



GEORGE RANCH HISTORICAL PARK

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Table of Contents

TOPIC	PAGE
Welcome, Mission Statement, Core Values	3
Frequent Contact Numbers	4
George Ranch Historical Park History & Organizational Structure Overview	5
Volunteer Benefits & Responsibilities	6
Code of Conduct	7
Policies & Procedures	
Technology & Public Relations	8
Safety	9
Workplace Information	10
Property - Personal and Professional	14
History of the George Ranch	15

WELCOME / MISSION / CORE VALUES

Welcome, Volunteers!

Welcome to the George Ranch Historical Park! We are so glad you have decided to volunteer with us. You bring your own unique set of skills, experiences, and interests to the Park. Together we can offer added levels of interpretation and interaction that would be impossible if we relied solely on paid staff. In return, we hope to offer you a productive and rewarding volunteer experience.

Over the next few pages, we intend to provide the essential information you need for volunteering at the Park. But if there is anything you still need to know, please do not hesitate to contact the Volunteer Coordinator. We want you to be as equipped as possible as you join us in the adventure that is the George Ranch Historical Park!

Our Mission

The mission of the George Ranch Historical Park is to deliver a compelling educational experience to students and the community through the history, legacy and land of a pioneer Texas family.

Our Community Commitment

1. To create an ambassadorial mindset in all of our staff and volunteers so they understand that they are entrusted with preserving and sharing the story of one unique Texas family.
2. To deliver excellent educational programming that requires the assistance of volunteers to stretch our boundaries and help us see the development of new capabilities.
3. To provide an informative and lively place for your volunteer energies, where you can take pride in the work you do and be surrounded by others who share your passion and commitment.

Core Values:

1. High ethical standards
2. Responsible stewardship of the assets entrusted to our care
3. Consistent excellence in all customer service and programming

FREQUENT CONTACT NUMBERS

George Ranch Historical Park main number 281-343-0218

Site Director Adrienne Barker Ext. 117

Programs Department Director Susan Vanderford Ext. 278

Program and Volunteer Coordinator Sarah DeArmond Ext. 222

Chief Curator of Collections /Quonset Chris Godbold Ext. 237

1830s Site Lead / Stockfarm J.R. Thomas Ext. 246

1860s Site Lead / Prairie Home Megan Cromeens Ext. 252

1890s Davis & Sharecropper Site Leads Ext. 294

1930s George Home Site Lead Allison Parrott Ext. 252

Ranching Heritage Site Lead Cody Kalinowski Ext. 254

Davis House Ext. 229

George Ranch House Ext. 227

Visitor Services Manager Kevon Hunter Ext. 258

Corporate Sales & Events/Site Rentals David Comerota Ext. 267

Fort Bend History Association Admin Office /McFarlane House 281-342-1256

Executive Director Claire Rogers Ext. 1102

Admin Services Manager Dani Abrego Ext. 1101

Fort Bend Museum / 5th and Houston Street, Richmond 281-342-6478

Museum Manager Ana Alicia Acosta Ext. 1201

Program Coordinator Jessica Avery Ext. 1202

Texian Time Machine Allison Harrell Ext. 1203

HISTORY AND ORGANIZATION

A Brief History

The George Ranch Historical Park's history follows family lines beginning in 1824 when Texas was still part of Mexico. The first Texas pioneers settled near the Brazos River. In the years since, the Ranch has passed through four generations and grown into one of Fort Bend County's landmarks. Today, the George Ranch is a 20,000+ acre working ranch. The family's original "home place" is at the core of the George Ranch Historical Park where the legends and legacies of those who shaped this place come to life every day. Authentic locations, historic homes, costumed presenters and a remarkable story of determination and courage set the stage for trekking through Texas history.

In 1988, the Trustees of the George Foundation resolved to open a living history site to preserve the original homestead and to share the four generational legacy of the Jones, Ryon, Davis and George Families. The Fort Bend County Museum Association (now the Fort Bend History Association) Board of Trustees voted to accept their landmark offer to create, manage, and present the educational and interpretive programs for the enjoyment of the public. This enduring partnership has resulted in a nationally prominent historical site visited by thousands and recognized worldwide for showcasing the heritage of Texas. We are a living history partnership of the Fort Bend History Association and The George Foundation.

