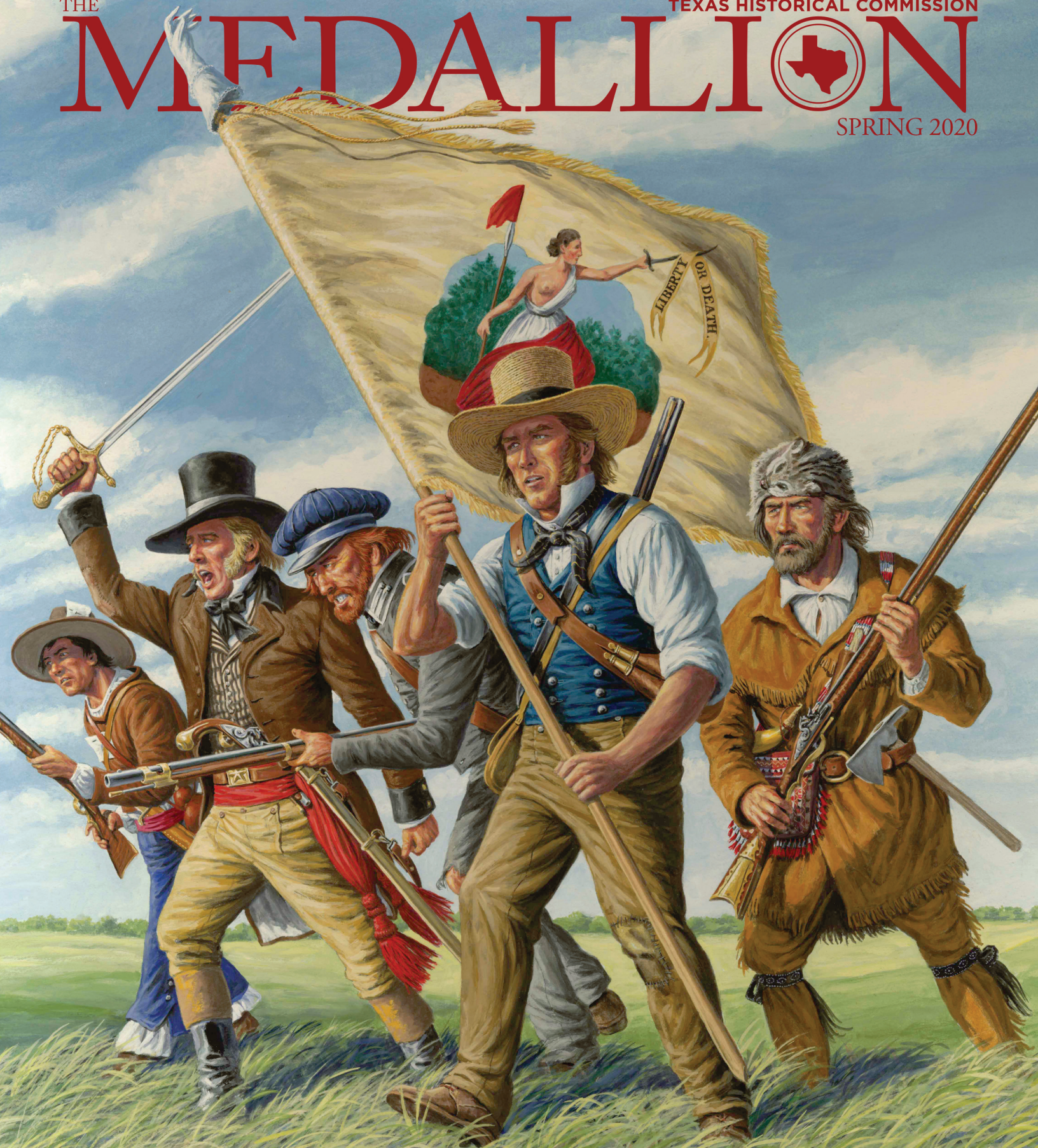


THE

MEDALLION

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

SPRING 2020



BEYOND THE ALAMO
DISCOVER THE UNDERTOLD STORIES OF THE TEXAS REVOLUTION



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To protect and preserve the state's historic and prehistoric resources for the use, education, enjoyment, and economic benefit of present and future generations.

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TOP: The Bexar County Courthouse in San Antonio is on the site of the infamous Siege of Bexar during the Texas Revolution (page 6).

