

San Jacinto News

JANUARY 2015

Member Lunch to be at Historic Lancaster Hotel

The San Jacinto Museum of History will hold its 2015 Membership Luncheon on February 7, 2015, at the historic Lancaster Hotel in Houston. In 1926 Italian immigrant Michele DeGeorge built the



Photo courtesy The Lancaster Hotel.

Auditorium Hotel on property at the corner of Texas Ave. and Louisiana St. that he had purchased in 1901. His second hotel in the city of Houston, the Auditorium Hotel was built across the street from the 1901 City Auditorium; this location continues to be the heart of the city's theater

Fun Run Provides Expanded Options

Now in its fourth year, the San Jacinto Texas Independence Fun Run has grown to become a popular repeat event. Participant options for the March 14, 2015, Fun Run have expanded to four events: a 10K run, a 5K run, a 5K walk, and a 1K kids run.

Each of the adult races will pass by the Monument, with the longer 10K course also passing the U.S.S. *Texas*. The 10K and 5K runs will be chip timed, meaning that the exact start and finish time for each individual participant will be electronically recorded. The 10K and 5K races are on courses whose length has been certified.

Start times for the races



vary, with the 10K beginning at 7:30 a.m., and ending with the kids' 1K at 9:00 a.m. Awards will be presented to the overall male and female winners, and to the first, second, and third place winners in each 5-year age bracket. All 1K participants will receive medals. Strollers and dogs on leashes can for the first time accompany walkers in the 5K walk event.

The growth in community participation is one reason for the expansion of the race. "I am most encouraged that many of the local businesses have joined the list of not

only sponsors but as participants in the event," says Carolyn Campbell, race organizer. Many of the neighboring companies send teams to take part in the event, including presenting sponsor Office Systems of Texas.

Registration is either online at www.active.com or through the museum at 281.479.2421. Cost of the run through February is \$30 for the 10K, \$25 for the 5K run, \$20 for the 5K walk and \$20 for the 1K, with an additional \$5 through March 12 and \$10 on race day.

Other Upcoming Events

April 18, 2015 San Jacinto Day Festival and Battle Reenactment.

April 21, 2015 Commemorative Ceremony of the Battle of San Jacinto.

April 21, 2015 San Jacinto Dinner.

Letter from the President

Dear Supporter,

Can a person be born north of the Red River and still be a Texan? Apparently so... and not just because the borders of the land called "Texas" have varied over time. Not only has the Red River changed its course many times over the centuries, causing the border to fluctuate, but the Spanish conquistadores who traveled to the northern frontiers of New Spain as far as Kansas, claimed all they saw for the Spanish Crown. When the nation of Mexico was established through revolution, it claimed those northern lands as part of the province of Tejas.

But being a Texan depends on more than a place of birth or an attitude; and Texas has a compelling story that can inspire and entrance those born elsewhere. Like the men who fought in the Battle of San Jacinto - only 23 of the 935 are known to be native Texans - many who were born in other states or even nations have made a big impact on the history and prosperity of the state. And many who "got to Texas as soon as I could" make an impact today on the future of this museum. Although many of our corporate supporters originated in Texas, others, like the Dow Chemical Company which we honored at our November Special Evening With Texas History, and others of our neighbors along the Houston Ship Channel whose names you can read in this and other issues of the *San Jacinto News*, are from other states or even nations. We are thankful for their support as they give to the community that they have joined.

Bob Hixon is one of the individuals who though born elsewhere has had an impact in Texas; Bob was born in "northern Texas," the so-called state of Oklahoma. As chairman of the Board of Trustees, Bob has guided the San Jacinto Museum of History Association toward its most important endeavor since its opening of the San Jacinto Monument on April 20, 1939.

During his chairmanship, our board worked on developing a strategic plan for the future with the goal of building a new San Jacinto Museum annex and visitors center.

The beginning steps toward this goal have already been taken: the purchase of 13 acres of land adjacent to the battlefield; testing the soil and water for contaminants; a partial archeological study; contracting with a project manager to provide a framework and time table for feasibility analysis and strategic planning; and engagement of consultants to support the strategic planning effort.

Even though Bob's chairmanship expires at the next convening of the board, he has pledged his continuing support of and leadership for this significant and inherently Texan project. I hope we can also depend on your continuing support, native Texan or not, as the museum works toward expanding the ways in which we share the history of Texas and of San Jacinto, a history that has played so significant a role in shaping the world map.



