

## Be Amazed at The Grace

Step back in time to 1909, and instead of expecting an entertaining gallery of museums, you might be paying a dollar to stay the night in the Hotel Grace, which was the original design behind the building of the Grace Museum.

Built by Colonel W.L. Beckham, the hotel was named in honor of his daughter, Grace. In 1926, during one of Abilene's biggest booming eras, a fourth story was added to the structure and the hotel's business skyrocketed as it became the popular hot spot of the town.

In the early 1980s, however, hotel occupancy began to slow under the weight of broader economic concerns in Abilene. As the building began to see changes in ownership, it was eventually left abandoned to decay. Members of the Abilene Preservation League and Abilene Fine Arts Museum grew concerned for the once well-respected establishment and met together to discuss alternative plans for the building aside from demolition.

In 1992, after more than six years of intense restoration and renovation and a \$4.8 million campaign, the qualities of the building began to stand out once again. The historically beautiful attraction once again began to bring life back into downtown.

The Grace Museum now stands proudly on the National Register of Historic Places. As the 10<sup>th</sup> largest general museum in Texas, this four-story, 55,000-square foot building, offers artistic and visual entertainment for a variety of tastes. The Grace Museum has also become a popular venue for special events including weddings and receptions, hosting an elegant marble ballroom, glass loggia and large enclosed brick courtyard.

The allure of the Grace Museum lies not only in its resilient history but also in its renovated beauty, which encompasses three fascinating museums. The art museum features world-class unique exhibitions and collections to capture your attention. The Grace also contains a hands-on children's museum, featuring science and technology exploration. Children are encouraged to engage in the colorful, mind-developing activities that are enjoyable and challenging to the imagination. The historical section of the museum consists of displays offering a complete visual portrayal of life and growth in Abilene from 1900 to 1950.

The Grace Museum stands as one of the oldest buildings in Abilene. Thanks to the reconstruction efforts of the Abilene Preservation League and dedicated financial supporters, the future of the Grace Museum will offer a glimpse of the past for generations to come.

Located in the heart of downtown Abilene at 102 Cypress St., The Grace Museum sits among a number of feature attractions including Frontier Texas!, the National Center for Children's Illustrated Literature and the 12<sup>th</sup> Armored Division Memorial Museum.

The Grace Museum offers hours Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Prices are \$6 adults; \$4 senior citizen, student and military; \$3 ages 4 to 12; free for ages 3 and younger and free on Thursday from 5 to 8 p.m. [www.thegracemuseum.org](http://www.thegracemuseum.org)