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**STAR OF THE REPUBLIC MUSEUM
ANNUAL REPORT
SEPTEMBER 1, 2002 – AUGUST 31, 2003**

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STAR OF THE REPUBLIC MUSEUM
ANNUAL REPORT
September 1, 2002--August 31, 2003

PURPOSE

An educational institution, the Star of the Republic Museum interprets the history of the Republic of Texas and its influences. Interpretation is conducted through exhibits, school and group programs, media programs, and community programs. The Museum collects and preserves artifacts to implement the programs and extensively researches to ensure authenticity of the collections and presentation.

Adopted by the Blinn College Board of Trustees, 1979

AUTHORITY

The Star of the Republic Museum, located in the Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site, was created by the State of Texas in 1970. House Bill No. 634, of the Sixty-first Legislature, in regular session, transferred the control and custody of the Museum to Blinn College, Brenham, in Washington County, Texas, from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission. The Museum was created to interpret the ten-year history of the Republic of Texas from 1836 to 1846, and to commemorate the site of the signing of the Texas Declaration of Independence and the last capital of the Texas Republic. The Star of the Republic Museum is the only AAM accredited museum in the state devoted exclusively to collecting and interpreting pre-1850 Texas history and material culture.

SPECIAL NOTE

Due to building renovations and exhibit construction, partial closings, changing staff, and other concerns, the Museum has not produced an annual report since August 1998. The Museum has gone through a complete renovation of its exhibits at a cost of just over \$1,000,000. The first floor exhibits were completed in the fall of 2000, and the second floor exhibits were completed in the spring of 2002. The Museum's theater will be renovated with new A/V equipment along with a new interpretive video program in the spring of 2004.

HIGHLIGHTS

The Star of the Republic Museum was the recipient of a 2003 Certificate of Commendation from the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) for the *Republic of Texas* exhibition. Only nineteen museum exhibits across the United States and Canada were selected to receive such awards this year.

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“The AASLH Awards Program is the nation’s most prestigious competition for recognition of achievement in local, state, and regional history. We congratulate the Star of the Republic Museum for the work that has brought this honor,” said Terry L. Davis, President and CEO of AASLH.

The AASLH Awards Program was initiated in 1945 to establish and encourage standards of excellence in the collection, preservation, and interpretation of state and local history throughout North America. The program not only honors significant achievement in the field of local history, but also brings public recognition to small and large organizations, institutions, and programs that contribute to this arena. By publicly recognizing excellent achievements, the Association strives to inspire others to give that extra effort.

ATTENDANCE

The current economic downturn has caused a reduction in attendance at the Museum and Park. These reductions mirror other museums, parks, and other cultural sites around the state and country. Total attendance at the Museum for the 2002-2003 fiscal year was just over 30,000. This represents a 16% reduction from the previous year, which had a 10% reduction over the previous year. Additionally, another 3,643 individuals have received outreach programs and presentations in the community.

EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Scheduled Tours

The staff of the Education Department conducted a total of 173 scheduled school tours comprised of a total of 8,611 students from public, private, and home schools. In addition, 39 scheduled adult groups toured the Museum with a total of 1,206 participants. A combined count of visitors in scheduled tour groups for the 2002-2003 year was 9,817.

Expanded Programs

The Education Department offered several expanded programs at selected times of the year. These programs utilized an inquiry-based, hands-on approach to encourage more student involvement. They were designed to align with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for selected grade levels. The expanded programs included:

- Thanksgiving/Native American Program: Offered during the month of November to children in grades K-1.
- “Leeches by Thousands,” a program about Republic period medical practices: Offered during the month of January to students in grades 5-6.

- “Childhood in the Republic”: Offered every Saturday and Sunday throughout the month of April.