Organizational Structure

The George Ranch Historical Park has 3 primary departments: Programs, Visitor Services, and Corporate Sales & Events/Site Rentals. Through the Site Rentals department, guests can book private events such as weddings, fandangos, rodeos, corporate gatherings, etc. Visitor Services manages the Visitor Center, program bookings, and transportation throughout the park. The Programs department staffs all the historic sites as well as all programs done at the park.

The administrative staff of the Programs department consists of the Director of Programs and the Programs and Volunteer Coordinator. The Programs department typically has an intern who assists with program development and implementation. Each of the historic sites is managed by a Site Lead who is in turn assisted by full-time and part-time hourly staff. When you are out on site, the Site Lead is your direct supervisor. However, the Volunteer Coordinator is your point of contact for determining volunteer times and locations, as well as to respond to any comments, criticisms, or questions you may have.

BENEFITS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Ranch Responsibilities

- We will facilitate you choosing a site or sites to be trained in a job that is worthwhile, challenging and important to our programming mission
- We will not waste your time with lack of planning or coordination
- We will tell you whether your work is effective and how it can be improved
- We provide periodic programs and special events for staff and volunteers
- We give recognition for completed skills, training and knowledge development; most often this will take place at the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner at the beginning of the year
- We give you a membership for the Fort Bend History Association after 40 hours of service. This membership includes 2 yearly passes to all Association sites, discounts to special events and meals, and passes to Texian Market Days.

Volunteer Responsibilities

- Follow policies and procedures established by the George Ranch Historical Park
- Fulfill your commitment to volunteer
- If a decision is time sensitive and there is no known or understood policy, you should use reasonable judgment in making decisions; then, as soon as possible, consult with your site supervisor to discuss the situation
- Attend all training/orientation sessions as scheduled and undertake continuing education and research to maintain your competence
- Act at all times when volunteering in the best interest of the GRHP
- Recognize the GRHP's right to dismiss any volunteer for failure to meet the program's guidelines, including unsafe practices, poor performance, poor attendance, etc. (see the Disciplinary Policies in this manual).

CODE OF CONDUCT

Code of Conduct

A volunteer's personal conduct is vital to making the George Ranch Historical Park's facilities fun, friendly and educational places for all who visit and work here.

Volunteers should:

- Abide by the policies & procedures detailed in this handbook
- Be approachable, friendly, helpful, cooperative, respectful and courteous when working with guests and staff
- Communicate with co-workers, guests, and vendors in a professional manner
- Be well informed and knowledgeable when presenting information to guests
- Always be truthful with a supervisor or other staff member
- Take instruction from, or perform reasonable duties assigned by, the Volunteer Coordinator or other GRHP staff member
- Avoid offensive conduct and use of inappropriate language (swearing)
- Avoid discussions of personal life/issues (such as those related to political affiliation or religion) in public conversations
- Never engage in a physical confrontation or in any other conduct which could endanger the well-being of any GRHP volunteer, staff, guest or animal
- Ensure the health, safety and dignity of all living things at GRHP facilities
- Follow all safety rules and ensure the care and safety of all facilities, equipment and materials at the George Ranch Historical Park and The George Foundation facilities
- Respect property belonging to the GRHP, other volunteers, staff and/or guests
- Perform consistently satisfactory work and strive for consistently excellent work
- Never perpetrate fraud, gamble, possess personal modern weapons or explosives, or violate any criminal laws on GRHP or The George Foundation premises
- Interact with family and/or friends in the work environment only during scheduled break times (exceptions must be cleared with your site lead)

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Telephones, Cell Phones and Pagers

Volunteers can discreetly carry their cell phones on site. Cell phones should be set to “Silent” or “Vibrate” when before the public. Personal calls and text messages should be made during breaks or lunch periods. If it is necessary to make or receive personal calls while on duty, the call should be made out of sight of the public. Cell phones should never be seen by the public.

Computers and the Program Office Library

The George Ranch Historical Park maintains a small library in the Program Office. Volunteers are welcome to check-out items from the Program Office library. Please remember to return within three weeks. At times, volunteers may be asked to use GRHP computers for assignments, projects or research. These computers should be used only with the permission of the Site Lead or Volunteer Coordinator, and only for GRHP related tasks.

