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(Please email or call for photos, videos, advance interviews, etc.)

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**For Immediate Release:**

**Washington on the Brazos State Historic Site – July through Sept 2016**

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

2016 is an important year for [Washington on the Brazos State Historic Site](http://wheretexasbecametexas.org). Not only is it the 180th anniversary of the signing of the Texas Declaration of Independence from Mexico in 1836 at the park site, but it is also the state park's 100th birthday. 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 283-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.

All attractions at Washington on the Brazos complex are offering free admission to all active duty military personnel and members of the National Guard and Reserve, U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps and the NOAA Commissioned Corps **(and five family members**) from Memorial Day, May 30 through Labor Day, September 5, as part of the [Blue Star Museums](http://bluestarfam.org/Programs/Blue_Star_Museums) program.

Likewise, teachers are offered free admission throughout the month of August to all attractions at the complex so they can discover the learning opportunities available at the park; school ID or business card required.

**SCHEDULE OF SPECIAL EVENTS/EXHIBITS FOR JULY THROUGH SEPTEMBER:**

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.

**Permanent Exhibit - *Pioneer Playroom,* Star of the Republic Museum:** The Museum’s new 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. Contact: Anne McGaugh, (936) 878-2461, ext. 237, amcgaugh@blinn.edu.

**Through February 15, 2017 - *A Legacy of Leadership: The Signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence Exhibit –* Star of the Republic Museum:** The exhibit focuses on the delegates to the Constitutional Convention in 1836—those leaders who determined the future of Texas. Among them were 12 lawyers, five physicians, four surveyors and three each of planters, empresarios and merchants. The exhibit includes personal artifacts such as Sam Maverick’s buckskins, a cameo of Michel Menard, oil portraits of Stephen Blount and his wife, and many others items. Contact: Shawn Carlson (936)878-2461, x241 or scarlson@blinn.edu.

**July 2, 2016 - *Hands-On History – Floating Ball Toys,* 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. - Star of the Republic Museum**: Join museum staff on every Saturday through August 20th to make crafts and toys that pioneer children made during the Republic time. Visitors can also discover what life was like for children living in the 1830s in the newly renovated Pioneer Playroom. Contact: Donna Barker, (936) 878-2461, ext. 236, Donna.barker@blinn.edu.

**July 4, 2016:** ***H-E-B Fireworks on the Brazos:*** celebrates national Independence Day at the place Where Texas Became Texas. Sponsored by H-E-B, the annual 4th of July celebration at Washington on the Brazos includes a fun-filled day of family activities. Highlights of the celebration are the free music concert by the [Cody Bryan Band](http://www.codybryanmusic.com/) from 7 to 9 p.m. in the park’s amphitheater, followed by a fireworks extravaganza with patriotic music at approximately 9:30 p.m. H-E-B will give away sodas. Food vendors will offer a variety of festival food choices; arts and crafts vendors will offer items for sale. Visitors can bring picnics, blankets, lawn chairs and flashlights. State park rules apply; alcohol prohibited.

**July 9, 2016 - *Stagecoach Days,* 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.:** 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. There is no admission fee to visit the inn, with a suggested donation of $10 for adults and $5 for children for stagecoach rides. Rides last approximately 15 minutes and Inn tours for 30-45 minutes. Contact: Jon Failor at (936) 878-2214 ext. 224 or jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov.

**Special Focus Program for Stagecoach Day: *How Sweet the Sound*** Join us at 11, 1 and 3 p.m. as we present**” 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 9, 2016 - *Hands-On History – Tissue Flowers,* 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. - Star of the Republic Museum**: Join museum staff on every Saturday through August 20th to make crafts and toys that pioneer children made during the Republic time. Visitors can also discover what life was like for children living in the 1830s in the newly renovated Pioneer Playroom. Contact: Donna Barker, (936) 878-2461, ext. 236, Donna.barker@blinn.edu.

**July 16, 2016 – *Living History Saturday,* 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.:** 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. Try your hand at writing with a quill pen and sign a copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence. Visit with militia soldiers travelling 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 guided tours of Independence Hall will not be offered these days. Contact: Jon Failor at (936) 878-2214 ext. 224 or jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov.

**July 16, 2016 - *Hands-On History – Quill Writing,* 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. - Star of the Republic Museum**: Join museum staff on every Saturday through August 20th to make crafts and toys that pioneer children made during the Republic time. Visitors can also discover what life was like for children living in the 1830s in the newly renovated Pioneer Playroom. Contact: Donna Barker, (936) 878-2461, ext. 236, Donna.barker@blinn.edu.

