

FYI on Texas History by Bob Heinonen

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Bob Heinonen as
George Durham

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

If you have never been to the **Texas Independence Day Celebration** at Washington-on-the-Brazos, this is the year to go. Set aside March 4th and 5th.

Visiting Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site is an enjoyable experience on two levels. First, the expansive park grounds along the Brazos River provide a beautiful setting for picnicking, sightseeing and birdwatching. And secondly, the Star of the Republic Museum, Independence Hall and Barrington Living History Farm, offer the visitor a unique insight into the lives and times of those who won Texas' independence from Mexico. Elizabeth Seibert and I will be performing on both days. This is our fourteenth year as featured performers at this Celebration.

TEXAS HISTORY CONFERENCE

Bill Shuttlesworth at TEA Region VI in Huntsville organized his first **Texas History Conference** this year; it was a **roaring** success. They had to close registration at 200 attendees for the one day event. There were so many attendees that my luncheon performance as William Barret Travis was televised in two additional rooms. I hear Bill is planning a three day event next year...write down January 11-13, 2007. Way to go, Bill!

LEGENDS OF TEXAS

Legend: A steamboat that is a hero

The *Yellow Stone* made trips far up the Missouri River, the Mississippi River and the Ohio River before coming to Texas. These were well known and celebrated journeys so, when it arrived in Texas in 1836 it was a well known steamboat. Registered as an American vessel, the *Yellow Stone* left New Orleans on December 31, 1835, with 47 volunteers coming to fight for Texas...the Mobile Grays. Three months later, they all died at Goliad.

Around the first of April, 1836, the *Yellow Stone* was loading cotton at Groce's Plantation when Sam Houston, whose Texian Army had a camp at the Brazos River's edge about twenty miles upriver from the Gulf, conscripted the *Yellow Stone* into military service.

Starting about 10:00AM on April 12, the *Yellow Stone* began to ferry Houston's army across the river and completed the task a little more than 24-hours later. Now the Texians were on the same side of the river as Santa Anna's army and Houston released the *Yellow Stone* from service. The march to San Jacinto began.

The captain of the *Yellow Stone* piled bales of cotton on deck in such a way that everything above deck was protected from rifle fire and cannons. The boat made a dash down the Brazos for the Gulf; as it passed Santa Anna's army, soldiers shot everything they had available at the *Yellow Stone* but they only put some bullet holes near the tops of its two smokestacks. The *Yellow Stone* arrived at Galveston safely.

Ten days after the Battle of San Jacinto, the *Yellow Stone* arrived at the battle site with President Burnet and his cabinet on board. Sam Houston, who had received a serious wound to his ankle, was transported back to Galveston on the *Yellow Stone*.

The *Yellow Stone* disappeared from the record books in 1837 and the circumstances of her demise are still debated. The information for this Legend comes from **Voyages of the Steamboat *Yellow Stone*** by Donald Jackson.

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