Printing in Texas History

Subject Areas: Texas History, U.S. History, Social Studies, and Humanities

Learning Objectives
• The history of journalism and newspaper publishing in early Texas and American History
• The history of newspaper, journalism, people and treaties through Mexican and Texas history

Students will learn to:
• Use primary and secondary sources, including original artifacts, to discuss the importance of word choice and purpose.
• Identify the history and development of Texas Independence and currency through people and events during specific times before Texas joined the United States.
• Demonstrate an understanding of the different forms of media and printing styles.

Lesson Details
1. Pre-arrival lesson options: vocabulary activity and word search
2. Main lesson ideas:
   • Distribute the profile on Samuel Bangs, one of the important early printers in Texas
   • Design your own handbill lesson for students
   • Design your own currency lesson
   • Mexican Revolution Comic activity
3. Post-visit lesson options: discussion/reflection questions and post-visit activity.

Vocabulary words associated with lesson:
Albion press, annexation, broadside, colonization, currency, decree, facsimile, frontier, gazette, handbill, independence, liberty, newspaper, primary source, printer, printing press, republic, revolution, secondary source, typesetter

Applicable TEKS*

As a courtesy, these items are complimentary from The Printing Museum, and we kindly ask that these lessons aren’t distributed to schools and classes that are not coordinating a lesson or trip with The Printing Museum. Thank you.

*TEKS as of July 2021.
For each section write the vocabulary word in the top, and circle the part of speech it is. Then, define it, write a few synonyms, and a sentence using the word.

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Sentence
Use the correct vocabulary word to the definition.

**Down**
1. press, a mechanical device for applying pressure to an inked surface resting upon a print medium, thereby transferring the ink
2. the action or process of settling among and establishing control over the indigenous people of an area
3. press, a model of early iron hand printing press, originally designed and manufactured in London by Richard Whittaker Cope
4. a small printed advertisement or other notice distributed by hand
5. a paper that is printed and distributed usually daily or weekly and that contains news, articles of opinion, features, and advertising
6. form of government in which a state is ruled by representatives of the citizen body
7. a line or border separating two countries
8. free from outside control; not depending on another’s authority
9. a person whose job or business is commercial printing
10. a large sheet of paper printed on one side only. Historically used for announcing events or proclamations, as posters, or advertisements.
11. an exact copy, especially of written or printed material
12. the forcible acquisition of one state’s territory by another state
13. an exact copy, especially of written or printed material
14. source, works that analyze, assess, or interpret a historical event era or phenomenon
15. a system of money in general use in a particular country
16. a fundamental and relatively sudden change in political power and political organization which occurs when the population revolts against the government, typically due to perceived oppression or political incompetence
17. the state of being free within society from oppressive restrictions imposed by authority on one’s way of life, behavior, or political views
18. a person who typesets text
19. source, a first-hand or contemporary account of an event or topic
20. a journal or newspaper

**Across**

4. a small printed advertisement or other notice distributed by hand
8. free from outside control; not depending on another’s authority
13. an exact copy, especially of written or printed material
14. source, works that analyze, assess, or interpret a historical event era or phenomenon
15. a system of money in general use in a particular country
16. a fundamental and relatively sudden change in political power and political organization which occurs when the population revolts against the government, typically due to perceived oppression or political incompetence
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Samuel Bangs (ca. 1798–1854)

Key figure of Texas Printing History

The first printer in Texas, west of the Mississippi, and three Mexican states

Samuel Bangs left New England and joined Francisco Xavier Mina’s expedition in support of Mexican freedom from Spanish rule. He was captured by Royalists and put to work as a printer. He often was forced to be creative with limited materials, and glued writing paper together to make paper large enough for broadside printing. After being freed years later by the Mexican Revolution, he then went on to print for the Mexican government. Bangs ultimately printed under Spanish, Mexican, Texan, and American rule, and his newspapers, government documents, and more tell the turbulent story of Texan history.

