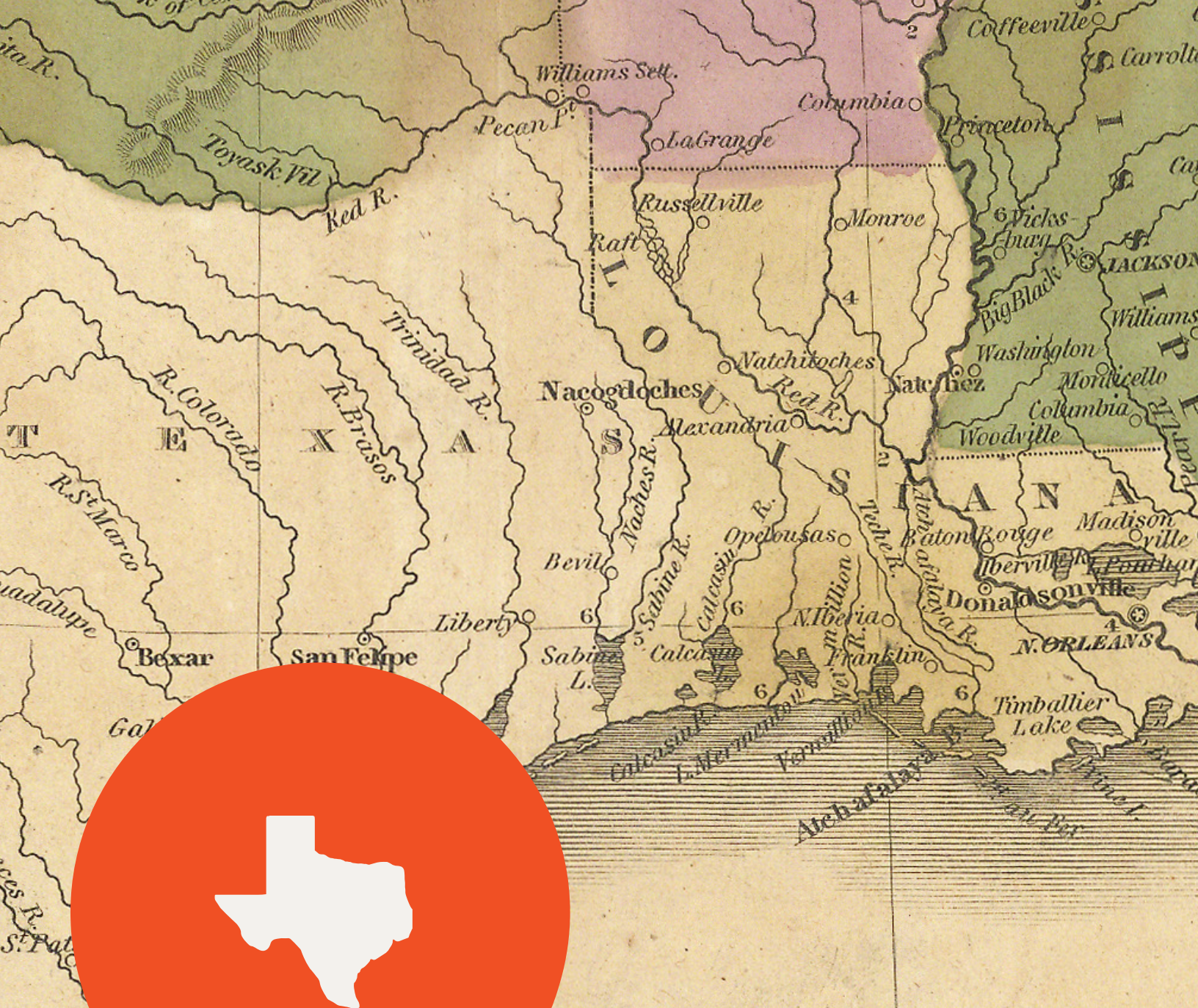




Save Texas History Symposium
**A Lone Star Among
Many: Texas and the
Making of America**

November 13-14, 2026



Bullock Texas State History Museum
Austin, Texas

Fellow Texans

As your Land Commissioner and as a ninth-generation Texan, I know that our history and heritage help shape who we are. The Texas General Land Office is home to a vast archive of historic land grants, maps, and records dedicated to conservation, education, and public access. Our Archives and Records team play a vital role in safeguarding these invaluable Texas treasures while also developing educational resources, including lesson plans that help bring Texas history to life for students. It is essential that Texans learn the stories of the pioneers, ranchers, farmers, and Texas defenders who built and protected our great state. Their courage and determination remind us that the freedoms we enjoy today were earned through sacrifice and must be preserved. I invite you to visit the GLO Archives and discover how we are saving Texas history so that its stories can continue to inspire generations to come.



For Texas,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "D. Buckingham".

Dawn Buckingham, M.D.
Commissioner, Texas General Land Office

ABOUT THE COMMISSIONER

Commissioner Buckingham's family were among the first settlers to Texas nine generations ago, and that tough, independent, pioneer spirit is deeply rooted in her personality. True to her Texas roots, her commitment to service began early, serving as a volunteer firefighter, and attending the Texas A&M Fire School. She is also an avid hunter, outdoorswoman, and steward of the land. She made history in 2016 as the first woman elected to the Texas State Senate from Travis County. Without slowing down, she made history again in 2022 when elected as the 29th, and state's first female Commissioner of the General Land Office, Texas' oldest state agency.

Dawn came from humble roots—growing up on a ranch near the Texas coast and then moving to Central Texas. She has never settled for less than her dreams. Wanting to attend college, but without the money to do so, Dawn lived at home, working two jobs to pay her own way through college at the University of Texas at Austin. With endurance of spirit she graduated Magna Cum Laude and debt free. It was during college that she met the love of her life and husband of 31 years, Ed Buckingham. Dawn and Ed both received their medical degrees from the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, and they have two children. Dawn then went on to become a successful oculoplastic surgeon. Her commitment to service and recognition for her work has allowed her to hold leadership positions in local, state, and national medical organizations.

