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

February 2018

**For Immediate Release:**

**Washington on the Brazos State Historic Site**

**Q2 May through August 2018 Special Events and Celebrations**

It was March 2, 1836 when 59 delegates bravely met at Washington, Texas to do something few have ever done: found a nation and 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, stories of this tumultuous time in Texas history live on and can be experienced at [Independence Hall](http://wheretexasbecametexas.org/about/independence-hall/) (the site in 1836 where the representatives met to write the declaration of independence and craft the first constitution); 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.

**Extra Special Events:**

**Now through February 2019 -** ***So Others Could Follow: Four Centuries of Maps That Define Texas* - Star of the Republic Museum:** The museum exhibit illustrates the evolution of Texas’s distinct shape, recognized around the world with 20 maps spanning three centuries from the most famous cartographers in the world, is the result of four centuries of exploration and cartography. These maps from the Museum’s collection illustrate the evolution of the state, both topographically and politically. Contact Lisa Berg at 936-878-2461, ext. 237, or lisa.berg@blinn.edu.

Washington on the Brazos’s annual fundraising event, [Sundown Social](http://wheretexasbecametexas.org/events/sundown-social/) will be held at 6 p.m., Saturday, April 21, 2018 at [Rockin’ Star Ranch](https://rockinstarbrenham.com/) in Brenham, Texas. This event will include a gourmet chuck wagon steak dinner, cocktails, musical entertainment by Texas legend [Dale Watson](https://www.dalewatson.com), 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 the park grounds. Ginger Moreland at 979-830-1824 or office@wheretexasbecametexas.org to purchase tickets or to inquire about table and corporate/individual sponsorships.

**June 23, 2018 – *Juneteenth Heritage Program – 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.*:** 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. Washington on the Brazos will observe this important occasion and celebrate the rich African American heritage and culture of the Brazos Valley, past and present.  Now in its second year, the Juneteenth Heritage program will include exhibits, art displays, guest speakers, living history, music and more. Contact Jon Failor at (936) 878-2214 ext. 224 or jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov.

**[Blue Star Museums](http://bluestarfam.org/Programs/Blue_Star_Museums) program** – All attractions at Washington on the Brazos (Independence Hall, Barrington Living History Farm and Star of the Republic Museum) are offering free admission tours 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 29 through Labor Day, September 4.

**Teachers Free in August** – 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.  Contact (936) 878-2214.

**Farmers Market** ***- from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays: April 21, May 19, June 16 and July 21, 2018:*** Washington on the Brazos State Historic Site is holding Farmers Markets from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. under the live oak trees outside the park’s Visitor Center every third Saturday, from April through July. Local vegetables, fruits, snacks from food trucks, baked goods, artisan items and more will be sold at this free event, sponsored by the Washington on the Brazos Park Association. The markets will be held rain or shine since vendors can move inside. Parking and admission to the park are free, as always.

***Pioneer Playroom* – Permanent Exhibit – 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. Contact Donna Barker at (936) 878-2461 ext. 245 or donna.barker@blinn.edu.

**NOTE:**  The annual “Fireworks on the Brazos” event on July 4th at Washington on the Brazos will no longer be held, due to the large numbers of celebrations in the area.  H-E-B has generously moved its underwriting from this event to the park’s annual [Texas Independence Day Celebration](http://wheretexasbecametexas.org/events/texas-independence-day-celebration-3/) event in March, as well as its new summer tradition:  the Juneteenth Heritage Celebration.   Washington on the Brazos State Park Association thanks HEB for its unwavering and generous support of its programs and events, starting with its sponsorship of Fireworks on the Brazos when the event as created nearly 20 years ago, to fill a void in the area.

**SCHEDULE OF SPECIAL EVENTS – MAY THROUGH AUGUST 2018:**

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.

**May 5, 2018 – Seeds of the Past:** (Barrington Living History Farm): Discover what the folks at Barrington Farm would have raised in their gardens to add some variety to their meals. Learn tips and tricks from early Texas for a thriving garden, and take home heirloom seeds to grow a garden at home. Contact Laura at 936-878-2214 ext. 246.

**May 12, 2018 – *Stagecoach Days*:**9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (Fanthorp Inn): Stagecoach Days allow visitors to experience what it was like to travel cross country via mule-driven 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 will be offered from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 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.

**May 19, 2018 – *Living History Saturday*:** 10 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (Independence Hall and Park Grounds): Travel back in time to where a nation was born in 1836. On the third Saturday of each month, staff and volunteers dress in period clothing to bring to life the people and events of Old Washington for a unique opportunity for the entire family to discover various aspects of life during the Republic of Texas. The program features family activities including writing with a quill pen, signing a copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence, visiting with militia soldiers or playing early Texas games. Demonstrations include cooking demonstrations. 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.

