

Star of the Republic Museum

NOTES

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2019

Elections in the Republic of Texas:

NOT FOR THE FAINT OF HEART, PART III

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 third 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 third election (1841), widely recognized as the most personal and vicious, is highlighted.

As the election of 1841 unfolded, it was no surprise when Sam Houston threw his hat into the ring. He represented San Augustine in the Fourth Congress and was re-elected to the Fifth. During this time, Houston was very vocal in his criticism of President Mirabeau Lamar and the decisions of his administration. The only question was who would be running against Houston. It became clear there would be a bitter battle between two former presidents of the Republic of Texas. On one side was Houston, the popular hero of the revolution, a supporter of annexation, and the first elected president. On the other side was David Burnet, Lamar's vice-president, the former ad interim president and ardent military and political critic of Houston.

The campaign between Burnet and Houston began almost a year-and-a-half before the election and was hostile from the beginning. The political debate gave way to personal insults both from the candidates themselves and their supporters. Newspapers became the perfect stage for this election drama to play out with letters from each side printed regularly.

Anson Jones, prominent physician and Houston supporter, wrote that Burnet "...lacked tact and judgment..." and could not set aside his personal thoughts and feelings for the betterment of Texas. In response, Burnet's camp accused Houston of being too drunk to be trustworthy. "The people are becoming more and more afraid of trusting the righting of the Ship of State into the hands of a hero who can't stand upright himself," wrote Edward Fontaine, Lamar's private secretary.

In a letter from Burnet, Houston was referred to as having "...bestly intemperance and other vices degrading to humanity." Houston responded by saying Burnet was "...a canting

hypocrite, whom the waters of Jordan could never cleanse from your political and moral leprosy." Additionally, Burnet and Houston sent letters to newspapers under pseudonyms, "Truth" for Houston and "Publius" or "Texian" for Burnet, with assistance from Lamar. Both candidates used these letters as a way to set the record straight, but their dislike for each other was very apparent.

TELEGRAPH AND TEXAS REGISTER.

JUDGE BURNET.—The Newark Advertiser discredits altogether the statement that Judge Burnet, of Texas, has challenged General Houston to fight a duel. He says he is a native of Newark, and his whole life, one of extraordinary hazards, has been distinguished by a high morality; — pure, unimpeached, and never suspected." —Boston Journal

The paragraph excerpt is from the Telegraph and Texas Register on Wednesday, July 21, 1841. Downloaded from the Portal to Texas History at <https://texashistory.unt.edu>.

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In fact, Houston as "Truth" submitted a letter to the Houston Gazette and Advertiser's August 22, 1841 issue in which he addresses Burnet directly. "You [Burnet] have made statements in Publius which you know to be false... Because General Houston has not thought proper to contradict any charges contain in "Publius," and other stuff published by you under assumed names, you suppose you have gained a signal triumph," wrote "Truth."

Houston continued to voice his bitterness towards Lamar's decision to relocate the capitol to Austin from the city that bore his name. The anti-Houston newspapers frequently reported this was the real reason behind Houston's concerns about

the safety of the capitol and the archives. The editor of the Austin City Gazette claimed if Houston had his way "... Austin should be deserted and grass would grow in its streets." Houston quickly wrote to the editor claiming this was false and attempted to put a lid on that particular rumor.

The insults almost turned deadly when Houston called Burnet a hog thief. Hogs were plentiful in Texas, and this insult was worse than being called a horse thief. Numerous papers reported Burnet immediately challenged Houston to a duel. Houston reportedly said there were numerous men ahead of Burnet, and he would have to get to the back of the line. Another source recalled Houston declined the duel stating he "...did not fight downhill." Burnet's supporters claimed this was just another fabricated event from Houston's camp.

As the election drew closer, Burnet's supporters began to feel their candidate had a chance of winning the election. This optimism was misguided, as Houston won 7,915 votes to Burnett's 3,619. The response from many was, "Old Sam H. with all his faults appears to be the only man for Texas. He is still unsteady, intemperate, but drunk in the ditch is worth a thousand of Lamar and Burnet."

After the election, Houston did not have smooth sailing. He was forced to deal with public outcry over Lamar's failed attempt to expand Texas boundaries with the disastrous Santa Fe Expedition that left many men dead and imprisoned in Mexico. He continued to push for annexation of Texas by the United States and attempted to tackle the crippling debt that ballooned under Lamar. However, it was uncertain if Houston could accomplish all he wanted to in just three years.



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

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Curator of Education & Editor.....Lisa Berg
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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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.

Brazos Valley Regional History Fair

We want to congratulate all of those students who represented the Brazos Valley Region at Texas History Day in Austin on Saturday, April 27! The theme this year was Triumph and Tragedy in History.



Those students who placed:

2nd place, advances to Nationals in Junior Individual Exhibit:

Nya Farrow (Brenham Jr. High) for Tragedy and Triumph at Tenerife

3rd place in Junior Individual Website:

Nicholas Panko (Brenham Jr. High) for The Evacuation of Dunkirk



Nya Farrow will compete at National History Day at the University of Maryland in June.

