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REFERENCE

**STAR OF THE REPUBLIC MUSEUM  
ANNUAL REPORT  
SEPTEMBER 1, 2004 – AUGUST 31, 2005**

**Administered by Blinn College, Brenham, Texas**



Government Publications  
Texas State Documents

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**STAR OF THE REPUBLIC MUSEUM  
ANNUAL REPORT  
September 1, 2004–August 31, 2005**

**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**

*In Pursuit of Independence*

The Museum presented a new exhibit about the signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence entitled *In Pursuit of Independence*. Documents bearing the signatures of some of the fifty-nine signers of the Declaration and documents related directly to the Convention of 1836 were featured. Also included in the exhibit was one of the original printed broadsides of the Declaration of Independence, on loan from the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. The exhibit was open in the Showers-Brown Discovery Center from March 4–May 31, 2005.

On March 4, the Museum hosted an evening reception to honor the past year's donors to the Museum, and to preview the exhibit *In Pursuit of Independence* in the Showers Brown Discovery Center. Donors to the Museum Collection included: Mr. & Mrs.

Wesley Anderson, Ms. Carol S. Dutton, Mr. John Gambrell, Ms. Marianne S. Hayes, Mrs. Mary Gambrell Hughes, Mrs. Martha S. Jonas, Ms. Elise S. Lawrence, Mr. Benjamin Meeks, Mr. James C. Nance, Mrs. Nevaire Gambrell Richardson, Mr. Edward F. Sullivan, III, and Mr. Robert E. Sullivan. Donors to Educational Programs and Projects included: Arts Council of Brazos Valley, Blinn College, Blue Bell Creameries, L.P., First National Bank Bryan/College Station, George and Anne Butler Foundation, The Eagle, Humanities Texas, Texas Commission on the Arts, and Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park Association. Donors to the Blinn Foundation on behalf of the Museum included: Mr. & Mrs. L. Cletus Brown, Jr., Mr. & Mrs. Tom Bullock, Sr., Mrs. Margie Foelber, Mr. & Mrs. Tom French, Mr. & Mrs. Houston McGaugh, Mr. Gus Mutscher, Mr. & Mrs. Gus Hurley Mutscher, Mr. & Mrs. Milton Tate, Jr., and Mr. Julian Weisler, II. Former Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives, Gus Mutscher, was also honored for the role he played in establishing the Museum 35 years ago.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Total attendance at the Museum for the 2004-2005 fiscal year was just over 30,000. In addition, approximately 350 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 152 scheduled school tours comprised of a total of 8,096 students from public, private and home schools. In addition, 42 scheduled adult groups toured the Museum with a total of 1206 participants. A combined count of visitors in scheduled tour groups for the 2004-2005 year was 9,302.

### ***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 month of 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- May- "In Pursuit of Independence"
- June – "Flags of the Republic"
- July- "Independence: The USA and the Republic of Texas"
- August- "Reading Writing, and Arithmetic"

## *Special Events and Projects*

- On the first and third Wednesdays in September and October, the staff at the Museum and Barrington Living History Farm presented "**Home School Days: Childhood in Early Texas,**" an interactive, hands-on program for the entire family. Participants discovered what life was like for a child in the mid-19th century. In the museum, they learned about childhood chores, clothes, and schools, and then make some old-fashioned toys to take home. After a picnic lunch in the pecan grove along the Brazos River, they hiked up to Barrington Farm to experience life on the farm. Approximately 211 students and adults participated in the program.
- The museum sponsored its annual **Republic of Texas Art Contest** for fourth grade students in Washington and Grimes County. Lou Beck, member of the Brenham Fine Arts league; Janice Campbell, former teacher and current historical interpreter; and Russell Cushman, professional artist, judged entries from 254 students. An awards ceremony was held on March 5, 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, Lou Rose (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 2,392 people visited the Museum during the Texas Independence Day Celebration.

- A teacher workshop entitled “**Bringing History to Life in the Classroom**” was hosted by the Museum on June 8. 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-eight 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 July 13, 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 4<sup>th</sup>, with the Star of Texas Dulcimers playing in the Museum. Activities in the Park included historic children’s games, a concert by the Houston Concert Band, free Blue Bell ice cream and Coca-Cola products, and a spectacular fireworks display. Approximately 340 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 6-7. Visitors could learn about education in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. All teachers were granted free admission throughout the weekend, and were provided free teaching materials. Over 121 visitors toured the Museum that weekend.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND SERVICE

On February 10-11, Anne McGaugh, Curator of Education, served as a judge at the Heart of Texas Regional History Fair in Waco. She also consulted with Regional Coordinator to gain a better understanding of the organization of the fair, in anticipation of hosting a regional history fair at Washington-on-the-Brazos in the 2005-2006 school year.

