



# The Window Pane

## Brazoria County Historical Museum

100 East Cedar Street  
Angleton TX 77515

### The Texas Navy

The Brazoria County Historical Museum has opened a new exhibit entitled *The Texas Navy*, which examines the history of the organization. After Texas declared independence from Mexico, one of the major concerns of the new Republic was continued Mexican control of the waters of the Gulf of Mexico. The creation of the Texas Navy was a splendid example of the forward thinking of the founders of the Republic of Texas. To accomplish this, the new nation accepted the United States' assistance in creating the Navy as well as much needed supplies from European supporters. With dashing figures commanding its ships, the Texas Navy cruised the Gulf ensuring that the land forces of the Republic were safe from Mexican invasion by sea.

The Texas Navy experienced a couple of "firsts" as a military organization. The Navy was the first such group to arm its members with the newly patented Paterson Revolver, which was invented by Samuel Colt. A reproduction of this .36 caliber Holster model is on display as a part of the exhibit. Additionally the Texas Navy had the first steamship of war in North America, the *Zavala*. A special thanks goes to the Texas Navy Association for its help in developing this exhibit. *The Texas Navy* will be on view at the Museum until August 18, 2006.

*The Battle of Campeche*



### March 2006

<i>Texas Navy</i>	1
<i>Baseball</i>	2
<i>Shelia Smith</i>	2
<i>Adriance Library</i>	3
<i>Dr. Lienhard</i>	4

## Upcoming Programs

### Baseball

in the

Lone Star State

March 9th

6:30 PM

Dr. John Lienhard

April 18th

6:30 PM

## Baseball in the Lone Star State



Join the Brazoria County Historical Museum on Thursday, March 9, at 6:30 p.m. for a book review and signing by Tom Kayser, president of the Texas League, for his book Baseball in the Lone Star State: The Texas League's Greatest Hits.

The book will be available for sale at the Museum that evening. Admission to the program is free. In colorful well-written chapters, Kayser and coauthor David King have fashioned an entertaining history of the Texas League, a century-old minor league baseball organization. The book details the history of the Texas League from its inception in 1888 up through the present day. With marvelous descriptions of the games, players and newspaper accounts about the league, the coauthors delve into the lives of those individuals who did so much to give this league a prevailing place in Texas culture. Accompanying the text are dozens of photos that date to the league's founding as well as an appendix of baseball statistics. Tom Kayser has had a lifelong career in baseball, working with such organizations as the Eastern League, the Berkshire Brewers, the Pittsburgh Pirates, the Cincinnati Reds and the Calgary Cannons.

## 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  
Shelia Smith  
*Programs Assistant*  
giftshop@bchm.org  
Rose Olivares  
*Secretary*  
office@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)

## Welcome aboard Shelia!

Shelia Smith has joined the Museum staff as the new programs assistant. Shelia will be managing the bookstore and helping with public programs.

As a graduate intern completing her Master's degree through the University of Houston Clear Lake, Shelia worked at the Museum on the Brazoria County Fair Project from January through May 2005.

When asked about her new position she enthuses "I am passionate about Texas history, and Brazoria County in particular. I look forward to meeting you! If you have a book request, or if I can be of assistance, visit the museum store or email me at [giftshop@bchm.org](mailto:giftshop@bchm.org)."



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

## Adriance Library & Research Center

Just like the old Saturday serials at the local movie theater, I left a story dangling in last month's newsletter, with a promise to complete the tale in the next issue. I had begun to relate the experiences of the Wertz family as recorded by Gladys Wertz Clark in her memoirs, and I promised to recount her story of the 1900 Storm.

The Charles Wertz family moved to Brazoria County in 1898 just in time to get settled in before the 1900 Storm. Gladys was only 13 years old in September of 1900, and like so many others who endured a Gulf storm, she recalled the story vividly. She wrote that her father was "over on the Brazos River bottom trying to raise a crop of corn" that fall, while her mother, Flora, and the four children were at their home near Austin Bayou.

Flora Wertz and her children spent a day mopping up the rain water that was blowing in under doors and around windows. It became obvious to them that the house was not stable enough to withstand the storm as it strengthened. Gladys wrote in her account, "Finally we saw the window frames starting to twist and we knew we had to take our chances on the outside." During the height of the storm, each one took a quilt and stepped out where "the wind seemed to pick us up and tumbled us one hundred to two hundred feet from the house and landed us in a blackberry patch and there we stayed." Gladys and her sister Nadine landed together in one area while their mother and their two brothers ended up a short distance away, though the girls did not know exactly where at the time.

Since standing up was impossible in the fierce wind, the family members "huddled in the mud and water and waited" for about three hours until at last the lull came. Gladys remembered that when "the sky cleared and the moon shone," she and Nadine stood up and located the rest of their family. Surveying the scene, they saw that nothing was left standing on their farm. The house and barn and outbuildings were all demolished. As the hurricane returned, the little family settled down with their saturated bedding on what was left of the floor of their home. There, they spent the rest of that awful night.

As morning dawned, "it was to show a pitiful and tragic panorama; not one thing was left standing on that place but the fence posts." At last, a lone rider appeared on the horizon. The Mollers, who lived two miles away, had sent their son to find the Wertz family and to invite them to stay in the Moller home. The Godfrey Moller home was sheltered in the timber and had survived. Though damaged, it was to Gladys and her family "a most welcome shelter... offered with that true Texas hospitality which always shares with those in distress."

Mr. Wertz endured the storm over on the Brazos River and made his way back to the site of his home that day, though he was ill with a fever. Gladys wrote, "...the sight of that desolated country, the heap of wreckage that had been our home, must have caused him to feel

that he was indeed facing his Gethsemane." The next day, Gladys' uncles Joe and Ben Wertz came over from their farm on Chocolate Bayou to collect their displaced family members. Gladys and her family stayed at her Uncle Joe's place for over a month.

Now for that other promise I made in last month's newsletter article. I said that I would tell you the one "fine thing" about Brazoria County that transcended all of Gladys Wertz' unhappy memories of the five difficult years her family spent here. I don't think it will surprise you. That "fine thing" had to do with the people.

Let Gladys tell you in her own words what the people they met here meant to her family: "Our five and a half years in South Texas was literally jammed with poverty, calamity, sickness, and death. Nearly every phase of human suffering was experienced there. The only fine things were our friendships with those old Texas families, some of them lasting to the present time. Everyone was poor in Texas, poor in material things, but rich in hospitality and friendship."

Then, as now, Brazoria County's greatest asset is its people.

Next month, we will continue to follow the story of the Wertz family (and their amazing traveling house) a little farther. *Jamie Murray*





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

Happy Texas Independence Day !

## Dr. John Lienhard; April 18th

Come listen to University of Houston, College of Engineering Professor Dr. John Lienhard at the Brazoria County Historical Museum, Tuesday, April 18th at 6:30 PM.

Lienhard, author and voice of *The Engines of Our Ingenuity* on KUHF, is M.D. Anderson Professor Emeritus of Mechanical Engineering and History at the University of Houston. He is known for his research in the thermal sciences as well as in cultural history. He is an Honorary Member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and a member of the National Academy of Engineering.

For his work on *The Engines of Our Ingenuity* Dr. Lienhard received the ASME Ralph Coates Roe Medal for contributions to the public understanding of technology, the 1991 Portrait Division Award from the American Women in Radio and Television, and the 1998 American Society of Mechanical Engineers Engineer-Historian Award, other ASME honors, and two 2005 Crystal Microphone Awards.