Special Topics

Each month throughout the year, the Museum focused on a special topic with a display in the Showers Brown Discovery Center. These rotating displays were designed to help visitors relate the past to their own lives in the modern world, through the use of images, text, artifacts and original documents. The special topics included:

- September- Hispanic Heritage: “*Diez y Seis de Septiembre*”
- October – “Archeology Awareness”
- November- Native American Heritage: “The Road to Peace”
- December- “Texas Christmas Traditions”
- January- “Anson Jones: President & Physician”
- February- “Black History Month”
- March- “Martin Parmer: The Ring-tailed Panther”
- April- “Texas Wildflowers”
- June – “Flags of the Republic”
- July- “The Texas and U.S. Declarations of Independence”
- August- “Capitals of the Republic”

Special Events and Projects

- **“The Call of Freedom”**- Presented in support of a nationwide initiative sponsored by the American Association of Museums (AAM) and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the purpose of this event was to celebrate our freedom in remembrance of the tragic events that took place on September 11, 2001. Museum visitors were invited to help create a mural in the Showers Brown Discovery Center by writing their thoughts about freedom alongside quotes about freedom by Sam Houston, William Barret Travis, and other Republic of Texas luminaries. Admission to the museum was free on September 11, and each visitor received a commemorative lapel pin.

- Also in September, the Education staff coordinated the filming of **“The Perfect Texas History Field Trip”** with Region VI Service Center and Brenham ISD. The staff met with a fourth grade teacher and a seventh grade teacher to advise them of pre and post-visit activities which would make the most of their field trip experience. A film crew from Region VI visited the classrooms on the day before the field trip, then followed them on the actual trip, and returned to the classroom the following day to record the post-visit activities. The completed film was aired on the T-STAR Network of the Texas

Education Agency. It has also been broadcast on select PBS stations and utilized in two teacher workshops.

- **“Indian Lifeways in the Post Oak Savannah,”** a lecture by Dr. Alston Thoms, assistant professor of Anthropology at Texas A&M University, was presented on October 12 in conjunction with Archeology Awareness Month. Thoms’ lecture focused on native root food, tool-stone and cook-stone technology, as well as natural site formation processes.
- Also in October, the Education department worked with Dr. Cathy Lively of Blinn College to produce two segments of streaming video to be used with the **Blinn College Texas History internet courses.**
- On October 26, the Museum presented an all-day **teacher workshop** for Aldine ISD in conjunction with the Blinn College Department of Workforce Education. Twenty-nine educators were in attendance. The workshop included a tour of the facilities at Washington-on-the-Brazos; a session by Anne McGaugh, Curator of Education, on using primary sources in the classroom; and an opportunity to experience a scavenger hunt through the exhibits in the Museum. At the conclusion of the workshop, teachers received a certificate for seven hours of Continuing Professional Education (CPE) from Blinn College.
- In support of Black History Month, **“I Am Annie Mae,”** a one-woman musical production by Naomi Carrier of the “Talking Back Living History Theatre” was presented in the Museum on February 15. The program told the story of Annie Mae McDade Prosper Hunt, an African American woman who lived in the Washington County area near the turn of the century. Approximately 50 people attended the production. The program was co-sponsored by the Texas Commission on the Arts, Brenham Independent School District, Washington County Arts Council, and the Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park Association. Additional performances were presented at the Brenham Jr. High School on February 14 for all 7th & 8th grade classes.
- The Museum sponsored its annual **Republic of Texas Art Contest** for fourth grade students in Washington and Grimes County. Dee Turner, member of the Brenham Fine Arts league; Janice Campbell, former teacher and current historical interpreter; and Russell Cushman, local artist, judged entries from 220 students. An awards ceremony was held on March 1, during the Texas Independence Day Celebration, and the winning entries were exhibited in the Museum through the end of May.
- During the **Texas Independence Day Celebration** in March, the Museum hosted several historical craft demonstrators. Included were: Bluebonnet Lace Makers, Brazos Bluebonnet Quilt Guild, Mildred Cuffaro (pine needle weaving), Don Henthorn (chair caning), Betty Ann Thiel (tatting), and Betty Wharton (knitting). Visitors were also treated to performances by “Texas

Heroes” (professional troupe of historians/actors), “Gone to Texas” (Musical theater group sponsored by Sam Houston Memorial Museum of Huntsville), and “Star of Texas Dulcimers.” Approximately 1000 people visited the Museum during the Texas Independence Day Celebration.