In a continuing effort to make the public more aware of what the museum has to offer, Ms. McGaugh made a presentation to the Rotary Club of Washington County on March 8. Ms. McGaugh spoke about several primary sources from the Museum collection.

To further strengthen the museum’s connection with Blinn College, the Education Staff worked with several teachers to provide additional resources for their classes. On

October 13-14, the staff traveled to the Bryan campus, where they made nine presentations to approximately 300 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. In addition, the Museum worked with Blinn History professors to provide a unique extra- credit project for Blinn students who visited the museum.

## 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 "The Know Nothing Platform," a look at a short-lived political party in Texas; and "Love and Marriage," an analysis of romantic relationships in the early to mid- 19th century. In addition to the quarterly mail-outs, the newsletter is also now available to download off the internet.

### *Website*

The Museum's website, [www.starmuseum.org](http://www.starmuseum.org), has been online for several years and is used extensively by teachers and the general public to gain more information about the Museum's programs, exhibits, and activities. The site also provides downloadable files for teachers bringing students on tours to the Park and Museum. TEKS compliance requirements and post-visit activities were downloaded 1,700 times. The public downloaded 1,469 past issues of the "Notes" as well as other information about the Republic of Texas. Two of the key statistics for the past fiscal year are 35,650 visits with 65,704 pages viewed and 6,200 files downloaded. It is also interesting that 10% of the web visitors are from other countries and that 60% of visits are from other states, with the leading states being California, Washington, Virginia, and Washington, DC. The Museum will continue to grow this source of educational information and outreach communications over the coming years.

## COLLECTIONS

### *Accessions*

Several purchases were made during the 2004-2005 fiscal year. The most outstanding accession was the Pleasant B. Watson diary. Covering the years 1858-1868, the diary recounts events of Watson's young adulthood in the town of old Washington. Books and manuscripts purchased for the Museum's collections include Francis Hardman's 1853, "Frontier Life, or Scenes and Adventures in the South West"; Vito Alessio Robles' 1939, "Relacion del Viaje que Hizo a los Presidios Internos"; David Holman and Billie Persons' 1979, "Buckskin and Homespun: Frontier Texas Clothing 1820-1870"; P.M. Butler and M.G. Lewis' 1847, "Letter from the Secretary of War, transmitting a report of

Messrs. Butler and Lewis relative to the Indians of Texas and the southwestern prairies"; Thomas Earle's 1847, "The life, travels, and opinions of Benjamin Lundy, including his journeys to Texas and Mexico; with a sketch of cotemporary [sic] events, and a notice of the revolution in Hayti"; Manuel E. Gorostiza's 1838, "Message from the President of the United States transmitting a copy and translation of a pamphlet, in the Spanish language, printed and circulated by the late Minister from Mexico before his departure from the United States, etc."; and Niles Weekly Register's 1813 newspaper with the article entitled, "Republic of Mexico."

Gifts to the Museum's collections include a human hair watch fob from Mr. Benjamin Meeks. The fob belonged to his grandfather who was a Texas Ranger during the 1880s. From Mr. John Gambrell and his sisters, Nevaire Richardson and Mary Hughes, items were given belonging to their ancestor, George W. Smyth, a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence. Smyth's pocket compass, a daguerreotype of Smyth, and a lock of hair taken at his funeral were donated by the Gambrells.

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, especially quilts in the Textiles exhibit and documents throughout the Museum.

During 2005, various documents were rotated in the Museum's cast iron document case, including a broadside copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence on loan from the Texas State Library and Archives during the annual Texas Independence Day celebration. Coinciding with the celebration was a temporary exhibit, "In Pursuit of Independence," in the Showers-Brown Discovery Center from February 28<sup>th</sup> to May 31<sup>st</sup>. The exhibit focused on documents in the Museum's collection that were produced by signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence during the Constitutional Convention of 1836 at Washington-on-the-Brazos.

Many other documents and artifacts were exhibited during the year and corresponded with the monthly displays in the Showers-Brown Discovery Center.

### *Collections Management*

In September of 2004, the Museum was notified that it had been awarded a \$75,000 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to be matched by the Museum for a 2-year project entitled, "Digitization of the Star of the Republic Museum Collections." The purpose of the project is to digitize the Museum's collections so that

they will be accessible to students, researchers, and virtual visitors via the Museum's website.

