

May 2015 • Volume 19, Issue 2

TEXAS HOME SCHOOL COALITION

REVIEW



TEXAS
HOME SCHOOL
COALITION ASSOCIATION
Keeping Texas Families Free

**Exploring Texas
History in the Lone
Star State**
Page 7

Traveling Texas
Page 10

**Journaling the
Journey**
Page 28

KEEPING TEXAS FAMILIES FREE

**“I want my kids
to never stop learning.
There are opportunities
to learn everywhere.”**

—Michelle Duggar





CONTENTS

MAY 2015 • VOLUME 19 • ISSUE 2

- 5 • REVIEW From the President
- 7 • Experiencing Texas History in the Lone Star State
- 10 • Traveling Texas
- 13 • The Heart of Texas
- 14 • Letter Writing to Friends and Family
- 16 • Getting Personal With History:
Using Primary Sources to Make History Come Alive
- 19 • To See Like a Child
- 22 • 7 Ways to Prepare Students for College Writing
- 25 • Exploring the World Through Postcards
- 28 • Journaling the Journey
- 30 • What You Need to Know Before You Home School
- 33 • The Missing Link
- 24 • Puzzles & Games
- 37 • Photographic Memories
- 40 • Questions Every Home Schooling Mom Wishes
You Would Ask
- 42 • News and Notes



TEXAS HOME SCHOOL COALITION

REVIEW

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REVIEW

FROM THE PRESIDENT

TIM LAMBERT



THSC's work is driven by our conviction that parents should be able to make decisions for their own children. We believe that parents—not government officials—are best equipped to direct the care, control, and upbringing of the next generation.

Even in recent months, we have seen numerous examples of the ongoing conflict between government regulations and family freedom. These recent episodes remind me that vigilance is critical in the fight for parental rights.

For example, our home school friends in Pennsylvania are enjoying newfound educational freedoms after a law that removes home school restrictions took effect late last year. Prior to the law's passage, home school students' academic portfolios were routinely subjected to reviews by superintendents.

However, thanks to the new law, families in Pennsylvania may now educate their kids with less governmental red tape and intervention. I was delighted to hear of this encouraging development, and I hope other states allow more freedom for home school families.

Of course, adversaries of the home school movement were quick to censure Pennsylvania's new law. Many pundits and commentators argued that the state's deregulation would lead to lower standards and inadequate education for home school students.

The problem with these statements is that there is no evidence to support them! In fact, study after study has shown that students excel academically whenever they are raised under the loving supervision of parental educators. Furthermore, children in home schools are much less likely to receive an inadequate education than their public schooled counterparts.

The evidence is clear: Parents can be trusted to do what is best for their children.

Affronts to parental rights do not only arise in educational settings. The medical field is another place where government officials sometimes rob parents of their freedoms. In some particularly disturbing cases, government authorities have forced children to undergo medical treatment—contrary to the parents' wishes.

In the same way, a few lawmakers have recently advocated for mandatory vaccinations or immunizations for children. Again, this

is another example of the erroneous belief that government authorities are somehow better qualified than parents to take care of children. We could not disagree more. Parents should be able to make educational and medical decisions for their kids in keeping with the constitutional right of parents to direct the care, control, and upbringing of their children.

Of course, we do not stand idly by whenever parental rights are challenged or compromised. In fact, with the Texas legislature now in session, we have been staying very busy analyzing proposed laws and lobbying for THSC-sponsored bills. THSC has a significant presence in Austin, with the members of the THSC Watchmen working full-time to promote and defend home school priorities.

Sometimes, when people learn of THSC's work in Austin and our involvement in the legislative process, someone will ask me: "Why all the politics?" People occasionally wonder why THSC doesn't just focus on home schooling and withdraw from the political field altogether.

When someone asks me this, I share with them my conviction that home schoolers' involvement in the public policy process is critical. Nearly 30 years ago, when home schooling was largely prohibited in Texas, I realized that my freedom to raise my children was limited because lawmakers believed that the government was better qualified to educate my children than my wife and I.

At that time, I recognized that we would have to be involved in the public policy arena if we wanted to home school our children. In other words, we had to become engaged in the process by which Texas chooses its elected officials, or what we often refer to as "politics."

Today, I remain convinced that we home schoolers must be informed of current issues and challenges affecting our fundamental family freedoms. Yes, God has blessed us in allowing us to make incredible strides toward greater home schooling opportunities here in Texas. We are encouraged by the progress we have made over the years, and I am thrilled whenever other states—such as Pennsylvania—follow suit.

However, let's not take our home schooling freedoms for granted. Let's not assume that our parental rights will never be challenged. I believe that vigilance is essential for continued home schooling success in Texas, and I hope you believe so too.



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EXPERIENCING TEXAS HISTORY IN THE

LONE STAR STATE

by David Emprimo

In the first season of *Boy Meets World*, Cory Matthews and his class are given an assignment to read *The Diary of Anne Frank*. When asked by his father what the book is about, Cory responds “It’s about the Nazis and the Jews—back when there was prejudice and stuff.” Later in the season, he refers to World War II as “The European Sneaker War” after Mr. Feeny tells him about rubber rationing and how the soles of sneakers were made from recycled tires during that time.

As a home schooling family, we can’t help but shake our heads and feel sorry for him. To Cory and others, history is a dead, dry subject because all they know about it is what they learn in books. My nephews know better: they know that history is tangible. It can be seen, experienced, and—provided it’s not behind glass in a museum—touched.

One of the great things about home schooling in Texas is that history literally surrounds us. No matter where you live, history is just outside your door; finding it just takes a little research. We get ideas from travel guides, chamber of commerce websites, and TV shows such as *The Texas Country Reporter* and *The Daytripper*. Any time we are called out of town for other events, such as a 4-H competition or a business meeting, the first thing that comes to mind is: What else is there? What can we do that can be used for school?

Trips to Dallas have included stops at the Sixth Floor Museum, the Dallas Holocaust Museum, the Dallas World Aquarium, and the Dallas Museum of Art when it hosted the King Tut Exhibit. Excursions to Houston have included trips to the San Jacinto Monument and

Museum, and Patrick’s Cabin in Deer Park. A family trip to Oklahoma included a stop in Greenville at the Audie Murphy/American Cotton Museum. Once you find out what’s available, the options are literally endless.

Start by finding out where you are going and when you need to be there, then plan your route accordingly. This not only tells you how long it will take to get to your destination, but also which cities and towns you will pass through along the way. By knowing how much time will be spent on the road, you can adjust your departure and figure out how much time you have to stop at museums or historical spots along the way. Be sure to leave time to stop and take pictures! Next, consult travel guides, brochures, or the Internet to find out what historical sites might be along your chosen route. The Texas Travel Guide and books such as *Texas Off the Beaten Path* or *Why Stop?: A Guide to Texas Roadside Historical Markers* are great for this, as are the official websites for the aforementioned TV shows (which contain detailed episode guides). Don’t forget to search online to see if there is a local chamber of commerce, historical commission, or visitor’s bureau for the city you are visiting; they are often a great source of information about little-known historical sites.

If your trip will require an overnight stay, it is certainly advisable to research hotels online, but here’s a hint: make your reservation by phone with the actual hotel where you’ll be staying. Booking through Expedia or Hotels.com may seem cheaper and easier, but you’re usually dealing with a national booking office. By calling, you can ask questions and negotiate with someone who is actually on-site. If you need more than one room, you can request rooms with a

connecting door, or at least rooms that are side-by-side if that's not an option. This also allows you to ask about any possible discounts.

If a lengthy trip is out of the question, field trips closer to home are easier to work into the school schedule and are more economical. We live in East Texas and, while trips to the Alamo, the San Jacinto Monument, and the Sixth Floor Museum are all well and good, we can often work history into our curriculum by just taking a short drive.

We have taken day trips to local historical and educational sites such as the Killough Monument outside Mt. Selman, the American Freedom Museum in Bullard, Mission Tejas and the Caddo Mounds State Historic Site just outside of Alto, Millard's Crossing in Nacogdoches, and Camp Ford in Tyler. Slightly farther afield are Huntsville (Sam Houston Memorial Museum and the Steamboat House), Lufkin (Texas Forestry Museum), New London (London Museum and Tea Room), Kilgore (East Texas Oil Museum at Kilgore College), and historic Jefferson. Most of these trips have cost us nothing except the price of gasoline and lunch.

Tying the field trips into our school curriculum is an important part of deciding where to go and which places to visit; sometimes the trips are planned to go along with what is being studied. Our trip to the Dallas Holocaust Museum followed a reading of Corrie Ten Boom's *The Hiding Place* and Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl*. We have made multiple trips to the American Freedom Museum, depending on what period of American history we have just covered. By reviewing what you've studied already, it often makes the exhibits seem more relevant.

Although most of our field trips are historical in context, they can of course be incorporated into other school subjects; a trip to the museum also covers science, social studies, religion, music, or even math. Writing or journaling about the trip afterwards ties the whole thing into the English curriculum.

Speaking of journaling, here's another hint: take photos of any historical marker or signage that accompanies a place you visit, especially if you are taking pictures at a historical site that you may have trouble identifying by sight alone. With images from a high-resolution camera, you can zoom into the photos on your computer and re-read relevant information when you are journaling or writing about the trip later.

Of course, we try to balance cold, hard facts with something that interests the kids. Museums are great, but there are also concerts, plays, zoos, and other venues. What is most important is that we learn something, have fun doing it, and enjoy our time together.



After all, isn't that one of the main reasons we home school?

David Emprimo is the uncle of two home schooled nephews. He has worked at the Jacksonville Public Library for more than 20 years and is the author of The Newtonberg Stories series.



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T R A V E L I N G TEXAS

by Lynn Dean

Can you imagine living in Orlando, Florida, and never experiencing Disneyworld or EPCOT? Or living in Washington, DC, and never taking your children through the National Museum of American History or pointing out our national monuments as you drive by?

What a wasted opportunity that would be!

Yet I'd wager there are people who live in those places who have done just that. Maybe it's because they live there every day that local opportunities seem unimpressive.

Do you do the same?

No matter where you live in Texas, you're right smack dab in the middle of a field trip waiting to happen. That being the case—and since active participation is one of the most effective ways to learn anything—why would we choose to do all of our home schooling at home?

