

Independence



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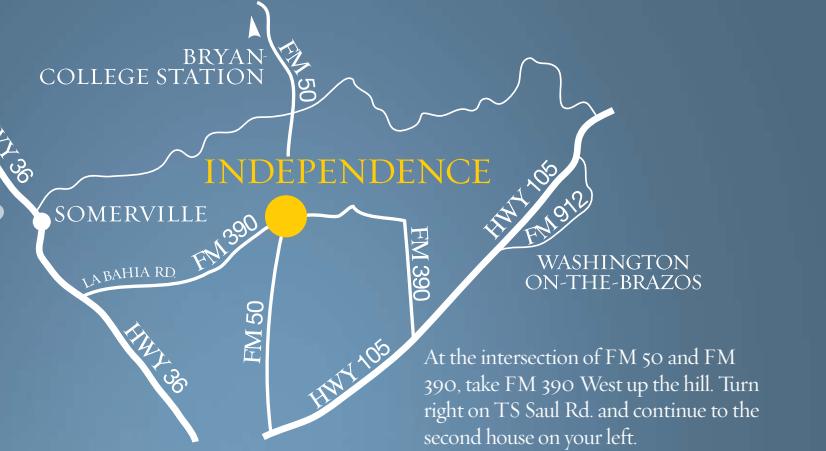


Baylor Line Campers dine on the grounds of Independence Baptist Church.

FLING YOUR GREEN & GOLD BACK IN TIME!

FIRST STOP - INDEPENDENCE VISITOR CENTER

The Visitor Center officially opened to the public on May 1, 2010.
To verify days and times open, call 979.251.9227.



At the intersection of FM 50 and FM 390, take FM 390 West up the hill. Turn right on TS Saul Rd. and continue to the second house on your left.

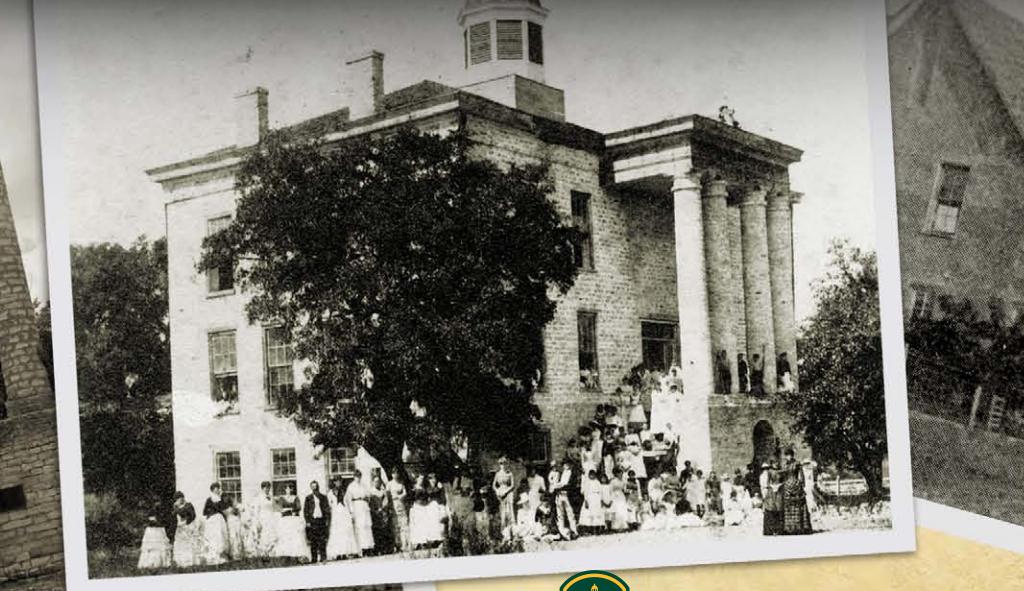
KEEP THIS STAR SHINING!

Contribute to the Lanella Spinks Gray Baylor at Independence Endowed Fund named for Ms. Gray's influential and energetic involvement in preservation efforts. Donate by calling the number below or visiting our website.