ON THE COVER: "Liberty or Death" by artist Gary Zaboly. Courtesy of the General Land Office.



TEXAS REPRESENTATIVE JOHN CYRIER LEADERSHIP LETTER

Friends,

It's my pleasure to pen this message, allowing me to speak directly to thousands of Texas history lovers. House District 17, which I represent, is comprised of five counties whose settlers played vital roles in establishing Texas independence. We're intensely proud of our legacy.

My hope is that by the time you read this letter our state, country, and world are on the road to pandemic recovery. Regardless, though, I know Texans will continue to meet and defeat challenges with the same resolve as our multi-cultured ancestors.

I'm particularly proud to serve you as chair of the Texas House Committee on Culture, Recreation, and Tourism. Along with my colleagues on the committee, I've truly enjoyed learning more about and supporting the work of the Texas Historical Commission (THC).

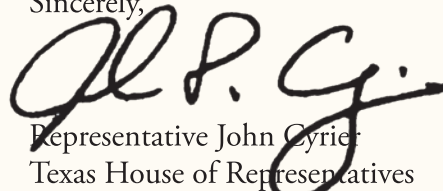
Since 2007 the Legislature's Sunset Advisory Commission, examining agency efficiency, has led the transfer of 27 state historic sites to the THC from the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD).

Last fall I was asked to chair the Sunset Commission, allowing me to work even more closely with TPWD, a group of dedicated public servants whose enduring achievements in wildlife management and outdoor recreation should be admired and treasured by all Texans.

And I was very pleased you joined me last November in voting overwhelmingly for Constitutional dedication of the Sporting Goods Sales Tax to recognize the value of these two marvelous agencies.

Please join me in celebrating Texas history in Bastrop, Caldwell, Karnes, and Lee Counties, the heart of the THC's Texas Independence Trail Region. And while you're nearby, don't miss visiting Gonzales County, where we still say, "Come and Take It!"

Sincerely,


Representative John Cyrier
Texas House of Representatives
House District 17

UNKNOWN HEROES

SOME TEXAS REVOLUTION PARTICIPANTS DESERVE TO BE IN TEXTBOOKS

By Cait Johnson, Lead Educator
San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site

Crockett, Bowie, Travis—they're all iconic standalone names that define heroism during the Texas Revolution. But what about Mann, Castrillón, and Almonte? All three participated in the story of Texas' independence but didn't make headlines or many Texas history textbooks. Each of them offered a slice of humanity that resonates to this day.

MRS. MANN AND HER OXEN

By all accounts, Pamela Dickinson Mann was feistier than the average frontierswoman. Life was difficult for Texas settlers, and many women like Mann had to take charge of their households while their husbands were absent—especially during the Runaway Scrape.

For obvious reasons, the story of the Texas Revolution focuses heavily on men, and the few women who do appear in the narrative are usually victims. However, Mann's story is a good example of the indomitable spirit of Texas frontierswomen.

Mann immigrated to Texas with her husband and two sons in 1834, settling near San Felipe de Austin. During the revolution, Mann operated an inn at Washington-on-the-Brazos but fled along with everyone else when the government evacuated. This mass evacuation of civilians, known as the Runaway Scrape, often traveled alongside Gen. Sam Houston's army as it retreated east.

On April 12, 1836, the Texian army crossed the Brazos River after spending two weeks training at Groce's Plantation. While they crossed the river, the Twin Sisters, the two six-pound cannons that were the Texas army's only artillery, were delivered.

Cannons are very heavy and difficult to move, an issue made worse by the heavy spring rains that turned the roads to mud. Mann agreed to let the Texas army use her team of oxen to pull the Twin Sisters while they headed toward Nacogdoches with the Runaway Scrape.

On April 16, near present-day New Kentucky, the group approached a fork in the road. The civilians, including Mann, took the east branch toward Nacogdoches, while the Texian army took the south branch, which led to Harrisburg and the Mexican army.

Eyewitness Robert Hancock Hunter later recorded a vivid account of what happened next. About 10 miles down the road, Mann, armed with two pistols and a knife (and in some accounts, a whip), overtook Houston and shouted, "General, you told me a damn lie. You said that you were going on the Nacogdoches Road. Sir, I want my oxen!"

Houston replied, "Well, Ms. Mann, we can't spare them. We can't get our cannon along without them."

