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1989-90 STAR OF THE REPUBLIC MUSEUM

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ANNUAL REPORT

SEPTEMBER 1989 - AUGUST 1990

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STAR OF THE REPUBLIC MUSEUM ANNUAL REPORT 1989/1990

PURPOSE

An educational institution, the Star of the Republic Museum interprets the history of the Republic of Texas with emphasis on the Brazos Valley. 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 insure 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 Historical Park, was created by the State of Texas in 1970. House Bill No. 634, of the Sixty-first Legislature, in regular session, transferred from the State Parks and Wildlife Commission the control and custody of the Museum to Blinn College, Brenham, in Washington County, Texas. 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 museum in the state devoted exclusively to collecting and interpreting pre-1850 Texas history and material culture.

HIGHLIGHTS

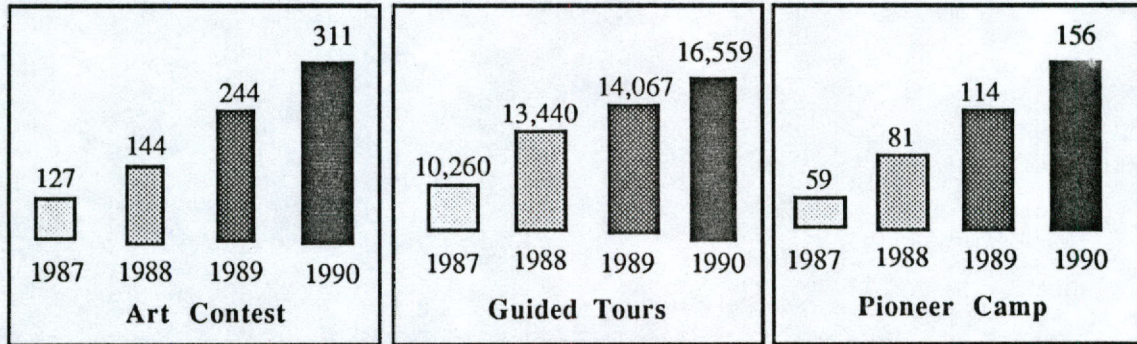
1989-1990 was a year of continuing recognition for the Museum, for the fifth time in seven years, the Museum received the **Outstanding Interpretive Exhibit Award** from the Texas Historical Commission. The award recognizes the 1989-90 exhibit, "*Wond'rous Cures Performed,*" *Medicine in Nineteenth Century Texas*. The Museum's summer program, "Pioneer Day Camp," also received an award from the Historical Commission for **Outstanding Educational Program**.

The 1989-90 exhibit, *Texas: A Beautiful, Promising Land*, was chosen to be reviewed in the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, published by the Texas State Historical Association. The exhibit received a very favorable review from Dr. Bryant Markette, Professor, Regional Studies, Baylor University.

The Star of the Republic Museum also received a **Certificate of Commendation** from the American Association for State and Local History for its quarterly publication, the *Notes*. The American Association for State and Local History, a nonprofit education organization, assists historical organizations throughout the United States and Canada in preserving their local heritage. According to Patricia Gordon Michael, the Executive Director, "the AASLH awards program is the nation's most prestigious competition for achievement in the preservation and interpretation of local and regional history." There were only 56 awards presented to institutions in both the United States and Canada.

