

AUSTIN REMEMBERS.

“THE COLLECTIVE MEMORY OF AUSTIN & TRAVIS COUNTY”

WINTER 2018

Driskill Hotel to Take Center Stage at Annual Eberly Luncheon



A couple checks in at the front desk of the Driskill Hotel in this 1952 photo by Dewey Mears. ASPL_DM-52-C15 585, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.

Like colorful threads that bring life to a tapestry, the ups and downs of the Driskill Hotel are inextricably woven through the history of Austin. The names of people whose fortunes have been tied to the hotel, or those whose lives changed within its walls reads like a Who's Who of Austin. On Friday, Feb. 2, the story of how a group of community-minded citizens saved the Driskill from destruction will anchor a broader discussion about the importance of preserving similar landmarks, as the Austin History Center Association hosts the annual Angelina Eberly Luncheon.

“Three prominent Texans whose lives have intersected with the Driskill Hotel will lead the luncheon panel,” said Charles Peveto,

chair of the Angelina Eberly Luncheon Committee.

Luci Baines Johnson, daughter of former President Lyndon Johnson, and Julian Read, founder of Read-Poland Associates, will share their perspectives on events that helped shape the significance of the hotel. Author Monte Akers, who has just published a new book about the history of the Driskill Hotel, rounds out the panel. Copies of Akers’ book, *The Grande Dame of Austin: A History of the Driskill Hotel*, will be available for purchase and author signing at the luncheon.

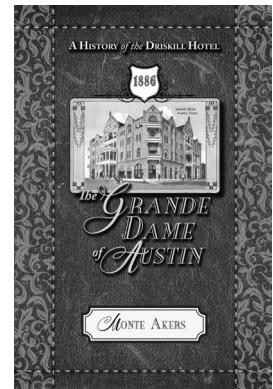
“I’m proud of the work our committee has put into preparing for this year’s luncheon,” said Peveto. “Those who attend are in for a real treat.”

EBERLY... PAGE 6 ➤

Release of New Driskill Hotel Book Coincides with Eberly Luncheon

The timing couldn’t be better. As members and friends of AHCA get ready to gather Feb. 2 for the annual Angelina Eberly Luncheon at the Driskill Hotel, a new book about the dramatic history of the old hotel has been released. *The Grande Dame of Austin: The History of the Driskill Hotel*, was researched and written by local author and AHCA board member Monte Akers, and published by Waterloo Press. Recently, Akers spent a few minutes talking about his most recent project.

AKERS, DRISKILL... PAGE 7 ➤





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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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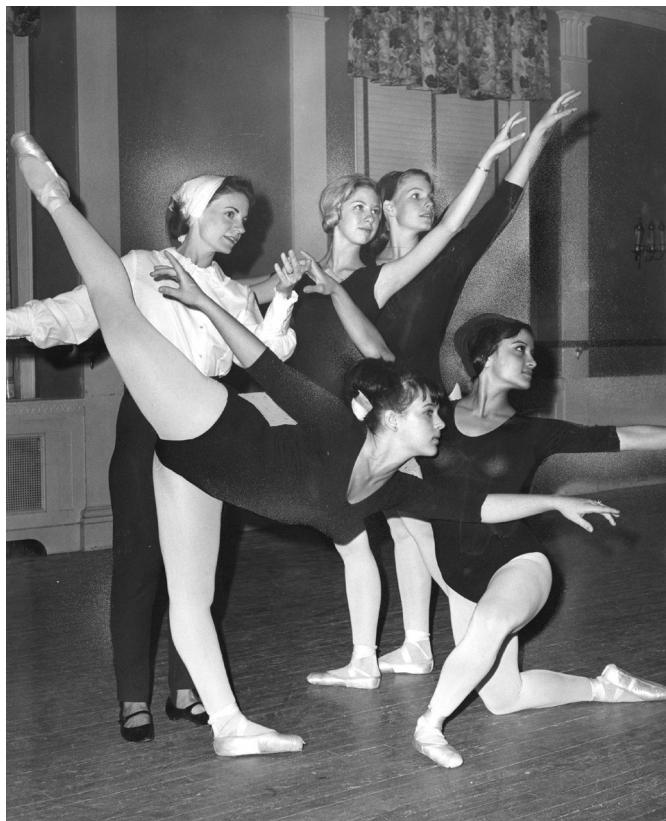
Anne Wheat - Photographer