Dawn embodies the American Dream. Through hard work, a “never-quit” attitude, and perseverance, she has risen above her circumstances. Becoming a self-made small business owner employing Texans, serving others in her profession and as an elected official, she has always given back to her community. As your Land Commissioner, Dr. Dawn Buckingham brings a lifetime of experience to the office. She is committed to helping Texans after a disaster, supporting Texas energy, ensuring that every child in Texas receives a high-quality public education, serving Texas Veterans, and securing the border to keep our communities safe.



Schedule

Friday, November 13

Student Research Showcase
1:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Location: Bullock Texas State History Museum

12:00 PM

Doors Open

1:00 PM

Opening Remarks

1:15 – 1:35 PM

Old Empire, Young Nation: A Semiquincentennial Analysis of Spanish and Spanish-American Perspectives on the Emergent United States

Melody Delamarter, Midwestern State University

Sponsored by: Bullock Texas State History Museum

1:35 – 1:55 PM

Healing the Borderlands: Curanderas, Parteras, Sobadoras, & the Preservation of Ancestral Knowledge in South Texas

Maria Contreras, The University of Texas

Rio Grande Valley

Sponsored by: Southern Methodist University Clements Center for Southwest Studies

1:55 – 2:30 PM

Break

2:30 – 2:50 PM

Empire of Blood: Examining General Joaquín de Arredondo's Brutal Administration in Spanish Texas

Gregory Cook, Texas A&M University

Sponsored by: Texas A&M University History Department

2:50 – 3:10 PM

Mission Espada: A Story Removed

Jessica "Jae" Gonzales, The University of Texas San Antonio

Sponsored by: Texas Supreme Court Historical Society

3:10 – 3:30 PM

Camels on the Texas Frontier

Sierra Tervo, Liberty University

Sponsored by: Texas State Historical Association

3:30 – 3:50 PM

The Port of Bagdad, Tamaulipas: Transnational Cotton and the Emerging Global Economy of South Texas During the Civil War

Andres Rochin, The University of Texas Tyler

Sponsored by: Tod & Laura Swann

3:50 – 4:15 PM

Break

4:15 – 4:35 PM

Week's Quarters, a Freedom Colony: Importance of Collective Memory and Intergenerational Storytelling

Sara Torrentera, The University of Texas San Antonio

Sponsored by: Texas State Genealogical Society

4:35 – 4:55 PM

In The Woods of Creedmoor, Texas: The Vásquez Cemetery as a Historical Landscape of Rural Mexican American Community.

Emma Gomez, Texas State University

Sponsored by: Texas State University History Department

5:00 – 7:00 PM

Open Access to Bullock Museum Exhibits

7:00 – 9:00 PM

Save Texas History Reception, Bullock Museum Lobby

Reception featuring JB Saucedo, Host and Executive Producer of *Texas Country Reporter*

Save Texas History Symposium



Schedule

Saturday, November 14

9:00 AM – 3:30 PM

Location: Bullock Texas State History Museum

8:00 AM

Doors Open

9:00 – 9:15 AM

Opening Remarks

James Harkins, Senior Deputy Director of Heritage,
Texas General Land Office

9:15 – 9:45 AM

Texas Saved the American Revolution

Dr. Carolina Castillo Crimm, Professor Emeritus,
Sam Houston State University
Sponsored by: The University of Texas at Austin History Department

9:45 – 10:15 AM

Bridles and Biscuits: Contraband Culture in

Spanish East Texas

Gary L. Pinkerton, Executive Director, Alliance for
Texas History
Sponsored by: William Allison Books

10:15 – 11:00 AM

Break

11:00 – 11:30 AM

Acquiring Tierras Realengas: Service, Access, and Power in the Colonization of Nuevo Santander, 1749-1800

Dr. Maria Vallejo, Assistant Professor, Lamar University
Sponsored by: Friends of the Texas Historical Commission

11:30 AM – 11:45 PM

Jennifer Jones, Chief Clerk and Deputy Land
Commissioner, Texas General Land Office

12:00 – 1:00 PM

Lunch

1:00 – 1:30 PM

Hermanos en Armas: The Alamo and the Age of Revolution

Nathan Jones, Director of Curation, The Alamo
Sponsored by: San Jacinto Battleground Association

1:30 – 2:00 PM

Quartermasters of Conquest: The Mexican American War and the Making of South Texas, 1846-1860

Dr. Christopher Menking, Professor of History,
Tarrant County College
Sponsored by: Texas A&M University Libraries

2:00 – 2:30 PM

Break

2:30 – 3:00 PM

Travel, History, and Geographic Imagination in 19th- Century American Travel Writing

Dr. Susan Roberson, Regents Professor English Emerita,
Texas A&M University-Kingsville
Sponsored by: Frontier Texas!

3:00 – 3:30 PM

Building the Sandbar Kingdom: The Improbable Rise of Nineteenth-Century Galveston

Dr. Andrew Torget, University Distinguished Teaching
Professorship, University of North Texas
Sponsored by: The University of Texas Press



Student Research Showcase

Friday, November 13, 2026

1:00 PM – 5:00 PM



Melody Delamarter
Midwestern State University

Old Empire, Young, Nation: A Semiquincentennial Analysis of Spanish and Spanish-American Perspectives on the Emergent United States

Sponsored by: Bullock Texas State History Museum

This presentation explores Spanish and Spanish-American perspectives on the emergent United States during the period from the American War for Independence to the Louisiana Purchase with a focus on the Texas and Louisiana borderlands. These perspectives highlight the longstanding geopolitical significance of the borderlands, the key roles played by its inhabitants in the early days of the young American experiment, and the mixed responses exhibited towards Anglo-American independence. They also reveal the long history of multiculturalism on the North American continent. However, these perspectives are often missing from the mainstream historical narrative due to the language barrier and an Anglo-centric focus. Where they are included, they are often treated as monolithic rather than nuanced. This project utilizes an extensive review of the pertinent primary and secondary literature to assess for the motivations and perceptions exhibited by Spaniards and Spanish Americans during this period. The original Spanish is used whenever possible and a variety of different groups are examined including diplomats and policymakers, governors and officials, and soldiers. This project argues that physical proximity to the Americas had a significant influence in defining the ideological perspectives of Spaniards and Spanish Americans.