ATTENDANCE

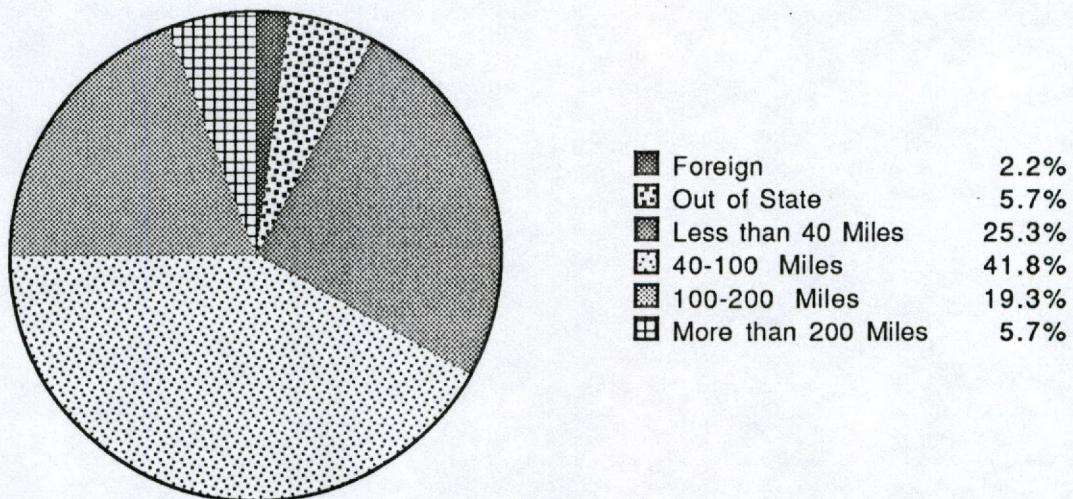
The Museum experienced a slight increase in overall attendance last year despite a lower than normal attendance for the annual Texas Independence Day Celebration in March. The total attendance for the year was **72,814**, compared to the previous year's total of 71,874. The Museum has continued to show excellent growth in each of our major program areas, as shown below:



The Museum's loan materials were utilized by over 6,000 individuals last year. In addition, programs presented by the staff to civic and historical organizations reached another 2,000 adults in the area.

In an attempt to better understand who the visitors are and where they are coming from, an annual visitor analysis is derived from the museum guest register.

MUSEUM ATTENDANCE



These figures represent only 19% of the total number of visitors recorded by the counter. However, the figures do indicate trends that can be used to develop future programs, exhibits, and publications. The "Less Than 40 Miles" category includes Bryan/College Station, and the category "40-100 Miles" includes Houston. Therefore, over 40% of our audience is travelling from 80-200 miles roundtrip to visit the Museum and Park, and most of these visitors are from Harris County. Currently, a more detailed visitor study is being developed which will provide more statistically significant information.

EXHIBITS

"*Texas: A Beautiful, Promising Land*" was the major exhibit in the Showers-Brown Exhibit Hall this year. This exhibit presented views of what the land of Texas was like during the years of the Republic and early statehood, about 150 years ago, and briefly looked at present day Texas. Visitors could see birds, animals, fish, plants, fossils, collecting boxes, surveying equipment, books, photographs, and prints relating to the cultural geography of Texas. Animals included full mounts of a buffalo, a jaguar, two bears, a deer, an alligator, a spoonbill and other birds, a long-nosed gar, and many others. Habitat settings placed them in the proper environment. Two Ivory-billed Woodpeckers and a passenger pigeon, both considered extinct, were also on display. Included in a panel about buffalo hunting was a Sharp's carbine, a smaller relative of the Sharp's buffalo rifle. Animals and artifacts came from as far away as Anniston, Alabama, as close as Waco's Strecker Museum at Baylor University, and the Museum's own collections.

Explorers, like Captain Randolph Marcy, and scientists, such as Ferdinand Lindheimer and such colorful characters as Gideon Lincecum were featured in some of the exhibits. A slide show, composed of scenes from all the geographic regions of Texas, displayed photographs by well-known Texas nature photographers. Maps delineated the various ecological areas of Texas. "Touch" exhibits included a deer antler and skin, bear skin, a bison skull, horn, and fur. Visitors of all ages especially enjoyed this part of the exhibit.

"*The Republic of Porkdom*" was installed around the gallery walls opposite the Women's exhibit and near the theater entrance. This exhibit presented to the visitors views of ordinary lifestyles, elegant ones (with a china tea set) and daily food preparation tasks. It was called "The Republic of Porkdom" simply because this is what the settlers ate the most. "When the first cold days came in the fall, seventy-five or more hogs were killed; the negroes making a holiday of it. Hams and bacon were hung in the big log smoke-house and the women were busy rendering lard and stuffing sausage." John Lockhart commented about plantation life. Artifacts included a gambrel, a lard press, a hog scraper, and a skimmer.

