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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Washington on the Brazos State Historic Site**

**April through July 2017 Special Events and Celebrations**

***Site’s attractions and parkland open year-round with special activities***

It was March 2, 1836 when 59 delegates bravely met at Washington, Texas to make a formal declaration of independence from Mexico. From 1836 until 1846, the Republic of Texas proudly existed as a separate nation. Washington on the Brazos is, indeed, “Where Texas Became Texas.”

[Washington on the Brazos State Historic Site](http://www.wheretexasbecametexas.org) has many onsite amenities open daily, as well as an incredible schedule of events and programs. On the grounds of this 293-acre, TPWD-run state park is [Independence Hall](http://wheretexasbecametexas.org/about/independence-hall/) (the site in 1836 where the representatives met to write the declaration of independence); the [Star of the Republic Museum](http://www.starmuseum.org/) (collections honoring the history, cultures, diversity and values of early Texans; administered by Blinn College); and [Barrington Living History Farm](http://wheretexasbecametexas.org/about/barrington-living-history-farm/) (where interpreters dress, talk, work and farm as the earliest residents of the original farmstead did). The site’s Visitor Center features interactive exhibits which present a timeline of the Texas Revolution and highlight the historic attractions located within the park; it also houses the spacious Washington Emporium Gift Shop, which offers snacks and a wide range of Texas-themed items and keepsakes. The [Fanthorp Inn State Historic Site](http://wheretexasbecametexas.org/about/fanthorp-inn/) is a wonderfully preserved example of a 19th century stagecoach inn, located nearby in Anderson, TX. The entrance to the park grounds, Visitor Center and parking is always free; fees apply for access to Barrington Farm and the Star of the Republic Museum, and for tours of Independence Hall.

**“Fireworks on the Brazos,”** one of the park’s most treasured events occurs on Tuesday, July 4, 2017 from 10 a.m. - 10 p.m. Presented by H-E-B and coordinated by Washington on the Brazos State Park Association. The event celebrates when the U.S. became the U.S., at the place “Where Texas Became Texas.” The Fourth of July celebration includes a concert; patriotic music; old-fashioned baseball games; period games; rifle firing demonstrations; food and crafts; and living history interpretations. Admission to the park and parking is free during this event; shuttle within the park is also free. Visitors can bring picnics; blankets; lawn chairs; and flashlights; alcohol is prohibited. For more information, contact Jon Failor at 936-878-2214 ext. 224 or jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov.

Washington on the Brazos’s annual fundraising event, **Sundown Social** will be held on Saturday, April 27, 2017 at 6 p.m. at Rockin’ Star Ranch. This event will include a gourmet chuck wagon steak dinner, cocktails, musical entertainment by 2016 Texas State Musician recipient Joe Ely, and auctions filled with Texian Treasures. All proceeds from this Texas-size party will benefit Washington on the Brazos State Park Association and its educational programming, events and maintenance of park grounds. Tickets can be purchased by contacting Ginger Moreland at 979-830-1824 or office@wheretexasbecametexas.org. Table and corporate/individual sponsorships also available.

**March 4, 2017 through February 15, 2018 – *Heirloom Genealogy: Tracing your Family* Treasures – Star of the Republic Museum:** The Star of the Republic Museum at WOB will celebrate the 181st anniversary of Texas’s independence with its new exhibit, “Heirloom Genealogy: Tracing your Family Treasures.” Stories will come to light as artifacts are examined in-depth through lineage research. Documents reveal where the artifacts originated, who owned them, and how they got to Texas. Items in the exhibit include three-year-old Edward Boylan’s buckskin suit; Pleasant B. Watson’s diary; Heinrich Tiemann’s clog-making tools; and Clara Lang’s grand piano, among others.

**Permanent Exhibit – *Pioneer Playroom* – Star of the Republic Museum:** The Museum’s Pioneer Playroom simulates an early Texas frontier homestead that allows participants to immerse themselves in the role of pioneers through role-playing, interactive experiences and a variety of learning styles. Children can load and sit on a buckboard wagon, dress in clothing characteristic of the period, build a log cabin, wash and hang laundry, haul water, milk a cow, gather eggs from a chicken coop and more. Free with paid admission to the Museum. For more information, contact Donna Barker at (936) 878-2461 ext. 245 or donna.barker@blinn.edu.

