

# TEXAS INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATION



Our mission  
is to educate,  
participate and  
celebrate Texas  
Independence.

- Symposium
- Cook-Off
- Art Contest
- Music




★ ★ ★ MARCH 13-14, 2015 ★ ★ ★

TEXAS HERITAGE INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATION ASSOCIATION, INC.  
**COMMITTEE**



Texas Heritage Independence Association, Inc. is an organization dedicated to promote the participation of Tejanos in the Texas Independence. Our vision is to bring awareness and acknowledgement to Tejanos who participated in the Independence of Texas and in U. S. history. We (THICA) want to educate and promote Texas Independence by reenacting events of the Texas Revolution leading to Texas Independence.



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SE HABLA ESPAÑOL

## Letter from the President

**O**n behalf of the Texas Heritage and Independence Celebration Assoc. (THICA), everyone in the Rio Grande Valley and the rest of Texas is invited to our 8th Annual Texas Independence Day celebration on March 14th at 11am-5pm at the San Benito Fair Grounds on Hwy 510. That Saturday will be our



Day of Celebration, a Day of Education, and a Day of Participation with our main mission is to commemorate and honor the bravery and courage of all the Texans and Tejanos (Texas-born citizens of Mexican and Spanish ancestry) who fought and died for Texas Independence from Mexico.

Our main attraction will be our re-enactments of the Battle of Gonzales, the Battle of the Alamo, and the Battle of San Jacinto, with the roar of the cannons and smoking fire from the gunpowder loading muskets. Everyone needs to see the brave Texans and Tejanos defending the Alamo to the last man, as well as seeing Capt. Juan Seguin lead his Tejanos to victory with Gen. Houston and the

Texas army on the plains of San Jacinto, and the direct confrontation between the Mexican Lieutenant and the Texan Colonel over the possession of the small cannon at Gonzales.

Other attractions will be our invitation to the public to participate in the resigning the Texas Declaration of Independence with the names of the 59 Texas Patriots including Jose Antonio Navarro, Francisco Ruiz, and Lorenzo de Zavala, our 3rd Annual Texas sanctioned Bar-B-Que cook-off, music, food and craft vendors, and our art contest. Also, joining us at our celebration will be the San Benito Economic Development Councils Market Days and the Elks Lodge chili cook-off. On March 13th, our Texas history symposium is open to the general public for \$10 and to educators for \$50 for Continuing Education credits who want to expand the knowledge of Texas heritage and history, as well a parade on Friday night at 7pm with our vaqueros. There will also be music and a dessert cook-off on the fairgrounds that night.

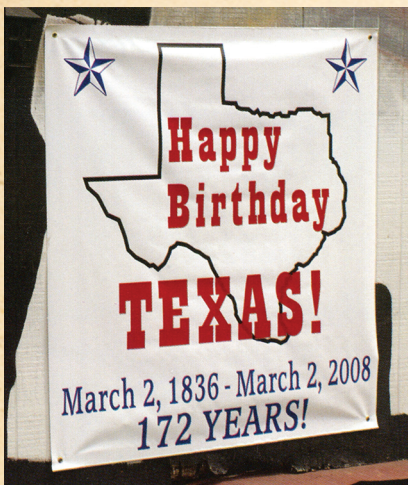
Our celebration is made possible only with the tireless efforts of our volunteers of THICA, along with the total community commitment of San Benito. Mayor Celeste Sanchez will give the official city proclamation of Texas Independence Day in San Benito. Salomon Torres, executive director of the San Benito EDC will be portraying General Santa Anna leading the Mexican soldiers, and Dr. Puig, San Benito school superintendent, will be a Mexican soldier re-enactor shooting his gun-powder loading musket on the battlefield.

THICA would truly appreciate everyone to come out to the San Benito Fair Grounds and join us in celebrating Texas Independence Day, the biggest celebration south of San Antonio.

VIVA TEJAS Y VIVAN LOS TEJANOS

Jack Ayoub

President-THICA



**Texas Heritage and  
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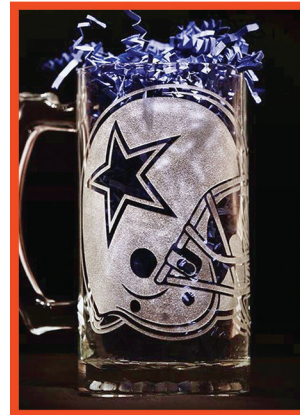


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# Table of Contents

<b>7</b>	Texas Independence Day Schedule of Events	<b>16-17</b>	The Battles for Texas Independence
<b>8-9</b>	Texas History Symposium 2015 <i>Keynote Speakers</i>	<b>18</b>	Jose Antonio Navarro <i>Tejano leader among those who signed the Texas Declaration of Independence</i>
<b>10</b>	Pan de Campo <i>Old fashioned dish is official bread of Texas</i>	<b>19</b>	Antonio Menchaca Nava and Jimenez
<b>11</b>	Pan de Campo Recipe	<b>21</b>	The Art of Reenactment <i>Cordova, Wildhorse Desert Historical Brigade bring Texas history alive</i>
<b>12</b>	Texas Heritage Independence Celebration Association - Court 2015	<b>22-23</b>	The Science of Reenactment
<b>13</b>	Clara Driscoll <i>"Savior of the Alamo"</i>	<b>27</b>	Special Thanks To Supporters
<b>14-15</b>	The Beginning of Our Celebration		