"I don't care a damn for your cannon," Mann responded. "I want my oxen!"



Courtesy of the San Jacinto Museum of History.

She then pulled a large knife from her saddle, cut the rawhide tug connecting her oxen to the cannons, and rode away with the oxen. Capt. Conrad Rohrer, the wagon master, protested that they could not move the cannons without the oxen and rode after Mann to try and reclaim them. As he left, Houston shouted, “Captain, that woman will bite.” Rohrer responded, “Damn her biting.”

Without Mann’s oxen, the Texian army had no choice but to push the Twin Sisters by hand. Gen. Houston was the first to dismount his horse, and, along with nearly 10 men, began pushing the cannons through the mud.

Rohrer reappeared after the army made camp that night, empty-handed with a torn shirt. He announced that Mrs. Mann decided to keep her oxen.

CASTRILLÓN’S LAST STAND

There are enough accounts of Mexican army Maj. Gen. Manuel Fernández Castrillón to know that he stared down the advancing Texian army and refused to flee. Although he’s not a familiar name in the stories of the Texas Revolution, he deserves recognition for his courage and bravery. And a very dramatic death.

Castrillón was also known for opposing Gen. Santa Anna’s treatment of Texian prisoners, pleading for the lives of Texian soldiers at the Alamo, and protesting Santa Anna’s orders to execute the prisoners at Goliad. But on the fateful day of April 21, 1836, Castrillón was the Mexican artillery commander in charge of the Golden Standard cannon (El Volcan). As the Mexican defense started to crumble, and soldiers started to flee—including some of Castrillón’s cannoners—he stood his ground.

According to an account from Texian Second Lt. Walter Paye Lane, “As we charged into them, the General commanding the Tampico Battalion (their best troops) tried to rally his men, but could not. He drew himself up, faced us, and said in Spanish ‘I have been in forty battles and never showed my back; I am too old to do it now.’

Lane continued, “Gen. Rusk [Texian Secretary of War and a Battle of San Jacinto commander] hallooed to his men: ‘Don’t shoot him,’ and knocked up some to their guns; but others ran around and riddled him with balls. I was sorry for him. He was an old Castilian gentleman, Gen. Castrillón.”



Courtesy of the San Jacinto Museum of History.

Lorenzo de Zavala, Texas’ interim vice president, was an old friend of Castrillón. After the battle, De Zavala’s son had Castrillón’s body buried in his family cemetery on the other side of Buffalo Bayou. Castrillón was the only Mexican officer to receive a proper burial after the battle.

ALMONTE HOLDS FIRE

The story of the Texas Revolution can often turn into a very black-and-white story of the virtuous Texans fighting against the evil Mexicans, in part because Santa Anna often embodies many of those characteristics. Mexican Col. Juan Nepomuceno Almonte provides a refreshing example of a Mexican soldier prioritizing civilian life over military victory.

Almonte, who attended school in the U.S and spoke fluent English, was quite familiar with Texas. In 1834, the Mexican government, worried about the rebellious Anglo immigrants, sent Almonte on an inspection tour. His detailed report is one of the most comprehensive accounts of Mexican Texas.

Continued on page 14

OPPOSITE: “The Runaway Scrape” by Charles Shaw.
ABOVE: “Castrillón Awaiting Death” by Charles Shaw.



CASA NAVARRO STATE HISTORIC SITE



LITTLE CHAPEL, LA VILLITA



SAN FERNANDO CATHEDRAL



BEXAR COUNTY COURTHOUSE



SAN FERNANDO CATHEDRAL

BEXAR BATTLES

DOWNTOWN SAN ANTONIO PLAYED A ROLE IN TEXAS REVOLUTION

San Antonio's bustling urban environs belie its role in the Texas Revolution. Although it's challenging to imagine the nation's seventh-largest city as it appeared in the mid-1800s, pockets of independence-era vestiges remain scattered throughout downtown.

In fact, one of the best places to see what life was like in Alamo City back then is Casa Navarro State Historic Site. The Texas Historical Commission (THC) property is the original 1850s home of José Antonio Navarro, a leading advocate for Tejano rights and one of only two native-born Texans to sign the Texas Declaration of Independence.

Visitors get a sense of mid-19th century Texas as they walk among the site's charming whitewashed adobe structures topped by roofs with rugged wood shingles. But beyond the low-slung walls, it's a different story. A massive Brutalist-style detention facility looms over the site, while modern parking garages and institutional facilities peek behind the outstretched arms of live oak trees.

