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**For Immediate Release:**

**Washington on the Brazos State Historic Site**  
**August through December 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](#) 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](#) (the site in 1836 where the representatives met to write the declaration of independence); the [Star of the Republic Museum](#) (collections honoring the history, cultures, diversity and values of early Texans; administered by Blinn College); and [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](#) 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 Historic Site 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 29 through Labor Day, September 4, as part of the [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.

**VERY SPECIAL EVENTS:**

**Saturday, December 9, 2017: *Christmas on the Brazos*** celebrates the historic Christmas traditions of Texas in the 1800s with period music, craft-making and artisan gifts. The day culminates in the popular ***Candlelight Christmas*** event at Barrington Living History Farm, featuring Texan frontier festivities such as musket firing, dancing and candlelit tour of the farm. Activities commence in the early afternoon and extend into the evening, bringing holiday spirit alive for all. [See below for more details.](#)

**Saturday and Sunday, March 3 and 4, 2018: *Texas Independence Day Celebration*** - 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Washington on the Brazos State Historic Site). This annual two-day celebration features 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 Texas Declaration of Independence; and take photos near the Declaration. Contact: Jon Failor at [\(936\) 878-2214](tel:936-878-2214) ext. 224 or [jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov).

**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 Washington on the Brazos will celebrate the 182nd 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](mailto:donna.barker@blinn.edu).

## **SCHEDULE OF SPECIAL EVENTS - AUG THROUGH DEC 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, check the website at [www.wheretexasbecametexas.org](http://www.wheretexasbecametexas.org) or follow on [Facebook](#) to confirm these dates and times; events subject to change based on weather, etc.

**All weekends in August – Field Tending Weekends:** 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Barrington Living History Farm): Volunteers can assist the farm staff in tending to fields and gardens to keep down bugs and weeds, which are the enemies of the farmer. Contact (936) 878-2214, ext. 246.

**August 19, 2017 – Living History Saturday:** 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (Independence Hall and Old Washington Townsite): 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. This program will feature: Quill pen writing and 19<sup>th</sup> century medicine. Traditional 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](mailto:jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov).

**August 19, 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. In the Pioneer Playroom, visitors can also discover what life was like for kids living in the 1830s. Contact Donna Barker at (936) 878-2461, ext. 236 or [Donna.barker@blinn.edu](mailto:Donna.barker@blinn.edu).

**September 9, 2017 – Stagecoach Days:** 11 a.m. – 3 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 last approximately 15 minutes and Inn tours for 30-45 minutes. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Contact Jon Failor at (936) 878-2214, ext. 224 or [jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov).

**Special Focus on September 9: Bundles for Baskets** – Join the staff at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. for "Bundles for Baskets." Visitors will discover the techniques and skills needed to build storage containers in early Texas—a time when Tupperware didn't exist.

**September 16, 2017 - Hands-On-History – Rope Making:** 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Star of the Republic Museum): Join museum staff on the third Saturday of each month to make crafts 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. Contact Donna Barker at (936) 878-2461, ext. 236 or [Donna.barker@blinn.edu](mailto:Donna.barker@blinn.edu).

**September 16, 2017 – Living History Saturday:** 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (Independence Hall and Old Washington Townsite): 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 for the entire family to discover various aspects of life surrounding the birth of the Republic of Texas. This program will feature: Quill pen writing, Blacksmithing and woodworking demonstration and Texian Militia display with black powder rifle demonstration at timed intervals: 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. Visitors can write with a quill pen and sign a copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence; meet militia soldiers travelling through town or play early Texas games. Activities will vary and some are weather dependent. Traditional 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](mailto:jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov).

**September 23, 2017 – Cotton Pickin':** 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Barrington Living History Farm): Join the staff in picking heirloom cotton and tending the fields on an 1850s farm. Learn where Dr. Jones' sold his most important cash crop. Contact Bruce Wardlow at (936) 878-2214, ext. 246 or [bruce.wardlow@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:bruce.wardlow@tpwd.texas.gov).

**October 7, 2017 – Trade Days:** 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Barrington Living History Farm): The farmer was only one member of a large world market in the 1800s. Other trades in action such as leather working, laundering, woodworking, spinning, blacksmithing and pottery making will be displayed. Contact Mike Edwards at (936) 878-2214, ext. 246 or [mike.edwards@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:mike.edwards@tpwd.texas.gov).

**October 14, 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. Contact Jon Failor at (936) 878-2214, ext. 224 or [jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov).

**Special Focus on October 4: Henry Fanthorp's Wake** –11 a.m., 1 p.m., 2 p.m. and 3 p.m.

Visitors will get a look at the ceremonies and rituals of death in 19th century Texas. Henry Fanthorp, proprietor of one of Texas' most successful stagecoach inns was one of many people who met their demise at Fanthorp's Stagecoach Inn. This presentation lasts approximately 40 minutes and is not recommended for children under 10 years.

[C. Mobley, Collodion artist](#) demonstrate traditional wet-plate photography and discuss the role of the photograph in the mourning practices of the 19th century.

**October 21, 2017 - Hands-On History – Basket Weaving:** 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Star of the Republic Museum): Join museum staff on every Saturday of each month 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 at (936) 878-2461, ext. 236 or [Donna.barker@blinn.edu](mailto:Donna.barker@blinn.edu).