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# Texas Independence Day - Schedule of Events

## March 13

8:00AM-4:00PM Annual Educational Symposium  
San Benito City Hall  
485 N. Sam Houston

### Featured Speakers:

Dr. Andrés Tijerina  
Dr. Harriett Denise Joseph  
Dr. Trinidad Gonzales  
Dr. Joseph Chance  
Sergio Gonzalez

### OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

General Admission - \$10.00  
*(Lunch and Refreshments Included)*

Educators - \$50.00  
*(Continued Education Units Awarded)*

7:00PM City Parade along Sam Houston Blvd.  
8:00PM Turn-In Time for Dessert Cook-Off  
Must cook onsite/ open flame

## March 14

8:00AM Music- Franko. Cookers Meeting  
9:00 AM Market Days  
10:00AM Entertainment: Carlos Cañas  
11:00AM Arena Parade-Presentation of Colors  
11:15AM Proclamation- Mayor of San Benito Celeste Sanchez  
11:20AM Keynote Speaker- Dr. Andrés Tijerina  
11:30AM Public to participate in the signing of the Texas Declaration of Independence  
12:00PM Re-Enactment: Battle of Gonzales  
(The Lexington of Texas) Narrated by Wade Markum  
12:30PM Festivities: Live Music, Roy Solis - Country Singer  
1:00PM BBQ Judging Starts  
2:00PM Re-Enactment: Battle of the Alamo  
Narrated by Wade Markum  
2:30PM Festivities: Live Music, The Tejano Boys  
3:00PM Awards: Art Contest Winners Announced  
4:00PM Re-Enactment: Battle of San Jacinto  
Narrated by Wade Markum  
4:20PM Awards: BBQ Cook-off Winners Announced  
5:00PM Entertainment - Food Vendors



# Texas History Symposium 2015

## Keynote Speakers

### Elizandro Muñoz

Elizandro Muñoz earned a M.A. in history and has been an assistant professor of history at South Texas College, where he has been recognized with a South Texas College Jaguar Excellence Award and an NISOD (National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development) Excellence Award. Mr. Muñoz always volunteers with various organizations that promote, preserve, and celebrate history and is proud to be a founding member of THICA (Texas Heritage and Celebration Association, Inc.) serving as vice chair of our committee. While helping the Harlingen Heritage Day Event to become established, he became associated with military re-enactors and with the Bear Clan Indian Tribe with their 30 foot teepee that would become our foundation for the Texas Independence Day Celebration in San Benito. On March 7th, Mr. Muñoz will be one of the featured Texas history speakers at the Texas History Symposium at the San Benito School District building with his topic, "Early Spanish Ranches in Texas".

### Dr. Andrés Tijerina

Andrés Tijerina, a native of Ozona, earned his Bachelor's degree from Texas A & M University, Master's from Texas Tech, and Doctorate from the University of Texas at Austin. Following teaching stints at Tech, UT Austin, UT San Antonio, and Texas A & M - Kingsville, Dr. Tijerina joined the faculty of ACC and serves with distinction as Professor of History at the Pinnacle Campus.

Dr. Tijerina is the author of *Tejanos and Texas Under the Mexican Flag* and *Tejano Empire: Life on the South Texas Ranchos*. He edited Andrés Saenz's *Early Tejano Ranching In Duval County* and co-edited Elena Zamora O'Shea's novel entitled *El Mesquite*. All four works are available through A & M University Press. Organizations such as the Sons of the Republic of Texas, the Texas State Historical Association, and the Texas Historical Commission have officially recognized the significance of such works with the Presidio La Santa Award, the Kate Broocks Bates Award, and the T. R. Fehrenbach Award.

Dr. Tijerina is a Fellow of the Texas State Historical Association and an active presenter to gatherings of historians throughout the state. His writings have appeared as chapters, articles, and book reviews in journals ranging from the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* to the *American Historical Review*.

### Dr. Trinidad Gonzales

South Texas College history professor Dr. Trinidad Gonzales was elected to the AHA's Council Teaching Division in November, and began his three-year term on Jan. 2, 2014 at the association's annual meeting in Washington, D.C.

Gonzales, helps coordinate the STC Mexican American Studies Program. "It will be an opportunity to be involved in conversations related to the field of history that AHA engages in throughout the year."

Dr. Gonzales' leadership role within the division will include being involved in policy-making decisions for the AHA and providing standards for the profession of history, and to advocate for the highest degree of respect for the importance of history to the nation's educational policy makers.

Dr. Gonzales earned his doctorate from the University of Houston and received a Center for Mexican American Studies Graduate Fellowship and a Smithsonian Predoctoral Fellowship. His areas of research include Borderlands, Chicana/o, and Civil Rights histories, specializing in early 20th century Lower Rio Grande Valley history. Dr. Gonzales' most recent publication is "The Mexican Revolution, Revolución de Texas, Matanza de 1915," in *War Along the Border: The Mexican Revolution and Tejano Communities*, edited by Arnoldo de León and published in 2012.