Media Policy

The FBHA employs a Director of Marketing who is responsible for marketing and public information. This staff member is charged with releasing accurate and pertinent information about the FBHA and GRHP to the media (newspapers, television, magazines, radio stations, bloggers, etc.). The Marketing Director for the FBHA must approve all requests for interviews and articles. If a member of the media contacts a volunteer for an interview about their activities as a GRHP volunteer, the volunteer should notify the Volunteer Coordinator prior to accepting the request. If a media representative approaches a volunteer while on GRHP property, the volunteer should refrain from answering any provocative questions or sharing opinions on GRHP concerns unless the marketing staffer has given their approval. Volunteers should direct media requesting information to a GRHP staff member. Any volunteer who conducts an unauthorized interview, or attempts to contact a member of the media regarding any GRHP or FBHA business, will be subject to immediate disciplinary action and/or dismissal from the volunteer program.

Social Media Policy

On social media, volunteers should always be fair and courteous to other volunteers, staff, donors, and others who work on behalf of the FBHA. Volunteers may be dismissed from the volunteer program for posting anything that may be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, disparaging, or bullying regarding GRHP and the people associated with it. Volunteers should remember that they are more likely to resolve complaints by speaking to the Volunteer Coordinator than by using social media. If you post anything online in relation to GRHP, know that it may be used by the marketing department at the FBHA. Be aware that our visitors use social media often and you may be featured on a guest’s online video or photo album.

Unauthorized Endorsements

Volunteers serve in a position as ambassadors for the GRHP, its facilities and its events. Volunteers are **not** permitted to use the GRHP’s name or logo in the conduct of private activities without express permission from the Programs Director. Additionally, it may not be suggested or implied in any way that the George Ranch Historical Park is a sponsor of private activities.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Emergency Procedures

Accidents or Injuries: Any accident or injury to a visitor, staff member or volunteer should be reported immediately to the Visitor Services office. If there is an accident, find your immediate supervisor and they will handle it.

Fire: In case of fire inside of a building or outside, evacuate the building or area. Then check in with your supervisor. Under NO circumstances should you enter a burning building or area!

Bad weather: In case of a tornado warning, listen to your supervisor's instructions. Stay away from windows, doors or outside walls. Shelter in place in a sturdy building. In case of lightning, leave the blacksmith shop and stay inside a house that has lightning rods. Cowboy shows will be suspended and the tram will cease operation during lightning storms. In case of thunderstorms, stay with your supervisor and find cover or shelter in place.

Tobacco, Drug and Alcohol Policy

Smoking is permissible but must be done unobtrusively, on breaks and out of sight, never in front of guests.

The manufacture, possession, distribution, transfer, purchase, sale, dispensation, or use of illegal drugs while on site as a volunteer, including while operating a vehicle or equipment owned or leased by the GRHP or FBHA, is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

The FBHA also prohibits the possession, consumption, and/or distribution of alcohol while on duty as a volunteer. Failure to adhere to this policy could result in immediate termination of your volunteer status.

Volunteers may use physician prescribed medications while at the park, provided that the use of such drugs does not adversely affect the performance of volunteer duties or compromise the safety of other volunteers, staff or guests.

Security

All volunteers are expected to follow all security guidelines in effect at facilities to protect guests, volunteers and staff. Different facilities have different individual policies related to the setting of building alarm systems, access to certain areas, etc. Each site will provide a non-public place for volunteers to store personal effects. There is no after-hours presence on GRHP property allowed, unless it is an official event and the volunteer is there with the approval of the Volunteer Coordinator.

Firearms and other Weapons

The FBHA prohibits all volunteers and employees from carrying firearms or other weapons while on the FBHA property or during working hours. The state open carry law does NOT override this policy, which is intended for the safety of our guests, volunteers and staff. Participants in living history programs hosted by the GRHP can be authorized to demonstrate replica and antique weapons, including 19th and 20th century firearms. However, live rounds are never allowed on the premises without specific permission of the GRHP's Program Director.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Dress Code

During business hours or when representing the George Ranch Historical Park, all volunteers are expected to present a clean, neat, and tasteful appearance. Everyone is expected to dress and groom according to the requirements of their position and acceptable social standards.

It is not appropriate to wear stained, wrinkled, frayed, or provocative clothing at the workplace. The following should not be worn during business hours: sweatpants, pajamas, yoga pants, lounge pants, exercise pants, mini-skirts, spandex or other form fitting pants (except under appropriate wear), t-shirts and sweatshirts with offensive messages or images, visible undergarments (even if these are period appropriate), tank tops, chemises, low cut blouses, or spaghetti straps. You must wear closed-toed shoes or sandals that have a strap to hold the sandal on.

