

San Marcos Daily RECORD

sanmarcosrecord.com

SUNDAY, JANUARY 31, 2016

MY TOWN

San Marcos Daily
RECORD

Sunday, January 31, 2016 • Page 1B

Historical program brings Texas heroine to life

Texas heroine Susanna Dickinson, Messenger of the Alamo, is brought to life in Songs of Susanna, a historical program of song, verse and lecture by author/historian Donaly Brice and songwriter Fletcher Clark.

Clark's epic ballad, "There Must Be a Good Man in Texas," provides a panoramic tale of Susanna — in itself a microcosm of the emergence of Texas.

The presentation will take place at the monthly meeting of the Hays County Genealogical Society on Tuesday, Feb. 2 at 7 p.m. at the Church of the Latter Day Saints, located at 120 Suncrest in San Marcos. The public is invited.

Songs of Susanna follows Susanna (nee Wilkerson) in her travels from Tennessee to Gonzales, Texas, with her husband, Almeron Dickinson, who would become a fallen hero at the Alamo.

As Messenger of the Alamo, she carried Santa Anna's demand for capitulation to



"Little Known Facts of Susanna Dickinson, Messenger of the Alamo" is based on the fascinating life of Texas heroine Susanna Dickinson.

General Sam Houston, who then prepared his Texian army to join in the Runaway Scrape.

After victory at San Jacinto, she found herself widowed and penniless with

her infant daughter, Angelina, Babe of the Alamo.

Unskilled and illiterate, she would marry three more men in Houston, seeking in vain that husband who would keep her and her daughter happy and secure.

Moving to Lockhart, she would marry her fifth husband, Joseph Hannig, a young German immigrant half her age.

Moving to Austin, ultimately Susanna Wilkerson Dickinson Williams Herring Bellows Hannig would become prosperous and respected.

"Donaly and I were asked to prepare a program for the Friends of the Susanna Dickinson Museum in Austin," said Clark. "For me, what began as a simple folk song about a historical figure turned into a four-chapter epic ballad of verse and song spanning the challenges she faced — challenges universal to the 19th century frontier women of Texas."

Clark's writing was guided

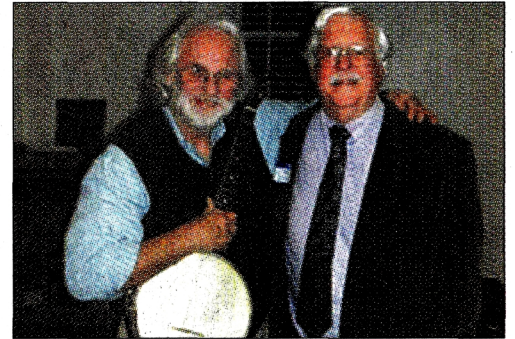
by Brice's research and his access to source materials as Senior Archivist for the Texas State Library.

"I asked Donaly and Fletcher to present their program at our 2014 Annual Meeting celebrating Susanna's 200th Birthday, and couldn't have been more pleased with the results," said Terri Schexnayder, former president of Friends of the Susanna Dickinson Hannig Museum in Austin.

"The combination of Donaly's historic genius and Fletcher's musical magic brought Susanna Dickinson to life that evening."

Fletcher Clark is a veteran musician and songwriter from the earliest days of the emerging music scene in Austin and its famed concert hall Armadillo World Headquarters.

Moving to Lockhart seven years ago, he began sharing music with Donaly Brice at their Emmanuel Episcopal Church (the oldest west of



PHOTOS BY THE HAYS COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Fletcher Clark, left, and Donaly Brice of Lockhart will present, "Little Known Facts of Susanna Dickinson, Messenger of the Alamo," a narrative and musical presentation on Tuesday, Feb. 2 at 7 p.m. at the Church of the Latter Day Saints, located at 120 Suncrest in San Marcos. The presentation is part of the San Marcos-Hays County Genealogical Society meeting. The meeting and presentation are open to the community.

the Mississippi).

Fletcher produces and hosts the monthly series Evenings with the Songwriter at Lockhart's historic Dr. Eugene Clark Library (the oldest in Texas) explor-

ing the art and craft of guest professional songwriters.

The acclaimed series is in

SEE **HEROINE**
PAGE 8B

HEROINE FROM PG. 1B

its sixth season. He has published his Personal Hymnal, "Open Up the Doors," and released a CD containing recordings of 12 of the songs.

He also composed a complete "folk mass," and together these form the basis of his musical ministry, which he shares with groups and congregations throughout Texas.

Now retired from the Texas State Library, Donaly Brice has written or co-written several books on Texas history, including "The Great Comanche Raid: Boldest Indian Attack of the Texas Republic," "The Governor's Hounds: The Texas State Police, 1870-1873," and "Texas Ranger N.O. Reynolds, the Intrepid."

He has also written a number of historical articles that have been published in the Plum Creek Almanac and The East Texas Historical Journal.

Brice is a member (and recently named Fellow) of the East Texas Historical Association, the West Texas Historical Association, the Southern Historical Association and the Texas State Historical Association (who elected him as a Fellow of that organization in 2010).

He has presented papers and given lectures to many historical and genealogical groups throughout the State of Texas.

Clark and Brice have brought their program to various Daughters of the Republic of Texas chapters.

Nancy Evridge of Brady's Heart of Texas Chapter said, "What an entertaining way to tell the story of Susanna Dickinson. Our luncheon was a huge success thanks to your memorable program."

After their presentation in Burnet for the Janes Wells Woods DRT Chapter, President Krissy Sralla said, "Mr.

Clark and Mr. Brice present a riveting portrayal of the life of Susannah Dickinson. Their knowledge of the family and details bring Susanna to life. One can simply close one's eyes and see Texas so many years ago. The stories, poems, and music truly bring history to life!"

They presented the program in Luling for the Caldwell County Historical and Genealogical Society, prompting author/historian Chuck Parsons to remark, "Once experienced, this program of song and history will not be forgotten. It gives new life to our understanding of our Texas heritage. Clark and Brice working together is indeed a true delight."

• Submitted by
the San Marcos-
Hays County
Genealogical Society