



## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I hope this message finds each of you safe and healthy. Our world continues to evolve in unimaginable ways, which in turn significantly impacts our small organization. We evolved in June when we successfully hosted our first ever virtual Chapter meeting. This option may be our only option for the foreseeable future. Keep each other in your thoughts and prayers, Texas History will continue!

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Join us for 2  
these Events...

What Hasn't 2  
Sam Houston..

Texas County 2  
Names and...

The History of 3  
King's Fort

Recognizing 3  
One of Our...

The Council 4  
House Fight...

# The Honor Ring

VOLUME III, ISSUE III

JULY 1, 2020

## SRT's Texas History Essay Contest

Jennifer Lee Searle, daughter of Kameron and Marisa Searle, won 2nd place in The Sons of the Republic of Texas 2019-2020 Texas History Essay Contest. The topic was *Anson Jones: The Last President of the Republic of Texas*. She was rewarded with a scholarship in the amount of \$3,000. Jennifer was a Senior at James E. Taylor High School in Katy, Texas. In addition to her academic studies, she also lettered in Cross Country track. Jennifer is an 8th generation Texan and has loved Texas history all her life. She has been a Republic of Texas era reenactor since she could walk and has reenacted all over the State of Texas including historical activities at Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site, San Felipe de Austin State His-

toric Site, the San Jacinto Battlefield, and the Fernland Historical Park in Montgomery, Texas. She participated as a reenactor in two Texas Historical Marker



**Jennifer Searle, daughter of one of the Sam Houston Chapter's long-time members, Kameron Searle.**

dedication ceremonies, specifically one for President Anson Jones in Houston's Glenwood Cemetery and the Lake Creek Settle-

ment in Montgomery, Texas. Her ancestor, Martin Parmer, seconded Sam Houston's motion to declare Texas independence from Mexico on March 2, 1836 at Washington-on-the-Brazos, and was one of the signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence. Jennifer is also a member of the Descendants of the Signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence and has worked with the Descendants Committee planning of the Texas Independence activities for the Texas Independence Day Celebration at Washington on the Brazos State Park for the last six years. Jennifer has also been active in Sam Houston Chapter activities over the years including parades, meetings, and other events. Congratulations Jennifer!

## Texas First Families

The Texas State Genealogical Society (TSGS) offers all members of The Sons of the Republic of Texas a [Texas First Families Certificate](#). Specifically, they allow both direct and lateral ancestors who settled in Texas or served the Republic of Texas before February 19, 1846 to qualify for

this distinction. You must submit the relevant Texas State Genealogical Society application along with the documented proof of descendency. The TSGS has published two volumes from this project and intends to publish additional volumes; therefore, your ancestry will be available in

yet another important location. An online INDEX of those applicants to-date is available for your review. You may pursue this through the TSGS organization, or some regional societies also offer County-specific *First Family Certificates* such as the [East Texas Genealogical Society](#).



Participate to the extent of your capability and availability, but participate.

*"Bite on a bullet while dueling, it will make you aim better."*

Former U.S. Senator  
from Tennessee,  
Andrew Jackson, 1826

## Join Us for these Upcoming Events

As of right now, EVERYTHING is up in the air, any previous plans are up for reconsideration. Our new reality is a temporary and unpleasant one, but one we cannot ignore. *Plan for the worst, hope for the best* seems an appropriate motto today. Assess your computer capabilities to participate in virtual meetings (i.e., camera, microphone, etc.) as this option may be forced upon us. We will provide updates to events and activities as they become available.