Whatever topic you're teaching, there's a field trip that can help make the lesson meaningful, memorable, and fun. Whatever you're studying, the question to ask is, "Where do they do that?" Ask that question while studying biology, and the answer may lead you to a zoo, a hospital, or a butcher shop. (In addition to displaying a wide selection of sea life, your butcher can provide hearts, tongues, livers, and brains to take home and dissect.) Ask that question while studying mathematics, and the answer may lead you to a financial planner, a tax accountant, or to NASA. (Did you know engineers calculated the trajectory of Apollo rockets on computers far less sophisticated than your cell phone?) Ask the question while studying government, and the answer may take you to a city council meeting or to a candidate's office. (Politics can get delightfully messy!) Since I'm a history buff, my natural tendency is to seek out the places where history happened or where history is being made.

What do you do once you get there? Open your eyes of wonder! Be amazed at all God has done. Teach your children to think "outside the box." Teach them to be curious—to observe and to ask good questions. Then watch them begin to expand what they're studying to encompass the big, exciting world around them. Field trips connect the theoretical with the real world.

While you're there, learn to see what God is doing in the here and now. Our faith is not limited to what goes on within the walls of a church building. We live out spiritual principles every day, even when we don't mean to, because what we believe naturally affects our choices—how we live and what we do. In a sense, we are all a part of making history—HIS story—every day. So as you help your children connect basic educational theories with real life events, point out the spiritual principles that are at work around them. If while studying biology you visit a sick friend in the hospital, don't miss the opportunity to point out to your children how very many ways there are to affect healing. How might their gifts and talents fit? If you take them with you to the tax accountant's office, don't miss the opportunity to discuss what the Bible says about taxes, honesty, and God's provision. Note, too, that a field trip does not have to be a pre-planned, large-group activity. There are teachable moments to be found on almost any excursion, even the ones close to home.

When you do plan to deliberately "travel Texas," where do you look for ideas? The possibilities are endless, and some are as close as your local phone book. Start by checking "Museums" in the yellow pages. Your home school support group might be a good source for local suggestions. The Internet can also be a home school parent's best friend. When I Google "Texas History Museums," the first three listings my eyes land on are the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum (in Austin), the Institute of Texan Cultures (in San Antonio), and a Wikipedia listing of museums in Texas organized by

region and city—not a bad place to start! Using “Texas Landmarks” as a search term yields an exciting array of points of interest all over the state. If your tastes tend toward outdoor adventures, check out “Texas’ State Parks” (<http://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/>). The Discover Texas blog (www.discovertexasonline.com/blog-news-around-texas/) also archives field trip ideas and sorts them by region for your convenience.

Another wonderful resource you’ll want to know about when you plan to travel Texas is the **Texas Historical Commission’s Texas Heritage Trails website** (www.thc.state.tx.us/preserve/projects-and-programs/texas-heritage-trails). Here you’ll find many resources! One series of brochures highlights each region’s heritage sites. Another provides itineraries for re-tracing the trail of Texas’ Independence, Civil War history, the Chisholm Trail, or Texas forts. Any of these would work wonderfully for a week’s vacation or a weekend outing. Click on the “Texas Heritage Travel Guide” for ideas and information on a wide variety of historical sites throughout the state, or click on “Texas Time Travel” to plan your own thematic adventure.

And don’t forget opportunities provided through our own Texas Home School Coalition. A field trip to the THSC Capitol Days in Austin (three events in the spring of every odd-numbered year, when the state legislature is in session) can provide the perfect blend of education and excitement.

Ideas for “where to go” abound! Because they’re nearby, most of your ideas will be affordable and easy to get to. Now you just have to find the time. Consider combining a field trip with a trip you were already planning to make. My father-in-law’s business included a good deal of travel. During school breaks, the family sometimes rode along with him to see the sights. A trip to see grandparents can be a good opportunity to visit interesting places in their area. Are you planning to attend a home school book fair this summer? If you’re going to the THSC Convention in Arlington (May 7-9) or in the Woodlands (July 23-25), think how close you are to the **Johnson Space Center, San Jacinto Monument, or the Fort Worth Stockyards!** The FEAST Home School Convention in San Antonio (June 4-6) will make it very easy for you this year with a family-friendly list of suggested side trips, some offering discounts with your convention ID.

I believe so strongly in the educational value of travel that if finances dictated I drop either textbooks or field trips, I’d drop textbooks without a second thought! Your children will probably forget most of the textbooks they read, but they will never forget traveling Texas with you.



Lynn Dean is the author of *Discover Texas*, a unit study-based Texas history curriculum for Christian schools (www.discovertexasonline.com). In addition to the *News Around Texas* blog, she also sponsors *FREE* weekly writing tutorials at www.aNOVELWritingSite.com. Lynn and her husband Tom home schooled for over 16 years, and led the Greater Waco Christian Home Educators support group for three years. Their two children are now adults who prove that home schooling was worth every effort!



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This month's online edition feature articles include:

"The Missing Link"

and

"What You Need To Know Before You Home School"



THE HEART OF TEXAS

by Lisa Pennington

As a true, blue Texan myself, it's surely important to me that my children learn as much as they can about this great state of ours. And I don't mean just the meaning of each of the six flags over Texas or the story of the Alamo. I want to make sure my girls learn how to do big Dallas hair and my boys figure out how to navigate Houston traffic with ease.



The real Texas lessons must be experienced.

I was born in Waco, and we lived in Austin and Dallas before we landed in Houston, where I spent most of my growing up years. To me it was normal to peek through a hole in the backyard fence and see longhorn cattle grazing in the field behind the house. We used to catch crawdads for fun in the bayou that ran along the front of our neighborhood. Remember those days? When you could let your kids wander the streets until the sun went down?

Yessirree . . . things have changed since I was a pup.

I want my kids to know the thrill of "Rodeo Day" every February and how to avoid rattlesnakes like every Texas schoolchild should. There's nothing like a summer afternoon of picking blackberries and pulling burs out of your pants hem. And who doesn't love a long inner tube cruise down the Guadalupe River to really relax?

Being a Texan is a source of pride. I was visiting an Amish family in Ohio a few years ago, and as we sat around their dinner table, I told the children they could ask me questions if they wanted. They pelted me with curiosities about what it's like to live in Texas. "Is it really so big?" and "Do you all own oil wells?"

(I wanted to say, "Why yes, little darlin', we sure do!")

I tried my best to give them the full picture. I told them about the great variety of terrain, the summer heat, how it can take more than 12 hours to drive from Amarillo to Brownsville (imagine how long that would take in a buggy!). I finally ended with this, "Kids, here's the thing . . . in Texas we love our state. We love the size, we love the way we talk, we even love the SHAPE of our state! Being from Texas is an honor!"

Texas is about a rich history of strong people who understand what it means to work hard and be united. The symbols of Texas—oil wells and cattle and a lone star—all make me feel like home. I even love a cowhide rug on the floor . . . to prop my boots on, of course!

Learning about Texas is not just about studying the battle for independence from Mexico or the presidents that hail from here. It's a sluggish drive up I-35, spending a full day in the 100-degree heat at Six Flags, eating at hole-in-the-wall restaurants with the best Tex-Mex you ever tasted, sitting under a blanket at a Friday night high school football game, counting pick-up trucks on the highway, armadillos, and knowing how to pronounce Pedernales.

I try to pour into my kids a love for this great state by embracing all of its treasures and flaws. Sure, we don't have the prettiest beaches in the world, but they sure do cool you off in the summertime. And Austin may be weird, but it's family, and family sticks together.

To really drive home the beauty of Texas, we take a trip at least once a year to the LBJ Ranch outside of Johnson City. There we can take nature walks, tour the Texas White House, and really get a sense of the strength of being a Texan. No matter what your politics, nothing will make you love Texas more than seeing it through the eyes of Lyndon Baines Johnson.

To all of my purebred Texan friends, I tip my hat. You're my people and we understand each other. And if you're new here, well, get yourself some boots and a pair of denim britches and mosey around this grand state and find out for yourself why we love it so.

And pick up some barbeque while you're at it!

Lisa and her husband James live on a family farm outside a little Texas town with their nine kids and a whole herd of animals, with which they have no idea what to do. It's an adventure they never expected, filled with moments of greatness and moments of wondering why no one can remember to put their shoes away. In addition to home schooling and doing laundry, Lisa runs an Etsy shop with her daughters and blogs about it all at ThePenningtonPoint.com.



BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION



Letter Writing to Friends and Family

by Izabella Boyd

There I was, 22 years old, packing to go abroad to Houston, Texas. It was the first time I was going to be away from home for an extended period of time, six months. I am from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and the plan was for me to learn English so I could add that skill to my résumé.

It was really exciting coming to Texas not only because it's in the United States but also it is home to one of my favorite TV shows, *Dallas*! I knew, of course, I wasn't coming to the same place where the TV show took place, but it didn't matter, it was in Texas so it was close enough! (Should I mention that at the time we had four channels on TV and three of them were boring? *Dallas* showed on the one channel we watched. No wonder I loved it, I was surrounded by a concrete jungle and Dallas was full of ample fields of grass with horses and Texas cowboys, with hats and all!)

The year was 1990. There were no calling cards or international calling plans. When I called Brazil, it was a big deal. We scheduled the day and time for the next call specifically to minimize wasted minutes listening to "she is not home," and when I talked to my family and friends it was more like sharing our personal headlines than actually having a conversation. Still, it was great to hear their voices! But it was just not enough—I was in Texas, and it really had people wearing cowboy hats walking around! I had to share more!

That's when I started writing letters. I would sit down at the end of the day and write down everything I saw—the feelings I felt, the questions I thought of; and I complemented it all with stickers that matched the experience. The stickers were sprinkled all over the letter; some of them even smelled good! If you were not from the United States you might not have appreciated the abundance of cute stickers there were here! You could match every emotion and activity and make your letter not only words, but visuals too! That was just not the case in Brazil, at least not back then.

My letters had between five and 30 handwritten pages. I would share with my mom all about my English lessons and the many different nationalities I met—not only in class but also everywhere I went! Texas is truly a welcoming place! The more I experienced, the more I learned; the more I learned, the more I changed; and the more I changed, the more I had to share. My mom would read my letters and on many occasions when we talked she would tell me she felt as if she were there with me—the Alamo, the River Walk, Galveston, etc. I was an international student, so my travels didn't go very far from Houston for economic reasons; but every corner I went, I registered in my letters the details about it with all my heart. When I closed that envelope, it was like I was hugging my mom. It was an emotional experience for me and for her. Sometimes I would cry when I wrote

the words "I miss you," or laugh when writing about my gaffes. Writing my experiences on this trip was more than just writing a report; I was truly sharing my life. I wrote the most to my mom, which I meant for her to share with my sister and the rest of the family, but also wrote to my childhood best friend whom I missed very much. Somehow we were able to add our "inside joke voices" to our letters through our word choices, and it felt so good to laugh!