Maria Contreras
The University of Texas
Rio Grande Valley

Healing the Borderlands: Curanderas, Parteras, Sobadoras, & the Preservation of Ancestral Knowledge in South Texas

Sponsored by: Southern Methodist University Clements Center for Southwest Studies

This presentation examines how *curanderas* (folk healers), *parteras* (midwives), and *sobadoras* (massage healer) have preserved generations of cultural knowledge along the Texas-Mexico border through oral tradition, medicinal plant practices, and community-based healing. Drawing on oral histories, community narratives, ethnographic research, and historical records, this project explores the role of these women as healers, educators, and keepers of community memory from the nineteenth century to the present. Their knowledge of native and introduced medicinal plants, childbirth, massage therapy, and spiritual healing represents a living archive of borderlands history that is often absent from official historical records. Rather than existing outside American history, these healing traditions demonstrate how Indigenous, Mexican, Spanish, and Anglo influences converged to create uniquely Texan forms of knowledge and resilience. By highlighting the experiences of community healers, this presentation broadens our understanding of who preserves history and how cultural traditions survive across generations. This presentation is designed to contribute by showing that the history of Texas is also the history of its Borderlands, where mothers, female elders, and community have shaped the state's cultural identity through the preservation of Ancestral knowledge and community care.





Gregory Cook
Texas A&M University

Empire of Blood: Examining General Joaquín de Arredondo's Brutal Administration in Spanish Texas.

Sponsored by: Texas A&M University History Department

This presentation examines the brutal reprisals carried out by Spanish royalist General Joaquín de Arredondo against the inhabitants of San Antonio de Bexar (present-day San Antonio) in the aftermath of the Battle of Medina in 1813, during Spanish rule in Texas (1690-1821). Using archival sources, Cook demonstrates how Arredondo's reprisals fundamentally reshaped the political and cultural landscape and collective memory of Spanish Texas. Executions, mass imprisonments, property confiscations, and forced relocations in and around San Antonio produced an atmosphere of fear while deepening resentment toward royal authority. This study links post-1813 conditions to the movement for Texas independence in the 1830s. Arredondo's occupation created conditions, including the depopulation of local populations due to death and deportation, the disruption of harvests to the point of famine, and leaving settlements unable to protect themselves from indigenous raids. For two decades, these conditions eroded loyalties to Mexico's central authority. Survivors of these reprisals carried memories of state violence that shaped later political views. By tracing the connection between repression after Medina and the social and military conditions of the 1830s, this project reframes Texan independence as rooted in earlier imperial violence rather than solely in nineteenth-century frontier politics.



Jessica "Jae" Gonzales
The University of Texas San Antonio

Mission Espada: A Story Removed

Sponsored by: Texas Supreme Court Historical Society

Mission Espada's convento illustrates a long and layered story of preservation. Father Francis Bouchu spent three decades restoring Espada, transforming it from the "mass of ruins" described by Father Odin in 1840. In the mid-1950s, the convento's second floor was demolished, marking another significant shift in how the site was understood and managed. Each phase of care at Espada carried its own agenda and purpose. This paper examines architectural history through what Gonzales calls the Language of Preservation, which refers to the shifting vocabularies actors use to justify interventions in historic fabric. Drawing from sources such as the two-volume *Of Various Magnificence*, Art Martínez de Vara's *Mission Espada After Secularization*, and archival maps from UT Austin and the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, she argues that architect Harvey P. Smith's dismissal of the second floor as non-original fabric exemplified the conjecture that shaped mid-century restoration work. Smith's own survey documentation contradicts that conclusion. The demolition was made possible through a convergence of architectural authority and the Archdiocese's institutional priorities under Archbishop Lucey, a relationship that existing scholarship has not fully examined. Recovering this history requires asking not only what was lost at Espada, but also who decided what was worth saving and what was not.





Sierra Tervo
Liberty University

Camels on the Texas Frontier

Sponsored by: Texas State Historical Association

From 1855-1865 the U.S. Government undertook an experiment to import camels into the United States through Texas in an effort to determine their utilization for military purposes. This was a unique piece of American history that sheds light on the crucial part Texas played in American Westward Expansion. Connecting Mexican cession to westward migration, Texas was the fundamental location for launching expeditions into the Great American Desert to build wagon roads and explore rugged territory to scout possible frontier fort sites along the borderlands. In addition, Texas was essential to the Confederacy during the Civil War as they set sights on expanding their empire to the west. During their control, Camp Verde, home of the camels, was used as a prisoner of war camp and there is emerging research as to the Confederacy's attempt at developing a use for the captured camels on their own. Investigation continues on Camp Verde; the various men stationed there and what their lives were like, which expands knowledge on the line of forts across Texas as the nation grappled with the movement of settlers and their push into Native American territory.



Andres Rochin
The University of Texas Tyler

The Port of Bagdad, Tamaulipas: Transnational Cotton and the Emerging Global Economy of South Texas During the Civil War

Sponsored by: Tod & Laura Swann

Where the Rio Grande empties into the Gulf of Mexico, a port city called Bagdad, Tamaulipas, once stood, linking South Texas and Northern Mexico to the emerging global economy of the mid-19th century. Bagdad's status as a duty-free port on the Mexican side of the river made the city a smuggling haven and a home to an international cast of fugitives, merchants, spies, run-away enslaved people, gun smugglers, liquor dealers, and sex workers. During the Civil War, one of Bagdad's founders, Don Carlos, or as he was known in his home state of Connecticut, Charles Stillman, transformed the city into one of the Confederacy's most vital ports for the South's principal commodity, cotton. While the Union blockaded southern ports, Bagdad's international status and proximity to the US-Mexico border enabled southern plantation owners from Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas to easily circumvent the blockade by smuggling cotton into Bagdad, where French, Dutch, and British vessels carried it as "Mexican cotton" to European markets. In 1867, a hurricane flattened Bagdad, but its disappearance did not mark the end of the transnational movement of capital and people that would come to define the Lone Star State and America's relationship with Mexico and Latin America.





