



The Window Pane

Brazoria County Historical Museum

100 East Cedar Street
Angleton TX 77515

Austin Town 2005: What a Site!



By all appearances everyone really enjoyed *Austin Town* this year, especially the new location. On the banks of a deep blue lake, over one hundred volunteers in period dress met and entertained thousands of visitors.

This year's special program, underwritten in part by Humanities Texas, was the re-enactment of a broom jumping ceremony. Several professional actors and actresses worked with local volunteers to talk with passersby, sing spirituals, and "jump the broom." This provocative program was very moving and well received.



The broom jumping ceremony was held in front of the almost-completed log cabin the Museum staff and volunteers have been constructing. The small, single pen cabin was built by volunteers and staff at the Museum, but was relocated to the new *Austin Town* site before the event. There remains some work to be done on the cabin as the eaves must be finished, the cracks chinked and daubed, and a door installed.

The Museum already is planning for the 10th Annual *Austin Town*, which will be held October 27-29, 2006. During the coming year, Museum staff and volunteers will be working on the blacksmith shop and some of the other buildings at the site as well as drafting a master plan for the development of the entire site. This plan will address issues such as period landscaping and crops, buildings, furnishings and special event facilities.

If you have any ideas for what you would like to see at *Austin Town*, please contact Bruce Taylor-Hille at the Museum.

November 2005

<i>Austin Town</i>	1
<i>Memberships</i>	2
<i>Adriance Library</i>	3
<i>Christmas Exhibit</i>	4

The Traditional Christmas Cultural and Historical Influences On Exhibit December '05

Memorials and Memberships

Memorials

In Memory of:

Fred & Pete Schumm
Fred Schumm
Doris Kramig
Cordie Lang
Cordie Lang
Fred Schumm
Pat Cruce
John Caldwell
Patsy Brock

By:

Estelle Brubaker
Carolyn Tunnell
Beth Griggs
Marie Beth & Kathy Jones
Jack & Sarah Buice
Alice Ball Strunk
Alice Ball Strunk
Alice Ball Strunk
Alice Ball Strunk

Honorariums

In honor of

Eleanor Nabors Rea
Garvin Germany

By

Pat Shell
Carolyn Tunnell

New Members:

Senior

Bobbye Peltier, Danbury
Lon Tullos, Clute

El General

Arthur O. Evans III, Wharton
Phil Garza, Alvin
Judge Ben Hardin, Lake Jackson
Kimberley Sprouse, Washington, DC
Commissioner Larry Stanley, Brazoria

Recent renewals:

El Presidente

Mike & Leslie Lowrey, Lake Jackson
Dr. Margaret McNeese, Houston

El General

Lisa Doyle, Junior Service League,
Lake Jackson
Mr. & Mrs. Dwyer McNeese, Houston
Eleanor Nabors Rea, Lake Jackson
Mr. & Mrs. Marcus Stephenson, Lake
Jackson

La Familia

Stewart & Shirley Coffman, Pearland
Mr. & Mrs. J. J. Fenn III, West Colum-
bia
James Glover, Angleton

Dr. Richard & Arlette Hardoin, Lake
Jackson

Mr. & Mrs. Durwood McKinney,
Angleton

David Roberts, Clute

Dr. & Mrs. Bob Schwebel, Lake Jack-
son

Mr. & Mrs. Darrell Schwebel, Lake
Jackson

El Tejano

Charlene Buck, Lake Jackson

Louise Krohn, Houston

John O'Leary, Lake Jackson

Pat Shell, Lake Jackson

Sue Williamson, Angleton

Mrs. Jack Zylks, Lake Jackson

Senior

Gen Bagley, Angleton

Betty Blackmon, West Columbia

Neil Caldwell, Angleton

Gardner Campbell, Lake Jackson

Nedra Kelley, Angleton

Neal McLain, Brazoria

Kathryn Purdom, Angleton

Winona Thomas, Brazoria

Sandy Weems, West Columbia

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Thanks to Killum Pest Control for
their donated services to the Museum.

Adriance Library & Research Center

What a relief to know that hurricane season is almost over for the year 2005! That makes about 170 hurricane seasons in Brazoria County for my family since 1835; and with one possible exception in 1900, I do not think the Gieseckes ever did anything but “hunker down” when a hurricane came. For one thing, until fairly recently folks never knew a hurricane was coming until just before it arrived.