**SCHEDULE OF SPECIAL EVENTS - APRIL THROUGH JULY 2017:**

Unless noted otherwise, programs are open to all ages, but an adult must accompany any children. Visitors should dress appropriately for the season and be prepared for the weather as the events take place in 1850s period settings, with some portions outdoors. Visitors should call the park at (936) 878-2214 to confirm these dates and times; events subject to change based on weather, etc.

**April 8, 2017 - *The Doctor Is In*:** 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Barrington Farm): Dr. Anson Jones was the fourth and last President of the Republic of Texas and physician by trade and used different techniques to treat ailments than we do today. Learn about pharmaceutical and medical inventions for disease in 1850 For more information, contact Jon Failor at (936) 878-2214 ext. 224 or jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov.

**April 8, 2017 – *Stagecoach Days*:** 11 a.m. – 3p.m. (Fanthorp Inn): Fanthorp Inn will host Stagecoach Days allowing visitors to experience what it was like to travel cross country via stagecoach and learn about the Inn’s history and connection with early stage lines. A suggested donation of $4 ($10 with coach ride) for adults and $2 ($5 with coach ride) for children to tour the Inn and ride the coach helps support the site. Coach rides last approximately 15 minutes and Inn tours for 30-45 minutes. This event is open to all ages; children must be accompanied by an adult. For more information, contact Jon Failor at (936) 878-2214 ext. 224 or jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov.

**Special Focus on April 8: *Children’s Pastimes and Playthings*** – Join us at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. for “Children’s Pastimes and Playthings”— children's day/fest focuses on hands-on activities stations with fun and engaging activities for kids including period games, toys and interactive historical demonstrations. In the days before cell phones, TVs and computer games, Texas children found delight in activities such as Button Whizzers, Corn Shuck Dolls and Hoop Races.

**April 15, 2017 – *Living History Saturday*:** 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (Independence Hall and Washington grounds): Travel back in time to where a nation was born in 1836. On the third Saturday of each month staff and volunteers dressed in period clothing bring to life the people and events of Old Washington providing a unique opportunity to discover various aspects of life surrounding the birth of the Republic of Texas. The program features activities suited for the entire family including blacksmithing demonstration and Texian Militia display with black powder rifle demonstration at timed intervals: 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. Try your hand at writing with a quill pen and sign a copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence. Visit with militia soldiers traveling through town or try your hand at some early Texas games. Step back in time and discover the spot where Texas became Texas! (Activities will vary and some are weather dependent.) Traditional tours of Independence Hall will not be offered these days. For more information, contact Jon Failor at (936) 878-2214 ext. 224 or jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov.

**April 15, 2017 - *Hands-On-History* – *Quill Writing*:** 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Star of the Republic Museum): Join museum staff on the third Saturday of each month to make crafts and toys that pioneer kids made during the Republic time.  Visitors can also discover what life was like for kids living in the 1830s in the newly renovated Pioneer Playroom. For more information, contact Donna Barker at (936) 878-2461 ext. 236 or Donna.barker@blinn.edu.

**April 22 & 23, 2017 – *Basketry on the Brazos*:** 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Barrington Farm): Baskets were a utilitarian and useful item on a farm, used much like our plastic bags or baskets today, but people could buy or make their own. Many different kinds were made, some by folks on the farm repaired or made their own. For more information, contact Bruce Wardlow at (936) 878-2214 ext. 246 or bruce.wardlow@tpwd.texas.gov.

**May 13, 2017 – *Stagecoach Days*:** 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. (Fanthorp Inn): Fanthorp Inn will host Stagecoach Days allowing visitors to experience what it was like to travel cross country via stagecoach and learn about the Inn’s history and connection with early stage lines. A suggested donation of $4 ($10 with coach ride) for adults and $2 ($5 with coach ride) for children to tour the Inn and ride the coach supports the site. Coach rides last approximately 15 minutes and Inn tours for 30-45 minutes. This event is open to all ages; children must be accompanied by an adult. For more information, contact Jon Failor at (936) 878-2214 ext. 224 or jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov.

