

*Dear Ladies,  
Have a Merry Texas Christmas ...*



*.. and a wonderful New Year  
filled with all the happiness  
and health the world can offer!*

Daughters of the Republic of Texas



December 2023

## From the President

*Merry Christmas!*

*Happy New Year!!*

*Happy Holidays!!!*

What a happy and joyful time of year!

If you are like me, you have way too much going on - but as I like to say "happy chaos"!

Decorating the Log House was so fun, and the baked potato lunch provided by Debra Grigsby and Luanne Zacek provided some needed energy.

The Holiday Open House is an event looked forward to not only by our chapter members but CRT, the SRT, Texas Navy and San Jacinto Descendants. What a blessing to have so many of these organizations visit us. This year, we presented Randy Pollard, President General SRT with a check for the SRT Scholarship Fund with half of the proceeds of the Road to Independence Chili Cookoff. And our CRT members joined us for fun activities, visiting with Santa & Mrs. Claus and distributing certificates to six new members. Don't forget you can apply for your children and grandchildren to join; they are never too young. The homemade goodies and holiday punch were enjoyed by all.

The Kick Up Your Heels Luncheon was enjoyed by members, their families, prospective members and friends. We had two 90ish young ladies attend - what an inspiration for us all. And there were several young ladies in college who were inducted as new members.

Thank you to everyone who brought gifts for children in CPS B.E.A.R. (Be a Resource) during the holidays. These children need lots of prayers and support.

Also needing prayers are the families of Jaimie Moran, Deborah Liss-Frank and Stella Frank on the recent passing of their mother, grandmother and great grandmother Stella. Long time member Shirley Houston, age 85 (ancestor James Frederick Gomer) passed away in November. Margie Forster has fallen, broke her femur and moved to a physical therapy facility but would enjoy calls and texts. And pray for Lisa Braly's family as her husband is gravely ill.

If you have visited the Log House recently, you have enjoyed sitting on our new steel chairs, purchased with a generous donation from Carolyn Lightfoot. We loved the old wooden fold up chairs but like us old people they aren't as sturdy as they used to be.

Luanne and Sharolyn have been extra busy as docents with more than sixteen log house events or rentals in November and December. Remember, the Pioneer Memorial Log House can be rented.

Whew!!!

May you enjoy this glorious time of year. We look forward to seeing you in the new year.

Be safe and happy!

God Bless Texas and You!

Sincerely,

Gwen Sorsby Koch



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# The San Jacinto Dispatch

Calendar December 25th – January 20th



**December 25** *Merry Christmas*

**January 1** *Happy New Year to All!!!*

**January 3** Undecorate the log house 10:30 a.m.

**January 4** SJC Chapter meeting 10:00 a.m.

**January 18** Log House Workday 10:00 a.m.

**January 20** Pioneer Memorial Log House  
Open House 1-3 p.m.

**2024**



# The San Jacinto Dispatch

## Christmas Spirit at the Log House

Getting the Log House into the Christmas spirit. Thank you to our decorating volunteers.



Tree Decorator Volunteers:  
*Heather Henderson, Beth McCarty, Susan Stormer, Eron Tynes, Luanne Zacek, Gwen Kunz*





# The San Jacinto Dispatch

## Kick Up Your Heels Holiday Luncheon

### Kick Up Your Heels Holiday Luncheon

What a gorgeous day!

The log house was beautifully decorated with greenery and red poinsettias; the tables set with boots filled with Texas flags and a tiny poinsettia; boot stockings were hung at the fireplace; and the Assembly Room filled with lovely ladies, members, family and friends. New member Clarissa Grayson tag teamed with Martha Jorgensen playing beautiful Christmas music on our 1861 grand square piano as guests arrived. There was a happy buzz in the room with everyone visiting.

Lupe Tortilla's catered the shrimp, beef and chicken fajita lunch with all the fixins, and a brownie dusted with peppermint for dessert.

