

Star of the Republic Museum NOTES

VOL. 44: No.3

2019

Director of the Star of the Republic Museum

RETIRES AFTER 32 YEARS OF SERVICE



"The Republic of Texas is no more." I always seem to get a little sad when I read this line from President Anson Jones as he lowers the Lone Star flag and raises the flag of the United States. I guess because the Republic of Texas holds the most dynamic and significant portions of Texas History: The Battle of the Alamo, the

Declaration of Independence, and the victory at San Jacinto. These events are all but seared into the brains of all Texans at an early age. And yet it was a beginning for all of the immigrants to come for the next 183 years, including current residents and those who will come in the future.

As Director of the Star of the Republic Museum for 32 years, it has been my mission to reach the most diverse audience possible as we developed our programs, exhibits, and publications. We have done a good job of that, but more can always be accomplished. I am excited about the leadership and resources that will come with the Texas Historical Commission as they take over the administration of Washington on the Brazos State Historic Site and Star of the Republic Museum this fall.

I wish to thank all of the previous Blinn College administrators, Boards of Trustees, and all the volunteers that have served with the Washington on the Brazos State Park Association for their support over the years. I wish to thank all of the Museum's donors and patrons who have supported us with their time and

donations and trusted us with their prized family heirlooms. Most importantly, I want to express my gratitude, respect, and appreciation to all of the past and present staff members who have given their very best to make the Star of the Republic Museum one of the best in the state. Their dedication and willingness to go above and beyond expectations enabled us to achieve our goals and meet deadlines; especially to our Office Manager, Effie Wellmann, who for 23 years has been my "right-hand man," confidant, and friend.

It is with both sadness and pride that I announce my retirement as Director. It is time for a new administration to take the reins and continue with new ideas, programs and projects to enlighten another generation of Texans. God Bless Texas!

Houston McGaugh, Director, August 1, 1987-August 31, 2019



Houston McGaugh served most of his 32 years as museum director under Blinn College President Dr. Donald Voelter (center), and Executive Vice President John Barkman (left).

Elections in the Republic of Texas:

NOT FOR THE FAINT OF HEART, PART IV

Mudslinging and personal attacks have been a part of politics in the United States since its founding; it was no different in the Republic of Texas (1836-1846). This article is the last in a four-part series on the presidential elections of the Republic of Texas. In the previous issue of Notes, the election of Mirabeau Lamar was featured. For this issue, the fourth election (1844), which dealt with annexation, is featured.

While the question of annexation dominated the 1844 United States presidential election, it was barely mentioned during the campaign cycle for the Republic of Texas the same year. Sam Houston ensured it

was not entirely forgotten; he was the driving force for annexation to reach the U.S. Senate for a vote, but it was narrowly defeated on June 8, 1844. With the presidential vote six months away, Houston knew his successor would be responsible for whether or not Texas would become a state.

Burleson's supporters immediately went on the offensive, insisting Jones was simply Houston's puppet candidate. Jones supporters associated Burleson with all of Lamar's failed policies that brought Texas to the brink of financial ruin. Jones became the fourth and final president of the Republic of Texas, winning 7,037 votes to Burleson's 5,668.

Finding candidates to run for president of the Republic of Texas was not a challenge in 1844. Vice President Edward Burleson, considered the Lamar Party candidate, was the first to announce his candidacy. His opponent was prominent physician, Secretary of State, and congressman Anson Jones, who received Houston's endorsement. Although Jones did not support all of Houston's stances, most people assumed he was pro-annexation.



Edward Burleson



Lone Star Flag, Republic period.

Collection of the Star of the Republic Museum. Gift of L. Cletus Brown, Jr.



STAR OF THE REPUBLIC MUSEUM

Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site

Open Daily
10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

936-878-2461 (fax) 936-878-2462

www.starmuseum.org

www.txindependence.org

www.facebook.com/staroftherepublic

Director.....Houston McGaugh
Curator of Collections.....Stephanie Klemm
Visitor Services Coordinator.....Donna Barker
Visitor Services Assistant.....Gail Swanlund
Office Manager.....Effie Wellmann

The newsletter also is available to download from our website at www.starmuseum.org.

