

FYI on Texas History by Bob Heinonen

A Free E-Mail Newsletter from Texas Heroes Issue 39 April 15, 2006

A NEW LOOK AT DALLAS

For a new look at Dallas, including several excellent on-line tours, take a look at www.watermelon-kid.com. This site is published by an old friend, and former autobiographical actor, Steve Butler. Not only has he provided some of his own high quality photos, he has also written excellent and accurate descriptions and histories.

Steve actually provides four photo tours of Fair Park plus he has tours of White Rock Lake and Dealey Plaza (where the Kennedy Assassination took place). In addition he has historic photos and postcards of Dallas from his own personal collection.



Although Steve focuses on Dallas, he also has some dazzling photos of The Alamo, Goliad, Palo Duro Canyon, Austin and Galveston-Houston.

Steve's current photograph of the Texas School Book Depository, from which Lee Harvey Oswald fired the shots that killed President John F. Kennedy, is shown here. The Sixth Floor Museum, which is all about the Kennedy assassination, is housed in the Depository.

Steve has also been very active in keeping the memory alive of those who fought in the Mexican-American War. His site has information on that war plus links to other, more comprehensive sites.

LEGENDS OF TEXAS

Legend: Stephen F. Austin fought in the Texas Revolution.

After the Battle of Gonzales on October 2, 1835, three prominent citizens of Texas (Peter Grayson, Patrick Jack, and James Fannin) sent an urgent message to Stephen F. Austin asking him to come to San Felipe immediately. Austin arrived on October 11 and the next day he was overwhelmingly elected commander-and-chief of the Army of the People. The man that nominated Austin for the post was his bitter rival, John A. Wharton.

“Given the fragile state of his health and his general dislike for things military, Austin probably did not relish the appointment. But for him to turn down the most important position in Texas affairs at this point would have been unthinkable. Neither his ego nor the apparent reality that only he could bring unity to the army would allow him to consider refusing. In his speech to the men at the time of the election, Austin, according to [Noah] Smithwick, referred to his weak physical condition but declared, “I will wear myself out by inches rather than submit to Santa Anna’s arbitrary rule.”

Austin immediately led the new Army of the People to San Antonio to begin the siege of the town and The Alamo.

Leading a siege by the Texian Army was not easy. Every Texian soldier was a volunteer with an opinion on what should and should not be done. The men would rather drink, argue and fight than follow orders. Then, on November 12, the Consultation that was governing Texas asked Austin via letter to go to the United States with Dr. Branch Archer and Mr. John A. Wharton to raise money and volunteers to help fight the revolution.

Just after Christmas of 1835, the three men sailed for New Orleans. For the next four months, they traveled throughout the United States exclaiming Texas’ virtues and cause. Austin returned to Texas in May, 1836, a month after the revolution was over.

Stephen F. Austin led the Texas Army for a little over a month during a stalemate at San Antonio and was in the United States for the rest of the Texas Revolution.

The above information comes from *Stephen F. Austin: Empresario of Texas* by Gregg Cantrell.