Visitors to the Harlingen Arts and Heritage Museum will be happily surprised when they spot a bright new visage behind the chain link fence to the rear of the complex. Sporting a new, sunny canary-yellow paint job with white trim and lavender window frames is the Ross-Bobo House. This historic house was likely built in 1909 at a site which would become 521 E. Harrison Avenue. It was built by L. S. Ross and his wife Mollie, who together in May 1909 had purchased the double lots upon which the house was to stand. Lawrence Sullivan Ross was the son of the former governor of Texas and famous Texas Ranger Lawrence Sullivan "Sul" Ross. In 1912 he, president of the Harlingen State Bank, would be elected mayor of Harlingen. Re-elected in 1914, he was to die in October during a business trip. In his mid-forties he was struck down in Mineral Wells by what may have been a stroke.

The property later came into the hands of sisters Sunshine E. and W. Ophelia Harrington of Hidalgo County. In 1920 the property is purchased by Charles Pearson (C. P.) Bobo and his wife Louisa Ellen. C. P. was descended from one Gabriel Baubeau. In 1883 he was graduated from the University of Arkansas with a degree in civil engineering. Their children are Horace Greeley, Scott Schley and Jesse Marion, later to be followed by Lacy Simpson Bobo, Mary Lucille Bobo (Harris), Margaret "Blonde" Bobo (Kirlin), Charles Max, and Grace Ellen Bobo (Berry). C. P. became the president of the board of directors and manager of the Cameron County Water Improvement District (CCWD) No.1, having been elected to the board in 1922. He will later serve as a City Commissioner 12/31-12/33 and act in the capacity of Finance Commissioner. C. P. and Ellen continue to live at 521 until 1935. In his 77th year C. P. is to die this year on April 19. By 1939 under Ellen's management her home becomes a rooming house. Before Ellen dies in 1957 other Bobo family members, including Horace and his wife Iris, continue to utilize the house. It is by 1959 that Iris makes a major career decision. She commences a nursery and child daycare facility. Locally everyone calls the nursery by its catchy alliterative name—Bobo's Baby Bank. The roomy house is amenable for this particular use. This operation by Iris continues into the early 1970s though Horace is to die in 1963. Iris will follow in October 1992.

In early 1993 the vacant, rundown Bobo House (as it has come to be known) is scheduled to be demolished to make way for a commercial development. Banker Dial Dunkin, among others, is instrumental in bringing the house's historical significance to the attention of historian Betty Murray and the Board of Directors of the Rio Grande Valley Museum. By 3/18/93 a bulldozer is waiting to knock down the house in order to clear the lot. By 3/27/93 an inspection of the structure finds it to be sturdy despite its shabby outward appearance and decrepit sweeping porch. The Valley Morning Star runs articles in March and April about the historic house. The Board commences a drive to raise funds for the house's transfer should the City fail to be of assistance. In seeking financial help from the City, the Museum people learn that the City is not ready to rule out the fate of the 1909 home. To buy time a $1000 check signed by Betty Murray and dated March 31, 1993 is given to the Iris Netz Bobo Estate as earnest money guaranteeing the removal of the structure from the property. City Commissioner Wayne Potter is to make the motion,
seconded by Connie de la Garza, to have the City contract to move the house to a site at the Rio Grande Valley Museum. It passes. On April 14, 1993 the historic move is implemented.

In the Spring of 1994 a new wood shingle roof was put on the edifice. Restorers tell us that this is one of the most important elements in preserving an historic edifice. Once a structure is open to the elements it can deteriorate very rapidly. This new roof was fortuitous. With no additional funding being provided to restore this building it sat neglected for 12 more years. At that time the industrious and inspired Sue DeBrooke single-handedly began to remove the flaked paint from the buildings clapboard siding and trim. Others became interested in the project when it was suggested that the building could be utilized and serve as a children's activities center. The docents of the museum through their organization, The Rio Grande Valley Museum Association, invited and received bids to replace deteriorated clapboard, trim, and window frames. A very reasonable quote was received and the association moved ahead to conduct this work. Before it was commenced however a survey for asbestos was made. In the process some asbestos was discovered in the floor tile within the house. This required professional abatement at some cost and delay in moving forward. Once the problem was corrected, however, matters moved quickly. What one sees today is in sharp contrast to the many years of its bleak, gray rundown appearance.

Today the structure stands at a crossroad. Substantial inside work needs to be conducted before it can be serviceable. In addition, when the structure was moved its veranda, which was in very deteriorated condition, was discarded. This wrap-a-round porch was an integral part of turn of the 20th century homes, so its reconstruction at the museum would add to the authenticity of its previous appearance. What are needed are financial angels or knights in shining armor. This historic building that once rang to the happy laughter of children can once again play a role in promoting useful and joyful youth activities. Please contact the association if you wish to donate to this project that can only produce future dividends for our community.