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Law Enforcement Tug-of-War



FRIDAY,  
MARCH 13

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MARCH 13-14, 2020



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# Letter from the President

Texas Heritage and Independence Celebration Association, Inc. (THICA) is proud to present the new 13th Annual Happy Birthday TexasFest event. Join us as we travel back 184 years to 1836 and recreate the events that led to the battles of Gonzales, (the Lexington of Texas), the Alamo and San Jacinto. Relive History. Bring your relative and friends to see and hear about the valiant efforts of Tejanos and Texians as they fight for Texas Independence. As you hear the roar of the cannons and see the clouds of smoke from the flint-lock muskets on the battlefield, history comes alive again.

It is our belief that now more than ever, we should reflect on the proud history of the birth of Texas and honor all of the brave men and women that sacrificed everything to give us this proud heritage. Help us educate more people about the wonderful history of Texas.

Participate in our activities. Our tents and re-enactors will be in full dress and welcome visitors to view their muskets, attire and camp surroundings. There will be arts and crafts vendors and food vendors. School District performances, folklorico, Aztec, Matachines and native Indian dancers, dancing horses, kiddie area. Music will be provided by country, tejano and conjunto bands. Become a judge at our Texas Independence Bar-B-Que and taste some of the best Bar-B-Que in South Texas. Visit our art show. There will be artwork created by the school children of San Benito area schools.

Celebrate as we finish the day with the battle of San Jacinto and mark the birthday of Texas. Music and festivities will be plentiful. Enjoy the festivities and explore our rich history and celebrate and honor the courage of our Texians and Tejano heroes. HAPPY BIRTHDAY TEXAS!

FEDERICO V. GARZA  
*President*



Federico V. Garza,  
*THICA President*

**THICA Founders:**  
Federico V. Garza  
Carol Garza  
Jack Ayoub

## 2020 THICA Volunteers

Anabeth Molina-Cordova	Edinburg Regional Group	John McCammon	Rob Ramaker
Ana Ramirez	Dirk Yarker	Johnny Ayla	Robin Wheelus
Bruce Kidd	Eddie Guerra	Jose Jaramillo	Ron Corbuet
Boy Scout Troop 1954, Edinburg Tx	Erica Allen	Juan Cabriaes	Ronnie Rodriguez
Bubba Ball	Elizandro Muñoz	Julio Guerra	Ruben Cordova
Bubba Cheek	Federico V. Garza	Leslie Whittemore	Salomon Torres
Caryn A. Cadena	Frank Gonzalez	Letty Gonzalez	Sean Carney
Carlos Treviño	Frank Gonzalez, Jr.	Los Liberadores	Sheryl Ackerman
Carol Garza	Fred Valle	Marcie Ramaker	South Texas ISD Medical Professions
Charlie Linedancers Group	George Conde	Matthew Govea	STC History Group
Celeste Sanchez	George Fluids	Mike Frazier	Tootie Madden
Christian Garcia	Gisela Guerra	Miro Lucio	TSC History Club
Christine Kidd	Jack Ayoub	Noemi Ramirez	Wade Marcum
Daniel Fleischmann	Luis Flores	Nina Garza	Wayne Powell
Diana Bates	Jamie Saenz	Obed Longoria	Victor Rosas
	Joe Anzaldua	RHOKAPPA Students	



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2004 W. Jefferson, Suite 4, Harlingen, Texas 78550  
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**Texas Heritage and Independence Celebration Association Committee**

*Sitting: Leslie Whittemore, Diana Bates, Veronica Rodriguez, Jamie Saenz, Letty Gonzalez, Anabeth Cordova, Christine Kidd, Celeste Sanchez*  
*2nd Row: Johnny Ayala, Elizandro Muñoz, Victor Rosas, Jose Jaramillo, Julio Guerra, Bruce Kidd, Jack Ayoub, Edelmiro Lucio, Federico Garza, Joe Anzaldúa*  
*3rd Row: Dirk Yarker, Bruce Johnstone, Ruben Cordova, Frank González, Wayne Powell*

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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# Happy Birthday TexasFest 2020 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

*Please bring your own lawn chairs to watch the Battle Reenactments.*

## FRIDAY, MARCH 13

8:30 AM - 9:25 AM	Winter Texan Appreciation Reception - Pan Dulce & Coffee (Newman Building)
9:30 AM - 9:45 AM	Charlie's Line Dance Group (Newman Building)
9:50 AM - 10:50 AM	Live Music for Winter Texans (Carlos Cañas) (Newman Building)
11:00 AM - 12:00 AM	Johnny Gonzales (Freddy Fender Tribute Musician) (Newman Building)
12:00 PM - 12:30 PM	Tesoros de Mexico Matachines Dancers (Newman Building)
1:30 PM - 2:00 PM	San Benito High School Folklorico Dancers (Newman Building)
2:30 PM - 2:50 PM	Cross Church Kids Dance Ministry (Newman Building)
3:00 PM - 3:25 PM	STEAM Academy ASP Dance Team (Newman Building)
3:30 PM - 3:55 PM	Frank Roberts Elementary Dance Team & Choir (Newman Building)
4:00 PM - 4:25 PM	Sullivan Elementary ASP Dance and Cheer Teams (Newman Building)
4:00 PM - 4:45 PM	Resaca City Boys (Main Music Stage)
4:30 PM - 4:55 PM	La Encantada Elementary Dance Team (Newman Building)
5:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Reyes Dancing Horse Show (Corral Arena)
5:00 PM - 6:15 PM	Los City Boys (Main Music Stage)
6:30 PM - 7:45 PM	Mid Night Run (Main Music Stage)
8:00 PM : 9:15 PM	Los Garcia Brothers (Main Music Stage)
9:45 PM - 11:00 PM	Elida Reyna Y Avante (Main Music Stage)