Sara Torrentera

The University of Texas San Antonio

Week's Quarters, a Freedom Colony: Importance of Collective Memory and Intergenerational Storytelling

Sponsored by: Texas State Genealogical Society

This presentation examines the significance of a Freedom Colony, Week's Quarters, in East Texas, emphasizing the importance of collective memory and intergenerational storytelling in preserving the past and community heritage for future generations. Established in Sabine County, the Freedom Colony is in a critical location near the Louisiana-Texas border, where many travelers entering Spanish Texas crossed ferries and would have used the El Camino Real de los Tejas Trail to continue their journey. El Camino Real, a historic route dating back to the indigenous peoples who lived on the land before the Spaniards arrived, has been extremely valuable for decades of research across a wide range of topics. El Camino Real has funding, public attention, and historical pride that can positively impact the areas and communities it passes through, and "Week's Quarters" can be a part of them. The Week's Quarters have sparse publicly available information, as most is passed down orally or scattered throughout other documented stories. The research is in collaboration with Yolanda Bozant, who has continued to record oral histories of her family elders to preserve the past and the community heritage of future descendants, and organize gatherings to preserve their legacy. Through family gatherings, social media, church services, and magazines, The Week's Quarters is just one community that shows how people can work together using collective memory to keep their history alive, even amid challenges.



Emma Gomez

Texas State University

In The Woods of Creedmoor, Texas: The Vásquez Cemetery as a Historical Landscape of Rural Mexican American Community.

Sponsored by: Texas State University History Department

This project examines the role of cemeteries in preserving neglected rural Mexican American histories in Central Texas. Focusing on the Vásquez Cemetery, the only remaining physical structure of the historic Vásquez Ranch, this study uses built-environment and material-culture analyses, as well as genealogical and archival research, to reconstruct the social dynamics, cultural identity, and lifeways of the Mexican American community it served in early-20th-century Creedmoor, Texas. Ultimately, Gomez argues that the cemetery's history shows that the Vásquez family turned their ranch into a community anchor that maintained borderlands ranching customs rooted in the Spanish Colonial era, even during the transition from Tejano ranching to Anglo-dominated commercial agriculture in Texas. This project demonstrates that the Vásquez Cemetery serves as a community history archive, providing evidence of social cohesion and continuity of identity. Simultaneously, the cemetery's current state of neglect reveals how rural Mexican American histories are often physically present but publicly forgotten. To support the preservation of this cemetery and others like it, this project includes examples of cemetery documentation and a survey map of all Mexican American Cemeteries in Travis County. Additionally, the narrative serves as part of an application for Historic Texas Cemetery designation through the Texas Historical Commission.





Save Texas History Symposium
A Lone Star Among Many:
Texas and the Making of
America

Saturday, November 14, 2026

9:00 AM – 3:30 PM



Dr. Carolina Castillo Crimm

Professor Emeritus,
Sam Houston State University

Texas Saved the American Revolution

Sponsored by: The University of Texas at Austin History Department

Texas may well have been the deciding factor in the defeat of British forces along the Mississippi and the Gulf Coast. Young Louisiana Governor Bernardo de Gálvez needed Texas cattle to feed his troops as he took on the might of the British army. In the longest battle of the American Revolution, lasting from February through May of 1781, Gálvez used the Texas cattle to keep his troops fed and in the field.



Gary L. Pinkerton

Executive Director, Alliance for
Texas History

Bridles and Biscuits: Contraband Culture in Spanish East Texas

Sponsored by: William Allison Books

Bridles and Biscuits: Contraband Culture in Spanish East Texas explores the complex economies and shifting structures of a borderland environment. In 1773, as residents of Los Adaes were abruptly forced to relocate to Béxar, the Spanish retreat from the region created a greater opening for unregulated trade among French, American, and Italian settlers. For five years before Spanish subjects resettled Nacogdoches in 1779, the people forced out of Los Adaes forged a new existence on the Trinity River in a place they called Bucareli. There, Antonio Gil Ibarvo solidified his role as a key figure in contraband trade. Through the story of Ibarvo's rise to become the leader of Nacogdoches and his subsequent arrest and removal from that post, Pinkerton demonstrates how the region that hosted the exiled Adaeseños "became the entry point for those with bigger goals than trading horses and skins."



Dr. Maria Vallejo

Assistant Professor, Lamar University

Acquiring Tierras Realengas: Service, Access, and Power in the Colonization of Nuevo Santander, 1749-1800

Sponsored by: Friends of the Texas Historical Commission

Nuevo Santander illuminates the nuances of power and influence along the borderlands. To encourage migration, Spain offered incentives, such as land grants, to populate these settlements. For the Villas del Norte, for example, the Villas de Reynosa and Camargo, captains who served as the administrative and military leaders, were integral in acquiring additional lands beyond the promised porciones granted by Spain. Juan José Hinojosa, resident of Camargo and later Captain of Reynosa, used his service to the crown as a means of acquiring tierras realengas, or kings' lands, in his name. In addition, his children and extended family also held positions of power and influence. His acquisition of land highlights how the Spanish Crown viewed its lands and territory in the regions and speaks to the nuances of power, politics, status, reputation, and influence across the spaces that New Spain often failed to reach or impact.



Save Texas History Symposium



Nathan Jones

Director of Curation at The Alamo

Hermanos en Armas: The Alamo and the Age of Revolution

Sponsored by: San Jacinto Battleground Association

Jones will explore the Alamo and San Antonio de Béxar's connection to three revolutions: the American Revolution (1776-1783), the Mexican War of Independence (1810-1821), and the Texas Revolution (1835-1836). While peripheral to the larger events of the American Revolution, the Alamo and San Antonio became a pivotal battleground in later struggles. Figures in Béxar modeled their words and actions on the examples of patriots in the American Revolution and became brothers in arms fighting for liberty and self-determination. As part of the current America 250 commemoration, the presentation also looks to explore how these revolutions have been remembered over the years.



