



Dear Principals, Curriculum Directors and Seventh Grade History Teachers,

The Battle of Flowers Association announces its 23rd Annual Texas History Essay Contest for all seventh grade students from San Antonio area schools. **Please encourage your students to compete** for the honor of representing their school in this contest by writing an original 350 to 700 word historical essay on the topic:

BLAZING TRAILS*Forts on the Texas Frontier

Throughout history, brave souls have been blazing new trails across Texas: American Indians, Spanish explorers, Catholic missionaries, French soldiers, colonial entrepreneurs and Texas cattlemen. These trailblazers opened the way for new settlers to populate the land of Tejas, the Republic and the state of Texas. But who would continue to keep these roads open and safe for those traveling on them? It was a new type of pioneer who came to open the territories of Texas and protect those who followed. It was the US Army. During the 1800s, the US Army established and manned well over 40 forts and camps along the westward moving frontier. In 1856 alone, 25% of the troops in the US Army were based in Texas. Able soldiers like Benjamin H. Grierson and Ranald S. Mackenzie were on the Texas frontier protecting settlers and connecting outposts of civilization in the unsettled West. These soldiers came to an untamed land that was inhospitable, harsh and dangerous. They were challenged by the weather, the vast territory and the unknown. They scouted for water in the desert, built their forts with adobe, native wood and stone, strung telegraph lines and battled a relentless war against the American Indians who fought to protect their way of life. By the time the last of these forts closed, over 75,000 soldiers had come to the Texas frontier. Some were famous like Phillip Sheraton. Some were unknown like the hundreds of immigrants looking for a stake in their new country. But they all came to do their job....to tame the Texas frontier.

Please select your school's two best essays and submit them to contest chair Carol Hebdon at the address below. The deadline is **Monday January 16, 2017**. Include the attached statement of originality, signed by students whose essays you select.

Entries will be judged on content, creativity, the interest generated, accuracy and appropriateness of topic (70%), and on neatness of presentation, grammar, spelling and quality of research (30%). Resource materials should be listed in standard bibliographic form on a separate page (not counted toward the length of the essay). References will be checked for accuracy. Please note that essays must

fall within the 350 to 700 word length to qualify for the contest. **Please make sure your essays are titled!**

The first place winner of the Essay Contest will be invited to ride in the 2017 Battle of Flowers Parade!

The Texas History Essay Contest is held in conjunction with the Battle Flowers Annual Oratorical Contest in which Texas college students research, write and deliver original speeches on a similar topic.

Winning Essay Contest authors will be honored at the Oratorical Contest, which begins at 9 a.m. on Friday, February 24, 2017 at the Witte Museum in San Antonio. PROMPTLY AT 1:00 p.m., the first, second and third place winners of the Essay Contest will receive plaques and awards for their accomplishments. Winning essays will be displayed and Participation Certificates will also be presented. The first place essay will be published in the Battle of Flowers Parade program. Each school submitting entries will receive participation recognition.

We invite winners and their teachers to attend the luncheon as guests of the Battle of Flowers Association. Essay guests check in at 11:45 and have lunch. We invite other interested students, parents and teachers to attend the Oratorical Contest and Essay Contest Awards (open to the public) and, if they choose, to make a paid reservation for lunch (\$25.00) by mailing a check to Mrs. Christy Kerr, 2907 Albin, San Antonio, Texas 78209.

Oratorical Contest finalists repeat their speeches to a new set of judges in the afternoon session, which begins at 1:15 after the Essay Awards and everyone is invited to attend.

We hope that you will encourage your students to compete! Please complete the attached participation form and send it to the address below if you plan to participate. To help you publicize the Essay Contest, we have enclosed a flyer for you to copy, post and distribute.

Please contact me if you have questions or need more information.

Sincerely,

Carol Hebdon
Essay Contest Chair

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San Antonio, Texas 78209
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SUGGESTED FORTS ON THE TEXAS FRONTIER:

Fort Belknap

Fort Bliss

Fort Chadbourne

Fort Clark

Fort Concho

Fort Davis

Fort Griffin

Fort Sam Houston

Fort Lancaster

Fort Phantom Hill

Fort Martin Scott

Fort Mason

Fort McKavett

Fort Richardson

Fort Stockton

Fort Worth