

FYI on Texas History by Bob Heinonen

A Free Newsletter from Texas Heroes Issue 61 February 15, 2008 Home page: www.TexasHeroes.net

Washington-on-the-Brazos

Here is our *Texas Heroes* performance schedule for the Texas Independence Celebration:

Saturday, March 1

- 11:00 Susanna Dickinson and William Barret Travis at the Star of the Republic Museum
- 1:30 Mary Austin Holley and Stephen F. Austin at the Star of the Republic Museum
- 3:30 Susanna Dickinson and William Barret Travis at the Star of the Republic Museum

Sunday, March 2

- 11:00 Susanna Dickinson and William Barret Travis at the Star of the Republic Museum
- 11:15 Sam Houston at Independence Hall
- 2:00 William Barret Travis at the Amphitheater



Jack Edmondson as Sam Houston

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF STEPHEN F. AUSTIN

Part 5: Meanwhile, Back in Missouri

While Stephen F. Austin was attending school in Connecticut, his father, Moses Austin, was battling for his economic life back in Missouri. With their home and business now being a part of the Territory of Louisiana, the Austin family was subjected to the creation of a new American organized government and the laws created by the American Congress. Both raised havoc with the Austin's and the community.

In early 1804, Captain Amos Stoddard, under orders from President Thomas Jefferson, became the first Civil Commandant of Upper Louisiana; he headquartered in St. Louis. Part of Jefferson's instructions to Stoddard were to provide as much information as possible about the new territory. Since lead mining was the major industry in the northern area, Stoddard asked Moses Austin to write a report to President Jefferson on the state of lead mining in Missouri. President Jefferson was so pleased with Austin's report that he used parts of it in his State of the Union Address in November, 1804.

Late in the summer of 1804, Stoddard was replaced with Governor William Henry Harrison. Governor Harrison then appointed Moses Austin as one of five justices on the first Court of Common Pleas and Quarter Sessions

for the St. Genevieve District. Although Stephen's father had no prior legal experience, Moses' substantial business experience and his standing in the community seemed to qualify him.

Then, on March 2, 1805, the United States Congress created the Board of Land Commissioners to review and validate all land claims in the Louisiana Territory. Ownership of land was a major problem. Fraudulent claims for the best land and mines became rampant; it made no difference if someone had already been living on or working the piece of land. Land speculators and cheaters were everywhere.

"The United States never before had obtained territory from a foreign power with an unfamiliar land system. It groped for the best way to distinguish real from pretend claims. Most agreed that the actual settler on the land before the United States took control of the Purchase could and should be confirmed in his possession, and so read the [prior] Law of March, 1804. At issue lay grants larger than the Spanish normally made, blank – or floating – concessions that could be located anywhere, particularly located fraudulently on a known lead mine or on someone else's newly discovered outcrop, and permissions to settle or orders of survey written after, but dated before, acquisition by France."

Continued on page two

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

Continued from page one

With the new law in place and chaos in the Territory of Louisiana, President Jefferson decided to appoint a new, strong and prominent governor to implement the law – General James Wilkinson.

Quotes in this article are from *Moses Austin: His Life* by David B. Gracy II.

Next Month – Part 6: Enter The Villians

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

CURRENT MARCH BOOKINGS

| Day | Organization |
|-----|---|
| 1 | Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park/Star of the Republic Museum |
| 2 | Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park/Star of the Republic Museum |
| 3 | Haun Elementary School, Plano |
| 3 | Three Fountains, Dallas |
| 3 | Mansions in the Forest, Conroe |
| 4 | St. Thomas Episcopal School, Houston |
| 4 | Wheatley Elementary School, Dallas |
| 4 | Meadowstone Place, Dallas |
| 4 | Highland Springs, Dallas |
| 4 | The Towers on Park Lane, San Antonio |
| 4 | Merrill Gardens at San Antonio, San Antonio |
| 4 | Forum at Park Lane, Dallas |
| 5 | Independence Hill, San Antonio |
| 5 | The Conservatory at Wells Branch, Austin |
| 6 | Miller Elementary School, Richardson |
| 6 | Parc Place Retirement Community, Bedford |
| 6 | The Waterford at Mesquite, Mesquite |
| 7 | Brinker Elementary School, Plano |
| 7 | Lakewood Village Christian Care, Fort Worth |
| 10 | Patriot Heights, San Antonio |
| 12 | Merrill Gardens at Round Rock, Austin |
| 12 | Querencia at Barton Creek, Austin |
| 14 | San Antonio History Club, San Antonio |
| 17 | Hearne Elementary School, Hearne |
| 18 | Jackson Elementary School, Dallas |
| 20 | Mount Auburn Elementary School, Dallas |
| 20 | Junkins Elementary School, Dallas |
| 21 | Morningside Ministries at Menger Springs, Boerne |
| 24 | The Summit at Westlake Hills, Austin |
| 26 | The Conservatory at Plano, Plano |
| 28 | Forum at Lincoln Heights, San Antonio |

These are the bookings as of the issuance of this newsletter. Check our website for the most current bookings.