

### ***Fifty-nine for Freedom*** Exhibit Opening



On March 2, 1836, as Santa Anna was approaching San Antonio, the delegates at Washington-on-the-Brazos declared: "Our political connection with the Mexican nation has now forever ended, and the people of Texas do now constitute a free and independent republic." By signing this Declaration, these men were signing their own death warrants, jeopardizing their property, and the lives of their families.

But who were these men who put their lives on the line? The new exhibit *Fifty-nine for Freedom* at the Star of the Republic Museum, will explore the life and contributions of each delegate. Numerous artifacts and documents owned or created by many of the 59 signers will be on display, many hastily scribbled on a scrap of paper during the convention.

Artists Charles and Fanny Normann, who painted *The Reading of the Texas Declaration of Independence*, wrote, "the majority of the signers were discerning, well-styled men of education who left professions and trades in the East for the opportunities and adventures that original Texas offered." According to their notes:

- 26 signers served in the Congress of the Republic
- 4 served as Texas Rangers
- 3 were members of the Supreme Court
- 6 served as Chief Justices of Counties
- 5 served in the United States Congress
- 5 were members of constitutional conventions and legislatures of other states
- 6 were in the convention which framed the Constitution of the State of Texas in 1845
- 2 were members of the Secession Convention in 1861
- 2 were in the Constitutional Convention of 1866
- 2 had been Governors prior to signing the Texas Declaration of Independence
- 8 were in the Battle of San Jacinto
- 2 were major figures in the Fredonian Rebellion
- 5 occupied positions as sheriffs
- 3 were postmasters in Texas
- 2 had lived among the Indians
- 4 died the year the Declaration of Independence was signed
- 4 lived past 90 years of age

*Fifty-nine for Freedom* will open on February 26, in celebration of the 175th anniversary of the signing of the Texas Declaration of Independence. Special guests at the anniversary celebration will be the living descendants of the fifty-nine signers. Volunteer genealogical researchers have been working for months to document the lineage of the signers. Over 1000 people have responded to the volunteers' inquiries. The descendants will have an opportunity to meet others who have descended from the same signer, and to answer "here" for their ancestors during a roll call of the delegates. The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison, herself a descendant, will be the keynote speaker.



## ***The Big Picture!*** The Rest of the Story!

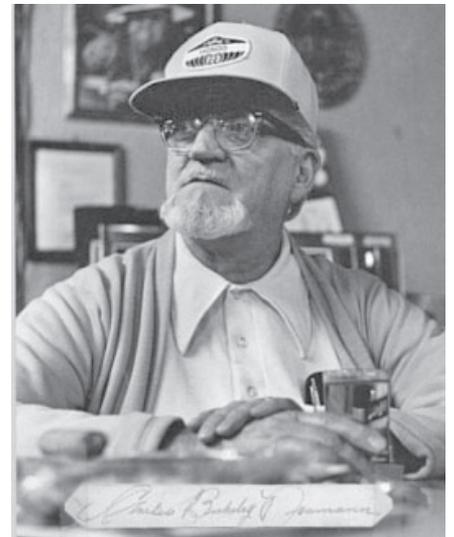
In the one hundred years that elapsed following the Texas Revolution, the stories that survived and grew to be legends commemorated military valor. The Alamo and the battleground at San Jacinto were etched into the hearts and memories of Texans forever as shrines to the bravery and fortitude of our founding fathers. Yet without the actions of the men who leaned their guns against the walls at Washington-on-the-Brazos in 1836, using their brains instead of ammunition to outline a path for an infant nation, the outcome would have been much different.

Artist Charles Berkeley Normann and his wife, the former Fanny V. Harris, preserved the actions of these men by painting the dramatic *Reading of the Texas Declaration of Independence*. Following two years of intense research, the painting was completed and exhibited at the Hall of State at the Texas Centennial Exposition in 1936.

Authenticity was crucial to the Normanns, and their research was recorded in a scrapbook, which currently, along with the painting, is owned by the Joe Fultz estate in Navasota, Texas. The artists wrote:

*Practically every face is a portrait, carefully composed after study of known likenesses in painting, daguerreotype, photograph, or sculpture. If no likeness of a participant could be found, [we] consulted family tradition and studied contemporary descriptions of the man. [We] then submitted sketches from these data for the approval of descendants. An effort was made to express the personality of each delegate as well as to depict him as he probably appeared on that occasion.*

The artists made detailed notes on each delegate to help comprise an accurate representation of each man. They were able to obtain actual pictures of 28 signers, and likenesses of 5 sons of signers. They also collected from full to partial descriptions of 9 other signers. To determine accurate dress for each man, and whether their clothes would have been buckskin, homespun, or of the “well dressed” variety, the artists noted the delegates’ “activities, number of years in pioneering, and the distance over which they rode on horseback to attend the convention.”



