

**STAR OF THE REPUBLIC MUSEUM**  
*WASHINGTON-ON-THE-BRAZOS STATE HISTORIC SITE*

**TOUR OBJECTIVES:**

1. To give the students an insight into the social, political, economic, and cultural life of the Texas Republic.
2. To acquaint students with the day-to-day activities of early settlers, including occupations, clothing styles, and entertainment.
3. To make students aware of the differences in lifestyles existing today versus the 1830s-1840s in Texas.
4. To familiarize the students with the reasons why Texans wanted independence from Mexico.
5. To identify the three accomplishments of the Convention of 1836.
6. To give the students an insight into the life of Anson Jones and his family.

**PRE-VISIT PREPARATION:**

**K – 3rd GRADE:**

1. Tell the students why they are coming to Washington and the topics to be covered. Explain that the town of Washington was where Texas was born and that Texas was a separate county for 10 years before it joined the United States.
2. Talk to the students about the Republic time period (1836-1846). This can be done in several ways. a. What was happening in your town? b. How many generations ago was this time? Who lived here? c. Who was the President of the United States and how many Presidents has the country had since that time?
3. Have the students talk about what life might have been like in early Texas. Possible topics of discussion might include:
  - a. Who lived in Texas? What groups of people lived here?
  - b. How did they get here? stagecoach? horse? boat? on foot?
  - c. How did these Texans get food, shelter, clothing, etc?
  - d. What kind of work did these early Texans do? blacksmithing? preaching? teaching? farming? etc.
4. Using the list of books found on this website and other sources, read some of the books related to this time period.
5. Keep a running chart of “what we know,” “what we want to know,” and “what we have learned” to refer to before and after the trip.

#### 4th-8th GRADE:

1. Why is Texas called the “birthplace” of Texas? What happened here in 1836? Texas was an independent nation for 10 years (1836-1846)—what does that mean? Compare the Republic of Texas to an independent nation today. How were they alike? How were they different? What form of government did the Republic of Texas establish? How did they raise money to pay the President and other elected officials?
2. Who were the first “Texans?” Why did so many new people come to Texas in the 1830s? Who were they and where did they come from? What types of clothes did they wear? What types of cloth were used to make the clothes? (When you visit Barrington Farm make sure that you look carefully at the clothes won by the workers. See if you can find any zippers used in making their clothes.) What were their houses like? What materials were used to build them? What kind of work did they do? What forms of entertainment did they have? Name three different groups of people that “became Texans.”
3. How do we know about the past? What sources do we use to reconstruct history? William Fairfax Gray wrote a diary during the Convention of 1836 in Washington, Texas. From his book we have learned important details about the convention. His diary is a primary source (first-hand account). A primary source is one way of documenting history. One day your diary/journal could be used to tell the history of your life. You can read excerpts from his diary on the museum website <http://www.starmuseum.org/Gray.htm>. If you knew that 50 years from now your emails and text messages might be used as a primary source to research what kind of person you were, how would that change what you write?
4. Discuss geography. Locate Washington, Texas, on a map. Using the New Handbook of Texas, research what the town of Washington was like in 1835. You may go to [www.tsha.utexas.edu](http://www.tsha.utexas.edu) and find more information about Washington. Also use the excerpt from Gray’s diary (<http://www.starmuseum.org/Gray.htm>) to find the entry Sunday, February 14, 1836, to read what the town of Washington was like in 1836, according to Gray. Then discuss how the location of Washington was important to the people who attended the Convention of 1836. Look at a map of Texas as it was during the time that it was a Republic. Other than being larger, how would Texas be different today? Would the size change its economics? Would it change its representation in Washington, D.C.? Do you think that Austin would still be the capital of Texas? Why or why not?
5. Research Anson Jones at [www.tsha.utexas.edu](http://www.tsha.utexas.edu). Where was he born? Why did he come to Texas? Why was his home in Texas called Barrington?

Describe his family. How many people lived in his home? What led to his decline as a politician? How did he die and where?

