



In Search of El dorado

A daily journal of my travels and adventures in my.....Search for Eldorado

Hello to Family & Friends



As I searched the web for sights to see here in Cuero I found a lot more than I did in my initial research. It seems Cuero has about 60 homes with historic significance, the mural tour I mentioned last night and about four museums. It is the 'Wildflower Capital' of Texas (not at this time of year obviously), the 'Turkey Capital of the World', and known as the 'Heart of South Texas'. Big claims for a small town.



I do find it odd that several websites mention the mural tour, but none of them offer the route or any descriptions. The Chamber of Commerce does not open until Monday, so, due to the weather conditions, as you can see in the photo above, I will just try to dodge the raindrops as I take you on a short walking tour of, as the light post signs say, 'Historic Downtown Cuero'.

We'll start with K N Root Beer.....



....whose structure eerily reminds me of an A&W Root Beer stand (in reality, I did drive by this one).



The first seven murals I found were on the alley side of some shops along N Esplanade St. I won't try to describe them if you don't ask.

This one is kind of unique. The fisherman from the fish's point of view.





This one is appropriate, being the Turkey Capital of the World and all.





I'm pretty sure the store behind these doors is a drugstore.



When I visit the C of C tomorrow, hopefully they will have a complete tour and descriptions. I'm sure I will probably miss a few today. I was hoping to get the info on the Turkey Capital and Heart of South Texas monikers at the Cuero Heritage Museum here, but it doesn't open until Wednesday, and I don't think I'll be in town that long.



I was quite impressed by the courthouse over in Victoria, it was a wowser. Then I saw the DeWitt County Courthouse – Holy Cow!

Below is a panoramic of the left elevation taken while reaching over the construction fence, making it a little distorted.

Built in 1896





Obviously, the middle mural pays tribute to 'The Wildflower Capital of Texas'.

I think the bottom mural is supposed to be sparkling fireworks, or, as I look at it during my proofread, maybe a dandelion?



I believe this is the most recent addition to Art Alley



This huge mural fills the alley façade of the local police station.





All right, I hear ya, where's the photo of the bandstand? Right? First of all, it was relatively small, second, the sign itself states it's a replica. So with the photo of the bandstand in Victoria do we really need to see another one? I'll include one in tomorrow's newsletter.

How many City Halls have you seen with the Coca Cola logo carved on the front of the building? Neither have I. I can't find out why right now, but hopefully I will have an answer tomorrow. There is a large, old Coca Cola Factory/warehouse of some sort here in town.



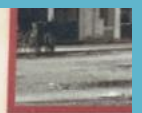
H. RUNGE BANK BUILDING

TEXAS'S OLDEST BANK



In 1845, Henry Runge founded the H. Runge & Company in Indianola, Texas. Having business training and education in his native land; Mr. Runge immigrated to Texas as a member of the Prince Solms colony of Germany and together with a small group of settlers, Runge helped to settle what became the port city of Indianola. *Researcher*

Branches were opened in Luling, Victoria and Cuero — the Cuero branch, which opened in 1873, was managed by Mr. Edward Mügge. The Cuero business consisted principally of transporting goods to interior points brought by rail from Indianola, and soon a bank and grocery department were also established. Cuero and Indianola, each dependent on the other, became two of the most important trading points in South



H. Runge Bank

The devastating hurricane of 1886, which destroyed most of Indianola, led to the firm's adquarters being established in Cuero and on this site a wood frame structure was built. ter, in 1907, this new brick and stone structure was designed by Jules Leffland, a Danish architect practicing architecture in Victoria, and built by local builders, Allert & Fuess.

The effects of a declining economy were strongly felt in the U.S. in the 1930s, and marked the beginning of a decade of high unemployment, low profits, poverty, deflation, and lost opportunities for economic growth. Unfortunately, the H. Runge & Company, which included the H. Runge Bank located in this building, was forced to close.



Bank was the oldest chartered independent bank in the state of Texas, dating its origins to 1845 when Texas was experiencing its last days as a republic. The Cuero Loan & Mortgage Company was organized to collect debts owed to H. Runge & Company, and paid off depositors at a rate of 75 cents per \$1 deposited.

H. Runge Bank interior (probably 1907) — Left to Right: Unknown; William Frobese, Sr.; Fred T. Mügge (son of Edward Mügge); Berthold Schiwetz; Paul Dornbluth, Sr.; and Unknown.

For a half-century the firm had been the leading business enterprise at Cuero, and the Runge conglomerate, bearing the name of its founder, stood for almost 100 years as one of the most successful business enterprises in South Texas.

