**Annual Member Lunch Welcomes Dr. Spellman**

One of the most appreciated member benefits offered by the San Jacinto Museum of History is the annual lunch for members. This year the event will take place on Saturday, February 6, at Willie G’s Seafood and Steaks, from 11:30 to 2:00. The presentation by a historian is always a highlight, and this year will be no exception, when Dr. Paul N. Spellman will talk about the early settlers of Texas and his book, *Old 300: Gone to Texas*. Dr. Spellman teaches at Wharton County Junior College, is the author of eight books on Texas history, and was inducted into the Western Writers of America in 2009. Free valet parking is available, and reservations are required. See “ONLINE” on page 2.

**Reservation Form on page 3.**

**Team and Individual Events for Fun Run**

Experience the gentle rise and fall of the San Jacinto Battleground on foot as many of the soldiers did, in the San Jacinto Texas Independence Fun Run/Walk on Saturday, March 5, 2016. This annual event brings participants of all ages to compete in timed 10K and 5K runs, and in the untimed 5K walk and 1K kids run; many athletes have enjoyed the event so much that they return each year.

New for 2016 is the team event, with options for all-male, all-female, and mixed teams; early registration shows that this will be a popular option. “We have tried to add different ways for people to have fun supporting the museum through this walk/run,” said Carolyn Campbell, race organizer. “I hope each of the participants will go inside the museum to learn something new about Texas history, made possible through their support.”

Corporate supporters include Office Systems of Texas, Kirby, First Choice Emergency Room, and Vopak. To register, visit www.active.com, or call 281.479.2421.

**Online Exhibits Show Hidden Collections**

Many times, researchers at the museum’s Herzstein Library are surprised to learn about the depth and scope of San Jacinto’s paper collections. While one can learn about the content of these collections via the library’s online catalog and finding aids, the display of these items in the galleries is difficult. Documents, manuscripts, and works of art on paper such as prints, drawings, photographs and watercolors are inherently fragile and the damage caused to these delicate artifacts by exposure to light is cumulative and irreversible. In order to make more of the collections available to the public without doing permanent harm, museum staff have begun a series of online exhibits featuring high-resolution scans of artifacts from the library and archives.

Currently, four online exhibits, including two on the opening of the museum, one on Valentine’s Day featuring some truly fantastic holiday cards and the most recent, *Trains to Texas: Images of Railroad Expansion in the Lone Star State* are available. So much
The story of Andrew Briscoe’s and Sidney Sherman’s involvement in building railroads in Texas is told in the museum’s online exhibit *Trains to Texas*. But what of other San Jacinto veterans; were any involved in the industry?

Moseley Baker was a director of the Houston and Brazos Railroad, chartered in 1839, and Alexander Ewing was one of its supporters. Although ground broke in 1840, no real progress was made and the company failed. In 1850 Samuel Damon had the contract to provide all of the cedar ties for the first rail line between Wharton and Houston; he also invested in the railroad. Construction had reached Columbia by 1861, but Damon lost his investment when the line failed during the Civil War. Leander Cunningham served for a short time as agent for the Columbus Tap Railway. Isaac Lafayette Hill promoted and invested in the Central Railway, and Richard Peebles was a stockholder and later director of the Houston and Texas Central. He and his wife donated land for the right-of-way, which later became the town of Hempstead, named for Peebles’ brother-in-law.

Perhaps the most unusual connection is that of Moseley Baker and the Houston, East and West Texas Railway; railroad financier Paul Bremond was a spiritualist who believed he was guided by Baker’s spirit to build the narrow-gauge railway, which successfully connected Houston and Shreveport in 1886.

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**Board Honors Outgoing Member**

In December, the Board of Trustees of the San Jacinto Museum of History honored Sadie Gwin Blackburn, at the time of her stepping down as a member of the board. Mrs. Blackburn first joined the board in 1972, and served as its president from 1975 to 1977. Her work on behalf of the San Jacinto Museum of History provided countless long-term benefits to the Museum, particularly in the development of a master plan for the site and in the museum’s relationship with Texas Parks & Wildlife, for whom she worked from 1994 to 1996. Museum president Larry Spasic and current board Chair Chad Muir presented Mrs. Blackburn with a resolution expressing the museum’s deep appreciation for her outstanding service.

