



# The Window Pane

## Brazoria County Historical Museum

100 East Cedar Street  
Angleton TX 77515

### First Waco Horror Book Review Rescheduled

Due to Hurricane Rita, Patricia Bernstein will now review her book [The First Waco Horror: the Lynching of Jesse Washington and the Rise of the NAACP](#) at the Brazoria County Historical Museum on Thursday, November 10, at 6:30 PM. [The First Waco Horror](#) is the story of the public torture and murder of Jesse Washington, a 17-year old retarded black boy, on the town square of Waco, Texas, in 1916, before an audience of 10,000 screaming, cheering spectators and the efforts of the fledgling NAACP to investigate, dramatize and publicize the event in order to expose the reality of the crime of lynching and force the na-



tion to see it for what it was. The book sets the scene by painting a picture of Waco, enamored with an image of itself as "the Athens of Texas," but with an ugly, persistent history of violence. The book then describes the brave souls who founded the NAACP in 1909, and tells the story of women's suffrage activist Elisabeth Freeman who was hired to go to Waco and investigate the Washington lynching. Freeman, clever, courageous and relentless, used all of her skills and wiles to get the facts and identify the lynch mob leaders. W.E.B. Du Bois, brilliant editor of the NAACP's magazine, then told the story of the Waco Horror to the world.



Patricia Bernstein has written articles for Smithsonian Magazine, Texas Monthly and Cosmopolitan. Bernstein's book is available for sale in the Window's Gift Shoppe at the Museum. Call 979/864 -1208 or 979/388 -1208 for more information.

### September 2005

<i>First Waco Horror</i>	1
<i>Streeter Collection</i>	2
<i>Veterans Quilt</i>	2
<i>Adriance Library</i>	3
<i>Texas Archaeology Month</i>	4
<i>Austin Town</i>	5
<i>Father of Texas Banquet</i>	6

## Freeport

### Bottle

### Works

Poetry reading by  
author

**Carlyn L. Reding**

**October 6, 6:30 PM**

at the Museum

## Streeter Collection

The Adriance Library & Research Center has obtained microfilm of the Thomas W. Streeter Collection of Texas Manuscripts. The set of thirty - nine reels of microfilm contain 1,679

titles that have been filmed in date order and published by *Primary Source Microfilm*. The set is entitled *Texas as Province and Republic, 1795 -1845* and is based on Thomas W. Streeter's Bibliography of Texas, 1795 -1845. There is an accompanying printed guide for the collection. The collection contains legal documents, personal papers, broadsides, maps, proclamations, books and pamphlets and is considered the pre-

### COLUMBIA JOCKEY CLUB



mier collection of Texana materials. Almost any book about the early history of Texas references the Streeter Collection as a source.

Thomas W. Streeter was born in New Hampshire in 1883, and graduated from Harvard Law School in 1907. He practiced law until he moved to New York in 1917, when he began a career in finance. Streeter started collecting items of early American history as a young man and eventually amassed the largest collection ever of Texas materials. He collected these materials not only from Texas, but also from other states, Mexico and Europe. Many were collected when he served as Chairman of the Board of Simms Petroleum Corporation, a Texas oil company. Streeter's collection was sold to Yale University for its Western Americana Collection and remains there to this day.

*Michael Bailey*

## Museum Staff

Jackie Haynes  
*Executive Director*  
director@bchm.org  
Joyce McHam  
*Business Manager*  
manager@bchm.org  
Bruce Taylor -Hille  
*Program Coordinator*  
programs@bchm.org  
Michael Bailey  
*Curator*  
curator@bchm.org  
Jamie Murray  
*Information Services Coordinator*  
research@bchm.org  
Rose Olivares  
*Secretary*  
office@bchm.org  
Rosemary Duke  
*Store Manager*  
giftshop@bchm.org  
Bettye Snell  
*Curatorial/Library Assistant*  
clerk1@bchm.org

The Museum Staff also can be reached at the following:  
100 East Cedar Street  
Angleton, TX 77515  
979/864-1208 (office)  
979/864-1217 (fax)

## Veterans Quilt

The Brazoria County Historical Museum and the Plantation Quilting Guild of Lake Jackson are working together to ensure that many of the names of those Brazoria County residents who have served or currently are serving either in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan or in Operation Iraqi Free-

dom are remembered. Guild members are sewing the quilt at the Museum, which should be finished by Veterans Day, November 11, 2005.

Memorial quilts are a traditional way of preserving names of those individuals who have served in various military conflicts. The quilt project is both straightforward and commanding, yet will lead to a quiet remembrance of modern day military conflicts and those who served in them.



