

Goliad Courthouse Square Historic District

After Texas gained its independence from Mexico in 1836, settlers began arriving in the Goliad area, lured by the prospect of rounding up the stray cattle that belonged to Mission Nuestra Señora del Espíritu Santo de Zúñiga and Nuestra Señora del Rosario before the two missions were secularized. Ranching became the primary economic driver, and the age of the cattle drives began in the late 1800s. Local ranch owners drove thousands of head to railheads in Kansas and Nebraska for shipment to the coasts of the U. S. As railroads were built, cattle no longer were driven up the trail, and the economics of Goliad shifted to cotton farming, with some other farming and beef production. With the influx of Mexican citizens fleeing the Revolutionary turmoil in Mexico to work the cotton fields, the population grew to 13,000 in the 1890s. Older buildings on the Square were replaced by brick and stone edifices, some designed by well-known architects. The County Courthouse, three banks, and many retail buildings (some with residences on the second floor) were built; most of these late Victorian-style edifices have been preserved, some with modern adaptations, and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. By the 1940s, many laborers had left to join the military in WWII, cotton root rot had devastated the fields, and synthetic fabrics became available. Cattle raising and agricultural production again became economic generators and continue today. Goliad is a designated site on El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail. The Goliad Courthouse Square Historic District, Mission Espíritu Santo, Presidio La Bahía, and the Fan-nin Battleground State Historic Site also make the area an important tourist destination.

1. Fannin Park Plaza. Built in 1885 with a monument



for Col. Fannin and his comrades in arms, located here because the site of the massacre was too remote. Used for many ceremonies, picnics, and Easter egg hunts. The cannon near the marble obelisk was found on Goliad streets during paving of the roads. The other cannon was used by Fannin and his men on the battlefield.

2. Ballard Seidel Hotel (Cole House). There was no evidence of

an earlier structure when C. A.

Ballard sold this and other vacant lots to August Seidel for \$225.00 in

1856, but a hotel was operated

within the year until 1910. The

building of plastered Mission rock has a gabled roof de-

fining the original building. Fencing on the side yard was

salvaged from around the Courthouse in the early 1900s.



3. John Cole Bergmann Building. The two-story tan and

red brick building, built of brick from the

Goliad Brick Factory, retains most of the

original architectural features designed by

Jules Leffland. The front doors and win-

dows are classic examples of late 19th cen-

tury storefront design. The second floor

center bay contains a single round arch

window with rectangular windows on both sides. In the

center part of the cornice, the date 1899 sits within a

small pediment and above the name Bergmann. Upstairs

was a family home for the Bergmann sisters and down-

stairs was their millinery store until 1907 when a barber

shop was opened. In the 1930s a beer tavern occupied the

downstairs; the Baumgartner jewelry shop occupied this

floor from 1948 to 2014.



4. J. W. Ellis Building. A crisply detailed brick building designed by architect Jules Leffland, and built by B. M. Covington of Goliad and R. A. Nagal of Dewitt County in 1917 with angled display windows with thin copper mullions. Transoms are above the windows, with an upper wall of corbelled brick, and a recessed brick panel topped with corbelled dentils. Operated as a grocery store by Annie Koehler for 46 years, it has been used for several other businesses.



5. Bergmann Building. This yellowish tan Goliad brick building and the adjacent C. T. Black share a feature unique in the Courthouse Square. Each has an original central door on the upper tier of the porch from second floor to an upstairs porch. Many original architectural features in the upper part of the building have been preserved. A single door on the right end of the façade opens to a stairway leading to a second floor apartment that features a hand-powered elevator manufactured by Energy Elevator Co. A pool hall once existed on the second floor, but it was used as a residence as recently as 2014.



6. C. T. Black Building. The only three-story commercial building on the Square displays cast iron posts on each end of the storefront and a cast iron step embossed with the name C. T. Black at the entrance. A separate door on the ground floor leads to the 2nd floor. A central door opens to a second floor porch suggesting that a kind of double tier porch was always part of the building. An unusual change is visible on the side between the second and third floors: the brick corner is detailed, so perhaps the third floor was not originally planned. Black Jewelry Store occupied the first floor in 1905; the upper floors were resided. Oral history reveals Teddy Roosevelt recruited Rough Riders here. John Ferber, who had worked with the Fort Worth bootmaker John Justin, later used the first floor. Oral history notes he would repair shoes, throw them into a pile, and direct the owners to find their own shoes.



