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## Grady County Historical Society. CA-002 Series 3: Files from Sections Hawthorne Papers - I

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September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022

# Hispanic History

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9/21/22

# First ever Hispanic Heritage Month celebration drew a large crowd downtown

Hundreds of people came out to enjoy Cairo's first ever Hispanic Heritage Month Festival Saturday where the colors, tastes and sounds of a variety of Hispanic cultures were on full display.

Festival organizer Silvia Salgado was thrilled with the inaugural event. "It was phenomenal, better than expected, and I am just very grateful how the turnout was," Salgado says. "Everyone was full of joy by how they were being valued and

supported; for having the space to show their culture, which was long overdue, and that different people from different communities came out and supported and fellowshipped with them."

Salgado estimates that several hundred people participated in the festival, which kicked off at 11 a.m. with a parade of about a dozen entries including sev-

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**HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE** filled South Broad Street downtown for the Hispanic Heritage Month Festival where vendors set up booths for the day to sell everything from jewelry and clothing to Hispanic treats and crafts.

# Community comes together to celebrate Hispanic Heritage month

## ►FESTIVAL, from Page A1

eral brightly colored floats.

South Broad Street was blocked to vehicle traffic making room for the 30 vendors who set up on the sidewalks and along the street for the many festival goers who descended on Cairo's downtown for the festival.

Downtown Cairo business owner Emilee Connell de Umanzor said the festival proved to be positive for her

shop, EverHope Collective.

"The event was an incredible success! We, EverHope Collective, had our best day in sales since opening last December. It was so much fun welcoming locals and out of town visitors alike into our shop," says Connell de Umanzor.

Sales were also busy on the sidewalks where long lines of customers patiently waited at many vendor booths to buy a variety Hispanic food

items, from sweets to tamales.

Traditional clothing was also a popular draw, including leather belts and hats and colorful ponchos and tops.

Inside Zenee's Ballroom, donated items and services were available for youngsters, such as free school supplies, shoes and even haircuts.

The Carousel provided a dance floor for movers of all

ages to feel the beat of the music provided by DJs. The open air facility also had much welcomed seating for those seeking a break for their feet.

That evening, the band La Reforma de la Sierra livened up South Broad Street with their upbeat music that encouraged many to show off their dance moves.

Salgado says the entire day and evening was an authentic experience for the His-

panic community.

"One thing I heard a lot, a lot of people learned about the culture and a lot of people gave feedback of living in this region 10-20 years and never seeing anything like what happened on Sept. 17 in Grady County," says Salgado. "The whole community made this happen and made it a successful day."

The young Cairo resident says she is already making plans for next year's festival.

"For sure, it's going to be an annual event, and it's going to get bigger and better every year. This was definitely a great start for it to be the first time," she says.

Salgado gives praise to the team that she says supported her in organizing the festival, the James E. Miller Outreach and The Less Fortunate Still Matters Foundation.



LA REFORMA DE LA SIERRA entertained the crowds and got them to their feet. In addition to live music, DJs Tony Herrera, Tino Herrera and Gerson Villalobos also kept the music pumping.



THE CAIRO POLICE DEPARTMENT had a booth with free coloring books and crayons for children, gunlocks for adults and information about safety.



SOME LOCAL BUSINESSES stayed open late to take advantage of festival foot traffic.



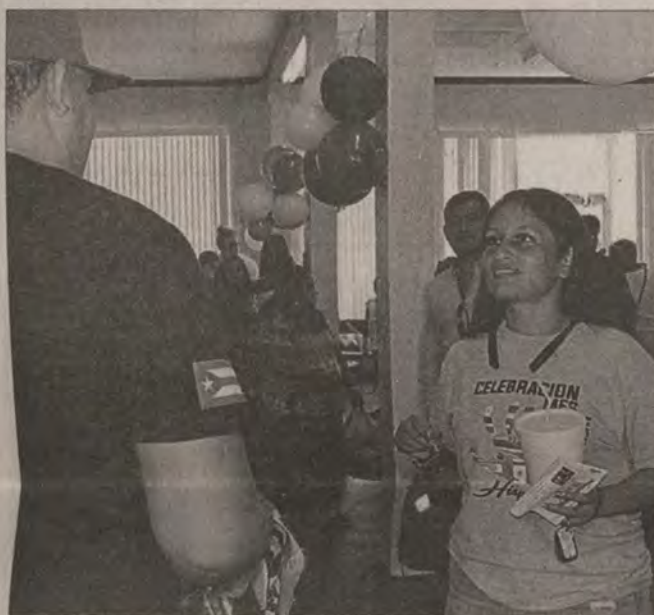
HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE filled South Broad Street downtown for the Hispanic Heritage Month Festival where vendors set up booths for the day to sell everything from jewelry and clothing to Hispanic treats and crafts.



**THE FLAGS OF MANY HISPANIC** countries are waved on this float. There were flags representing Guatemala, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Colombia and more.



**COLORFUL SOMBREROS AND PONCHOS** are the style of choice for some of these float riders.



**SILVIA SALGADO**, right, is the driving force behind Cairo's first ever Hispanic Heritage Month Festival. The 2014 graduate of Cairo High School is only 25 years old.