Dr. Christopher Menking

Professor of History,
Tarrant County College

Quartermasters of Conquest: The Mexican American War and the Making of South Texas, 1846-1860

Sponsored by: Texas A&M University Libraries

The Mexican American War (1846-1848) tested the martial ability of the United States in a foreign war and resulted in the largest military-caused land acquisition in American history. In particular, the logistics of waging war at great distances from a nation's territory have been neglected. The US Army Quartermaster Department helmed the logistical war effort to support three separate armies in the field. In the wake of the war, the Quartermaster Department continued to operate a new chain of forts and depots along the southern and western boundary with territories controlled by Native Americans. This continued presence of the Quartermaster Department created an economic environment that favored Anglo-American entrepreneurs, allowing them to grow in wealth and begin to supplant the traditional Tejano/Mexican American power structure in South Texas. Despite remaining an ethnic minority, Anglos used this situational advantage to dominate the region politically. This outcome shaped South Texas for decades to follow.



Dr. Susan Roberson

Regents Professor English Emerita,
Texas A&M University-Kingsville

Travel, History, and Geographic Imagination in 19th-Century American Travel Writing

Sponsored by: Frontier Texas!

In many ways the story of America is a story of roads and travel. Just as the imagined geographies of the nation have invited readers to undertake their own journeys of self-discovery, the road has persisted as a metaphor for America's idea of itself. As the road conjures ideas of mobility and discovery, travel stories from the nineteenth century open a historical view of the ways it participated in constructing the American ethos. Metaphors of the road and actual experiences of individual journeys are shaped by the geographic imagination, the impulse to convert space, or geography, into meaning. This imagination emerges as writers confirm, contest, and recast assumptions in texts that are themselves sites, rhetorical locations of exploration and contestation, giving today's readers an overview of American history in the making.





Dr. Andrew Torget

University Distinguished Teaching
Professorship, University of
North Texas

Building the Sandbar Kingdom: The Improbable Rise of Nineteenth-Century Galveston

Sponsored by: The University of Texas Press

In this presentation, Andrew J. Torget will chart the improbable rise of Galveston from an abandoned sandbar in 1836 to its emergence as the most important port city in the American Southwest (and the second wealthiest city in the United States) by 1900. Exploring the transformations of Galveston as a window into forces remaking all of North America, Dr. Torget will explain how Galveston had become the jewel of the American Southwest by the eve of the devastating Storm of 1900.



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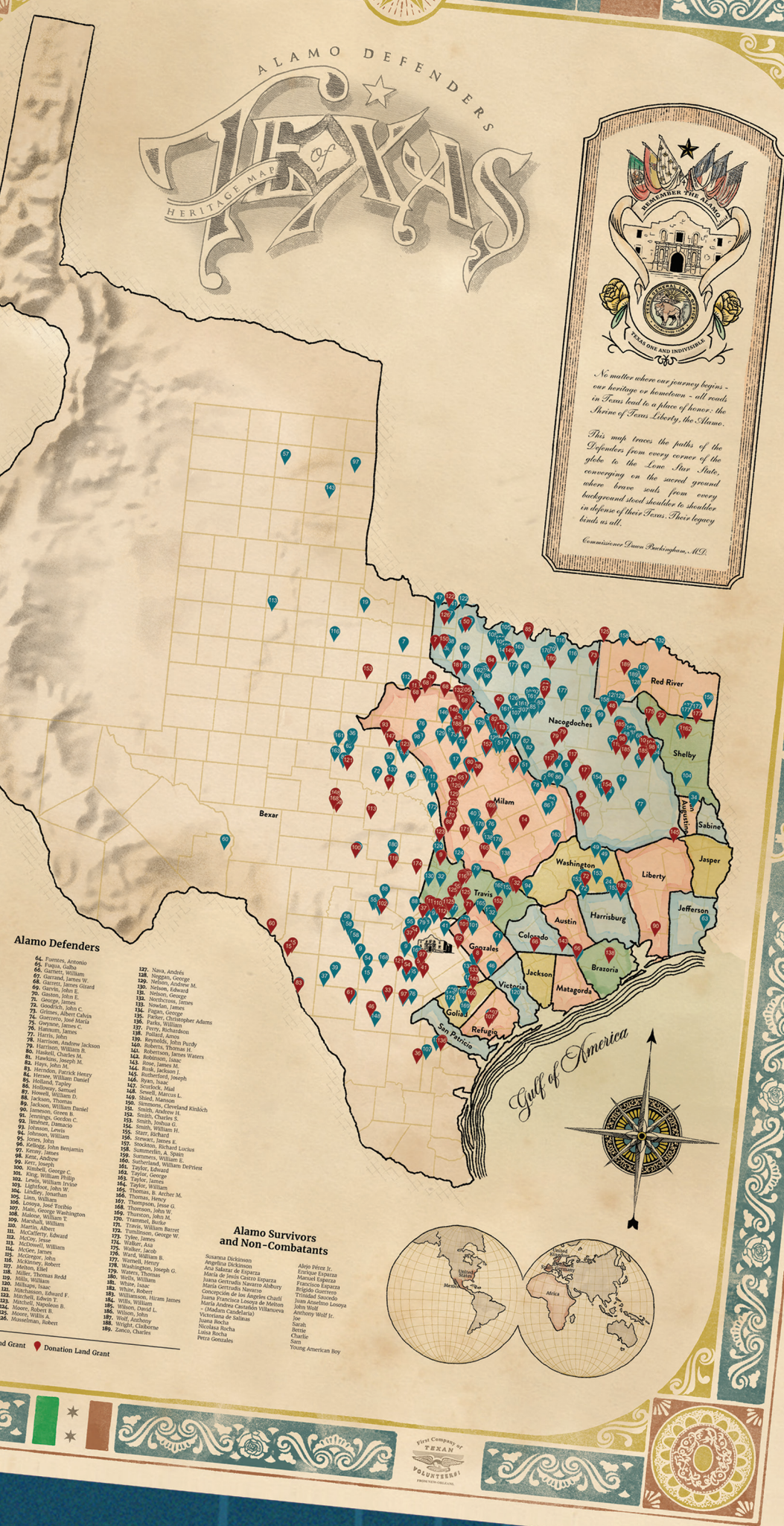
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Austin, Texas

The Bullock Museum, a division of the Texas State Preservation Board, is funded by Museum members, donors, and patrons, the Texas State History Museum Foundation, and the State of Texas.