7. Cole Lott Buildings.

Cole Lott #1. The 1891 building constructed of Mission rock finished with plaster was built by John Cole, twice Mayor of Goliad. A small central triangular pediment rises from the middle of the cornice



and contains the name "Cole Block" and the date 1891. Originally no covered walk was at the sidewalk, but by 1906 a wooden porch had been added. The marble step at the entry door is worn from use, suggesting that perhaps it and the marble head moldings over the windows might be original. After the cyclone, architect Jules Leffland remodeled the smaller brick building for Will Lott, and for many years the Lott family owned all the buildings and lived upstairs. The first floor has been used for many businesses, from barber shops to general stores.

Cole Lott #2. The exterior load-bearing walls of the wider 1892 building are built of reclaimed Mission rubble rock finished with smooth plaster. An 1894 Sanborn Map and vintage photographs depict a two-story wood porch in the open space between the two Cole buildings. This side porch was later enclosed to create a two-story entry hall to the second floor. Servants quarters in the rear dating from ca. 1891 were used as a restaurant at one time.

Cole Lott #3. The two-story narrow brick infill building built in 1911 connected the two earlier 1891 buildings. The name LOTT in raised block letters is located on the wall between the dentiled brick cornice and the lintel. Leffland's plans for this building are located in Goliad Library.

8. Masonic Lodge. This second oldest building in the district has exterior walls of reclaimed Mission stone covered with plaster. The walls at the sides of the building retain the quoins and arches scored in the plaster to resemble cut stone. Two dates, 1854 and 1907, appear on the front façade with the newer date indicating that the building may have undergone important changes. The second story is unusually tall with horizontal stress lines on the sides revealing that the original height was lower. The first floor has had many uses: from a post office to a dining hall, doctor's office, and others. The second floor has been the home of the Masonic Lodge since 1854.



9. Chilton Building. Similar to the Eberhardt and Maeve Building (#23) except the placement of the colors is



reversed. Here the yellow-tan Goliad brick wall surfaces are enlivened by red brick trim. Within the pediment are the name CHILTON and an incomplete date 190_. The architect was Jules Leffland. Drs. L. W. Chilton Sr. and Jr. had offices on the second floor. Owner of the first automobile in Goliad, a “Red Devil,” Dr. Chilton Sr. had the first electric generator installed in Goliad for his new x-ray machine from Germany. The second floor offices housed medical offices from 1901 to 1958. Over the years, many retail shops have occupied the first floor.



10. Baker-Von Dohlen Building. Divided into three equal bays, the center bay is higher than the side bays with a rectangular pediment supported by brick dentils. It once housed a hardware store and was the Greyhound bus stop from 1942 to 1960, seeing many Goliad residents off to World War II. The location was also a pharmacy for many decades.

11. Baker Building. This building has endured alterations similar to those of its neighbors, yet parts have been well preserved. At the top, a generous parapet remains with a small pediment bearing the date 1896. A cast-iron threshold with vents runs below the storefront. The left bays represent the commercial space. The door on the right provides stairs to the second floor. The first floor connects to the one-story building, which for years housed a pharmacy with a soda fountain enjoyed by generations.



12. Maetze Bank. This red brick building has a lively façade in Italian Gothic Revival style. On the ground floor, the central bay has two slender rectangular openings separated by a cast iron post stamped with the name of the manufacturer, Koken Iron Works, St. Louis. According to a 1900 Sanborn Map, the building did not have a covered porch or awning over the sidewalk; by 1906, a porch had been added. The first floor was a bank with a second floor residence in 1896. From 1942 to the 1960s, both floors were residences.