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Blinn College District
www.blinn.edu



Established in 1883, the Blinn College District offers a variety of college academic transfer, workforce training, and continuing education classes for approximately 19,000 students who attend one of our five campuses or our comprehensive online education programs.

The premier two-year college in Texas, Blinn's transfer rate ranks No. 1 in the nation.

“Old Sam, can beat the D___l [sic] himself when he trys [sic], and make anyone President,” wrote James Morgan, who was the commander of Galveston during the Texas Revolution.

As it turned out, Jones was not as ardent a supporter of annexation as Houston. When the United States did pass the joint resolution to allow Texas to enter the Union as a state in February of 1845, Jones promised to delay for 90 days, at the request of Britain and France. Both countries wanted one more opportunity to persuade Mexico to recognize Texas as an independent nation.

Word of the proposed annexation resolution spread quickly and the citizens of Texas were eager for the safety and financial security that would come with becoming part of the United States. When news came that Mexico agreed to recognize Texas independence if annexation were removed from consideration, Jones urged the Texas

Senate to consider it. President Jones hoped the new development from Mexico could be leveraged to get better terms out of an annexation resolution. Congress refused to play the game, first rejecting the offer from the Mexican



Anson Jones

government and then accepting the resolution from the United States.

A convention met on July 4 in Austin to vote on the path forward with annexation, with only one dissenting vote. Richard Bache was rumored to have cast the lone “no” vote because he did not want to be in the same country as his ex-wife (the reason he left for Texas in the first place). On October 13, 1845, Texian voters officially approved annexation with 4,254 votes to 267 and agreed to the proposed state constitution 4,174 to 312.

On December 29, 1845, almost 10 years after the Republic of Texas was born, it dissolved with U.S. President James K. Polk signing the Texas Admission Act. This made Texas the 28th state to enter the Union. In his final speech as the last president for the Republic of Texas, Jones said, “The final act in this great drama is now performed. The Republic of Texas is no more.”

ARTIFACT CORNER

This child’s rocking horse, made of pine, likely was made by a German immigrant living in Texas in the early 19th century. German immigrants were well-represented in the Texas furniture-making industry. In 1860, one-third of Texas cabinet makers were German, though they made up only 6% of the state’s population. This rocking horse would be a luxury for a child and only occasionally used as a reward for good behavior.



NIGHT AT THE
Star of the Republic Museum
MUSEUM

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19

6:30 P.M. - 9 P.M.

FEATURING TAVERN TALES AND
SUNDOWN WAGON RIDE!

ADMISSION FEE IS \$8/ADULTS, \$5/STUDENTS OR CHILDREN

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

UPCOMING EVENTS

starmuseum.org

Hands-On-History Saturdays

On the third Saturday of the month through May and then every Saturday from June-August, the museum will offer a hands-on craft activity for children, free of charge. The craft will be available throughout the day, as long as supplies last.

September 21: Wildflowers

October 19: Knot Tying

November 16: Weaving

Runaway Scrape Escape

November 16, 2019

Admission: \$15 for adults, \$13 for students ages 18 and under, and \$10 for Blinn employees and students.

Guests, ages 10 and up, must use teamwork and problem solving skills to decipher puzzles and riddles in order to get out of the room in the 45-minute time limit or be captured by Santa Anna and his army.

Advanced registration is recommended, although walk-ups are accepted based on availability. For more information or to make a reservation, visit www.starmuseum.org/calendar or call 936-878-2461.

Bark in the Park

September 28, 10 A.M.-2 P.M.

Join us for this park-wide, free, family, and pet-friendly event featuring adoptable dogs, food trucks, local pet care businesses, contests, clinics, mini dog park, pet portraits, entertainment, and more. Dogs are not allowed in any buildings on the park grounds. All pets must be on a leash.

Night at the Museum

featuring Tavern Tales and Sundown Wagon Ride

Saturday, October 19, 6:30 P.M.-9 P.M.

Admission: \$8/adults, \$5/students or children

Visitors can enjoy a wagon ride through the park, experience the exhibits in the Museum coming to life when the lights are turned off, and listen to tales from a few former Old Washington residents.