**May 19, 2018 - Farmers Market** ***- from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.:*** Washington on the Brazos State Historic Site is holding Farmers Markets from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. under the live oak trees outside the park’s Visitor Center every third Saturday, from April through July. Local vegetables, fruits, snacks from food trucks, baked goods, artisan items and more will be sold at this free event, sponsored by the Washington on the Brazos Park Association. The markets will be held rain or shine since vendors can move inside. Parking and admission to the park are free, as always.

**May 29 through Labor Day, September 4, 2018** - [**Blue Star Museums**](http://bluestarfam.org/Programs/Blue_Star_Museums) **program:** All attractions at Washington on the Brazos (Independence Hall, Barrington Living History Farm and Star of the Republic Museum) are offering free admission tours 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 29 through Labor Day, September 4.

**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 homes for warmer weather and to clean out the dust from a shut-in winter. A much more laborious task than cleaning today, visitors can help clean windows, shake out rugs and learn how early Texans cleaned more delicate items. Contact the farm at (936) 878-2214 ext. 246.

**June 9, 2018 – *Stagecoach Days*:**9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (Fanthorp Inn): Stagecoach Days allow visitors to experience what it was like to travel cross country via mule-driven 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 will be offered from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 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.

**June 16, 2018 - Farmers Market** ***- from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.:*** Washington on the Brazos State Historic Site is holding Farmers Markets from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. under the live oak trees outside the park’s Visitor Center every third Saturday, from April through July. Local vegetables, fruits, snacks from food trucks, baked goods, artisan items and more will be sold at this free event, sponsored by the Washington on the Brazos Park Association. The markets will be held rain or shine since vendors can move inside. Parking and admission to the park are free, as always.

**June 23, 2018 – *Juneteenth Heritage Program*:** 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. Washington on the Brazos will observe this important occasion and celebrate the rich African American heritage and culture of the Brazos Valley, past and present.  Now in its second year, the Juneteenth Heritage program will include exhibits, art displays, guest speakers, living history, music and more. Contact Jon Failor at (936) 878-2214 ext. 224 or jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov.

**July 7, 2018 – *Mud, Glorious Mud***: 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Barrington Living History Farm): Repairing mud chinking was an annual event that happened on a farm in early Texas. Watch staff mix, chink and daub the farm’s chimney and cabins. Contact the farm at 936-878-2214 ext. 246.

**July 14, 2018 – *Stagecoach Days*:**9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (Fanthorp Inn): Stagecoach Days allow visitors to experience what it was like to travel cross country via mule-driven 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 will be offered from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 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.

**July 21, 2018 – *Living History Saturday*:** 10 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (Independence Hall and Park Grounds): Travel back in time to where a nation was born in 1836. On the third Saturday of each month, staff and volunteers dress in period clothing to bring to life the people and events of Old Washington for a unique opportunity for the entire family to discover various aspects of life during the Republic of Texas. The program features family activities including writing with a quill pen, signing a copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence, visiting with militia soldiers, blacksmithing and Texian Militia display with black powder rifle demonstration at timed intervals 11 am, 1 pm and 3 pm. Tours of Independence Hall will not be offered this day. Contact Jon Failor at (936) 878-2214, ext. 224 or jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov.

**July 21, 2018 - Farmers Market** ***- from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.:*** Washington on the Brazos State Historic Site is holding Farmers Markets from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. under the live oak trees outside the park’s Visitor Center every third Saturday, from April through July. Local vegetables, fruits, snacks from food trucks, baked goods, artisan items and more will be sold at this free event, sponsored by the Washington on the Brazos Park Association. The markets will be held rain or shine since vendors can move inside. Parking and admission to the park are free, as always.

**Teachers Free in August** – 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.  Contact (936) 878-2214.

**August 4, 2018 – *School Class:*** (Barrington Living History Farm): Guests will learn 1850 etiquette and the alphabet, during an early Texas school lesson. Contact the Farm at 936-878-2214 ext. 246.

**August 18, 2018 – *Living History Saturday*:** 10 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (Independence Hall and Park Grounds): Travel back in time to where a nation was born in 1836. On the third Saturday of each month, staff and volunteers dress in period clothing to bring to life the people and events of Old Washington for a unique opportunity for the entire family to discover various aspects of life during the Republic of Texas. The program features family activities including writing with a quill pen, signing a copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence, visiting with militia soldiers or playing early Texas games. Demonstrations include quill pen writing and 19th century medicine. Tours of Independence Hall will not be offered these days. Contact Adam Arnold at (936) 878-2214, ext. 228 or adam.arnold@tpwd.texas.gov.

**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. All 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).