## SATURDAY, MARCH 14

8:30 AM - 9:00 AM	Veterans Reception - Pan Dulce & Coffee (Reenactment Area Tent)
9:00 AM - 9:10 AM	Pre-K & Kinder Cowboy Show, Ed Downs Elementary (Newman Building)
9:10 AM - 9:25 AM	Fred Booth Choir, Fred Booth Elementary (Newman Building)
9:30 AM - 9:55 AM	Fire Prevention Poster Awards Presentation (Newman Building)
10:00 AM - 10:20 AM	Lone Star Dream Musical, Ed Downs Fine Arts Academy (Newman Building)
10:20 AM - 10:30 AM	Art Show Awards Ceremony (Newman Building)

10:30 AM - 11:30 AM	Opening Commencement Ceremony & Presentation of Colors (Reenactment Area)
10:40 AM	Invocation - Pastor Donald Hamm
10:42 AM	Welcome - Ben Gomez, Mayor, City of San Benito
10:45 AM	Proclamation - On behalf of the Governor of Texas, Priscilla Gabrielle Duran, South Texas Community Relations Specialist with the Office of the Governor (Reenactment Area)
10:50 AM	"Riderless Horse" Ceremony
11:15 AM	Resigning of Texas Declaration of Independence (Reenactment Area)
11:30 AM - 12:50 PM	Berta Cabaza Middle School and San Benito High School Conjunto Estrella (Newman Building)
11:40 AM - 12:50 PM	Chalupa Game #1 (Chalupa Game Tent)
11:40 AM - 12:50 PM	Texas History Symposium Session #1 (Symposium Tent)
11:40 AM - 12:50 PM	Law Enforcement Tug-A-War Contest
12:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Antique Car Show hosted by The Zines (Car Show Area)
12:00 PM - 12:50 PM	Resaca City Boys (Main Music Stage)
<b>1:00 PM - 1:30 PM</b>	<b>Battle of Gonzales (Reenactment Area)</b>
1:30 PM - 2:30 PM	Los Fresnos High School - Conjunto Halcon (Main Music Stage)
2:00 PM - 2:30 PM	Edinburg Aztec Dancers (Newman Building)
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM	Chalupa Game #2 (Chalupa Game Tent)
1:45 PM - 2:30 PM	Texas History Symposium Session #2 (Symposium Tent)
<b>3:00 PM - 3:30 PM</b>	<b>Battle of the Alamo (Reenactment Area)</b>
3:45 PM - 4:15 PM	Sahawe Indian Dancers (Newman Building)
3:30 PM - 4:30 PM	Roy Solis (Main Music Stage)
3:45 PM - 4:50 PM	Texas History Symposium Session #3 (Symposium Tent)
<b>5:00 PM - 5:30 PM</b>	<b>Battle of San Jacinto (Reenactment Area)</b>
5:30 PM - 6:00 PM	Sahawe Indian Dancers (Newman Building)
5:30 PM - 6:30 PM	Grupo Azido (Main Music Stage)
6:45 PM - 7:45 PM	Hache Tres (Main Music Stage)
8:00 PM - 9:15 PM	Zereno (Main Music Stage)
9:45 PM - 11:00 PM	Jaime DeAnda (Main Music Stage)

For more information visit our website:  
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# Texas History Symposium 2020

## Keynote Speakers

### Elizandro Muñoz

*(Master of Ceremonies)*

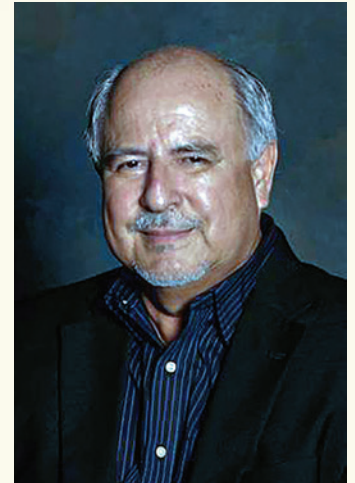
Elizandro is an Asst. Professor of History at South Texas College, and an avid historian, focusing on South Texas History. He has been recognized with a South Texas College Jaguar Excellence Award for Excellence, and a NISOD (National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development) Excellence Award by the University of Texas. He has served as a consultant for the Teaching American History grant, and a United States Dept. of Labor Community based Training grant, as a panelist at symposiums at the collegiate level, and featured speaker at museums, and special events, as the keynote speaker at the Texas Independence Day Celebration event. Elizandro is proud to be a founding Board member of THICA (Texas Heritage and Independence Celebration Association) and the work it does in promoting Texas and Tejano history.



### Dr. Manuel F. Medrano

*Speaker*

A Brownsville native, Dr. Manuel F. Medrano holds a doctorate degree from the University of Houston. He is a Professor Emeritus at UTRGV, specializing in Mexican American history and culture and taught at the Brownsville campus for 45 years. His books, essays and poems have been published regionally, nationally and internationally, including Americo Paredes, "In His Words" and "Medieval Culture and the Mexican American Borderlands". One his most recent publications is a chapter for the book Folk Balladeers: Critical Essays on Americo Paredes. In 1991, he began the Los del Valle Oral History Project, which includes 30 edited profiles and many raw footage interviews of people primarily from South Texas. Among the interviewees are conjunto pioneer Narciso Martinez, writer/poet Carmen Tafolla and political activist/author Jose Angel Gutierrez. Volume 30, Accordion Roots and Conjunto Music: An Unlikely Journey, premiered in June of 1918 at Guangxi University in Guilin, China. The collection is currently on loan for digitization and research at the Nettie Benson Library at the University of Texas at Austin. Today, he continues to write about and live in the place that he will always call home - El Valle.

A red and black advertisement for Blanquita's Mexican Restaurant. The text "Blanquita's" is in a large, yellow, cursive font, with "Mexican Restaurant" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it. Below the text are two images: a plate of Mexican food on the left and a plate of eggs and bacon on the right. The phrase "Que Rico!!!" is written in a white, stylized font between the two images. At the bottom, the address "190 N. Williams Rd. San Benito, Texas 78586" and the phone number "(956) 399-8880" are listed in white and yellow text on a black background.