“Hunkering down” may not always have been the best course of action, but there was a decided lack of other choices in the early days. It seems odd to me now that I do not ever remember hearing just exactly what my great-grandparents, Cornelius and Emma Giesecke, did during the 1900 Storm. I know that they were living in a large two-story house in Quintana and that they owned a store there in 1900. I also know that they lost both the store and their home in the storm. Were they in Quintana during the storm? I suppose that that they were not. Our family was one to share storm stories with gusto in recent generations. It is hard to imagine that their story would not have been told and retold, too, if it was an interesting one. How could being in Quintana during the 1900 Storm have failed to produce an interesting story?

Cornelius died in 1933 and Emma died in 1948 (when I was three years old), so I would have had to hear their storm story from their children or grandchildren. I always have thought that in 1900 the family might have journeyed inland rather than spend the storm in Quintana, but all those people living in Galveston did not leave the coast. I do not think the residents of Quintana would have had any more insight about the storm than the people in Galveston at the time. I recall that my great-aunt Mary Kennedy, who later married one of Cornelius Giesecke's sons, told of spending the 1900 Storm at Quintana when she was 15 years old. That seems to prove that all the people of Quintana did not evacuate. Back then, it was the practice for wives and children to spend time at the beach in the summer, while the father of the family stayed in town and worked. Aunt Mary's father was in Angleton when the 1900 Storm hit, but his family was at Quintana. One can only imagine the emotional turmoil he must have experienced when he realized the severity of the storm.

Aunt Mary told me that Perry Bryan, who had a large and sturdy house on Bryan Beach, sent Joel Bryan to her family's place at Quintana and insisted that Mrs. Kennedy bring her children and spend the storm at the Bryan House. Aunt Mary said they owed their lives to Mr. Bryan, because when they went back to their house after the storm it was no longer there. As she put it, “it was flat.” Mary Kennedy survived that storm and many others in her long life, and lived on to be 100 years old thanks, in part, to Mr. Bryan.

So where did the Quintana Giesecke's spend the 1900 Storm? There were no hair-raising stories of their 1900 Storm experience handed

down in the family. Perhaps they, too, stayed at the Bryan House or with one of the other families whose home survived the onslaught. Evidently, there were not too many homes that were still standing at Quintana after the 1900 Storm. The Giesecke home was located almost next door to the Jarvis House, known in recent years as the Allen House. Built in the 1880s, the Jarvis House was one of the few that made it through the storm, and it still stands today on its original site. Perhaps the Jarvis House survived because the two massive fireplaces with foundations extending into the ground provided additional support. Some accounts say that most of those who stayed in Quintana the night of the 1900 Storm ended up seeking refuge at the Jarvis House. It would seem likely that the Gieseckes could have stayed there with their neighbors.

Perhaps more research will provide an answer to where Cornelius, Emma and their sons rode out the storm. It seems odd to me that their 1900 Storm story did not trickle down to the current generation. My other set of Brazoria County great-grandparents, Robert and Lillie May Glass, certainly had a story to tell. They are the ones who spent the 1900 Storm on the Lake Jackson Plantation where he was working as a carpenter. One of their daughters, Rae Glass Smith, left us an oral history tape in which she describes that experience. I have written about it before, but if you missed it, you are welcome to come hear the story in Rae's own words and in her own voice. The tape was made in 1976 when she was 85 years old. The 1900 Storm raged on Rae's birthday the year she turned nine years old, and seventy-six year later, she still remembered it vividly.

Storm stories abound in the Adriance Library's files. I plan to look there for more stories about the 1900 Storm in Quintana. Last June, Bonnie Schuster of Missoula, Montana, provided a new addition to the Museum's collection of 1900 Storm accounts. She sent us a copy of a memoir written by her grandmother, Gladys M. Wertz Clark. Gladys moved to Brazoria County with her family in 1898, when she was eleven years old. The Wertz Family's storm adventure took place on their farm near Austin Bayou. I will share Gladys' story with you in next month's newsletter.
Jamie Murray





Brazoria County
Historical Museum

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Happy Thanksgiving !

The Traditional Christmas: *Cultural and Historical Influences*

Nothing quite gets you in the Christmas Spirit like the image of a capering demon carrying away the bad children who got on Santa's "naughty list."

Stop by the Museum this December to view a whimsical exhibit that explores the origins of some of our most cherished holiday traditions. The exhibit will look at the origins of the Christmas tree, Santa Claus, Wassailing and several other customs.

The exhibit will open to coincide with Angleton's Christmas on the Square Celebration, which will be held on December 3, 2005. Please contact the Museum for more information at 979/864-1208 or programs@bchm.org.

