

NEWS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TEXANA TALES Comes to Woodville

(Lockhart) Author/historian Donaly Brice and songwriter Fletcher Clark, both from Lockhart, will present *TEXANA TALES* for the Tyler County Heritage Society, the kick-off for their Harvest Festival (this the first in their Lecture Series). The presentation will take place at 6:00pm, Thursday, October 17, 2019, at Heritage Village in Woodville, Texas (206 US-190).

The program opens with *RUNAWAY SCRAPE*, the story of the frenzied flight of Texian civilians before the advancing armies of cruel Santa Anna. Following an intermission, the second half is *SONGS OF SUSANNA*, the saga of Texas heroine Susanna Dickinson, *Messenger of the Alamo*. These histories are brought to life in lecture, song, and verse. Donaly Brice (retired Senior Archivist for the State Library) imparts learned insight and little known information. Fletcher Clark's songs and characterizations of the events of Texas Independence bring out the emotionally charged nature of those times. His epic ballad, *There Must Be a Good Man in Texas*, provides a panoramic tale of Susanna - in itself a microcosm of the emergence of Texas.

The Harvest Festival continues at 10:00am the following morning, Friday, October 18, when Brice and Clark will offer a special presentation of *RUNAWAY SCRAPE*. Typically, some 700-800 area kids (2nd and 3rd graders, as well as from home-school groups), and groups of seniors from Houston, attend the various events at Heritage Village. Many stay for a picnic lunch or a bite at the renowned Pickett House Restaurant there at Heritage Village (serving boarding house style all-you-can-eat fried chicken, chicken & dumplings, country vegetables, cobbler, biscuits and cornbread).

As a young officer in the Mexican Army, Generalissimo Santa Anna formed his policy and conduct for the Texas Revolution. When it became clear that Texian insurgents were intent upon armed response to Mexican military presence, the Tornel Decree was invoked against them, branding them as pirates and subject to immediate execution. So Texians who found themselves in a state of rebellion - whether their intent be enforcement of their citizenship and loyalty to their constitutional government or a desire for total independence from Mexico - were soon to realize that Santa Anna intended to show no quarter and spare no measure in

his use of the Tornel Decree. As the Mexican Army moved north across the Rio Bravo, citizens became alarmed as early as January of 1836 and as far south as San Patricio. The English translation of the Tornel Decree was then published in New Orleans and in Texas prior to the Battle of the Alamo with Travis and the Battle of Coleto Creek which led to the mass execution of Fannin's forces at Goliad. Civilians had begun their flight (in what was characterized as the 'Sabine Shoot') toward the imagined safety of the United States beyond the Sabine River, while Houston attempted to form a true Texian army in Gonzales. News of the fall of all at the Alamo spurred him to order the burning of Gonzales. News of the massacre and executions at Goliad and the burning of Bastrop further fed the peoples' fear. Thus, came the frenzied civilian flight and the ragged military retreat that we know as the *RUNAWAY SCRAPE*.

SONGS OF SUSANNA follows Susanna (*nee* Wilkerson) in her travels from Tennessee to Gonzales, Texas, with her husband Almeron Dickinson, who would become a fallen hero at the Alamo. As *Messenger of the Alamo*, she carried Santa Anna's demand for capitulation to General Sam Houston, who then prepared his Texian army to join in the Runaway Scrape. After victory at San Jacinto, she found herself widowed and penniless with her infant daughter Angelina, *Babe of the Alamo*. Unskilled and illiterate, she would marry three more men in Houston, seeking in vain that husband who would keep her and her daughter happy and secure. Moving to Lockhart, she would marry her *fifth* husband Joseph Hannig, a young German immigrant half her age. Moving to Austin, Susanna Wilkerson Dickinson Williams Herring Bellows Hannig would become prosperous and respected. She always believed "There Must Be a Good Man in Texas", and ultimately for her there was.

Now retired from the Texas State Library, Donaly Brice has written or co-written several books on Texas history, including *The Great Comanche Raid: Boldest Indian Attack of the Texas Republic*, *The Governor's Hounds: The Texas State Police, 1870-1873*, and *Texas Ranger N. O. Reynolds, the Intrepid*. *Texas Rangers: Lives, Legend and Legacy* is his latest book for North Texas Press, co-authored with renowned Texas writer Bob Alexander. Donaly has also written a number of historical articles that have been published in the *The Plum Creek Almanac* and *The East Texas Historical Journal*. He is a member (and recently named Fellow) of the East Texas Historical Association, the West Texas Historical Association, the Southern Historical Association and the Texas State Historical Association (who elected him as a Fellow of that organization in 2010). He has presented papers and given lectures to many historical and genealogical groups throughout the State of Texas.

Fletcher Clark is a veteran musician and songwriter from the earliest days of the emerging music scene in Austin and its famed concert hall Armadillo World Headquarters. Moving to

TEXANA TALES from Donaly Brice & Fletcher Clark, October 17, 2019

Lockhart eleven years ago, he began sharing music with Donaly Brice at their Emmanuel Episcopal Church (oldest west of the Mississippi). Fletcher produces and hosts the monthly series *Evenings with the Songwriter* at Lockhart's historic Dr. Eugene Clark Library (oldest in Texas) exploring the art and craft of guest professional songwriters. The acclaimed series is in its ninth season in 2019. Fletcher has published his Personal Hymnal, *Open Up the Doors*, and released a CD containing recordings of twelve of these songs. He also has composed a complete 'Sung Eucharist', soon to be recorded by the Choir of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in San Marcos. Together these form the basis of the musical ministry he shares with groups and congregations throughout Texas. Fletcher's label Flécha3 Music has released the CD, **SONGS OF SUSANNA**. This collection of twelve songs includes the four chapters of his epic ballad of Susanna recorded as four separate songs, plus other selections written by commission for various ceremonial historical occasions and groups. Celebrated actor/playwright Jaston Williams remarked, "I can think of no better person to create a musical tribute to the legendary Susanna Dickenson than another notable Texan such as Fletcher Clark. What a perfect fit." Clark's new CD is **CALDWELL COUNTY JAIL**, a collection of country, bluegrass and Texas swing tunes. Clark's CDs and Brice's latest book will be on sale at the presentation.

Clark and Brice have brought their program to various Daughters of the Republic of Texas chapters and Historical Commissions in Austin, Bastrop, Brady, Burnet, Eden/Jackson County, Fort Stockton, Gonzales, Liberty, Mason, San Marcos, and of course Lockhart and Luling in their home Caldwell County. Celebrated author/historian Chuck Parsons remarked, "Once experienced, this program of song and history will not be forgotten. It gives new life to our understanding of our Texas heritage. Clark and Brice working together is indeed a true delight."

Contact Director Ofeira Gazzaway (hvillagemuseum@att.net / 409.283.2272) for information. Tickets can be obtained in advance or at the gate. Heritage Village, Museum Store, Pickett House, and Whitmeyer Library are owned and operated by the Tyler County Heritage Society, a non-profit organization with members from all parts of the country interested in preserving the East Texas Heritage. Memberships are available to anyone on request. Yearly dues entitle members to free admittance to the Village, newsletter, special discounts, 4th of July Picnic, and entertaining bimonthly programs.

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