Website Expands Offerings

This summer you can explore many of the treasures of the San Jacinto Museum of History without leaving your home. With the release of the museum’s new website, you can browse over 3000 selections from the artifact collections, featuring some of the most interesting and significant items in the collections. The new Veteran Biography section, while retaining Louis W. Kemp’s research into the men who fought at San Jacinto, adds additional information learned since Kemp did his research, and collates images of the men and the artifacts that they owned. A new timeline places the Battle of San Jacinto in context.

The total redesign of the site was done by BrandExtract as a donation to the museum. “We are excited to have worked with such an able and creative group of people to expand our offerings to the public,” says Museum President Larry Spasic.

The new site has been called “staggeringly cool” by one of the early testers. With new video content by BrandExtract and Houston Arts & Media, image galleries featuring collection highlights and museum events, maps of the battlefield, and links to social media, the site provides added content that is both educational and entertaining. And you can still find the basic information you need to prepare for your visit - hours, directions, and a map. Take a look at http://www.sanjacinto-museum.org, and plan your visit this summer.

Additions to Collections

The San Jacinto Museum of History works to fulfill its mission of collecting and preserving artifacts of historical significance that will help tell the rich history of this region for the enrichment of present and future generations. To further this mission, the Museum continues to add significant works of art to its permanent collections. Although the museum does not have funds to acquire artifacts, many generous donors seeking a home for their family treasures have placed them at San Jacinto, including some recent acquisitions.

Currently on display in the lobby is a single-shot pistol that was owned by San Jacinto Veteran Robert Moore. This walnut firearm shows evidence that its firing mechanism was converted from flintlock to percussion; it was recently acquired from the descendants of the veteran. Please take the opportunity to find this veteran in the new Veteran Biography section of the museum website.

While the acquisition of artifacts related to San Jacinto veterans is always celebrated here, the museum is also grateful for the generosity of those who share items that help us tell the larger story of Texas history. One such recent acquisition includes ten 20th century radio receivers. Given by the daughter of Major William Peterson, who served in World War II, the collection includes a Bendix Radio Type TA-13C Aircraft Transmitter that is now on display in the new World War II exhibit case.

Next time you clear out the attic, please keep the museum in mind. It is due to generous donations like those mentioned above that the museum’s collections have been significantly enhanced. E-mail curator@sanjacinto-museum.org with information about potential donations and be sure to include as much information about the artifact as you can, including family history and photos, and your treasures may be accepted for preservation at San Jacinto.
Dear Friend of San Jacinto:

These are exciting times for the San Jacinto Museum of History Association. We are in the initial phase of a process that will revitalize and reinvigorate the Museum and the Park to a degree not seen since the Monument was built and opened in the late 1930s.

A land acquisition project will allow us to broaden the impact of our mission to promote the study and appreciation of the role Texas has played in U.S. and world history. By working together, we can attract new generations of visitors to our site to learn more about our state’s history and enjoy the amenities of our park. A long-term goal will include an expansion of exhibition space, an improved environment for our permanent collection of historical artifacts, additional space to promote the study and research of our region’s history, and a visitor’s center to orient our guests and convey an accurate interpretation of the significance of the park.

The Museum and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department published a master plan for the San Jacinto Battleground State Historical Park in 1998. This plan, among other items, envisioned:

1. Restoration of the Battleground to its 1836 condition of prairie, marshes and trees.
2. Construction of a new Museum / Visitors Center and parking that would not intrude on the Battleground area.
3. Provision of a facility, not in conflict with the Battleground, where interpretation could be enhanced.

In an effort to pursue these important initiatives, our Board made the decision in early 2012 to begin to seek the best alternatives for additional land.

The museum association identified possible sites for a museum annex and visitors center adjacent to the park, obtained comparable pricing, and began discussions with the various owners of those properties. We had an opportunity at a writ of execution sale in October 2012, and, at auction, acquired one property. Subsequently, we negotiated a contract to purchase an adjacent 11.5 acres.

Our present goal is to raise $700,000 to complete the land acquisition, replenish the museum’s financial resources, clear the property, perform environmental evaluations, and begin developing site plans in preparation for future construction.

Before approaching any other potential supporters, we obtained a 100% commitment for participation on this project from the museum’s Board and Advisory Board. I am pleased to report that we have received overwhelming support from the Board.

Our vision can be expanded or enhanced, but our central goal remains unchanged: to construct a San Jacinto Museum of History Association annex and visitors center. Acquiring this property will effectively let us control our destiny and properly evaluate all options to create the best facility for the benefit of the Museum and the Park. Further, with roughly 13 acres, we will gain the space needed to ensure our future expansion. This property has excellent sight lines to the Texian Camp, the monument and, at some height, the Mexican Camp. The sweeping view available from this single observation point will allow visitors to fully absorb the drama and significance of the actual battle. Today, I cannot share the precise size or scope of the future annex or any of our other amenities. But I am certain about one thing: if we do not acquire this land, we will never know.

The San Jacinto Museum of History is asking all who care about Texas and its history to help us acquire this critical piece of property. We want you to be one of thousands of supporters to make this dream of the next major enhancement for the Park and the Battleground a reality. We will of course appreciate any contribution you can make at this time to this cause.

You can make a donation to the San Jacinto Museum of History at:
San Jacinto Museum of History Annex and Visitors Center
One Monument Circle
La Porte, Texas 77571

Sincerely,

Robert B. Hixon
Chairman, Board of Trustees
San Jacinto Museum of History Association

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### San Jacinto Dinner Sponsors

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SAN JACINTO NEWS  JULY 2013
Thanks to Sponsors HEB, The Dow Chemical Company, Vopak, Pasadena Strawberry Festival, CenterPoint Energy and LyondellBasell, the day brought entertainment, education, and excitement to approximately 20,000 people.

Thank you to these recent grantors:

BNSF Railway
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Winning may not be the only thing, but as the current exhibit in the lobby can attest, it can result in the production and gift of artifacts and documents to suitably (and sometimes lavishly) mark the occasion. Crowns, cups, proclamations and medals—these are some of the items that are included in this lobby exhibit that shows how success has historically been rewarded.

The show includes awards, such as a rare silk first prize ribbon from the first Texas State Fair that was won by Galveston stationer Clark and Courts for the “Best General Display of Blank Books, Including Stationery” and a silver napkin ring given as a prize for needlework at the fair in 1870. Documents awarding rank, including the diploma of Houston Eldredge, Jr., who graduated from the U.S. States Naval Academy in 1938, are on display alongside his father’s highly ornate military commission by President Chester A. Arthur in 1884. The museum has many medals given as a reward for military service or participation as well as examples made to commemorate an event. The example on display is an 1892 bronze medal designed by noted Mexican engraver Cayetano Ocampo which was handed out by Mexican dignitaries to commemorate the fourth centenary of the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus. These artifacts, along with photos of beauty queens and prize steers, will be on display in the museum lobby until the Fall.

While you visit to check out the awards, take the opportunity to wander towards the gift shop. You will note that three cases from in the main gallery look very different than they did before. We are in the process of an 18-month reinstallation of the Permanent Exhibit Gallery and the first cases, displaying artifacts from World War I, Texas between the Wars and World War II, are up. The next new case—featuring artifacts that illustrate the impact that trains had on the 19th and early 20th century Texas landscape—will be going up in early August. So plan to come out to the museum soon because there is always something new to see!