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

# Adriance Library & Research Center

Last month's newsletter article left early Texas traveler Thomas Rexford making his way on horseback from Velasco to Columbia, San Felipe, Washington, Mill Creek, and Cole's Settlement. He had come from New York as escort to a group of settlers on the brig *Belvedere*, and had landed at Velasco on July 2, 1837. Evidently, it was never his intention to settle in Texas, but while waiting for another ship to make the return trip to the US, Thomas took advantage of the opportunity to see the area.

After spending 16 days in Velasco, Thomas bought a horse and gear and set out for Brazoria. There, he found about 30 small houses with only 2 or 3 of brick, and "none that would be called good at the North." Brazoria had 300-400 inhabitants, two taverns, and "a number of stores and grocery, some with very good stocks of goods." Timberland surrounded the little village, which Thomas described as a little "village in the woods."

From Brazoria Thomas went to Columbia. He mentioned in the journal that most of the 10-20 vessels that served the Texas trade from New Orleans went as far up the Brazos as Marion. Today we know Marion as East Columbia, but the Columbia Thomas describes is the settlement situated 2 miles inland from the river. This settlement has about 30 or 40 houses and is "pleasantly situated" on the border of a large prairie and enjoys "the advantage of a continual breeze across the Prairies." Near Columbia, Thomas noted a distinctive mound "which attracts the notice of every traveler." It came to be called Damon Mound, but Thomas states that its "singular form and situation have obtained for it the distinctive title of the mound." The town called Columbia that he visited in 1837 is now called West Columbia. Although Thomas passed through Marion (now East Columbia) on the return trip to Velasco, it is disappointing that he does not take time to describe it as he had the other towns he visited.

From Columbia Thomas traveled on to San Felipe, which had been burned the year before by its citizens as Santa Anna's forces advanced. Thomas described it as "now as great a desert as the site on which stood the ancient city of Babylon; rows of the China tree with here and there a brick chimney, is all that is left of its former existence." Only a few new buildings were being erected there when Thomas visited, including a building to house the post office and county business, and, of course, a tavern.

From San Felipe Thomas journeyed on to Washington, which he described as "a smart little place having 30 or 40 houses, 3 or 4 stores, 2 taverns, 1 black-smith shop, a wheelwright shop, 4 or 5 lawyers offices, and I believe about as many Doctors, two professions by the way of which there is no scarcity in Texas."

On his return to Velasco Thomas learned that a steamboat and 2 schooners were about to leave for the US, but because he still had some business to do he chose to stay longer and wait for the next boat. Perhaps his story might have ended differently had he been able to go on one of those first vessels.

After completing his business at Velasco, Thomas procured a place for his trunk on an ox cart and set out for Galveston with the hope of boarding a ship there. He walked along the beach most of the way from Velasco to Galveston, only to find that a boat had left for the US the day before. He took this opportunity to visit Houston and the San Jacinto Battleground before catching a schooner scheduled to leave Galveston on August 23rd.

During the 10 days in which he was waiting for the boat to depart, Thomas came down with a fever. When the schooner sailed he had recovered, but

soon suffered a relapse after the vessel was underway. His account ends here, but 3 letters are attached at the end of it. One, dated September 27, 1837, is from William C. Smith, a passenger on the schooner who wrote to Mrs. Rexford informing her of her husband's death. The 2nd letter, also from Mr. Smith to Mrs. Rexford, is a letter of consolation giving more details of her husband's last days and telling her of the journal found in Thomas' trunk.

The 3rd letter is from the clerk on board the schooner, telling Mrs. Rexford of Thomas' death and stating that he is returning her husband's personal effects and has attended to having a tombstone placed on his grave in Louisville as she had requested. There follow 3 emotional paragraphs of thoughts on death most likely penned by Thomas' widow, but there is no signature to confirm who wrote them. The final paragraph reads, "Amid the instability which so often wrecks our happiness here, there is a solace in the belief that the world which shall endure while the ages of eternity roll by in unending succession--The remembrance of gentle words, of elevated affections will not pass away from our memory in the days to come." If only Thomas had taken one of the earlier boats and had experienced less delay in returning to New York, perhaps he never would have contracted the fever and would have made it safely home.

