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August 2016

**For Immediate Release:**

**Washington on the Brazos State Historic Site – August through December 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 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.

**One of the site’s most significant, annual events occurs on March 4 and 5, 2017: *Texas Independence Day Celebration;*** 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Washington on the Brazos State Historic Site). “Texas Independence Day Celebration”is an annual two-day celebration featuring live music, food, traditional crafts, living history presentations, firing demonstrations, historical encampments and commemorative programs. Guests will experience life in Texas in 1836 by visiting with reenactors; witnessing firing demonstrations in the Texas Army camps; watching cooking, weaving and period craft demonstrations; and walking the same trail as Texas’ forefathers and pioneer families. Texas musicians and actors will provide musical and theatrical entertainment. A Kid Zone will allow children to dress up in historical costumes; sign a large scale copy of the Declaration; and takes photos near the Declaration. Contact: Jon Failor at (936) 878-2214 ext. 224 or jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov.

**SCHEDULE OF OTHER SPECIAL EVENTS/EXHIBITS - OCT THROUGH DEC 2016:**

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 Houston McGaugh at 936-878-2461 or hmcgaugh@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, ext. 241 or scarlson@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.

**Saturday, September 3*,* 2016 *- Turtle! Turtle! – Turtles and Tortoises of Texas,* 1 – 3 p.m. – Education Center:** This seminar will discuss Red-eared Sliders, Texas Tortoises, other turtles and tortoises common to the area and State, as well as the difference between turtles and tortoise; what action to take if a tortoise or turtle is found; and which are protected. The session will last approximately 1½ to 2 hours, including classroom education and a nature walk, and is hosted by the Gideon Lincecum Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists in partnership with TPWD. Contact: Karen Ginnard at (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 – *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.

**Saturday, September 24, 2016 – *Our Fine Feathered Friends – Birdwatching at the Park, 9 a.m. – 11 a.m. – Education Center:* :** Located on the Brazos River, this Historic Site is something incredible to experience, but it’s also an excellent place for birding. Since the park is kept very much as it might have been in the mid-1800s, there is an abundance of natural habitat and food sources for feathered friends. This seminar will explore birding, park safety, and some of the birds that make the park their home, then take a nature walk to see birds in the park; one advanced birder has observed 128 species of birds in the park, including Blue Birds. Beginners to advanced bird watchers are all welcome. The session will last approximately 2 hours, including classroom education and a nature walk, and is hosted by the Gideon Lincecum Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists in partnership with TPWD. Contact: Karen Ginnard at (713) 584-9756 or kginnard56@gmail.com.

**Saturday, October 1, 2016 – *Snakes Alive! – A Study of Snakes in the Washington County Area –* 1 p.m.– 3 p.m. – Education Center**: Snakes are interesting and diverse creatures, and as most property owners in Texas know, they often come free with the property. The beauty and habits of snakes routinely seen at Washington on the Brazos will be discussed including Copperheads, Texas Rat Snakes, Coral Snakes, Brazos Water Snakes and others.  Live specimens may be on hand in containers. Session will last approximately 2 hours, including classroom education and a nature walk, and is hosted by the Gideon Lincecum Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists in partnership with TPWD. Contact: Karen Ginnard at (713) 584-9756 or kginnard56@gmail.com.

**October 8-9, 2016 – *Plow Days* – 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. – Barrington Farm:** Preparing the fields for winter crops and controlling weeds is an important task on the farm. Amending the soil is also part of this process by adding manure and other nutrients. The **Texas Draft Horse and Mule Association** will prepare the fields at Barrington on plow days. Contact Bruce Wardlow at (936) 878-2214 ext. 246 or bruce.wardlow@tpwd.texas.gov.

**October 8, 2016 - *Stagecoach Days,* 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. – Fanthorp Inn:** This events allows 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; Children must be accompanied by an adult. 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 Program for Stagecoach Day: *Henry’s Wake:***  This special October Stagecoach Day tour look at the ceremonies and rituals associated with death in 19th century Texas, including the unfortunate passing of the Inn’s proprietor, Henry Fanthorp, on October 31, 1867. From draping mirrors to stopping clocks, this tour will introduce some of the unique mourning traditions used by the Victorians.  Tours are available from 9 am to 3:30 pm and will last approximately 30-45 minutes.  Children must be accompanied by an adult.

**October 15, 2016 – *Living History Saturday,* 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. – Washington on the Brazos Site:** 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, activities include, writing with a quill pen; signing a copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence; visiting with militia soldiers travelling through town; and playing some early Texas games. Step-back in time and discover the spot where Texas became Texas! Activities will vary and some are weather dependent. Kids focus to include: children’s toys, quill pen writing, dress up and hands on laundry. This is Texas Archeology Month and a hands-on artifact table will be displayed. Traditional guided tours of Independence Hall will not be offered these days. Contact: Jon Failor, (936) 878-2214 ext. 224 or jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov.

**October 22-23, 2016 – *Trades Days,* 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. – Barrington Farm**: The farmer was only one member of a larger world market. Who did the farmer rely on, and how did he send his goods to market? Leather working, laundering, woodworking, spinning, blacksmithing, pottery, and other trades will be displayed. Contact: Mike Edwards at (936) 878-2214 ext. 246 or mike.edwards@tpwd.texas.gov.