- In March the Museum hosted a reception for a **Historic Preservation Symposium**, which was organized by Dr. David Woodcock of Texas A&M University.
- A teacher workshop titled “**Bringing History to Life in the Classroom**” was hosted by the Museum on June 25. The workshop was open to all teachers who wanted to learn more about the history of the Republic of Texas and how to enhance their students’ understanding of this crucial time in Texas history. This workshop was held in conjunction with the Blinn College Department of Workforce Education and the Region VI Service Center. Forty-nine participants from public and private schools, as well as universities, attended. At the conclusion of the workshop, each participant received a certificate for seven hours of Continuing Professional Education (CPE) from Blinn College.
- **H-E-B Fireworks on the Brazos** was celebrated on July 4th, with the Star of Texas Dulcimers playing in the Museum. Activities in the Park included historic children’s games, a concert by the Houston Symphonic Band, free Blue Bell ice cream and Coca-Cola, and a spectacular fireworks display. Approximately 350 people toured the Museum prior to the evening events.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

In a continuing effort to make the public more aware of what the Museum has to offer, members of the staff presented programs to various civic and community organizations. In September, Anne McGaugh, Curator of Education, made a PowerPoint presentation to the Brenham Rotary Club about the new Museum exhibits. As the members viewed slides of the exhibits, they heard quotes from the past that related to the images. This same presentation was made in November to the Lake Conroe Rotary Club. In February, the Education staff traveled to the Bryan campus of Blinn College, where they made nine presentations to approximately 315 Texas History students. Artifacts and reproduction items from the Museum were used to clarify what it was like to be a settler in Texas in the 1830s. Also in February, presentations were made to the Montgomery County Historical Society and to the Harris County Historical Society. In June, Sara Keil, Public Programs Coordinator, presented “Childhood in the Republic” to approximately 50 students at the Nancy Carol Roberts Library in Brenham.

Taking the opportunity to assist a local museum, Curator of Collections, Shawn B. Carlson, offered her expertise as an archaeologist to Bryan’s new African American Heritage Museum. Carlson conducted volunteer excavations at the site of the new museum using students from Blinn College and Texas A&M University. Artifacts

recovered from the site—which previously was home to two African American schools—were developed into an exhibit that is currently on display in the lobby of the Bush Presidential Conference Center at Texas A&M.

Recognizing the increased use of the internet by information seekers, the Museum embarked on re-designing its website, www.starmuseum.org. The Curator of Education worked with Charlie Kelm, graphic designer at Blinn College, to update the website to include more helpful information for potential visitors. Through the website, the Museum will be able to reach an even broader audience.

PUBLICATIONS

The Museum's quarterly newsletter, *Notes*, was distributed to over 2,000 individuals throughout the year. The newsletter is available free of charge, upon request. Each issue contains a featured article along with information about upcoming events. A new column, "Curator's Corner," was added to the publication this year to provide readers with information on how to care for family heirlooms. The featured articles included "The Mighty Brazos," a compilation of memories of the days when the mighty Brazos River transported essential goods and prominent people to the thriving town of Washington; "Anson Jones: President and Physician," an explanation of the dramatic highs and lows in the life of the last President of the Republic of Texas; "Texas Independence and the Ring-tailed Panther," the colorful story of Martin Parmer; and "Back to School," a look at education in early Texas.

COLLECTIONS

Acquisitions

New acquisitions during 2002-2003 included the donation of two oil portraits from Mary Alice Thomas Pate of Austin. The two paintings date from about 1840-1859 and depict the likenesses of Josiah Turnham and Martha Ann Woolfolk Turnham at their home near Little River in Milam County.

Purchases included a number of documents: (1) an 1837 marriage license for John Robbins and Eliza Crane at Washington, Texas, (2) an 1841 petition from Jerome B. Robertson (son of Sterling Robertson) to the Washington County probate judge, (3) an 1834 letter identifying three candidates for positions within the Department of Brazos—one of whom was William Barret Travis who also signed the letter, (4) an 1837 testimony describing a shooting at San Felipe, (5) an 1837 bill of sale to Andrew Robinson, Jr. for livestock from John W. Hall at Washington, and (6) an 1845 series of documents initiated by Daniel Rowlett of Fannin County for the return of his slaves.