The end of the six months was approaching fast! It felt even faster because by then I had met someone (a real Texan!) and I didn't want to part with him. In my letters I shared with my mom and my best friend how I felt, and how I really wanted to stay and "study English" a little longer. I wrote a letter to the Immigration Department along with the forms to extend my student visa. They accepted! (I didn't write to them that I was in love and wanted to study longer because of that! I just said I wanted to study longer and asked for permission—in case you were wondering.)

Here we are, 2015. To make a long story short, I have been married to my Texan for 22 years. Nowadays I can buy a \$5 phone card and talk to my mom for a good nine hours! There is really no "need" to write letters anymore, and I feel grateful that I can just pick up the phone and talk to my family in Brazil at a moment's notice. It's doesn't matter if I get the "she is not home" message; I can just call later and it won't cost me an arm and a leg. With that being said, a couple of years ago my mom

decided to scale down and moved to a smaller apartment. When she came to visit she brought me a folder that contained the letters I had written to her during those years when I first traveled to Texas. It's quite a thick folder because it also had the letters I wrote to my grandmother, who had passed away and they were among her belongings!

One by one I read the letters in which I had shared my heart and soul. There I found the feelings of discovery, adventure, novelty, and love just as I left them. It gave me the opportunity to recall places I had forgotten I visited and relive the feelings as I visited them. It was wonderful to share with my kids the importance of writing and creating motivation to learn the modality. Best of all, I was able to recall exactly how I felt when I first met my husband in a way that could never have been possible had I just made a phone call. I encourage you to write letters anytime you want to share something of personal value with a loved one. Your experience will be preserved for generations to come, along with your feelings and your true self.



Izabella Boyd was born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and came to the United States in 1990. She lives in Houston, Texas, and has been happily married to Michael Boyd for 22 years. They have two children, Christopher who is an 18-year-old freshman in college, and Michael who is 11 and home schooled.

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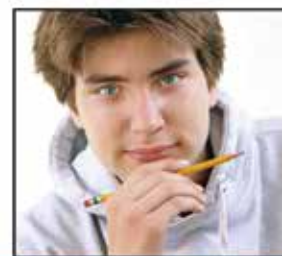
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Getting Personal with History

Using Primary Sources to Make History Come Alive

by Sherry McElhannon

Often, history can seem very distant and impersonal. History is the story of the people who have lived before us, so get to know the characters! Use primary sources to provide first-hand insight to a person's life and the time period. What did they do for fun? What did they eat? What did they care about? What were they afraid of? What were their dreams? Why did they do what they did? Reading personal documents such as journals and letters might feel like prying, but it can help your students develop a new and personal connection that will lead to deeper understanding. Additionally, once they come to care for or empathize with an historical figure, they will be inspired to find out more.

Personal documents are inherently biased, so be sure to help students place the documents in the context of the greater historical period by encouraging them to ask questions and challenge beliefs held by the authors. We have the advantage of seeing the broad scope of history, whereas the authors of these documents knew only what surrounded them. Present primary sources from different regions or time periods together to help students gain a more complete understanding. Read letters written by both Union and Confederate soldiers. How are they similar? How are they different? Could you tell by reading them which soldier wrote which letter? Choose a theme, such as equality or heroism, and trace it over time. What was the view of equality during the Civil War? during the women's suffrage movement? during World War II?

We are fortunate to have a wealth of history right here in our state, but if you are not able to take advantage of the many historical sites around Texas in person—photographs, maps, drawings, and first-hand descriptions can be examined to provide context and background information. In some cases, it is interesting to examine these items even if you are able to visit the site in person. It is fascinating to see what the Alamo looked like before it was in the middle of San Antonio! For history that took place abroad (outside of Texas), primary resources are invaluable in helping students visualize and connect with history before and during their study of it.

Before modern digitization practices and the Internet, examining primary sources involved a trek to a specific library or a museum, special permission from the curator, and special gloves (if you were even lucky enough to touch the documents!). Now, many of these resources are available at no cost from the comfort of your living room.



Sherry McElhannon is a home school graduate with a master's degree in library science. As a librarian, she is passionate about helping people discover new and exciting information. Find more resources on her website: literaryfusions.com.

Reading a person's journal or letter is usually a punishable offense, but in the case of historical Texans, it is actually encouraged!

The Library of Congress defines primary resources as "the raw materials of history—original documents and objects which were created at the time under study." Primary sources can include personal letters, journals, newspapers, books, manuscripts, maps, photographs, drawings, paintings, songs, and cartoons—and can be powerful tools to enhance your study of history by engaging your students, promoting critical thinking, and helping them construct meaningful background knowledge.

Resources

Texas State Library and Archives Commission: Online Exhibits

<https://www.tsl.texas.gov/exhibits/index.html>

The TSLAC is the first stop for Texas-specific primary sources. They have digitized and compiled many of their rare and unique items into online collections. Each collection provides high-resolution images and places the item or document in context with informational text and links for further study.

The Portal to Texas History

<http://texashistory.unt.edu/>

Hosted by the University of North Texas, the Portal to Texas History is an amazing resource for Texas history materials. In conjunction with a number of museums, organizations, societies, and archives around the state, they offer an expansive database that can be searched specifically or browsed by subject.

Resources 4 Educators

http://education.texashistory.unt.edu/lessons/psa/index_chronological.html

Additionally, the Portal offers incredible resources specifically for educators. The Primary Source Adventures are built around various

time periods in Texas history and include a full lesson plan, collections of primary sources, and activities. The Primary Source Sets are built around specific topics, such as Sam Houston, Cowboy Culture, or Baseball in Newspapers.

Texas Digital Newspaper Program

<http://texashistory.unt.edu/explore/collections/TDNP/>

Another feature of the Portal is the availability to search through digitized newspapers dating from 1829. Newspapers are a wonderful way to provide context and study contemporary thought.

The Library of Congress: Selected Resources by State

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/states/texas/index.html>

Many resources are available at the national level as well. The Library of Congress has collected a sample of Texas resources available on the Library's Web site, including maps, images, and mp3 files. Analysis guides and teacher guides for many types of primary resources are also available for free through the Library of Congress.



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TO SEE LIKE A CHILD

by Elizabeth Willis

"You have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children."

- Luke 10:21

At 7 a.m. on the first day of winter break, my son and I woke up to a cold, crisp morning. After a quick breakfast of warm oatmeal and hot cocoa, we decided to brave the wintry wind and spend some time outdoors at one of our favorite neighborhood parks. When we arrived, my son darted for the playground and we spent a good 30 minutes sliding, laughing, and trying to stay warm. Soon his adventurous spirit got the better of him and he began to wander toward a small, wooded walking trail. I followed and watched as he began to collect things off the ground and shove them into his tiny pockets. This was no surprise to me. The trash bin in my laundry room is full of his little pocket collections. Sometimes I'll miss a crayon or stick of gum, and then spend hours scrubbing and scraping at my dryer.

This is life with a boy!

By the end of the trail he was tired. We stopped at a bench to sit and rest. My son reached into his khaki pockets and pulled out a handful of leaves, sticks, rocks, and dirt. He knelt down and very carefully organized his collection on the rough pavement below. Excitedly, he began to chatter about his fascinating finds. I zoned out thinking about my big, important, grown-up plans for the day: what I was going to cook for supper that night, lesson plans for the new year, the big pile of dishes in the . . . In mid-thought, the Lord caught me off guard. He got my attention by suddenly directing my heart to carefully listen to what my child was saying. So I listened.

As my son spoke, I struggled a bit to see things from his child-like perspective. After all, these were just ordinary nuisances that most people spend time raking, sweeping, or shoveling out of the way. I desperately tried to see the value in his little "treasures."

Conviction gripped my heart. Revelation gripped my spirit.

I realized that through my own weathered eyes I had to strain to see the worth in these ordinary things, but through the vision of a child I was able to see the splendor and the beauty that each piece of my son's treasure contained. I began to envision the different seasons that the assortment of leaves had been through, the storms they had endured, and the quietness they experienced. As I viewed the row of twigs, a picture of winter tree silhouettes flashed in front of

my eyes, and that of a little girl's fairy house. I saw river water flowing over his pile of stones, and heard joyful noises as small children picked them up and skipped them across the surface. In the small sprinkling of dirt, I saw a barn swallow's story of long days spent building a mud nest in the eaves of an old rickety house.

Then this scripture came to mind:

At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure." (Luke 10:21)

How truly amazing it would be to see things entirely from a child's perspective! To really understand how children view the world around them, how they process new information, how they interpret the stories that are told to them, how frightening conflict really can be, and how trusting and loving and faithful they are. It would be incredible to see with purity, innocence, and wonder—to see the unlikely in something so ordinary; to see the potential in the impossible!

My prayer instantaneously changed from, "Lord, give me patience to get through this day," to "Lord, renew my mind and purify my heart! Make my vision untainted so that I can see the beauty in everything that surrounds me. I want to see the value in the neglected, the life in the barren, and the promise in the outcast."

As we ventured back home, I took my son's hand in mine. I noticed how brightly the sun was shining, how refreshing the morning air was; I even noticed an unfamiliar spring in my step. Oh, how wonderful to see through the eyes of a child!



Elizabeth Willis is a wife, mother of three children, and teacher. She recently graduated with a bachelor's degree in elementary education, and continues to pursue her passion as an educator. She grew up in a home school family, which explains not only her great interest in home education but in Christian education as a whole. One of her greatest desires is to make an impact on the way we educate our children.



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FOR CHILDREN
AND TEENS:



[illegible]

by Kim Priesmeyer

May 2015

to take some sort of stand on a topic and support it with logical reasons, examples, and details. For example, in history class he may have to defend a certain political strategy, and in a marketing class he may have to prove that one advertising campaign is better than another.

They'll need to know how to use online academic databases and sources.

Many college students today will never step foot inside their campus library. I feel nostalgic as I think back to hours spent researching in Bracken Library at Ball State, but it's a reality of the age in which we live. Students now retrieve sources online, and not just any online source. Most professors will require academic sources, like journal articles, and these are found via a university's online library databases. The good news is that public library systems have the same databases, so students can practice accessing them and getting used to academic articles before college. There is a bit of a learning curve when navigating the databases, so just "playing around" on them is useful. Also, academic articles can be very dense (and somewhat boring) reading, so becoming accustomed to this type of reading will avoid the shock of it down the road.

They'll need to know what plagiarism really is and how to avoid it.