## Dr. Joseph Chance

Dr. Joseph Chance earned a PhD in mathematics at UT in Austin in 1974 and has taught at Pan American College from 1969-2005 where he served as chairman of the math department for 10 years. He wrote a Texas history column in the Valley Morning Star, "History by Chance" and has authored 10 books: 2 of which were self-published and 8 that were published by the University press that included "The Regimental History in the War between the States and the Mississippi Rifles led by Jefferson Davis in the Mexican-American War". Dr. Chance's great-great-grandfather came to Texas with Stephen F. Austin and became a Mexican citizen, making Chance a true Mexican-American.

## Dr. Harriett Denise Joseph

Dr. Harriett Denise Joseph received her BA. in Spanish and History for Southern Methodist University (Phi Beta Kappa) and her NLA. and PhD. in Latin American History from the University of North Texas. She has been a member of the history faculty at TSC and UTB/TSC for thirty-five years and her main teaching focus has been on Colonial Mexico and Texas history. Dr. Joseph is the co-author of "Notable Men and Women of Spanish Texas", "Explorers and Settlers of Spanish Texas" and "Spanish Texas, 1591 -1821", all published by the University of Texas Press at Austin. She also authors more than a dozen articles on topics as varied as the Roman Catholic Church in Mexico and the History of Temple Beth-El in Brownsville. She also serves as a Member of the Texas State Historical Association's Advisory Committee for the Handbook of Texas Online and of the TSHA's Distinguished Speakers Bureau.

## Sergio Gonzales

Sergio Gonzalez is a bilingual teacher at Brownsville Independent School District. He was born on October 23, 1966 in Mexico City, and came to the United States in 1993. He attended and graduated from the University of Texas-Brownsville and is a Certified Translator and Interpreter. He is an amateur photographer and has six years of experience as a re-enactor. Sergio lives in Brownsville with his lovely wife, Gabriela, and their three children: Daniela, Rebecca and Mauricio.



# Pan de Campo

## Old fashioned dish is official state bread of Texas

**I**t's a little known fact that Pan de Campo is the official state bread of Texas.

After San Benito's Annual Texas Independence Day Celebration, chances are those who attend the event won't forget it.

Often baked in a cast iron Dutch oven over a mesquite fire, Pan de Campo, or camp bread, is a round loaf of bread about the diameter of the Dutch oven in which it was baked and about an inch and a half or two inches thick.

Heralded for its flavor and texture, Pan de Campo has become such a mainstay in Texan/Mexican/ Tejano culture that there are often festivals and celebrations specifically themed just for the bread.

This was also the case in San Benito at one point, when Pan de Campo festivals near the Berta Cabaza Elementary School campus were once held. Although these festivals have not been held in three years, the event once attracted not just Pan de Campo bakers but a plethora of other interesting exhibitors. There were those who also

displayed bows and arrows of the time and instructed on how to craft them, not to mention people who portrayed 18th century handymen and the tools once used.

Now for the second consecutive year, those who attend the Texas Independence Day Celebration in San Benito will get the opportunity to taste the camp bread.

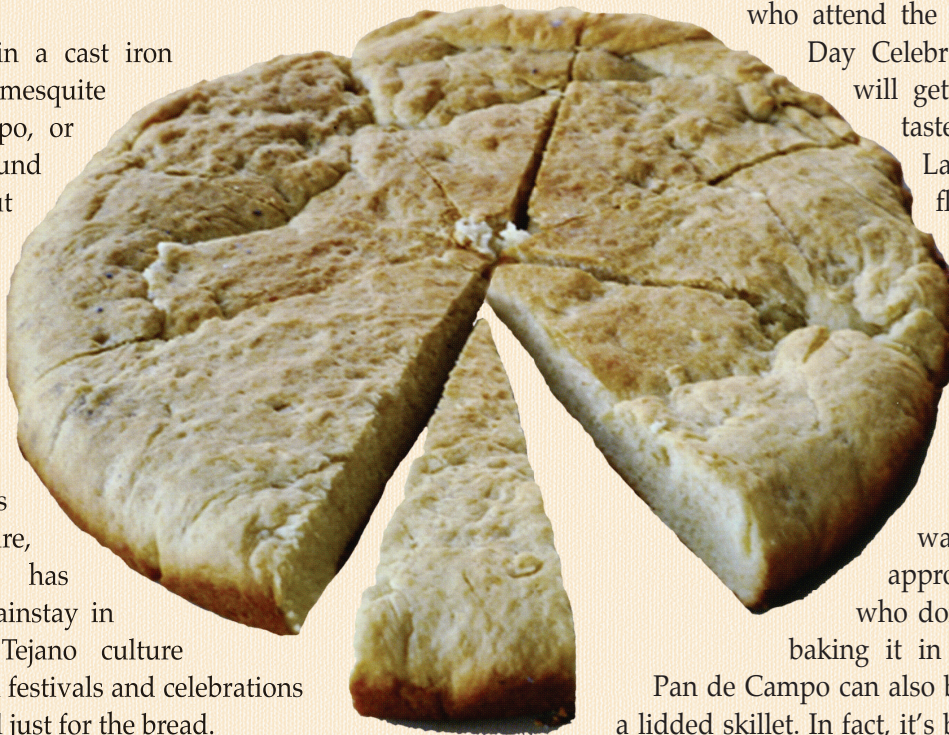
Last year, attendees flocked first to the Pan de Campo site before witnessing any other display or exhibit - a true testament to the tasty bread's allure and deliciousness.