**Blanquita's**  
Mexican Restaurant

**Que Rico!!!**

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# Texas History Symposium 2020

## Keynote Speakers



**Trinidad Gonzales,  
PhD**

*Speaker*

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, Revolucion de Tejas, Matanza de 1915." In War Along the Border: the Mexican Revolution and Tejano Communities, edited by Arnaldo de Leon and published in 2012.

Dr. Gonzales helps coordinate the South Texas College Mexican American Studies Program, and his leadership role within the division includes being involved in policy-making decision for the AHA and providing standards for the profession of history. Gonzales also advocates for the highest degree of respect for the importance of history to the nation's educational policy makers. His topic for the Texas History Symposium: Texas Constitution in Perspective - Rights and Race.

**Leonel (Leo) Lopez**

Leo Lopez is a life-long resident of Edinburg, Texas. He graduated from St. Anthony Catholic High School (San Antonio) and received a B. A. Degree in Social Studies from Pan American College (Edinburg) in 1966.

After college, he spent 2 years in the Peace Corps in Barranquilla, Colombia (S.A.) where, with the

Colombian Red Cross, set-up the first lifeguard team on a public Colombian Caribbean beach and Physical Education.

After the Peace Corps, he taught in the Edinburg CISD schools for 32 years teaching elementary P.E., coaching tennis and outdoor and environmental education. He attended continuing graduate classes in conservation and environment



education classes at Texas A&M and Kingsville A&I. In 1982, he was awarded the Texas Environmental and Conservation Teacher of the Year by the Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Texas.

Leo works with and teaches at the annual Texas Outdoor Education Workshop every year and was president (1988) of the Texas Outdoor Education Association.

Retired since 2000, he does presentations on Native American history and culture, primitive skills and crafts for the outdoor workshop, college programs, schools, teachers, museums and cultural events.

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# San Benito hosting awesome South Texas events

The City of San Benito is home to some awesome events!

With several major events -- the Hog Waddle Country Concert & Cook-Off, ResacaFest, South Texas Music Festival and TexasFest -- San Benito is on the road to establishing its identity as a Destination City in order to attract more visitors, growth and development as an avenue toward greater economic development for the City with long-term benefits.

As a Destination City, San Benito also is expanding offerings centered around culture, aesthetics, food, museums, entertainment and festivals. The City is giving the public throughout South Texas a greater reason to travel to this culturally-rich community. Officials are fully aware that studies show that tourism and hospitality are among the facets of creating solid economic development.

The San Benito Cultural Heritage Museum plays an integral role in drawing visitors to the City. With its rotating art exhibits featuring colorful and stimulating works from international artists, Conjunto music presentations, receptions, foods, Gallery Talk discussions and social events, the museum is drawing visitors from neighboring cities, states and countries.

The facility is the flagship designed to cultivate San Benito into a true Destination City. Recent events include the dedication of a new bronze bust of City founder Col. Sam Robertson and a Valley schools' Conjunto music competition, as well as changing exhibits in the museum.

The events contribute to the area's economic development by raising revenue for continued cultural events, attracting outside dollars, instilling San Benito Pride in the community and enhancing quality of life for residents.

Current or scheduled exhibits scheduled for 2020 are Castillian Roses, an exhibit in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe; Indigenous Warriors by Andy Villarreal, and Conjunto in Our Back Yard, a showcase of Conjunto music and art.

But what also makes San Benito so attractive is its geographical attributes of location and open land suitable for the future growth and development of this Cameron County community. Solid progress in new commercial growth and development today is being seen locally.

Some impressive construction and development is underway locally, highlighted by Resaca Village, a mixed-use commercial facility that will house retail shops, restaurants and office space is currently underway. Projected to cost between \$5 million and \$7 million in construction alone, the waterfront project will consist

## San Benito Events Calendar

**May 15-16, 2020**

### Hog Waddle Country Concert and Sanctioned BBQ Cook-off

City of San Benito Hog Waddle Country Concert and Sanctioned BBQ Cook-off is scheduled at the San Benito Fairgrounds, located on FM 510 and Cesar Gonzalez Parkway. 4-11 p.m. Country-western music will be showcased, along with some quality BBQ meats. Please call 956-361-3830 for information.

**May 25, 2020**

### Memorial Day & Silent March of Veterans

8:45 a.m. in front of City Hall, 485 N. Sam Houston. Veterans and Survivors carrying photos of deceased veterans march silently down Sam Houston Blvd. to Veterans War Memorial Site for ceremony at 9 a.m. Ceremony honors all military personnel who gave their lives in defense of freedom for the United States of America. To purchase a commemorative, engraved brick to honor your loved one, please call Martha McClain at 96-361-3804 Ext. 301.

**July 4, 2020**

### ResacaFest 2020

Celebrating the Spirit of America. Sponsored by the City of San Benito's Special Events Board from 4-11 p.m. Day of live music, refreshments and performances on the Resaca at Heavin Memorial Park, 705 N. Bowie Street, capped by a fireworks display over the resaca. Arts & Crafts & Food Vendors welcome. Please call 956-361-3830 for information.

of between 40,000 and 50,000 square feet of leasable space to be developed over the next few years.

The land for the project will provide 300 full and part-time time jobs, approximately \$7 million in improvement value, and \$10 million in annual sales, and attract 20 new tenants as well as a number of professional offices, suites and potentially a new financial service company. The project's design focuses on attracting more people to the area and to ensure the improvements complement its location on the beautiful Resaca in San Benito.

Cognizant of the community's many assets, ranging from its winding resaca to its geographic location, officials here are seeing a vibrant and progressive community taking shape, thanks to actions taken over the past two years.