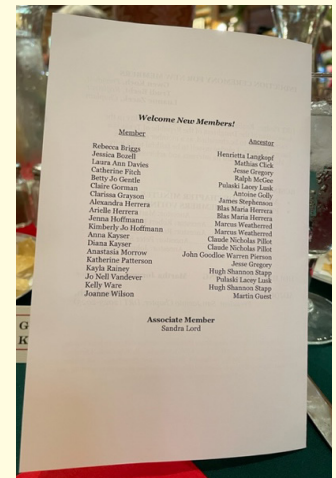
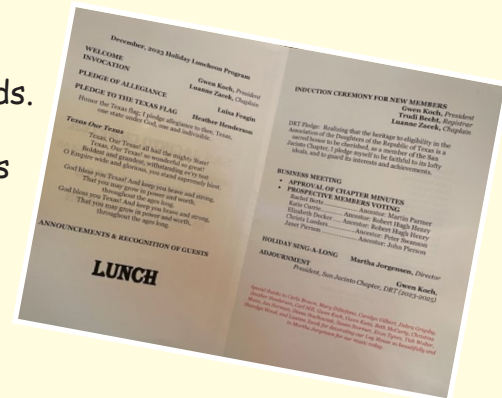
In attendance, we had many of our new members and prospective members; several mother/daughter pairs; aunt/niece, cousins; mother-in-law/daughter-in-law; and grandmothers. Maybe this can inspire you to have your mothers, daughters, aunts or cousins to join.

The Induction Ceremony for new members was conducted by Trudi Becht, Chapter Registrar; Chaplain Luanne Zacek and President Gwen Koch. There were nine of the sixteen new members since June 1 present to receive symbols of Texas - the Lone Star flag and our state flower, the Bluebonnet.

Debra Grigsby (who designed and created the Texas Our Texas quilt for the raffle) sold all 200 of the tickets for proceeds total of \$1,700 to benefit the log house. New member, Alexandra Herrera drew the lucky ticket winner, Tim Rainey. Tim was present as his daughter and granddaughter were being inducted as new members of San Jacinto Chapter. Tim is a member of the SRT and an admiral in the Texas Navy who reached out to San Jacinto Chapter to have "his girls" join Daughters of the Republic of Texas. He was so proud of their induction to membership that he flew in family to have six of them celebrate the occasion with us.

Our Christmas sing-along was led by Martha Jorgensen playing her guitar, and new member Clarissa Grayson. Many voices were singing joyful music. Clarissa's father, in the audience for her new member induction really heightened the tone with his fantastic baritone voice.

The luncheon was a wonderful occasion for enjoying the holiday season.





# The San Jacinto Dispatch

## Kick Up Your Heels Holiday Luncheon





### The Winner!!!

We raised \$1,700.00 on the quilt raffle. The drawing was done at the Holiday Luncheon by new member Alexandra Herrera. The winner was Tim Rainey, Sons of the Republic of Texas member. He plans to use it as a wall hanging in his hunting cottage in Arkansas. Congrats!



### Congrats!!!



# The San Jacinto Dispatch

## Open House

**The Open House  
was a huge success**

During the Open House, the San Jacinto Chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas was pleased to present a check to Randy Pollard, President General of the SRT for proceeds for a scholarship from the Road to Independence Chili Cookoff.



Scholarship Check presented to Randy Pollard







# The San Jacinto Dispatch

## Open House



Martha Jorgensen providing holiday music at the Open House



Donated Childrens gifts





# The San Jacinto Dispatch

## Open House





# The San Jacinto Dispatch

## New Members, December 2023



*New Members December 2023*



*New Member Clarissa Grayson*



*New Member 93 years*



### CRT Certificate Presentation to New Members and Visit with Santa

The SJCCRT had a fun time at the Holiday Open House. There were nine members in attendance and several guests. The kids enjoyed a craft project, a Capitals of Texas word search, and a visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus.

Tish Wolter  
CRT Sponsor



Excited new CRT member



New CRT members receiving their certificates



CRT with Santa



Another new CRT member



Family Portrait



**Attention Please!!!**



**Presenting the Newest and Youngest CRT member  
*Abby Mae Switzer***



# The San Jacinto Dispatch

## CRT Activity Page





# The San Jacinto Dispatch

## Special Notes

Texas History 4th and 7th grade Teacher Award - Information at [sanjacintodrt.org](http://sanjacintodrt.org) Teaching Texas tab or contact Patti Randolph.