RECENT ACQUISITIONS

History marches on and the Austin History Center staff continues to document our past. Since the Fall 2017 issue of Austin Remembers, the AHC has received 55 donations totaling over 109 linear feet of new acquisitions for the collections. Here are a few highlights of these recent acquisitions:

- Expanding or relocating Austin's municipal airport was a highly contested issue during the 1980s and 1990s. During this time, Citizens for Airport Relocation (CARE) and Airport Neighborhoods Environmental Defense Association (ANEDA) formed to advocate for moving the airport to nearby Manor. The AHC received the organizational records of these groups, including bylaws, membership lists, meeting minutes, newsletters that include meeting agendas, internal memorandum, financial records, legal documents, reports, newspaper clippings, handbills, and fliers - all of which highlight the activities of both CARE and ANEDA from 1987 to 1998.
- The AHC also recently acquired the records and archives of Ballet Austin. The collection consists of all the historical records about the operation of the organization dating back to 1953, as well as its role with the Southwest Regional Ballet Association. Most of these materials were gathered by Velma Lee Guinn, a longtime member of the Ballet Austin board and unofficial historian of the group.



◀ Ballet Austin's *The Nutcracker*, 1965. PICA 24594, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.

NEWLY PROCESSED COLLECTIONS

Austin History Center staff and student volunteers continue to work to make the collections more accessible to the public, processing 23 unique manuscript and photograph collections and over 101,000 items in the last three months. You can view inventories of all the AHC's processed collections online at: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/browse/browse_ahc1.html. Here are a few collections recently completed:

AR.Z.036. Austin (Tex.). City Council. Sally Shipman Records

Sally Stevens Shipman was born in Beaumont, Texas, in 1938 and graduated from Beaumont High School in 1956. She moved to Austin to attend the University of Texas and graduated in 1960 with a Bachelor of Liberal Arts.

Shipman began her political career as a neighborhood organizer and was a founding member of the West Austin Neighborhood Group. She served as chair of the Austin Building Standards Commission from 1974 to 1977, and then joined the Austin Planning Commission, where she served as vice-chair from 1977 to 1982. She was first elected to Place 3, Austin City Council, in 1983, and was reelected in 1985 and 1987, completing her tenure in the spring of 1990. She served as mayor pro-tem during her last term. While in office, she remained devoted to improving neighborhoods. A major initiative during her time in office was creation of Capitol view corridors to prevent views of the Texas Capitol building from being blocked

by downtown construction. She also worked to get land near Town Lake (now Lady Bird Lake) dedicated as park space, helping maintain environmentally sensitive areas.

Documents in this collection – correspondence, memoranda, reports, budget documents, legal records, news clippings, maps and requests for assistance from Austin citizens – represent Shipman's work as an Austin City Council member from 1983 through 1990.



▲ Austin City Councilwoman Sally Shipman. PICB 13321, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.

AR.D.007. Eugene Carlos Bartholomew Papers

Eugene Carlos Bartholomew, son of Orange Adams and Sarah Chapin Wright Bartholomew, was born in Hanover, Michigan, on January 3, 1839, and moved to Jonesville, Michigan with his family at age 11. He graduated from Hillsdale College in 1861, and then entered the Union Army as a civilian employee in 1864. In 1865, he became chief clerk in the Quartermaster's Division of the Fourth Army Corps, a unit that was relocated from Nashville to Victoria, Texas in 1865. Thereafter he worked with the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands further up the coast in Galveston. As an agent of the Bureau he was transferred to Austin in 1867 to oversee the establishment of schools.