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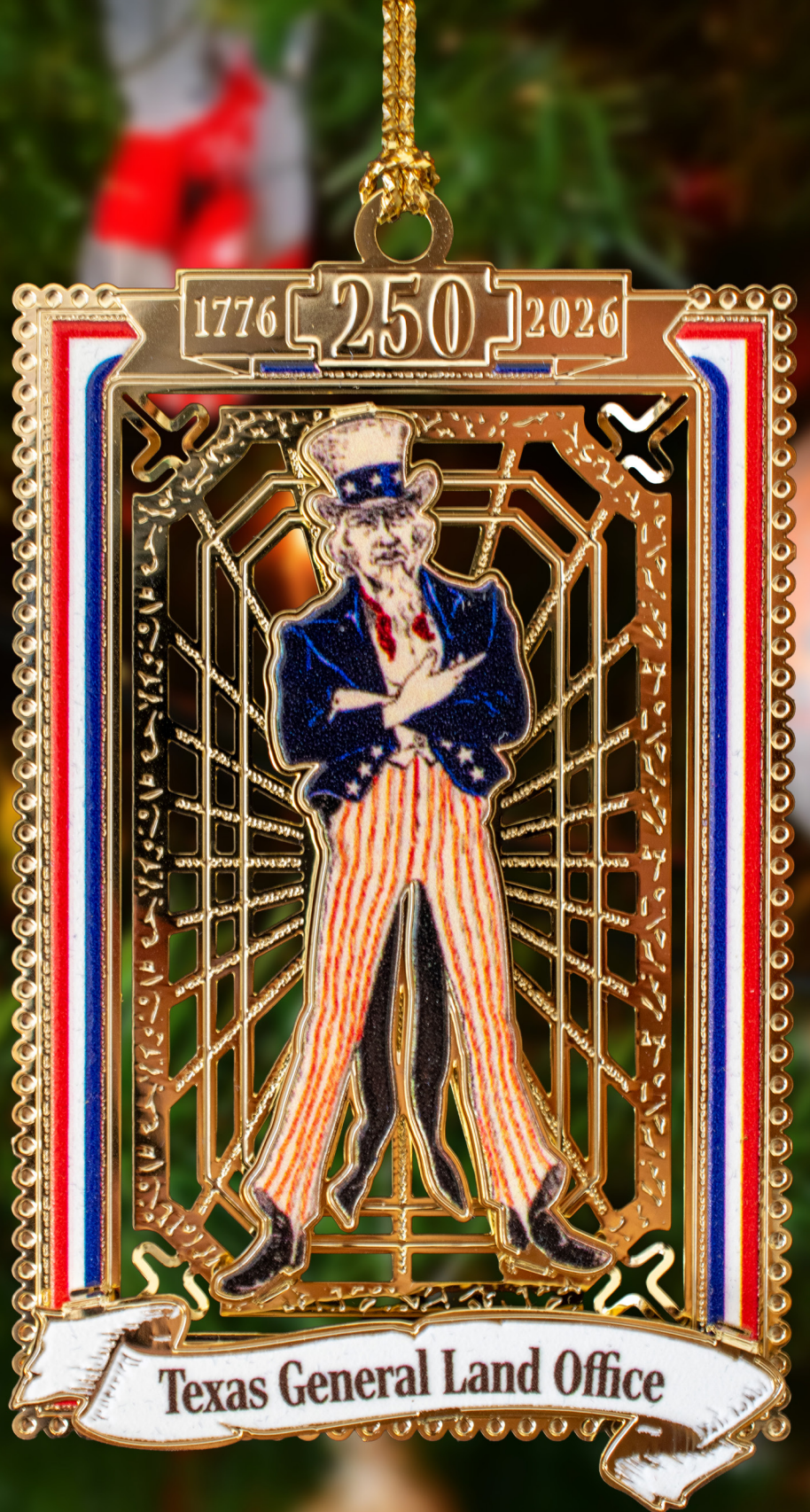
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Commissioner Dawn Buckingham, M.D.





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MARCH 3-6, 2027

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An esteemed tradition since the inception of our association, TSHA's Annual Meeting stands as the premier gathering for aficionados of Texas history, welcoming both seasoned professionals and independent scholars. This flagship event presents an array of opportunities for individuals and organizations dedicated to historical, cultural, preservationist, and tourism endeavors.

Join us in Abilene, March 3–6, 2027, for a multi-day gathering where we will explore the state's past through scholarly sessions, informative workshops, exciting banquets, and immersive offsite tours of the Big Country region.

