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**STAR OF THE REPUBLIC MUSEUM
ANNUAL REPORT
SEPTEMBER 1, 2003 – AUGUST 31, 2004**

Administered by Blinn College, Brenham, Texas



Accredited by the American Association of Museums



STAR OF THE REPUBLIC MUSEUM
ANNUAL REPORT
September 1, 2003–August 31, 2004

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.

HIGHLIGHTS

Once a Nation

The museum staff worked with Frame by Frame, a video production company from College Station, Texas, to produce a new introductory video, *Once a Nation*. The twenty-minute video debuted during the Texas Independence Day Celebration in February. The video's production took advantage of the newly refurbished theater surround sound system. The completion of the theater upgrade and new video completed the Museum's million-dollar development project.

Original Declaration of Independence

The original hand-written Declaration of Independence was on exhibit from February 26 through March 2, on loan from the Texas State Library and Archives. This was the first

time the document had been on display at its place of origin. During this time, over 5,100 visitors to the Star of the Republic Museum had the rare opportunity to view the historic document in its entirety. The Museum received excellent media coverage of the event, as well as of its delivery to the Museum by three Texas Rangers. *The Eagle*, the local newspaper in Bryan/College Station, included a reprint of the Declaration of Independence in its Thursday edition and also provided the Museum with hundreds of extra copies that were given out to visiting school groups.

The Origins of Texas Music Festival

The Museum and Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site hosted the "Origins of Texas Music Festival" on April 3, 2004. This event traced Texas music chronologically, from the Republic Period to the early 20th century. The festival represented the music genres of Anglo-Appalachian String Music, Tejano Conjunto Music, German/Czech Music, African American Blues and Western Swing, with performances by *Sweet Song String Band*, Johnny Degollado, Mark Halata and *Texavia*, Ruthie Foster, and the *Light Crust Doughboys*. In-between the live performances, there were scholarly lectures presented by music historians, Dr. Kevin Mooney and Dr. Bill Malone, in the Washington-on-the-Brazos Restaurant. The live performances began at 11:00 am and ended at approximately 6:45 pm, in the outdoor Washington-on-the-Brazos Amphitheater, with over 2,225 attendees during the day. In addition, the Museum hosted the "Origins of Texas Music Festival" Dinner for 135 registrants, which immediately followed the festival at the Washington-on-the-Brazos Conference Center. It included a catered BBQ meal and live entertainment by *Back at the Ranch*.

ATTENDANCE

Total attendance at the Museum for the 2003-2004 fiscal year was just over 30,000. There was a 2% increase in regular Museum attendance and a 16% increase in scheduled group attendance. In addition, approximately 500 individuals received outreach programs and presentations in the community.

EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Scheduled Tours

The staff of the Education Department conducted a total of 184 scheduled school tours comprised of a total of 8,610 students from public, private and home schools. In addition, 33 scheduled adult groups toured the Museum with a total of 1067 participants. A combined count of visitors in scheduled tour groups for the 2003-2004 year was 9,677.

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-2.
- “Leeches by Thousands,” a program about Republic period medical practices: Offered during the months of January and October to students in grades 4-7.

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”
- December- “Texas Christmas Traditions”
- January- “Anson Jones: President & Physician”
- February- “Black History Month”
- March- “Signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence”
- April- “Origins of Texas Music”
- May- “Jane Long: The Mother of Texas”
- June – “Famous Fathers”
- July- “Independence: The USA and the Republic of Texas”
- August- “Capitals of the Republic”

Special Events and Projects

- Prompted by a request from a local teacher, the museum created a program about using primary sources for 22 students in a 3rd & 4th grade Gifted and Talented class from Brenham. The Curator of Education explained to the students how museum artifacts and documents could be used for historical research. This program will serve as a pilot project for future programs.
- 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; Cynthia Eben, museum volunteer, judged entries from 275 students. An awards ceremony was held on February 28, during the Texas

Independence Day Celebration, and the winning entries were exhibited in the Museum through the end of May.

- On February 27, the Museum hosted an evening reception to preview the original **Texas Declaration of Independence**. The more than 200 attendees also had the opportunity to view the new Museum video, *Once a Nation*.
- During the **Texas Independence Day Celebration** in February, the Museum hosted several historical craft demonstrators. Included were: Bluebonnet Lace Makers, Brazos Bluebonnet Quilt Guild, Don Henthorn (chair caning), Lou Rose (chair caning), Betty Ann Thiel (tatting), Bill Bryant (wood working), 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 4,256 people visited the Museum during the Texas Independence Day Celebration.
- A teacher workshop titled "**Bringing History to Life in the Classroom**" was hosted by the Museum on June 9. 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. Twenty-two participants from public and private schools attended. At the conclusion of the workshop, each participant received a certificate for seven hours of Continuing Professional Education (CPE) from Blinn College.
- On June 30 and July 21, the Museum education staff participated in the **Texas Parks and Wildlife Camp YES** (Youth Exploring Stewardship) program, a day camp for Brenham's Community Education Program. This program was for 120 children aged 8-12 from Kid's Kountry Camp, as well as Washington County Boys and Girls Club. The students traveled to a different State Park each day and attended site activities that explored the concept of resource stewardship.
- **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 324 people toured the Museum prior to the evening events. A special fireworks viewing opportunity from the Museum's second floor outdoor deck, was provided to over 120 Park Association members and guests.
- All sites in the Park, including the museum, hosted **School Daze: Education in the Republic**, on August 7-8. Visitors could learn about education in the mid 19th century. All teachers were granted free admission throughout the

weekend, and were provided free teaching materials. Over 125 visitors took advantage of this opportunity.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