# Cultural Heritage City!



## Events, Music & Culture!

### March

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### Open To The Public

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### Year 'Round Events

Cultural Heritage City  
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[www.cityofsanbenito.com](http://www.cityofsanbenito.com)  
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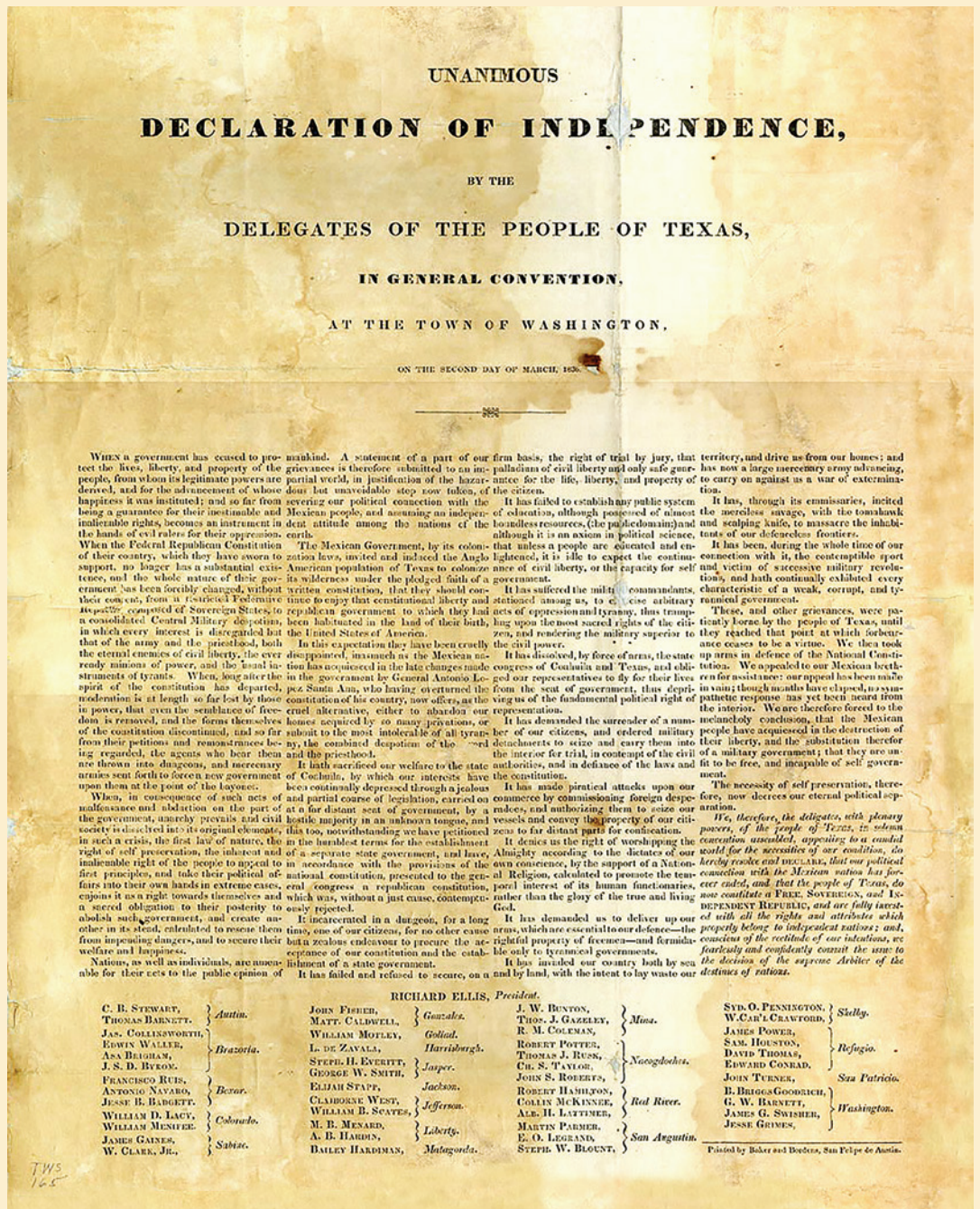
# Texas Declaration of Independence

by Jack Ayoub

**O**n March 2nd, 1836, 59 delegates all across Texas including two Tejanos, Jose Antonio Navarro and Francisco Ruiz, from San Antonio as well as a Mexican national, Lorenzo de Zavala, from Mexico City, met at Washington-on-the-Brazos in a half-built barn with glassless windows and open doors in nearly freezing conditions.

George Childress, an ancestor of Dr. James Childress, a San Benito surgeon, came to the convention with 5 handwritten copies of the Texas Declaration of Independence modeled after the American Declaration of Independence. This famous document declared Texas independence from Mexico because President Santa Anna was establishing himself as a dictator when he did away with the Mexican Constitution of 1824, denying basic rights and liberties to the citizens of Mexico as well as doing away with the state governments and the local militias. This political act by Santa Anna would centralize all political and military power to the federal government in Mexico City. His government would now be named the centralists, while the followers of Stephen F. Austin would be called the Federalists with the belief in state rights and the right to keep and bare arms to maintain a local militia.

While General Santa Anna's cannons were pounding the walls of the Alamo, our brave Texas patriots were signing their names, their lives, and their sacred honor to this famous document, knowing full well that this declaration could be their death warrant if Santa Anna won the war... VIVA TEJAS Y VIVAN LOS TEJANOS!



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

-Juan Seguin



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Lorenzo Alaniz  
CEO/President

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# The Battles for Texas Independence



## THE BATTLE OF GONZALES

In 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". Outnumbered and outgunned, 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.

Tensions were increasing between the Texas settlers and the Mexican government ever since General Santa Anna became president. Santa Anna had Stephen F. Austin thrown into prison for personally requesting statehood. The Mexican Constitution

of 1824 was done away with and all the state governments were closed, transferring all political power to Mexico City. Santa Anna was now making himself, a dictator and wanted to disarm all the citizens of Mexico.

