

San Jacinto News

JULY 2017

Elevator Closed During High Attendance Days

Spring tends to bring the largest number of visitors to the museum, particularly on San Jacinto Day, Easter, and the festival and reenactment day, with a larger number of school groups visiting once the students have completed standardized testing. Unfortunately this year, the elevator was closed for just over six weeks in April and May, leaving disappointed guests unable to visit the Observation Floor while a part for the elevator was made and installed. If you or your friends were unable to ride the elevator this past spring, please plan to visit again now that the elevator has reopened.

WWI Exhibit Online

2017 marks the 100th anniversary of the U.S. entrance into World War I. A coded telegram from German Foreign Secretary Arthur Zimmermann to the German ambassador to Mexico was intercepted, promising Mexico that if she would join the Central Powers, Germany

Spanish-American War Artifacts in Lobby



Campaign pin of Private Gustav E. Edlund, who was killed in the Philippines.

One of America's most forgotten conflicts began with her third formal proclamation of war on April 25, 1898, which was declared against Spain. After the USS *Maine*, an American warship sent to Cuba to protect American citizens from Spain's violent attempts to end a revolt in their island colony, mysteriously exploded and sank in Havana Harbor,

newspapers quickly pinned the blame on Spanish authorities, and fueled anti-Spanish propaganda. American public opinion, and the opinion of Congress, quickly swung in support of war, and despite President William McKinley's reservations, an American blockade was established on Cuba.

The Spanish-American War

resulted in an American victory and an expansion of her territory. In the Treaty of Paris, Spain relinquished sovereignty over Cuba, and ceded the Philippine Islands, Puerto Rico, and Guam to the United States for \$20 million. The Spanish-American War helped redefine America's national identity through the participation of southerners and northerners, as well as blacks and whites, fighting on the same side. This summer, the museum lobby plays host to an exhibit of items, including uniforms, weapons, photos and commemorative items from our collections that were used by those Americans who answered the call and served during this brief four month conflict.



Texans George D. Sears, L. R. Bryan, and John A. Hulin stand in the front row beside M. Rediear on the steps of Chateau de Tanley in December 1918.

would assist Mexico to regain her lost territories in Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico by conquest. The threats contained in the Zimmermann Telegram led to the U.S. declaration of war on Germany on April 6, 1917.

Wars can leave aftermaths that resonate with current events today. This war was

See WWI on page 3

Letter from the President

Dear Museum Members,

Individuals and organizations occasionally experience unforeseen events and circumstances. At those times, the character of a person or institution is revealed, not by the unexpected occurrence, but by how they react to it. At San Jacinto, when a challenge presents itself, we see it as an opportunity not only to meet the challenge, but to learn from it and work hard to achieve a positive result.

On April 12th, during the height of our busy season, the elevator in the San Jacinto Memorial Monument ceased operating. Fixing the problem required a new part that had to be custom fabricated. The elevator did not resume operation until May 26th.

Beyond the disappointment experienced by our visitors who were unable to go up to see the best view in Texas from our observation floor, there was also the loss of revenues to the museum of over \$75,000. Our museum has never charged an admission fee to enter one of the most iconic buildings ever constructed, or to experience centuries of history through our survey of Texas history exhibit. Instead, we rely upon the revenue generated from the reasonably priced venues inside the museum for income, including the elevator ride to the Observation Floor at the top of the Monument.

Texans have a long history of overcoming challenges. Remember Sam Houston's response to hearing of the fall of the Alamo, and over a century later the electric words coming from space "Houston we have a problem!" We acknowledged and successfully overcame those challenges; we can overcome current challenges as well!

I want to thank those of you who have responded to the membership renewal letter we sent out in May, that shared the news of the elevator closure and subsequent financial loss, particularly those who have increased their membership level or who gave an additional gift. If you have not renewed yet, or if you would consider giving a gift membership to a friend or family member, we would essentially restore or even surpass the monies lost due to this unfortunate circumstance — funds that allow us to care for the treasures entrusted to our care, to provide educational and entertaining programming such as the annual festival and reenactment, and to present new exhibits, like the two listed on page 1 of this newsletter.

Remember, turning an unprecedented circumstance into an unprecedented benefit is the Texan thing to do. Together, as Texans, we can do anything!

In advance, THANK YOU!



Larry Spasic
President, San Jacinto Museum of History

If you would like to help the museum overcome the loss of income, please send donations to One Monument Circle, La Porte, Texas 77571-9585, call with credit card data to the museum at 281.479.2421, or make a donation through Paypal at http://www.sanjacinto-museum.org/Support_Us/Donate/. Use your Kroger card with Community Rewards number 18314.

Save the Date: Special Evening With Texas History, Thursday, November 2, 2017.

Today's Heroes of San Jacinto

New and Renewing Members

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Mrs. Kenneth E. Bentsen
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April Events



San Jacinto Day Festival and Battle Reenactment Sponsors

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 San Jacinto Day Foundation
 Green Mountain Energy
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 San Jacinto Museum of History

Continued from WWI on page 1 the first in which women officially served as members of the U.S. armed forces. Of the 198,450 Texans who served during the course of the war, at least 5,170 Texans died, including seven women from the U.S. Army and Navy Nurse Corps. World War I also saw the start of Victory Loans and the beginning of the U.S. national debt. Investigate how the conflict impacted Texans through the lens of the San Jacinto Museum of History's collections at <https://sanjacinto-museum.smugmug.com/OnlineExhibits/Texans-in-WWI/>.

Thank You to Recent Donors

The Gordon A. Crain Foundation
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The San Jacinto Museum of History
Association was chartered in 1938 to preserve
and revitalize the early history of Texas.

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New Acquisitions

Two new additions were made to the textile collections at San Jacinto in the second quarter of 2017. A pair of hand-crocheted cotton coverlets made by Irene Harbuck Gawley for her granddaughter, Sue Ledbetter Bell, in 1940 represent superlative examples of the craft. Irene and her husband Julian lived in Anderson, Grimes County, Texas and had four daughters. One of the daughters, Hazel Gawley Ledbetter, Sue Bell's mother, had an interest in architecture, restoration and the decorative arts and would collaborate with her friend Ima Hogg on some of the early preservation efforts in Round Top, Texas.



The coverlets made by the matriarch of this Texas family join a collection that includes a wide variety of bedding textiles as well as examples of crochet done by Texans in the 19th and early 20th century.

Thanks to Doug and Becky Forsythe, the Albert and Ethel Herzstein Library now has Mrs.

P. J. Brown's papers. Billie Brown's genealogical research focused on the families of the Texans and immigrants who fought at the Battle of San Jacinto. Besides published genealogy books, the collection contains photos, copies of source documents, and her genealogy notes. The collection is particularly rich in information on the Kuykendall and Burleson families. Once the collection has been processed, described, and a finding aid written, it will be available for researchers in the Herzstein Library.



Burleson family information and a list of San Jacinto soldiers from the Billie Brown Collection.



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

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