

San Jacinto News

APRIL 2016

Rare Flintlock Musket Exhibited

In 1841, the Republic of Texas sent an expedition of traders to Santa Fe, New Mexico, accompanied by a volunteer escort guard who were issued a couple hundred Tryon flintlock muzzle-loading muskets. When they reached Santa Fe, the travelers were met by armed resistance ordered by New Mexico's governor. The Texians were imprisoned and many of the muskets were destroyed, leading to a heated diplomatic controversy between Mexico and Texas.

Today, one of the very small number of remaining Tryon muskets is on view at the museum thanks to a long-term loan offered by native Texan Tom O'Neal. The scarcity of these finely made firearms—less than ten are known to exist—is part of what makes its display at San Jacinto truly remarkable.



April Events Celebrate Texas's History

April brings a series of exciting traditional events to San Jacinto. The first of these for 2016 is the annual San Jacinto Dinner, which will be held at the Houston Country Club on April 19th. The guest speaker will be James P. Bevill; honorees for the event are Bobbie and John Nau, well known for their love of Texas history. For tickets, contact Mequet Werlin at 713-703-9993, or at sanjacevents@gmail.com.

On the actual anniversary of the Battle of San Jacinto, the official state ceremony honoring those who participated in the battle will take place at 11:00 a.m. on the steps of the San Jacinto Monument. Nina Hendee, a former member of the San Jacinto Historical Advisory Board, the body appointed by



Nina Hendee on San Jacinto Day, 2003. Photo courtesy Jackie Welch.

the governor to oversee the battleground, and a lover of Texas history, will be the principal speaker. She serves on the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo's Speakers Committee, and shares tales of Texas ancestors with about 13,000 Houston-area students each year when they visit her

Daughters of the Republic of Texas will be on hand to present scholarships to winners of their essay contests, and the Texas Army will salute the men who were on the battlefield 180 years ago.

A highlight of April's events for many Texans is the San Jacinto Day Festival and Battle Reenactment. The event runs from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., with family-friendly fun including entertainment on three stages, vendors and craft demonstrators, visits to the reenactors' camps, and the

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Taste
of
Texas

restaurant.

At the April 21 event, the Sons of the Republic of Texas and the



Above: April may bring showers, but the festival still goes on. Phydeaux's Flying Flea Circus and Wahoo Medicine Show entertained kids of all ages in 2015, which was noted by the State Climatologist as the wettest year in Texas's history since records began to be kept in 1895.

Left: cannon salute at the San Jacinto Day Commemorative Ceremony.

5th Annual Fun Run/Walk

Beautiful weather on Saturday, March 5, 2016, led to an increase in participation in the 5th annual San Jacinto Texas Independence Fun Run/Walk, with registration up to 450, several registering



Intersection of the 10K run and 5K walk routes.

on the day of the event. With a new team event added to the 10K run, 5K run, 5K walk, and 1K kids' run, there were opportunities for participation for all. Registered participants ranged in age from 2 to 82 years, with a few

babies in strollers riding along for the walk, and there were several families with three generations taking part. The three routes were laid out so as not to conflict or be confusing. This event was successful not just due to the athletes and the weather, but also to volunteers from the Sam Rayburn

High School ROTC, and to the sponsors and donors.



Above: 10K Top Finishers Samuel Sanderson and Krista Garrett.

Below: 5K Run Top Finishers Ann Wacker and Leroy Valladares.



Right: The first runner to finish the 1K Kids' event.

Below: sponsor Office Systems of Texas's George Peckham crosses the line.



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reenactment itself. Thanks to Presenting Sponsor H-E-B and major sponsors City of Deer Park, City of La Porte and Dow Chemical Company, the event remains admission-free for the festival's 12,000-plus visitors.

For a list of performers, an entertainment schedule, and parking information, visit http://www.sanjacinto-museum.org/About_Us/News_and_Events/Upcoming_Events/2016_Festival_Reenactment/.

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War Begins

Following Texas's joining the United States as her 28th state at the close of 1845, President Polk sent an envoy, former Louisiana congressman John Slidell, to Mexico to try to resolve disputes over the Texas boundary and over damages that the Mexican government owed to the United States. Polk instructed Slidell to negotiate to acquire "Upper California and New Mexico" and would spend as much as \$40 million to purchase the land. After Mexico refused the offer, the tensions between the two nations rose in 1846 over the border issue: Texas claimed the Rio Grande as its southern border, while Mexico claimed the Nueces River farther to the north as the border. As the situation worsened, both sides sent troops to the area.

On the evening of April 25, 1846, while leading seventy U.S. dragoons to investigate an incident in the territory between the rivers, Captain Seth Thornton came upon a force of 2,000 Mexican soldiers. A fierce firefight ensued and sixteen of Thornton's men were killed before the remainder were forced to surrender. On May 11, 1846, Polk, citing the Thornton Affair, asked Congress to declare war on Mexico. After two days of debate Congress voted for war, not knowing that the conflict had already escalated. Visit the exhibit *A Destined Conflict: the U.S.-Mexican War* at the San Jacinto Museum of History to learn more about this pivotal moment in the western hemisphere, and inspect documents and artifacts that hint at the political, economic and social issues that brought about this important but often neglected dispute.



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Dr. Paul N. Spellman spoke to about 50 museum members at the annual member lunch on February 6.

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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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From This Day Forward

With this Ring I thee wed, with my body I
thee worship, and with all my worldly
goods I thee endow...

Halfway through the ceremony for the
“Solemnization of Matrimony” found in the 1789
U.S. *Book of Common Prayer*, the groom swears the
above statement to his bride in front of a
celebrant, and oftentimes, their family and friends.
The words may have evolved since then, but both
the accumulation and outlay of money, goods and
property have been an integral part of the rituals,
ceremonies and legalities surrounding marriage for
centuries. Presents given before marriage, items
purchased for the ceremony itself and the gifts
offered to the newlywed couple often become
some of the most cherished items that a family
will own. Many of these precious items that have
made their way into the collections of the San

Jacinto Museum
and are currently
on display in the
lobby in an exhibit
titled *From this Day
Forward*. Featuring
the green silk
dress worn by
Ernestine
Friedericke
Stahrenberg at her
wedding to
George Christian
Giesecke in 1817



and a silver set given to a descendant of San
Jacinto veteran Sidney Sherman upon the occasion
of her wedding, this show is definitely one not to
miss.

1864 Letters Donated to Archives

The library has been given four letters,
dated from May to November, 1864,
written by Emory Clapp from the towns
of Houston, Navasota, and Alleyton, Texas.
Emory Clapp was the director of the Louisiana
Cotton Bureau, which traded cotton for supplies
needed for the Confederate war effort. The letters
are written to Louisiana governor Henry W. Allen,

and give information about the availability of
goods in Texas during 1864. Allen fought in the
army of the Republic of Texas, was later a
Confederate general, and then Louisiana governor;
he died in Mexico in 1866. He was credited with
setting up trade routes through Texas to Mexico
during the Civil War. The donor is respected
Louisiana genealogist Winston De Ville.



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