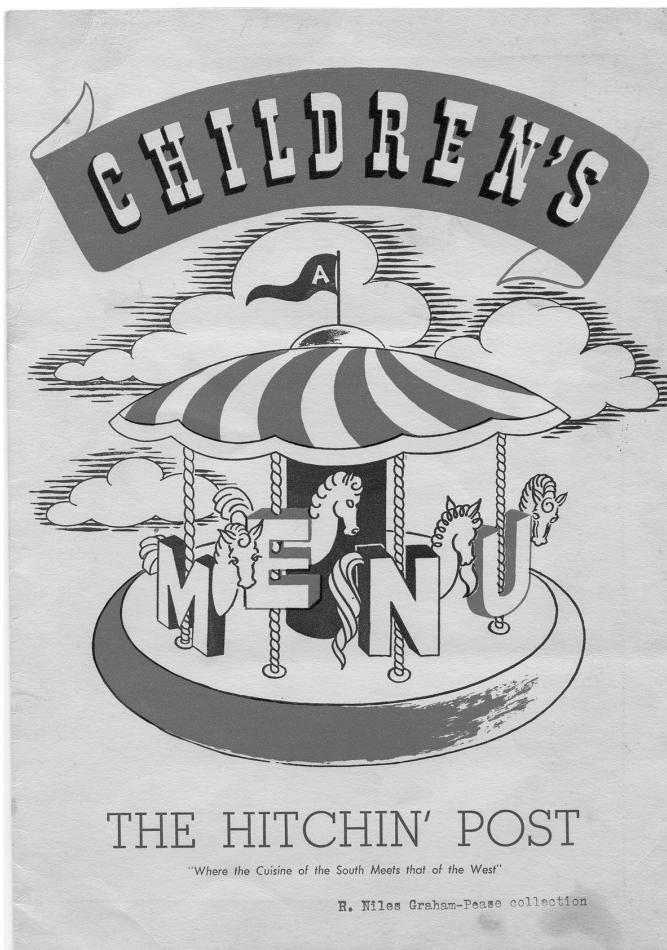
In 1870, Bartholomew was appointed Superintendent of Education, having also served as Chief Clerk for both the State

House of Representatives and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instructions. By 1873, he had become involved in the real estate and loan business, which occupied him for the remainder of his life. He was one of the founders and original director of the Austin National Bank, in which both his son and grandson later became executive managers. From 1909 to 1919, he served as one of the first city commissioners and assisted in the funding of the first city park, named in honor of Mayor A.P. Wooldridge. Bartholomew also headed the Water and Light Department.

The collection documents the activities of Bartholomew from the years before entering college in 1857 until approximately two weeks before his death in 1923. There are five series, grouped as Diaries, Account Books, Letters Sent, Letters Received, and Assorted Materials.

AR.1992.017. Austin/Travis County Restaurant Menu Collection

This Menu Collection contains approximately 400 menus (and growing) donated by a variety of donors. The menus document the restaurants and food culture of Austin and Travis County from the late 1800s through the current day. From El Arroyo to Youngblood's Fried Chicken, more than 100 restaurants, past and present, are represented in the collection. While the collection has menus dated from the late 1800s, the majority of the menus are from the 1940s to current day.



▲ This children's menu from the long-closed Hitchin' Post restaurant is one of the hundreds of menus in the Austin/Travis County Restaurant Menu Collection. AR.1992.017(B2Fh_1), Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.

Weeks Named to Lead Austin Public Library System



These are exciting times for the Austin Public Library system. In August 2017, Roosevelt Weeks was named the new Director of the Austin Public Library. His first day was Sept. 18. A little more than a month later, Weeks presided over the opening of Austin's new Central Library, a stunning, state-of-the-art community space.

Prior to coming to Austin, Weeks worked with the Houston Public Library, where he was most recently deputy director and chief of staff, and chief technology officer before that. In those roles, Weeks managed large budgets and oversaw installation of technology in all of Houston's library locations, including computer upgrades, wireless connectivity, videoconferencing, and a patron reservation system.

Weeks is a member of several state and national library associations. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science from Texas Southern University and his Master of Library Science degree from the University of North Texas.

The Austin History Center is the local history division of the Austin Public Library.

◀ Director of the Austin Public Library, Roosevelt Weeks.

AUSTIN CELEBRATES OPENING OF NEW CENTRAL LIBRARY



▲ A signature feature of the new central library is a large red grackle clock. The new building opened for business Oct. 28.