From October 1-December 31, 2004, the Museum purchased a Nikon D70 camera and lenses, a Power Mac G5 computer, lighting equipment, and photo tents and backdrops to implement the digital project.

In November 2004, the Director and Curator of Collections traveled to the University of North Texas at Denton to visit with the staff of the "Portal to Texas History" project. Their staff will be uploading the Museum's data to their website where it will become part of a multi-institutional online database. A link back to the Museum's website will allow visitors to see the data from either site.

Paperwork was completed during the fall of 2004 to begin the hiring process for two positions necessary to carry out the digital project. Two people were hired in January 2005—one an information technology student from Texas A&M University who managed and edited the files and, the other, a full-time staff person who photographed the collections.

From January 16 to May 31, objects in the Museum's collections storage area were photographed to avoid disruption of the tour schedules. On June 1, a new information technology intern was hired and from June 1 to August 31, objects on exhibit in the Museum were removed from their exhibit cases and taken to the Conservation Lab where they were photographed.

Also during the summer, arrangements were made with the Map Library at Texas A&M University to scan the Museum's map collection and oversize prints on a wide format scanner beginning in the fall semester.

By September 1, nearly all objects in the Museum's collections were photographed and a decision was made to not hire another intern for the fall semester. As of September 30, 2005, there were 3,415 edited photographs and 88 scans logged. With raw images included, a total of 7,182 images have been stored filling 68 GB of hard drive space. The edited images will be uploaded to the "Portal of Texas History" where they can be viewed by anyone with internet access. Smaller jpeg images will be derived from the master images to be used in-house in the Museum's database. Backup files of the images are being stored on the project computer, on an external drive, and on DVDs for offsite storage.

Notes were taken throughout the project to record the methods used in photographing different kinds of objects. That information has now been organized as an in-house manual to be used by staff members as new acquisitions need to be photographed in the future.



Currently, staff at the University of North Texas have samples of our images, a copy of our database, and the software necessary to view our database. They have notified us that they will begin working with our data to upload it to the Portal of Texas History site.

The digitization project is scheduled to be completed by August 31, 2006. The 2005-2006 fiscal year will be devoted to scanning the Museum's documents and editing the Museum's database so that images can be mapped to the database fields.

## VOLUNTEERS

During the past year, three people have volunteered their time in Collections. Gerald Humphreys has continued his work on the Stagecoach Inn archaeological collection from Chappell Hill, volunteering 100.3 hours. He has completed an inventory of 202 lots (discrete proveniences) that represent approximately one-third of the collection.

Texas A&M University history student, Cynthia Eben helped inventory and re-house the Museum's document collection. She volunteered 62.25 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.

Blinn College anthropology student, Matthew Smith, contributed 28.4 hours while labeling an archaeological collection recovered from the site of the new African American Museum in Bryan.

## PERSONNEL

### *Museum Staff*

**Houston McGaugh** has been the Director since July of 1987. He received an M.A. in Museum Science from Texas Tech University, and has twenty-eight 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 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> 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, and supervises two Education Staff positions. 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 Roesse Family Reunion, and Treasurer of the Sunday School at Friedens Church of Washington, UCC.

**Leslie Weiss** worked as a part-time education assistant at the Museum from November 2004 to May 2005. She was responsible for guiding school groups on tours of the Museum, 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  
Bill Marshall, part-time Information Desk Clerk  
Sandra Vega, 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

**Blinn College Board of Trustees for Academic Year 2004-2005**

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**STAR OF THE REPUBLIC MUSEUM  
REVENUES AND EXPENSES  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED AUGUST 31, 2005**

**REVENUES**

State Appropriations	\$331,287.00
State Health Insurance Appropriations/State Retirement	\$ 38,998.00
Sales/Services	\$ 4,267.00
Interest Income	\$ 9,280.00
Museum Receipts	\$ 48,728.00
IMLS Grant (Digitization Project)	\$ 35,215.00
Transfer from Reserve (Replace Chiller Compressor)	<u>\$ 14,110.00</u>
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>\$481,885.00</b>

**EXPENSES**

Salaries	\$235,340.00
Fringe Benefits	\$ 62,649.00
Building Maintenance	\$ 30,425.00
Training/Travel	\$ 3,470.00
Consumables/Services	\$ 25,616.00
Utilities	\$ 61,129.00
Property/Liability Insurance	\$ 13,849.00
Furniture/Equipment	\$ 6,731.00
Collections	\$ 5,500.00
Museum Digitization Project	\$ 35,215.00
Miscellaneous	<u>\$ 1,961.00</u>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$481,885.00</b>