



Tales of Texas Newsletter



March 2025

This issue of Tales of Texas details two historical women in our Texas Revolution. Artwork above shows Pam Mann retrieving her oxen.

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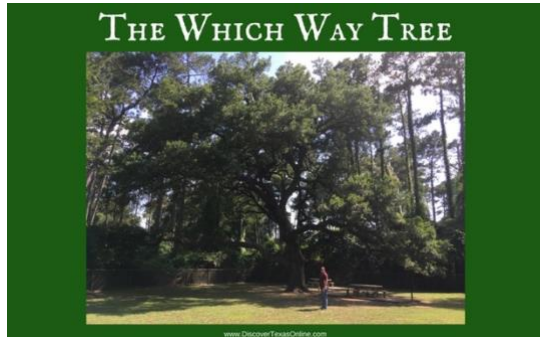
Two Women of the Texas Revolution: Pamela Mann & Peggy McCormick

Pamelia Mann was a pioneering businesswoman in the Republic of Texas. Born around 1800, she arrived in Texas in 1834 with her husband, Marshall Mann. The couple initially operated a boarding house in Washington-on-the-Brazos, which became a central hub during the Texas Constitutional Convention in March 1836. Following the convention, they relocated to Houston, where Pamelia established the Mansion House hotel in May 1837. Situated at the corner of Milam and Congress, facing what is now Market Square, the hotel frequently accommodated congressmen, government clerks, and army officers, and was also known for its lively atmosphere.

Pamelia was known for her assertive and resilient nature. During the "Runaway Scrape," as Texan settlers fled advancing Mexican troops, General Sam Houston's army requisitioned her oxen to transport "The Twin Sisters" artillery pieces. Unwilling to part with her property, Pamelia confronted Houston and reclaimed her oxen, demonstrating her fearless character. General Houston, of course, could have claimed the critical oxen, but he didn't, figuring he'd be like Santa Anna if he did.



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The Which Way Tree
New Kentucky Park, Hockley TX



Replicas of *The Twin Sisters*
San Jacinto Battleground

The incident with the oxen occurred during the *Runaway Scrape*. This was the retreat of Sam Houston and his army east from Gonzales after the fall of the Alamo.

Houston led a rag-tag band of Alamo widows, with other women, and children away from Santa Anna's advancing army. Also in tow, were the men that would form the nucleus of his growing army. As the group of refugees and men, many of whom had burned their homes and businesses to deny Santa Anna quarters and supplies, marched eastward, they came to present day Hockley, marked by the *Which Way Tree*. It was here where the men turned south to Harrisburg and the women turned north to Nacogdoches. They parted ways. The oxen turned north. The entire Texas army was down to two cannons, gifts from the people of Cincinnati. They had never been fired: not enough powder to practice. General Houston literally put his shoulder to the wheels and pushed them as they were mired in mud most of the march.

Margaret McCormick, known as Peggy, was an early settler and cattiewoman in Texas. Born in Ireland around 1788, she immigrated to Texas with her husband, Arthur McCormick, and their two sons as part of Stephen F. Austin's "Old Three Hundred" colonists in 1824. The family settled on a league of land at the confluence of the San Jacinto River and Buffalo Bayou. Tragedy struck when Arthur drowned in Buffalo Bayou in 1825, leaving Peggy to manage their extensive property.

In April 1836, during the Texas Revolution, the decisive Battle of San Jacinto was fought on Peggy's land. She had fled the area with her sons as part of the "Runaway Scrape" to escape the advancing Mexican army. Upon returning, she found her property devastated and over 700 Mexican soldiers' corpses scattered across her land. When she demanded that General Sam Houston remove the bodies, he refused, believing his own troops wouldn't allow it after the abuses at the Alamo and Goliad. "Peggy's Lake" at San Jacinto is a swamp where most of the carnage took place.



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Marker of Peggy's Home

Despite these hardships, Peggy successfully built one of the largest cattle operations in what would become Harris County. However, she faced significant challenges, including being defrauded of much of her land due to unscrupulous resurveying practices. Peggy continued to live on her remaining property until her death on July 30, 1859, when her home was destroyed by fire, a suspected act of foul play.

Both Pamela Mann and Peggy McCormick exemplify the resilience and determination of women who significantly contributed to the shaping of early Texas history.

Sometimes, people ask me if I think women really played such vital roles in Texas history. Of course, they did. When it's about survival, societal expectations imported from more genteel areas are disregarded. Texas women had no time for niceties or play-actin'. Pam Mann needed those oxen for her family to survive. She stood up to the commanding general, all 6'3" of him, and cut the traces to those oxen with a Bowie knife.

Peggy McCormick was furious when she saw all the bodies on her land and in her "lake." She gave Houston a piece of her mind about it, but in the end, she became one of Harris County's leading cattlemen.

Marker at San Jacinto Battleground Mexican Camp Peggy's Lake is in bottom right portion.