January 4, 2024, speaker- Iris Clawson-Davis, Texas Native Plants. Come in person or with ZOOM

Texas History Art Contest - topic: and original drawing of a Harris County person or landscape or building in Harris County. For more information contact Tish Wolter. A great project during the holidays.

SJC Scholarship - three \$4,000 scholarships will be awarded at the San Jacinto Day Ceremony in April to Houston area high school seniors who will attend a Texas college or university in the fall. For information: [sanjacintodrt.org](http://sanjacintodrt.org) Teaching Texas tab or contact Laura Kaplan. Applications due before March 10, 2024.

Remember to link your Randall's and Kroger cards to the Pioneer Memorial Log House for our chapter to receive donations from your purchases.

Show us your colors - fly your Texas flag and send us a picture. You could have it in our newsletter.

4th grade Essay Contest - topic: Colin McKinney  
7th grade Essay Contest - topic: The Canary Islanders  
Find detailed information at [sanjacintodrt.org](http://sanjacintodrt.org) Teaching Texas tab or contact Patti Randolph. Great project to work on during the holidays.

We have been selling the usable wooden folding chairs for \$25. If you would like to have one as a memento, there are only 4 left. Contact Debra Grigsby at [dgrig@comcast.net](mailto:dgrig@comcast.net)

If you would like to help with refreshments at a future chapter meeting, contact Gwen Koch.

If you need DRT information or forms not included in the SJC Yearbook, go to [drtinfo.org/members](http://drtinfo.org/members). Sign in (your username is your member #, and the password is your choice). You can also find the form for ordering insignia, ancestor bars, etc. These items require signatures from the chapter treasurer and chapter president as confirming the person's chapter membership. And you can purchase San Jacinto Chapter pins in our Country Store for \$35.

Show your Texas pride by purchasing a Native Texan License Plate - we would love to see all cars in our parking lot with one!



# The San Jacinto Dispatch

## How You Can Help

### Double Your Donation (at no cost to you)

Ladies, does your employer have a matching gift program? You can double your donation to our Chapter or the *Friends of the Log House* through Employer's Matching Gifts. And retirees can often do the same through their previous Employer's Matching Gifts. Help our chapter and the loghouse increase our donations through this free program. Please contact Carla Brown, Treasurer at [treasurer.sjcdrt@gmail.com](mailto:treasurer.sjcdrt@gmail.com) for assistance in setting up your matching gift.

### Did You Know???

Kroger and Randall's both offer a 1% Rebate to us for all money you spend on groceries. Simply sign up to link your account to us; here's how:

#### Kroger:

Go to [HOgrogerCommunityRewards@kroger.com](mailto:HOgrogerCommunityRewards@kroger.com). Our account is DAUGHTERS OF THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS, PIONEER MEMORIAL LOG HOUSE, Account number is RF149. Ask them in the email to link your Kroger Rewards Account to us. You will need to provide your Kroger Rewards number *OR* go to the courtesy counter and ask them to help you. Kroger has a number of affiliate stores including City Market, Dillon's, King Super and Fry's (grocery).

#### Randall's:

Set up a Randalls for U account through the smart phone app or the website at [www.randalls.com](http://www.randalls.com). Then, send an email to [GoodNeighbor@Randalls.com](mailto:GoodNeighbor@Randalls.com) and ask them to link your account to the non-profit by providing the organization's Good Neighbor number in your message, along with the phone number used to set up your Randalls for U account. (This is the same phone number you use at the register when shopping.) Our Good Neighbor account number is 14197. Affiliates include Albertsons, Safeway, Vons, Jewel-Osco, Shaw's, Acme, Tom Thumb, United Supermarkets, Pavilions, Star Market, Haggen, Carrs, Kings Food Markets, and Balducci's Food Lovers Market. Be sure to ask the courtesy booth if you need other help.

If you are aware of other stores that offer rebates to non-profits please let me know so that we can apply. My email is [dgrig1@comcast.net](mailto:dgrig1@comcast.net).

Thanks,  
*Debra Grigsby*, 4th VP Ways and Means







### San Jacinto Chapter History

How special that San Jacinto Chapter's first President Rebecca Matilda Williams Fenn, 1891-1896, two daughters were also chapter presidents. May Fenn McKeever was our chapter's 3rd president 1898-1914. And Belle Fenn Clark was chapter president 1921-1926 and penned the words for the Daughters of the Republic membership installation.

