

FYI on Texas History by Bob Heinonen

A Free Newsletter from Texas Heroes Issue 45 October 15, 2006 Home page: www.TexasHeroes.net

TIME MARCHES ON

As most of you know, March 2nd is Texas Independence Day and March 6th is the anniversary of the fall of The Alamo. This is a very popular time of the year to do special events about both topics. Now is the time to book a **Texas Heroes** performance for February and March. Consider a visit from Susanna Dickenson, Sam Houston, William Barret Travis, Deline Rose, Stephen F. Austin or James Bowie.

Come late spring, teachers should think about the cattle era: Charles Goodnight, Cynthia Ann Parker, or Texas Jack.

*Jack Edmondson as
Texas Jack*



LEGENDS OF TEXAS

Legend: *Fannin's men were massacred at Goliad*

I have attended several symposiums about the Texas Revolution in the last few years that were open to the public and there has been a significant Hispanic attendance. This is good to see because in the past, the Hispanic population has avoided discussions of the Texas Revolution. Participation in the discussion of Texas history is essential by all cultures involved in its development.

One topic, that I would like to address, has been posed several times by Hispanic attendees. The statement: The death of Fannin and 342 of his men at Goliad on March 20, 1836, was an execution, probably legitimate, by the Mexican Army, not a massacre. The question: Why is the speaker calling it a massacre?

This same situation just occurred at the *Tejano Leadership in Mexican and Revolutionary Texas Symposium* held at Texas State University in San Marcos on October 14, 2006, and organized by Dr. Jesus F. de la Teja; it was an excellent symposium. Dr. de la Teja is a Professor of History and Chairman of the Department of History at TSU. In the Q&A at the end of the symposium, a Hispanic gentleman in the audience questioned Dr. Stephen L. Hardin's reference to "the massacre at Goliad" during his presentation on "Placido Benavides."

Dr. Hardin answered that his description using the term "massacre" is correct; the dictionary definition of "massacre" is "killing large groups of people intentionally." I looked up "massacre" in *The Living Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language*; it says, "The indiscriminate killing of human

beings; a brutal murder; slaughter" and is derived from an Old French word meaning "butcher."

I looked up "execution" in the same dictionary. "Execution" as it applies here means, "infliction of capital punishment." The word "execute" means "to inflict capital punishment on, esp. in accordance with legal sentence."

The Mexican Congress passed a law on October 30, 1835, saying that all pirates would be executed without trial when captured; no surrender with terms would be accepted, only unconditional surrender which would be followed by execution. Santa Anna and the Mexican Congress defined anyone who took up arms against the government as pirates. Santa Anna, therefore, ordered that all Texians found to have taken up arms against him would be executed...no matter whether they were killed in battle, they were captured or they surrendered. From Santa Anna's point of view, he was following the law and killing large numbers of pirates was an execution.

Santa Anna's own staff officers argued against executing all prisoners. They said it was not the morally right or honorable thing to do in time of war. It appears the difference in opinion was in whether you viewed the Texians as pirates or enemy soldiers. Santa Anna's officers expressed shame at their actions.

Based on how this difference in opinion has presented itself, it seems to depend on what point you are trying to prove. And what point is the question trying to prove?

Massacre or execution? I vote for both. As Stephen F. Austin I refer to "...the massacre at Goliad where the Mexican Army executed over 300 Texians after they had laid down their arms and surrendered."

CURRENT NOVEMBER BOOKINGS

Day	Organization
2	Franklin Park at City View, Fort Worth
8	Ireland Elementary School, Dallas through the Dallas Historical Society
9	Brinker Elementary School, Plano (2 performances)
13	Village on the Park Steeplechase, Houston
14	Waldenbrooke Estates Retirement Inn, Bryan
15	George Bush Presidential Library, College Station (3 performances)
16	Highland Meadows Elementary School, Dallas through the Dallas Historical Society
16	Reinhardt Elementary School, Dallas through the Dallas Historical Society
17	Independence Hill, San Antonio
27	Merrill Gardens at Wichita Falls, Wichita Falls
27	Merrill Gardens at Vernon, Vernon
28	Fisher Elementary School, Frisco
28	The Arbors, Amarillo
28	Park Central Retirement Community, Amarillo (3 performances)

Many more bookings will be added by the end of this month. The most current list of all future bookings is always on our website. See www.TexasHeroes.net and click on **Where We Are Going**.