Larry Spasic
President, San Jacinto Museum of History

Today's Heroes of San Jacinto New and Renewing Members

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Thank you to the city of La Porte which has provided funding for archeology on the 13 acre site. Left to right: Chuck Engelken, Councilmember District 2, Larry Spasic, Mayor Louis Rigby, and Dottie Kominski, Councilmember At-Large-B.



HOTEL continued from page 1 district. Miki Lusk Norton, a museum supporter and Houston historian, will speak about the history of the hotel and her ancestors who built it. A tour of the newly renovated hotel will also be provided.

The annual lunch for members is a free benefit for members at the Museum Circle, Monument Society, Sam Houston Society, and San Jacinto Society levels. Members at other levels may attend at a cost of \$50.00 per person, and non-member guests may attend, for \$60.00. For reservations, please return the form below, or contact the San Jacinto Museum at 281-479-2421 or ccampbell@sanjacinto-museum.org. The event will run from 11:30 a.m. to approximately 2:00 p.m., at 701 Texas Avenue, Houston, Texas.

Above: *Houston Skyline 1928*, by Cecil Thomson; with the Auditorium Hotel rising above the horizon on the left side of the photograph. SJMH collection.



Above: *Houston, Texas, City Auditorium, Sept. 1946* by Cecil Thomson; SJMH collection. Left: The Lancaster Hotel today. Courtesy The Lancaster Hotel.

Reservation Form

San Jacinto Museum of History Membership Luncheon, February 7, 2015

The Lancaster Hotel, 701 Texas Ave., Houston, Texas

11:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

I will attend the Membership Luncheon

| | | | |
|------------------|-------|--|----------------------------|
| Number attending | _____ | Museum Circle, Monument Society, Sam Houston Society, or San Jacinto Society | <u>Free Member Benefit</u> |
| Number attending | _____ | Museum member \$50.00 per person | \$ _____ |
| Number attending | _____ | Non-member \$60.00 per person | \$ _____ |
| | | Total | \$ _____ |

Name: _____

Names of additional attendees: _____

____ My check is enclosed for \$ _____ Charge my credit card \$ _____ (Visa, MasterCard, AmEx, Discover)

Credit Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____ Security Code _____

R.S.V.P. by February 2, 2015. To make your reservation by phone, call 281.479.2421.
Mail to: San Jacinto Museum of History, One Monument Circle, La Porte, Texas 77571-9585

Early Cultural Material Included in Museum Collections

The scope and breadth of the collections housed at San Jacinto Museum is often surprising even to those who are familiar with the museum. A new exhibit case that will be installed in January will house some of the oldest artifacts in our collections: fantastic examples of pottery from native regional cultures that date from as early as 200 BCE that will include examples of works executed by Mayan, Aztec and Mezcalan craftspeople. This type of pottery is frequently called by the collective term “pre-Columbian”, indicating that it was made by the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean, North, Central, and South Americas prior to the period marked by Christopher Columbus' arrival in the Americas. Many Pre-Columbian cultures did not have writing systems, so their visual art expressed the cosmologies, world views, religion, and philosophy of these cultures, as well as serving as mnemonic devices.

Some of the more decorative works in our display will include items made by those from the Casas Grandes culture

that thrived from the 13th to 15th centuries A.D. in the northwestern region of Mexico, approximately in the current location of the state of Chihuahua. For hundreds of years before the arrival of the Spanish in northern Mexico, the largest settlement of the Casas Grandes people was Paquimé, located about 150 miles southwest of El Paso. Paquimé was a great trade center, whose influence is seen in cultures in the American Southwest to Mesoamerica in central and southern Mexico. Trade was by far one of the most prominent aspects of life in the Casas Grandes culture. Goods, including turquoise, obsidian, shells, and animals were a part of this trade.

The people of Casas Grandes created several different types of unique pottery, including effigy pots (in the shape of humans or animals), polychrome pottery (with patterns in different colors), and many other forms that had both practical and ceremonial uses. Along with those items previously mentioned, archaeological finds throughout Mexico and the American Southwest show that this pottery was traded with many different cultures and was valued for its beauty and function. Come learn more about pottery from Casas Grandes and some of the earliest artifacts from our collections in the new year.



This olla, or pot with holes near the rim for hanging, was made by the people of Casas Grandes, pre-16th century



Archeologists working on the survey of the land purchased for future museum expansion.

Thank You to Recent Donors

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Special Evening Delightful



Special Evening Sponsors

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The San Jacinto Museum of History is grateful to all of the sponsors and guests who helped make the November 6, 2014, Special Evening with Texas History such a congenial and successful evening. The San Jacinto College Central Chorale, led by Dr. Paul Busselberg, sang a delightful selection of patriotic music, following which the museum honored Dow Chemical Company for their support. “It is particularly appropriate that we should thank Dow here in this theater, which has had that company’s support for many years,” says Larry Spasic, president of the Museum. The surround sound speakers and new acoustic panels installed in the theater this fall were funded in part by Dow.