Exhibits

Since the completion of the final phase of the new exhibit project in the spring of 2002, only minor changes have been made in the permanent exhibit. However, the Museum has constructed a new exhibit case expressly for loaned documents from the Texas State Library and Archives. Built of cast iron and bullet-proof Lexan, the case has already been home to a broadside copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence and two documents regarding the Republic of Texas' annexation to the United States. In March 2004, it will house the rare manuscript copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence during the Independence Day festivities at Washington-on-the-Brazos.

Conservation

An 1824 quilt hand-stitched by Elizabeth McCreary is currently undergoing conservation by textile conservator, Beatrice Dodge, of Elgin. The blue and white quilt is constructed of white homespun cotton with accents of imported European calico. Funds for the work were donated by the quilt donor, Martha Jonas, who is a direct descendant of McCreary. The quilt will soon be available for viewing in the second floor textile exhibit.

Collections Management

Curator of Collections, Shawn B. Carlson, has redesigned the Museum's relational database during the past two years and reconciled the records during an ongoing inventory of the collections. To date, the objects on exhibit and objects in storage have been inventoried and reconciled. Inventory of the documents is currently in progress. As part of the redesign, donor information has been linked with artifacts, both a loan file and an exhibit file have been created, an image file has been started, and various reports have been generated making it possible to have a better grasp on the collection.

Carlson has also completed an application to the Smithsonian Institution for membership in their Smithsonian Affiliates program. The program encourages long-term loans from the Smithsonian as their storage space becomes increasingly scarce. Because applicants must identify items that they would like to borrow from the Smithsonian, Carlson has also developed a collections plan for the Museum. The plan prioritizes and identifies needed acquisitions based upon the existing collection, desired collection, complementary collections, projected audience interest, and available resources.

VOLUNTEERS

During the past two years, two people have regularly volunteered their time in Collections. Gerald Humphreys, who conducted an archaeological excavation many years ago at the Stagecoach Inn in Chappell Hill, has been working on an updated inventory of the collection that is estimated to hold about 12,000 artifacts. Texas A&M

University history student, Cynthia Eben, has been helping to inventory the Museum's document collection. Cynthia has been replacing regular file folders with acid-free lignin-free folders, separating multiple documents from folders that are too full, and measuring the documents.

PERSONNEL

Museum Staff

Houston McGaugh has been the Director since July of 1987. He received his M.A. in Museum Science from Texas Tech University, and has twenty years of museum education and administrative experience. He is President of the Central Texas Museum Association, has served on committees and panels for the Texas Association of Museums, served on the AAM Standing Professional Committee on Education for the Mountain/Plains Museums Region and is currently a member of the Washington County Historical Commission. He was also appointed by Governor Ann Richards to serve on the Sam Houston Bicentennial Commission and the Stephen F. Austin Bicentennial Commission. He was appointed to serve on the Texas Historical Resource Advisory Board for the Texas State Archives. The Director assumes overall responsibility for the long-term and daily operations of the Museum, oversees the curators and staff in their duties, and reports to the governing authorities.

Shawn Carlson has been the Curator of Collections and Exhibits since May 2002. She has an extensive background in historic sites archaeology of the 18th-20th centuries and is very knowledgeable about Republic period artifacts. Shawn received her Ph.D. in Anthropology in 1994 and in 2002 completed a semester-long distance education class in Collections Management from the University of Victoria. Recently, she was appointed to the Texas Preservation Trust Advisory Board by the Texas Historical Commission. Her previous experience includes five years as a consulting archaeologist during which she served as Principal Investigator for the Ballpark at Union Station excavations—a project that encompassed 17 city blocks in Houston and focused upon the period 1830-1870. Prior to that she worked for TAMU's Center for Ecological Archaeology for 13 years. Her field experience has centered exclusively on historic sites throughout the southeast, leading her through eight states and dozens of sites, including the town of Washington-on-the-Brazos, the Anson Jones plantation, and the David Burnet home site. As Curator of Collections and Exhibits, Shawn is responsible for accessioning, cataloging, conservation, research and storage of the artifact collections and oversees the development and implementation of exhibits.