This dichotomy even causes some people to question Casa Navarro's locale.

"We've had visitors ask us when the casa was moved here," says site interpreter Lester Velazquez-Po. "People sometimes ask the same thing at the Alamo, which is about a mile away from here. They don't know that the city grew around these historic structures that have been here for hundreds of years and tell the stories of this city's past."

Velazquez-Po uses the opportunity to discuss Casa Navarro's stronghold in the area during several rounds of San Antonio urban renewal, and how much

of the surrounding history was lost "when people tried to wipe the slate clean."

Although Navarro lived here just after the Republic era, his contributions to Texas' independence are significant. His familiarity with the land as a native-born resident was advantageous, as was his bilingualism.

Site representative Ericca Espindola reports that many visitors are intrigued by the site's historical timeline display featuring an inspiring Navarro quote:

"As I fought, so shall I be willing to die. I will never forsake Texas and her cause. I am her son."

Navarro spoke these words during the Santa Fe Expedition of 1841, when his loyalty to the Republic of Texas was put to the test by a Mexican military official. Espindola occasionally fields questions from people who aren't aware of events occurring during Navarro's lifetime, such as the advent of railroads and telegraphs.

"Our site really helps put things in perspective that visitors didn't know about," she says.

Velazquez-Po adds, "Navarro said he will always be a Texan, that was his main identity. He was a proud Tejano."

MAIN PLAZA MANEUVERS
A couple blocks east of Casa Navarro is

Main Plaza, one of San Antonio's most important historical gathering places for nearly 300 years. Even today, it retains the feel of a European plaza, with alfresco cafes and bustling foot traffic in the shadows of ornate architectural works of art.

One of the most prominent buildings is the remarkable San Fernando Cathedral. The congregation was originally organized in 1731 by a group of families from the Canary Islands, and it has since been a centerpiece of San Antonio.

The current Gothic Revival structure—officially consecrated in 1873—features lofty arches, a gilded 24-foot-tall altar, and enormous stained-glass windows. People of all denominations gather at the church throughout the day to light candles, pray in the pews, or simply gaze upon the serene surroundings.

Most San Antonio visitors (and many residents) are unaware that the cathedral also played a role in the Texas Revolution. In late 1835, Mexican Gen. Martín Perfecto de Cos arrived in San Antonio and selected the Main Plaza area as a defensive fortification. Several times during the Texas Revolution, San Fernando Cathedral served secular purposes, including hosting Mexican cannons on its roof during the Siege of Bexar.

The siege started when Texian soldier Ben Milam roused troops to storm

Continued on page 14

LARGER THAN LIFE

EXPLORE THESE LESSER-KNOWN TEXAS REVOLUTION DESTINATIONS

By Bryan McAuley
Site Manager, San Felipe de Austin

Texans and visitors to our great state have long shared a fascination with the story of Texas' independence from Mexico. It's chock-full of larger-than-life historical figures, intense political and military conflicts, and amazing stories of ordinary people experiencing extraordinary things.

These iconic images share a backdrop of Texas rapidly progressing through its third national flag (the Republic of Mexico) to its fourth: the Republic of Texas. It's no coincidence that the symbolism of that flag followed Texas to its next national banner as part of the U.S. Although Texans celebrate epic battles—the tragedy and exuberance—of the Alamo, Goliad, and San Jacinto, a handful of minor battle sites remain mostly obscure.

The story of Gonzales and the Come and Take It cannon is among the most popular of independence lore. However, many visitors to Gonzales miss the handsome monument southwest of town that marks the battle site near the hamlet of Cost. This beautiful “first shot” commemorative monolith was dedicated by Gov. James Allred in 1935.



A couple of skirmish sites related to the Goliad campaign also merit attention among the lesser-known battlegrounds. One of them is the Battle of Refugio, where some of the troops with James Fannin's Goliad campaign were captured while evacuating colonists before the Mexican army's arrival. Several historical markers and sites in the town of Refugio commemorate this campaign, including King's Park—named for Texian officer Amon King—located across the street from the Refugio County Courthouse.

Surprisingly, despite its easy access from US 59, the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) Fannin Battleground State Historic Site is often neglected by visitors making their way to Presidio La Bahía for the Goliad story. The battleground marks the location where Fannin and his men fought valiantly after being caught on an open prairie and were forced to surrender during a retreat toward Victoria.