**July 23, 2016 - *Hands-On History – Knot Tying,* 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. - Star of the Republic Museum**: Join museum staff on every Saturday through August 20th to make crafts and toys that pioneer children made during the Republic time. Visitors can also discover what life was like for children living in the 1830s in the newly renovated Pioneer Playroom. Contact: Donna Barker, (936) 878-2461, ext. 236, Donna.barker@blinn.edu.

**July 30, 2016 - *Hands-On History – Embroidery,* 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. - Star of the Republic Museum**: Join museum staff on every Saturday through August 20th to make crafts and toys that pioneer children made during the Republic time. Visitors can also discover what life was like for children living in the 1830s in the newly renovated Pioneer Playroom. Contact: Donna Barker, (936) 878-2461, ext. 236, Donna.barker@blinn.edu.

**August 6, 2016 - *Hands-On History – Basket Weaving,* 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. - Star of the Republic Museum**: Join museum staff on every Saturday through August 20th to make crafts and toys that pioneer children made during the Republic time. Visitors can also discover what life was like for children living in the 1830s in the newly renovated Pioneer Playroom. Contact: Donna Barker, (936) 878-2461, ext. 236, Donna.barker@blinn.edu.

**August 13, 2016 - *Hands-On History – Buzz Saws,* 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. - Star of the Republic Museum**: Join museum staff on every Saturday through August 20th to make crafts and toys that pioneer children made during the Republic time. Visitors can also discover what life was like for children living in the 1830s in the newly renovated Pioneer Playroom. Contact: Donna Barker, (936) 878-2461, ext. 236, Donna.barker@blinn.edu.

**August 20, 2016 – *Living History Saturday,* 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.:** 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. Try your hand at writing with a quill pen and sign a copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence. Visit with militia soldiers travelling 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 guided tours of Independence Hall will not be offered these days. Contact: Jon Failor at (936) 878-2214 ext. 224 or jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov.

**August 20, 2016 - *Hands-On History – Corn Husk Dolls,* 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. - Star of the Republic Museum**: Join museum staff on every Saturday through August 20th to make crafts and toys that pioneer children made during the Republic time. Visitors can also discover what life was like for children living in the 1830s in the newly renovated Pioneer Playroom. Contact: Donna Barker, (936) 878-2461, ext. 236, Donna.barker@blinn.edu.

**September 3, 2016 – *Where Have the Monarchs Gone?,* 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m. - Education Center:** This fun workshop session takes children through the life-cycle and migration of the Monarch butterfly, including discussion of food and nursery sources, and how to plant a butterfly waystation at home. The class includes a lively mixture of indoor and outdoor activities (weather permitting), all geared toward children from the age of 6 to 12 years old. This will be a hands-on adventure following the Monarch butterfly from egg to caterpillar to butterfly, and then follow the amazing journey to Mexico. The session will last approximately 1½ hours, and is hosted by the Gideon Lincecum Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists. Contact: Karen Ginnard, (713) 584-9756 or kginnard56@gmail.com.

**September 10, 2016 –** ***Stagecoach Days,* 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.:** 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. There is no admission fee to visit the inn, with a suggested donation of $10 for adults and $5 for children for stagecoach rides. Rides last approximately 15 minutes and Inn tours for 30-45 minutes. Contact: Jon Failor at (936) 878-2214 ext. 224 or jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov.

**Special Focus Program for Stagecoach Day: *Bundles for Baskets-*** Join us at 11, 1 and 3 for “Bundles For Baskets.” No Tupperware in early Texas! Come discover the skill of making baskets in the days before plastic and paper sacks. Fanthorp Inn will feature demonstrations of basket weaving as performed in the early days.

**September 17, 2016 – *Monarch Conservation / Restoration,* 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. - Education Center:** Monarch butterflies are known for the incredible mass migration that brings millions of them to California and Mexico each winter. North American monarchs are the only butterflies that make such a massive journey—up to 3,000 miles. Join other interested adults to explore the decline of the Monarch butterfly, and discuss lifecycle, habitat, migration, and restoration activities that can be undertaken from the smallest flowerbed to the largest acreage. The workshop will include approximately one hour of lively education, followed by a one-hour nature walk (weather permitting) and discussion of the restoration efforts being undertaken by the Washington on the Brazos State Historic Site. The session will last approximately 2 hours, and is hosted by the Gideon Lincecum Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists. Contact: Karen Ginnard, (713) 584-9756 or kginnard56@gmail.com.

**September 17, 2016 – *Living History Saturday,* 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.:** 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. Try your hand at writing with a quill pen and sign a copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence. Visit with militia soldiers travelling 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 guided tours of Independence Hall will not be offered these days. Contact: Jon Failor at (936) 878-2214 ext. 224 or jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov.

**Washington on the Brazos**

**The Park:** The expansive park grounds 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.

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.

Visitors should call the park at (936) 878-2214 to confirm all of these dates and times; events subject to change based on weather, etc. Leashed pets allowed in 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).