In the historic area, nail polish, unnatural shades of hair color, or heavy makeup are not allowed. Volunteers must remove all visible piercings and plugs, as well as try to cover any tattoos before entering the historic area. Only historically appropriate jewelry as approved by the Site Lead or Volunteer Coordinator is permitted. As applicable, hairstyles should be simple and practical, and easily pulled back should a task require it for safety.

Volunteers that do not arrive appropriately attired (as determined by the Volunteer Coordinator or Site Lead) will be given a verbal warning on the first incident. If there is a second occurrence, the volunteer will be asked to leave and return when appropriately dressed or not to participate for that day. Repeated violations can result in termination.

Sign In/Sign Out Procedures

Volunteers must sign in upon arrival in their area of service. Sign in/sign out books are kept in the GRHP Programs dressing room. Signing in upon arrival enables the staff to track who is in the GRHP in the event of an emergency and where they are most likely to be found. It also helps us track your hours. Tracking your volunteer hours helps us assess future needs, recruitment, and determine awards for your contribution. If you volunteer off-site, please let the Volunteer Coordinator know so your hours can be recorded.

Volunteer Shifts

The Park is very flexible in working with volunteers to determine the number or length of shifts. Volunteers are welcome to arrange for as many volunteer opportunities as they like. If you commit to being at the George Ranch Historical Park for a specific program or day, we ask that you keep that commitment; we are depending upon you once the commitment is made, and our programs will suffer in quality if you do not attend as promised.

Volunteers should arrive on site, on time and prepared to participate. Almost as important, volunteers should plan to depart the site when their shift or program concludes. Volunteers should call the ...

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Volunteer Shifts (continued) ... Volunteer Coordinator if scheduled but not able to come for a particular program so that staffers are aware that their part of the program may not be covered. Failure to appear for a scheduled volunteer shift more than once without calling in to inform pertinent staff of an absence can result in dismissal.

If you are volunteering a full day, you will be able to take your 30 minute lunch at the Programs building. Your lunch shift will be scheduled by the Site Lead and will be affected by the day's events - such as school program times and transportation needs.

Food and Beverage Policy

The Programs building has a refrigerator and microwave for you to use for lunches or snacks. Any beverage aside from water is not allowed in the 1890s Davis House or the 1930s George House. Food is also not allowed in these two houses. This helps prevent pests from being attracted to the houses with original furnishings. If your drinking vessels are not period appropriate, please use them outside of the public view and keep them hidden when interacting with the public.

Volunteer Records and Privacy

Access to volunteer files is restricted to the volunteer, Volunteer Coordinator, and senior FBHA and GRHP management.

Volunteers should report changes of name, address, telephone number, email or cell phone number to the Volunteer Coordinator so that we may update our records and remain in contact with you under normal circumstances or in emergencies.

Volunteers may have access to their own volunteer records.

All volunteer records are the property of the FBHA. A volunteer may review their file or make copies of information in their file.

Confidentiality

The protection of confidential information is vital to the interests and success of the George Ranch Historical Park. Such confidential information includes, but is not limited to, the following examples:

- Privileged information about the GRHP and FBHA
- Privileged information about finances, salaries or personnel data.
- All mailing and email lists.
- Knowledge about our guests from their participation in public programs, including school age children.
- Privileged information about livestock used in programs.

Questions about the confidentiality of any information should be directed to site supervisors.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Harassment and Other Forms of Impermissible Conduct

The FBHA and GRHP are committed to providing a work environment that is free from harassment. We will not tolerate any type of insulting, degrading or exploitative actions, words, comments, or treatment based on gender, race, ethnicity, age, religion, or other legally protected characteristics. Forbidden conduct includes any conduct that creates an atmosphere that is intimidating, hostile or offensive.

Complaint Procedure

Should a volunteer have a concern or complaint, they are encouraged to discuss these concerns with the Site Lead. If the problem involves the supervisor and the volunteer does not feel comfortable discussing the matter with him or her, he or she should contact the Volunteer Coordinator directly.

Evaluation

Volunteers will be evaluated on their specific trained skills in the park setting. Volunteers will be asked to evaluate the volunteer program regularly.

Reassignment

There are many different volunteer opportunities throughout the GRHP, and volunteers can take advantage of these by participating at different sites and in different programs. Any volunteer may request reassignment if they feel that their current assignment is no longer of interest to them. Site Leads will work with volunteers to find a productive outlet for them, their skills and their time.