San Felipe de Austin State Historic Site, the THC's recently improved historic site with a new visitors center and multimedia exhibits, is located near the site of the Runaway Scrape skirmish known as the Battle of the Brazos. The Texian militia under Capt. Moseley Baker evacuated the citizens of San Felipe de Austin, burned the town as part of a scorched-earth campaign, and held the Brazos River crossing when Santa Anna's advance forces arrived in early April.

While all Texas historic sites pale in comparison to the Alamo, which has transcended mere historic battle site, the other Spanish missions in San Antonio played a small role in the 1835 Siege of Bexar by which Texans captured and occupied the city. Notably, Mission Concepción was the scene of a battle in which Jim Bowie and James Fannin commanded

a force that drove the Mexican army back into town by launching a counterattack on the enemy.

OTHER OFF-THE-BEATEN-PATH TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

In southern Brazoria County, committed travelers can chase down two Stephen F. Austin-associated sites. On the northern outskirts of West Columbia just off SH 36, a sign and marker note the site of Austin's death. George McKinstry, an original San Felipe colonist, settled in Austin's Colony and hosted Austin while the latter served as the first Secretary of State to the Republic of Texas. The Father of Texas fell ill in December 1836 and died in the waning days of that historic year.

Further south in the town of Jones Creek, visitors can stop by Austin's original burial site at the Gulf Prairie Presbyterian Church cemetery. Austin's gravesite is marked inside the small courtyard cemetery that stands near where his sister's family established Peach Point Plantation.

Two THC sites that aren't always connected to the independence story have great rewards for the visitors who seek them out. Casa Navarro State Historic Site in San Antonio is the home of Tejano patriot and Declaration of Independence signer José Antonio Navarro (see article page 7). Varner-Hogg Plantation State Historic Site in West Columbia is connected to early settlement and the Texas Revolution through the Patton family's occupation of the site after Martin Varner, an Old Three Hundred pioneer with Austin's Colony.

EXTRA LARGE HISTORY

Twenty early Texian leaders were commemorated with bronze statues during the Texas Centennial celebration of 1936. These statues are grand in scale and imagery.

Ben Milam, one of the heroes of the Siege of Bexar who gave his life in that battle, is commemorated with one of the Centennial bronzes in Milam Park. Incidentally, Milam is the only early Texan to receive the honor of two statues (his second is on the grounds of the Milam County Courthouse in Cameron). Not far from Milam's statue is the Moses Austin bronze—the only Centennial statue to commemorate someone who never actually lived in Texas. Regardless, Austin's sales pitch for immigration to Spanish Texas charted a course his son Stephen would follow after Mexican independence.

It's difficult to address larger-than-life historical items without mentioning the world's largest Bowie knife, a massive sculpture in Bowie between Fort Worth and Wichita Falls on SH 81. And rest assured, you're not the first one to think of that pose to impress your social media followers.

The circa 70-foot tall statues of Sam Houston (near Huntsville on I-45) and Stephen F. Austin (just outside Angleton on SH 288) should be added to any Texas history bucket list when sheer size is in play. Many travelers are surprised to learn that there are visitors centers at the base of each of these giants, created by modernist sculptor David Adickes.



To learn more about the Texas Revolution, visit texastimetravel.com/TexRev.

ALL ABOARD!

STURDY VESSEL CARRIED AN UNBELIEVABLE CARGO OF TEXAS HISTORY

By Bob Brinkman
Texas Historical Markers Program Coordinator

With the terrific speed of life these days, it's sometimes hard to slow down and remember how we got here. In the case of Texas independence, the "how" is not only about one decision leading to another, but about the very modes of transportation.

Most travelers zooming through Hempstead down SH 159 have probably never noticed a small pink granite block that was placed as a historical marker in 1936. It commemorates



the centennial of the Texas Revolution, marking a significant site on the nearby Brazos River.

In 1836, journeys were often arduous and roads as we know them were nonexistent. Most movement was done on foot or horseback. But we should remember one special means of transport that

made a great contribution to the winning of the Texas War of Independence: a steamboat named *Yellow Stone*.