Many think that plagiarism is copying another person's work or submitting another person's paper as his own. While this certainly happens, it is becoming very difficult for students to do this because of software programs like Turnitin that check a student's paper against a vast database. Most professors are using a resource like Turnitin, so blatant cheating of this nature has become nearly impossible. What's more common is what I call unintentional plagiarism. This occurs when students aren't experienced in using and citing sources, so they do it very poorly. They may not know what to cite from a source, how to cite it accurately, or how to integrate material well. Again, most professors will not teach these skills, but they will expect these skills to avoid plagiarism. Misusing a source is plagiarism too. Therefore, it's important to have some experience not only in finding sources, but also in using them. By the way, using sources well requires much critical thinking. Students must ask themselves questions like, "Where does this fit well?" and "How much of this quotation should I use?" Using and integrating sources well is really an art form.

They'll need to know how to write under pressure.

I hear often from students that they've never had any time constraints as writers. While many writing assignments in college will allow for several weeks of planning, drafting, and revising, there are also scenarios that require a student to write in a timed setting. One example is the essay exam. Many instructors will forego the traditional objective test for an essay exam because this form of assessment is considered more challenging and more revealing of what a student actually knows and thinks. Sometimes students will know the topic in advance, but topics may not be revealed until test day. Students are not only being tested on the content of the writing, but also are being tested on how well they can generate

and organize ideas . . . in say, an hour or two. To prepare for this type of assessment, students need practice before college so they feel more comfortable when the time comes. If they haven't had any exposure to writing under pressure, they tend to freeze up, become anxious, and doubt their abilities. So set a timer, and start writing!

Taking rigorous course work can go a long way to helping home school students succeed as writers in college classes. Dual enrollment programs, like Belhaven's High Scholars, can assist students in learning how to write well in a college setting while still in high school. My experience has been that home school students are very bright and eager learners, but even the best students need some specific skill building before college. Although most college professors are helpful and accommodating, they have high expectations about what writing skills students have mastered prior to college. Therefore, practicing the above skills can help students feel prepared and confident as they enter a college classroom.

Kim Priesmeyer is an associate professor of English based at Belhaven University's Houston campus. She has 25 years of teaching experience at both the high school and college levels. Her experience includes dual enrollment, advanced placement, international baccalaureate, and college-level composition and literature. She is currently working on a doctorate in educational leadership at Sam Houston State University, and she is the mother of two teenage daughters.



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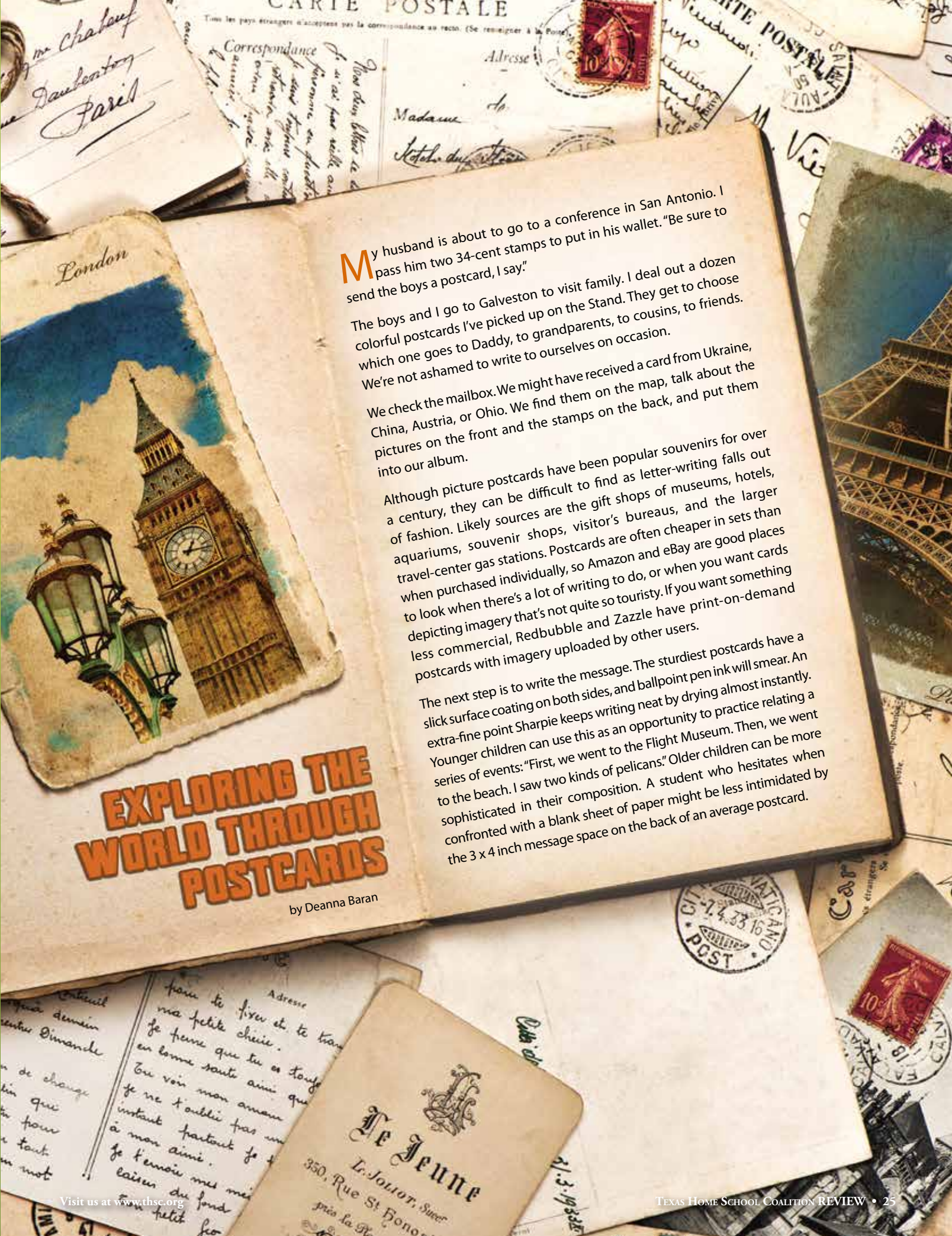
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EXPLORING THE WORLD THROUGH POSTCARDS

by Deanna Baran

My husband is about to go to a conference in San Antonio. I pass him two 34-cent stamps to put in his wallet. "Be sure to send the boys a postcard, I say."

The boys and I go to Galveston to visit family. I deal out a dozen colorful postcards I've picked up on the Stand. They get to choose which one goes to Daddy, to grandparents, to cousins, to friends. We're not ashamed to write to ourselves on occasion.

We check the mailbox. We might have received a card from Ukraine, China, Austria, or Ohio. We find them on the map, talk about the pictures on the front and the stamps on the back, and put them into our album.

Although picture postcards have been popular souvenirs for over a century, they can be difficult to find as letter-writing falls out of fashion. Likely sources are the gift shops of museums, hotels, aquariums, souvenir shops, visitor's bureaus, and the larger travel-center gas stations. Postcards are often cheaper in sets than when purchased individually, so Amazon and eBay are good places to look when there's a lot of writing to do, or when you want cards depicting imagery that's not quite so touristy. If you want something less commercial, Redbubble and Zazzle have print-on-demand postcards with imagery uploaded by other users.

The next step is to write the message. The sturdiest postcards have a slick surface coating on both sides, and ballpoint pen ink will smear. An extra-fine point Sharpie keeps writing neat by drying almost instantly. Younger children can use this as an opportunity to practice relating a series of events: "First, we went to the Flight Museum. Then, we went to the beach. I saw two kinds of pelicans." Older children can be more sophisticated in their composition. A student who hesitates when confronted with a blank sheet of paper might be less intimidated by the 3 x 4 inch message space on the back of an average postcard.





Artistry may be brought into play. Liven up your message with colorful Sharpies, or doodle a memorable moment. Try decorating with flat stickers or other embellishments that won't get caught in postal machinery. Washi tape, also known as decorative masking tape, is available at most office supply stores.

Once the postcard is ready, it must be stamped. Currently, a domestic 6 x 4.25 inch postcard or smaller may be mailed for 34 cents. Oversized postcards take a regular 49-cent stamp. International postcards may be mailed for \$1.15, regardless of country or continent. For variety, use vintage postage, which can frequently be bought online at or under face value.

Now it's time to mail the postcard. There's always the closest mailbox, but postmarks nowadays aren't the same as they used to be. A piece of mail can be sent from Wichita Falls, Fort Worth, or Dallas, and all receive the same blurry spray cancel that says "NORTH TEXAS PDC DALLAS TX." Take the time to visit the counter and request a hand cancellation that reflects your location: Loving, Paradise, Apple Springs, Egypt, Venus. The truly adventurous can apply for a Mailer's Postmark Permit from their local postmaster and, under very specific guidelines, hand-cancel their own mail.

For some people, just sending a few postcards a year to friends and family members is sufficient. When sent to oneself, or collected blank, they might serve as a memento of field trips—the San Jacinto Monument or the Alamo; NASA or Dinosaur Valley; Big Bend or Palo Duro.

Our family was discouraged that, after all our time and effort, not a single reciprocal message was received. We recommend Postcrossing.com, which facilitates individual postcard correspondence. There is also a forum for unofficial trades on the side. The cost of international postage adds up quickly, so you might want to limit your activity to the United States. If a student wants to practice his Russian, Chinese, or German by corresponding with native speakers, he can target users in those specific countries. If another student wants the continuity of a dedicated pen pal, she can find one. The number of postcards you will receive in return will only be limited by your energy and your budget.

If you wish to instill a love of correspondence in your children, consider postcards as a colorful, fun way to train them to communicate their thoughts, cultivate tidy handwriting, discover fascinating places—both here and abroad, and develop an eye for sending mail that is not merely functional, but is also something beautiful.



Deanna Baran is a former museum curator and youth librarian, who grew up in a home schooling family. She is passing her love of the handwritten note on to her two boys. See a sampling of their mailbox at deltiophile.blogspot.com.

