Cactus Jack Delivers News from Garner Museum

The John Nance Garner Museum, a component of the Congressional History division of the University of Texas Center for American History, welcomes you to the inaugural issue of Cactus Jack, the newsletter of the John Nance Garner Museum. In this and See “Cactus Jack,” P.2 »

Friends of John Garner Museum Will Hold Gala on November 17

Priceless Texas historical documents from the Spanish colonial era through the Revolution of 1836 archived at the Center for American History will be featured at the Friends of John Garner Museum special gala event at the First State Bank in Uvalde. The fundraising dinner for the Friends organization will be held on Thursday, November 17 at 6:00 p.m.

Center director Dr. Don Carleton will be the featured speaker, discussing this important collection of Texas treasures. The public may contact the Museum for ticket information.

Guests will enjoy the opportunity to view documents such
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Calendar of Events

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<th>Month</th>
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<td>September</td>
<td>Garner State Park CCC Reunion</td>
<td>Texas Parks &amp; Wildlife → Garner State Park, Concun, Texas</td>
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<td>October</td>
<td>Uvalde Art League → Art Show and Sale</td>
<td>Grounds of the Garner Museum, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>November</td>
<td>Friends of John Garner Museum Fundraising Gala</td>
<td>First State Bank, Uvalde, 6:00 p.m. (ticket required)</td>
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John Nance Garner Museum
333 North Park Street, Uvalde, Texas 78801
Telephone 830 / 278 5018 → Fax 830 / 279 0512
Museum hours → Tuesday – Saturday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. → closed Sunday & Monday
Center for American History website: www.cah.utexas.edu
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subsequent issues you will find news and information about the Museum’s programs, exhibits, collections, and involvement in its home community of Uvalde, Texas.

The Garner Museum is administered by the Center for American History, a special collections library, archive, and museum at The University of Texas at Austin. The Garner Museum is dedicated to documenting the remarkable life and career of Texas native son John Nance “Cactus Jack” Garner (1868-1967). It is an important component of the Center for American History, which has one of the

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as the official letter from the Spanish governor to Moses Austin allowing for settlement of Americans in Texas; Stephen F. Austin’s hand-drawn map of the colonies; Mary Rabb’s 1823 diary of life in Texas; Sam Houston’s call for volunteers for the revolution; a map of the Alamo fortifications prepared by Santa Anna’s engineers; the narrative of José Enrique de la Peña, an officer in Santa Anna’s army; one of the original printed copies of the Texas Declaration of Independence; and many other historic items of this era from the Center’s archives.

The Friends of John Garner Museum is a newly formed non-profit organization dedicated to assisting the Museum toward its mission of telling the important historical story of John and Ettie Garner. “We are very pleased to have this outstanding group of individuals that represent the Friends of John Nance Garner,” stated Dr. Patrick Cox, the Center’s assistant director who administers the John Nance Garner Museum. “The Friends organization will provide valuable assistance to the programs and improvements at the John Nance Garner Museum.”

The first meeting of the newly formed organization was its annual membership meeting held on April 5 in the stately McNelly Room at The First State Bank in Uvalde. The purpose of the annual meeting was to elect officers and determine term lengths for the board of directors. The officers of the Friends of John Garner Museum are: John Blades, president; Craig Garnett, vice president; William I. Dillard, secretary; and Virginia Davis, treasurer. The other members of the board are Stephen Kerbow, Sharra

Cantu, John E. Lampe, William A. Kessler, Jr., and Olga Charles.

“I am excited with the present board of directors and know they want to see improvements made to the museum,” stated President Blades. “We would like to see the John Nance Garner Museum not only

be a tourist destination, but to show the impact that Garner had nationally.”

The Friends group welcomes new members and membership is open to all individuals, organizations, and businesses interested in promoting the mission of the John Nance Garner Museum. Specifically, the Friends group is organized to assist the John Nance Garner Museum in carrying out its fundamental purposes and responsibilities by raising funds and organizing volunteer workers for the Museum’s programs. The address for the Friends’ website is: www.friendsofjohnagnarnermuseum.org

For more information about the Friends of John Garner Museum and the November 17 gala dinner and viewing of the Texas treasures, visit the Friends’ website or send an email to texastreasures@friendsofjohnagnarnermuseum.org. ✩
Spotlight on the John Nance Garner Papers ⇆ Rayburn, Truman, and Johnson

The John Nance Garner Papers at the Center for American History contain a variety of documents, photographs, artifacts, and political and personal memorabilia related to John Nance Garner and his wife, Ettie. Many of these items are on public display in the John Nance Garner Museum in Uvalde; most of the documents and photographs in this collection are preserved and made available to the public for research at the Center’s Research and Collections division on the campus of the University of Texas in Austin.