The boat was constructed in Louisville, Ky., in 1831. The 120-foot-long, three-deck side wheeler was designed to carry people and goods from the upper Missouri River back to St. Louis for the American Fur Company. In 1832, it was the first vessel to venture as far as the mouth of its namesake river in Wyoming.

Two important early chroniclers, artists George Catlin and Karl Bodmer, were aboard on separate voyages, painting some of the first recorded views of the landscapes and Native American tribes throughout the region. In winter months, the American Fur Company used the boat along the lower Mississippi River between New Orleans and the Yazoo. The *Yellow Stone* continued in this capacity until late 1835, when Thomas Toby & Brother bought the ship and began repairs and rebuilding for its next series of adventures.

The boat was reported in Brazoria by November 1835, sailing into the Mexican province of Texas as an unarmed neutral

ship of the U.S. The *Yellow Stone* typically traveled along the coast and the Brazos River. On New Year's Eve, passengers from New Orleans included 47 young soldiers of the Mobile Grays militia on their way to fight for Texas independence. Under the command of James Fannin, most were killed a few months later in the Goliad Massacre.

The main Texian army, commanded by Gen. Sam Houston, had been marching east for weeks when, on March 31, 1836, they reached Groce's Landing on the Brazos. The river was impassable and flooded from recent rains. Knowing that the *Yellow Stone* was nearby, Gen. Houston sent word to Capt. John E. Ross that he needed to press his ship into service to carry the army across the river.

While Santa Anna's Mexican army was crossing the river farther downstream, the *Yellow Stone* successfully moved the Texians across in seven trips on April 12, to the count of hundreds of troops and nearly 200 horses, along with wagons, ox teams, supplies, and a pair of cannons known as the Twin Sisters. The Texians were able to march past Harrisburg and meet the Mexican army at San Jacinto.

In the meantime, the *Yellow Stone* continued her exploits. Carrying bales of cotton and refugees of the Runaway Scrape down the Brazos, the boat was spotted by Mexican troops, who proceeded to attack with guns and cannon fire. The unarmed vessel was able to withstand the barrage with minimal damage thanks to its shielding of cotton bales.

The boat was pressed into official service for the young Republic of Texas once again when president David G. Burnet and his cabinet boarded the *Yellow Stone* in Galveston on April 26, conducting official government business aboard a floating capital until disembarking at Buffalo Bayou on May 4 to begin treaty negotiations with Mexico. The voyage of May 9 carried a most interesting group of passengers, as the wounded Sam Houston, the captured Santa Anna, and dozens of other Mexican army prisoners were brought to Velasco, where Santa Anna signed treaties ending hostilities on May 14.

Another patriotic duty of the *Yellow Stone* came in December with the death of Stephen F. Austin at Columbia. The boat conveyed his body along with many mourners to Peach Point Plantation for his burial (his remains were later reinterred in Austin).

On April 27, 1837, the *Yellow Stone* again helped move the Republic of Texas toward its future. On board that day were many officials of the government and a new printing press

For

The Steam Boat



Yellow Stone,

A. C. BENNETT, Master,

WILL DEPART FOR THE ABOVE PORT,

On **the** **inst.**

For Freight or Passage, apply

ON BOARD.

ST. LOUIS, 1832. TIMES OFFICE - ST. LOUIS.

for the Republic's leading newspaper, the *Telegraph and Texas Register*, all being transported to the new capital at Houston.

The last documented journey of the *Yellow Stone* was a May 30 trip from Houston to Galveston. Her final fate is unknown, reported as possibly snagged on a sandbar, or else heading out of Texas and possibly continuing under a new name. There is one mention of a ship of the same name going through the canal and locks at Louisville in 1837, but no further proof.

When the steamboat ferried the Texian army across the Brazos, Sam Houston promised land to the captain and crew for their help. No record of land grants or monetary payments have been located.

Each time a request was presented, Sam Houston would speak of the significance of the intervention of the ship and its crew. In 1855, he wrote, "What would a league of land have been worth, if I had been prevented from intercepting Santa Anna at San Jacinto? One hour short of the time that I reached San Jacinto would have enabled Santa Anna to have crossed the [San Jacinto] River."

He added, "A compliance on the part of Captain Ross and his crew enabled me to save Texas."

To learn more about the Texas Revolution, visit texastimetravel.com/TexRev.

OPPOSITE PAGE: A marker near Hempstead notes the nearby Brazos River crossing location. ABOVE: Newspaper ads in the mid-1800s notified passengers and shippers about *Yellow Stone's* impending arrival.