13. W. A. Pettus Building. An 1894 map shows a rock building housing a county office. W. A. Pettus built this structure in 1912 over the basement of the earlier building. Today, an internal stairway in the middle bay leads to a basement with walls of reclaimed Mission rock, a decrepit fireplace, and two windows with light wells and a steel access door at the south end of the basement opening to the sidewalk above. The second floor was first designed for the Pettus family's residence, including a hand-operated Otis elevator and a large ballroom, while the ground floor was for commercial use. The commercial uses have been a dry goods store, a five and dime, a pool parlor, and the post office.



14. Brooking-Lipscomb-White Residence. The oldest residence in the historic district was built ca. 1850 by



Vivian Brooking, who left for the Gold Rush in California. After returning, he was shot during the Cart Wars. The men who shot him were hanged on the Courthouse Square. Dr. Lipscomb bought

the house for his family and built an adjoining building for a school house for the Lipscomb children, which later became his office. The home was bought by Judge and Mrs. J. A. White in 1905. An example of early Texas architecture, the building features a side gabled roof and a porch across the front. The house has two main rooms with a modified dog trot between and a chimney at each end of the house.

15. Ewell Building and Storeroom. Jules Leffland is the architect of this 1883 building that has had many



different uses and architectural configurations. First built as a store, the building had an elaborate Victorian façade with brick side and back walls. Inside, a tall interior space had a balcony mezzanine. The front

façade was removed in the early 20th century to present a more fashionable and up-to-date modern brick front. The yellowish tan bricks were manufactured by the Goliad Brick Company. A section of an earlier concrete sidewalk has been preserved, scored with an unusual design of squares and parallelograms. The name of the original business J. W. EWELL & CO. appears to be stained rather than inlaid in this concrete section. On the rear façade, a round window is framed by a bull's eye brick arch. Next to the northeast corner of the building, the words GOLIAD THEATRE, an image of the state of Texas, and a flowing line are stained into the concrete sidewalk. Businesses have included an emporium, theater, tractor company, and café.

The Storeroom, a small Goliad brick building at the rear of the lot, was built in 1906 and remodeled as an apartment in 1929. It once provided



storage for the main Ewell Building. The wide segmental arch on the east façade has unusual proportions. The center of the arch is almost at the same height as the arch's spring line giving it the appearance of a semicircular arch. A large rock cistern is in the Mission rock basement.

16. Stout-Pettus Block. This one-story brick building built in 1894 is the only "arcaded block" building



configuration in the Historic District. Possibly designed by

Jules Leffland, it has a strong resemblance to his documented designs for the LeTelle Mercantile Co. and the Bay City Grocery Company buildings in Bay City, Texas. Behind the red brick façade are three separate buildings: each once housed businesses until 1991-2002 when they were consolidated and rehabilitated as the Goliad County Public Library by Houston architect Ray Bailey. The sides and rear walls are tan Goliad brick. In 2014, a brick addition was built at the rear of a section of the building to house the J. A. White Family Center for Texas History. Over time, the buildings have housed department, mercantile, and grocery stores, and a bowling alley.

17. Bull Durham Wall Advertisement. The robust colored painting advertising Bull Durham Chewing Tobacco was painted sometime between 1894 and 1900



by "wall dogs," itinerant painters who traveled the country. The 43' advertisement with an 8' x 12' bull image was painted on the then-exposed exterior brick wall of the Stout-Pettus Building.

The image was covered by a frame wall when a new building was added around 1900 that protected it from the elements for more than a century. When the frame building was dismantled in 2013, the wall painting came to light, revealing itself in mint condition. A shed roof has been built to protect the mural.

18. Burns Building. Built in 1915, the first floor was the Burns Bank, later the Commercial Bank of Goliad, which



closed during the Depression. Originally of frame construction, it was later covered in plaster. The second floor was the residence of J. C. Burns, who practiced law and served as county judge. At age

93, he wrote his memoirs about his experiences on a trail drive at age 17. After the bank closed, the first floor was used as Judge Burns' Law Office until his death.

19. Patton Building. Built after the 1925 fire that destroyed six buildings on this block, this building has a unique poured-in-place concrete exterior for the creation



of the walls. Horizontal bands on the side walls indicate that wood boards were used to form the walls. The loss from fire damage, estimated at \$20,000-\$30,000 for these six buildings, was caused

by an explosion in a cleaning shop. After his loss, Mr. Patton wanted a fireproof building and built the first and only concrete structure on the Courthouse Square.

