

## Past and Future for the Georgia Battalion Project-2017

There is a detailed backstory for this website as it appears now. I launched the website in October 2012 for the purpose of promoting knowledge and understanding of the Georgia Battalion's role during the Texas War of Independence. I wanted to memorialize its members' trials and accomplishments, as well as the sacrifice of so many of the young men. Most now lie in a mass grave in Goliad, massacred by the Mexican army, along with the rest of Fannin's command. Even the few survivors are largely ignored. A number of those survivors escaped and were able to join Houston and fight at San Jacinto. A very few of them have been officially recognized as fighting in this climactic battle. There is very convincing evidence that others also participated but are not officially recognized. I wanted to see these "lost" soldiers get their due.

This site has received many compliments. Some additional information has been added by other researchers and, I believe, awareness of the Georgia Battalion has been raised. However, I had hoped that Texas history advocates would join me in getting recognition for our "lost" soldiers, a hope that has remained unfulfilled.

My distant cousin Rick Allen had contacted me through [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) on San Jacinto Day, April 21, 2010. He had

done years of research on the Georgia Battalion. He had become interested the Georgia Battalion due to his relationship to one member of the unit: James Peter Trezevant (JPT), his g-g-grand uncle. Rick had researched JPT's family of origin, and his military career in Texas, but Rick did not know much about JPT's later life in Franklin Parish, Louisiana. Rick was very happy that I could provide some family history to fill out the story. JPT is my g-g-grandfather.

The only thing I knew about JPT's connection to Texas was what I had seen on his tomb stone in Delhi, Louisiana, that by age twenty-one JPT had become a major in the Texas army during the Texas Revolution. I had never heard of the Georgia Battalion, the Battle of Refugio, and the fate of Ward and his men, most of whom were murdered at the Goliad Massacre. I certainly was unaware that some of Ward's men had evaded capture, found their way to General Houston and his army, and fought at San Jacinto. Of course, my learning all of that history from Rick was thrilling and made me very proud.

An important fact that I learned from Rick was that he knew about the process of getting someone recognized as a veteran of the Battle of San Jacinto. He had personally visited the San Jacinto Museum in 2005 and had learned of the application schedule. Rick knew from his research

that the direct link of JPT to San Jacinto was the narrative done soon after the battle by Samuel Hardaway. Hardaway's narrative tells the story how he and three other young men (James Trezevant, Joseph Andrews and M.K. Moses) became separated from the Georgia Battalion and made their way to Houston's army. He states he and the others joined Mosely Baker's company and participated in the battle at San Jacinto. None of these men were initially included as participants of the battle, because as is true of many others, they were not recorded on muster rolls. Hardaway's name was added at a later date to the official San Jacinto list at the Museum, though (like JPT) his name does not appear on a muster roll and though (unlike JPT) he never applied for a land or bounty grant. This addition was made solely upon the discovery by scholars of Hardaway's story, published in several 1836 Georgia newspapers. There is additional circumstantial evidence that points to all four young men's participation in the battle. Rick got the impression that JPT would probably not be accepted, though Hardaway had been accepted exclusively on the basis of his narrative.

The issue for Rick and me then became time sensitive. Though all three of Hardaway's companions deserved consideration, we had the greatest amount of supporting historical documentation about James Peter Trezevant. We

decided to start with him then attempt to include M. K. Moses and Joseph Andrews.

Strangely enough, the San Jacinto Museum accepts applications only EVERY TWENTY-FIVE YEARS (after 1936), and the 175th anniversary of the battle would be in April 2011. Using Rick's research, I sent an application on JPT's behalf to the Museum in late August 2010. I received the rejection of my application in March 2011. That's when I began the process of challenging the decision by doing my own further research and corresponding with those who made the decision.

When my challenge went nowhere, I decided to create a website and post all of the materials I had collected. The site went online on October 2, 2012. One person who responded in December 2012 was Texas history activist Sarah Reveley. She suggested that I drop the focus on the San Jacinto Museum and try working with the Texas Historical Commission. She suggested that I delete from the website the tab of all the "Application for Recognition" materials related to the San Jacinto Museum application, which I did. These included my original application cover letter (6 pp.), biographical sketch of JPT (25 pp.), and documentation (3 pp.). Also included were my correspondence record, research record, original bibliography, a closing statement, and some early blog entries. I would be

happy to forward these “Application for Recognition” documents to any historian who requests them.

Meanwhile, before 2036, there are possibilities to pursue regarding recognition for the Georgia Battalion, the Battle of Refugio, and those survivors who fought at San Jacinto. There is still not a monument to the Georgia Battalion at Goliad, as agreed to by Texas in 1856. Though there is a monument to King and his men at Refugio, there is no monument there to Ward and his men and their fighting the Battle of Refugio. At the Texas State Cemetery in Austin, the monument to Joanna Troutman contains the list of Georgia Battalion members, but there is no marker or other explanation of the significance of the Georgia Battalion itself, i.e., that it was the largest, most well-trained, and best equipped group of volunteers in the Texas army. My hope is that historians in both Georgia and Texas will work together to assure the honors due to the Georgia Battalion and to all of its men.

R.W.T. June 2017

A number of people responded to the original version of the website. They, too, felt that the San Jacinto Museum’s refusal to accept Trezevant, Andrews, and Moses was based on a gate-keeper attitude that did not acknowl-

edge current scholarship. I posted a few quotes from readers who disagreed with the Museum's position.

"I can't understand the rejection. Why is it important to them to turn you down? No harm would be done if they accepted your position."

Bruce Marshall, author of *Uniforms of the Alamo and the Texas Revolution and the Men who Wore Them 1835-1836*, March 21, 2011

"The notion that the folks at San Jacinto will not reconsider James Peter Trezevant in the face of new data is absurd. For 25 years?!? That's not historical preservation and integrity...that's called institutional laziness. They'd rather pass the work on to their grandchildren?!? They won't consider Davenport?!? What more prominent Texas historians are there? I used him extensively in my work."

Jay Stout, author of *Slaughter at Goliad: The Mexican Massacre of 400 Texas Volunteers*, July 2, 2011

"If researchers had come to me as Editor-in-Chief of National Geographic with the kind of statement sent to you, they would have left my office looking for other employment."

Bill Allen, Aug. 13, 2011