**Special Focus on May 13: *Music Makes a Dance Celebration*** – Join us at 11, 1 and 3 for “Music Makes a Dance Celebration.” Fanthorp Inn focuses on dancing in Texas during the days when music along with dancing was one of the few opportunities to socially interact and enjoy the company of others. Come join the fun and learn a few of the popular dances enjoyed in early Texas. Citizens looked forward to these events and an opportunity to show their finest clothes, behavior and manners. Anticipation and preparations of days if not weeks were spent preparing for the parties.

**May 20, 2017 – *Living History Saturday*:** 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (Independence Hall and Washington grounds): Travel back in time to where a nation was born in 1836. On the third Saturday of each month staff and volunteers dressed in period clothing bring to life the people and events of Old Washington providing a unique opportunity to discover various aspects of life surrounding the birth of the Republic of Texas. The program features activities suited for the entire family including cooking demonstration with focus on the type of food available in town at the time of the Convention of 1836. Try your hand at writing with a quill pen and sign a copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence. Visit with militia soldiers traveling through town or try your hand at some early Texas games. Step back in time and discover the spot where Texas became Texas! (Activities will vary and some are weather dependent.) Traditional tours of Independence Hall will not be offered these days. For more information, contact Jon Failor at (936) 878-2214 ext. 224 or jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov.

**May 20, 2017 - *Hands-On-History* – *Corn Husk Dolls*:** 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Star of the Republic Museum): Join museum staff on the third Saturday of each month to make crafts and toys that pioneer kids made during the Republic time.  Visitors can also discover what life was like for kids living in the 1830s in the newly renovated Pioneer Playroom. For more information, contact Donna Barker at (936) 878-2461 ext. 236 or Donna.barker@blinn.edu.

**May 27, 2017 - *Letters from Home*:** 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Barrington Farm): Writing letters was an important way to communicate news, family information, announcements, and new ideas or events to the world. Try your hand with a calling card, and see the importance of the written word. For more information, contact Kellie McKenney at (936) 878-2114 ext. 246 or kellie.mckenney@tpwd.texas.gov.

**All weekends in June - *Chased by Mops and Buckets*:** 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Barrington Farm): Spring cleaning was a yearly ordeal that families underwent to prepare their house for warmer weather and to clean out the dust and dirt from a shut-in winter. It was much more laborious than cleaning today and you can help clean windows and shake out rugs. Learn how we clean other items in the house that are more delicate and learn some ideas to use with spring cleaning at your home. For more information, contact the Farm at (936) 878-2214 ext. 246.

**June 11, 2017 – *Stagecoach Days*:** 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. (Fanthorp Inn): Fanthorp Inn will host Stagecoach Days allowing visitors to experience what it was like to travel cross country via stagecoach and learn about the Inn’s history and connection with early stage lines. A suggested donation of $4 ($10 with coach ride) for adults and $2 ($5 with coach ride) for children to tour the Inn and ride the coach helps support the site. Coach rides last approximately 15 minutes and Inn tours for 30-45 minutes. This event is open to all ages; children must be accompanied by an adult. For more information, contact Jon Failor at (936) 878-2214 ext. 224 or jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov.

**Special Focus on June 11: *Children’s Toys*** – Join us at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. for “Children’s Toys.” A day children can learn new games from the old days. There will be several stations with fun and engaging activities for kids including period games, toys and interactive historical demonstrations. In the days before cell phones, TVs and computer games early Texas children found delight in activities such as Button Whizzers, Corn Shuck Dolls and Hoop Races. Come join the fun and take home a 19th century toy you made yourself.

**June 24, 2017 – *Juneteenth Heritage Program*:** 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Independence Hall and Visitor Center): On the 19th of June 1865, Union General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston and made a declaration of freedom ending the bondage of approximately 250,000 enslaved men, women and children in Texas.  Since that time, “Juneteenth” has been celebrated and remembered by picnics, parades, family reunions, pageants, barbecues and games. Join us as we observe this important occasion and celebrate the rich African American heritage and culture of the Brazos Valley, past and present.  This new program for Washington on the Brazos State Historic Site will include exhibits, art displays, guest speakers, living history, music and more. For more information, contact Jon Failor at (936) 878-2214 ext. 224 or jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov.

**All weekends in July – *Corn Harvest and Field Weeding*:** 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Barrington Farm): Help harvest our corn fodder and corn, as weather permits, and tend to our fields throughout the summer. Fighting the weeds is something everyone had to do to help survive and corn being one of the Jones’ cash crops it was most important to tend to. 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. For more information, contact the Farm at (936) 878-2214 ext. 246.