600+

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PRESENTERS

32

SESSIONS

9

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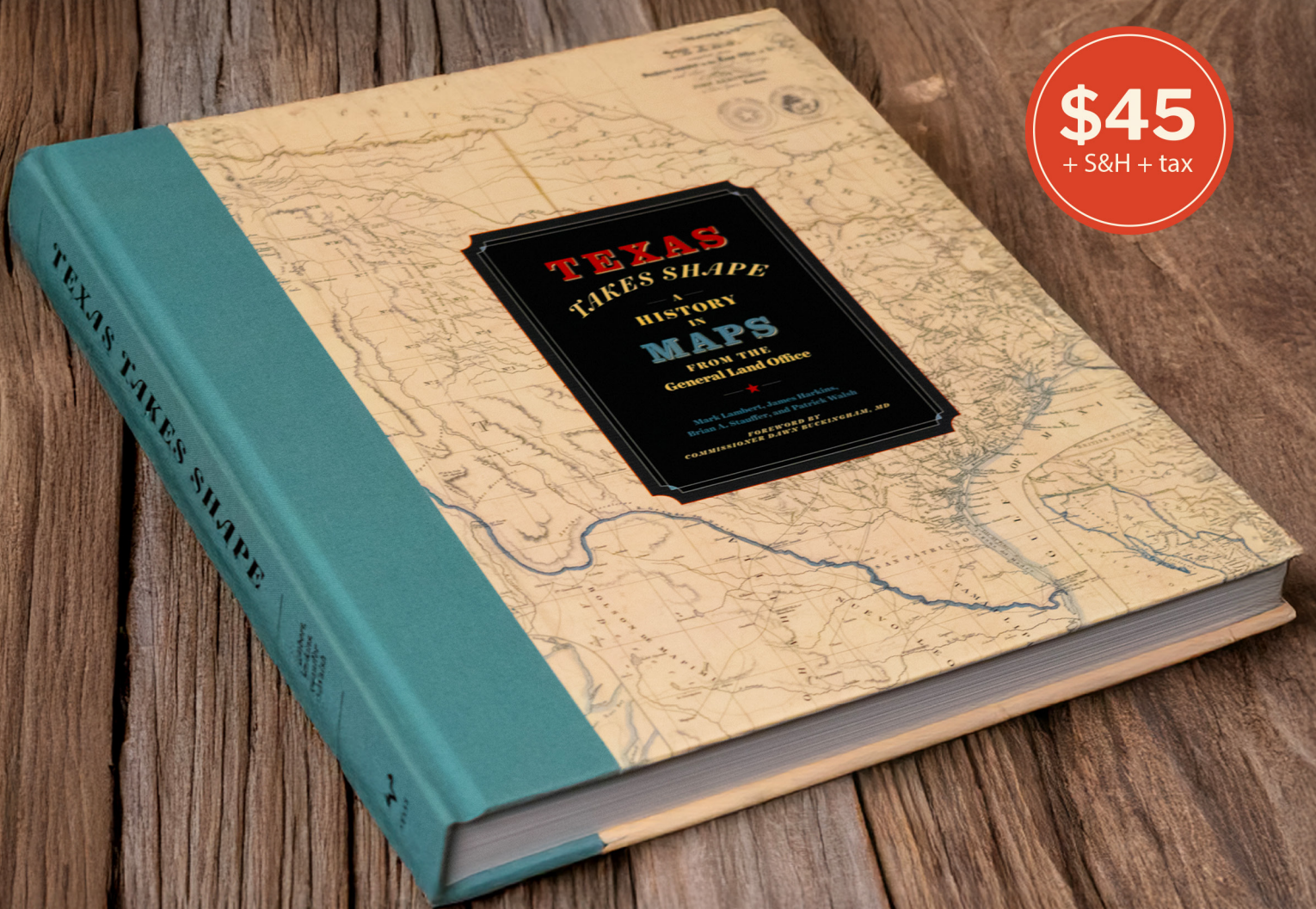
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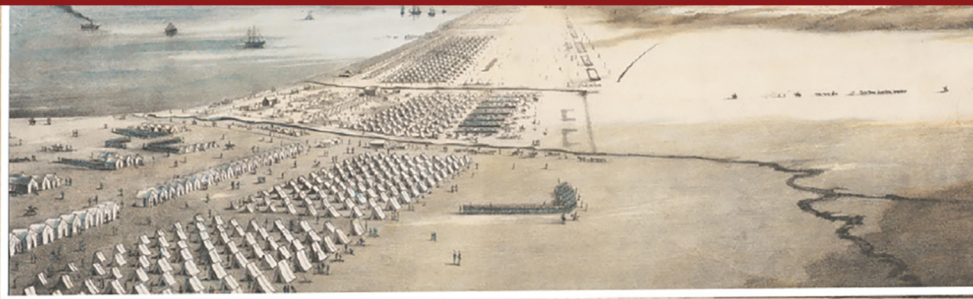
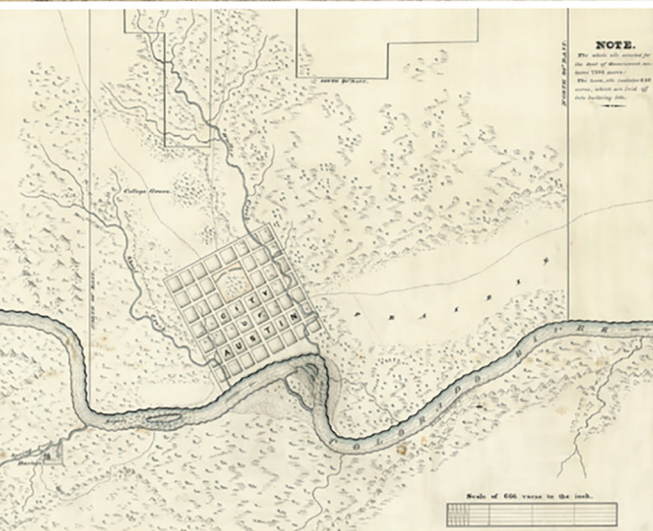
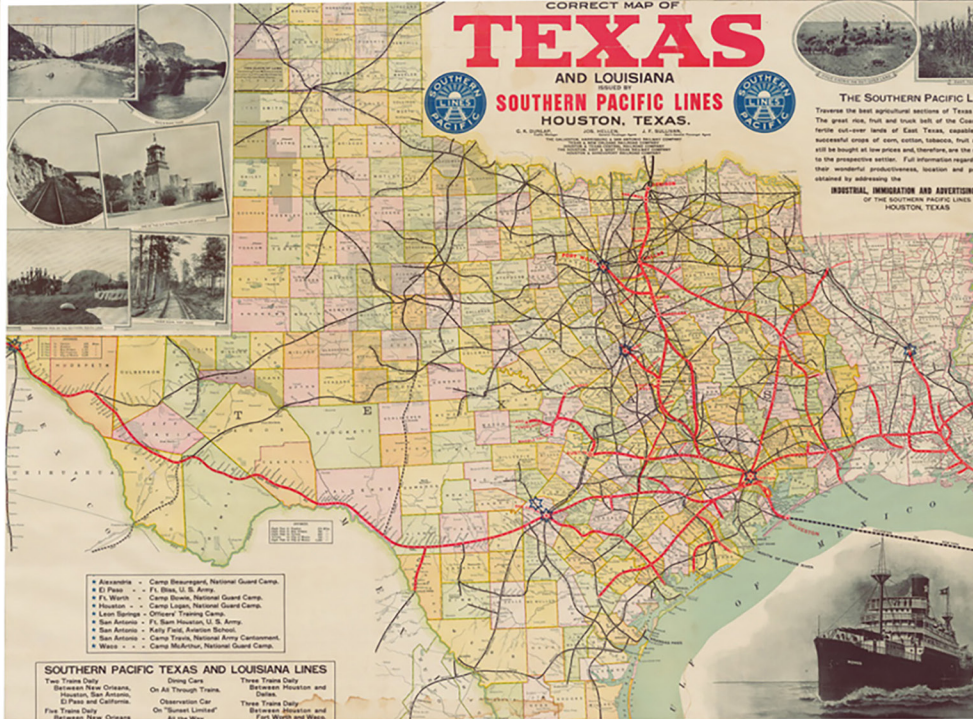
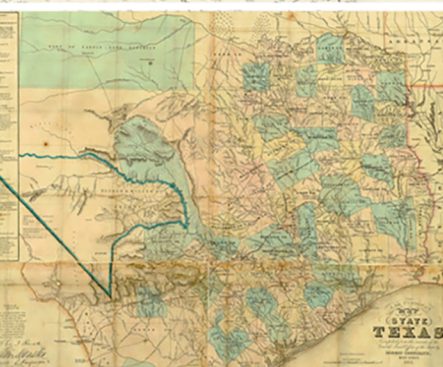
By Mark Lambert, James Harkins, Brian A. Stauffer, and Patrick Walsh
Foreword by Commissioner Dawn Buckingham, M.D.