*Realizing that the heritage of eligibility in the society of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas is a sacred honor to be cherished, as a member of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, I pledge myself to be faithful to its lofty ideals, and to guard its interest and achievements.*

What a legacy that family gave us.

*Special Thank You!*

*Susan Schaffer for the newsletter*

*Sharolyn Wood for taking care of the Pioneer Memorial Log House and donating the greenery.*

*Luanne Zacek for donating the beautiful red poinsettias.*



*And for jumping in where needed to get the Log House ready for holiday happenings: Isabelle DiStefano, Mary DiStefano, Alexandra Herrera, Trudi Becht, Warren Coston, Luanne Zacek, Heather Henderson, Christina Munn, Clarissa Grayson, Beth McCarty, Susan Stormer, Carla Brown, Martha Jorgensen, Debra Grigsby, Shelly Richarson, Tish Wolter, Gwen Kunz, Carolyn Gilbert, Jan Norman, Debbie Lunn, Eron Tynes, Carl Hill, Diana Stachowiak, and Patti Randolph.*



## The San Jacinto Dispatch

### Mary McCutcheon Smith McCrory Jones

This is the text of a talk given at the grave sites of Dr. Anson Jones and his wife, Mary, at Glenwood Cemetery in Houston on February 19, 2023 to celebrate Texas Statehood Day.

*For a person with such a common name, Mary Smith had a very uncommon life. She was born July 24, 1819, in Arkansas Territory. This month we celebrate her life of 88 years which ended on December 31, 1907 in Houston, Texas.*

*Her dad died in Arkansas in 1833, so she, her mom, and 4 younger siblings moved to Texas, to Brazoria County, arriving in 1834 after a difficult journey crossing the swollen Sabine River on a raft! Mary was just 14.*

*In 1835, her Mom married John Woodruff, a widower with six children. Mary was the oldest of the now 11 children, so she played a major supporting role in her family.*

*The next year, in March of 1836, the entire family ran from Santa Ana's army during the Runaway Scrape and sheltered in Clear Creek, 8 miles from the San Jacinto Battlefield where they heard the cannons' roar during the battle.*

*The City of Houston was founded in August 1836. Her family moved there in December of that year. At that time, there were no houses in Houston, not even tents. Everyone just camped out as they built their homes. There she met and married Hugh McCrory, a soldier in the Texian army, on July 18, 1837, when she was just 18 years old. They were the first couple to receive a marriage license in Harris County! Sadly, her husband Hugh died suddenly of an illness just 7 weeks after their wedding.*

*So Mary moved back home with her family and helped care for the 4 new daughters of the family along with her other siblings. She met Dr. Anson Jones when he stayed at her parents' Boarding House. They married May 17, 1840, when Mary was just 20 years old.*

*When Dr. Jones became President of the Republic of Texas, Mary became the last First Lady of the Republic, serving from 1844 – 1846. On February 19, 1846, Dr. Jones lowered the Texas flag and famously said, "The Republic of Texas is no more". By 1845, Anson and Mary had 3 children, and got the news that Mary's mother had died (aged 45), with Mary's youngest sister being just 4 years old. In 1847, Mary's stepfather died, leaving Mary and Anson as guardians of Mary's 4 youngest siblings along with the now 4 children of their own.*



## The San Jacinto Dispatch

### Mary McCutcheon Smith McCrory Jones

*Dr. and Mrs. Anson Jones built a plantation near Washington-on-the-Brazos which they called 'Barrington' after Dr. Jones' birthplace in Massachusetts. The house itself is now part of the park there.*

*But sadly, Anson Jones had a debilitating accident and later died by suicide in January 1858, leaving 39-year-old Mary a widow again. The family was soon destitute and had to sell their plantation. Luckily, Dr. Ashbel Smith helped Mary to buy land on Goose Creek, near Baytown, where she raised her children and young siblings.*

