Cemetery entrance gate. There is a 25-person limit, register early!

HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS

Historical Happy Hour: Presentation & Book Signing: "Puertas Verdes", a novel by Manuel Hinojosa



Historical Happy Hour: Game Night



Simon Celaya Railroad Gallery Grand Opening





NOW OPEN

Simon Celaya Railroad Gallery

**NEW LEARNING GAMES,
INTERACTIVES, AND MORE!**

**HISTORIC BROWNSVILLE MUSEUM
641 E. MADISON STREET
BROWNSVILLE, TX 78520**



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Brownsville Historical Association
1325 E. Washington Street
Brownsville, Texas 78520