Those who do not want to take the class approach, and for those who don't want to cheat by

baking it in their kitchen oven, Pan de Campo can also be fried or cooked in a lidded skillet. In fact, it's been known that one can also wrap the dough around a long wooden stick and cook it over a coal fire.

However, it has been argued by some that baking the Pan de Campo in a cast iron Dutch oven gives it a moist texture.

*(Pan de Campo image courtesy of Lori Falcon of MyWoodenSpoon.com)*



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# Pan de Campo Recipe

## INGREDIENTS:

5 oz Evaporated Milk  
4 lb bag of flour (*I recommend King Arthur*)  
4 cups buttermilk biscuit mix  
1 tsp salt  
3/4 cup baking powder  
1/2 cup sugar  
1 cup lard or 1 large stick butter flavored Crisco

## DIRECTIONS:

Mix all ingredients in a BIG bowl and let rest for about 20 minutes. Pinch off enough to roll out a 12" circle about 1/4" thick. Grease your dutch oven and place one dough circle inside dutch oven. Cook 15 minutes with coals on both top and bottom, then remove from bottom coals and cook another five minutes with coals on top to brown the camp bread. This recipe makes at least eight 12" pans worth.



*(Pan de Campo images and recipe courtesy of Lori Falcon of MyWoodenSpoon.com)*



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**Solanii  
Jasso**

**Olga  
Berrones**

*Chelsea A. Rodriguez, Age: 17 - Attends IDEA College Prep, San Benito - 11th Grade*

*April Joy Sequera, Age: 17 - Attends IDEA College Prep, San Benito - 11th Grade*

*Cecilia M. Flores, Age: 16 - Attends San Benito High School - 10th Grade*

*Solanii Jasso, Age: 8 - Attends Judge Oscar De La Fuente - 3rd Grade*

*Olga Berrones, Age: 17 - Attends IDEA College Prep, San Benito - 12th Grade*

# Clara Driscoll

## “SAVIOR OF THE ALAMO”

**T**exas history remembers Clara Driscoll as the “Savior of the Alamo,” but forgets her partner and associate, Adina De Zavala. These two women shared a passion and love for Texas history and its heroes, as well as each having grandfathers who fought for Texas independence. In 1889, De Zavala and several women in San Antonio would meet to discuss Texas heritage and history. In 1893 this historical society would join the Daughters of the Republic of Texas (DRT), the De Zavala Chapter, in honor of her grandfather, Lorenzo De Zavala Sr. first Vice President of the Republic of Texas.

Clara Driscoll joined the DRT in 1903, and together with Adina would save the Alamo chapel from destruction when Driscoll came up with \$65,000 of her own money along with \$10,000 raised by the DRT to prevent commercial interest from acquiring it. Texas State Legislature would authorize the purchase from Miss Driscoll in January 1905 and give custody and maintenance of the Alamo to the DRT. Soon afterwards, the DRT would split into two rival factions, one led by Adina De Zavala and the other by Clara Driscoll.

Believing the Long Barracks had been constructed after the fall of the Alamo, Driscoll wanted the Long Barracks torn down to give an unobstructed view of the Alamo chapel. In contrast, De Zavala believed some of the heaviest fighting of the battle had occurred in the Long Barracks (further excavations would prove De Zavala correct). When Driscoll and her faction expressed their desire to destroy the Long Barracks in 1908, De Zavala would fight the “2nd battle of the Alamo” by barricading herself in the Long Barracks for three days and nights, defying a court order

and with denial of food and water. De Zavala did not desist until she was certain the historic structure was safe from destruction.

Although the governor of Texas sided with De Zavala to preserve the Long Barracks, a judge would rule in favor of Clara Driscoll and her group as the true chapter of the DRT and legal maintainers of the Alamo and its

properties. No longer affiliated with the DRT, De Zavala founded the Texas Historical and Landmarks Association in 1912. With chapters all across Texas, she endeavored to locate and preserve the Spanish Governors Palace, several San Antonio missions, and the homes of Texas patriots such as Jose Antonio Navarro and Francisco Ruiz, Tejano signers of the Texas Declaration for Independence. De Zavala wanted public schools to be named after Texas and Tejano patriots of the Texas war for freedom. She also wished everyone to fly the Texas flag on March 2 in remembrance of



Texas Independence Day. For the rest of their lives, Driscoll and De Zavala never reconciled their differences.

When Clara Driscoll died on July 17, 1945, her body would lie in state at the Alamo for the public to mourn and pay their last respects with the Texas flag flying at half-staff. Sadly, when Adina De Zavala died, the day before Texas Independence Day, March 1, 1955, her funeral procession would only drive slowly passed the Alamo. Today the Alamo and the Long Barracks still stand in honor of the bravery and courage our Texan and Tejano soldiers fought and died for thanks to the selfless efforts of Adina De Zavala, “Co-savior of the Alamo,” along with her partner and associate, Clara Driscoll.