Anne Simms McGaugh was hired as the Assistant Curator of Education in 1998, and selected as Curator of Education in 2002. She graduated with honors from Trinity University with a B. A. degree in Elementary Education. She received her M. Ed. degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Texas A&M University. She also is a graduate of the Winedale Museum Seminar. She has five years experience as an elementary classroom teacher, and was an Assistant Lecturer in the College of Education at Texas A&M

University in the spring of 2001. She oversees the development and implementation of all educational programs at the Museum. She is also responsible for writing and editing the Museum's quarterly newsletter and maintaining the Museum's website.

Sara Keil was hired as the Public Programs Coordinator in June of 2002. She graduated Cum Laude from Texas A&M with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in History and a minor in Theater. She was a College of Liberal Arts Distinguished Student, a Texas A&M University Honors Candidate and a participant in the College of Liberal Arts Honors Plan. She is responsible for coordinating all scheduled tour groups in the Museum and Park, giving tours, and assisting with other projects within the education department at the Museum.

Effie Wellmann, Museum Secretary, has been with the Museum since November 1995. She manages accounts payable and receivables and prepares and tracks all requisitions, invoices and deposits. She is responsible for preparing end of the month and year-end reports for the Museum and schedules part-time personnel for the weekly and weekend information desk. She also maintains the Gift Shop Inventory, reordering stock as necessary and is currently assigning Library of Congress call numbers to the Library Inventory. She is currently serving as President of the Washington Texas Farm Bureau, Secretary of the Roese Family Reunion, and Treasurer of the Sunday School at Friedens Church of Washington, UCC.

Karen Hazelwood has been a part-time education assistant at the Museum since April 2003. She graduated Magna Cum Laude from Houston Baptist University with a B. A. in Elementary Education and Physical Education. She has taught in the public school, worked as a teacher's aide at a private school, and has been a parent volunteer for many years. She is responsible for guiding school groups on tours of the Museum, researching and developing displays for the Discovery Center, and generally assisting in the education department.

Additional Staff:

Virginia Tappe, Building Maintenance and Cleaning
Virgie Griffith, part-time Information Desk Clerk
Dorothy Wiesepape, part-time Information Desk Clerk
Melvrene Morrow, part-time Information Desk Clerk
Ketra Williams, part-time Information Desk Clerk
Vivian Keil, part-time Information Desk Clerk

Blinn College Administration

Donald E. Voelter, President
John D. Barkman, Executive Vice President
 {administrative responsibilities for the Star of the Republic Museum}
John D. Harris, Vice President Student Services
Ronald L. Johnston, Vice President Academic Affairs
Barbara Pearson, Vice President Brazos County Campus
John Robertson, Vice President Business Services

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STAR OF THE REPUBLIC MUSEUM REVENUES AND EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR ENDED AUGUST 31, 2003

REVENUES

State Appropriations	\$328,515.00
State Health Insurance Appropriations	\$ 27,488.76
Sales/Services	\$ 9,632.52
Interest Income	\$ 9,486.76
Museum Receipts	\$ 28,789.00
Donations/Contributions	<u>\$ 30,000.00</u>
TOTAL REVENUES	\$433,912.04

EXPENSES

Salaries	\$230,237.43
Fringe Benefits	\$ 61,980.50
Building Maintenance	\$ 22,227.71
Training/Travel	\$ 4,594.99
Consumables/Services	\$ 19,455.62
Utilities	\$ 51,666.74
Property/Liability Insurance	\$ 3,967.00
Furniture/Equipment	\$ 8,774.44
Museum Project	\$ 3,567.00
Miscellaneous	<u>\$ 21,358.00</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$427,829.43

TOTAL INCOME LESS TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 6,082.61
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