Texas General Land Office
Commissioner Dawn Buckingham, M.D.



SAVE TEXAS HISTORY



HistoricTexasMaps.com

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Texas General Land Office
Commissioner Dawn Buckingham, M.D.



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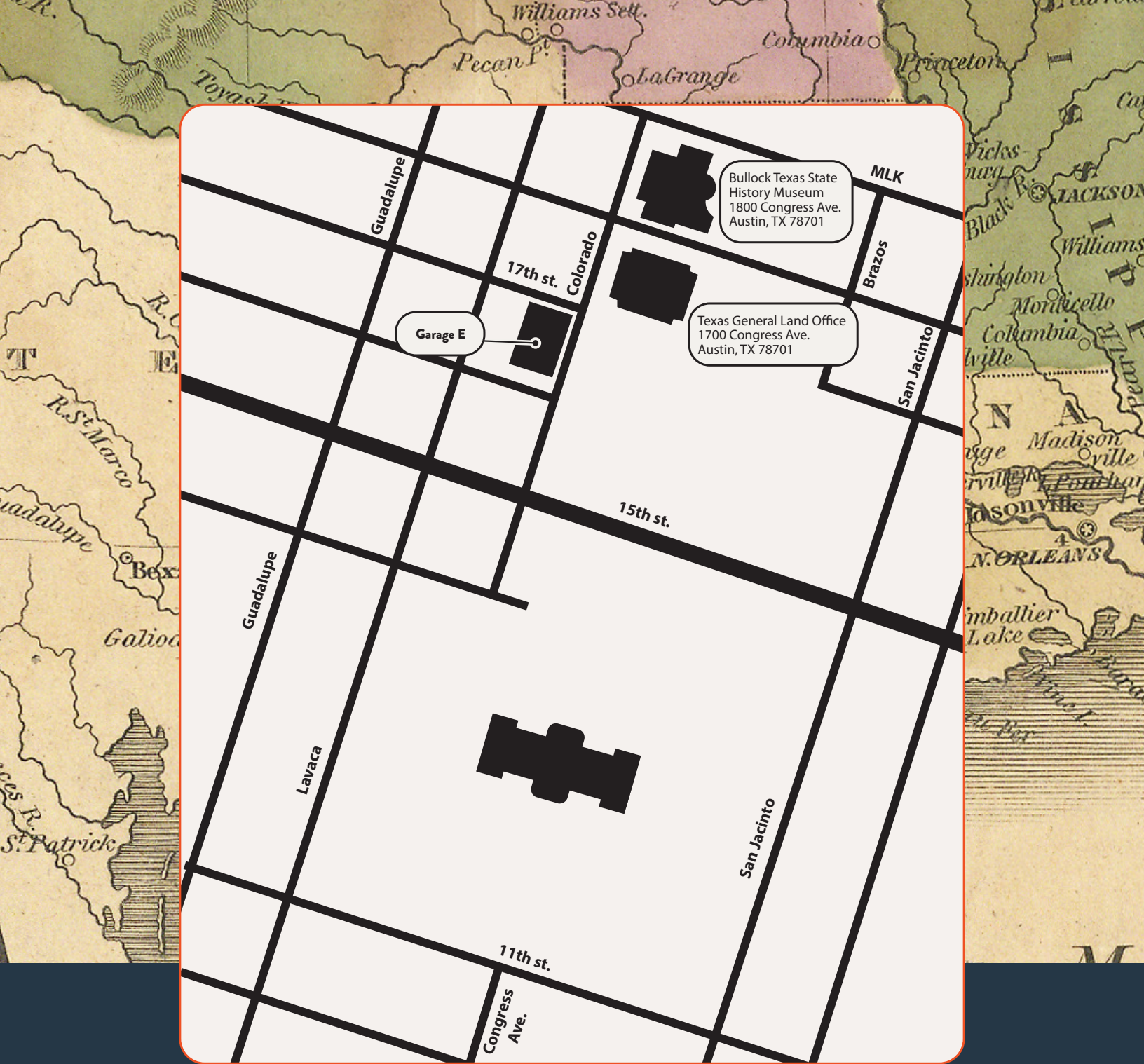
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Notes



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