In a continuing effort to make the public more aware of what the museum has to offer, Anne McGaugh, Curator of Education, presented programs to various civic and community organizations. On March 1, Ms. McGaugh made a PowerPoint presentation to the Judge Nathaniel Hart Davis chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas in Conroe 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 on June 1 to the Rotary Club of Washington County and on June 3 to the Lake Conroe Rotary Club. A similar presentation was made to the Navasota Noon Lion's Club on November 12.

To further strengthen the museum's connection with Blinn College, the Education staff worked with several teachers to provide additional resources for their classes. In September, the staff traveled to the Bryan campus, 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. The same presentation was made to Dr. Larry Watson's Texas History class on the Brenham campus in October. In addition, the Museum worked with Blinn History professors to create unique extra credit projects for Blinn students who visited the museum.

In June, Sara Keil, Public Programs Coordinator, presented "Childhood in the Republic" to approximately 20 students at the Children's Museum of the Brazos Valley in Bryan, Texas.

PUBLICATIONS

Notes

The Museum's quarterly newsletter, *Notes*, was distributed to over 2,000 individuals throughout the year. The newsletter was available free of charge, upon request. Some of the featured articles included "Remember the Alamo," a comparison of some of the various movies that have been made about the Alamo story; and "The Santa Fe Expedition," a look at an incredible journey across Texas, New Mexico, and Mexico that began in 1841.

Witness This

In collaboration with the Law Related Education Department of the State Bar of Texas, the museum published *Witness This*, a curriculum guide about the grand jury system in Texas. Based upon a document from the museum's collection, this guide explains the

development of the grand jury system, and provides the transcript of the testimony from a murder case in Texas in 1840. The curriculum guide is available to teachers upon request, or may be downloaded from the museum website.

Website

The museum continues to improve its website, www.starmuseum.org. Throughout the year, various teacher resources were added to the site, and the most recent issue of the *Notes* is now also available online.

COLLECTIONS

Acquisitions

Several purchases were made during the 2003-2004 fiscal year. From Anne Serra Antiques in New York, the Museum purchased a spectacular baby tender made between 1810 and 1825 that still has remnants of its original red buttermilk paint. A nice leather sewing- clamp with hand-forged hardware, a bolt header, and a pair of "C" clamps—also hand-forged, were purchased as well. Other items from Anne Serra include a straight razor, an amber talisman baby necklace, a washboard, spatula, dough scraper, snuff container, and a twist of flax.

From Buckingham Books in Pennsylvania, the Museum purchased a book entitled, "The Mexican Soldier, 1837-1847." This book describes and illustrates Mexican military organization, dress, equipment, and regulations during the Republic period.

The Museum's last two purchases were from Simpson Galleries in Houston. One, a court summons from 1840 requesting the presence of Michael Fogleman to testify in the suit of James W. Parker (uncle of Cynthia Ann Parker) vs. Bloodsaw Gay is signed by Charles B. Stewart, a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence, and Hiram Hanover, an ancestor of Eleanor Hanover Nance—one of the Museum's donors. The other purchase is an 1846 promissory note from Tacitus Clay to J.W. Young for \$131.25 for hire of a "negro" boy named Tony. It is especially interesting because it provides for summer and winter clothes, shoes, hat, and blanket for the young boy.

Major gifts to the Museum include the conversion of a long-term loan from the Nance family. A collection of 195 books from Milton Nance was donated by his son, James. Of these books, 18 were accessioned into the rare book collection while the others had previously been cataloged in the Museum's library. Nearly 1200 books from this collection had previously been donated to the Blinn College Library. In addition, three dolls from the collection of Eleanor Hanover Nance were also donated to the Museum by James Nance. These include a crudely carved wooden doll; a wire-eyed doll with wax shoulders and head, cloth body, and kid leather arms and hands; and a wooden jester on a stick.

Another gift, from Wesley and Sallie Anderson, also resulted from a long-term loan. The Anderson's donated five Mexican lithographs and seven pieces of Texian Campaign ware. The lithographs include, "General Taylor and Staff: The Heroes of Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma, Monterey and Buena Vista" (1847), "Death of Major Ringgold of the Flying Artillery, at the Battle of Palo Alto (Texas) May 8th 1846" (1848), "Battle of Resaca de la Palma May 9th 1846: Capture of Gen'l. Vega by the gallant Capt. May" (1846), "Burying the Dead After the Battle of Monterey," and "Major General Winfield Scott, at Vera Cruz March 25, 1847." The Texian Campaign ware, which dates from 1846-1852, includes four plates, two platters, and a serving bowl.