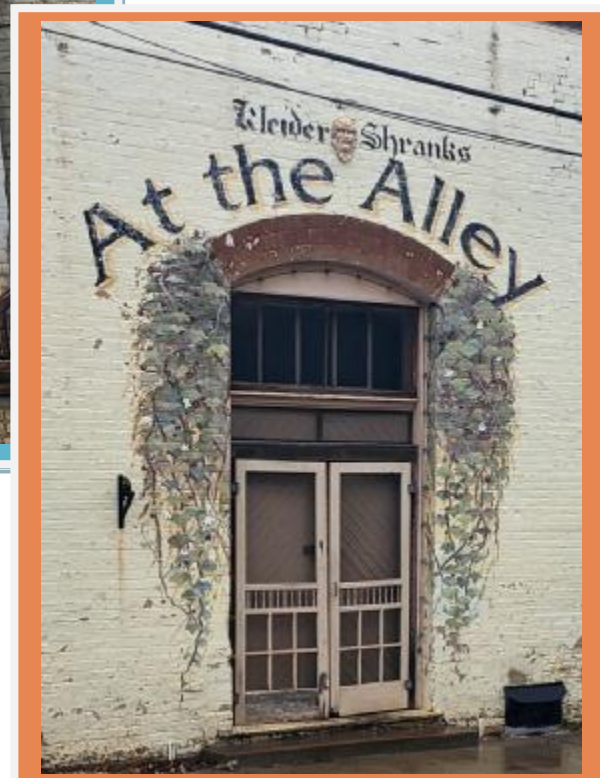
An interesting variety of downtown building facades. There are a couple streets like this.



Hey, we saw this one already. It was at this point on my walk that I came across this mural and decided to use it for the opening shot. I feel it's good enough to be seen twice since it is probably the best one, at least so far.



This was the second best one.



A typical small town general store. Note Gram's Attic on the 2nd story window. My first glance at the sign below and I thought it said 'Fixins & Flushins' meaning plumbing parts. I drove by later and realized my mistake.





CHISHOLM TRAIL HERITAGE MUSEUM

302 N. ESPLANADE

This museum does not open until Tuesday. I really want to see this one, it was starred on my itinerary. I am still debating with myself if I should stick around and visit. I am leaning toward yes. Especially when I saw the quality of the artwork on the next page and some of the items in the windows.



KNIGHTS OF PYTHIAS HALL, JEWEL LODGE NO. 103

IN 1864, IN RESPONSE TO THE TENSIONS SURROUNDING THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR, JUSTUS HENRY RATHBONE ORGANIZED THE KNIGHTS OF PYTHIAS, A FRATERNAL ORDER. THE FIRST TEXAS LODGE, IN HOUSTON, WAS ASSEMBLED IN 1872; TWO YEARS LATER, THE GRAND LODGE OF TEXAS WAS ESTABLISHED. IN MARCH 1889, A SMALL GROUP OF CUERO CITIZENS PETITIONED THE GRAND LODGE FOR A CHARTER, BECOMING THE JEWEL LODGE NO. 103. DR. D.B. BLAKE BECAME THE FIRST CHANCELLOR COMMANDER. HE AND JOHN T. WOFFORD, BOTH CHARTER MEMBERS OF JEWEL LODGE, LATER SERVED AS GRAND CHANCELLORS OF TEXAS.

CUERO'S LODGE MEMBERSHIP INCREASED STEADILY, AND IN 1892, THE ORGANIZATION PURCHASED THIS SITE FROM CAROLINE OLSON. TEN YEARS LATER, LODGE MEMBERS HIRED NOTED CENTRAL TEXAS ARCHITECT JAMES WAHRENBERGER TO DESIGN A LODGE HALL. THE RATHBONE SISTERS, A WOMEN'S AUXILIARY GROUP, RAISED FUNDS TO HELP FURNISH UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOMS. LOCAL ARCHITECT JULES C. LEFFLAND MAY HAVE ASSISTED WAHRENBERGER IN THE HALL'S DESIGN, WHICH IS RICHARDSONIAN ROMANESQUE IN STYLE. THE BUILDING'S MAIN FACADES ARE ASYMMETRICAL, FEATURING A CORNER TOWER AND ARCHED WINDOWS. ELABORATE BRICKWORK IS SEEN IN THE DENTILS OF THE WINDOW ARCHES AND IN THE CORBELLED PARAPET. AS WAS COMMON IN LODGE HALLS, THE GROUND FLOOR WAS LEASED TO VARIOUS BUSINESSES, INCLUDING, FROM 1903 UNTIL 1912, MOORE & SAMES WHOLESALE GROCERY. IN THE MID-1910s, THE NAGEL MOTOR COMPANY AND DODGE BROTHERS LEASED THE GROUND FLOOR AND ALTERED IT TO ACCOMMODATE VEHICLES.

THE LODGE SOLD THE HALL IN 1975 AND DISBANDED IN 1982, BUT THE GROUP'S HISTORY REMAINS A SIGNIFICANT PART OF CUERO'S PAST. THE HALL ITSELF IS AN IMPORTANT EXAMPLE OF EARLY 20TH CENTURY ARCHITECTURE.

RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK - 2002

JEWEL LODGE

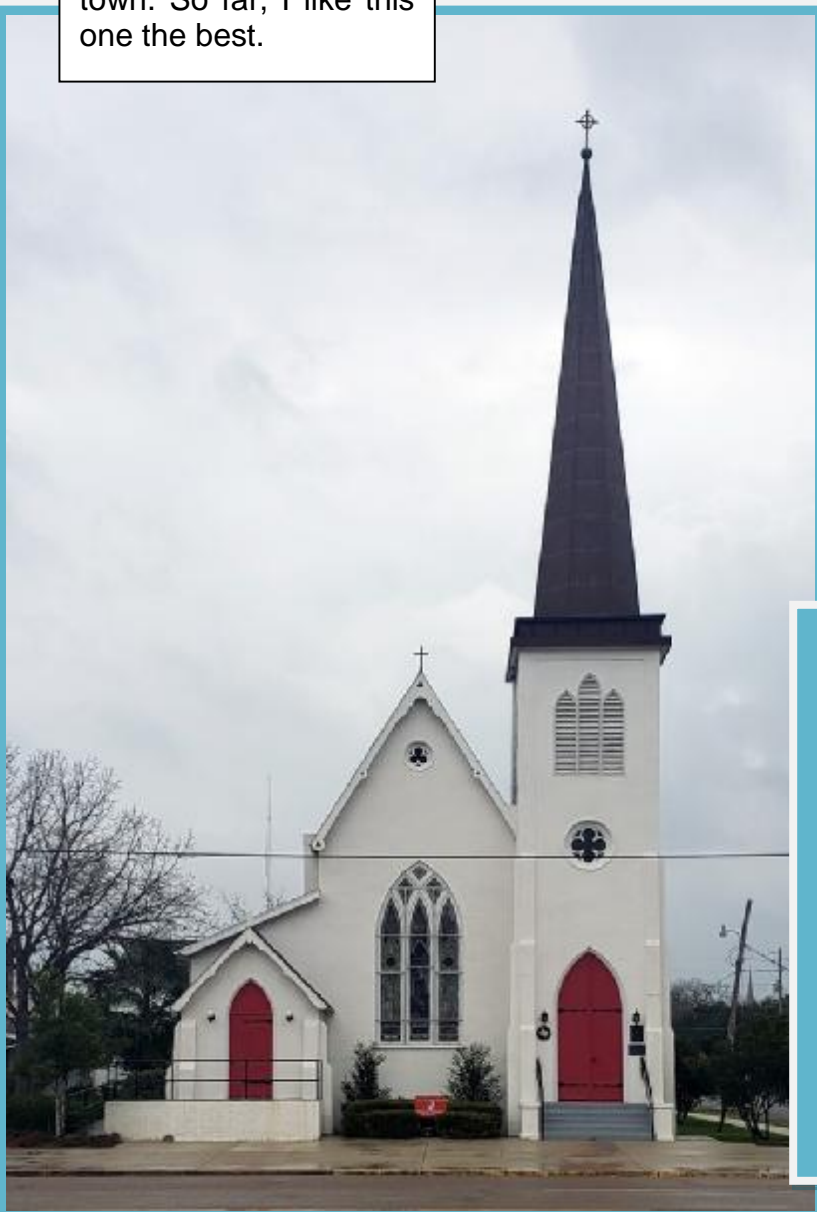
No. 103

K. OF P.

1903.

Unfortunately, the light really sucked to get a good picture of the detail in this statue. I even tried from different angles with no luck. Maybe tomorrow will be better.

There are several eye-catching churches in town. So far, I like this one the best.





Take a gander at where this tree is located. It's in the street! There must be a story here somewhere.

By this time it was getting near 2:00 and Packer game time. The best prospect in town appeared to be the Monster Burger Sports Bar & Grill. Sports bar right? They must have the game on, right?

Well, yes and no. There was one other couple at a booth besides myself. I sat at the bar with that big screen right in front of me. The score was 0-7 by the time they figured out how to get Fox on the TV. They kept apologizing. Once it was finally on it kept buffering every five minutes or so. I was sitting at the bar, in a sports bar, watching the game on my phone.

I was planning to order food at halftime, but did so much earlier since the game finally went off completely. I can get it on my laptop in the RV and be much more comfortable. More apologies. I didn't say it but, apologies don't fix the problem. Whoever heard of a SPORTS BAR that can't get the NFC Championship game on their TV?

Don't ask me why I left a 20% tip. Oh yea, no to go cups for my soda. "We can put it in a plastic Miller cup". Ok. Oh, no lid? That's fine, I'll just spill it on my way out.

I watched the rest of the game in the RV.

The Game. No comment.

Tomorrow I will hit the C of C first for info, then a couple museums, maybe a bike ride. Who knows what tomorrow will bring. Better weather hopefully.

Until next time.....