PUBLICITY

The Museum received excellent publicity this year with articles about exhibits, programs, or excerpts from the *Notes*, appearing in the following publications: *Southern Living*, *Insite*, *Texas Highways*, *Texas Journal*, *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, *The Waterways Journal*, *The Medallion*, *Waco Tribune Herald*, *Texas Parks and Wildlife*, *Antique Review*, *Houston Chronicle*, *ArtiFacts* (an Arts Council of the Brazos Valley publication), *Antiques Magazine*, *Austin American Statesman*, as well as several stories each in the *Bryan Eagle*, *Navasota Examiner*, and *Brenham Banner Press*.

PUBLICATIONS

The quarterly newsletter, *Notes*, was distributed to over 3,000 individuals last year. The *Notes* topics included: *We Worked From See to Can't: Slavery in the Republic*; *Texas: A Beautiful, Promising Land*; *Beautiful, Strange, and Menacing Animals*; and *Gambler's Heaven: Amusements in the Republic*. The Museum also produced a brochure to accompany the exhibit on Texas and the land.

EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS

The number of individuals visiting the Museum in organized tours this year was 16,559, representing 390 groups. Included in this total were 230 student groups, comprised of 13,626 students, which represents a 29% increase in the number of guided tours over last year.

In an attempt to make the history of the Texas Republic more meaningful to area school children, once again the Museum sponsored the Republic of Texas Art Contest for the fourth grade students of Brenham Intermediate School and John C. Webb Middle School, Navasota. Strongly supported by the principals and staff at both schools, a total of 311 students participated. An awards ceremony was held in the Museum theater during the Texas Independence Day Celebration, and the winning entries were exhibited in the Museum, March 4 through May 27, 1990. The judges for the contest were Mrs. Shirley McCord, Mr. Charles Weaver, and Mrs. Jane Barnhill.

The Curator of Education organized a series of "April Folk Weekends," with demonstrations of traditional folk art and crafts every Saturday and Sunday in April. The programs included: quilting, spinning and weaving, cornshuck doll making, traditional Republic period music, lace-making, making traditional musical instruments, and black-powder firearm demonstrations. For the first time this year, we were able to bring in a group of Sacred Harp Singers from the East Texas Sacred Harp Singing Convention.

This was the fourth summer that the Museum held its "Pioneer Day Camps." Area children had the opportunity to participate in activities which included pioneer food preparation (grinding corn and making butter), carding and spinning cotton, early crafts, traditional games, a live snake demonstration, a nature hike, firearm programs, a live "Buckskinner show," and program about the Native Americans who lived in Texas. The camp was held on four Saturdays in June and July, with separate sessions for the younger and the older children. A total of 156 children participated. The participants, ranging in age from six to twelve, came from Brenham, Navasota, Bryan/College Station, Houston, and other surrounding communities. A random poll taken at the end of each session confirmed that the participants thoroughly enjoyed the Day Camp.

Schools and other organizations are increasingly taking advantage of the Museum's "outreach programs," which include a 16 mm film on the Texas Republic; a video of the Sesquicentennial film, "Independence," highlighting the actual signing of the Declaration; and an ethnic activity suitcase which examines children's entertainment in the Texas Republic through folk toys, games, folktales, and a music tape. The Museum's newest outreach program is geared to junior high and high school students. A slide show, "The World of the Texas Republic," examines the political, economic, and cultural events transpiring in the rest of the world during the 1830's and 1840's. Two new additions to the lending program last year were the Republic of Texas videotape seen in the Museum theater, and the videotape, *Prometheus Proud's Miracle Medicine Show*. All of these programs are available through the mail and are free of charge except for return postage and insurance. Outreach programs were seen by over 6,000 individuals last year. In addition, approximately 2,000 people, in various groups and organizations, heard programs presented by the Museum staff, primarily Ellen Murry, Curator of Education.

COLLECTIONS AND LIBRARY

Additions to the Museum's collection included sixteen purchases and five gifts. The purchases included items for the new lighting exhibit as well as tableware and other items for the collections and future exhibits. Thirty-one books were added to the research library.

GRANTS AND DONATIONS

In 1990 the Museum received a \$3,060 grant from the National Institute for Conservation, funded by the Institute of Museum Services. The grant was for a Conservation Assessment Program survey to assess the Museum's collections (both on exhibit and in storage); assess the building's environmental conditioning system and overall building status; and provide the information necessary to develop a long-range conservation plan for the Museum. With these funds, we were able to hire Carl Patterson, Conservator at the Denver Museum of Natural History, to spend three days at the Museum and conduct this detailed inventory and survey.