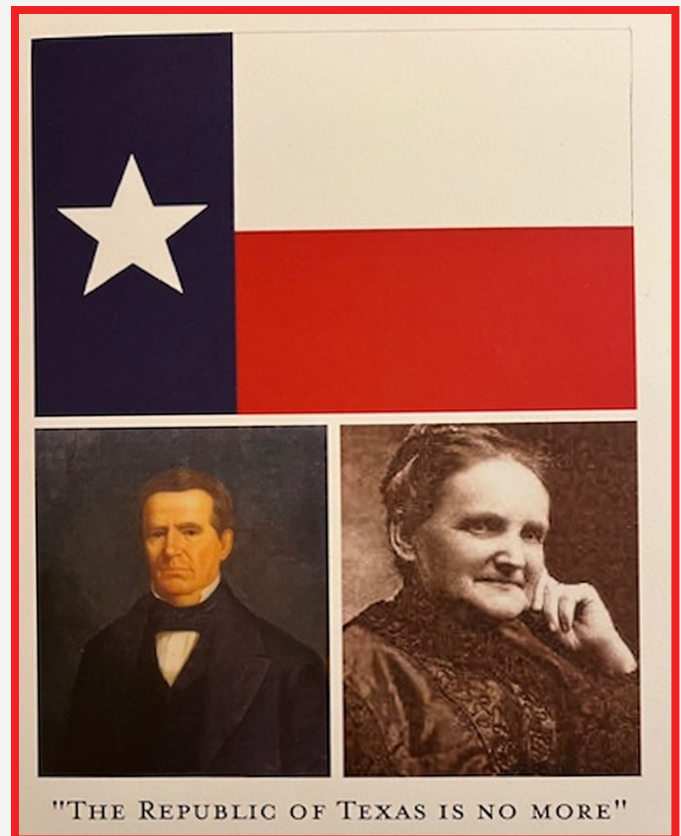
*In 1879, 60-year-old Mary returned to live in Houston. Her son Cromwell was Chief Justice of Harris County and her daughter Sallie also lived in Houston. Mary had nursing skills and throughout her life helped women during and after childbirth. We can see her strong maternal role – caring for her siblings, then her children, and then all of these many pioneer women.*

*'The Daughters of the Republic of Texas' was founded in November 1891 and Mary Smith Jones became its first president, serving for 17 years until her death. Mary perceived her role of president of the DRT as a "mother to her many daughters".*

*In 1899, at the age of 70, she said "I have literally grown up and old with the state of Texas".*

*She died in her daughter Sallie's home in December 1907 at the age of 88. Mary McCutcheon Smith McCrory Jones was truly a strong founding mother of the state of Texas.*

Beth Garrett McCarty





### History of the Red Family Grand Square Piano

*The Red Family grand square piano is a prized exhibit in San Jacinto Chapter's Early Texas History Collection. Mrs. Erette Red, San Jacinto Chapter President 1969-1972, and President General Daughters of the Republic of Texas 1973-1975, donated the piano to San Jacinto Chapter in memory of her late husband, Dr. George Plunkett Red.*

*This piano in our Pioneer Memorial Log House was purchased by Dr. Red's grandmother about 1861. She had a degree in music and taught music at Live Oak Seminary, founded in 1850 and located at Old Gay Hill, Washington County, Texas. Tuition was \$10 per month. The school taught 25-30 young women at a time.*

*The piano was manufactured by Vose & Sons circa 1861. Similar pianos are showcased at the new Daughters of the Republic Headquarters in Austin, and at Sam Houston's "Woodland Home" in Huntsville.*





## The San Jacinto Dispatch

### Red Family Grand Square Piano

*It has “come back to life” in 2023 after being fitted with an electronic keyboard, making current use of this antique piano which can no longer be properly tuned. Martha Jorgensen spearheaded this project to carefully remove the original keyboard, wrapping it to protect the key and hammer section, and placing it in a custom-built cedar crate for storage. The keyboard can be reinserted into the piano to restore it to its original configuration. The wood SHINES after being hand waxed twice with museum quality furniture wax. Thank you to Martha and other interested chapter members for donating toward these expenses.*

*The stool which sits near the piano is an original companion piece to the grand square piano. It is covered in green velvet and has carved wooden legs painted green.*

*Come to chapter meetings to hear Martha Jorgensen play “Texas Our Texas”, the first music played “in tune” on the piano in many years.*

*Curatorial Committee*



*ERETTE REESE RED  
(Mrs. George Plunkett Red)  
1973 — 1975*