**FAMILIES ENJOYED THE DAY** learning about the many different Hispanic cultures right here in Grady County.



**BARBER RAUL ORTIZ** gave many children free haircuts during the festival.



**TRADITIONAL CLOTHING** was a popular item for sale during the festival. South Broad Street was blocked off to motorized vehicles.



**WOMEN OF ALL AGES** showed off the colorful beauty of traditional Hispanic clothing.

# Hispanic Heritage Festival exceeded expectations of its organizer

**Mesha C. Wind**  
Staff Writer

sion Vision Foundation Inc., envisioned.

"It turned out phenomenal, better than expected. I don't think we expected to get such an overflow. People showed up from all over the place. It was fantastic," says Salgado, the young Cairo woman who is the festival founder and organizer.

The Cairo High School graduate said she was especially touched when she saw the Syrupmaker marching band in the parade with many of the Hispanic members wearing flags like capes on their backs representing

the countries of their heritage.

"The Cairo High School band was the cherry on top. It was a proud moment seeing people wearing their flags and representing their heritage with such honor," Salgado says.

After the parade, there were vendors selling a variety of wares, from tacos and Mexican street corn to traditional Guatemalan and Mexican attire. Salgado says there were 50-55 vendors and food trucks.

Having professional dancers perform for the

crowds was the wow factor that Salgado says made everyone gasp in amazement.

"They left people in awe! They'd never gotten to experience it in person before; they'd seen it on TV, but never up close. It was a once in a lifetime experience. It was amazing," she describes.

Salgado says she and others are already discussing the possibility of expanding the festival next year to give people more room. She said other communities are also asking how they can have such a festival.

Salgado thanked the many sponsors who support the event. "If they didn't participate, in one way or another, this wouldn't happen. It's thanks to them I was able to put this together," she says.

Those sponsors are Cairo Main Street, La Buena Música; DEEJAY Rudy Max; Sonido Karizzma; James E. Miller Community Outreach; Casa Grande; La Mexicana; Nivel; Family Worship Center; Gorilla Truck & Tire Repair; Smile Doctors; MICHOCAN Mexican Restaurant; Raul Ortiz; Amanda's

Salon De Belleza; Abigail Cadena Estilista; Cancun's Sports Bar & Grill; Complete Party Rentals; Tobias Rentals; The Estala Event Co.; Hidden Studios; Erika Tomas Photography; Bueno Media; Walmart; Gate 16 Cafe; A Taste Of Mexico Food Truck; Chuchis Boots; Mi Casita; Silvia Hernández; First National Bank; Silvia Hernandez; DINA'S Home Appliance Store; The Carousel; Hobson Chevrolet; Jtekt; Thermaflex; Cairo Physical Therapy and Royce's Towing and Recovery.



**GIRLS MODEL LAVISH** Quinceanera gowns worn for their special 15th birthday celebrations. (photo by Margaret Tyson)



**VENDORS LINED THE STREET** offering crafts, traditional attire, sombreros, food and more. Photos by Laura B. Register.



**DRESSED FOR THE OCCASION** are Sandra Pineda and her daughter, Sol.



**LOCAL PHYSICIAN DR. NOEMI LEFRANC MATTA**, second from right, and her family enjoyed the festival.



**THE PARADE GRABBED THE ATTENTION** of these young men. (photo by Margaret Tyson)



# ns Peannut Festival is this Saturday

Board, American Peanut of Morgan and Ann Wise have followed their ancestors' footsteps through community and church involvement in Plains. Phil, Plains High School Class of 1969, graduated from Georgia Tech and served on Jimmy Carter's gubernatorial staff, his 1975 Presidential campaign and his administration from 1977-1981. Phil retired as vice president of operations and development at the Carter Center in 2022 and hood Farm in Archer. The United States Peanut Federation, Friends of the Jimm Carter National Historic Site, form live on Main Street beginning at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday.

Sponsors of this year's Peannut Festival include the American Peanut Shellers Association, Buffalo Peanuts, where he serves on the board of the Plains Historical Preservation Trust, Rosalynn Carter Butterfly Peanut Company, MANA Peanut Commission, Golden Peanut Company, National Nutrition, National Peanut Board, National Peanut Buy- ing Points Association, Olathe Peanut Shelling Company, then there will be several round trip rides from Plains to the Jimmy Carter Boyhood Farm in Archer. The United States Peanut Federation, Friends of the Jimm Carter National Historic Site, coordinates the festival annually.



ed by the Woman's Club of Cairo.

THE CAIRO HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING SYRUPMAKER BAND brought a joyful noise to Saturday's parade.



THE SECOND ANNUAL HISPANIC HERITAGE FESTIVAL attracted hundreds to downtown Cairo Saturday, including these two handsomely dressed young men.



DR. ERIKKA EDWARDS AND THE CHS CHORUS marched together in the parade.



FLAGS DRAPED THE SHOULDERS of some members of the marching band in representation of their heritage.



THE PARADE KICKED OFF the day's festivities in downtown Cairo.