**San Jacinto Veterans and Railroads**

The story of Andrew Briscoe’s and Sidney Sherman’s involvement in building railroads in Texas is told in the museum’s online exhibit *Trains to Texas*. But what of other San Jacinto veterans; were any involved in the industry?

Interesting material was found on the history of trains in Texas that a second exhibit on the topic is in the works and should be up in February. Make sure to access https://sanjacinto-museum.smugmug.com/OnlineExhibits to see some truly marvelous items from our collection and learn more about the history behind them.

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**Today’s Heroes of San Jacinto New and Renewing Members**

- **Sam Houston Society**
  - The Lubrizol Foundation

- **Monument Society**
  - Mr. Edward H. Andrews, III
  - Mr. and Mrs. John B. Brent
  - Mr. George Hixon
  - Ms. Lois P. Luallin

- **Museum Circle**
  - The Honorable Frank W. Calhoun
  - Mr. and Mrs. Gid Hixon
  - Mr. and Mrs. J. Philip McCormick

- **Independence Society**
  - Mr. and Mrs. Bo Bothe
  - Mr. and Mrs. George A. Peterkin, Jr.
  - Mr. James Reeder, Jr.
  - Mr. and Mrs. Mack Stringfield

- **Family Freedom Society**
  - Mr. and Mrs. Richard Blades
  - Mr. and Mrs. William Conner
  - Mr. and Mrs. L. Clay Fisher
  - Dr. and Mrs. Michael Kelley
  - Mr. Gerard Kendall
  - Mr. Howard W. Kiatta
  - Ms. Susanna Kartye
  - Mr. John T. Malone
  - Mr. Tom F. Marsh
  - Mr. Kurt F. Metyko
  - Ms. Diane Simpson

Continued from “ONLINE” on page 1.
The 2015 Special Evening with Texas History was an enjoyable event for all who attended. Honoree Craig Biggio was presented with the San Jacinto Star Award. The former Astro and Baseball Hall of Fame member spoke movingly about his love for Texas history.

Financially, the evening supported the museum, with silent auction proceeds going to Biggio’s Sunshine Kids Foundation. The table decorations sported a baseball theme, and a display of baseball memorabilia was presented for this night only.

**Reservation Form**

San Jacinto Museum of History Membership Luncheon, February 6, 2016
Willie G’s Seafood and Steaks, 1605 Post Oak Blvd, Houston, Texas 77056
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

Number attending _____ Museum member $50.00 per person

Number attending _____ Non-member $60.00 per person

Name:_______________________________________________________

Total $_______________

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 1, 2016. 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
Presidential Ambitions

Under James Knox Polk, the United States grew by more than a million square miles. More than any other President, Polk pursued “Manifest Destiny,” a phrase coined by his fellow Jacksonian Democrat, John L. O’Sullivan, to express the conviction that Providence had foreordained the United States to spread republican institutions across North America. He accomplished every major goal that he set for himself in one term as President and in the process successfully waged war against Mexico in a sixteen-month campaign that had U.S. forces driving deep into the country, capturing Mexico City in September 1847, and obtaining for the United States most of its present boundaries as a nation.

Polk kept his pre-election promise not to run for a second term and was succeeded in office by the hero of the U.S.-Mexican War, Zachary Taylor, candidate of the opposition Whig Party and a man whom Polk despised. Less than three months later, Polk was dead, possibly of cholera contracted on a long tour of the southern states.

Come learn how the ambitions of this man redrawed the political lines of a continent in our current special exhibit, A Destined Conflict: U.S.-Mexican War.

Upcoming Events

April 19, 2016 San Jacinto Dinner.
April 21, 2016 Commemorative Ceremony of the Battle of San Jacinto.
April 23, 2016 San Jacinto Day Festival and Battle Reenactment.