# THE BEGINNING OF

by Fred Garza



**O**n or about February 28, 2006, Federico Garza, owner of STMS Income Tax decided to have a “Happy Birthday Texas” coffee in his office. Two cakes were ordered, one of the Alamo and the other, the Yellow Rose of Texas. The office was to give a piece of cake and coffee or chocolate to all clients who came to the office on that day. Mr. Garza’s assistant, Carolina Garza, asked if she could include tamales in the menu. Addition to the menu was approved. Later, Ms. Garza asked if rice, beans and cokes could be added. Again, the addition was approved. The following week she states that her husband works with a group of trail riders and that they would like to do a parade. A parade seemed impossible, but Carolina, called a client of ours and arranged for a police escort from the library to the office. With a parade that included horses, a covered wagon and riders, it only seem logical to have the celebration outside of the office. So two banners were bought that displayed the words: HAPPY BIRTHDAY TEXAS 1836 TO MARCH 2, 2008 - 172 YEARS and the celebration was held behind the office. A tent was leased so that people could sit under the tent and listen to two people, who volunteered to speak at this event. Mr. Jack Ayoub, a local historian was invited to speak on the Yellow Rose of Texas and Dr. Noe Ramirez, of University of Texas, Pan American spoke on the acculturation of the Hispanics in our area. Mr. Ayoub was excited and volunteered to pay for one half of all expenses. So Mr. Garza and Mr. Ayoub decided to make this an annual event.



# Our Celebration

To add to the festivities, Mr. Garza asked Sal and Jennifer Robles to sing some Texas songs at the event. Mr. and Mrs. Robles not only sang Texas songs but encouraged people from the audience to participate and sing along. Pretty soon we had people participating and having fun. The food was served, but it was windy. The tent was impossible to set up because of the wind. We had wind gusts as high as 30 to 40 mph.

Tootie Madden and Mike Frazier attended the event and liked it so much that they asked Fred and Jack if the event could be held in San Benito, Texas. Both Fred and Jack agreed as long as the focus of educating, participating and celebrating the participation of Tejanos and Texans for the cause of Texas Independence would never be lost.

Every year the event has evolved into a greater community event. With excellent cooperation from Humanities Texas, the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the City of San Benito, The San Benito Economic Development Corporation, the San Benito Independent School District, residents and business members of community, this event should become a City event in the near future.

Texas Heritage and Independence Celebration Association, Inc. has applied for a non-profit status and will continue to educate, participate and celebrate the great heritage of our Tejanos and Texans in our great state of Texas.





# The Battles for Independence

## THE BATTLE OF GONZALES

**I**n 1835, with tensions rising with the Texans and Tejanos against the central Mexican government of General Santa Anna, the military commander of San Antonio began taking action to disarm the region. When his request for the return of a small cannon from the citizens of Gonzales was refused, Lieut. Francisco Castañeda was dispatched with 100 calvary men to seize it. Lieut. Castañeda and his soldiers were eventually attacked while they were resting at their camp about 7 miles from Gonzales, by Col. John Henry Moore and 150 Texas militia with the battle cry, "Come and take it". Out numbered and out-gunned, Castañeda ordered his troops back to San Antonio. Although the only casualty of the skirmish was a Mexican soldier, the Battle of Gonzales, sometimes called "the Lexington of Texas", symbolized the beginning of the Texas War for Independence, on Oct 2nd, 1835.

## THE BATTLE OF THE ALAMO

**O**n Feb 23rd, 1836, General Santa Anna and his Mexican Army nearly caught the defenders of the Alamo by surprise, but these brave Texans and Tejanos would hold out for 13 days against impossible odds. As these defenders saw it, the Alamo was the key to the defense of Texas, and were ready to defend their fort rather than surrender to General Santa Anna. Among their leaders were Lieut. Col. William Travis, commander of the Alamo, Col. James Bowie, famed knife fighter, and Davy Crockett, famed frontiersman and former congressman from Tennessee.

The final assault came before daybreak on March 6, 1836, with the calls of "viva Santa Anna and viva Mexico", on each side of the Alamo. Small arms fire and cannon blasts beat back several attacks, but the 3rd assault finally over ran the north wall. Once inside, the Mexican army turned the captured 18-pounder cannon on the southwest corner on the defenders behind the barricaded doors of





## “Come and take it.”

### THE BATTLE OF SAN JACINTO

the Long Barracks and the chapel. Their desperate struggle continued until all the defenders were overwhelmed. By sunrise, the battle of the Alamo had ended, as General Santa Anna entered the compound to survey the bloody scene of his military victory.

While the facts and legends of the Alamo continue to be debated by Texas historians today, there is no doubt that the Battle of the Alamo has come to symbolized a heroic struggle and the supreme sacrifice for freedom and liberty when brave Texans and Tejanos (Texas-born Citizens of Mexican and Spanish ancestry) fought and died together.

**O**n April 21st, 1836, General Sam Houston led his 900 Texans and Tejanos to a decisive victory over General Santa Anna and his 1300 Mexican soldiers in just over 18 minutes. Battle cries, such as “Remember the Alamo and Remember Goliad” could be heard all over the battlefield. About 630 Mexican soldiers died and 730 captured, while only 9 Texans died. Santa Anna was captured the following day and held as a prisoner of war. About 3 weeks later, the Mexican general was forced to sign the Treaty of Velasco ordering his armies to leave Texas and cross over the Rio Grande River; allowing the Republic of Texas to become established as an independent country.