Disciplinary Actions Policy

Reassignment can also come at the request of a Site Lead if a volunteer has been disruptive, in violation of policies or unable to perform their assignment competently. In this instance, reassignment would be a measure of remediation, aimed at giving the volunteer a chance to succeed in another department. Reassignment will only be considered if it is deemed likely that a change of location, or a change in the personnel with which the volunteer routinely interacts, will improve the situation.

The FBHA and GRHP have established standards of performance and volunteer behavior necessary for effective and enjoyable service at our facilities. When a volunteer violates policy or fails to meet their performance requirements, supervisors must make an evaluation of the situation and act in accordance with the guidelines established in this policy. It is in the best interest of the FBHA, the GRHP, and the volunteer that written guidelines have flexibility so that they appropriately fit each situation. The elements of this infraction policy follow corrective counseling procedures.

The GRHP may use progressive discipline at its sole discretion. As determined by the Volunteer Coordinator or the Programs Director, disciplinary action may include, but is not limited to, the options below. These options may be used in accordance with individual circumstances,...

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Disciplinary Actions Policy (continued) ...organization policy, and the facts surrounding the situation, but they are not necessarily designed to be used in any particular order, and one or more options may be bypassed or repeated depending on, among other considerations, the severity of the situation and the number of occurrences. However, in most cases, the GRHP staff will implement the following counseling procedures.

- A. **Verbal warning:** When a volunteer's conduct or performance is not consistent with the GRHP's minimum standards, the supervisor and another staff member will discuss the issue with the volunteer, clearly explaining the problem and suggesting how the situation might be improved. (The appropriate department will maintain records of oral counseling sessions.)
- B. **Written Warning:** For more serious or repeated problems, the supervisor and another staff member will provide the volunteer with a written memorandum describing the problem and any suggested corrective action.
- C. **Termination:** For infractions which the management deems to be sufficiently serious or representative of a refusal to respond appropriately to previous counseling action, termination is appropriate. The Program Director must approve this action.

What You Need to Know

There are several items of information that a volunteer will need to know about the site in which they work, no matter whether it is the Visitor Services center, an historic house or a living history site. Some of these items of information are for safety reasons, some are for the convenience of our visitors and some are for your own protection. Please make sure you know the answers to these questions:

- Where are the nearest functioning bathrooms?
- Where is the nearest water fountain?
- Where are the Fire Extinguishers located at your site?
- Where is the nearest First Aid Kit and who is trained to use it?
- Where is the nearest phone to your site? Several historic buildings have phones. What is the extension number for the Visitor's Center? The Program Director?
- If you are posted in an historic house, where are the exits in case of a fire? Are the doors kept locked? Who has a key?
- What are the accessibility options for guests who are unable to climb stairs or walk easily?

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Use of Personal Property While a GRHP Volunteer

Volunteers should refrain from using GRHP or The George Foundation materials or equipment for unauthorized projects including personal correspondence, making items for personal use, making items for sale of personal profit, et cetera. Personal property such as clothing, tools, equipment, supplies or materials should not be necessary to accomplish volunteer work, except as approved **in advance** by the Site Lead or Programs Director. Unless specifically agreed to by the Programs Director, the GRHP assumes no financial responsibility for loss, damage, or wear on personal property used on or off GRHP premises. Volunteers are provided with small lockers in which to store their personal belongings while active in the GRHP. These lockers are capable of being locked, but the GRHP does not supply locks. The GRHP assumes no liability for items left in these lockers. Volunteers should not store personal possessions on GRHP property.

Motor Vehicle Policy

Volunteers are not allowed to drive GRHP vehicles. They may drive GRHP golf carts with authorization from a Site Lead, the Volunteer Coordinator, or the Programs Director. Volunteers using a GRHP golf cart are required to have a valid Driver's License. Volunteers **must** report **any** accident involving a GRHP vehicle or golf cart. Even if no injuries or damage resulted from the accident, the Programs Director **must** be informed about the incident.

Copyrights and Royalties

Creative work performed as part of a volunteer assignment or duties becomes the physical and intellectual property of the FBHA, together with any related copyrights, publication rights or royalties. This remains true whether the work is created during or outside of regular operating hours, since it involves the privileged use of FBHA resources and/or ideas and is created at the specific request of the FBHA, for the FBHA's exclusive use.

Collecting and Museum Property

According to museum industry ethics, it is inappropriate for volunteers to acquire museum collection items even when those items are being disposed of in a public sale. This is to prevent perceptions of favoritism or conflicts of interest. When working with artifacts or in historic homes, volunteers will be specifically trained in how to work around antique items. No volunteer will use for any personal purpose any object that is part of the FBHA's collections or use any property or resources of the FBHA except for the explicit intended use.