20. Seeligson Building. The oldest brick building on the south side of the Square, designed by Jules Leffland, was built in 1890 for the Seeligson & Co. Grocery and Dry



Goods store. Extensively remodeled, the original Goliad brick façade was plastered over to present a streamlined modern appearance. It was used as a movie theater, restaurant, and gift shop. As a movie

theater, bottle caps were sometimes traded for entrance fees to the movie theater.

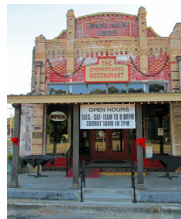
21. W. W. Denham Building. Narrow and very deep, the building, possibly a Leffland design, stretches one block



from South Courthouse Square to Fannin Street. Goliad brick pilasters divide the building into three bays, the highest with the date 1900 inlaid in stone. Signs painted in shadowed letters on the brick read: W. W. Denham and Co. FURNITURE,

COFFINS, and CASKETS. Denham was one of the Goliad Brick Company owners.

22. Neyland Building. Another narrow and very deep building has a red brick pediment outlined with Goliad brick that rises above the central corbeled brick cornice. An arched panel holds the name Neyland and the date 1903. Neyland constructed the building for an implement and hardware store.



23. Eberhardt and Maeve Building. This building, with a brick stepped parapet façade, was built around 1890, and was used as a department store and as a saloon. The word *Saloon* is barely visible now under the parapet on a band of red brick.



24. First National Bank. One of three banks on the Square at the turn of the century. Designed by architects



Green and Finger of Houston, the Classical Revival style is dominated by four Tuscan limestone columns. The bank, constructed in 1912 over a Mission stone basement of an earlier building, had an adding machine, a “first” for Goliad. An addition to the original was built in 1981.

25. Vollbrecht-Getzwiller Building. An earlier inventory shows this as part of a larger building. After demolition of the southern part, the two-story rubble Mission stone building was rebuilt and replastered in 1980 and deeply lined to simulate coursed and ashlar stone. Originally a one room residence built by Ludwig Vollbrecht around 1848, it was later remodeled by Dr. Getzwiller, who used the front rooms as an office and the rock basement as a pharmacy. The original walls are 20" thick made of stones from Presidio La Bahia.



26. Old Market House. Built in 1871, the structure had 12x24-foot stalls that rented to sellers of meat and produce. From 1886-1964, it was the fire house for the Volunteer Fire Department. In 1967, it was renovated and renamed the Market House Museum and operated by the Goliad County Historical Commission.



27. Goliad County Courthouse. Architect Henri E. M. Guindon designed the 1894 Courthouse costing \$67,888.95. He was also the architect for an almost identical courthouse in Caldwell County. Limestone and brick recovered from the earlier 1870 Courthouse were used in the rebuilding. Goliad citizens relate that part of the stones were hauled from Austin by oxcart. This is the fourth courthouse



built since the County was created in 1836. After the 1902 tornado, the Courthouse was used as a hospital. In 1942, a hurricane caused significant damage, demolishing the towers and the center clock tower and roof. In 2003, the building was restored with partial funding from the Courthouse Preservation program when George W. Bush was Governor.

Reminiscences



Turner's Ferry — Early Transportation. Once located at the south end of Commercial Street before there was a bridge, the ferry provided a link for the town of Goliad and the La Bahía community.

Basements. Five basements in buildings around the Square are made of Mission rock. The source of the rocks is believed to be from the ruins of Presidio La Bahía and Mission Espiritu Santo. "An act, passed in 1847 by the city fathers: An act providing for the survey of the town tract of Goliad and appropriating the loose rock at the old mission for the benefit of persons residing in the town tract. Be it further enacted that the citizens residing in the town tract of Goliad have the right to take and carry away any loose rocks that may be found within the mission wall so that in removing said rock no injury shall be done to the building and the wall enclosing same."

Goliad brick. Yellow bricks used in the construction of some of the buildings on the Square were made at the Goliad Brick Factory at a site southwest of Fannin and Commercial Streets near a ford on the San Antonio River.