As I read Thomas' journal, there was a ring of familiarity about some of the circumstances he described. I went to the file of the Follett family and searched for some letters that I remembered reading several years ago. I found a letter written on July 18, 1837, by Henry C. Wilcox shortly after his arrival in Velasco. In this letter to his parents back home, Henry recounts some of the same tales as told by Thomas. The story of the captain who would not land the passengers and their goods upon arrival, the woman and infant and 3 others who were drowned trying to get ashore, the duel, the hardships of the voyage from New York, were all here in Henry's letter and also reconfirmed in a letter from Henry's wife, Parmelia, to her parents. Henry's letter even included a poem he had written about coming ashore from the *Belvedere* onto Texas soil at Velasco. How interesting to have accounts of the same adventure from 2 different perspectives.

We are grateful to Rex Ennis for sharing his ancestor's story with us. You are invited to read Thomas Rexford's journal transcript, along with Henry and Parmelia Wilcox's letters, in the Adriance Library where many different sources on early Texas are available. Besides the genealogy material, maps, and photos mentioned in Part I of this article, the Library holds a collection of oral history tapes and a vertical file of miscellaneous stories and information. Each file contains an assortment of items relevant to a particular place, event, or topic.

Of all the materials held in these files, it is the memoirs, journals, and personal letters that stand out in my mind above all the rest of the information. It is from these first-hand accounts that we gain insight on how individuals in the past perceived the moment: what they were thinking, what they were feeling, and what conditions were like from their point of view at a given time and place. Through them, we are allowed to "peep through the curtain" that separates us from the past, and we are able to gain a better understanding for what life was like in another time. The journals, the letters, and the memoirs of early settlers like Thomas Rexford and Henry and Parmelia Wilcox truly have the power to make history come alive for us today.

Jamie Murray



## Austin Town

October 29 & 30



1832. Set just north of Angleton, *Austin Town* features character interpreters, craft and skill demonstrators, army and militia drill units, and sutlers, as well as period games and wildlife demonstrations. Visitors will have the opportunity to interact with members of the Brazoria Militia and Texas

Army, watch spinners, tatters, butter churners and blacksmiths, play games and visit the General Store, activities which are sure to delight and entertain. *Austin Town* is a valuable teaching resource and provides the public with the opportunity to learn about Mexican Texas in a hands-on environment.

*As a gospel hymn is softly sung in the background, two sweethearts prepare to make the all-important leap into matrimony. During a short ceremony called "Jumpin de Broom", the couple will pledge themselves to one another but do so without the benefit of marriage. As slaves in Austin's Colony, they are considered chattel and as such are forbidden to marry or to enter into any legally binding agreement.*

Witness a broom jumping ceremony as well as many other demonstrations of life in 1832 Texas at the Brazoria County Historical Museum's Ninth Annual *Austin Town*. Step back in time on October 29-30, 2005, at *Austin Town*, a historical re-enactment that recalls and celebrates the lives of those pioneers who settled colonial Texas from 1821 to

The Staff and Volunteers of the Brazoria County Historical Museum work diligently to provide visitors to *Austin Town* with the opportunity to visualize an accurate image of the people who called Austin's Colony home. We can all share in our heritage by learning more about the many people who shaped Texas into what it is today. Tickets are \$3 for Children (12 and under) and Senior Citizens (65 and over), and \$5 for Adults. The gates will be open from 10:00 AM until 5:00 PM on Saturday, October 30. On Sunday, October, 31, the gates will be open from 10:00 AM until 3:00 PM. *Austin Town's* new location is at the intersection of Highways 288 & 288B, with the entrance to its parking lot on Highway 521. For more information and maps to the new site, please contact the Museum by telephone at 979/864-1208 or via e-mail at [programs@bchm.org](mailto:programs@bchm.org).

## Great Time Had By All at

## Father of Texas

## Awards Banquet

### *Texas Trails: The Tenth Annual Father of Texas Awards Banquet*

Supporters of the Brazoria County Historical Museum gathered at Columbia Lakes on Saturday evening, September 17<sup>th</sup> to fete Garvin Germany, Eleanor Nabors Rea and Gregg Dimmick for their respective contributions to our community. Good food, good friends and good cheer marked a wonderful evening for both the honorees and attendees. The Museum is grateful to the following individuals and organizations that supported the Awards Banquet, the organization's primary annual fundraising event:

#### *Chisolm Trail Tables (\$1000)*

ConocoPhillips

The Dow Chemical Company

#### *Goodnight-Loving Trail Tables (\$750)*

BASF Corporation

Eleanor Nabors Rea

#### *Shawnee Trail Tables (\$500)*

City of Angleton

Brazosport College

Garza Bail Bonds

Merrill Lynch

Marcus & Lila Stephenson

Texas Dow Employees Credit Union

#### *Auction Donors*

Academy, Alvin Premiere 5, Sybil Andrus, Angleton Flower & Gift Shop, Michael Bailey, BASF, Bayou Wildlife Park, Billy's Donuts, Brazoria County Parks Dept., Brazoria Heritage Foundation, Brazosport Area Chamber of Commerce, Brazosport College, Brazosport Museum of Natural Science, Captain Elliot's, Carriage

Flowers & Gifts, Columbia Lakes, Cleo Congrady, Commissioner Jim Clawson, ConocoPhillips, Mark Coulter, DDS, Curves for Women -Angleton, Custom Looks, Rosemary Duke, E. J.'s Restaurant, Tom & Cheryl Fowler, Freeport Municipal Golf Course, Garza Bail Bonds, Ginger's Salon, Giovanni's Restaurant, Grapevine Gifts & Collectibles, Beth Griggs, Haak Vineyards & Winery, Harlequin Antiques, Lola Kay Hood, Houston Astros, Jeter's Old World Antiques, Joe's Barbeque Company, Marie Beth Jones, KD's Subs, Pizza & Pasta, Sean & Barbara Kennedy, Dan Kessner, Krenek Chiropractic, La Casona Restaurant, Lake Jackson Historical Museum, Lake Theatre, Jay Mallard, Mary Manuel, Midway Video, Stan & Jamie Murray, Nature's Best Flowers, Jean Nigbor, Nolan Ryan Foundation, On The River Restaurant, Jo Parish, Mr. & Mrs. Morris Paschall, Commissioner Dude Payne, Mayor Shane & Linda Pirtle, Anita Rau, Sharon & Speedy Rogers, Shipley Donuts, Bettye Snell, Randy Stroud, Dawn Stubbs, Emma Jean Tanner, Texas Settlement Region, The Calico Cats Sewing Center, The Center for the Arts & Sciences, The Junior Service League, The Museum of Fine Arts-Houston, The Saltgrass Company, Mary Ann Thomas, Lon Tullos, Ginger Tumlinson, UnCommon Market, Varner-Hogg State Historical Park, Shirley Walcik, West Columbia Chamber of Commerce, Wildflower Café, Windswept Seafood Restaurant, and Pat Woods

#### *Auction Buyers*

Kevin Berckenhoff, Stacy Black, Betty Blackmon, Charlene Buck, Robyn Cochran, Cleo Congrady, Ed Denman, Beth Dickson, Gil Dickson, Billye Riggs Downing, Dan Forrester, Joe Garcia, Betty Hodges, Gregg Kiihne, Arnold Langston, Beverly Nixon, Shane Pirtle, Geneva Rader, Kathy Reed, Juanita Robisheaux, Jimmy Royalty, Deneise Slaydon, Regina Slaydon, Judy Starnes, David Stedman, Lila Stephenson, Emma Jean Tanner, Marlene Taylor, Kandy Taylor -Hille, and Eddie Venne

#### *Special Gratitude*

Mixed Media Advertising for invitation & program design



Brazoria County  
Historical Museum

100 East Cedar Street  
Angleton TX 77515

Tel: 979/864 -1208  
Fax: 979/864-1217  
www.bchm.org

NON PROFIT BULK  
MAILING PERMIT

63

Angleton, Texas  
77515

### "Mansion of Riddles"

on the edge of Love Field,  
a Maxfield Parrish sunrise  
paints the beveled glass  
of the multi-paneled room,  
creating a jewel box  
surrounding morning meditation  
from Freeport Bottle Works  
by Carlyn L. Reding  
October 6, 6:30 PM

October is Texas Archeology Month !

## Archaeology Blitz

Join us for four special programs recognizing Texas Archeology Month.

- *A Most Desperate Fight: Lt. Farnsworth & the Battle of Round Timber Creek*  
October 6, 7:00 PM  
Brazosport Museum of Natural Science 979/265 -7831
- *Archaeological Visions: Understanding the Past & Present of Levi-Jordan State Historical Site.*  
October 13, 6:00 PM  
Levi-Jordan SHS 979/345 -4656
- *X Never Marks the Spot: Mapping Texas' Cultural Heritage*  
October 20, 6:30 PM  
Brazoria County Historical Museum 979/864 -1208
- *Jumpin Juba: Uncle Bubba & Mammy Belle Jump de Broom*  
October 29, 11:00 AM & 1:00 PM  
Austin Town Re -Enactment 979/864 -1208



Carved brooch dug at Levi -Jordan SHS