HISTORY OF THE GEORGE RANCH

The George Ranch is a 20,000 + acre working ranch that traces its beginnings back to the 1820s with Stephen F. Austin's original colony in what was then part of Mexico. Known as the "original 300 Settlers of Texas," the family that moved here was the first of four generations to farm and ranch this property from the 1820s to the 1950s. While the original land grant was only for a league (4,428 acres), each generation added to the family holdings and grew the property into the sprawling ranch it is today. Although now called the George Ranch, the property has had many names over the years, including Circle O Ranch and Arroyo Secco (Dry Creek) Ranch.

The Jones Family

Henry and Nancy Jones heard of the colonization of Spanish Texas in the 1820s when they were residents of Arkansas. Soon after their marriage in 1821 they came to the colony to receive the offer of free land. By 1824, they had settled on land along the Brazos River in what is now Fort Bend County. They received 4,428 acres according to Austin's deal with the Mexican Government and developed a farmstead. By 1830, they moved their log cabin to the ¼ league of prairie land owned by Henry's brother, John Jones, and developed the property into a wealthy dual plantation. The family consisted of Henry, Nancy, the in-laws and the couple's 12 children. The family lived in that house until 1861 when there was a partial fire in the log cabin and Henry decided to build a two-story Greek revival home based on the popular architectural style of the time. Unfortunately, that was also the last year of Mr. Jones's life. He died without leaving a will so his property was divided up between his living children.

The Ryon Family

Mary (Polly) Moore Jones was the second generation of the family to own and operate the dual plantation. She was the oldest daughter of Henry and Nancy Jones, and inherited equal proportions of the ranch with her siblings. Over the years she purchased land from her brothers and, with an inheritance from her godfather, Wiley Martin, she increased the ranch lands to over 20,000 acres. In 1845, she married William Ryon. They had nine children, although only three survived into adulthood. Polly and William ran the booming cattle ranch during the Golden Era of the Cattle Drive in the late 1860s through the 1880s. Ten years after William's death in 1875, Polly developed the Ryon, Farm and Pasture Company (1885) and continued to run the ranch with the help of her son-in-law, J.H.P. Davis until her death in 1896.

HISTORY OF THE GEORGE RANCH

The Davis Family

“Judge” Davis married Polly’s eldest daughter, Susan Elizabeth Ryon, in February of 1875. The couple had three children, although only two survived into adulthood. Susan died in 1884 from tuberculosis, leaving her husband to care for the two children. On her death bed, Susan requested that Davis marry her distant cousin, Belle Ryon, which he did in 1888. “Judge” Davis accumulated great wealth over the years and became one of the wealthiest men in Fort Bend County. His holdings included land, livestock, a banking business and a life insurance agency in Richmond and Rosenberg, as well as being a member of the Texas Cattleman’s Association.

The George Family

J.H.P Davis and Susan’s daughter, Mary Elizabeth (Maime), was the last family member to own the ranch lands. Along with her brother Thomas Walter (Bud) Davis, they inherited portions of Polly’s property. In 1896, Maime married Albert Peyton George. A. P. worked at Judge’s bank, and he and Maime moved to the Ranch property soon after their marriage. Upon Bud’s death in 1922, Maime inherited his portions of the ranch, and she and Mr. George turned the property into a thriving cattle business. The George’s had one child, Davis George, but he died of infant cholera at the age of 22 months.

In the early 1920s the discovery of oil and natural gas on the property accounted for much of the George’s wealth along with the development of A.P.’s own livestock breeding programs. Maime’s cousin John Henry Jones and his wife Rydonia came to live with the Georges, and Henry worked as foreman of the ranch. They had a daughter named Mary who was born in 1920, and she was treated like the George’s own daughter. After growing up and marrying a Marine, Mary moved back to the Ranch while her husband was overseas. In 1943, she and her un-born child were killed in a car accident that also injured Mr. George and her mother Rydonia. After Mary’s death, the Georges set up the Foundation that still maintains the ranch today and allows us to tell the story of this amazing family. Mr. George passed away in 1955, and Mrs. George died in 1971, thus ending a rich and wonderful family story.

The Foundation

Since 1971, The George Foundation has managed the Ranch and its assets. In 1987, the Foundation contracted a partnership with the Fort Bend History Association to operate the Historical Park. The Park now consists of over 500 acres with four sites covering the four generations’ history.