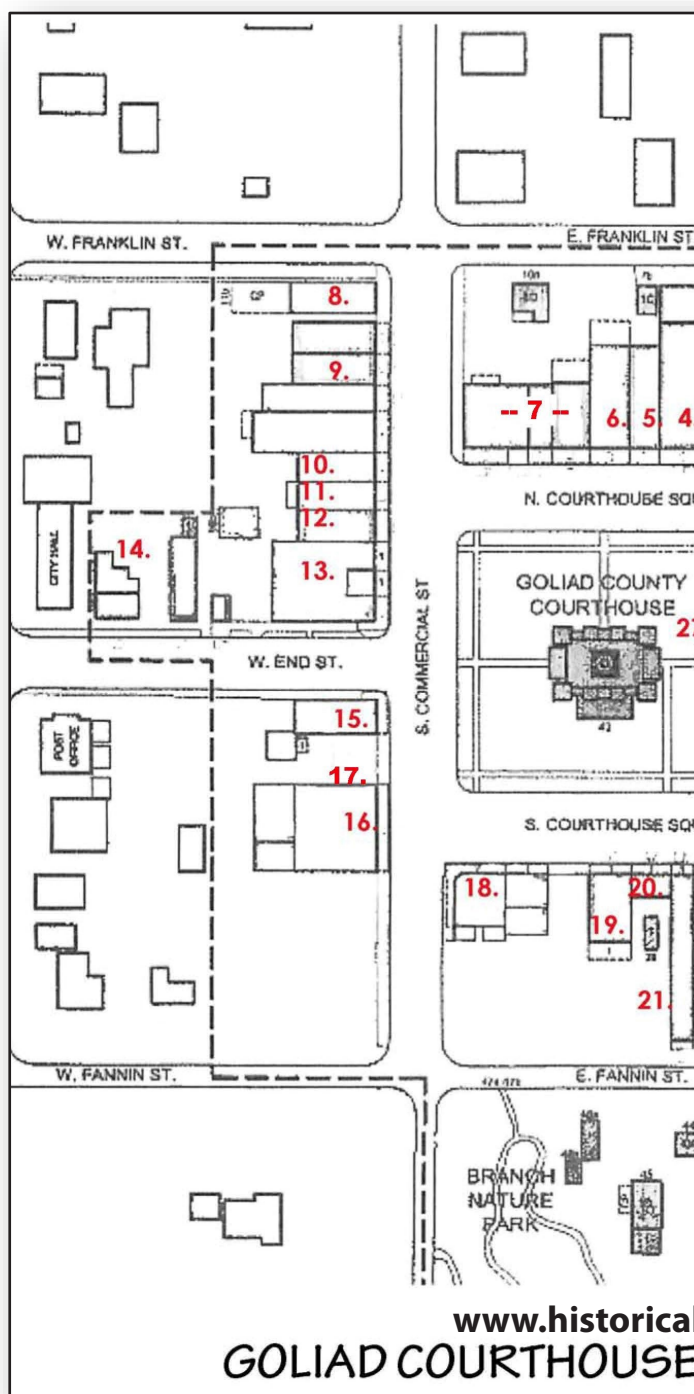
There are few towns in Texas, to my notion, that are truly colourful...In Goliad, around the square and area adjacent, you can cut the color with a knife.