**April 21, 2020:** San Jacinto Day, LaPorte, TX. CANCELLED

**May 16, 2020:** May Chapter Meeting, San Felipe de Austin, San Felipe, TX. CANCELLED

**June 27, 2020:** June Chapter Meeting, Katy, TX. VIRTUAL

**July 18, 2020:** July Chapter Meeting, Katy, TX. TBD

**September 19, 2020:** Texian Navy Day, TBD.

**September 19, 2020:** Texas Heroes Day, La Grange, TX.

TBD

**October 10-11, 2020:** City of Katy Rice Festival, Katy, TX. TBD

**November 14, 2020:** Father of Texas Celebration, San Felipe de Austin, San Felipe, TX. TBD

**November 21, 2020:** November Chapter Meeting, Katy, TX. TBD

**December 12, 2020:** Chapter Holiday Gathering Dinner, Katy, TX. TBD

## What Hasn't Sam Houston Done?

When it comes to Sam, the sky is the limit! During his time as a U.S. Representative of the State of Tennessee, Sam made a few enemies. One of those was John P. Erwin, the Nashville Postmaster, whom Sam wrote a letter to then U.S. President John Quincy Adams stating Erwin *"was not a man of fair and upright moral character."* In addition to this letter, Sam



**What a typical pistol duel might have looked like in the early 1800s.**

attacked Erwin during a speech on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives. All of this resulted from patronage politics wherein Andrew Jackson had promoted another candidate for Nashville Postmaster over Mr. Erwin. As a vocal ally of Andrew Jackson, Sam caught the attention of Mr. Erwin who was extremely displeased by Sam's besmirching his charac-

## Texas County Names and Etymologies

Of the 254 counties in Texas, 14 were named after their original county seats. Of the remaining 240, 199 were named after people, and 27 were named after geographic features, such as rivers. The other 15 have miscellaneous names in English, Spanish, or Indian languages. 66 were

named after men who fought against Mexico in the Texas Revolution including 11 counties named after 13 men who died at The Alamo (which included a trio of brothers). 58 were named after men who held public office in the Republic of Texas, including 18 soldiers in the Texas Revolution.

No counties were named directly after women, but others were named for Texas Rangers, figures from Spain or Mexico, and U.S. Presidents. You may click on this [link](#) to see the etymology of each County in Texas. Houston County was the first County established by the Republic of Texas.

## What Hasn't Sam Houston Done?, *Cont'd*

ter! In response, Mr. Erwin dispatched Col. John T. Smith, a professional duelist, to deliver a challenge to Sam. In turn, Sam rejected that challenge and went about his usual business. This rejection only further infuriated Mr. Erwin who then dispatched General William A. White to challenge Sam to a duel, wherein Sam reluctantly accepted. Sam prepared for the duel by practicing his marksmanship at Jackson's home, The Hermitage. On the morning of September 22, 1826, Sam and General White squared off



**Miniature portrait of Sam Houston circa 1826 from the Digital Collections at Sam Houston State University.**

at 15 paces. Sam emerged unscathed, but White was struck in the groin and called out to Sam "you have killed me!" White survived the duel, but in June 1827, a Kentucky grand jury delivered a felony indictment against Sam who was now running for Governor of Tennessee. The current Governor chose not to pursue the arrest arguing that Sam had acted in self defense. Here lies yet another example where our Sam was *touched by angels* and protected to serve us in a capacity he could never expect!

*"In this frail  
tenement, a garrison  
of only ten or twelve  
men have bid  
defiance to the whole  
Indian force of that  
section, and have  
sustained their  
position with as little  
difficulty as if they  
were protected by  
walls and battlements  
of massive stone."  
- Houston Telegraph  
& Texas Register,  
September 1, 1841*

## The History of King's Fort

The frontier forts of the Republic of Texas predate the better known frontier forts of the post-Civil War era in Texas, yet little is known about them. One such fort known as King's Fort, located near present day Kaufman, TX, was built around 1840 to secure the North Central Texas area for settlement and protect against Indian attacks. Detailed information is available [here](#) via The

*History of King's Fort.* The fort is named for Dr. William P. King, President of the Southern Land Company. Having come from Mississippi and then to San Augustine in 1839, Dr. King and surveyor Warren A. Ferris set out to develop 500,000 acres in the North Texas area. The fort was comprised of several buildings enclosed by a tall tree log wall encompassing  $\frac{3}{4}$  of

an acre. From July to August 1841, King's Fort was a staging point for General Tarrant and General James Smith to pursue and engage Indians located near present-day Arlington, TX. Your Chapter President's qualifying ancestor, Henderson Birdwell, was among the men in General Smith's militia during that engagement. President Sam Houston visited King's Fort in July 1843.