**November 5, 2016 – *Foraging for Food,* 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. – Barrington Farm**: Visitors will discover the wild edible plants plentiful in Texas. Hosted by one of the area’s most intrepid explorers, Dr. Mark “Merriwether” Vorderbruggen, PhD. will teach which plants are edible and/or medicinal. He will proselytize on how foraging heals the body, mind and soul. Class size is limited. For ages 12 and up. Contact: Perry Foskey at (936) 878-2214 ext. 246 or perry.foskey@tpwd.texas.gov.

**November 5, 2016 – *Night at the Star of the Republic Museum,* 7 p.m. – 9 p.m. – Star of the Republic Museum**: Explore the museum in a new light…a flashlight. After the lights go down in the museum, the exhibits come to life as live characters step out of the exhibits to tell the story of the Texas Republic. Guests should bring a flashlight. Adults/$5; students/$3; children ages 6 and under and all those with current Blinn College ID are free. Contact Houston McGaugh at 936-878-2461 or hmcgaugh@blinn.edu.

**November 19, 2016 – *Living History Saturday,* 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. – Washington on the Brazos Site**: 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, activities include, writing with a quill pen; signing a copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence; visiting with militia soldiers travelling through town; and playing some early Texas games. Step-back in time and discover the spot where Texas became Texas! Activities will vary and some are weather dependent. **Cooking demonstrations will focus on the type of foods available at the time of the Convention of 1836. Blacksmithing demonstrations will also be featured.** 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.

**November 26, 2016 – *Twilight Firelight,* 4:30 p.m. – 7 p.m. – Fanthorp Inn**: Visitors can tour this historic inn restored to its 1850s appearance, ride a replica stagecoach, enjoy period music, visit with interpreters in period clothing, and learn about this exciting site that is so rich with history and culture. Twilight Firelight includes stagecoach rides from the courthouse square in Anderson, TX to Fanthorp Inn. A donation of $10 for adults and $5 for children is suggested for stagecoach ride. Contact: Jon Failor at (936) 878-2214 ext. 224 or jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov.

**December 3-4, 2016 – *Special Christmas Shopping,* 9:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. – Washington Emporium Gift Shop**: The gift shop in the Visitor Center will host a special Christmas shopping event, featuring products made by local vendors and artisans from the area and throughout Texas. Refreshments and music will enhance the shopping experience. Santa Claus will be on hand to greet visitors, hear their Christmas wishes, and to take photos. Contact: Celeste Doty at (936) 878-2214 ext. 230 or celeste.doty@tpwd.texas.gov.

**December 10, 2016 – *Christmas on the Brazos*:** Begin the holiday season by spending special time at Washington on the Brazos. Activities commence in the early afternoon and extend into the evening, bringing a sense of the holiday spirit alive for all:

* ***An Afternoon with Dickens,* 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. *–* Independence Hall**: Staff dressed in period clothing will be regaling visitors with tales of Olde Time Christmas as told by the great author, Charles Dickens!
* ***Christmas Lore and Traditions,*** **4 p.m.** **– Independence Hal**l: History is not only about battles, dates and names but also touches on the special times in peoples’ lives, and Christmas is one of those very special times! With this program we discover how people embraced the holy day in the early Texas.
* The **Star of the Republic Museum** will host “make-and-take” period crafts from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Regular admission fees apply; no charge for the crafts. Museum open during regular hours from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
* The site’s **Visitor Center** and **Washington Emporium Gift Shop** will be open from 9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. and will feature merchandise from Texas artisans, tastings and samplings of some local fare, family friendly activities, and self-serve photo opportunities with Santa.
* **Barrington Living History Farm** will be open from noon until 3 p.m. and then will reopen for its **Candlelight Christmas** event that starts at 5:30 p.m. and lasts until 9 p.m. (with the last tour leaving at 8 p.m.). Regular admission fees will apply.
* ***Candlelight Christmas****,* **5:30 p.m. – Barrington Farm**:Program offered at timed intervals *with last ticket sold at 8 p.m*. Celebrate an 1850s Christmas. Meet St. Nick; fall in with some noisy, rowdy revelers; experience the Jones family lighting the Christmas tree and singing carols; attend an evening service with a traveling minister; and discover how the enslaved people celebrated Christmas. Allow at least one hour to complete the full experience. Groups will enter the site at timed intervals. Reservations are highly recommended and will be accepted starting October 1. Contact: Bruce Wardlow at 936-878-2214 ext. 246 or bruce.wardlow@tpwd.texas.gov.

**December 17, 2016 - *Living History Saturday,* 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. – Washington on the Brazos Site**: 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, activities include, writing with a quill pen; signing a copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence; visiting with militia soldiers travelling through town; and playing some early Texas games. Step-back in time and discover the spot where Texas became Texas! (Activities will vary and some are weather dependent). This program will feature Quill pen writing and 19th century medicine.Traditional guided tours of Independence Hall will not be offered these days. Contact: Jon Failor, (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).