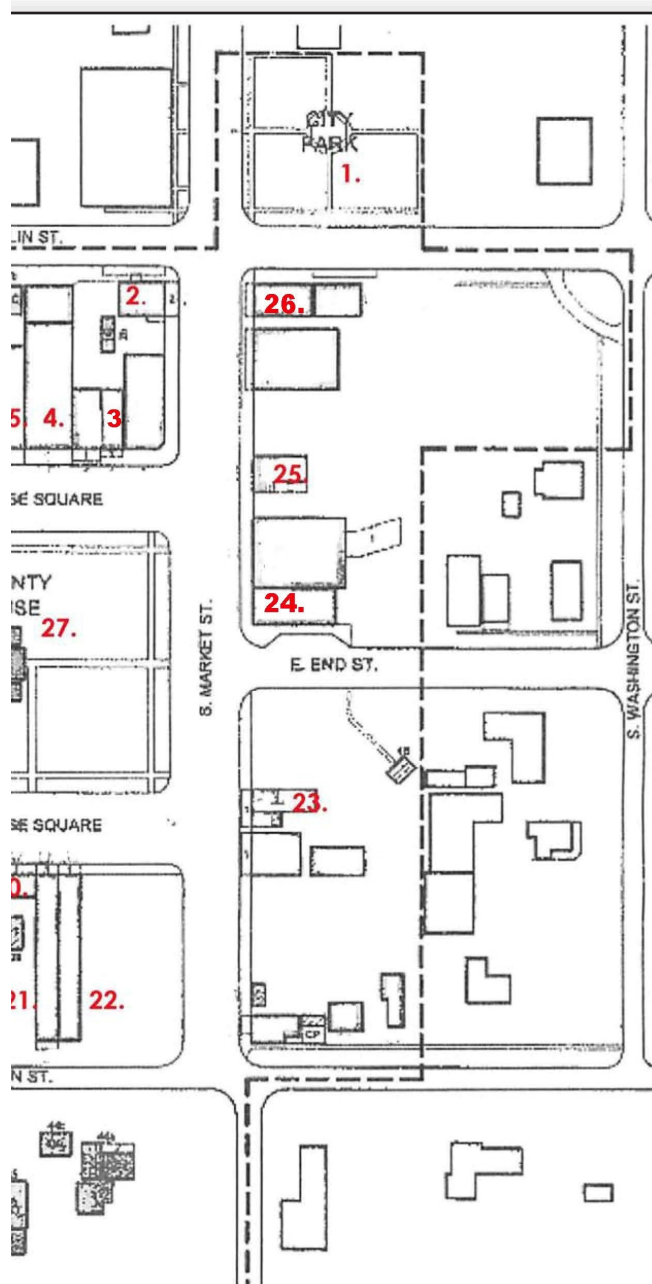
— Leon Hale

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Patsy Pittman Light, Marker Chair,
Goliad County Historical Commission





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SE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Historic Visitors to Goliad

1767-1768: Fray Gaspar de Solís, guardian of the College of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de Zacatecas, visited Nuestra Señora de Espiritu Santo on his inspection of the Franciscan missions. He reported the mission was “situated on the banks of the San Antonio de Bejar, a large river...with pleasant, shady banks and ...a large stock of fish” and that the mission’s population of 300 Indians included members of the Taranama (Aranama), Tamique, Piquiane, and Manos de Perro tribes.

1821: Stephen F. Austin, *empesario* (later founder of his colony in East Texas), scouted for a possible site for colonists with Manuel Becerra, a *regidor* (town councilman) of La Bahía and three Aranama Indians from the mission. He wrote, “The country is the most beautiful & desirable to live in I ever saw.”

1834: Jean Louis Berlandier, Swiss-French botanist/zoologist, travelled through Texas studying natural history subjects and created a map of the La Bahía-Bexar Road (designated as part of El Camino del los Tejas National Historic Trail in 2004). He wrote, “the terrain where Villa de Goliad is situated is very uneven... composed at first of a more or less thick layer of hardened white clay.” In 1832, the population was 1,439.

1838: Stephen F. Austin met with Goliad priests and civic leaders concerning attacks on his East Texas colonists by members of the Karancahua tribe.

1854: Frederick Olmstead, one of the designers of New York’s Central Park, travelled in Texas sending articles to the *New York Times*. He reported: “Goliad was a settlement of half a dozen houses, two stores, a wheelwright’s and blacksmith’s shop.”

1940: Eleanor Roosevelt visited Goliad State Park and addressed the Civilian Conservation Corps workers, who restored Mission Espiritu Santo, saying “I think the work here is wonderful... I wish to commend each and everyone for the fine workmanship that is everywhere.”

1968: Lady Bird Johnson unveiled a Department of the Interior plaque designating the restored Presidio La Bahía as a registered National Historic Landmark.

Goliad Courthouse Square Historic District

Walking Tour