The Museum received \$2,000 of an \$8,000 grant from the George Butler Foundation to assist in publishing *Notes on the Republic*. The book is scheduled to be published in early 1991.

The Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park Association donated \$100 to help cover expenses for the exhibit opening on March 4, 1990.

SPECIAL EVENTS

The Texas Independence Day Celebration held on Saturday and Sunday, March 3-4, 1990, was the major event of the year as always. The estimated attendance was 5-7,000 during the weekend of activities and events. Approximately 150 persons attended the Museum's exhibit opening on Friday evening, March 2.

Sponsored by the Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park Association, the two-day celebration was highlighted by Lieutenant Governor Bill Hobby, who was the keynote speaker.

VOLUNTEERS

Last year the Museum continued its effort to recruit, train, and utilize volunteers in several areas of museum operation. The result was a doubling of the number of volunteers over the previous year, and increasing volunteer hours from 313 in 1987-88 to 661 for 1988-89, and over 1,100 in 1989-90. For Pioneer Day Camp last summer 42 volunteers contributed over 455 hours. Other areas of volunteer efforts were in the Museum Gift Shop, Tour Docents, Exhibit helpers, and receptionist.

Two students from Texas A&M University, Karen Beach, and Gabrielle Lege' also served as volunteers, and assisted in several areas of Museum operation. They contributed a total of 388 hours.

The Museum hosted a volunteer appreciation dinner at the Museum to express its thanks, share the successes, and stress the continuing need for volunteer support and assistance. Volunteer recruitment and utilization at the Museum continues to be a priority for the coming year. Volunteers not only assist with the day to day operational needs of the Museum, but serve as a positive outreach from the Museum to the local communities.

PERSONNEL

Museum Staff

Houston McGaugh, Museum Director - B.S., M.A., Texas Tech University.
Serves as President of the Central Texas Museum Association, representative on the Texas Association of Museums Council, and was elected as the representative on the American Association of Museums Education Committee for the Mountain/Plains Museum Association, which covers eleven states. He is also a board member for the Arts Council of Washington County, and Board member for the newly formed Cotton Heritage Association.

Sherry B. Humphreys, Curator of Exhibits/Collections - B.A., University of North Texas ; M.A., Southern Methodist University.
She also served on the board for the Grimes County Heritage Association. She attended the Textile Conservation Workshop, sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution, conducted at the Witte Museum in San Antonio.

Ellen N. Murry, Curator of Education/Editor - B.A., Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge; M.A., Texas A&M University.
Serves on the board of the Central Texas Museum Association; serves on the Program Committee for the Texas Association of Museums; and serves on the Program Committee for the American Association for State and Local History.

Suzette S. Jensen, Administrative Assistant/Gift Shop - A.A., Blinn College
Attended the Fall Gift Show of the Dallas Market Center in Dallas.

Note: Mrs. Jensen died on August 4, 1990, after a lengthy illness, she served the Museum for fifteen years.

Cordelia Lauter, general assistant
Edith Dickschat, curatorial assistant
Carolyn Svec, part-time gift shop
Ladonna Vest, part-time tour guide

Gene McKnight , part-time gift shop
Ollie Newman, part-time maintenance
Mae Stegemoller, part-time assistant
Karin Falco, part-time gift shop

College Administration

Walter C. Schwartz, President
John D. Barkman, Vice President Administration and Planning
Has administrative responsibilities for the Star of the Republic Museum
Donald E. Voelter, Executive Vice President Fiscal Affairs
Charles L. Cottingham, Vice President Academic Affairs
William R. Perry, Vice President Student Services

College Board of Trustees

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FINANCIAL INFORMATION (not audited)