▲ Hundreds of Austin residents braved cool temperatures Oct. 28 as the city opened the doors of the new central library building. Participating in the ribbon cutting (to the right) were former Austin Mayor Frank Cooksey, member of AHCA's Past Mayors Advisory Committee; and his wife, Lynn Cooksey, member of the AHCA Board of Directors and former first lady of Austin.



▲ Mobile exhibits from Austin History Center collections grace the hallways of the new Austin Central Library.

Funding Sources Sought for Planned AHC Faulk Expansion

Former President Barack Obama once said, “Money is not the only answer, but it makes a difference.”

That sentiment certainly applies to the Austin History Center’s long-held plans to expand its operations into the John Henry Faulk Central Library building. Since 2003, internal City of Austin discussions have described how the AHC could move archives and operations into the Faulk once the building was vacated and the new Austin Central Library building opened for business. In 2008, the Austin City Council put its seal of approval on the concept with a resolution, and again in 2012, when the expansion was included in the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan. Now, the new Central Library is open but plans for AHC expansion into the Faulk are in a state of suspension.

Not surprisingly, money is the core issue. Early estimates indicate it will take at least \$14.8 million in repairs and general maintenance just to bring the Faulk building up to current city safety code and make it suitable for storing historic archives. Currently, there is no dedicated budget for the work. Meanwhile, the AHC is out of storage space, inhibiting the collection of archives and limiting room for citizens to access and research the archives. Lack of space also limits the ability to produce programs and exhibits that engage public involvement.

AHCA board members and staff are talking with new Austin Public Library Director Roosevelt Weeks as well as other city staff and elected officials, trying to identify funding sources that would pay for the Faulk repairs and allow the AHC to expand its operations into two floors of the building and its basement. One option being considered is including all or part of the cost in the city's planned 2018 general obligation bond proposal, which is now being developed, but competition for inclusion in that bond package is tough with many competing projects all trying to secure a spot as city leaders hold the line on spending.

As a friend of the AHC, you can make your voice heard in this discussion. AHCA has produced a new website, SaveAustinHistory.org, which provides information on the expansion of the AHC into the Faulk building. Visit the website, then call or email your Austin city council member or Mayor Steve Adler's office to let them know you value the AHC and support including repairs to the Faulk building in the 2018 bond proposal.

To learn more about the development of the 2018 bond proposal, visit www.austintexas.gov/department/city-austin-2018-bond-development

AHC Executive Director Jeff Cohen (left) and City Archivist Mike Miller (right) hosted District 10 Austin City Council member Alison Alter (center) and members of her family and staff for a tour of the Austin History Center in November. Each member of the City Council has been invited to take the tour.



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Annual Angelina Eberly Luncheon

Friday, Feb. 2, 2018 • Driskill Hotel Ballroom

Coffee Mixer, 11:15 a.m. • Luncheon, Noon – 1:15 p.m.

www.austinhistory.net/eberlyluncheon

Eberly Luncheon Panelists



Luci Baines Johnson

Luci Baines Johnson has spent most of her life in the public eye. As the younger daughter of former President Lyndon Johnson and First Lady Lady Bird Johnson, she has a unique perspective on events that shaped Texas and the United States in the mid-to late-20th century. Since then, she has built a career on a foundation of business and philanthropic commitments. For years, Johnson served as chairman of the board of the LBJ Holding Company, which included radio, real estate, timber, and ranch assets. In 2003, she and her husband, Ian Turpin, founded LBJ Wealth Advisors, which manages and helps transition family wealth from one generation to another. Johnson also co-founded BusinesSuites, an operator of executive suites.

On a more personal level, Johnson has committed time and resources to the causes of social justice, health care, and the environment. She currently serves on the boards of the Lyndon Baines Johnson Foundation, The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center and the Board of Visitors of MD Anderson Cancer Center. She is a Trustee Emeritus of Boston University and a lifetime board member of the Seton Fund, Dell Children's Hospital and the SAFE Alliance, dedicated to ending sexual exploitation and domestic violence.

Johnson is an honored graduate of St. Edward's University.



