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# Star of the Republic Museum

Government Publications  
Texas State Documents

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## Notes

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### *Barrington Living History Farm*



*Photo Earl Nottingham, courtesy Texas Parks and Wildlife Department*

*Barrington, the home of Anson Jones, last President of the Republic of Texas, has been relocated within the Park and restored to its 1850 appearance. Reproduction log buildings allow Barrington to come to life with the sights, sounds, and smells of the original Barrington Farm. Interpreters, dressed in Republic-era clothing and using traditional farming techniques, will recreate the day-to-day activities of a nineteenth-century farm. A garden, an orchard, and fields of cotton and corn will transport visitors to a past they can experience.*





*Photo Earl Nottingham, courtesy Texas Parks and Wildlife Department*

**...I, as President of the Republic, with my officers, am now present to surrender into the hands of those whom the people have chosen, the power and the authority which we have sometime held. This surrender is made with the most perfect cheerfulness.... I lay down the honors and cares of the Presidency with infinitely more of personal gratification than I assumed them....**

**The lone star of Texas, which ten years since arose amid clouds over fields of carnage, and obscurely shone for a while, has culminated, and following an inscrutable destiny, has passed on and become fixed forever in that glorious constellation which all free-men and lovers of freedom in the world must reverence and adore – the American Union . . . Blending its rays with its sister stars long may it continue to shine, and may a gracious Heaven smile upon this consummation of the wishes of the two Republics, now joined together in one. “May the Union be perpetual, and may it be the means of conferring benefits and blessings upon the people of all the States,” is my ardent prayer.**

**The final act in this great drama is now performed. The Republic of Texas is no more.**

Dr. Anson Jones, President of the Republic of Texas  
Austin, Texas February 19, 1846

With these words Anson Jones retired from public life and returned to Barrington, the home near Washington that he and his wife had built two years earlier. Having practiced medicine and been thrown into the world of politics Anson Jones now looked with relish to the life of a gentleman farmer. In his biography of Jones, Herbert Gambrel describes Barrington as, “...a model of neatness and efficiency. The Doctor’s seeds were scientifically bred; his fields were picked over three times each season; his cotton brought a premium in Galveston.... His corn and tobacco... were good, too, and even the thrifty Germans who were moving into the county had no better vegetables, fruits, flowers, and shrubs.” (*Anson Jones: The Last President of Texas* p. 420) Anson and Mary Jones spent twelve years at Barrington. They moved to their new home shortly after their third child, Sarah Sophia, was born. By the time their fourth and last child, Cromwell Anson, arrived Barrington was a thriving plantation.

In many ways Barrington was a typical middle class Texas farm. Like many farms of this size Barrington depended on slave labor to produce the cotton, corn and tobacco that supported the Jones family. The Jones’ owned six slaves and often hired others when added labor was needed. Life at Barrington followed the seasonal round common in rural communities. Ploughing and preparing the soil in late winter, planting in the spring, cultivating and tending crops through the summer and harvesting in fall. Barrington represents not only the lives of Anson and Mary Jones, but shows a cross section of Texas society in the mid-nineteenth century.

Today the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is undertaking the restoration of Anson Jones’ home and is attempting to recreate a small portion of Barrington to be operated as a working farm. Using the same tools and techniques, growing similar types of crops and raising period types of livestock the staff of Barrington Living History Farm will guide modern visitors back to a time when most Texans derived their living from the land. The role of the Barrington Farm will be to demonstrate agricultural technology and processes common in this part of Texas in the 1850’s and how these practices were reflected in the lifestyle of the region. Barrington Farm and the community it



represents will be the platform from which historical interpreters can discuss social, political and economic history.

Agriculturally, Barrington Farm will have two main objectives. First will be to demonstrate the agricultural technology and rural lifestyle of this region, using period appropriate crops and livestock whenever possible. Special events based on the seasonal activities of the farm will be held throughout the year, to compare and contrast the rural lifestyles of the past and present. Educational programming will be designed to show students how their ancestors lived and worked, as well as illustrate the great diversity found in rural Texas. Secondly, in this age of specialization in agriculture Barrington will serve as a store house for seed stock, antique plant varieties, and minor breeds that are in danger of being lost because they are no longer commercially viable. By providing a place for Mastodon and Petit Gulf cotton, Pineywoods cattle, and Ossabaw Island hogs, we will play a small role in maintaining a diverse genetic pool for the future. The Barrington Living History Farm will act not only as a gateway to understanding the past, but also as a resource for the future.

