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## HISTORY and MEMORY

*Contributed by Bob Gray*

The expansion of the annual Living History Day celebration to include a significant Native American historical component promises to provide a long overdue and much needed counterpoint to the misinformation promulgated by movies and media.

Recent discoveries demonstrate the importance of emotion concerning the precision and longevity of memories. The brain more readily and accurately stores those memories accompanied by an emotional stimulus than those without.

Most of us know this intuitively. Lessons learned in our mother's lap remain with us, often throughout our lifetimes. While those offered by the dry and uninspiring pedant or pedagogue often last little beyond the bell.

If you had the chance to impart important memories to your children in a way that would last, would you do it? If the answer is yes, then Living History Day is for you and yours.

The event, held the last weekend of September on the Schreiner University Campus in Kerrville, Texas, has been around for years. Set in September to commemorate the birth of Jimmie Rodgers, the Father of Country Music, (tribute at noon on Friday in the Pavilion) the event has grown beyond a one-day event to three days. And thanks to the largess of many Hill Country sponsors, the first two days of the event are free to all comers (Teachers and Parents please note: FREE to all, NOT just children).

Better than free, however, is the fact that those attending each year learn real history – about music, Texas, westerners, and turn of the century lifestyles. And this year we've increased the Native American participation.

For instance, did you know that only one Indian treaty in U.S. history has not been broken by either side? That's right – the treaty signed between the Fredericksburg German community and the local Comanche tribes is it. An annual Powwow held in May commemorates this treaty – and performers from the Powwow will be on hand at our Living History weekend to share this singular success with the rest of us.

And the Past is Prologue group will be telling stories in the Iroquois tradition as tools for learning, along with true representations of drumming and dancing. Among the Native American contingent performing their various specialties will be Julia Nava (Native American Education), Hoppy Hopkins (teepee and demonstrations), Javier and Dyanne Cortez (teepee and demonstrations), Dan Simpson (Native American Education). *Additional performers will be confirmed in the coming weeks.*

Knowledge is power and you and your kids will be afforded an opportunity that means real learning: to stand right next to the experts and performers, to question them and discuss the answers. We believe in the power of stories and songs as another way of learning. We know that connections made this way in the minds of the young last far beyond the test on Friday – because the participants actually enjoy themselves while learning. With more than 40 different performances going at the same time, and all day long, you and yours will easily discover dozens of intriguing and enjoyable places around the grounds to indulge your tastes and satisfy your curiosity.

And speaking of taste and satisfaction, Buzzies Bar-B-Q and Dr. Pepper will be providing lunch and drinks.

So, that's the free all-day event on Friday, the 24<sup>th</sup> of September, 2004.

On Saturday, the 25<sup>th</sup>, from 10 AM to Noon, you're invited to attend a free seminar of the Texas Heritage Music Foundation on Texas Blues. Hosting the seminar will be **Dr. Gary Hartman**, Director of the Center for Texas Music History at Texas State University. Incidentally, Gary also will perform at least one song from his immense catalogue of original Texas music. Guest speakers will be **Roger Wood**, author of *The Roots of Texas Music; The Da Capo Jazz and Blues Lover's Guide to the U.S.*; and *Down in Houston—Bayou City Blues*; plus **Steve Davis**, music scholar and speaker. He will discuss the late music legend Janis Joplin's lasting contributions to Texas Blues. Immediately afterward you'll want to take in some of the second annual all-day fiddle contests at the Robbins Lewis Pavilion sponsored by the Hill Country Youth Orchestra.

Sunday, the 26<sup>th</sup>, at 3 PM, we will feature a live concert with a well-known Texas singer (TBA) in the Schreiner University Dietert Auditorium. Ticket sales for the concert go to benefit the Wayne Kennemer Scholarship Fund, and Families and Literacy of Kerrville.

This event is part of a program at Schreiner University called "All Learn, All the Time," emphasizing innovative and creative learning techniques. **Dr. Kathleen Hudson**, founder of the Texas History Music Foundation, teaches in the English Department at Schreiner University, produces an on campus coffeehouse featuring original Texas music each month, coordinates a Past is Prologue workshop every October and the annual July gathering on the University campus, directs the Texas Writes Conference each April and is author of *Telling Stories, Writing Songs: An Album of Texas Songwriters* (2001, UT Press/Austin). Contact her at [kat@mavericksbbs.com](mailto:kat@mavericksbbs.com) or see [www.texasheritagemusic.org](http://www.texasheritagemusic.org) for more information.

Knowledge is power, and this event will provide those who attend both fun and knowledge that lasts for a lifetime. So power up and get there with your children. The advantage is yours.