

FYI on Texas History by Bob Heinonen

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HISTORY CHANGES

New information constantly comes forward and changes our view of past events. The Texas Revolution is a perfect example of how old legends fall as new facts are uncovered.

Unfortunately, school books are up to ten years behind this learning curve due to the long book replacement cycle and the number of years it takes to “authorize” new information. **Texas Heroes** solves that problem.

Texas Heroes performers stay current with the latest thinking, and present the most accepted current perspective. **Texas Heroes** brings teachers and students the most current facts and thinking.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF STEPHEN F. AUSTIN

Part 6: Enter The Villians

ENTER VILLIAN #1: Shortly after Congress passed the Law of March, 1805, to organize the Louisiana Territory, Thomas Jefferson, President of the United States, named General James Wilkinson as the Territorial Governor. Wilkinson was a top colonial officer under General George Washington during the American Revolution and then President Washington appointed him commander of the entire army in 1797. Wilkinson seemed like the ideal candidate to organize and settle down the new Territory. We now know, however, that Wilkinson is one of the true villains in American history; neither Washington nor Jefferson were aware that Wilkinson was actually a paid agent for the Spanish government.

ENTER VILLIAN #2: John Smith of Tennessee, who called himself John Smith T not to be confused with any other John Smith, was well educated and from a prominent family. However, he was also well known as a dangerous man. “Normally he carried four pistols, two in his belt and one in each side coat pocket, plus a dirk at his bosom and a rifle by his side. Anyone who crossed him did so at his peril. Smith never ducked a challenge and never lost a duel.” Smith T was a land speculator who established a strong, close friendship with Governor Wilkinson.

So, what do Villain #1 and Villain #2 have to do with



Did Bowie die of illness or fighting? James Bowie by Jack Edmondson

the Austin family? Moses Austin owned some of the best mining property in Upper Louisiana and Smith T apparently decided he wanted it. Without Moses’ knowledge of Smith T’s desires, Smith T began a long term campaign to undermine Moses’ legal ownership of the lands on which the Austin’s lived and worked. Through manipulation of Governor Wilkinson and through the generation of rumors, Smith T attacked Moses.

When Moses finally began to feel the attacks, he lashed out with the quick temper he was known for. Over the next three years, Moses and Smith T had a war of words, armed confrontations and court battles. And then entered Villain #3.

ENTER VILLIAN #3: Aaron Burr had been Vice President of the United States during Thomas Jefferson’s first term as President. Jefferson dumped him for his second term as President and selected Burr’s political rival, George Clinton as Vice-President. However, during Burr’s time as Vice President, “He went to Anthony Merry, the British minister in Washington and offered to ‘effect a separation of the Western part of the United States.’ His price was 110,000 Pounds and the support of a British fleet off the mouth of the Mississippi.” “He joined forces with General James Wilkinson, who, it will be recalled, had previously accepted money from Spain to betray his country’s interests, and in 1806, they organized a small force at a place called Blennerhassett Island, in the Ohio River.”

Continued on the next page

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Continued from page one

“For some reason, however— possibly because he was incapable of loyalty to anyone – Wilkinson betrayed Burr to Jefferson at the last moment.” Burr was arrested and the removal of the Louisiana Territory from the United States was stopped.

EXIT THE VILLAINS: After Burr’s arrest, the villains ceased to be a problem for Moses Austin. However, the lead mines weren’t doing well and Moses’ family had increased in size with the additions of daughter Emily and son Brown; Moses could no longer afford to send Stephen on to Yale University to become an attorney as his mother had hoped. At the age of sixteen, Stephen’s formal education ended. Stephen left Transylvania University and came back home to Missouri.

Next Month – Part 7: Back Home To Missouri

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

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CURRENT APRIL BOOKINGS

Day	Organization
4	Guzick Elementary School, Dallas
9	Hearne Elementary School, Hearne
10	Parkwood Retirement Community, Bedford
10	The Renaissance - Austin, Austin
12	Stanzel Model Aircraft Museum, Schulenburg
12	Friends of the Dick Smith Library, Stephenville
14	Crockett Middle School, Amarillo
15	Park Central Retirement Community, Amarillo (3 performances)
16	Parmer County Museum, Friona (2 performances)
17	Windsong, Lubbock
18	Puckett Elementary School, Amarillo
18	Grand Court - Lubbock, Lubbock
21	Village on the Park - Steeplechase, Houston
22	Northwest Bible Church, Dallas
22	The Conservatory at Alden Bridge, The Woodlands
22	Parkway Place, Houston
22	The Conservatory at Champion Forest, Spring
23	Camden Royal Oaks, Houston
24	Texas Education Agency Region V Education Service Center, Silsbee (2 performances)
24	Highland Park Presbyterian Day School, Dallas
24	Atria Collier Park, Beaumont
25	Pattison Elementary School, Katy
25	Forum at Memorial Woods, Houston
26	Lions Clubs International District Conference, Houston
28	The Buckingham, Houston
29	Pebblecreek Montessori School, Plano (3 performances)
29	Tarrytown Estates, Houston

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

For a list of all future bookings, go to <http://www.texasheroes.net/thefuture.html>

For a list of all prior clients, go to <http://www.texasheroes.net/thepast.html>