Above: left to right: Larry Spasic with representatives from the Dow Chemical Company Monty Heins, Harry Engelhardt, Tracie Copeland, Tom Lewis, Cindy Balsam, Denise DeLaune, and Ryan McGill. Left: Larry Spasic presents the San Jacinto Star Award to Monty Heins.

PECK continued from page 6 Lipantitlán that took place on the Nueces River. Peck also participated in the early parts of the Siege of Bexar: “the Town is walld in & the houses are build of stone and it is well fortified with 16 cannon & eight hundred men = we have from 5 to 600 men stacioned around the town with 5 small Cannon 4 & 6 pounders. With this force we keep them from showing their heads out side of the walls. We are now wateing for two long Cannon one an 18 the other a 12 - which will be on soon. I think we shall have posesion of the town in 24 hours after the arrival of the cannon we can soon throw the wall down about there ears

and when that is done they will not trouble us more.” The letter concludes with his concern for his family’s health and welfare.

A year after San Jacinto, Peck brought some of his family to Texas. Nicholas Peck Jr. died in 1838, leaving two sons to become respected businessmen in Gonzales.

The Nicholas Peck letter was purchased by the museum in 1942. It has recently been scanned, and can be seen online at http://www.sanjacinto-museum.org/Library/Veteran_Bios/Bio_page/?id=657&army=Texian.

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Museum of History
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CONTACT INFORMATION:
San Jacinto Museum
of History Association
One Monument Circle
La Porte (Houston), TX 77571-9585

Phone: 281/479-2421
Fax: 281/479-2428
E-mail: sjm@sanjacinto-museum.org
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The San Jacinto Museum of History
Association was chartered in 1938 to preserve
and revisualize the early history of Texas.

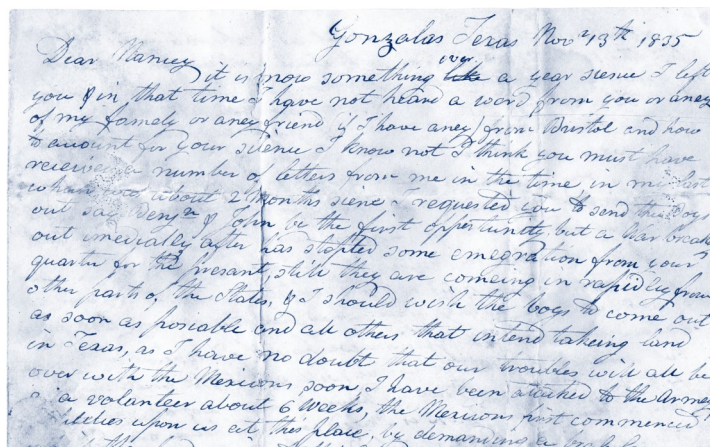
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San Jacinto Veteran Wrote of Gonzales, Bexar

One of the more interesting letters in the museum's manuscript collections is a letter written by Nicholas Peck to his wife Nancey in November and early December 1835. Nicholas Peck Jr. was born in 1789 in Bristol, Rhode Island, the son of merchant Nicholas

Peck and his wife Elizabeth Smith. Nicholas Peck Sr. was a prominent shipping merchant, a native of Bristol when the town was still part of Massachusetts. Peck Sr. traded between Europe, the Caribbean, New Orleans, and New England, shipping cargos of lumber, produce, tobacco, cotton, and slaves; he owned ships outright, sometimes serving as captain, but also partnering in joint shipping ventures. During the late 18th and early 19th centuries the value of cargos was usually greater than the cost of the ships that carried them, and Peck Sr. was known for shipping in less-than-seaworthy vessels.

The younger Peck worked with his father,



marrying Ann Bradford, known as Nancey, with whom he had several children. In 1831 or 1832 he left his family in Rhode Island, moved to Texas, and settled in Gonzales, where he purchased several town lots. His letter describes his concern for the cotton he had left in the fields, showing that he was farming in 1835. Nicholas joined the Texas Army in October of 1835, and participated in several battles, including the Battle of San Jacinto under Captain Moseley Baker. His letter was written over a period of several weeks, and describes the Battle of Gonzales, in which he participated, and a skirmish at "New Eses" now known as the Battle of

Continued on page 5, see PECK



**San Jacinto Museum of History
Association**
One Monument Circle
La Porte, TX 77571-9585

Return Service Requested