## Recognizing One of Our Own

Many of you are aware of the Sam Houston Chapter's, and more so Mr. Dennis Giuffré's undertaking of the Lamar Flag Ceremony for the past 27 consecutive years. But, what you may not know is that several of us in the Chapter sought a special recognition for Dennis' longstanding dedication to leading this event. Therefore, we submitted a Texas Historical Commission

*Award of Merit in Historic Preservation* nomination to the Texas Historical Commission in Dennis' name for the Lamar Flag Ceremony. This award recognizes the efforts and/or contributions of an individual or organization involved in preserving Texas' cultural and historical resources. Along with a little help from the Fort Bend County Historical Commission, we put together

the required paperwork and sent it off for consideration. Earlier this Spring, we were informed by the Texas Historical Commission they had approved the nomination! Dennis is likely the first SRT member to receive such an award and we are excited for him to receive this recognition!



**Dennis Giuffré and his wife Mary.**



## The Sam Houston Chapter #38

Katy, Texas

Chapter President: Bart Dawson

Phone: 281-220-7321

Website: <http://www.srt-samhouston.com>

Facebook: @SamHoustonChapter

**“Honoring your Ancestors,  
remembering your past”**

The **PURPOSE** of the SRT shall be to perpetuate the memory and spirit of the men and women who achieved the independence of Texas, set the young Republic upon its high course among the nations of the world, and finally secured its admission as a state of the United States of America.

The Sons of the Republic of Texas, Inc. (“SRT”) consists of members who are direct lineal descendants of those that settled the Republic of Texas prior to February 19, 1846, when Texas merged with the United States as the 28th state.

The Sam Houston Chapter was formed in 1987 in Katy, TX and holds regular meetings at Texas Tradition restaurant in Katy.

# The Council House Fight and Beyond

The Presidency of Mirabeau B. Lamar took a dramatically different tact with the Indian tribes in Texas compared to his predecessor Sam Houston. In fact, this has, in many circles, earned Lamar a black mark with respect to his handling of the Texas Indian tribes. The most notorious event was known as *The Council House Fight*, which took place in San Antonio on March 19, 1840. A peace party comprised of a large group of Comanche Indians, including many chiefs and warriors, women and children, and one captive arrived to meet with the Texians to discuss a peace treaty between the two factions. When confronted by the Texians that they did not bring all of their captives, the Texians decided to hold the Chiefs captive until the return of all Texian captives. A fight broke out in the

house, and surrounding area, with the Texian soldiers killing approximately 30 chiefs and warriors. As a result of this action, the Comanche and other Indian tribes were enraged about the betrayal. In August of 1840, the Indian tribes began their revenge for the Council House Fight in what would be called *The Great Comanche Raid*.



**The peace party of Comanche Indians arriving at the Council House in San Antonio, 1840.**

This offensive was allegedly encouraged by Mexican General Valentin Canalizo, the military commander of northern Mexico, who was headquartered in Matamoros. As the Indians swept down from the Hill Country, across the coastal plain, all the way to Victoria and Refugio, they scalped, mutilated, and killed many settlers and soldiers. This conglomeration of tribes included Comanche, Kiowa, and Cheyenne all led by Comanche Chief Buffalo Hump. Familiar Texians would once again rise to the fight including Matthew “Old Paint” Caldwell, Ben McCulloch, Edward Burleson, and Alsey Miller (*involved later in the Dawson Massacre in 1842*). The Battle of Plum Creek would ensue as well as other skirmishes through the Fall. After this, Indians never again raided so deep into Texas territory.