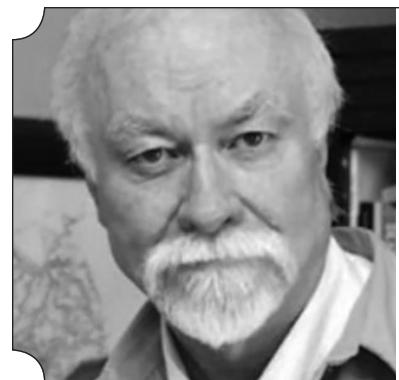
Julian Read

Julian Read is a nationally prominent corporate communications and public affairs counselor who has been part of the Texas business and political scene for more than half a century.

He founded and operated his own firm, Read-Poland Associates, for five decades before partnering with New York public relations executive Jeff Hunt to merge it with a global industry leader.

Read was a cub reporter for the *Fort Worth Press* when he was 18 years old. Six years later, he founded his own fledgling advertising and publicity shop. He soon scored two political campaign upsets that led to a lifetime of broad experience in the public sector. He became intimately involved in John B. Connally's successful campaign for governor of Texas in 1962, and remained his counselor and confidant for more than 30 years until Connally's death in 1993. He served as Connally's representative to the national media when an assassin's bullets wounded Connally and killed President John Kennedy in a Dallas motorcade in November 1963. In his book, *JFK's Final Hours in Texas*, Read offers his personal account of the events and looks at the continuing experience of a wounded community still recovering from the aftermath.

Based in Austin, Read continues to provide senior counsel for Cohn & Wolfe, a worldwide unit of London-based WPP. He also devotes much of his time in support of historic preservation.



Monte Akers

With a life-long passion for history and writing, Monte Akers has authored both fiction and non-fiction for more than three decades. He is the author of *Flames after Midnight: Murder, Vengeance, and the Desolation of a Texas Community* (University of Texas Press) and several other history-based books.

An attorney as well as historian, author, song lyricist, and collector of historical artifacts, Akers is also a former adjunct professor at Texas State University. He has been associated with numerous historical commissions and associations and currently serves on the executive committee of the Austin History Center Association. Akers is a frequent speaker at regional and national conventions and has authored articles that have appeared in a wide range of magazines, periodicals, and newspapers.

Akers is a graduate of the University of Texas at Arlington and the University of Houston Law Center. He currently serves as board secretary for the AHCA.



▲ This image depicts the Driskill Hotel when it opened in 1886. The image was used on a postcard produced in 1966 to mark the hotel's 80th anniversary. AF-P6150(24), Austin History Center, Austin Public Library

►... AKERS, DRISKILL

Austin Remembers: What time period does your book cover?

Monte Akers: It begins with the founding of Austin, or Waterloo in 1839, in order to trace the development of inns and hotels in the hamlet prior to the Driskill. Then, it picks up the story of Jesse Driskill, his plans and construction in 1885 and 1886, and comes forward to today.

Austin Remembers: What kind of topics did you write about?

Monte Akers: The book contains 12 chapters, each of which is devoted to a different topic including violence, suicides, politics, employee experiences and, of course, sightings of ghosts at the hotel.

Austin Remembers: Did you discover anything about the hotel that surprised you?

Monte Akers: I was surprised at how close the hotel came to failing in its early years. Jesse Driskill believed Austin would be the first city in the state to reach a population of 100,000 and he planned accordingly. So the hotel didn't start making a profit for almost 20 years, during which it closed and changed owners several times.

Austin Remembers: Who were some of those early owners?

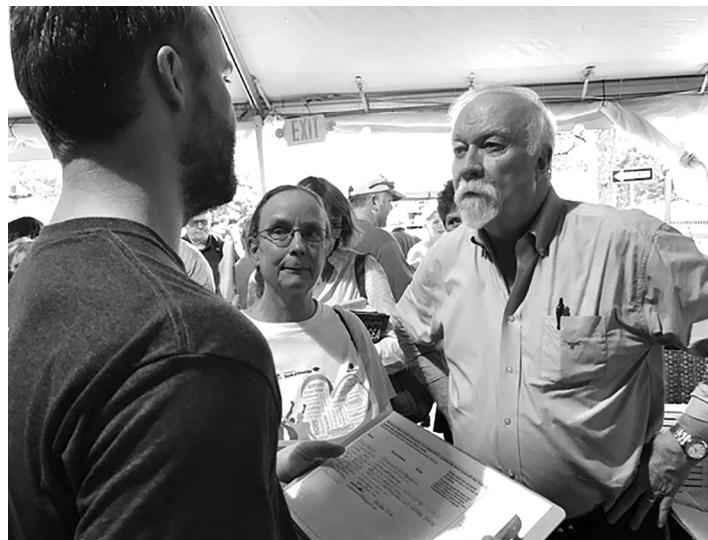
Monte Akers: The most colorful was Maurice Curtis. He was an English actor who made his fortune in a play called "Sam'l of Posen." He played the lead role, purchased the rights to the play, then got into the hotel business, first in California and then Texas.