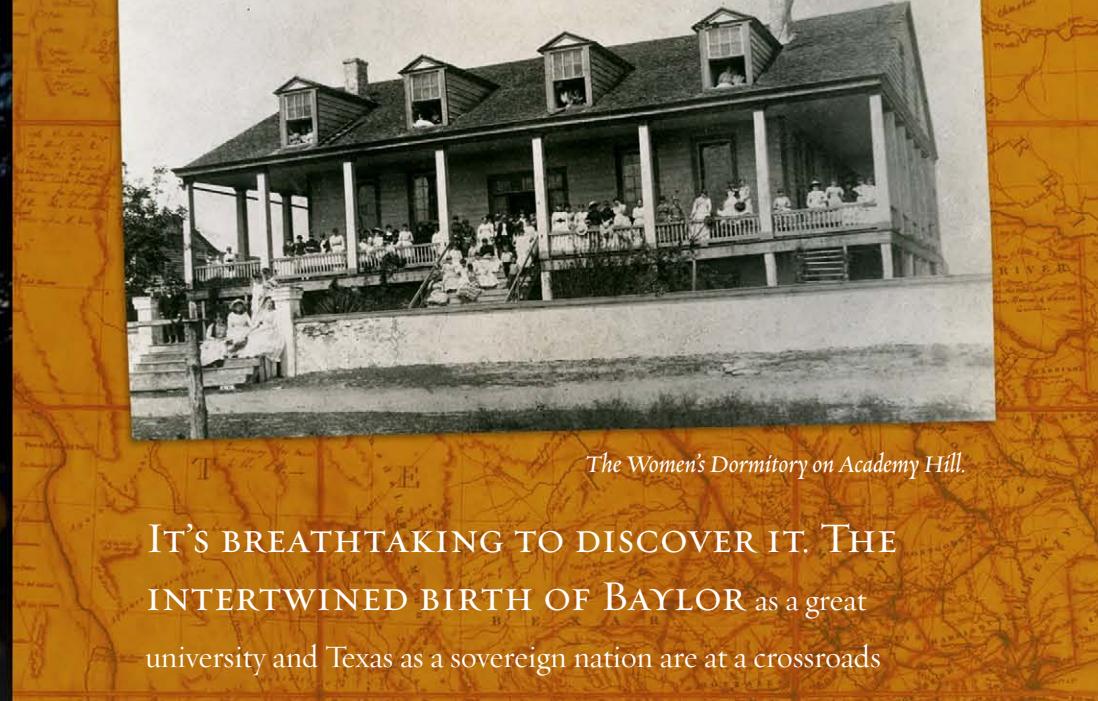


BAYLOR AT INDEPENDENCE

THE BIRTHPLACE OF INSPIRED LEARNING



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The Women's Dormitory on Academy Hill.

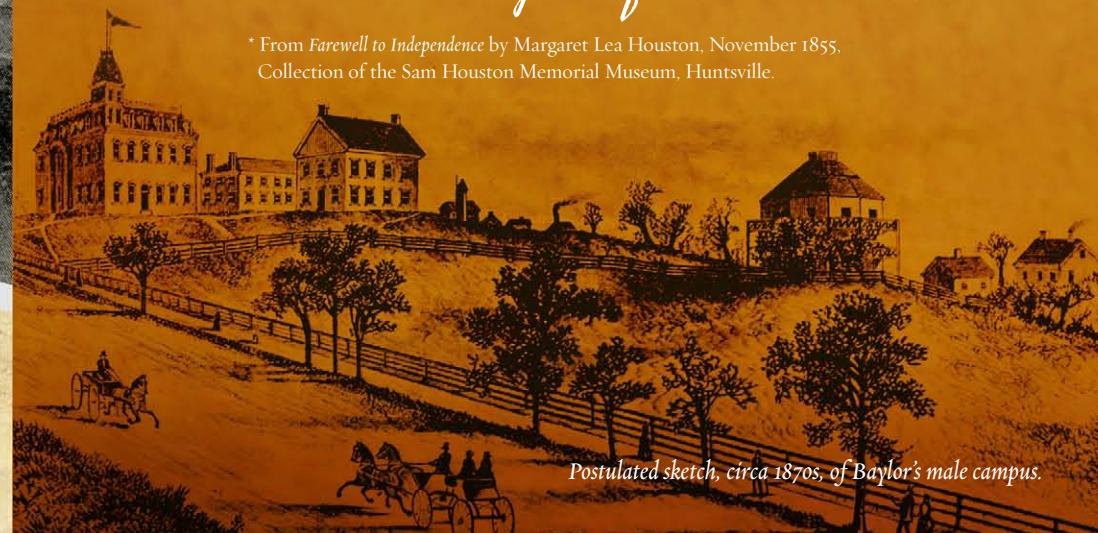
IT'S BREATHTAKING TO DISCOVER IT. THE

INTERTWINED BIRTH OF BAYLOR as a great university and Texas as a sovereign nation are at a crossroads known as Independence, Texas.

Just 14 miles from the historic site where the Texas Declaration of Independence from Mexico was signed (1836), Baylor set roots in the town of Independence where the oldest continuously operated Baptist church in Texas still holds services. Its spectacular clustering oaks and birdsong from every grove caused Sam Houston's wife, Margaret Lea Houston, to write of Independence:

*"Sweet village!
Thou loveliest spot of earth to me."**

* From *Farewell to Independence* by Margaret Lea Houston, November 1855.
Collection of the Sam Houston Memorial Museum, Huntsville.



Postulated sketch, circa 1870s, of Baylor's male campus.



Line Camp students tour Windmill Hill.

The Texas Baptist Educational Society chose Independence in 1845 as home to the newly chartered Baylor University. Of the location, they said it had "centrality, accessibility, health and beautiful scenery."