## “Remember the Alamo”

# Jose Antonio Navarro

## Tejano leader among those who signed Texas Declaration of Independence

**L**ate February marks the birthday of Jose Antonio Navarro, a Tejano leader who backed the movement for Texas independence from Mexico. Indeed, Navarro, and Jose Francisco Ruiz, an uncle, signed the Texas Declaration of Independence. Their support for this cause highlights Tejanos' regional identity and their interests, which were distinct from those of other Mexicans.

Navarro and Ruiz were among numerous Tejanos who risked their lives for their families and homeland. In the process, they played important roles in the 1835-1836 conflict that changed the course of history.

Still, Tejanos did not fare well after the Texas Revolution. Anglo newcomers took over their lands and relegated Tejanos to laborers, basing their actions on the Mexican loss of the revolution. Texans retold the story of the epic Battle of the Alamo with an anti-Mexican and, by extension, an anti Mexican-American bent that "proved" all Mexicans were "evil."

In this context, Tejano support for the Texas independence movement appears to have been mistaken. It wasn't.

A complete examination of the pre-revolution conditions validates the Tejanos' opposition to the centralist rule advocated by Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna and their support of the Texas cause.

Tejanos, along with the Native Americans who established the missionary-led towns, were the original settlers of New Spain's far northern Provincia de Texas. They set up farms irrigated with water from the San Antonio River and established ranches downriver. Their livestock holdings from those ranches constituted their real source of wealth.

But hauling livestock products or driving cattle and horses to Saltillo and other northern Mexican markets limited the profits Tejanos could reap from their efforts. Additionally, the goods Tejanos bought at Saltillo were made very expensive by an officially protected monopoly of Mexico City merchants.

Tejanos thus lacked a strong economic unifying infrastructure with other northern Mexican communities. As a result, they did not develop an indissoluble affinity and loyalty to the colonial heartland and the new Mexican nation.

The frontier province of Texas developed into a true border as the American colonial economy moved closer to New Spain - even before the settlers on the westward movement crossed the Sabine River.

A century before, Spain had considered the Texas province a buffer zone between New Spain and expanding French interests in the lower Mississippi Valley. Yet, this aspect of Texas settlement can be overstressed.

Texas was also a frontier extension of the New Spain's



heartland and the colonizers here - Indians, mestizos, Canary Islanders - acted out of their own need for economic security, permanence and advancement. The transition of Texas from a frontier to a borderland occurred because of the American Revolution. During the 1770s, Tejanos sold horses and cattle to middlemen in Louisiana who represented the American rebels. This link with Louisiana changed the direction of the economic infrastructure forever.

After the American Revolution, Tejanos continued the drives to Louisiana despite the Spanish government's prohibition. Indeed, the prohibition pitted Tejanos against Spanish authorities, reinforcing the separate identity that had developed over time.

Given this ongoing conflict, faraway Spanish authorities, many Tejanos had supported Mexico's independence from Spain in the early 1800s and later backed Mexican leaders who advocated organizing the new nation as a federal republic.

Thus, Tejanos opposed President Santa Anna's efforts to govern Mexico principally as a centralized state. And they joined Anglo Texans in their rebellion against Santa Anna when he ruptured the economic ties between Texas and United States. Santa Anna was disrupting the stability that Tejanos had enjoyed for more than a century.

Navarro's home in San Antonio reflects the stability and tenacity of Tejanos to survive through adversity. San Antonio and Texas was the Tejanos' homeland, and they defended it with their lives and honor.

*(This article was written by San Antonio historian Gilberto Hinojosa and has also been published in the San Antonio News-Express)*

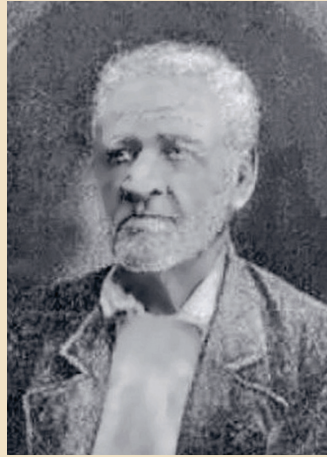
# According to Ayoub

## “Antonio Menchaca”

By Jack Ayoub

Photo Credit: Robert “Scott” Patrick

**T**exas history has forgotten another Tejano hero, Sergeant Antonio Menchaca of the Texas Army. Menchaca, a personal friend to Jim Bowie and Sam Houston, fought in the battle of San Jacinto with Captain Juan Seguin and his company of Tejano soldiers.



When Davy Crockett and his Tennessee Mounted Volunteers first arrived in San Antonio, February 1836, Bowie and Menchaca personally escorted Crockett to the home of Erasmo Seguin, father of Capt. Juan Seguin for rest and recuperation.

A fiesta was organized by Menchaca to celebrate Crockett’s arrival and a second fiesta later to celebrate George Washington’s birthday. It was at the latter fiesta that Sgt. Menchaca received a scouting report from Bias De La Garza, one of Seguin’s scouts, that Santa Anna’s army was approaching San Antonio.

At the battle of San Jacinto, Sgt. Menchaca served as the English translator for Capt. Seguin’s company of Tejano soldiers as well as cook Santa Anna’s first meal as a captive soldier. After the Texas War of Independence, Menchaca commanded a frontier company of soldiers between the San Antonio River and The Rio Grande River. In September 1842, while defending San Antonio against the Mexican Army led by Gen. Adrian Woll, Menchaca sustained an injury to his leg.