6. BE A SUPER SLEUTH:

Look at these artifacts and discuss what you think they are and how they were used during the Republic Period. When you come to the Museum look for these artifacts during your tour.



9th-12th GRADE:

1. Have the students review the history of the Texas Republic. Give at least 10 important dates, including the important events in the year prior to Texas winning their independence on April 21, 1836, possibly starting with the fight at Gonzales on October 2, 1835. In your review give the population at the time, race, gender, ethnicity of the people, economics of the day, state of health of the people, political leaders, types of homes, etc.

## **POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES:**

### **K-3rd GRADE:**

1. You may wish to have the students pretend that they are joining a small wagon train and that they must decide what to take to Texas. (Remind them that pioneers must travel lightly.) For the younger ones, you may want to make a list of items and let them eliminate the ones that they would NOT take. The list might include: dishes, silverware, pots and pans, hatchet, hammer, bucket, fire starters, change of clothes, sugar, flour, salt, coffee, baking powder, feather mattress, cradle, lantern, candles, bed frame, trunk, piano, Grandma's china dishes, gun, bullets, gun powder, cloth for making clothes, spinning wheel, the family Bible, toys, quilts, water, milk cow, churn, winter coats, extra shoes, books, seeds, large washtub, kettle, coffee grinder, coffee beans, pencils, shovel, pickax, guitar, tobacco, scissors, sewing needles, thread, soap, baby high chair, firewood, sewing machine, and canned goods from the garden.
2. Make a Republic of Texas picture wall. The students may draw, paint, or cut out pictures to show what life might have been like during this time. Discuss your trip briefly to remind the students what they saw while they were at the park.

### **4th-8th GRADE:**

1. Organize a class discussion about the life of a child their age during the Republic Period. Compare and contrast their chores, leisure time, bedtimes, personal hygiene, school, and clothes with those of today's children.
2. Compare and contrast the daily life of Tejanos, Native Americans, African Americans, and Anglos in Texas in 1836.
3. Define artifact. Discuss the items that they saw on the website prior to their visit to the park. Compare what their thoughts were about the artifacts BEFORE they found them with what they now KNOW that they actually are:
  - a. foot warmer-to be filled with hot coals
  - b. darning egg-to be put in the toe of a sock that needs darning
  - c. candle safe-to keep candles away from rodents in the house
  - d. sugar nipper-to cut chunk of sugar from sugar cone
  - e. shoe last-used by a cobbler to shape a shoe
  - f. stickball stick-used by Native Americans for sport
4. Have students bring artifacts to class that have been passed down in their family. If they are too valuable to be brought to school, maybe they could just bring a picture of the artifact. Make a class museum using labels to

describe each object. Ask questions about the artifacts such as: a. What is it? b. How was it made? c. How was it used? d. How old is it? e. Why is it important? f. To whom did it belong?

5. If your class did the pre-visit activity that included studying the geography of Washington, Texas, compare and contrast the town as it is now and how it was in 1836. Be sure to include the importance of the Brazos River for transportation of goods and passengers. Also discuss what happened later in Washington which caused its demise. Do you know of another town in WASHINGTON COUNTY that had this same problem that caused it to dwindle in size also?

#### 9th-12th GRADE:

1. Have students research and write a paper on historical museums or parks and the artifacts housed there. What is the purpose of a historical museum or park? Why do people collect things? Why is preservation of artifacts, the environment, or wildlife important? Students may bring *family* artifacts from home and have a discussion or write a paper about what it is, how it was made, how it was used, how old it is, what does it tell us about life during the time it was used, how it is important, and how it can be displayed or protected. OR you may use one of the artifacts found on the website and have the same discussion as above.
2. Compare and contrast race relations/gender relations (to include stereotypes) during the Republic with contemporary times: this can be a class debate or written report.
3. Discuss the debate over annexation. Choose pro/con sides and have a class debate. Would Texas become a state if your class were to vote?
4. Compare and contrast the Presidents of the Republic. What were their views on the important issues of the day? Do you think they would be elected to office today?

THANK YOU FOR COMING!  
WE HOPE YOU ENJOY YOUR VISIT!