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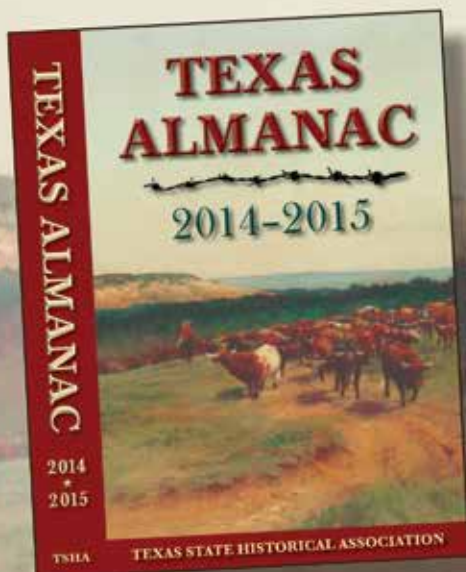
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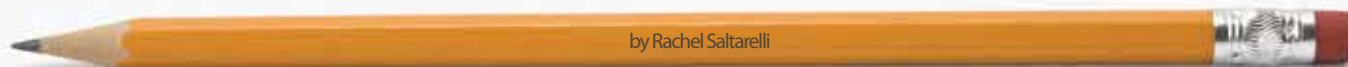
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Journaling the Journey



I called my kids to come back, but they scampered away to the old wooden slave quarters. We were on a family trip to the Barrington Living History Farm and the kids were having a grand time, flitting around between historical exhibits. Somewhere between the cotton field and the pig pen, I tried to catch my kids long enough to read to them from the sign about the slave quarters, "It says here this cabin was built in 1827 . . ." While clearly not listening to me, my son was amassing handfuls of spiky seeds that the gum trees had dropped. Meanwhile, my daughter was talking baby talk to a turkey and completely tuning me out. I persisted, "Listen guys, it says here that slaves' beds were made from corn husks." My son's response was to chase his sister through the blacksmith shop, pelting the spiky, make-shift weapons at her as they ran.

Road trips are great fun, but for the home school family, does school ever really stop? What home school mom can resist grabbing an opportunity to read to her kids a few facts from a historical marker? This is where journaling comes in: a great way to maximize the teachable moments while traveling. Having the children journal about the trip will help them get more out of the experience, educationally and otherwise. However, sometimes for kids (and even us home school moms), anything resembling academics on vacation can feel torturous.

So for the sake of a little extra motivation, here are . . .

Seven Reasons to Journal While Traveling

Journaling is Substantial Writing Practice.

Lots of practice is key in improving writing skills. Journaling is a fabulous writing assignment because you have your topic already provided for you. Lots of adventure and fun makes for lots to say on paper.

Journaling Preserves Memories.

Journaling is an excellent way to preserve your trip, especially the small but special details—Johnny's comment about how the statue of Davy Crockett looked just like Uncle Joe, and the time Suzy got picked as a volunteer at the Shamu Show. These journaling memories can be pulled out later to enjoy again and again. (Hint: they make for an especially fun New Year's Eve celebration, remembering the highlights from that year.)

Journaling is Emotional Therapy.

Writing is a great outlet for feelings and a healthy way to process life. Often, through journaling, we come away with a better, clearer

perspective. Even though road trips can be great fun, they can also be taxing and stressful, journaling to the rescue.

Journals are Great to Send to Relatives.

Journals can be included in letters to Grandma and Grandpa—either the letter itself can serve as the journal or it can be copied and included in the letter. It's a great way for grandparents to feel like they are kept in the know about the important details of their grandkids' lives.

Journals Make Valuable Resources for Later.

You never know when a journal will come in handy down the road. Details and stories from journals can be sources for blogs the kids might write, Christmas letters from the family, scholarship and college application essays, etc.

Journals Help Kids Focus.

Just knowing we will be writing about something later has a way of making us more in-tune to what is going on around us. When children know they will be journaling later, they may be on the lookout for things they might have otherwise overlooked. Taking notes along the way not only helps to jog the memory later, but also adds to a better focus through the entire experience.

Journaling Helps Retain Important Information.

It not only helps us remember educational facts like the Titanic sank in 1912, but it helps us retain lessons learned from experiences—those pioneers must have sacrificed greatly to build that corn crib before they even built their home.

Even with all this motivation, some kids may still need an extra boost to get started. To inspire these students here are . . .

Seven Ways to get Reluctant Writers Journaling

Write a Story.

Some students prefer to write fiction rather than nonfiction. Because journaling is nonfiction, they may see it as a bunch of boring facts strung together. Help them to see that they can write in story fashion, just as they would fiction, only keeping to the truth. They can even write in third person, describing Dad as if he is an unknown character in a mystery novel.

Use Numbers.

For example, kids can list the numbers 1-10 and come up with one

fact from the trip to correspond with each number: 1 waterfall spotted, 2 scoops in my Marble Slab cone, 3 deer ran across the freeway in front of our SUV, etc. Or list five things they did that day, expanding on each with as much detail as possible; or list seven things they learned at the zoo, etc.

Compose a Poem or Song.

Sometimes it is helpful to get writers started with a little, "Roses are red . . ." or "Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall . . ." Let them borrow the simple rhythm of a well-known poem and possibly even a few of the words if they wish. Older children may like using the tune and lyrics of a modern, popular song.

Journal Like a Journalist.

Take some of the intimidation out of writing by encouraging kids to just stick to the facts: who, where, when, why, what, and how. Beginning writers can even list the words who, where, etc. on their paper and then just fill in facts next to it.

Shamelessly Use Rewards.

If you are planning on getting the kids pizza or gifts from the souvenir shop, why not dangle these treats over their heads for after they get their journals done: "At the next rest stop, everyone who has one page of journaling done gets \$2 to spend on whatever you want."

Play up the Artistic Flair.

If your student enjoys expressing himself through art (photographing,

videoing, or drawing), have him write journals to accompany his artistic works. Depending on the writing level of the child, the journaling can range from simple captions to movie reviews.

Use sentence starters.

Have a few prewritten starter sentences ready for any kids who don't know where to start or what to say. Often, all it takes is getting the ball rolling, and the rest comes easily. Sentence starters can be simple like, "One thing from this trip I don't want to ever forget is _____," to more complex like, "I knew this trip would be different than the home routine, but I had no idea that _____." These starters just serve as first sentences, and the child should take it from there.


Wherever your travels may take you, in the midst of your fun, I hope you can lasso your kids long enough to teach them a fact or two along the way. Just remember to journal the journey.




Rachel Saltarelli is a home school mom of four children. Two of them have flown the coop, leaving two captive for their mother to chase down and teach a fact or two here or there. She is married to an incredibly patient man who has lovingly listened to her home school stories (some wonderful and some tales of woe) every night for 15 of their 23 years.




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Home schoolers are rich.

Because our family home schooled from birth to college, I often have the opportunity to advocate for it. People ask, "Why did you home school?" Sometimes I answer, "For a quality education." Other times I say, "Because it's an efficient and effective way to teach several children at one time," or, "It gave us the opportunity to maximize our children's strengths and work on their weaknesses." My favorite answer though, is, "It's a wonderfully rich lifestyle."

Have you ever thought about how rich you are if you're able to homeschool your children?

Looking back over 17+ years of home schooling, I can't begin to recount the awesome, exciting, one-of-a-kind experiences we had simply because we chose to educate our children at home. The trip to Washington, DC, and the special VIP tour of the White House; the chance to fly in a Cessna over our city; the hundreds of play dates with friends who weren't locked into a traditional school day; the poetry recitals in the garden of the Governor's Mansion; the chance to lobby for legislation that impacted our state; the tour of a gold mine; the chance to watch Loggerhead turtle babies excavated from a nest and released to the sea; the hours spent reading great books; the Feast of Purim play and Passover Seder; camping trips; tours of courtrooms, jail cells, nature centers, historical sites, rock

quarries, doughnut shops, forests and farms; teaching my children to read and to memorize Scripture; learning to crab from a dock on Hunting Island; petting a snake, a possum, a llama, a camel, and a Red-tailed hawk; and walks on the beach, the mountains, the cities, and little towns.

I could go on and on because these experiences span almost two decades. Between every one of these mountain top experiences of home schooling were many days of multiplication tables, spelling lessons, and just plain hard work. We spent the majority of our time doing school in the traditional way, but oh, the joy we experienced when one of those incredible learning adventures just happened.

Could we have had these experiences if we hadn't home schooled? Maybe, but I don't think so. I think we would have been so caught up in the traditional system of doing school that we wouldn't have been free to do school as only home schoolers can. There's no doubt about it, home schoolers are RICH.

Educating a child is a great privilege.

I recently had the opportunity to care for Seth, a friend's 5-year-old son, while his little brother was in the hospital. I work part-time as a dental hygienist, and just like it's good for me to sit in the dental chair every now and then to remind myself of how it feels to be a dental patient, caring for this kindergartener was a wonderful reminder of how it feels to parent a preschooler.

Parents of preschoolers, my hat is off to you. How quickly I had forgotten some of the interesting characteristics of five-year-olds: boundless energy, insatiable curiosity, and an uncanny ability to make a mess with everything they touch. Not to mention not sleeping very well at night (them and you), announcing loudly every time they have to go to the bathroom (even in church), and an irrational fear of vegetables.

I had forgotten one universal quality that became apparent soon after Seth's arrival into our household. I remembered that 5-year-olds don't know how to think silently. They speak aloud every thought that occurs to them. Since Seth didn't come from a Christian home, many of his thoughts were about our practices as Christians. Why do you close your eyes when you pray? Why do you say, Amen? Why do you thank God for food when we get it from the grocery store? What's a Bible? These were all questions my own children had asked, but somehow Seth's questions were especially exciting, because I realized I was watching him begin to understand that there was a God in Heaven who cared about him and his family.

If you are a parent of a young child, take heart. With each diaper you change and each runny nose you wipe, every mess you clean and every Lego block you step on, you are earning the right to answer his questions. You are the privileged one who gets to teach him to fold his little hands to pray or watch while he drops nickels and quarters into the offering plate each Sunday. You are there to hear him sing "God can do anything!" and whisper his prayers at bedtime.

These moments are worth every sacrifice you make. Not every child has a parent like you. Not every child knows before he can speak that Jesus loves him. Not every child knows that God hears and answers prayers. Not every child knows her mommy and daddy love God. Not every child knows what you know, and it is your privilege to teach them.

Home schooling can be harmful to your marriage.

The home schooling lifestyle lends itself to a child-centered home. For the majority of the day, moms—usually the primary teachers, focus on the academic, social, and spiritual needs of their children. When their husbands come home, it's hard to shift our focus. In many homes, by the time Dad arrives, all that remains of his wife's time, energy, and attention are the leftovers.

We've all heard the adage, "The squeaky wheel gets the grease." Our children learn to squeak, and we immediately jump to meet their needs. Although we see this immediate response as part of what makes us good moms, it can backfire on us and create selfish, self-centered children. It can also cause us to neglect our husbands.

One of the best tools my husband and I implemented to ensure our marriage stayed strong is what one parenting coach called "Together Time." As soon as your husband comes home from work, this man recommends, stop what you're doing and have a 20-minute conversation on the couch. This regular appointment helps your husband feel honored by your attention, gives you a chance to reconnect and fill each other in on the day's events, and demonstrates to your children that Mommy and Daddy love each other and want to spend time together.

