

## **FP-065**

### **TOWER BUILDING**

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This building, one of the more architecturally interesting at Fair Park, is also one that has had many identities over the years. Today it is called, appropriately enough, the Tower Building. During the State Fair, you'll find it hosting a wide variety of exhibits, as well as a food court serving pizza, barbecue, and Tex-Mex cuisine, among other options.

But the building was constructed in 1936 for the Texas Centennial Exposition, and it is one of the 30 historical structures at Fair Park remaining from that fair. At that time, it was called the Federal Building, for it housed exhibits showcasing projects undertaken by numerous government agencies based in Washington D.C. Among the more interesting items on display were a 4-million-dollar stamp collection, a model of Boulder Dam, a massive census board and weather map, and a replica of a wind tunnel used for testing military aircraft.

In 1954, the structure's name changed to the "Electric Building." For two decades after that, the tower featured a large clock and lighted letters spelling out its new name. In the 1970s, it became the Better Living Center, hosting exhibits during the State Fair on home furnishings and appliances before changing its name to the Tower Building in 1986.

The building's most distinguishing feature by far is its tall tower topped by a stern-looking, stylistic bald-eagle. This eagle was designed by the French-born artist Raoul Josset, and sculpted by his collaborator, Jose Martin. Look on the front of the building, on either side of the tower, and you will see large plaques depicting the front and reverse sides of the Great Seal of the United States.

You can also see, along the front and side of the building, a large bas-relief frieze executed by Julian Garnsey, who was a California and New York artist of international reputation. The frieze relates the history of Texas chronologically through scenes focused around famous Texas pioneers, explorers and soldiers.

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