

The 5th-grade class recently had the wonderful opportunity to visit San Felipe de Austin, the colonial capital of Texas, and they wanted to share their thoughts with everyone about what they learned while visiting this incredible Texas Historical Commission site.

From the 5th-grade class:

We all had an incredible time visiting San Felipe de Austin, the colonial capital of Texas. Some of our favorite things that we learned included information about Stephen F. Austin's first immigrant colony in Coahuila y Tejas (one of the newly established Mexican colonies under the Mexican Constitution of 1824), the saga of the Runaway Scrape of 1836, and what life was like for the Texian pioneers living in Colonial Texas. We would like to share our favorite facts with you! Aria Villarreal wanted you all to know that "I learned that Stephen F. Austin's middle name is Fuller! We should use it more often!"

Cambry Courville and Miranda Lapham stated, "'The Runaway Scrape' was my favorite thing to learn about! I learned that the people had to burn their own town to the ground so that General Santa Anna and his army could not use anything. Sam Houston ordered the town to be burned." All of our students enjoyed learning about the Runaway Scrape in the beautiful San Felipe de Austin Pioneer Museum, but thought that it was also very sad how they had to watch their homes be destroyed by the flames.

Emily Feiertag and Grady Ward said, "my favorite part was learning about the 'Texas Toothache Tree,' and how the citizens of San Felipe de Austin chewed on the leaves and bark of the tree when they had any mouth pain or toothaches. We also learned that the town did not have a dentist, so the local blacksmith had to yank their teeth out with a hook!" The students participated in a "naturalist scavenger hunt," locating many useful elements in nature and Gibson Schroller said this was his favorite part! Tori Davies said "it was so interesting to see how many useful things we could find on our scavenger hunt!" The students were also shown how the leaves of the Yaupon Holly tree can be dried, roasted, and used to make a caffeinated tea. Colette Hyslop, Giselle Schulte, and Ellie Kate Cameron all loved learning about the Yaupon Holly and how the colonial residents used to call it their "colonial coffee."

The students also had the opportunity to learn to bake molasses cornbread in Miss Celia's (a former slave who sued for her own freedom) kitchen with the help of our history guide, Miss Nicole. Celia's case was held in San Felipe, and William Barrett Travis was her lawyer! Zachary Sharma and Knox Reynolds loved the baking station and said, "We learned how to 'decipher' colonial recipes and translate them into modern recipes! It was fun learning to bake in the colonial kitchen!" Mayson Araoz said, "I loved learning to make the old-fashioned cornbread that the colonists called 'Indian Cakes.' They were delicious!"

While visiting the print shop, we observed how newspapers and legal documents were printed in the early 1800s. We used the printing press to create replicas of William B. Travis's letter from the Alamo, declaring "Victory, or Death!" Shiloh Horsely wanted everyone to know that "we

learned their printing press worked so well and so quickly, that the townspeople thought it was by magic!”

Ila Hargrave loved learning that our use of “upper case” and “lower case” came from how the larger and smaller print type letters were stored in “upper” or “lower” cases, with the larger letters in cases above the smaller ones. We also learned that the original papers used for legal documents were made from cloth towels imported from Germany!

The students learned that because of a lowercase “k” print type letter found near the remains of a brick chimney, the archaeologists knew where to rebuild the print shop! Getting to use the printing machine and being Mr. Mark’s “printing apprentice” was Corbin Stodder, Wyatt Waxler, and Dash Garza’s favorite part!

We all learned a lot about the colonial history of Texas and the importance of San Felipe de Austin to our freedom and independence from Mexico. Long before Washington on the Brazos became the hub of Texas independence, San Felipe was already on the “road to the revolution!”

The 5th-grade class wants everyone to know they should make time to go out and visit San Felipe de Austin.