The photo above reveals the deep influence Garner had on twentieth-century politics. As the first Texan to become Speaker of the U.S. House, as well as the first Texan to hold elected national office, he charted the political waters for later leaders from Texas, such as Speaker Sam Rayburn and President Lyndon B. Johnson.

Furthermore, in the years after his 1948 presidential campaign, Harry Truman credited Garner’s endorsement of him, given during Truman’s visit to Uvalde at a time when he was trailing Republican challenger Thomas Dewey in Texas, as a factor in his unexpected victory and return to the White House.

Beverly Hadley Joins Garner Museum Administrative Staff

Dr. Patrick Cox, assistant director of the Center for American History and administrator of the John Nance Garner Museum, announced that the Center has added Beverly Hadley as the newest member of the Museum’s staff. As the senior administrative assistant, Hadley will serve as the Museum’s program and communications coordinator. She also will coordinate the Museum’s resource development and educational programs, and be the Museum’s liaison with the Friends of John Garner Museum.

As the John Nance Garner Museum continues to grow as an educational and cultural resource, Hadley’s goal is to make the Museum a more prominent asset within the Uvalde community. “I would like to see the John Nance Garner Museum be one of the first places residents think to take visitors to in our city,” Hadley stated. “John Nance Garner was a very colorful and important individual in the history of Texas. Our hope is that visitors leave the Museum with a new understanding of his importance.”

Hadley has been a resident of Uvalde County since 1996. Prior to that she managed a busy medical practice in Houston. She has a background as a research scientist at the Johnson Space Center, with experience in teaching, event planning, and research development. Hadley earned an M.A. in audiology from the University of Alabama and a B.S. in speech pathology from Mississippi University for Women.

The day-to-day operation and the business administration of the John Nance Garner Museum will continue to be run by Maria Lara, who has been a member of the Museum’s staff since 1996.
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largest collections of congressional history outside of Washington, D.C. The Center is the home of the papers of more than sixty congressional leaders, as well as the administrator of the Sam Rayburn Library and Museum, in Bonham, Texas.

The Garner Museum occupies the Uvalde home, designed by influential architect Atlee Ayres, of John and Ettie Garner; in this house they lived, worked, raised a family, entertained dignitaries, and hosted thousands of citizens from all walks of life. The Museum’s exhibits, which are free and open to the public, feature a variety of artifacts, documents, and political memorabilia related to Cactus Jack and Ettie, who was his wife and his partner in political life.

This newsletter’s name, *Cactus Jack*, is Garner’s famous nickname, which he acquired early in his political career. As a member of the Texas State Legislature, Garner represented a sprawling, rural district of Southwest Texas. Cactus, cattle, sheep, and goats dominated a landscape of ranching country and small towns. According to the House Journal (March 4, 1901, p. 576), the Texas House debated in March 1901 a resolution proclaiming the “lupinus subcarnosus,” better known as the bluebonnet, as the state flower. During a debate over the resolution, Representative Garner moved that the resolution be amended by “striking out ‘blue bonnet’ and insert[ing] ‘cactus.’” Garner lost his motion, but the press and his friends named him “Cactus Jack,” a nickname he carried for the rest of his life. ※

**Community Involvement Blossoms at John and Ettie’s Home**

Members of the Green Thumb Garden Club of Uvalde have been hard at work and up to their elbows in dirt designing and planting the front flowerbeds at John Nance Garner Museum. Club members Diana Meyer and Kathy Thompson have organized this volunteer effort by club members, whose hard work welcomes visitors and reminds them that before the building was a museum, it was first a home to John and Ettie Garner.

The initial phase of the project occurred in the spring and fall of 2004 with the landscaping and planting of the front flowerbeds. “The garden club has taken on the Museum mostly in an advisory capacity,” stated Meyer. “Our goal was to use native and drought-tolerant plants as the foundation of our landscaping efforts. In addition, the large pots on the front porch allowed us to add color and seasonal variety to our gardening efforts.”