	1988/89	1989/90
State Appropriations	\$186,232	193,588
Museum Shop Revenue	64,935	70,050
Interest Income	23,560	21,441
Programs & Services Income	162	188
Donations & Miscellaneous	5,328	1,510
Meadows Grant	24,072	0
IMS Grant	23,000	3,060
Butler Grant		2,000
Education Program Revenue	2,340	7,821
TOTAL INCOME	\$329,629	\$299,658
Salaries, Wages, & Benefits	163,750	143,671
Collections	3,512	1,963
Equipment	12,150	799
Supplies, Office & Postage	7,818	6,316
Supplies, Exhibits	5,626	4,657
Supplies, Conservation	1,773	926
Supplies, Custodial	1,309	1,419
Travel	2,809	2,472
Utilities	34,757	34,532
Repair & Maintenance	7,424	10,735
Vehicle Purchase	13,150	0
Library	2,029	1,563
Publications	7,178	5,524
Insurance	3,830	3,164
Education Services	3,821	2,235
Freight & Other	1,306	1,449
Education Program Expense	1,513	5,559
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$273,755	\$226,984
Museum Store Expenses	39,020	39,279
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>\$312,775</u>	<u>\$266,263</u>
NET	\$16,854	\$33,395

Future Exhibit Plans

Major temporary exhibits will open every spring on the first weekend after March 2, in the Showers-Brown temporary exhibit room. Renovation of the more permanent exhibits, travelling exhibits, and other programming will be developed as needed or as available.

1991

The spring Showers-Brown room exhibit will be on 19th century lighting, the impact of lighting on daily lives, and the artifacts used. This exhibit will trace the development of lighting devices and fuels, and illustrate the wide variety of these artifacts available in nineteenth century Texas. Although crude, simple lamps were used well into the century, by 1900 electricity was becoming increasingly important as an energy source for light.

1992

The spring Showers-Brown room exhibit will be on Texas Indians, contact and history, cultural assimilation and conflict, and will also focus on policies of the Texas government, Lamar's wars of extermination, and Houston's concern for the Indians. The Museum has received a \$6,500 grant from the Texas Committee for the Humanities to sponsor a symposium in conjunction with this exhibit. Several scholars from around the United States will be brought in for the one day conference.

A minor exhibit, "What is it?", will open in the gallery area, using 19th century artifacts to fire the visitor's imagination so that they interact by trying to guess what the objects in the exhibit are. They will also be able to touch most of the artifacts.

Long-range Goals and Objectives and Current Status

The current long-range plan includes elements developed for the Museum and Park by the Center for Historic Resources at Texas A&M University, and funded by the Washington-on-the-Brazos Park Association. It addresses the Museum staff's desired goals by establishing the following objectives to be achieved by 1995:

1. A 4,000 square-foot, collection storage, curatorial work-space and artifact treatment facility for the Museum. The plan also calls for additional curatorial staff.
This project is underway with the completed Conservation Assessment survey; construction plans indicating the need for \$700,000 to complete the project; and the commitment of the Capital Campaign Committee in dedicating \$250,000 as a match toward private foundation funding, with numerous proposals pending. A successful NEH Challenge Grant, to be submitted in the spring of 1991, will assist in funding an additional curatorial position.
2. Expanded educational programming.
3. A comprehensive publicity and public relations campaign, combined with extensive signage on nearby interstates and major roads.
Funds were provided by the Association for a county-wide Festivals Brochure which highlighted the Museum and was distributed state-wide. Discussions have been held with the Texas Highway Department for new and improved signage.

4. An improved and more attractive entrance to the Park and Museum.
Phase one has been completed by the Park Association, with discussion of proposed plans with the Texas Department of Highways, utilizing their matching funds program for scenic highway improvements.
5. In addition, several mid-range objectives have been established:
 - A. Ongoing topical plans for all temporary exhibits, over the next five years; identifying potential sources of outside funding for the exhibits; renovation of several permanent exhibits.
Exhibits have been scheduled; a grant has been received from the Texas Commission for the Humanities for a symposium and publication in conjunction with an exhibit on Texas Native Americans to open in the spring of 1992.
 - B. Development of educational programs to accompany each new exhibit (ongoing)
 - C. Continued annual growth in the summer Pioneer Day Camp program, with increased minority participation.
 - D. Improved recruitment, training, and utilization of volunteers.
The growth in the new volunteer program has been phenomenal, and continued success is anticipated.
 - E. Increased budget through expanded Park Association membership, additional public programming, and continued project and supporting grants.