

# FYI on Texas History by Bob Heinonen

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## TEXAS STATE FAIR

Have you ever been to the Texas State Fair? Every Texan should go at least three times in a lifetime. It opens at Fair Park just southeast of downtown Dallas on Friday, September 26, and runs through October 19. Yup...three weeks which gives you plenty of time to go twice.

There are all sorts of unusual events like the Glue A Shoe Contest, Pumpkin Carving, Jeep Climbing, and Meet The Cowboys Cheerleaders. And that is just on the first day!

I always have to eat at least two Fletcher's Corny Dogs with mustard and spend a lot of time in the Automobile exhibits. But I also like to tour the animal barns and all the display booths. One year I bought two storage buildings



Big Tex at the Texas State Fair is 52 feet tall and talks

## THE LIFE AND TIMES OF STEPHEN F. AUSTIN

### Part 12: The Work Begins

by Bob Heinonen

By the time Austin returned to Texas from Mexico City with his empresario agreement in hand, it was already June of 1823...over a year after he had left Texas. When he arrived home, he was caught by surprise; it turns out his colonists were angry with him. They had been working on "their" land now for over a year without title to it. Austin had seen this happen before back in Missouri. Families had been putting all their efforts into developing land they were not certain they would own.

Also, Austin's colonists viewed him as a wealthy man attempting to become richer off of them by charging them 12.5 cents an acre. It is true that, as a part of his empresario contract, Austin was given a lot of land but if land was being given away, his land was of no value. And he had no money; how was he to pay his business expenses...his personal expenses? But, rather than causing a conflict with his colonists, Austin relinquished.

By 1824, Austin's original 300 colonists began settling near the new colony's headquarters – the village of San

Felipe de Austin. Americans had already become excited about Texas. And, while Stephen F. Austin was giving birth to what became a nation, American personalities who would have impact on Texas were plying their wares elsewhere.

"In 1822 "General" [Sam] Houston and two friends purchased shares in the Texas Association of Tennessee. This was one of many speculative companies that sprang up after Moses Austin negotiated his "empresario" colonization contract with Spain.... Land speculation, and in many cases the dream of emigration and settlement, led people to buy shares in such companies."<sup>1</sup> In 1823 Houston ran for and won a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives representing Tennessee; Andrew Jackson won a Tennessee Senate seat at the same time. They joined David Crockett in Washington where Crockett was already a Representative from Tennessee.

Andrew Jackson had risen to national prominence as the hero of the Battle of New Orleans in 1815, and he ran for President of the U.S. in 1824. Jackson received the most popular votes, but did not receive a majority of the votes in the electoral college, and lost to his opponent, John Quincy Adams, in a vote by the House of Representatives.

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Also in 1823, Anson Jones, last President of the Republic of Texas, was establishing another unsuccessful medical practice, this time in Philadelphia. William Barret Travis was fourteen years old, living with his parents, and attending school in Alabama. James Bowie was filing fraudulent land claims in Louisiana.

Over the next years, Austin's colonists began to build a great civilization out of the wilderness...without one dollar of government money. It is true there were some problems with his colonists. They mostly came from the United States where they were used to a more open form of government, where you could have public meetings and criticize the government. Both of those things were against the law in Mexico which was handed down by hundreds of years of Spanish rule, but Austin was fairly well able to maintain the peace and order.

Then, around 1830, Stephen F. Austin's goal in life changed.

## **Next Month – Part 13: A Change of Goals**

*Information for this article has been gleaned from many long forgotten sources plus **Andrew Jackson – Symbol for an Age** by John William Ward, **Sam Houston – A Biography of the Father of Texas** by John Hoyt Williams, **Three Roads To The Alamo** by William C Davis.*

*Bob Heinonen is the founder of **Texas Heroes** and has been portraying Stephen F. Austin since 1993. See [www.TexasHeroes.net/StephenFAustin.html](http://www.TexasHeroes.net/StephenFAustin.html). Copyright© by Bob Heinonen 2008.*

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## **CURRENT OCTOBER BOOKINGS**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Organization</b>
3	The Continental, Austin
6	National Tooling and Machining Association, Austin (2 performances)
6	Home schooling group, Friendswood
7	Patriot Heights, San Antonio
7	Forum at Lincoln Heights, San Antonio
7	Forum at Memorial Woods, Houston
7	The Terrace at First Colony, Sugar Land
7	The Conservatory at Wells Branch, Austin
8	Camden Royal Oaks, Houston
8	Village Park of Tanglewood, Houston
9	Parkway Place, Houston
9	League City Historical Society, League City
10	The Abbey at Westminster Place, Houston
15	St. Joseph Village, Coppell
17	Reinhardt Elementary School in Dallas for the Dallas Historical Society
19	The Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum, Austin
20	The Plaza at The Buckingham, Houston
20	The Buckingham, Houston
21	Eagle's Trace, Houston
21	Waldenbrooke Estates, Bryan
22	Tarrytown Estates, Houston
24	Angleton Intermediate School, Angleton (2 performances)
25	Stephen F. Austin Birthday Party, Angleton
28	Meadowstone Place, Dallas

The list above is the bookings as of the issuance of this newsletter. Check our website for an up-to-date list:

All future bookings, go to <http://www.TexasHeroes.net/thefuture.html>

All clients, go to <http://www.TexasHeroes.net/thepast.html>