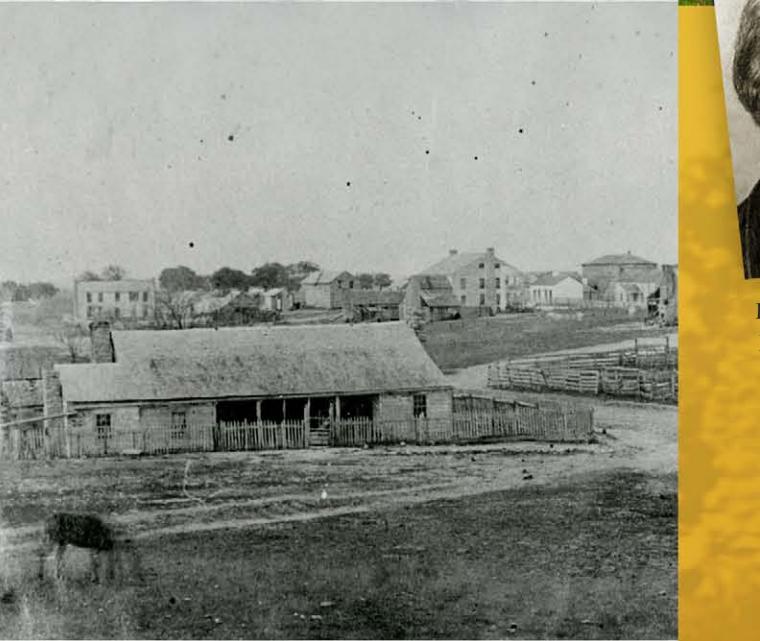
Of the original campus, four columns notably remain, painting a timeless image against the Central Texas sky. Now, more than a century and a half later, those columns stand sentinel-like within Old Baylor Park as today's entering freshmen assemble during a Baylor Line Camp visit to the birthplace of their chosen university. You, too, are invited to stroll and learn, picnic on the grounds and linger thoughtfully ~ where Baylor University took shape so that generations afterward could "light the ways of time."



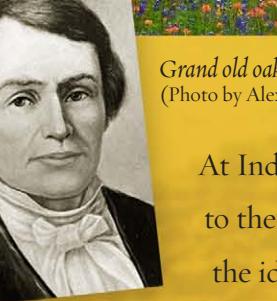
Roots

THE INTRINSIC GLORY OF HAVING ROOTS IS KNOWING THE HERITAGE OF HOME. For Baylor University, the deep roots nurtured in Independence, Texas, established a home that could move anywhere, a home built on the sacred trust of Christian higher education.

The move to Waco in 1886 changed nothing of the founders' intentions to train ministers and equip professionals "*...to meet the needs of all the ages to come.*" Forever changed, though, were the grounds of Baylor University at Independence. Four stone columns still rise up as reminders ~ marking in 1857 the stately edifice of the Female College, shown on the cover.



Independence's pre-Civil War buildings could be seen from the Baylor Campus.



Founder Robert Emmett Bledsoe Baylor, 1793-1873.

At Independence, our imaginations sweep us back to the day when Judge R.E.B. Baylor discounted the idea of naming a university in his honor, though others prevailed. And surely "this towering giant" of faith and justice had been the persuasive member of the Union Baptist Association to say, "*...steps should immediately be taken to provide a school for our people.*"

At Independence, we stand on the spot where the first 24 Baylor students enrolled and "bowed gracefully" whenever a visitor entered chapel services.



Grand old oaks of Independence.
(Photo by Alexey Sergeev)



Remains of Tryon Hall's west wall.

IN RECENT YEARS, BAYLOR HAS EMBRACED ITS INDEPENDENCE BIRTHPLACE WITH RENEWED VIGOR, developing a series of historic preservation projects and archaeological excavations, reacquiring land on Windmill Hill, and adding lush landscaping along self-guided touring paths, historic sites, and the area around the original campus.



An engraving of the Female Department's handsome school desks from Boston was published in Baylor's catalogue, 1856.



After Baylor's departure, Tryon Hall was home to Father M. Huhn's orphanage for some 30 years, then demolished in 1934 providing stones for an Independence store and cotton gin.

HERE ARE THE EXCAVATED REMAINS OF TRYON HALL, COMPLETED IN 1883, a home to young Baylor men whose rule was "not to be out of your room after 9 o'clock at night."

Closing our eyes, we can hear the swishing of a hundred floor-length skirts as the "Female Department" students processed to class at Baylor, co-educational from the start and "successful even before it became popular to create colleges for women in the Northeast." *

* Robert Crawford Cotner in the Introduction to *Baylor at Independence*, Lois Murray Smith, 1972, Baylor University.



Baylor President Starr and Alice Starr receive their jerseys at Baylor Line Camp.

The Texas Collection of the Baylor University Libraries is proud to partner with the Independence Preservation Trust, the Independence Historical Society, the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, Texas Baptists, and many other groups and individuals to preserve the rich history of Baylor's roots. We invite others to experience again the vision that began here and continues to make its mark in the world. Former Texas Governor Pat Neff, also a Baylor alumnus and longtime president, was fond of saying, "The preservers of history are as heroic as its makers." Our truly heroic efforts leave a profound impression on everyone who visits Independence.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT A BIRTHPLACE THAT DRAWS US HOME? Perhaps it is two-fold: a love of history and a reverenced gratitude. Baylor's heritage has not been lost. Come ~ experience Baylor's first 41 years in the beautiful village of Independence.