THE FACES

OF AUSTIN'S COLONY

Although the San Felipe de Austin visitors center is temporarily closed, its current temporary gallery is now accessible on these pages of *The Medallion*.

Note: The exhibit will close November 15.

The gallery features early photographs of settlers who came to Mexican Texas and lived in Austin's colony. For most of them, contributing a photograph meant living about 30 years or more past the destruction of the town. These early pioneers played important roles in the stories of Texas and many had parts in the story of Texas independence.

Notably, several images are of San Jacinto veterans, including a photo taken at the battleground in 1910.





For more information about the THC's 31 historic sites, visit storiedsites.com.

OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: John Christopher Columbus Hill (courtesy of the San Jacinto Museum of History); Sam and Yarboro Allen (courtesy of the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin); and Dilue Rose Harris (courtesy of the San Jacinto Museum of History).

ABOVE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: William Physick Zuber and Alfonso Steele at 1910 San Jacinto Veterans reunion (courtesy of the San Jacinto Museum of History); Jane Long (courtesy of the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin); and AE Baker (Texas Historical Commission, donated by Charlotte Duke and family).

Continued from page 5

On April 15, 1836, Almonte was in command of the vanguard that Santa Anna sent to capture David Burnet, interim president of Texas, and Lorenzo de Zavala, interim vice president. The Texas government was fleeing to Galveston, where they would be safe from the Mexican army.

Almonte and his troops caught up with Burnet in New Washington (modern-day La Porte) on April 16. Burnet, his family, and several cabinet members were waiting for a schooner to Galveston to be loaded when a Texas courier raced up, shouting, “Make haste, Mr. President! The Mexicans are coming!”

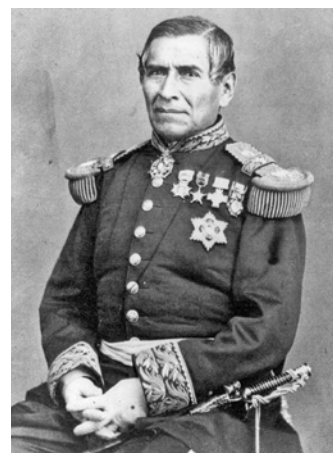
Burnet and his men quickly boarded a skiff and pushed off, just moments before Almonte’s men arrived. According to schooner captain Dr. George Moffitt Patrick, as the boat pushed off from shore, “the Mexicans were descending the hill, and not more than one hundred and fifty paces from us. We had not made more than thirty or forty yards from the shore when the enemy dismounted on the beach.”

Burnet stood up, making himself a target to save his wife and child. However, when Almonte saw that Hannah Burnet and her children were also in the boat, he ordered

his men to hold their fire, unwilling to risk killing civilians. Burnet and the rest of the cabinet were able to regroup in Galveston for the remainder of the war.

After the battle, Texian soldiers hunted down and killed every Mexican soldier they could find. Realizing that their only hope for survival was to surrender en masse, Almonte gathered a group of 200 men near Peggy’s Lake and ordered them to drop their weapons and surrender to a dozen Texian soldiers. Badly outnumbered, the Texans took them prisoner instead of fighting.

Unlike most of the Mexican soldiers captured at San Jacinto, Almonte was spared and returned to Mexico along with Santa Anna in early 1837.



To learn more about the Texas Revolution, visit texasimetravel.com/TexRev.

ABOVE: Mexican Col. Juan Nepomuceno Almonte.

Continued from page 7

Main Plaza on December 5. Cos had 1,200 men, but they were unable to hold off the Texans, so they retreated to the Alamo and eventually sent a white flag to Main Plaza.

On December 11, 1835, the Texans officially accepted Cos’ surrender in nearby La Villita. The site of the surrender remains in the historic neighborhood, now home to charming shops and restaurants near the Riverwalk. The Cos House features a solid stone marker noting the momentous surrender that occurred there.

Back on Main Plaza, the Texans flew a victory flag from the San Fernando Cathedral. A few months later, Mexican Gen. Antonio López de Santa Anna used the church as a lookout, and ordered a red flag—a

symbol of showing no mercy—to be flown there as a warning to Texans at the Alamo, who had since captured it.