To be able to effectively create an atmosphere where the visitor can suspend disbelief and begin to make a transition from the present to the past the staff of Barrington farm will need accurate reproduction tools, equipment and livestock. Our goal is to help the visitor experience what it was like to live at

Barrington in the 1850's and for a brief moment to actually feel as if they had been transported back in time.



*Photo Earl Nottingham, courtesy Texas Parks and Wildlife Department*

### **Park Association News**

On March 5, 2000, the final phase of the Park's long-range improvement project will culminate with the dedication of Barrington Living History Farm. This would not have happened without the hard work and dedication of the Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park Association. Later in the Spring, the Star of the Republic Museum will complete all new first-floor exhibits, and in 2001, complete second-floor exhibits. This million-dollar project is supported by a five-year, \$50,000 pledge from the Association.

However, work continues. The next project for the Association is to help with ongoing operational and programming costs for both the Park and the Star of the Republic Museum. The Association has also reasserted its pledge to promote and advertise Washington-on-the-Brazos around the region and state. Please consider being a part of these exciting projects by making a commitment to the Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park Association, as we endeavor to make Washington-on-the-Brazos as recognizable as the Alamo and San Jacinto.

For information or assistance regarding membership, call the Star of the Republic Museum at (409) 878-2461, ext.234.



P. O. Box 317 Washington, Texas 77880

**New Austin Biography Released**

*“Richly entertaining from start to finish, this book gives us a deeper appreciation for our history and a better understanding of a man to whom we owe much.”*

—Laura Bush, First Lady of Texas

*“The first critical study in 75 years of the founder of Anglo-American Texas—an appealing figure who has gained a shrewd and skilled biographer... it also brings alive this complex, honorable, politically savvy loner who, haltered to the values and aspirations of his overbearing father, transformed parental expectations into a historically enduring project. A solid achievement of biographical art and modern western history that substitutes new evidence and current scholarship where myth and romance have long held sway.”*

—Kirkus Reviews

The following reviews describe the newly-published biography, Stephen F. Austin: Empresario of Texas, by Gregg Cantrell, the Rupert N. Richardson Professor of History at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene. Dr. Cantrell addresses Austin’s character and influences, adding depth and humaneness to the “Father of Texas.” Although he remains an admirable personality who accomplished much in his 43 years, Austin still reveals some human faults. As with the 1836 election, Austin has often been overlooked in favor of more flamboyant, colorful leaders. Cantrell’s analysis fills the gap with the portrait of a man who remained gracious and honorable in the face of innumerable challenges, and whose main “object has been the general good, and the permanent liberty and prosperity of Texas.”

As of this publication Dr. Cantrell has agreed to be present for book signings at the 2000 Texas Independence Day Celebration in March.

**Museum Website Up and Running**

With a new millennium just around the corner, the Museum is now part of the Internet community, providing our patrons with another avenue for visitation. After only a couple of months on-line, we have already seen the fruits of our new outreach. Among the positive responses was a note from Comanche, Texas: “It is an excellent teaching facility and should have a wide appeal for students... The visuals are attractive.” If you would like to visit our virtual site, the address is: <http://www.starmuseum.org>. We welcome any and all feedback as the site continues to develop.

**EXHIBIT SCHEDULE**

***The Showers-Brown Discovery Center***

**MUSEUM SCHEDULE**

Open Daily  
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

409-878-2461 (fax) 409-878-2462  
Administered by Blinn College, Brenham, Texas

website: <http://www.starmuseum.org>  
e-mail address: [star@acmail.blinncol.edu](mailto:star@acmail.blinncol.edu)

Director . . . . . Houston McGaugh  
Curator of Exhibits . . . . . Sherry B. Humphreys  
Curator of Education and Editor . . . . . Lisa Kalmus Smith  
Museum Secretary . . . . . Effie Wellmann  
Assistant Curator of Education . . . . . Shari Irwin  
Assistant Curator of Education . . . . . Anne Simms

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