Col. Domingo Ugartechea, the highest ranking officer in San Antonio, decided to disarm the settlers of Gonzales of their 6 lb. cannon that was given to them by the Mexican government 4 years earlier. The cannon barrel was no longer than a man's arm

**"Come and take it."**

and was not even mounted on carriage wheels. Also, the cannon didn't even fire half the time and

the other half was used to only scare off the Indians and start the horse races. The Mexican army saw a piece of junk, but to the citizens of Gonzales, the cannon was their symbol to keep and bare arms for their protection. Lieut. Francisco Castañeda rode out of the Alamo with 100 calvary men with written orders for Andrew Ponton, the mayor of Gonzales, that ordered he give up the cannon to the Mexican calvary. Castañeda's calvary men were met by Col. John Henry Moore with 18 militia volunteers, guarding the road.





## THE BATTLE OF THE ALAMO

**O**n February 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

## “Remember the Alamo”

cannon on the southwest corner on the defenders behind the barricaded doors of 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.

## THE BATTLE OF SAN JACINTO

**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.

# Reenactors depict battles for Texas Independence Celebration



The sounds of firing muskets and cannon blasts fill the air each year during the month of March in San Benito as part of the annual Texas Independence Celebration.

Battle skirmishes and reenactments by living historians detail the Battle of the Alamo, Siege of B exar and finally the final clash, the Battle of San Jacinto, where Texas was born as a republic, free from Mexico.

Reenactors staged as both Texan and Mexican soldiers dress in period attire, ride on horseback and marched in make-shift formation for the battles. Defenders at the Alamo readied their muskets and cannon in anticipation of the looming battle. Many crouched behind the fortified wooden walls and hay bales, watching the Mexican troops in crisp blue coats moving towards them.

Founded in 2007, Texas Heritage & Independence Celebration Association, Inc., (THICA), produces Texas Independence Day. The organization is dedicated to preserving and promoting the history of Texas, from the natives who first

settled here to the numerous flags that have flown over Texas.

The group works to bring the story of the Alamo to life in celebration of Texas Independence Day. The San Benito community comes together in an effort to remember the bravery of the Texans and Tejanos for our independence.

It was on March 2, 1836, when Texas severed ties with Mexico and became a free and independent republic, when at the Town of Washington, 59 representatives voted into existence a sovereign nation: the Republic of Texas. Both Anglo and Tejano delegates declared to the world that they were different: Neither Mexican or American, but to be known as Texans.

The Independence Day reenactments honor the independent spirit of those early Texans and the sacrifices made for the independence that was won at the Battle of San Jacinto where the battle cry that day was “Remember the Alamo” and “Remember Goliad”; The battle lasted only 18 minutes and ended with the unconditional surrender of



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General Santa Anna to General Sam Houston in a victory that secured Texas' Independence.

We honor the heroes of the Texas Revolution such as Sam Houston, Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie and William Barrett Travis; and we honor the influential Tejanos such as Jose Antonio Navarro, Gregorio Esparza, and Juan Seguin who proudly risked death with the other signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence.

An emotional portrayal of the Battle of the Alamo over the years has been performed for increasingly large number of spectators coming from across the Valley to witness the historic depiction. In one performance, the audience watched in disbelief, and awed silence, as Davy Crockett was executed. In apparent disbelief at seeing the legendary hero gunned-down, the crowd remained reverently silent until the announcer asked for applause for the reenactors.

The reenactors themselves come from across the Valley, and sometimes across the state, to participate in the memorable events.

Event moderator described the scene where the defenders were holed-up in the Alamo in preparation for the advancing Mexican troops under the command of Gen. Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna.

“The general ordered that no prisoners would be taken, which only deepened the resolve of the Alamo defenders to fight to the end,” moderator said.

The event has grown significantly over the years, moving from Plaza de San Benito on Stenger Street, to the San Benito Fairgrounds to accommodate side attractions and a more appropriate area to support an increasing audience base.

In recent years, the organizers have added a sanctioned cook-off for a variety of dishes, an art show is featured and arts/crafts/corporate vendors join with food concessions to service the attendees.

THICA endeavors to retell these stories and honor the memory of those who came before us, shaping the Texas we enjoy today. Texas Heritage & Independence Celebration Association, Inc. (THICA) helps educate and celebrate Texas culture and to encourage participation by promoting the history of our state through symposiums and community events that recreate this area's rich and colorful history.

For more information, please contact visit our website at [www.happybirthdaytexas.com](http://www.happybirthdaytexas.com).



# The "COME AND TAKE IT" Spirit:

## A brief look at the Battle of Gonzales

By Luis H. Loza

The most famous battles of the Texas Revolution are arguably the battle at the Alamo and the Battle at San Jacinto, but the Battle of Gonzales is another battle worth remembering and retelling.

Unlike the battles at the Alamo and San Jacinto, which were clearly defined as direct intentional war conflicts with Mexico for the independence of Texas, the battle that took place in the small town located approximately 75 miles northeast of San Antonio, was a result of failed attempts by the Mexican government to take back a small cannon that had been given to settlers in Dewitt County, which Gonzales served as the capital city.

The six-pound cannon which historian Timothy Todish described as “a small bored gun, good for little more than starting horse races,” was given to Gonzales in 1831 in order to help settlers defend themselves against attacks Indian tribes such as the Comanche.

According to historian Stephen Hardin, on September 10, 1835, a Mexican soldier bludgeoned a Gonzales resident, which outraged and public and led to protests. The attack on the Gonzales resident along with political tension caused by Mexican states revolted during the early 1830s, raised fears among Mexican authorities, who came to suspect Texas might want to break away as well. Colonel Domingo de Ugartechea the commander of Mexican forces in Texas began to be suspicious and thought it would be unwise for Mexican government to leave the residents of Dewitt County with the cannon.