Before you implement Together Time, it's important to sit down with the children and explain the new routine. Tell them that unless the house is on fire or someone is bleeding, they're not allowed to interrupt you until the timer goes off. Then set the timer. While your Together Time may be occasionally interrupted at first, even toddlers can play quietly on the floor beside you or in their rooms with another sibling if you train them properly.

Be warned that your children will test the resolve of your new routine. Be firm as you teach them to respect this time with your husband by deferring any and all questions, demands, and requests with, "Mommy and Daddy are having Together Time right now. I'll be glad to help you when the timer goes off." You'll be surprised at how quickly they come to respect Together Time. Seeing their parents put a premium on together time fosters an environment of emotional security that children need and love.

I remember a day when I was particularly grumpy. As soon as my husband walked through the door, my eldest daughter took me by the hand and said, "Come sit down, Mom. Dad's home now, and I think you need some Together Time." Even at her young age, she recognized that the time I spent conversing with her dad each day was restorative and enjoyable.

Home schooling will be the hardest thing you've ever done.

I thought my college Head and Neck Anatomy class was hard. I thought studying for and passing the National Board for Dental Hygiene, all seven hours of it, was hard, too. I thought working full time and volunteering at church was hard. I thought childbirth was hard—and colic, months of colic. It was hard to surrender my child for surgery at 9-months-old. So was praying for her salvation since before she was born. Acting in our church Christmas play front of 13,000 people was hard. Staying married during rough times is always hard. In comparison though, home schooling remains the hardest thing I've ever done.

And if I had the choice to make again, I'd do it in a heartbeat.

Despite the lonely days when I thought if I didn't see another human being over three feet tall I would scream. Despite the 547 days of phonics instruction before one of my daughters could read a four-word sentence without pausing. Despite the buckets of tears we shed over Chemistry, Algebra, and Geometry. Despite the days when fear would grip me as I wondered if I might be single-handedly sabotaging my children's entire academic future. Despite the times when I dealt with the same sin for the 100th time, and then had to correct it in my children as well.

Home schooling will also be the most rewarding thing you've ever done.

Looking back on 17 years of home schooling, I'd do it all again for the joy that accompanied all the years of hard work—the joy of hearing my daughter pray to receive Christ during morning devotions and the pleasure of watching her read all the way through Go Dog Go, knowing I had taught her to read. I'd do it again for the character training I received through the years and for the opportunity to trust God when I knew that apart from his work in our homeschool, it would not succeed.

I'd do it again for the privilege of watching God work in each daughter's life as she came to understand the world through a Christian perspective. I'd do it again for the precious gift of time.

. . . never enough, but so much more than many of my friends had with their children during their growing up years. I'd do it again for every field trip vacation we took to fascinating places on a shoe-string budget. I'd do it again for the chance to pray and ask God for all we needed and watch him provide bountifully. I'd do it again so I could own part of their high school graduations and their college acceptances. I would do it again for the satisfaction of knowing I had obeyed what God told me to do.

As you begin your homeschool year, I pray God's richest blessings on you. ~Lori

Lori Hatcher is a 17-year home schooling veteran with two young adult daughters. She is the author of the devotional book



Joy in the Journey—Encouragement for home schooling Moms (Amazon.com). Powered by faith and a well-stocked stash of chocolate, she can be found blogging about the marvelous and the mundane at Hungry for God . . . Starving for Time (www.lorihatcher.com), and as a featured blogger for Crosswalk.com's home school page.

Resources for Helping Your Marriage Survive Home Schooling

5-Minute Couples' Devotional:

Moments Together for Couples

by Dennis and Barbara Rainey

Night Light

by Dr. James and Shirley Dobson

Together Time conversation starter book:

101 Conversation Starters for Couples

Marriage book and Bible Study:

The Marriage You've Always Wanted

by Dr. Gary Chapman (book)

The Marriage You've Always Wanted

by Dr. Gary Chapman

(Bible Study) ideal for couples or small groups)

Marriage Enrichment Seminars:

Weekend to Remember, weekend seminar

The Marriage You've Always Wanted, one-day seminar

This article originally appeared in The Mother's Heart magazine and is used with permission.



THE MISSING LINK

by Kelly Baldwin

"I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done." -Psalm 78: 2-4 (KJV)

The generational chain is welded together with the hard metal of obedience: obedience to God, where parents open their mouths to teach their children the wonderful works of God's divine hand in history. God *"commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children."* -Psalm 78: 5-6 (KJV)

The generational chain holds the heavy weight of our historical treasure, and it rusts easily in the hands of sinful man. In a single generation a link can break, resulting in the loss of the treasure for future generations.

Psalm 78 is clear that fathers are to take the position of family historian. By teaching his children the mighty deeds of God, the father is keeping the chain, in which he himself is a link, well oiled and free from rust and breakage, ensuring that his children's links and the links of his children's children in the generational chain are secured to the links of the past.

Fathers of our time have an additional job to that of historian. When, in this age, our history has been all but lost and the generational chain broken and twisted, he has the additional duty of becoming a generational blacksmith. With his hammer of diligence, he reforms the links on his anvil of truth. Blackened with the soot of revisionist history and sweaty from the heat of hard study, he begins to weld the broken links back onto the generational chain of history. With the bellows blowing and the forge heating, his red-hot passion to obey God's command emerges. In the course of time he reconnects the broken chain of the past to the links of the present and future generations by teaching his children.

The scripture in Psalm 78 goes on to tell us the consequences of the broken generational chain: spirits that are not steadfast in the Lord, rebelliousness, refusal to walk in God's law, and cowardice—all of which are a description of the postmodern generation we have inherited in our day in America. Postmodern man, in rebellion against God and his forefathers, wants to cast off his generational chain, thinking it will somehow free him. The obedient home schooling father understands that the chain keeps him moored to the truth. It anchors him to his identity.

While this postmodern, secular humanistic age might refer to the home schooling father as the barbaric, chest-beating, half-witted "missing link" in the chain of evolution, scripture indicates he has the more dignified identity of the missing link to mending the broken chain of past generations to reunite them to ourselves and to our children, and to our children's children.



Kelly lives in Amarillo, Texas, with his wife Kami and his five children: Marian, Sarah, Ruth, Luke, and Jesse. When not at his day job, Kelly is working hard at his real job: home schooling his five children. He enjoys extended vacations from his day job while thoroughly enjoying his real job of teaching his children.



All US states have at least one official state flower,
usually chosen because of its significance to that state.

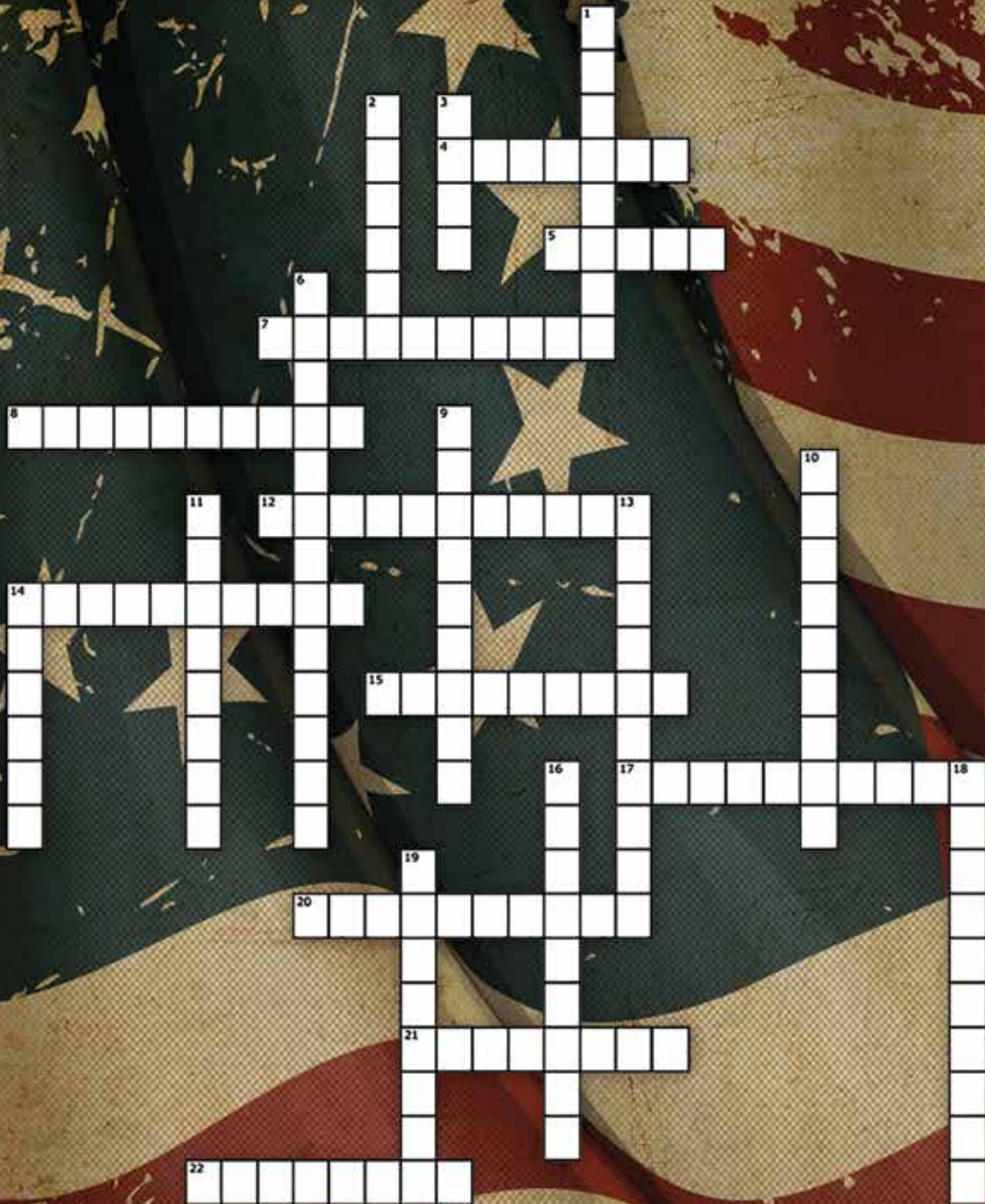
Match the State to its Flower!

- | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|-------------------|
| Alaska | ✿ | ✿ | violet |
| Connecticut | ✿ | ✿ | goldenrod |
| Florida | ✿ | ✿ | Indian paintbrush |
| Louisiana | ✿ | ✿ | rose |
| Illinois | ✿ | ✿ | mountain laurel |
| Kansas | ✿ | ✿ | bluebonnet |
| Kentucky | ✿ | ✿ | magnolia |
| Maryland | ✿ | ✿ | black-eyed susan |
| New York | ✿ | ✿ | iris |
| North Carolina | ✿ | ✿ | red clover |
| Oklahoma | ✿ | ✿ | orange blossom |
| Tennessee | ✿ | ✿ | mistletoe |
| Texas | ✿ | ✿ | forget me not |
| Vermont | ✿ | ✿ | dogwood |
| Wyoming | ✿ | ✿ | sunflower |

Key: 1-m, 2-e, 3-k, 4-g, 5-a, 6-o, 7-b, 8-h, 9-d, 10-n, 11-l, 12-l, 13-f, 14-j, 15-c

The American Revolution

Go to THSC.org/crossword to check your answers.



ACROSS

- 4. First man shot in the Boston Massacre
- 5. Wrote "Common Sense"
- 7. British General who surrendered at Yorktown
- 8. The act of commandeering housing for British
- 12. Where 2500 Americans died during winter camp
- 14. The battle fought at Breed's Hill
- 15. The fort Benedict Arnold was in command of when caught as a traitor
- 17. Wrote "Paul Revere's Ride" in 1860
- 20. A violent change in government
- 21. Number of original colonies
- 22. German mercenaries fighting for the British

DOWN

- 1. What the British soldiers were known as
- 2. Was known as the "Swamp Fox"
- 3. "I only regret that I have but one life to give for my country"
- 6. "I have not yet begun to fight."
- 9. Colonists who remained in support of the crown
- 10. American colonists ready for instant military service
- 11. The first American Victory, The Battle of ____
- 13. Leader of the Green Mountain Boys
- 14. Where Colonists threw tea overboard
- 16. Where the first shots rang out
- 18. Commander and Chief of the American military
- 19. The final major battle of the Revolutionary War

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Photographic Memories

by Tina White



Sleet hit the windshield as my husband pumped gas in Harper, Texas. The friendly man across the gas pump pushed up his cowboy hat and struck up a conversation with my husband. He offered his hand and his name. My husband reciprocated. Their topic quickly turned to the weather. The ice collecting on every solid surface had not been in the forecast. We were not concerned because we were headed home as soon as our tank was full.

We had filled our tank in other ways the past several days. We had arrived in Fredericksburg for a vacation with hopes of seeing bluebonnets. What better way to study our state flower than up close where they grow wild in pastures that resemble water. The spires of blue and white flowers wait for the next carload of passengers to pile out and take pictures.

Because of the history of the town, which I discussed with the children beforehand, we had decided to only eat German food during our vacation adventure. My husband found himself so captivated that he ordered German chocolate cake for dessert. The children and I had to remind him it had coconut, of which he had a distinct dislike. There was excitement for all four of us. The kids had their journals to write and sketch in and I had my camera. This was the first vacation that both of my children were old enough to have lasting, vivid memories.

My daughter fell in love that trip. The object of her affection was a grey-haired man who appeared to never comb the hairs that stuck straight up. She discovered Albert Einstein at the National Museum of the Pacific War on Main Street in the quaint little town that has not forgotten its heritage. My son's eyes grew in diameter as he studied the submarine that was showcased in the same museum. Reading the dry, rote facts from a history textbook, no matter how good the curriculum is, cannot compare to wandering through a museum for four hours, full of historical pictures, artifacts, and objects. All four of us found something to our liking. The museum took hours to walk through simply because we consumed every bit of information available to us through this top-notch museum. There were off-site locations to visit as well, but because we were so wrapped up in the main building, we decided they would be there to visit next time.

We learned about Sunday Houses at the Pioneer Museum and what general mercantiles looked like. We were immersed in history and stepped back in time. Not a book was opened. The learning that ensued could not compare to any bound page that we could read.

We devoured the history presented to us orally. All of our senses were immersed. We took pictures upon pictures. At night, after the daily adventures, the children wrote in their journals documenting the day's activities.

We continued our step back in time when we visited the Sauer-Beckmann Living History Farm in Stonewall. We explored the blacksmith shop and animal pens; and the children made Easter cards of the period. That was the last thing we did on our trip before we left for the gas station. The weather was brisker and our light jackets tried to stand up to the cooler temperatures and freezing rain, to no avail. Just the previous day, I snapped photos of the children at an herb farm decorated with a myriad of bluebonnets along walking trails in short sleeves and shorts in the warmth of sunshine. A teepee was in the background of one photo. As the two crouched and teetered to not compact or step on any flowers, I centered a birdhouse between the two. This has become a treasured photo that helps preserve the memories and adventures enjoyed.

Along with being rich in history, the area is rich in scenery as well. The day before we left, we drove and enjoyed seeing their local countryside. Back in town, we happened upon a chocolate shop. We enjoyed a few tasty treats as we walked along and saved the rest for later. That evening, we ate small pieces of confections with coffee encapsulated in sugar and covered in sweet Belgian chocolate. The liquid was a flavor we had never experienced before. It was a mesquite-roasted coffee. Our last morning there, we went on a trek in search of this new taste that had piqued our interest. The children were not coffee drinkers, but the flavor was so different we wanted to know more. We ended up buying some of the little roasted beans at a bed and breakfast after a quick phone call by the purveyor of the chocolate shop. Green coffee beans were roasted in the open air over mesquite wood to give the breakfast beverage its distinct flavor. We spoke directly to the man who roasted the beans, and he was full of information.

Vacationing as home schoolers is a bit different, as learning is a lifestyle. Somehow, you don't have to plan to learn, it just happens. I could not have known we would learn or come into contact with the amazing things that we saw those five days. We visited a butterfly garden. Through the lens of the camera, one of my children snapped a picture that appeared to have a butterfly landing on my nose. It was just one of the surprises that awaited us when we returned home and gathered around the computer monitor to view the different pictures



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that were taken by all of us. There were several gems that will always be little reminders of our adventure. The children were delighted to see the birdhouse between them as they posed among the bluebonnets. That picture still remains framed and resting on our mantle.

As we prepared to leave the gas station, bid goodbye to the Hill Country, and return home, the friendly motorist who had struck up the conversation with my husband returned. He looked like he was in a rush as he parked his car and said how glad he was that we were still there. Because he knew where we were headed, he asked his brother about the road conditions. His brother was a state trooper. He gave us a weather update. The children were settled in their seats, journals and reading books nearby. We three watched curiously as the two men talked. My husband and the kind stranger walked over to the truck. The road conditions were bleak and road closures were inevitable. We would not be able to complete our journey home as we had planned. The considerate stranger offered his home to us. Even though his youngest child was sick, he and his wife had quickly discussed taking us in for the night. We were amazed by their generosity, but we politely declined the invitation.

We waved our goodbyes after we gave our heart-felt thanks, then turned back to the town we had just left. We searched for a hotel room. They were all booked; it was a holiday weekend after all. We knew we would have to travel to another town, but our hearts were still warmed by how a complete stranger had offered to help us. Twenty miles away we found

a hotel. By the time we had toted our luggage into the new hotel, sleet was coming down prolifically. We were thankful we were safe and warm. The children swam in the indoor, heated pool as ice covered the overhead skylight. We recounted the kindness of the stranger and likened it to several things we had learned in the Bible. Not only were our palates broadened and our history knowledge filled, but we had learned that there were strangers ready and willing to help out a family they did not even know.

We fondly look back on that trip 10 years later. The photograph of my son and daughter surrounded by our state flower, with a beautiful birdhouse serving as the backdrop is more than a picture. It is a memory in picture form, a constant reminder of the wonderful journey on which we embarked and learned so much more than I could have ever planned.



Tina White is a native Texan who married her high school sweetheart Richard. She home schooled their two children, Maigen and Zackary, from preschool to high school graduation. After her 17-year home school journey ended, she returned to college to complete her English and history degrees. She is a freelance writer in her spare time. Tina loves to travel to the Hill Country and other parts of Texas—trying new cuisines and reading, blogging, writing, and spending time with her family.



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QUESTIONS EVERY HOME SCHOOLING MOM



WISHES YOU WOULD ASK

by Debbie Slaughter

If you've been home schooling for any length of time, or even if it has simply been a consideration you've spoken out loud, you've no doubt been questioned about your sanity or your child's future in society.

Let me put this plainly . . . you've been asked about socialization!

Not only have you faced the socialization question but you've probably had the math question, the evolution discussion, the pajama question, as well as the prom, driver ed, and college entrance questions! And, that's all in one conversation!

One of the things I've learned over my 17 years of teaching my children at home is that, to non-home schoolers, no question is off limits! No matter how long you've home schooled or how much proof you have that your kids are not buffoons, people still ask the same things. Recently I met a woman who seemed genuinely curious about the fact that we home school.

She didn't start off with the usual line of questioning, so I thought we were going down a good path, until about the third question. She threw out the same old line about socialization.

"So, do you teach math? Yes, with lots of help from the computer.
And, do y'all do the other subjects like history? Yep. We do it all.
So, I guess he goes to church to get socialization, right?"

Uhhhh . . . (deep breath) . . . "Well, yes, we go to church, have friends, family, co-op, music ministry, and many other things we do."

And, there you have it! Just when you think society is finally showing signs of "getting it," you get the dreaded socialization question again. I guess I should just give up hope that one day someone will actually ask legitimate questions that give true insight into what we do. It seems that we are just destined to validate our social capabilities—again and again.

So, just for the sake of daydreaming about the ideal conversation between a non-home schooling mom and one who teaches her kids at home, I thought I would compile a list of legitimate questions that might actually ease the tension between the two and give the non-home schooler a peek into the real life world of home education.

Here it goes . . .

#1: SO, WHAT LED YOU TO HOME SCHOOL?

(Shows an interest in how someone else thinks.)

#2: HOW DID YOU KNOW WHERE TO START?

(Gives the home schooling mom a chance to qualify her research skills.)

#3: HOW DO YOU CHOOSE YOUR CURRICULUM?

(Gives them a picture of the time and thought process that go into choosing the tools we use.)

#4: SO, WHAT'S A TYPICAL DAY LIKE AT YOUR HOUSE?

(Gives the non-home schooling mom a realistic view of all the hats one must wear, while taking on the educating of a child.)

#5: HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHAT TO TEACH?

(Gives a glimpse into what's important to their family.)

#6: DO YOU GET TO SET YOUR OWN HOURS?

(Shows that there could be perks to this gig!)

#7: IS IT HARD TRYING TO BALANCE TEACHING AND OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES?

(Gives a realistic view of balancing all aspects of being a mom and wife and teacher.)