*Charles Berkeley Normann*

*The Houston Chronicle* (February 26, 1939) reflected the detail with which the artists painted each delegate:

*No photograph of Sam Houston, at that age, being available, a statue by Elizabet Ney was sketched, and changed to fit his age then. It was known that Houston had been among Indians and attended the council in buckskin, wearing a red Indian blanket for a shirt. Mrs. Normann posed in such dress and Mr. Normann painted her, then superimposed the head of General Houston.*

How the Fultz family came into possession of the painting is also of interest. In the 1930s, a young Joe Fultz was a law student at the University of Texas. He befriended a struggling artist who was a recent immigrant from Norway. Upon seeing the artist’s pencil sketches, Joe scraped together some money to buy the artist a few tubes of paint—not an easy accomplishment during the Great Depression. This act of kindness sealed a friendship that would eventually result in the Fultz family’s ownership of the painting.

A “Texas-sized” reproduction of *Reading of the Texas Declaration of Independence* will be unveiled at our Texas Independence Day Celebration on Sunday, February 27 at 3:00 in the Park Amphitheater.

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# TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION

## *175th Anniversary of the Signing of the Texas Declaration of Independence*

### PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

#### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2011

10:30 am	Key Moments of the 1836 Convention.....	Independence Hall
11:00 am	Texas Heroes Living History..... (William Barret Travis & Susanna Dickinson)	Museum Theater
11:00 am	<i>The Texas Convention: The Birth of a Republic March 1-17, 1836</i> by the Navasota Theater Alliance.....	Amphitheater
11:30 am	Key Moments of the 1836 Convention.....	Independence Hall
12:30 pm	Republic of Texas Art Contest Awards.....	Museum Theater
1:00 pm	Key Moments of the 1836 Convention.....	Independence Hall
1:30 pm	Texas Heroes Living History..... (Stephen F. Austin & Mary Austin Holley)	Museum Theater
2:00 pm	Key Moments of the 1836 Convention.....	Independence Hall
2:30 pm	<i>The Texas Convention: The Birth of a Republic March 1-17, 1836</i> by the Navasota Theater Alliance.....	Amphitheater
3:00 pm	Key Moments of the 1836 Convention.....	Independence Hall
3:30 pm	Texas Heroes Living History..... (Sam Houston)	Museum Theater
4:00pm	Key Moments of the 1836 Convention.....	Independence Hall

#### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2011

10:00 am	Washington Guard Interpretive Program.....	Independence Hall
11:00 am	Texas Heroes Living History ..... (William Barret Travis & Susanna Dickinson)	Museum Theater
12:30 pm	Texas Heroes Living History..... (Stephen F. Austin & Mary Austin Holley)	Museum Theater
1:00 pm	Fightin' Texas Aggie Band.....	Amphitheater

Formal Ceremony for the Recognition of the Descendants of the Signers  
of the Texas Declaration of Independence.....Amphitheater

1:45 pm	Opening Remarks
2:05 pm	Remarks from Sam Houston, portrayed by Jack Edmondson
2:35 pm	Distinguished Speaker, The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison
3:00 pm	Black Powder Salute by the Texas Army
3:00 pm	Unveiling of <i>The Big Picture!</i>
3:15 pm	Texas-sized Birthday Cake

4:00 pm	<i>The Texas Convention: The Birth of a Republic March 1-17, 1836</i> by the Navasota Theater Alliance.....	Amphitheater
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Throughout the weekend, the Park will be filled with living historians recreating the everyday life, chores and activities of Texian settlers and soldiers. Visitors can experience small arms and artillery firing demonstrations, historic craft demonstrations, musicians, drill competition, and free admission to the Star of the Republic Museum.

*Upon arrival, see Event Program for additional activities and information*

P. O. Box 317 Washington, Texas 77880

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

**Brazos Valley Regional History Fair**

The sixth Brazos Valley Regional History Fair was held on February 4 at Washington on the Brazos. The Museum gratefully acknowledges the following sponsors:

**FOUNDERS** \$400+

- Washington on the Brazos State Park Association
- Blinn College
- Star of the Republic Museum
- Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site

**DELEGATES** \$250+

- Brazos County Historical Commission
- Washington County Genealogical Society
- Daughters of the Republic of Texas, Dr. Richard Fox Brenham Chapter
- Independence Historical Society

**TEXIANS** up to \$249

- Jared Patout, C. P. A.
- Brazos Heritage Society
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- Lacina, Kenjura & Haevischer, Attorneys at Law
- Daughters of the American Revolution, La Villita Chapter
- United Daughters of the Confederacy, Minnie B. Williams Chapter #531
- Washington County Historical Commission
- Blue Bell Creameries
- Henry P. Mayo

*Texas Tots Storytime*  
 Featured stories:  
 March 15: *L is for Lone Star*, by Carol Crane  
 April 19: *Armadillo Rodeo*, by Jan Brett  
 May 17: *Dandelions*, by Eve Bunting

10:00 to 11:00 a.m.  
 Story plus craft activity  
 \$3 per child/\$5 per adult

**STAR OF THE REPUBLIC MUSEUM**  
 Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site

Open Daily  
 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

936-878-2461 (fax) 936-878-2462

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