Ordered by the Mexican government to avoid using force if possible, Col. Ugartechea sent six soldiers to retrieve the cannon. The request was denied. Ugartechea sent 100 soldiers in response. On September 29, news of the Mexican troops approaching the town of Gonzales forced the residents of Dewitt County to use several excuses to keep them from the town and the cannon. One of excuses was demanding Ugartechea be physically present to make the request for the

cannon. Tactics such as this one delayed fighting and allowed the Texans to covertly relay messages to surrounding towns for support. During the next two days approximately 140 Texians and Tejanos (Texas-born citizens of Mexican and Spanish ancestry) gathered in Gonzales. With a larger number of volunteers poised to do battle, the Texas settlers voted on October 1 to delay the battle no more.

Although women were excluded from physically participating in the battle, they were still able to contribute in a special way. The women created a home-made flag from a white bed sheet and charcoal which featured the black silhouette of

the disputed cannon placed horizontally in the center with the muzzle pointed to the right. A black star was placed above the cannon and the words “COME AND TAKE IT” in capital letters were written below it. The rally cry evoked by the flag led to the controversial piece of artillery to become better known as the Come and Take it Cannon.

Hoping to draw first blood, the Texas fighters approached

the Mexican camp during the early hours of October 2, but they were spotted and the Mexican Army fired at them. After several hours of firing the Mexican troops retreated. According to several historians the skirmish had little military significance; however, the Texans and Tejanos had made their intentions clear with their actions. The war for the Republic of Texas had officially begun, and like the controversial cannon that had led to the Battle of Gonzales, Mexico’s Army and its infamous dictator Antonio López de Santa Anna would have to “COME AND TAKE IT”, by force because they were not going to give up the land without a fight.

Although the Battle of Gonzales took place more than 180 years ago, the spirit of the colonists and fighters who helped birth the Republic of Texas lives on through the efforts of the proud Tejanos of today.

*(Information from various authors and historical sources was used in this article.)*



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# Victory or Death The Travis Letter

by Jack Ayoub



**T**he Victory or Death letter, written by Lt. Col. William Travis, is considered to be one of the most heroic letters every written. Just one day into the Siege of the Alamo, Feb. 24th, 1836, Travis, besieged by several thousand Mexican soldiers under the command of General Santa Anna, sent out a urgent plea for men and supplies “to the People of Texas and all Americans in the World”.

Facing almost certain death, Travis vowed “to never retreat or surrender and to die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor and that of his country. “VICTORY OR DEATH”. The town of Gonzales was the only one who sent 32 brave men to come to the aid of the Alamo. After 13 days of siege, the Alamo was attacked in the early morning hours by Santa Anna’s army on all four sides and fell on March 6th, 1836. All 189 Alamo defenders died, including Lt. Col. Travis, Col. Jim Bowie, and Davy Crockett, for the Republic of Texas, only 4 days old. And true to his word, Travis never surrendered or retreated.



# San Benito EDC: Undertaking a Results Driven Approach on Economic Development

The San Benito Economic Development Corporation (SBEDC) has been in existence for 26 years and is the 57th largest EDO in the state of Texas (population based) out of 512 EDCs throughout the state. This EDO provides economic development within the city limits of San Benito, TX, the third largest city in Cameron County. As any other EDO the SBEDC must adhere to the rules that are stipulated in the Economic Development Act of 1979, Local Government Code Chapter 501 and 505, and specifically may undertake efforts as stipulated by the local ordinance that was voted by the residents of the City of San Benito when it was created in 1994.

variety of wealth and resources for the San Benito community. In being strategic the EDC is also analyzing data, making projections and looking beyond the present. The new approach is to instill and practice leadership that make decisions for the present and prepare and plan for a 3-5 horizon, and 10-15 year horizon. The EDC leaders of today are setting up the foundation for future leaders to continue on a strategic "smart" pathway with the main priority that being of creating a vibrant and prosperous community.

## San Benito EDC's Mission

The SBEDC's mission is to promote, support and foster economic development within the San Benito community through new industry recruitment, business retention and expansion, business innovation, new business startups and entrepreneurship and community building.

## Strong Leadership & Setting Up the Foundation

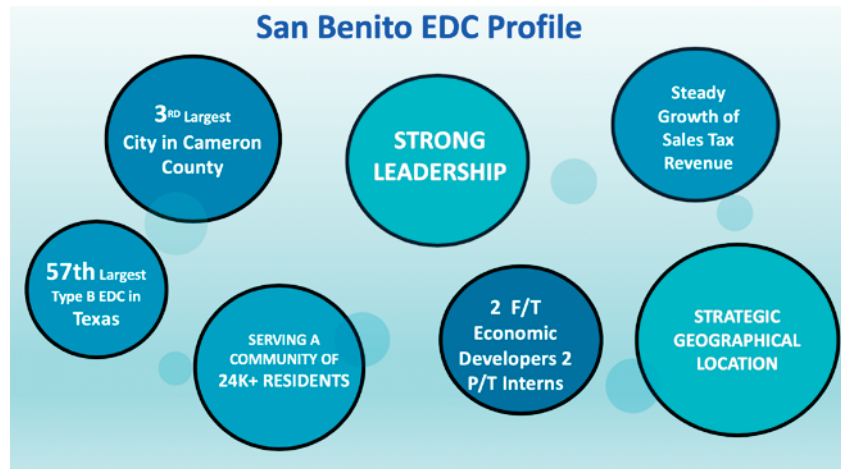
The City of San Benito City Commission appoints the EDC Board of Directors and ensures that strong leaders that can be movers and shakers are assigned to the SBEDC to make decisions in the best interest of the San Benito community. A very supportive City Commission that entrusts the EDC leaders is definitely integral in the creation of economic opportunities for San Benito, TX.

Through a gradual process, lessons learned and best practices, and with a strong leadership at the Board and Executive level the SBEDC has begun an evolution process that if it becomes constant it will definitely set itself to become a leading economic development organization (EDO) in the state of Texas.

