

3rd Grade Field Trip to Barrington Farm

By Miss Brittany Guardia

The third-grade class recently had the pleasure of visiting Barrington Living History Farm. The Texas Historical Commission site is located within the Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park complex.

Barrington Farms is the original plantation home of Dr. Anson Jones. A first-generation Texas homesteader, Dr. Jones was a medical doctor, statesman, and the last president of the Republic of Texas (in office 1844-1845, due to the annexation of the Lone Star Republic to the United States). He practiced medicine in Brazoria before moving his family to the farm. Anson Jones farmed near the Texas town of Washington during and after his presidency. Dr. Jones named his farm "Barrington" after his Massachusetts home, Great Barrington. He lived on his plantation with his wife Mary, their four children, his sister, his sister-in-law, and five slaves. We toured the family home and gardens, two slave cabins, a kitchen building, a smokehouse, a cotton house, and a barn at Barrington Living History Farm.

While touring his lovely dog-trot style home, we learned how this architectural design was ideal for warm summers and mild winters because it kept the house cool and breezy. The students experienced how his children attended school at home, what their leisure activities were like, and what daily chores would have been like without electricity, air conditioning, or indoor plumbing (ask them how they liked learning about the "chamber potties")! They also helped with the washing of clothes, harvesting veggies from the garden, and using the well pump to bring water to the garden and the outdoor kitchen.

The docents discussed with them about how this had once been a working plantation that owned enslaved persons until after the American Civil War. The third graders were very inquisitive as we toured the slave quarters, barn, and cotton fields. The students met the team of oxen that plows the fields, and saw a demonstration of how the oxen work together in their yoke. Some of the students even got to participate in the demonstration and wear the small yoke meant for training the calves. Our docent spoke with the third graders about the oxen needing to be equally yoked to work together well, and he even related his lesson to the New Testament when Paul warns the Corinthian church not to be unequally yoked in friendships. This was a phenomenal object lesson for everyone!

Next, the kids were given a few minutes to help pick as much cotton as they could manage so that they could see what the job would have been like. Surprisingly, the students loved this and made it into a contest! We completed the tour by meeting the pigs of Barrington Plantation. These pigs are descendants of some of the original Spanish swine breeds that were brought into Texas when it was once a part of Mexico. What a day of fun and learning we had! It was truly a great day!



