San Jacinto News

Museum’s Annual San Jacinto Dinner
Well Received

Type Left Its Mark on Texas History

Can you guess what the largest—in terms of sheer number of items—collection of similar artifacts in the holdings of the San Jacinto Museum of History is? It is not bullets or spurs or even cannon balls, though we do have scores of examples of each. No, it is actually thousands of pieces of lead, copper and wood, the moveable type that was used to compose the text of dozens of old Texas newspapers.

While current newspapers and publications like the San Jacinto News are designed on computers, in the 18th and 19th century many small towns had their own newspaper and each publisher had its own set of type with which to tell the stories of the day. Letters, numbers, punctuation marks and larger image print blocks were assembled like puzzle pieces and run off of small presses to share news with the local communities. Papers like the La Grange Journal, the Colorado

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Special Evening With Texas History Scheduled

Save the date and plan to attend the Special Evening With Texas History at the San Jacinto Monument. This year, the annual event will occur on Tuesday, November 13. Honored guest Dr. Douglas Brinkley is currently a professor of history at Rice University, and is the author of several award-winning books. Copies of his latest book, Cronkite, the definitive biography of the CBS news anchor published in May 2012, will be available for him to sign for guests at the dinner.

Dinner sponsorship opportunities are available; contact Carolyn Campbell at 281-479-2421, or ccampbell@sanjacinto-museum.org for more information.
Letter from the President

There are times in the history of an organization when a full slate of events require the long range planning and hard work of an excellent staff and a supportive and active board. This has been the case since you received our April newsletter, and I would like to share with you some of these successes.

We are very thankful to those Texans and “honorary” Texans who renewed their membership or joined for the first time, making the spring membership drive the most successful to date. Without continued support from members, we would not be able to fulfill our mission or share our story with the people who visit this site.

This past April 21, the Official State of Texas Ceremony commemorating the 176th anniversary of the Battle of San Jacinto attracted a standing room only crowd to celebrate the battle, and to hear the Honorable Bill White, former Mayor of Houston, speak. Later that same day, 20,000 guests visiting the San Jacinto battleground got to see, hear, smell and experience booming cannons, cracking musket fire, thundering hooves of horses and battle cries as well equipped reenactors portrayed the events of the decisive Battle of San Jacinto. During the day, Dr. J. F. de la Teja, a museum board member, professor of history at Texas State University, and former State Historian of Texas presented a well-received lecture on a Tejano hero of San Jacinto and the opposing general, “Antonio Menchaca and Santa Anna: An Unlikely Encounter.” Entertainers, craft demonstrators, wildlife educators and vendors gave guests an opportunity to learn and experience aspects of Texas’ culture.

We are pleased to present this living, dynamic reenactment of Texas history free of charge; that would not be possible without the assistance of our Presenting Sponsor H-E-B, Vopak, Dow Chemical Company, Pasadena Strawberry Festival, and LyondellBasell. Just as important are our partners who help us coordinate this event, including Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), Deer Park ISD, Clean Harbors, San Jacinto College and La Porte EMS.

This summer TPWD staff is hosting week-long summer camps at the San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site in June and July. This wonderful educational program started small a few years ago and has grown to five sessions due to its popularity and success. The San Jacinto Museum of History participates in and supports these summer camps.

As you read elsewhere in this newsletter, the San Jacinto Dinner was a great success. This would not have been possible without the extraordinary efforts of our Dinner Committee Chairs, Nancy and David Randall, Honorary Chairs, Anne and Charles Duncan, our Dinner Committee, members of San Jacinto Museum of History Board of Trustees and its Advisory Board members, and MLG Lifestyle Management LLC.

I hope you are aware of the challenges facing our two partner organizations here at San Jacinto: TPWD and the Battleship Texas Foundation. There have been recent news reports about the critical condition of the Battleship Texas. As we find out more about what is needed to secure its future, we will share this information with our members. In the meantime, if you would like to help find a way to save this National Historic Landmark and the first memorial battleship museum, you can make a donation at www.BattleshipTexas.org, or you can send a donation in care of the San Jacinto Museum of History, at One Monument Circle, La Porte, Texas 77571; please indicate that your donation is for TPWD Battleship Texas.

It is with regret that I mention the death on June 1 of the Honorable Ken Legler, a State Representative of Texas whose district included the San Jacinto Monument and Battleship Texas. He was an avid supporter of the San Jacinto Battleground, and his support will be greatly missed, but the legacy of his love for Texas will continue.

