

# FYI on Texas History by Bob Heinonen

A Free Newsletter from Texas Heroes Issue 56 September 15, 2007 Home page: [www.TexasHeroes.net](http://www.TexasHeroes.net)

## EVENTS TO REMEMBER

If you are planning visits to historic sites for yourself, your residents or your students, consider these events:

October 27 - Stephen F. Austin Birthday Party  
Angleton

March 1 & 2 - Texas Independence Day Celebration  
Washington-on-the-Brazos

## ANOTHER MONUMENT

If you have ever driven down Broadway Boulevard in Galveston, you have probably noticed the big monument in the middle of an intersection. But have you ever paid attention to it? Click the following for some great photos of the *Texas Heroes* monument:

<http://imagician.zenfolio.com/p406854673/>



*Bob Heinonen as Charles Goodnight*

## LEGENDS OF TEXAS

**Legend:** *Stephen F. Austin was a law abiding citizen*

Stephen F. Austin had never been in legal trouble until he suddenly found himself in prison.

In April, 1833, an illegal convention of colonists was held; it drafted a constitution for the new state of Texas within the Republic of Mexico. Although Stephen F. Austin was cool to the holding of the convention, he was asked by the convention to carry the petition for statehood to the government in Mexico City. Austin accepted the responsibility.

“The empresario’s attitude as he prepared for his journey was a curious mix of optimism and dread. ‘I go with considerable – I may say – strong hopes of success,’ he told [wrote] his cousin Henry. ‘The course taken by the convention is the true one I think....I can see no just reason why any offence should be taken [to] it by the Government, nor why it should be refused....I approve fully of the application for admission as a state and I think it will succeed.’”

Austin was not totally convinced he would succeed because he also said if he did not succeed he would recommend a state government be organized and another application for admission for statehood be submitted “as organized.” Forming a state government without permission of the Mexican central government would certainly be viewed as illegal under Mexican law so Austin indicated he was willing to break the law. “It

would be statehood or revolution. There would ‘be no middle course left,’ he declared.” As he told his cousin Henry, “‘The consequence of failure will no doubt be war.’”

Austin’s trip by sea took four weeks instead of the usual one week; he was seasick most of the time. He arrived in Mexico City on July 13, 1833, and began lobbying for Texas statehood. Then, in mid-August, he came down with cholera – he estimated that 18,000 people in the city died of the disease; it got so bad in the city that Congress adjourned without acting on Austin’s proposals.

Austin became frustrated with the lack of action by government officials so, in early October, 1833, he wrote the letter that would make him a criminal. He addressed the letter to the ayuntamiento (local government) in San Antonio suggesting they and the other ayuntamientos in Texas organize a state government.

On December 10, 1833, Austin left Mexico City by carriage for an overland trip to Texas. He felt he had accomplished at least a part of his mission outside of statehood. To Austin’s surprise, however, when he reached Saltillo he was placed under arrest on a charge of treason and sent back to Mexico City under guard. The government in San Antonio had forwarded his letter, recommending forming a state, through channels to the central government. The day after Austin left Mexico City, a warrant for his arrest had been issued.

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Austin was placed in the Inquisition Prison in Mexico City where he has held in solitary confinement for three months. Then, he was placed in the general prison population for another seven months. Finally, he was paroled into the city where he was detained for another six months.

Under Mexican law, Stephen F. Austin was a criminal and he was punished with a prison sentence.

Most of the information for this article was taken from *Stephen F. Austin – Empresario of Texas* by Gregg Cantrell, Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 1999. It is the definitive work on Mr. Austin.

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## CURRENT OCTOBER BOOKINGS

Day	Organization
2	The Conservatory at Wells Branch, Austin
5	Morningside Ministries at Menger Springs, Boerne
8	Three Fountains, Dallas
8	The Hampton at Cypress Station, Houston
8	The Buckingham, Houston
9	Parkway Place, Houston
9	Forum at Park Lane, Dallas
9	Westbrae Court, Houston
10	Camden Royal Oaks, Houston
10	Village Park at Tanglewood, Houston
10	Vickery Towers, Dallas
11	The Terrace at Clear Lake, Webster
11	Remington Park at Baytown, Baytown
11	Atria Collier Park, Beaumont
12	The Terrace at Willowpark, Houston
18	St. Helena's Church, Boerne
22	Carriage Inn, Katy
23	Fred Mead Friends & Family, Houston
25	Temple Emanu-El, Dallas
26	Angleton Intermediate School, Angleton
27	Stephen F. Austin Birthday Party, Angleton
29	Mirabella Assisted Living, Fort Worth.

These are the bookings as of the issuance of this newsletter. A more current list can be found at [www.TexasHeroes.net](http://www.TexasHeroes.net) under **Where We Are Going**