Two quilts, one dating from 1845 and the other 1873, were given by John Gambrell, of Dallas, and his sisters, Nevaire Gambrell Richardson and Mary Gambrell Hughes. The two quilts were made by Frances Grigsby Smyth, wife of George Washington Smyth, signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence and one-time surveyor for the Republic of Texas. The Gambrells are direct descendants of George Washington Smyth.

Throughout the year the Museum has been approached by a number of potential donors. Their gifts have been temporarily loaned to the Museum for observation and study and the Museum is currently awaiting decisions on some of these items.

Exhibits

Since completion of the second floor exhibit renovation in the spring of 2002, only minor changes have been made in the permanent exhibits. Most of these have involved rotation of light sensitive objects. The completed conservation of the 1824 Elizabeth McCreary quilt allowed the Museum to rotate that quilt into the textiles exhibit. Also, the 1845 Smyth quilt was added to the same exhibit and the 1873 Smyth quilt was added to the furniture exhibit.

During 2004, various documents were rotated in the Museum's new cast iron document case, including the original manuscript copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence. Many of these documents have corresponded with the monthly displays in the Showers-Brown Discovery Center. Another document case has been added to the Showers-Brown Discovery Center, also rotating documents and other artifacts that will complement the monthly displays.

Collections Management

A digital imaging plan was developed by Dr. Shawn B. Carlson, Curator of Collections, and was included in the Museum's successful application for the Museum's for America (MFA) grant of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Many of the objects stored in the Museum's collections are too fragile for exhibit and could be compromised by additional handling or excessive light. Digital images reduce the number of times that an object must be handled while internet access to the images allows more people to see them.

The plan outlines the type of hardware and software to be used in the project as well as matters of resolution, bit depth, color, file formats, compression, and storage media. A preliminary protocol addresses selection, description, preparation, digitization, quality control, and storage issues.

The objectives of the digitization plan are:

- To prepare digital images of each three-dimensional object in the Museum's collection,
- To scan each two-dimensional object, i.e., documents, manuscripts, maps, etc., in the Museum's collection,
- To establish a database of digital images and their associated metadata,
- To implement Internet access to the digital images in collaboration with the University of North Texas' Portal to Texas History Project, and
- To provide public access to the collections and research of the Star of the Republic Museum

Work continues on the Museum's collections database. Most recently the database has been upgraded to Filemaker Pro 7 and changes are planned to take advantage of the new features with which it is equipped.

VOLUNTEERS

During the past year, two people have regularly volunteered their time in Collections. Gerald Humphreys has continued his work on the Stagecoach Inn archaeological collection from Chappell Hill, volunteering 130 hours. He has completed an inventory of 131 lots (discrete proveniences) that represent approximately one-quarter of the collection.

Texas A&M University history student, Cynthia Eben continues to help inventory and re-house the Museums document collection. She volunteered 92 hours during the past year and has completed work on two of the 12 filing drawers and has assisted with other tasks in the Museum.

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, and also serves on the statewide planning committee for the new Texas Heritage Digitization Initiative. 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 received her Ph.D. in Anthropology in 1994 from Texas A&M University and has an extensive background in historic sites archaeology of the 18th-20th centuries. 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, providing her with considerable knowledge of Republic period artifacts.

Dr. Carlson has been a Research Collaborator with the Smithsonian Center for Materials Research and Education since 2000. She currently serves on the Texas Preservation Trust Advisory Board of the Texas Historical Commission. And, in 2003, she was recognized by the African American National Heritage Society for her role in preserving the archaeological record of two African American schools in Bryan, Texas. 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. She also planned and coordinated the Origins of Texas Music Festival.

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 worked as a part-time education assistant at the Museum from April 2003 to May 2004. She graduated Magna Cum Laude from Houston Baptist University with a B. A. in Elementary Education and Physical Education. She was 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
Vivian Keil, part-time Information Desk Clerk
Gerald Humphreys, part-time Information Desk Clerk
Melvrene Morrow, part-time Information Desk Clerk
Ketra Williams, 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, 2004**

REVENUES

State Appropriations	\$332,110.00
State Health Insurance Appropriations/State Retirement	\$ 37,255.00
Sales/Services	\$ 19,112.00
Interest Income	\$ 6,409.00
Museum Receipts	\$ 43,210.00
Transfer from Reserve (Theater renovation/HVAC system)	<u>\$ 84,256.00</u>

TOTAL REVENUES **\$522,352.00**

EXPENSES

Salaries	\$228,137.00
Fringe Benefits	\$ 60,259.00
Building Maintenance	\$ 41,975.00
Training/Travel	\$ 17,974.00
Consumables/Services	\$ 71,582.00
Utilities	\$ 64,749.00
Property/Liability Insurance	\$ 20,667.00
Furniture/Equipment	\$ 2,616.00
Museum Project	\$ 11,704.00
Miscellaneous	<u>\$ 2,689.00</u>

TOTAL EXPENSES **\$522,352.00**