For those strolling around the picturesque plaza, be sure to find the

somewhat-hidden yet informative THC historical marker dedicated to the Siege of Bexar. Tucked away in an alley just east of the Bexar County Courthouse, the marker commemorates the conflict with additional information on panels developed by the Bexar County Historical Commission.

“Main Plaza harkens back to a time that many of us associate with Texas history books and school-day lessons,” remarks Bob Brinkman, the THC’s historical markers program coordinator. “The sites in this area help us appreciate the fact that centuries-old heritage is still a tangible resource in the Lone Star State.”

Learn more about the Texas Revolution at texasimetravel.com.



NEWS BRIEFS

HISTORY AT HOME

The coronavirus is impacting history on a global scale; in response, the Texas Historical Commission (THC) is making efforts to address the pandemic for our state's history teachers, students, and enthusiasts. To continue our agency's mission of educating the public about the Lone Star State's rich heritage, we've launched an initiative called Texas History at Home.

Here's a sample of the site's free instructive resources about Texas history, preservation, and heritage tourism.

- **THC LEARNING RESOURCES WEBPAGE** A repository of lesson plans and activities for students focused on our state historic sites and topics such as archeology, cemeteries, historical markers, and military history. Visit thc.texas.gov/education/learning-resources

- **THC YOUTUBE CHANNEL** Featuring scores of educational videos about the Vaqueros of South Texas, Speaking German Texan, the Official Longhorn Herd of Texas, and much more. Visit youtube.com/user/TxHist

- **TEXAS TIME TRAVEL MOBILE TOURS AND TEXAS TRAVEL GUIDES** Engage with immersive audio tours, watch short documentary videos, view photo galleries of historic images. Visit texastimetravel.com/guides-apps

- **TEXAS HISTORY THEME PAGES** Thousands of historic sites across Texas—delve into the topics and places, with maps, photos, and more. Visit texastimetravel.com/travel-themes

- **TEXAS HISTORIC SITES ATLAS** Database featuring more than 300,000 site records, including information on cemeteries, courthouses, and museums across the state with historic photos and interactive maps. Visit atlas.thc.texas.gov/map

- **REAL PLACES, REAL STORIES BLOG** A full library of posts—hop on board the tall ship *Elissa* in Galveston, take a

tour of historic downtown Brownsville, or discover underwater boat wrecks off the South Texas coast. Visit thc.texas.gov/blog

- **THC STATE HISTORIC SITES** The THC preserves and operates 31 historic sites across the Lone Star State, from American Indian sites to frontier forts to common and elegant homes. All buildings and grounds at our 31 state historic sites are currently closed until further notice. We will reopen and restore programming as soon as we can ensure the safety of our visitors. If you need to contact our staff, call 512-463-6100 or email thc@thc.texas.gov. Visit thc.texas.gov/historic-sites

To sign up for updates or to learn about additional educational resources, please visit thc.texas.gov/historyathome.

THC APPROVES BATTLESHIP TEXAS MOVE, RESTORATION

The THC recently approved three permits enabling major work to begin on the relocation and restoration of the Battleship Texas. The THC's executive committee took actions enabling the Battleship Texas Foundation to prepare the ship for relocation to a shipyard for restoration.

The permits also authorize restoration work on the vessel's hull and "blister"—twin compartments that helped protect it from torpedoes or other assaults—and projects involving the removal and restoration of large deck pieces, like cannons and searchlights. The 86th Texas Legislature approved funding to move and restore the Battleship Texas.



WHERE ON EARTH...IN TEXAS

KNOW YOUR TEXAS HISTORY? Put your skills to the test by identifying the pictured site! The first people who correctly identify the location will receive a prize and be named in the next issue of *The Medallion*. Send your answer to: *The Medallion*, P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711-2276 or email to medallion@thc.texas.gov. Limit one prize annually per contestant.

NEED A CLUE? This store is located in a National Register Historic District in the Texas Lakes Trail Region.

ANSWER TO THE PHOTO FROM THE LAST



ISSUE: The photo at left is of the 1910 Harris County Courthouse in downtown Houston. Nearly 100 years after its construction, the building's exterior and historic interior spaces were restored to their original appearance with the help of the THC's Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program.

Congratulations and prizes go to the first three readers who correctly identified the site:

Carolyn Heinsohn of La Grange, Will Howard of Houston (a tour guide at the courthouse), and Rosalinda Reyes of Freeport. Thanks to all who participated!