**July 8, 2017 – *Stagecoach Days*:** 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. (Fanthorp Inn): Fanthorp Inn will host Stagecoach Days allowing visitors to experience what it was like to travel cross country via stagecoach and learn about the Inn’s history and connection with early stage lines. A suggested donation of $4 ($10 with coach ride) for adults and $2 ($5 with coach ride) for children to tour the Inn and ride the coach helps support the site. Coach rides last approximately 15 minutes and Inn tours for 30-45 minutes. This event is open to all ages; children must be accompanied by an adult. For more information, contact Jon Failor at (936) 878-2214 ext. 224 or jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov.

**Special Focus on July 8: *How Sweet the Sound*** – Join us at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. for “How Sweet the Sound.” Fanthorp Inn focuses on the Dulcimer in Texas during the days when music along with dancing was one of the few opportunities to socially interact and enjoy the company of others. On this day children will be given the opportunity to strum along with the Star of Texas Dulcimer group and learn a bit of early Texas music played on the authentic mountain dulcimer.

**July 15, 2017 – *Living History Saturday*:** 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (Independence Hall and Washington grounds): Travel back in time to where a nation was born in 1836. On the third Saturday of each month staff and volunteers dressed in period clothing bring to life the people and events of Old Washington providing a unique opportunity to discover various aspects of life surrounding the birth of the Republic of Texas. The program features activities suited for the entire family including blacksmithing demonstration and Texian Militia display with black powder rifle demonstration at timed intervals: 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. Try your hand at writing with a quill pen and sign a copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence. Visit with militia soldiers traveling through town or try your hand at some early Texas games. Step back in time and discover the spot where Texas became Texas! (Activities will vary and some are weather dependent.) Traditional tours of Independence Hall will not be offered these days. For more information, contact Jon Failor at (936) 878-2214 ext. 224 or jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov.

**July 15, 2017 - *Hands-On-History* – *Buzz Saw Toys*:** 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Star of the Republic Museum): Join museum staff on the third Saturday of each month to make crafts and toys that pioneer kids made during the Republic time.  Visitors can also discover what life was like for kids living in the 1830s in the newly renovated Pioneer Playroom. For more information, contact Donna Barker at (936) 878-2461 ext. 236 or Donna.barker@blinn.edu.

**Washington on the Brazos State Historic Site**

There are many reasons to join the [Washington on the Brazos State Park Association](http://wheretexasbecametexas.org/about/park-association/) as a member and explore this Texas treasure. Besides the irreplaceable satisfaction of helping to uphold Texas history through the Association’s preservation projects, celebrations and programming, spending time at the park is an easy, inexpensive, educational and fun way to entertain families and visitors. Park Association membership levels are available for individuals, families and businesses and include free admission to the Site’s attractions for a year, and—for some levels—private parties during the park’s special celebrations.

**The Park:** The expansive park grounds of this state park along the Brazos River also provide a beautiful setting for picnicking, sightseeing and bird watching, as well as four geocaching sites—two each from TPWD and the Brenham/Washington County Chamber and CVB. It also features a Conference and Education Center, which is available for rent for meetings, weddings and reunions. An outdoor amphitheater and two pavilions are also available to rent.

Leashed pets are allowed in the park, but NOT allowed onto farm site or in the buildings. Attractions are accessible for the mobility impaired. For lodging information, please contact the Brenham Visitor Center at [www.visitbrenhamtexas.com/](http://www.visitbrenhamtexas.com/) or 1-888-BRENHAM, or the city of Navasota at [www.navasotagrimeschamber.com](http://www.navasotagrimeschamber.com).

Washington on the Brazos State Historic Site is found on the Brazos River at the original townsite of Washington, Texas, a major political and commercial center in early Texas. It is located at 23400 Park Road 12, Washington, TX, 77880—approximately halfway between Brenham and Navasota, off of State Hwy. 105. From Hwy. 105, follow either FM 912 or FM 1155 to Park Road 12. For additional information, call (936) 878-2214 or visit the site’s website at [www.wheretexasbecametexas.org](http://www.wheretexasbecametexas.org).