

San Jacinto News

OCTOBER 2016

Special Evening Looks at 20th Century History

Beginning in 2005 in anticipation of lost revenue while renovations closed the San Jacinto Monument to the public in 2006 a fall fundraising dinner has been a way for the San Jacinto Museum of History to fund its educational programs, to interact personally with members of the surrounding communities, and to recognize individuals for contributions to Texas' history. This year that opportunity occurs on Thursday, November 3, 2016, beginning at 6:15.

The evening will include the opportunity to see the podium where President John F. Kennedy announced America's goal of landing a man on the moon, on loan from Rice University, and a spacesuit on loan from Space Center Houston. There will be a silent auction of items related to the San Jacinto Monument, the battleship *Texas*, and Texas history.

The honoree will be Gene

See "KRANZ" on page 3.

New Acquisitions Focus of Lobby Exhibit

A key component of the mission of the San Jacinto Museum "is to collect and preserve significant materials relating to the early history and culture of Texas, its constituent ethnic groups, and the region, and promote the study of and appreciation for the role of Texas within American and world history." To that end, San Jacinto is always looking for friends who are willing to donate their family treasures to the museum to fulfill that mission. Recently, several artifacts have been donated to the museum and to celebrate their acquisition an exhibit will be mounted in the lobby opening in mid-October that will display some of the items that have become a part of our holdings.

One item that will be on



display is a painting titled *The Capture of the Pelicano* by illustrator Fred Toler. The event depicted is the March 3, 1836, capture of the Mexican merchant schooner *Pelicano* by the Texan schooner of war *Liberty*. The painting

was to have been a part of a church fundraiser in Austin earlier this year. While trying to set a price on the painting, the organizers saw online that San Jacinto had nine paintings depicting ships of the Texas Navy by Toler. They called and eventually offered to give the museum the painting, thinking that San Jacinto would be the best home for it. San Jacinto's other Toler paintings were done to illustrate the 1948 book *Ships of the Texas Navy* while



this work appears to have been painted in the early 1970s.

On June 11, 1936, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt visited Houston on a campaign tour through Texas, arriving from Dallas and headed toward San Antonio. During his time in Houston he traveled down the Houston Ship Channel to the San Jacinto Battleground, where he was greeted by a crowd as he sat in an open car. In the crowd were members of the Schroeder family, one of whom took two pictures of FDR as he sat with his wife Eleanor, Houston mayor Oscar Holcombe,

See "GIFTS EXHIBIT" on page 3.

Letter from the President

Dear Museum Members,

November 3, 2016, will be an important date in the history of the San Jacinto Museum of History as it will mark our eleventh fall dinner, the *Special Evening with Texas History*. The program we have planned will be a wonderful addition to the tradition our museum has made of acknowledging Texas history's finest supporters and what they have contributed to our country. I assure you that I will enjoy sharing this evening with members and friends who will experience some of the best of what we are able to do at the San Jacinto Museum of History.

The San Jacinto Museum of History will honor two "honest-to-goodness" American heroes who each served our country in the United States military. Representative Wayne Smith held office for seven terms in the Texas House and served our country in the United States Army during the Vietnam War. Gene Kranz was a pilot in the United States Air Force during the Korean War and was a flight director at NASA and later served as Director of Mission Control.

We want this event to convey the significance of history in our lives and to present the traditions and character of our organization. A big aspiration? What else is Texas but that?

Since October 7, 1990, more than 2,000,000 visitors from 700 Texas cities, 2,500 communities in the other 49 states, and 69 foreign nations have experienced the international-award winning presentation *Texas Forever!! The Battle of San Jacinto*. This multi-media program interprets the dramatic events of the Texas Revolution and the Battle of San Jacinto, and clearly illustrates how these events changed the political and economic histories of Mexico, Texas, and the United State of America. This show is the single most valuable tool we have to educate students and other visitors over the past two and half decades at the San Jacinto Monument, and has made good use of the Jesse H. Jones Theatre for Texas Studies.

However, we would like to expand the use of this space in scope and

quality, by installing digital light projectors that will bring our theater up to current technological standards. Ongoing expenses of presenting *Texas Forever!!* would be reduced. Teacher in-services and local civic and corporate groups would also benefit from this renovation. The equipment would allow us to present theatrical released high definition films such as *The Alamo*, *Lincoln*, *Tuskegee Airmen*, and other films that reflect the history of the United States and Texas, as well as any PowerPoint software developed programs, with enhanced THX True Dolby Surround Sound. Historical serials like Stephen Spielberg's *Band of Brothers* and Ken Burns' *The Civil War* series could be presented in large screen format "to promote the study of and appreciation for the role of Texas within America and world history ...," an important part of our mission. Residents in the seven surrounding cities could be engaged with family film night festivals at the museum. These types of events have proven a very popular way to increase museum attendance and membership at other museums.

Funds raised at the *Special Evening with Texas History* dinner will support our educational, conservation, research and exhibit programs, including completing the theatre renovation project. Thus far, we have raised nearly \$77,000 of the \$153,000 needed to complete this effort.

We thank you for your past support and hope that you will join us at our very *Special Evening with Texas History* event. To make reservations for this special event, or to make a donation to the theater project, please call Carolyn Campbell at 281-479-2421. As always, thank you. Know that I never take your support for granted.