In 1875, Menchaca, along with Seguin and seventeen other Bexar (San Antonio) residents, wrote the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts claiming discrimination by the Texas government against Tejano veterans of the Texas Revolution regarding their military pensions.

Texas History has forgotten many of our Texas and Tejano heroes, but March 13-14, San Benito will be celebrating Texas Independence with a history symposium, parade, battle reenactments and more. Everyone is invited to join us in celebration and education.

## “Nava & Jimenez”

We should all remember the bravery and courage of those Tejanos (Texas-born citizens of Mexican and Spanish ancestry) from Capt. Seguin’s company of soldiers who fought and died for Texas independence from Mexico at the Alamo.

Every Texan and Tejano who volunteered for military service in the Texas Army was promised 320 acres of land for 3 months of service, 640 acres for 6 months of service, or 1,280 acres of land for the entire duration of the war.

According to the Texas General Land Office, at least two fallen Tejano soldiers were never paid for their military service; Andres Nava and Damacio Jimenez. Their families were too poor to pay the court filing fees, therefore their case was never resolved. There is still an unpaid war debt from 1836 that is owed to their families. It is a sad fact that these Tejanos, who paid the ultimate sacrifice for Texas along with Col. William B. Travis, Col. James Bowie, and Davy Crockett, would not receive their rightful reward from a grateful Texas for its independence from Mexico.

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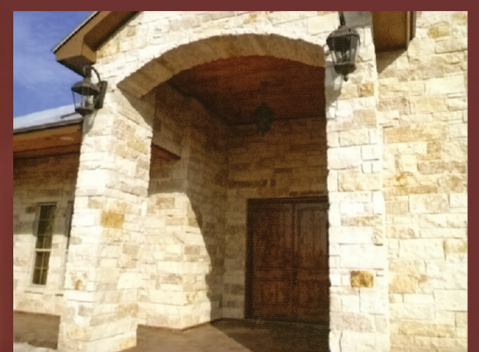
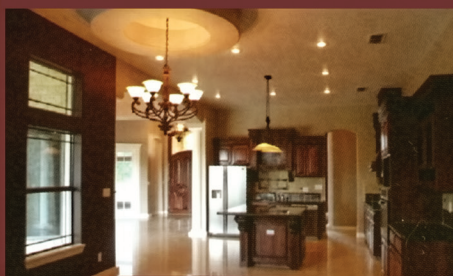
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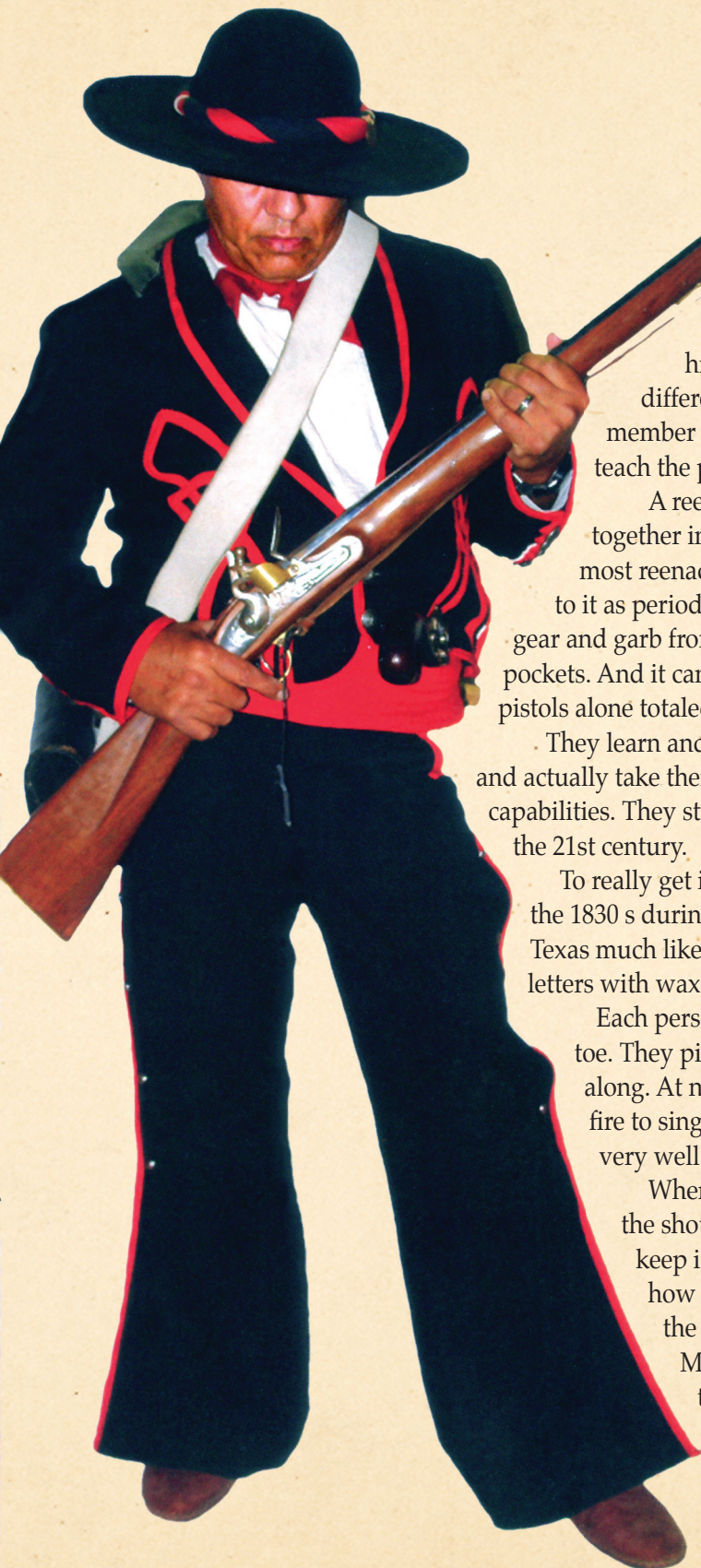
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# The Art of Reenactment

Cordova, Wildhorse Desert Historical Brigade bring Texas history alive.