As a new decade begins in 2020 the economic development leaders of San Benito, TX are continuously making decisions that lead to the success of its economic development corporation and to the positive economic growth of this community. With an increase of almost half million dollars in sales tax in 2019, San Benito has reached the sales tax mark of \$5 Million, which is an unprecedented achievement.

As we begin a new decade and evolution of the EDC it is projected that sales tax allocations for San Benito will potentially increase by 25% within the next three (3) years and by 100% within the next five (5) years, therefore, providing the revenue to continuously create a positive economic growth for the San Benito community.

The EDC leadership is continuously strategizing on how to maximize every dollar that they have been entrusted and how and when to re-invest it. With the appropriate economic development mechanisms in place, a yearly balanced budget, and a savings line item "Rainy Day Fund" there is definitely the opportunity to be able to create a



## 2025 Economic Development Strategic Plan

With the start of this new decade EDC leaders are preparing a strategic plan that can promptly be executed, is results driven, is consistent, fiscally conscious and performance measures and benchmarks are set that will measure the success in meeting all goals and objectives of the 2025 Economic Development Strategic Plan.

With strong leadership at the executive and board level the organization plans to focus on a two prong approach that leads to success, this will be to focus on a recruitment/retention approach that is interlinked to Community Building.

The recruitment/retention approach will focus on mostly external investment and will have a strong focus on priorities that can maximize investment opportunities for businesses, developers, & investors at small & large scale; that promote job

creation; workforce development; small business development; industrial park development; water, electricity, sewer, & transportation infrastructure as deemed necessary for new development; and that creates opportunities for business expansion & retention.

The community building concept will focus on the internal investment in our community, which may include efforts such as downtown redevelopment, historical preservation, partnering on city hosted community events that draws visitors and expands business opportunities, partnering with city on parks expansion & improvements, marketing campaigns such Explore San Benito, and other partnerships and collaboration efforts that strategically send a strong message to the world that San Benito, TX is open for business, is business friendly and undertaking gigantic steps to becoming a city of choice for residents and visitors to shop, dine, visit, work, & play.

Please note: By the time this publication is distributed the 2025 Economic Development strategic Plan will be adopted and undergoing its implementation process. Please visit [sanbenitoedc.us](http://sanbenitoedc.us) to access your EDO's most relevant and recent information.



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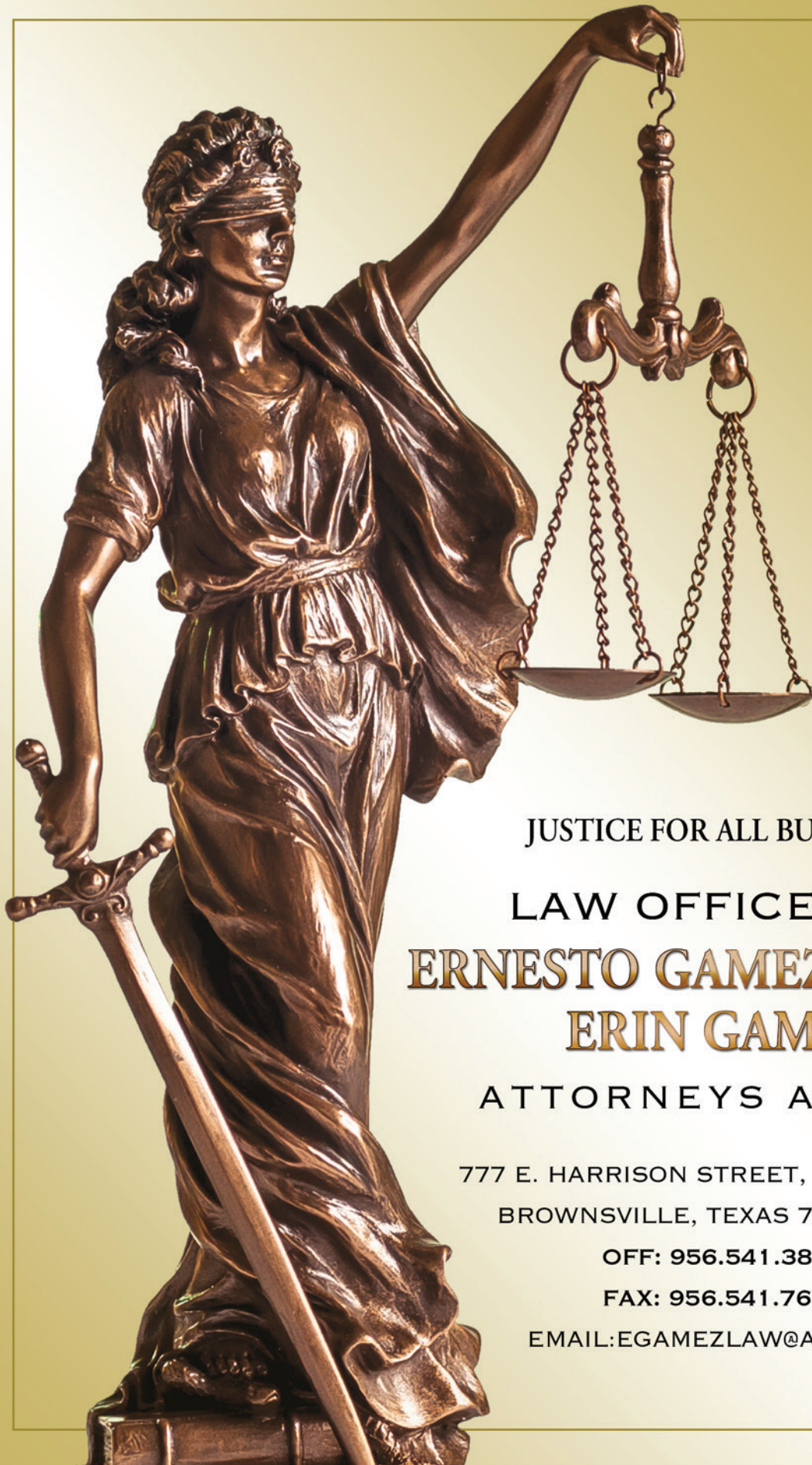


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# The Brownsville Historical Association and the History of a Texas battle flag

The Brownsville Historical Association was founded in 1947 by a group of local citizens concerned with the preservation of their city's historical archives and artifacts. Over the years, the BHA has acquired numerous donations to its collection and now operates several museums in the historic downtown area and the Mitte Cultural District in Brownsville. As a non-profit organization, the BHA is forever grateful to donors and all community support for allowing their mission to continue.