Larry Spasic
President, San Jacinto Museum of History

Today's Heroes of San Jacinto New and Renewing Members

Texas Forever - Lifetime Members

Ms. Joan H. Lyons
Mr. George Peckham

Sam Houston Society

Vopak

Monument Society

Mrs. Alfred C. Glassell, Jr.
Mrs. Helen K. Groves

Museum Circle

Mr. and Mrs. John B. Brent
Hon. Frank W. Calhoun
Mr. and Mrs. Tom M. Davis, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas R. Kelsey
Mr. and Mrs. Irwin L. Levy
Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Seureau

Independence Society

Mr. and Mrs. Edward R. Allen, III
Mr. Alfred Davis IV
Mr. and Mrs. Michael N. Lamb
Mr. and Mrs. John T. Malone
Mr. Justin Singer

Family Freedom Society

Mr. and Mrs. William P. Conner
Lt. Col. Peyton E. Cook, USAF (Ret.)
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Digitization Grant Received

The Albert and Ethel Herzstein Library has received a Rescuing Texas History 2016 mini-grant from UNT and the Portal to Texas History, to digitize and make available on the Portal about 900 pages of Texas newspapers from the Herzstein Library's holdings, as part of the Texas Digital Newspaper Program. These papers date from 1839 to 1923, and most titles are in single or only a few issues, with no known copies at other locations. The project will begin in October. Additional funding will be sought in the future to digitize other newspapers in the library's collections.

Save the Date

October 1-31, 2016 - Museum artifacts are part of the online exhibit for the Gulf Coast Reads simultaneous reading of *The Train to Crystal City*, by Jan Jarboe Russell. <http://www.gulfcoastreads.org>

November 3, 2016 - Special Evening With Texas History

February 18, 2017 - Membership Luncheon, Dr. Laura Lyons McLemore, Guest Speaker, McCormick and Schmick's Seafood and Steaks

March 5, 2017 - 6th Annual San Jacinto Texas Independence Fun Run; Discounted registration begins November 1

April 18, 2017 - San Jacinto Day Dinner, Houston Country Club

April 21, 2017 - Official Commemorative Ceremony of the Battle of San Jacinto

April 22, 2017 - San Jacinto Festival and Battle Reenactment

Continued from "GIFTS EXHIBIT" on page 1.

governor James Allred, and businessman Jesse H. Jones, with San Jacinto Battleground Park Superintendent Andrew Jackson Houston standing by. These photographs were donated to the museum by Deborah H. Spencer, granddaughter or niece of the photographer.

Two works of graphic non-fiction have been donated to the library. The earlier is a copy of the 1956 edition of *Texas History Movies*, given to donor Tom Williams while he was a student in a Texas school by Magnolia Petroleum Company. The second is *Tejano Exile: The True Story of Juan N. Seguin and the Texas-Mexicans After San Jacinto* by Jaxon, a nom de plume of Jack Jackson, the late Texas illustrator and historian who also created the updated version of *The New Texas History Movies* (published by TSHA, available in the museum store.) Jackson is credited with creating the first underground comic, and telling for the first time the story of Quanah Parker from Parker's point of view. This biographical work was donated by Henry Torres.

Additional donations by David B. Singleton of six issues of the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, an April 21, 1936, first day cover donated by Tom and Norman Williams, and an 1824 letter written from Paris to Paul Guerin in New Orleans, donated by Shirley Buys Talley as an addition to the library's C. J. Wolkarte Papers, have also been added to the library's collections.

Ways You Can Support San Jacinto

If you shop at Kroger stores every week, a few times a month or only every once in a while, consider linking your Kroger Plus card to the San Jacinto Museum, using ID 18314. One percent of the value of your purchase will be donated to the museum.

Make the most of your membership by purchasing gift items from the museum store. Or make the gift of a museum membership to a friend or relative, as a way to share your love of Texas and its history.

Continued from "KRANZ" on page 1.

Kranz, who was the assistant flight director for the original manned space missions, and Flight Director for Apollo 11, that landed a man on the moon. He retired as director of Mission Control at NASA.

For reservations, contact Carolyn Campbell at 281.479.2421, or ccampbell@sanjacinto-museum.org



Richard A. Zientek presents a check from the Union Pacific Foundation to Larry Spasic.

Thank You to Recent Donors

Houston Endowment, Inc.
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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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Davis at Buena Vista

Visitors to the museum's current special exhibit, *A Destined Conflict: the U.S.-Mexican War*

are often struck by the frequency with which they encounter the names of soldiers who participated in this war who would later become notable for their participation in the Civil War. One of these men is the future President of the Confederate States of America, Jefferson Davis.

Before traveling to Texas via New Orleans to join up for the war against Mexico, the 1st Mississippi Regiment elected a young Jefferson Davis, who was then serving as a congressman from Mississippi, as its colonel. A West Point graduate, when he took command, his thorough training and constant drilling shaped the Mississippians into an outstanding unit that became the recognized favorite of U. S. General Zachary Taylor. Colonel Davis had another link with Taylor: he was his former son-in-law.

Some years earlier, Davis had married Taylor's daughter, who died only a few months after the wedding. One of the highlights of the



exhibit is a watch fob owned by Davis made of carnelian and gold; on the back of the fob, the hair of his wife Sarah Knox Taylor Davis is pressed under the glass.

Colonel Davis's men, who came to be known as the Mississippi Rifles due to their skill with firearms, were in part responsible for the U. S. victory at the Battle of Buena Vista., shown in this lithograph by Bayot. On the second day of the battle, when a dangerous break in one key line occurred, Taylor ordered Davis's troops in to hold the line. The legend is that Taylor said, "steady, boys, steady for the glory of Ole Mississippi!" Colonel Davis placed his ranks into a V formation which was much praised after the battle. The Mississippi Rifles not only held fast but turned the enemy back. Visit this exhibit at San Jacinto and learn about the men whose experiences in the 1840s would prepare them for the much more difficult battles that were soon to come.



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Association**

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