

TIHAA Tours San Felipe de Austin - February 18 2019

by Gary Lockett



On February 18th, 23 TIHAA members and guests enjoyed a visit to the San Felipe de Austin Museum and Historical Site in San Felipe, TX. On the bus going to the museum, trip organizer **Mary Brown** passed out Bingo cards. The single game winners were **Brenda Moss, Delma Hogan-Cotton, Fermina Sutter** and lucky **Sylvia Cruz** won twice.

The director of the museum, Bryan McAuley, after a warm welcome, took us on an enlightening tour of the newly opened museum detailing events from the town's founding in 1825 up to its demise in 1836. The museum is filled with historical memorabilia: maps, exhibits, interactive multimedia and graphic displays, complete with an outdoor plaza showing current and planned site development. A gift shop was at the end the tour.



In 1823, Stephen F. Austin led a group of almost 300 families to settle on the west bank of the Brazos River in Mexican territory. It came to be known as San Felipe de Austin. The life of the town was very short,



but played an important part in history leading up to Texas independence.

By the early 1830's San Felipe de Austin had the first post office and was the second largest town, after Austin. In 1835 several meetings were held there to discuss alternatives for Texas's future, ranging between becoming a Mexican state, to total independence. After Mexico's refusal to negotiate any changes, the revolution began. After the fall of the Alamo in early 1836, in the wake of Santa Anna's fast approaching army, the citizens of San Felipe de Austin fled across the Brazos River. All of the buildings in the town were burned to prevent the Mexican army from quickly building rafts or boats to pursue them. Even after victory at San Jacinto, the original settlers never returned to the area and the town was never rebuilt.



An excellent, catered lunch of chicken fried chicken, mashed potatoes, green beans, salad, water and tea was served — dessert being Girl Scout cookies provided by Mary.

After lunch, we proceeded to the Guardian Angel Catholic Church in Wallis. The church is very similar to the painted churches in the Schulenburg area in Fayette County. It was built early in the 1900's by Czech settlers in the area. The interior is decorated with ornate carvings, statues and beautiful stained glass windows.

You can find more pictures and historical context on the San Felipe de Austin website:
www.visitsanfelipedaustin.com

Attendees were: Mary Brown, Cindy & Tom Croissant, Sylvia Cruz, Gwen Dickey Della DuHart, Estella & Ralph Garcia, Solange Gijon, Shirley Gifford, Arnetta Finley, Delma Hogan, Gary Luckett, Brenda & Daryl Moss, Anne Pratka, Patty Rose, Martha Stewart, Fermina & Tom Sutter, Maria Torres, Drew Weaver, and George Wolf.

