

FYI on Texas History by Bob Heinonen

A Free Newsletter from Texas Heroes Issue 59 December 15, 2007 Home page: www.TexasHeroes.net

Silent Canyon

Day breaks over the silent canyon.
Find a more glorious sight I dare!
The sun, sky and clouds companionate
Bringing a color show you cannot compare.
The bright reds fade to yellows and then to white.
The canyon waits for the sunshine.
In silence, the canyon says it is done with the night.
The sun climbs quickly and brightly
To start the silent canyon's day,
But the canyon keeps its silence.
That's just the silent canyon's way.
The Palo Duro Canyon holds its silence within.
It's seen too much to remark
About the times before man and animal,
And now it is an incredible Texas State Park.

Bob Heinonen Copyright 2007



*Sunrise over the Palo Duro Canyon
Photo by Bob Heinonen*

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF STEPHEN F. AUSTIN Part 3: A Change Of Ownership

In April, 1802, President Thomas Jefferson wrote U.S. Minister to France Robert Livingston: "Every eye in the U.S. is now fixed on this affair of Louisiana. Perhaps nothing since the revolutionary war has produced more uneasy sensations through the body of the nation." Was Spain going to give Louisiana back to France?

The presence of Spain on the west was not a big problem. A conflict over navigation of the Mississippi River had been resolved seven years earlier with a treaty in which Spain recognized the United States' right to use the Mississippi and to deposit goods in New Orleans for transfer to oceangoing ships. Jefferson's vision of obtaining territory from Spain was changed by the prospect of having the much more powerful France of Napoleon Bonaparte as a neighbor to the west.

France had surrendered its North American possessions to Spain and Britain, including the Louisiana Territory, in 1762 at the end of the French and Indian War. But Napoleon, who took power in 1799, wanted to restore France's presence on the continent. The Louisiana situation reached a crisis point in the United States in

October 1802 when Spain's King Charles IV transferred Louisiana to France, and the Spanish agent in New Orleans revoked Americans' access to port of New Orleans warehouses. These actions prompted outrage in the United States.

In January, 1803, President Jefferson asked that James Monroe join Livingston in Paris as minister extraordinary. Later that same month, Jefferson asked Congress to fund an expedition that would cross the Louisiana territory, ***regardless of who controlled it***, and proceed on to the Pacific; this became the Lewis & Clark Expedition.

Monroe's mission to France was to obtain land ***east*** of the Mississippi. He was authorized to pay up to \$10 million for the purchase of New Orleans and all or part of the Florida's. If this attempt failed, Monroe was to try to purchase just New Orleans, or, at the very least, secure U.S. access to the Mississippi and the port. But, when Monroe reached Paris, he learned from Livingston that a totally different offer was being made by France.

Napoleon's plans to re-establish France in the New World were coming apart. The French army sent to suppress a rebellion in Saint Domingue (present-day Haiti) had been decimated by yellow fever, and a new war with Britain seemed inevitable.

Continued on page two

FYI on Texas History by Bob Heinonen www.TexasHeroes.net

Continued from page one

France's minister of finance counseled Napoleon that Louisiana would be less valuable without Saint Domingue and, in the event of war, the territory would likely be taken by the British from Canada. France could not afford to send forces to occupy the entire Mississippi Valley, so why not abandon the idea of an empire in America and sell the territory to the United States? Napoleon agreed. On April 11, 1803, Foreign Minister Talleyrand told the American representatives that France was willing to sell all of Louisiana.

Monroe and Livingston immediately entered into negotiations and reached an agreement that exceeded their authority - the purchase of the Louisiana territory, including New Orleans, for \$15 million. The acquisition of approximately 827,000 square miles would double the size of the United States. An official announcement was made in Washington on July 4, 1803. The Senate ratified the treaty Oct. 20. Spain formally returned Louisiana to France on Nov. 30. France officially transferred the territory to the Americans on Dec. 20, and the United States took formal possession of the Louisiana Territory on Dec. 30, 1803.

Although President Jefferson sent the Lewis & Clark Expedition through the Louisiana Territory starting in 1804, there is no indication that any of the Austin family met either Meriwether Lewis or William Clark either then or later when Lewis and Clark both became involved in the political structure of the Louisiana Territory.

Though the sale of the Louisiana Territory was quickly sealed, there were those who objected to the purchase on the grounds that the Constitution did not provide for purchasing territory. However, Thomas Jefferson temporarily set aside his constitutional idealism to tell his supporters in Congress that "what is practicable must often control what is pure theory." The majority agreed. Jefferson later admitted that he had stretched his power "till it cracked" in order to buy Louisiana.

The Austin's home in Missouri, of course, became a part of the United States through the Louisiana Purchase. A year later Stephen, who was just ten years old, was sent by his father to one of the finest college preparatory schools United States -- the Bacon Academy at Colchester, Connecticut.

Next Month – Part 4: Off To School

Credits: *A large part of this article is based on an article written by Gaye Wilson for Monticello Research in March, 2003. Additional information comes from <http://www.earlyamerica.com/earlyamerica/milestones/louisiana/>*

*Bob Heinonen is the founder of **Texas Heroes** and has been portraying Stephen F. Austin since 1993. Copyright© by Bob Heinonen 2007.*

CURRENT JANUARY BOOKINGS

Day	Organization
4	Green Valley Elementary School, North Richland Hills
11	Winnetka Elementary School in Dallas for the Dallas Historical Society
11	Morningside Ministries at Menger Springs, Boerne
16	Weiss Elementary School in Dallas for the Dallas Historical Society
17	Parkwood Retirement Community, Bedford
22	Sun City Retirement Community, Georgetown
22	Stonewall Heritage Society, Stonewall
23	Williams Elementary School, Georgetown
24	Prestonwood Christian Academy in Dallas for the Dallas Historical Society

These are the bookings as of the issuance of this newsletter.