

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
79R8071 MAM-D

H.C.R. 93
By: Cook, Robby (Duncan)
Intergovernmental Relations
5/10/2005
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S/SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

In the mid-19th century, Czech and German settlers arrived in Central Texas looking for new lives of economic opportunity and religious freedom; these hardworking immigrants developed small communities in Fayette County and constructed churches to comfort their spirits and sustain their faith.

Today four of these churches dot the landscapes of Ammannsville, Dubina, High Hill, and Praha, small communities near Schulenburg; these four Catholic churches are monuments to the strength and perseverance of our state's early settlers, but they also provide a rich aesthetic history of Texas; though the architecture is typically Gothic Revival in style, the interior of these spaces includes rare decorative painting techniques and nearly every wall is covered with bright, densely rendered murals.

Schulenburg serves as the destination of choice for those who want to experience the beauty of the churches firsthand as the Schulenburg Chamber of Commerce offers tours of the Painted Churches, which let visitors marvel at the visual splendor of this charming part of Texas history.

In Ammannsville, St. John the Baptist Church features a distinctive interior of soft colors and a vaulted ceiling decorated with ornamental paintings of cherubs, palm ferns, and lily blossoms; in Dubina, Saints Cyril and Methodius Catholic Church includes the masterful strokes of a 19th century painter's original frescoes, which were restored in the 1980s.

The wild prairie land of High Hill is home to St. Mary's Catholic Church, which features 18 stained glass windows imported from Germany in the late 1800s; the rich reds and blues from the windows complement a dark, hand-carved altar and the hues of the statues of religious figures and saints. The final site, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church in Praha, contains wood from Germany's Black Forest, and it also features the work of Swiss artist Gottfried Flurry, who painted the ceiling with religious imagery and flowers and vines representing local flora.

Nestled in the gentle rolling hills of Fayette County, the Painted Churches of Texas are an irreplaceable part of our state's cultural heritage; for the region's early settlers, the churches represented hope and freedom, while today, they are monuments to a glorious past.

RESOLVED

Provides that the 79th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby designate Schulenburg the Official Home of the Painted Churches of Texas.