- He was an ingenious and technically skilled printer. He used horseshoes and nails to create his own printing materials.
- He printed some of the most important documents as a government printer for Mexico in Ciudad Victoria.
- He used a combination of italic and roman style letters when printing.
- He was imprisoned for seven years and declared dead by his family! Later in his life, he was also robbed by highwaymen bandits.
- After being required to convert to Roman Catholicism and become a Mexican citizen, he adopted a Hispanicized name: Jose Manuel Bangs.
- He lost his land due to a dishonest lawyer, Thomas Jefferson Chambers.

The Albion Press

The Albion Press, a platen press similar in design to the Gutenberg Press, was developed in London in the early 1820s by Richard Whittaker Cope. It is thought that Cope chose the name “Albion,” a lyrical term poets had used to describe England, in response to the recent arrival of the Columbian Press with its American eagle ornaments. This version of the Albion, manufactured by Harrild & Sons of London, was known as a portable overland press. Unlike most cast-iron hand presses of the time, which were bulky, heavy, and unsuited to moving by wagon or stage, the Albion could be broken down into six parts for comparatively easy transport over long distances in the United States and Mexico.

A press similar to this Albion was acquired by Samuel Bangs for the state government of Coahuila y Tejas (Coahuila and Texas) circa 1829. Over the next two decades, it was used to print official government materials.
In the past, social media and the internet wasn’t around to attract people’s attention. Printed fliers, called handbills, were created to get people’s attention. Below are two options for your activity.

**Option 1:** Pretend that you have just been hired by the Texas Department of Tourism. Your job is to write a description of your state that makes people want to come to the great state of Texas and purchase land.

**Option 2:** In the space below, or on the back, design a creative “Gone To Texas” broadside (poster) that you could hang on your door if you were moving to Texas in the early 1800’s. Your poster should include elements that represent you and Texas.

Be specific and use lots of details based on what you have learned in class and at the museum. Remember the fine print!

**Historical Examples**
When Texas won its independence, there was lots of essential printing to be done. Because printing and printed documents represent practical tools of a government’s authority to create laws, to issue currency, and to enforce titles of land ownership, printers such as Samuel Bangs were important during this era. The Republic of Texas needed a new form of currency; after all, they couldn’t keep using Mexican currency.

Now that you’ve seen a few of the treasury notes used by the newly independent Texas government, think of what kind of images and words you would want on your own currency. What values do you consider to be important (such as unity or liberty), and what symbols would you use to represent them? If you had the opportunity to create a new type of money for a new republic, what would you design?

Draw your ideas on the currency below (front and back). Make sure to sign it for authenticity!
The Mexican Revolution

A native Texan from Laredo, Texas, Jovita Idár played a key role in Mexican-American rights through journalism and political activism. With her family in 1911, she helped form the First Mexican Congress, and she founded La Liga Feminal Mexicaista to support women’s rights. She helped by writing for her father’s newspaper La Cronica to advocate these rights.

At one point in her journalism career, she wrote an opinion article criticizing Woodrow Wilson’s order to send troops to the Texas border during the Mexican Revolution. Texas Rangers, who were known to be violent at the time of the Revolution, came to shut down the newspaper after the article. When they arrived, Idár was waiting at the front door, blocking them from entering the office. She refused to move citing that it violates the first amendment. Eventually, they turned around. In the comic strip to the right, draw this scene in a comic strip style, adding words and phrases that might have been exchanged between Idár and the Texas Rangers, including the final moment of defeat. Use thought and speech bubbles, and other comic trademarks to create a fun interpretive drawing. Get creative and use colors!
Use the questions below to prompt discussion and reflection after the museum trip.

1. What was your favorite exhibit?

2. What’s one thing you learned from the activities?

3. What’s one thing that surprised you?

4. Is there anything you wished you could have seen more of?

5. Would you want to be a frontier printer? What challenges would you foresee in being a printer in a new place and setting up a print shop?

6. Why were printers such as Samuel Bangs so important to Texas history?

7. Why do you think Texas had a revolution and fought for its independence from Mexico?

8. Why do you think Texas was annexed by the United States?

9. If you could live in any era of Texas history (i.e. Mexican Texas, during the Revolution, The Republic of Texas, or as a new state) which one would you choose and why?

10. What’s one question you have after the trip?