**October 21, 2017 – Living History Saturday:** 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (Independence Hall and Old Washington Townsite): 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 for the entire family to discover various aspects of life surrounding the birth of the Republic of Texas. This program will feature: children's toys, quill pen writing, dress-up and hands-on laundry at timed intervals: 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. Texas Archeology Month, hands-on artifact table will be on display. Hands-on artifact table will also be present. Visitors can write with a quill pen and sign a copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence; meet militia soldiers travelling through town or play early Texas games. Activities will vary and some are weather dependent. Traditional 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](mailto:jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov).

**October 28, 2017 – Plow Day:** 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Barrington Living History Farm): Preparing the fields for winter crops, and keeping down weeds were important tasks on the farm. Amending the soil was part of this process, both with adding manure and other nutrients. The [Texas Draft Horse and Mule Association](#) will help.

Contact Bruce Wardlow at (936) 878-2214, ext. 246 or [bruce.wardlow@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:bruce.wardlow@tpwd.texas.gov).

**November 4, 2017 – Foraging for Food:** 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. (Barrington Living History 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, Ph.D. 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 and recommended for ages 12 and up. To make reservations, call Perry Foskey at (936) 878-2214, ext. 246.

**November 11, 2017 – Behind the Scenes Tour:** 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. (Barrington Living History Farm): Come see how staff keep a working farm running when it is closed to the public. Join them in not-so-period farm work and learn some secrets about Barrington Living History Farm. Contact Mike Edwards at (936) 878-2214, ext. 246 or [mike.edwards@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:mike.edwards@tpwd.texas.gov).

**November 18, 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. Contact Donna Barker at (936) 878-2461, ext. 236 or [Donna.barker@blinn.edu](mailto:Donna.barker@blinn.edu).

**Thanksgiving Weekend: Washington on the Brazos, Star of Republic Museum and Fanthorp Inn are closed on Thursday, November 23, 2017 for Thanksgiving Day. All reopen on Friday morning, for the weekend.**

**November 25, 2017 – Twilight Firelight:** 4:30 p.m. – 7 p.m. (Fanthorp Inn): Visitors can tour this historic inn restored to its 1850s candlelit appearance, ride a replica mule-driven stagecoach, enjoy period music, dancing, visit with interpreters in period clothing and learn about this exciting site that is so rich with history and culture. Guest can board a stagecoach or a mule-driven wagon for rides from the Grimes County Courthouse in Anderson, TX to Fanthorp Inn beginning at 4:30 p.m. with last ride leaving Anderson at 7 p.m. Rides will leave every 15 minutes. The last stagecoach and wagon rides will leave Fanthorp to return to Anderson at 8 p.m. Tickets will be available beginning at 4:30 p.m. the day of the event in the Grimes County Courthouse parking area where stagecoach and wagon rides to the Inn will begin. Please dress appropriately for the season as parts of the event and are held outdoors, and the wagons/stagecoaches are open air. First floor of Fanthorp Inn is handicapped accessible. A donation of \$10 for adults and \$5 for children under 12 is suggested for stagecoach ride. Contact Jon Failor at 936-878-2214, ext. 224 or [jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov).

**December 9, 2017 – 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 an 1850s Christmas alive for all. The highlight of the celebration is **Candlelight Christmas**, from **5:30 p.m. – 9 p.m. at Barrington Living History Farm**. 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, which is offered at timed intervals the last tour leaving at 8 p.m. Reservations are highly recommended and will be accepted starting October 1 by phone at 936-878-2214, ext. 246. Regular admission fees apply. Contact Bruce Wardlow at (936) 878-2214, ext. 246 or [bruce.wardlow@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:bruce.wardlow@tpwd.texas.gov).

**Christmas Lore and Traditions:** 4 p.m. (Independence Hall) - 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. This program discovers how people embraced the holidays in early Texas, and which of our present-day holiday traditions came from back then. Contact Jon Failor at (936) 878-2214 ext. 224 or [jon.failor@tpwd.gov](mailto:jon.failor@tpwd.gov).

Activities during the day include staff dressed in period clothing regaling visitors with tales of Olde Time Christmas; programs on Christmas lore, traditions and craft making; and selfie photo opportunities with Santa. Merchandise from Texas artisans will be featured at the Visitor's Center and Washington Emporium Gift Shop from 9:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

**December 16, 2017 - Living History Saturday:** 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (Independence Hall and Old Washington Townsite): 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 for the entire family to discover various aspects of life surrounding the birth of the Republic of Texas. This program will feature Quill pen writing and 19<sup>th</sup> century medicine. Visitors can write with a quill pen and sign a copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence; meet militia soldiers travelling through town or play early Texas games. Activities will vary and some are weather dependent. Traditional 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](mailto:jon.failor@tpwd.texas.gov).

**Christmas and New Year's Day: Washington on the Brazos and Fanthorp Inn sites are closed Monday, December 25 and Monday, January 1, 2018. Star of Republic Museum will close Saturday, December 23 and will reopen January 2, 2018.**

### **Washington on the Brazos State Historic Site**

There are many reasons to join the [Washington on the Brazos State 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 such as Fireworks on the Brazos.

**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-BREHAM, 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) or Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Washington-on-the-Brazos-State-Historic-Site-1562674683997696/>.