Thank you again for supporting our efforts to celebrate Texas History at San Jacinto.

Larry Spasic, President
San Jacinto Museum of History

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In looking at some of these early publications, you would be hard pressed to determine that they came from Texas. Their focus was largely on foreign news, reprints from other papers, literary features and official notices, with little local news; the best way to tell where a publication came from (other than the byline) was by examining the advertisements. Although few communities could support a daily paper, there were many weekly, semiweekly and tri-weekly publications in towns across the region both before and after the Texas Revolution.

The current exhibit, Making a Mark, Leaving a Legacy, shows examples of some of the type that was used by the region’s early publications and shares the story of one 20th century printer, John Marvin Hunter, who worked for newspapers in West Texas, New Mexico and Arizona before settling in Bandera, where he published the Bandera New Era from 1921 to 1935 and the Bandera Bulletin from 1945 until 1957. It also showcases the work of his son, the artist John Warren Hunter, whose painting of Sam Houston’s slave, Jeff Hamilton, is also displayed in the show. This summer, come learn how this type and the men who used it left their mark on Texas history.

San Jacinto Veteran: James Madden

James S. Madden was born in Laurens County, South Carolina, in 1804. He may have come to Texas with the Parker wagon train in 1832, or may have arrived separately with his father and several siblings. He settled his wife and family on San Pedro Creek in Houston County in 1835. During the Texas Revolution, Madden served as a private in Hayden Arnold’s company of Nacogdoches Volunteers, joining that company en route to Houston’s army, with seven other members of William T. Sadler’s company of rangers. Hayden Arnold certified on April 10, 1838, that James Madden was a member of his company, and was on duty with the baggage at Harrisburg on April 21, 1836. Although Madden did not receive any land for his service at San Jacinto, records show that his attempt was disqualified on the technicality that Arnold’s certification was not made under oath; the lack of a land grant may be why his name was omitted from the list of Harrisburg veterans in 1936. When Houston County was formed in September of 1837, Madden was elected the first sheriff; he held that position until the end of 1838.

The Indian raids following the Cordova Rebellion of 1838 had a tragic effect on the Madden family. On October 18, 1838, two of the Maddens’ three sons were killed, and wife Lucinda Edens Madden was severely wounded in what is known as the Edens-Madden Massacre. Madden and the three other men present were blamed for not better protecting the women and children who lost their lives in this raid. Madden died in 1843 or 44, survived by his wife and one child.

Joseph Adams gives a check from the Union Pacific Railroad Foundation to museum curator Elizabeth Appleby and executive assistant Carolyn Campbell.
Exhibits Employ Diversity of Collections

Two new exhibits will open late this summer that feature the diversity of the museum’s collections. The first is a new lobby exhibit that will include early 20th century illustrations from children’s books that bring to life many of the legends of the old west. Children's literature had its beginnings in the early 17th century, with books that taught rather than amused; it was not until the mid-18th century that books intended specifically for children were produced. By 1900, there was an established market for children's books and a need for illustrators of these books. The illustrations in this exhibit, created by offset lithography that allowed for the reproduction of fine lines, come from three books from the 1950s, including William Johnson’s *Sam Houston: The Tallest Texan*. Visit us and learn how these images of Texas’ past fueled many children’s imaginations of the mythical old west.

Also in late July, our second small exhibit will go up at the San Jacinto-themed I-10 rest stops that are located about thirty miles west of Beaumont. Appropriately, these cases will illustrate how, between 1800 and 1900, the way Americans moved around their world changed drastically.

In 1800, the only practical way to travel and trade across long distances was along natural waterways. As a result, settlement clung to the nation’s coasts and rivers. A few roads connected major cities, but travel on them was difficult and time consuming. Over the next hundred years, railroads sped along thousands of miles of track and large ships moved passengers and freight across the oceans and smaller boats plied the nation’s rivers, lakes and canals. Bicycles, carriages and wagons and, in the 20th century, cars and trucks, rolled over thousands of miles of roads. A selection of images from the museum’s collections will highlight this transport evolution in and around Houston. Whether it is learning about how we have managed to get around our city for the past 200 years or how artist’s created reality from myth with the stroke of a pen, there is something for history-loving Texians either at the museum—or on the road in the summer of 2012!

Steamboat Lizzie at the foot of Main St., Houston, with the railway crossing Buffalo Bayou, 1876.