Red caladiums in the four large pots thrived in the summer shade on the Museum’s front porch. Caladiums have also made an appearance at the footing of the sign in front of the museum. Maria Lara, administrative associate at the Museum, commented that “the caladiums were beautiful; we received many compliments from guests all summer long. In the fall, the Garden Club changed the plantings for cooler weather with snapdragons and pansies.”

The green thumbs of the volunteer gardeners and landscape artists represent one the many ways that the Uvalde community supports the John Nance Garner Museum. ※
PRIVATE SUPPORT CRUCIAL TO CENTER’S PUBLIC WORK

The John Nance Garner Museum is a component of the Center for American History’s Congressional History division. This division within the Center comprises one of the nation’s most important collections of congressional history. In addition to the John Nance Garner Museum, the Congressional History division includes the Sam Rayburn Library and Museum in Bonham, Texas, as well as the papers of more than sixty former and current members of Congress, including Sam Houston, Morris Sheppard, James Buchanan, Maury Maverick, Ralph Yarborough, Joe Kilgore, Lloyd Bentsen, and Henry B. Gonzalez.

In 1952, former Vice President John Nance Garner donated his home to the City of Uvalde as a memorial to Ettie Garner, his wife and partner in political life. In 1973, the City of Uvalde opened a museum in the house to preserve the history of Garner’s life and political career, as well as the history of his homeland of South Texas. In 1999, the City of Uvalde transferred ownership to The University of Texas at Austin.

Public funds provide for only a portion of the annual operating costs of the John Nance Garner Museum. There are several ways you can help ensure the success of this important Texas resource:

GIVE AN UNRESTRICTED OR RESTRICTED CASH GIFT —
You can give a cash gift by mailing a check or money order to the John Nance Garner Museum. You can also give a cash gift online: www.utexas.edu/supportut/giveonline
(On the “Make a Gift Online” page of the Support UT website, in the “Select an Area” drop-down window be sure to designate “American History, Center for” and specify in the accompanying text box that you would like your gift to be used for the John Nance Garner Museum.)
A cash gift can be paid in one lump sum, or pledged to be paid in installments.

APPLY FUNDS TO AN EXISTING ENDOWMENT, OR CREATE A NEW ONE —
There is currently one endowment that supports the John Nance Garner Museum — the John Nance Garner Fund, established in 2000. An endowment can be established or increased in one lump sum, or the amount can be pledged to be paid in installments.

DONATE A COLLECTION OR ITEMS OF ARCHIVAL MATERIAL —
If you have a collection or items of archival material that you think might enhance the collections at the John Nance Garner Museum, or any of the other congressional history collections at the Center, we will be happy to discuss your potential gift to determine if the materials are an appropriate fit for the Center’s collections.

MAKE A PLANNED GIFT —
You may designate a future gift to the Center to be given through your estate.

Some gifts to the John Nance Garner Museum bring the donor benefits from the University, as well as benefits from the Center for American History and its John Nance Garner Museum. If you are interested in giving a potentially tax-deductible gift, please call David Dettmer, Assistant to the Director, at the Center’s administrative offices at 512 / 495 4515, or email him at ddettmer@mail.utexas.edu, to discuss your options. No gift is too large or too small in helping to preserve American history.  


Sample from the Garner Cartoon Collection ↔ “The Great Buddha”

During a thirty-seven year career in Washington, D.C., that saw him rise from representative to Speaker to vice president in 1933, John Nance Garner methodically became a master of the legislative insider’s ability to give advice and wield power. In his essay on Garner in Profiles in Power (University of Texas Press, 2004), Dr. Patrick Cox describes the nature of Garner’s influence as vice president (pp. 52-3):

“Never the ‘spare tire’ on [Franklin] Roosevelt’s team, [Garner] attended and actively participated in Roosevelt’s cabinet meetings on national policy and legislative strategy. He thus effectively transformed the largely ceremonial office into an influential executive and legislative position.

“Garner quickly became, after the president, the single most important man in the government and, arguably, the nation. […] Garner’s political knowledge along with his respect and great persuasive powers proved to be invaluable, especially during Roosevelt’s first one hundred days. The new vice president’s whisky-drinking, poker-playing style was an additional asset that helped lubricate the legislative process for the New Deal. […] Because Garner knew the strengths and weaknesses of both houses, he was able either to push bills through or bury them. He was, as one writer stated, ‘a mole rather than an eagle.’ A master at working individual senators on the floor, he was the ‘wise old man of Congress.’”