



# Holding on to HISTORY

**EVEN AS THE STATE BAR OF TEXAS LOOKS TO THE FUTURE** by studying AI and other innovations in the law, it recognizes the value in connecting to and studying our past. We make that possible by preserving our records in the Gov. Bill and Vara Daniel Center for Legal History.

Housed in the Texas Law Center in Austin, the center is also known as our Archives Department. And our greatest resources there are our two professional archivists, Trina Purcell and Keely Drummond. They maintain the bar's physical and online records, ensuring they are always available to members, scholars, and the public.

What can you find in the archives? In addition to membership records and board meeting minutes dating back to the bar's founding with the State Bar Act in 1939, information includes a complete catalog of Texas Bar Books publications from 1961 to 2019, TexasBarCLE articles and course books from the 1960s through 1998, section journals, and original photos from the *Texas Bar Journal*.

Of course, the legal profession had a long history in Texas prior to the founding of this bar. And we are the custodian of the records of our predecessor organization, the Texas Bar Association. Founded in 1882 in Galveston, it operated until 1940. Among the prime holdings in this collection are the complete *Proceedings of the Texas Bar Association (1882-1940)*.

Other physical artifacts include examples of early Texas law licenses and legal instruments, legal reference texts and directories, oral histories from Texas attorneys, and records from local and specialty bar associations around the state.

About five years ago, the Archives Department created an online archives portal so that many of our most sought-after records would be accessible from anywhere by anyone. Online at [texasbar.com/digitalarchives](https://texasbar.com/digitalarchives), the portal holds about 1,500 digitized documents. In addition to more than 700 photos and hundreds of pages of governing documents, the minutes of every board of directors meeting since 1940 have been uploaded and are searchable by topic. The staff continues to update the digital portal with commonly requested documents and other records.

Did you know that you can also access the history of your State Bar and legal profession through decades of the *Texas Bar Journal* online? The full text of every issue, from the first in 1938 to the present, is available online and is searchable at [texasbar.com/tbjarchives](https://texasbar.com/tbjarchives).

Why not peek back in time and check out these resources? If you need help with a research request, or simply want to donate items, contact the Archives Department at [archives@texasbar.com](mailto:archives@texasbar.com).

Sincerely,

**TREY APFFEL**

Executive Director, State Bar of Texas  
Editor in Chief, *Texas Bar Journal*