Before coming to Austin, he was accused of killing a policeman. He was tried four times for the murder but he was acquitted of those charges. Curtis was a prima donna and not a successful hotel owner—he only owned it for a year—but he was interesting. Another owner was Major George Littlefield, who is quite well-known in Austin. He owned the hotel for eight years at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, and was the first to make a profit doing so.

Austin Remembers: So, is the hotel haunted?

Monte Akers: I would love to have a supernatural experience, but haven't yet. I was told plenty of stories by folks who have, and the hotel has something like 12 different ghosts attributed to it. I suspect that ghosts will someday be explained by science, but in the meantime the Driskill seems to be the city's top attraction for folks who believe otherwise.

The Grande Dame of Austin: The History of the Driskill Hotel is available at Book People and other Austin bookstores, and online at AustinHistory.net. You also can buy a copy at this year's Angelina Eberly Luncheon and hear Akers talk more about the history of this Austin landmark.



▲ Monte Akers, author of *The Grande Dame of Austin: The History of the Driskill Hotel* speaks with attendees at the Texas Book Festival.

INDELIBLE AUSTIN

★ MORE SELECTED HISTORIES ★

Double the Indelible

The end of 2017 was busy for Waterloo Press, the publishing arm of the AHCA. Following release of *The Grande Dame of Austin: The History of the Driskill Hotel*, Waterloo Press again teamed up with *Austin American-Statesman* columnist Michael Barnes to publish *Indelible Austin: More Selected Histories*, a spin-off of Barnes' first Waterloo Press project, the successful *Indelible Austin: Selected Histories*.

Following the pattern of the first book, Barnes tells the stories of real people and real places, offering a deeper understanding of our city, sometimes at odds with the accepted narratives.

Both Indelible Austin books are available online at AustinHistory.net or at most local book stores.

MICHAEL BARNES

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AHC Receives Archival Award of Excellence

The Texas Historical Records Advisory Board has selected the Austin History Center to receive the 2017 Archival Award of Excellence.

The award is based on AHC's recent efforts to better document and celebrate the architectural history of Austin. Supporting evidence was the article "All About Architecture: Recent Projects," which appeared in the Fall 2017 issue of the Austin Remembers newsletter. The article chronicled the series of projects that the AHC has undertaken to better preserve our community's architectural heritage. According to State Archivist Jelain Chubb, "The Center's work over the last year to create new finding aids for collections, share digital copies of photographs and oral histories online, curate two exhibits and host a number of public events serve as an example to archives throughout the state."

The Texas Historical Records Advisory Board was established in 1976 by Governor Dolph Briscoe to fulfill two objectives: First, it enables the state to receive monies from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission in support of archival and records management programs, and second, it serves as a catalyst for improving archival and records storage conditions within the state. The board created the Archival Award of Excellence to honor a Texas institution for its projects or ongoing programs that build collections, enhance access to archives, develop effective digitization programs, or implement preservation strategies.

The award was formally presented to AHC staff at the Dec. 14 Austin City Council meeting.

SAVE THESE DATES

AUSTIN HISTORY CENTER (AHC) - 810 Guadalupe (at 9th)
Open Tue.-Sat. 10am – 6pm & Sun. 12pm – 6pm Call 512-974-7480

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2
Eberly Luncheon
11:15 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Driskill Hotel

THURSDAY, MARCH 2
Amplify Austin
Contribute to AHCA!

SUNDAY, MARCH 25
85th Birthday Party for AHC &
Waterloo Press Open House
AHC

SUNDAY, MAY 6
AHCA Annual Meeting
2 - 4 p.m.
AHC

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