The BHA is delighted to announce that a very significant artifact dating back to 1832 now on permanent display at the Heritage Museum. The silk flag is a prototype of the Texas Navy battle flag that flew from the schooner, Brazoria, during the Battle of Velasco on June 25, 1832. The flag is printed on cream colored silk broadcloth material. The staff is shown to the left heading side of the flag and the left half of the flag is comprised of a blue canton with a single 5-pointed white star in its center. The right side of the flag features 13 alternating horizontal stripes: 7 red stripes and 6 white. The far right end of the flag is drawn as a curved line to symbolize its movement as if it were flown on a staff. The artifact dates back from the first confrontation between Texas and Mexico that lead to the Texas Revolution.

Prior to the Battle of Velasco, Fort Velasco was built at the mouth of the Brazos River in 1831 out of concern that the United States would attempt to annex Texas, which at the time was a Mexican province. The purpose of the fort was to serve as a checkpoint to stop Americans who were migrating into Texas. Around the same time, tensions were building up in Anahuac against Col. John "Juan" Davis Bradburn who worked his way up into the Mexican Army as an American volunteer during the Mexican Revolution. Discontent with Bradburn grew from his enforcement of Mexican law that prevented Anglo-American immigration into Texas. In addition, he was ordered to inspect the licenses of Anglo-American lawyers and land titles. In May of 1832, following the arrests of William B. Travis and Patrick C. Jack, certain citizens in Anahuac demanded their release from prison. When those demands were not met, plans were set into motion to secure their demands by force. In June of 1832, John Austin and Henry Smith, leaders of a group of early Anglo settlers known as Texians, traveled to Brazoria to take a number of cannons to use against Mexican forces in Anahuac. The cannons were placed on the schooner Brazoria to depart down the Brazos River into the Gulf, until Domingo de Ugartechea, Mexican commander at Fort Velasco, refused their passage. In response, an attack was ordered on the fort by the Texians. The attack occurred moments before midnight on June 25th and into the early morning hours of June 26th. Eventually, Ugartechea surrendered when his forces ran out of ammunition. The ship was completely demolished by cannon fire during the battle. It is believed that this flag is the only remnant of the Brazoria from around the time of the Battle of Velasco in 1832.

Among the figures involved in the prelude of the Texas Revolution with ties to Brownsville is Captain William Jarvis Russell, who was first in possession of the flag. Captain Russell joined John Austin on the trip to Brazoria to obtain the cannons. Leading up to the battle, Russell was placed in command of the schooner, Brazoria. The Rentfro family of Brownsville are descendants of Captain William Jarvis Russell. They donated the flag to the Brownsville Historical Association (BHA) almost two years ago. Since then, the BHA was awarded \$2,625 from the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) to help pay for the restoration of the flag. That amount was matched by the BHA through funds from the 2018 Taste of Texas event.

The BHA received the silk flag in poor condition. In its initial state, the material from the flag was malleable and not observed to be brittle. The left side of the flag containing the canton

blue square with a white star, was poorly dismantled. The stripes were in a solid condition, though there were splits in the silk and numerous holes, especially in the center bars. The heading, particularly the far left side of the flag had splits and tears throughout, as did the section of the flag where the staff is printed. The flag had been previously hand stitched to a piece of blue cloth, which was not deemed to be historic, but rather a means to support the flag from its previous state of deterioration.

Given that the flag was tattered, torn, and made of silk, indicated that restoration of the flag would be a delicate process. This extensive process consisted of first, taking apart the flag in order to clean. Then, the materials were dyed and coated with a special adhesive before mounting and framing the flag. This task was completed in December of 2018 by Jessica Hack Textile Restoration, located in New Orleans, Louisiana.

This year marks the BHA's 10th Annual Taste of Texas event, to be held on March 21, 2020. Funds raised from this annual fundraiser help support educational programs and exhibits throughout the year. **Please visit [www.brownsvillhistory.org](http://www.brownsvillhistory.org) or call 956-548-1313 for more information.**



This silk flag is a prototype of the Texas Navy battle flag that flew from the schooner, Brazoria, during the Battle of Velasco on June 25, 1832. The flag is printed on cream colored silk broadcloth material. The staff is shown to the left heading side of the flag and the left half of the flag is comprised of a blue canton with a single 5-pointed white star in its center. The right side of the flag features 13 alternating horizontal stripes: 7 red stripes and 6 white. The far right end of the flag is drawn as a curved line to symbolize its movement as if it were flown on a staff. The artifact dates back from the first confrontation between Texas and Mexico that lead to the Texas Revolution.



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## T O O U R P A R T N E R S

We wish to thank San Benito Mayor Benjamin Gomez and City Commissioners and the San Benito Economic Development Corporation Board and Executive Director Rebeca Castillo. We appreciate the assistance of City Manager Manuel De La Rosa, Asst. City Manager Fred Bell, Public Relations Director Martha McClain, Parks and Recreation Director Ramon Rodriguez and Staff - San Benito Planning and Development Director Bernard Rodriguez, San Benito Cultural Arts Director Luis Contreras, San Benito Police Department and San Benito Fire Department, as well as the San Benito Consolidated Independent School District, the San Benito Naval JROTC, and Pastor Donald Hamm.

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