#8: WHAT'S THE GREATEST BENEFIT TO HOME SCHOOLING?

(Great question that opens up a chance for the home schooling mom to really share her heart about what she does.)

#9: DO YOU EVER FEEL LIKE GIVING UP?

(Acknowledges that you're human and this job is hard.)

#10: DO YOU RECOMMEND CO-OPS AND SUPPORT GROUPS?

(Gives a look into the benefit of group settings versus going solo, as far as academics are concerned.)

Yes, a few of these have actually been asked before, but some, such as numbers 7, 8, and 9, are never asked; and yet, those are the questions that will really get to the heart of that mom and her home. I mean, let's think about it . . . isn't that what moms at home often want to know from moms who work? Sure it is!

We want to know how she "does it all," don't we? We want to know if going to work is worth the choices she's made. We want to know if she ever feels the desire to quit and stay at home. We ask those things, because we genuinely want to know her heart and how she balances her life and work.

We home schooling moms are no different! This is our work! It's our life! It's what we pour our heart into every single day; the only difference is that we do it from home.

I mean, think about this . . .

Don't we "do it all"? Don't we sacrifice? Don't we feel like quitting because it's hard work? So, why do we get the degrading questions, such as, "Hey! Do you ever take your kids out in public?"

What kind of question is that really?

You see, what we do is legitimate. What we do is real and hard and complicated and sacrificial and yes, some days you feel like totally giving up and sending your kids to the bus stop. But, we don't. We hang in there because what we do has value and worth, and it's making a difference in our children's lives and in ours. We hang in

there because what we do is fulfilling and hard, but amazing and irreplaceable.

All we want is for someone to recognize that what we do is legitimate and valuable and costly and admirable and to ask us dignified questions that allow us to share our heart.

So, from one mom to another, can we please just start asking questions that allow the other person to feel good about the choices she has made?

That way, in the end, no matter where our kids go to school, we can cheer each other on and know that we did the hard job of asking heartfelt questions, and we feel confident that the other mom is doing her very best.

After all, isn't that what raising kids is all about?



Debbie Slaughter is a wife, mom, mother-in-law, and soon to be Grammy! She has home schooled for 17 years, with one graduated and one to go. She spends her days writing, blogging, organizing, teaching, driving her 15-year-old here and there, and counting down the days to when she won't ever have to say the word "algebra" again! Debbie has been published in The Old Schoolhouse Magazine, Lifeway's Journey for Women, as well as THSC's E-Newsletter and the THSC REVIEW. www.a-million-skies.com

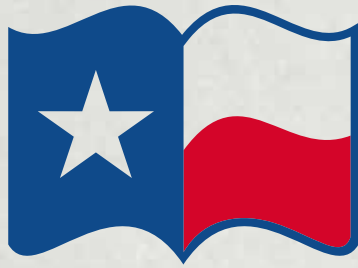
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T E X A S
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Keeping Texas Families Free

News and Notes

During the past quarter THSC staff has continued to work tirelessly, protecting home schooling and parental rights, advocating for members, and Keeping Texas Families Free.

THSC Watchmen at Work in Austin

The Watchmen are hard at work in Austin. They are constantly making and building relationships with offices at the Capitol in order to help *Keep Texas Families Free*. The Watchmen have sorted through and analyzed thousands of bills in order to make sure that parental rights and home school rights are not compromised. This is accomplished by working with offices on bills that THSC has concerns with and altering them to protect Texas families. In some cases this would require that some of the Watchmen testify in committee against bills that they believe to be harmful and detrimental to home school or parental rights.

The Watchmen have also begun work on a bill that would make it more fair for non-traditional students like home schoolers to be admitted to state colleges. Currently some colleges discriminate against home school students in the admission process by requiring them to meet higher standardized test scores than their public school peers. THSC's bill, filed by Senator Charles Perry, would create equality opportunity in the admission process by requiring colleges to stop discriminating against non-traditional students through different testing requirements.

Currently some colleges discriminate against home school students in the admission process by requiring them to meet higher standardized test scores than their public school peers.

The "Tim Tebow" Bill

The progress on the Tim Tebow Bill is moving right along. An online petition on Change.org was started in January and has thousands of registered supporters. In addition to this, there have been countless calls made to many of the offices in Austin, most of which are on the education committees in the House and Senate. Furthermore, the Tim Tebow Bill has received substantial support from legislators. The bill has many co-authors signed on to it. THSC and the Watchmen are optimistic about the bill this session.

Additionally, following the February Capitol Days event, where home school families lobbied for the Tim Tebow Bill, home school families gathered in March for the second Capitol Days Event where they lobbied for the Texas Parental Rights Restoration Act. The response was positive for the most part from legislators and the petition on Change.org for this bill has hundreds of supporters and the number is rising rapidly.

THSC, the Tutts, Parental Rights, and the Texas Supreme Court

For almost a year and a half now, the Tutt family has endured a legal battle with CPS after their children were removed illegally in November 2013. In January, the Tutts received more bad news as CPS further complicated and delayed the reuniting of their precious family.

After CPS requested more time to seek further evidence (as if more than a year isn't enough), the jury trial was postponed. The Tutts' attorney had prepared to fight for the return of the now six-year-old sister of two of the Tutts' adopted children who have already been reunited with the family. This young girl, the last to be returned to

the family, spent two years with the Tutts before the tragic taking of the children. She continues to insist to her foster parents that her last name is Tutt, and is punished by them for doing so.

Cecilia Wood, the Austin attorney retained by THSC for the Tutts, has filed a Writ of Mandamus with the Texas Supreme Court after the Dallas Court of Appeals rejected it for a second time. THSC is working with legal counsel to file an Amicus Brief in support of the Tutts to the Texas Supreme Court as well.

The Tutts' attorney had prepared to fight for the return of the now six-year-old sister of two of the Tutts' adopted children who have already been reunited with the family.

THSC Supports Member Denied VA Benefits

THSC quickly responded when Veterans Affairs (VA) denied a home school family benefits, even though their high school student was still studying as a home schooler. The VA wrongly claimed the daughter ineligible because she was not enrolled in school and was over 18 years of age. After the member family, trying to fulfill formal requirements, wrote a statement on the home school family's letterhead to officially explain their daughter's education, they were still denied benefits.

At that point, the family had no other "official" options to confirm their daughter's attendance so they contacted THSC. THSC President Tim Lambert wrote a letter to the agency to satisfy the request for an "official" statement verifying the daughter's enrollment.

In the letter, the issue was further clarified as THSC explained to the VA that students in Texas currently under home school instruction are considered in attendance for school even after their eighteenth birthday. It is unfortunate that organizations providing important benefits are unaware of the policies governing Texas families. However, THSC exists to provide assistance to families in these exact situations.

THSC Supports End of Discrimination Against Home School Graduates

Texas families want equal opportunities for their children; however, many home school families are discovering obstacles for their graduates. Texas Home School Coalition (THSC) serves Texas families by providing home school families with resources and legal

protection during the home schooling years; however, its interest in helping home school students goes even further than high school graduation. Currently, the THSC Watchmen are working with Senator Charles Perry on passing a piece of legislation that would help non-traditional students, especially home school students, receive equal opportunities of acceptance into college.

As it stands right now, some state colleges do not treat non-traditional students as fairly as those coming from accredited high schools. Oftentimes, when these students apply for acceptance to these schools, they are automatically assigned a default class rank under the 50th percentile merely because they graduated from an unaccredited, non-traditional school, including a home school. Furthermore, these same non-traditional students are sometimes required to score higher than average on standardized testing to even be considered for admission.

Senate Bill 1543 solves this problem, helping to end discrimination against home school students and other non-traditional students. This bill would prohibit state colleges from assigning students a default class rank under the 50th percentile mark. In addition, it would not allow state colleges to require these same non-traditional students to score higher than average for admission into the school. THSC believes in equal opportunities for home school students and Texas families, and will continue to push legislation like Senate Bill 1543 in order to make these equal opportunities more accessible.



ADVERTISER INDEX

A.C.E. (Accelerated Christian Education).....41	FEAST.....8	Rosetta Stone.....9
Alpha Omega Institute.....27	Generations With Vision.....24	Seton Testing Services.....18
Alpha Omega Publications.....IFC	Heart of Dakota Publishing.....24	Texas Almanac and Teacher's Guide.....27
Apologia Educational Ministries.....39	HEDUA.....OBC	Texas Tech University ISD.....17
Basic Christian Education.....26	Houston Baptist University.....6	THSC Convention.....20-21
Belhaven University High Scholars.....23	International ALERT Academy.....27	THSC Association Membership.....4
Classical Conversations.....18	One Year Adventure Novel.....15	University of Mary Hardin-Baylor.....29
Demme Learning.....IBC	Positive Action For Christ.....38	Wayland Baptist University.....38
Driver Ed in a Box.....36	PCApus Virtual Academy.....36	Writing Strands.....38
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.....36	Robots-4-U.....38	



UPCOMING EVENTS

May 7-9, 2015

Arlington
THSC Convention - Arlington
Texas Home School Coalition
(THSC)
thsc.org/convention

Jun 4-6, 2015

San Antonio
Home Shool Convention
Family Educators Alliance of South Texas
(FEAST)
homeschoolfeast.com

Jul 16-18, 2015

Dallas
Teach Them Diligently
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homeschool-conventions/2015/dallas-tx](http://teachthemdiligently.net/homeschool-conventions/2015/dallas-tx)

Jul 23-25, 2015

The Woodlands
THSC Convention - Woodlands
Texas Home School Coalition
(THSC)
thsc.org/convention

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THSC Association
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UberSmart Software
ubersmartsoftware.com

The Texas Home School Coalition (THSC) is a 501(c)(3) educational organization that is supported by tax-deductible donations. THSC is dedicated to serving the home school community; it promotes home education in Texas by educating the public, the home school community, and officials about home schooling.

THSC Association, a 501(c)(4) advocacy organization dedicated to serving and protecting the home school community of Texas, is supported by membership fees (not tax-deductible) and sales of resources. The Association now offers legal assistance in regard to home education issues as a benefit to its members, along with several other benefits and discounts.

The work of the THSC PAC (Political Action Committee) - endorsing and supporting pro-home schooling candidates - is supported by donations that are not tax-deductible. See thscpac.org for more information.



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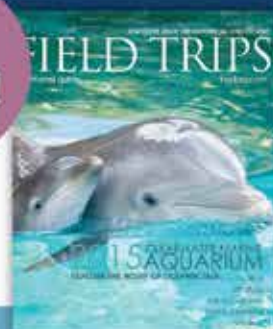
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