4th place in Junior Individual Documentary:

Addison Schramme (Brenham Jr. High) for Women in the Workforce During WWII: The Tragedy of War Brings Triumph to Women.

The following students made finals:

James Leman (Leman Homeschool) in Junior Individual Paper for RuddersRangers: Securing D-Day Victory by Paying the Ultimate Sacrifice

Abby Coats and Maggie Albright (Stephen F. Austin Middle, Bryan ISD) in Junior Group Exhibit for The Aggie Bonfire Collapse.

Recognized as Outstanding Students from the Brazos Valley Region

Grace Drodgy (Davila Middle, Bryan ISD)

McKenna Holloway (Anderson-Shiro High School)

Juneteenth Heritage Celebration

June 22 • 10:00 a.m. - 4 p.m.

On January 1, 1863, President Lincoln's executive order, The Emancipation Proclamation, freeing all slaves in the south was official. However, slavery did not end in Texas until June 19, 1865. Known as Juneteenth, this important historical event was made a state holiday and is observed in forty-five states. Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site is commemorating Juneteenth on June 22, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. with their award winning public program. This event will feature guest speakers; Cleveland Franklin talking about growing up in Brenham and his struggle to succeed in professional sports, Dr. Bruce Glasrug on The Significance of J. Mason Brewer American Folklorist and scholar, and Stephanie Klemm, curator of exhibits and collections at Star of the Republic Museum. The afternoon portion of the program will showcase folk music singer Brandi Pace, the Fantasy Band, church choirs, and ending the day with the Brown Sugar Band.

Around the Conference and Visitor Centers there will be numerous exhibits and displays celebrating African American history and heritage in Texas. There will be plenty of opportunity to eat and find the perfect gift artisan crafts vendors. For more information, visit wheretexasbecametexas.org or call 936-878-2461.



The Pine Burr or Pine Cone quilt pattern was a design frequently used by southern African American women. This version of that quilt style is in the collection at Star of the Republic Museum. It was made by Lela Grand Ballew of Fairmont, Ga., in 1896 and won a cash prize at the State Fair in Dallas.

Star of the Republic Museum Hires Curator of Collections

Stephanie Klemm

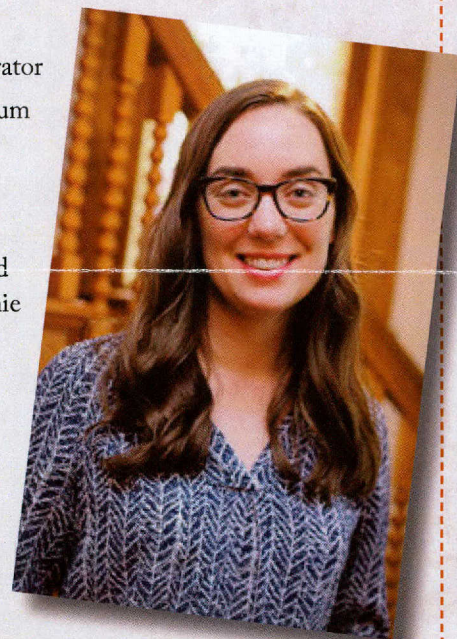
In November 2018, the Star of the Republic Museum welcomed Stephanie Klemm as the new Curator of Collections and Exhibits. Stephanie comes to the Museum after working four years as the Museum Manager of the Moore-Lindsay House, a historic house museum located in Norman, Oklahoma.

Stephanie, originally from Bartlesville, Oklahoma, completed her Bachelor of Arts degree in French, Spanish, and anthropology from Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, Oklahoma. While an undergraduate student, she interned at the Mabce-Gerrer Museum of Art, Frank Lloyd Wright's Price Tower, and the Bartlesville Area History Museum. Following graduation, Stephanie worked abroad in Paris, France, for one year.

"I was fortunate to have many meaningful internships early on in my studies," Klemm said. "Those internships truly shaped my interest and desire to pursue a career in the museum field, particularly as a curator."

After returning to Oklahoma, she received her Master of Arts in Museum Studies from the University of Oklahoma while working as the museum manager in Norman. During her position, she gained experience in collections management, exhibit development, local history research, and visitor services.

"I am delighted to serve as the Curator of the Star of the Republic Museum," Klemm said. "The collection is a wonderful resource, and it is full of endless opportunities for research and exhibits. I'm honored to have the chance to work at an American Alliance of Museums-accredited institution, and look forward for the opportunities to continue to grow professionally in the museum field."



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.

June 1: Wildflowers

June 8: Knot Tying

June 15: Weaving

June 29: Embroidery

July 6: Firecrackers

July 13: Corn Husk Dolls

July 20: Paper Flowers

August 3: Talavera Tile Magnets

August 10: Native American Horses

August 17: TBD

Juneteenth Heritage Celebration

June 22, 10 A.M.-4P.M.

Runaway Scrape Escape

3rd Saturday of the Month - June 15, July 20, August 17

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.

Blue Star Museum Initiative

May 18-September 2

Current active duty service members, with proper ID, and up to five family members receive free admission to all locations at Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site.