“Remember the Alamo!”

The cries will be raised Friday, March 13 and Saturday, March 14 in San Benito to honor Texas history. With their gear in hand, the members of the Wildhorse Desert Historical Brigade will gather together to reenact the famous Battle of the Alamo at the event. Much like acting, historical reenactment is an art form, but it generally has a different intended goal. When asked why he does it, local WHDHB member Ruben Cordova said, “It’s to teach the kids about history and teach the people about things you don’t get from a book.”

A reenactment does not consist of just a bunch of people who get together in costume and shoot off guns haphazardly at each other. In fact, most reenactors would be offended by the term “costume.” They refer to it as period attire. Cordova and his fellow members round up authentic gear and garb from the 1800’s, paying for their array of artifacts out of their own pockets. And it can get pretty pricey; for Cordova’s replica rifles, bayonets and pistols alone totaled a little over \$1,000.

They learn and practice battle tactics used by the Texas and Mexican armies, and actually take their weapons out to firing ranges to perfect their shooting capabilities. They study history and try to mirror it to keep it alive for the people of the 21st century.

To really get into the mindset of the people of the 18th century, specifically the 1830s during the Texas Revolution, the members who are scattered all over Texas much like the real Alamo fighters - send out handwritten parchment letters with waxed stamps to rally together their troops.

Each person comes to the battle field with full 1830’s gear from head to toe. They pitch a campsite together; some - like Cordova - bring their family along. At night, with instruments in hand, they gather together around a fire to sing traditional folk songs that the men of the Alamo could have very well sang in the nights leading up to their epic battle.

When morning comes, the regiments of each side are formed and the shots commence. Though their skirmishes aren’t scripted, the men keep in mind the historical accounts, and each puts in his idea of how the events panned out. The battle rages and the brave men of the Alamo are defeated by the Mexican army, led by tyrannical Mexican President Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna. The members of the WHDHB hope to inspire pride in their statesmen by reviving Texas history, so people never forget the Alamo nor the pride of what was once the Republic of Texas.

*(This article was written and submitted by Scarlet O’Rourke)*

# THE SCIENCE OF REENACTMENT

Imagine being transported back in time to see the skirmishes of soldiers and volunteers fighting to keep the Alamo. Historical reenactments can help people see what may have happened in past events. There are groups of people who get together to bring history out of the pages of school books and right into your home town. People like Ruben Cordova can be found in such a bunch. Cordova is a member of the Wildhorse Desert Historical Brigade, a reenactment outfit, who has a passion for his hobby and takes his roles seriously by using gear from the specific period.

He does it out of his love for history and his hopes to bring pieces of it back for the public to see. These people go all out to make the experience as real as possible. Paying for the artifacts themselves, they hunt for gear from the 1800's ranging from clothing to toothbrushes to guns to soap. With research, they buy or construct clothing from a certain time. Many of the fighters from the Texas side didn't wear a standard uniform during the battle of the Alamo. The locals would have been dressed in white cotton pants and shirts with decorative jackets and chaps, sombreros, and leather boots. Cordova has compiled a complete outfit that a Texas Vaquero would have worn at the battle of the Alamo.

In most battles, the men would carry all of their gear along with them into the skirmishes. They carried canvas sacks with hair and toothbrushes, soap, and their razors. Another leather satchel would have been full of little packs of black powder and ammunition for the guns. They also had a sheath for the bayonets and a cow horn full of loose black powder. This is the typical gear Cordova carries with him during reenactments. Cordova brings his musket, pistol, bayonet and tomahawk (small ax) into the fray with him. His guns are all in working



# GEAR



*(This article was written and submitted by Scarlet O'Rourke)*

order, and he makes it a point to take them out shooting to keep the up.

Because the bullets were round and rarely went in a straight line when fired, the men would act as a unit firing at once. This was known as volley fire. During the skirmishes, the WHDHB only puts the black powder into the flint pan, and when they take a shot a quick blast of smoke and fire erupts from gun.

When fighting, the WHDHB uses real historical battle tactics. If the two sides charge at each other, they form a checkerboard pattern so no one gets impaled by

the bayonets at the end of the muskets. This is done to maintain an authentic look to the audience. Also, the men operate by following instructions called out by the officers or beat of the drums.

Historical reenactments are often great ways learn about the past. The actual clothing, gear, weapons and tactics give it all a sense of authenticity that can bring the past to the present and reconnect people with the great events that have led up to our freedoms enjoyed today.

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“Texas shall be free and independent, or we shall perish in combat.”

-Juan Seguin



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