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## "The Father of Texas" series ends

This issue contains the 20<sup>th</sup> and final chapter of *The Life and Times of Stephen F. Austin*. Next month, I will pick up where I left off with *The Legends of Texas*. If you have any legends you would like me to address, let me know.

## Two new American heroes in one month

- Patrick Henry
- John Wayne

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## Patrick Henry

June brings the debut of a truly American hero, Patrick Henry. For the last few years, I had been trying to decide which American hero to portray. After considering John Adams and then his son John Quincy Adams, and Andrew Jackson, I decided that I could best tell the story of the founding of our nation through the eyes of Patrick Henry.

Selecting a character to portray is a very personal thing...you have to have empathy for the real person. You have to be able to relate to the events of the individual's life. And, you cannot be totally unlike the person physically.

I portray Patrick Henry in 1796, just twenty years after the signing of the



Bob Heinonen as Patrick Henry

Declaration of Independence and six years after the final approval of the Constitution Of The United States of America. He is 60 years old and within three years of his death.

Henry had become the most popular politician in Virginia where he served as governor. In 1796, he declined George Washington's offers to become Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Secretary of State, and Ambassador to France. In this same year he also declined running for President of the United States.

My first program in a series as Patrick Henry is called **Why America?** Today, as then, it is an important question: Why America?

## John Wayne

Yes, our own Jack Edmondson has brought John Wayne back to life. It was John Wayne's 1960 movie **The Alamo** that brought The Alamo into the limelight in modern times. In the film, John Wayne starred as Davy Crockett, Richard Widmark as James Bowie and Laurence Harvey as William Barret Travis.

Jack, possibly the world's foremost expert on James Bowie, portrays the Texas Revolution hero James Bowie who died at The Alamo. I guess it is a natural next step for an actor who portrays an Alamo hero to portray an actor who portrays another Alamo hero...did that make any sense? Does this mean we will see Jack Edmondson portraying John Wayne portraying Davy Crockett? Only time will tell.

In the meantime, Jack is available for events where "The Duke" mixes and mingles with the crowd. He also can give a ten minute talk on heroes.

For more information on booking Jack as *The Duke*, give me a call or e-mail me.

Jack Edmondson as John Wayne on Jack's horse Jake



## Texas Heroes

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## THE LIFE AND TIMES OF STEPHEN F. AUSTIN

### Part 20: The Father of Texas

Stephen F. Austin died on December 27, 1836, less than nine months after his Texas had become a nation. He died in the national capital of The Republic of Texas, Columbia. Mirabeau B. Lamar said he had worked himself to death. Since his imprisonment in Mexico City, Austin certainly had not taken the opportunity to regain his strength and health.

Sam Houston, the President of the new Republic of Texas, immediately sent out a broadside (flyer) across Texas that read:

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#### THE PATRIARCH HAS LEFT US.

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He worked  
himself to  
death

*WE perform a most painful duty in announcing the death of GENERAL STEPHEN F. AUSTIN, who departed this life, yesterday, at half-past 12 o'clock, P. M. at the house of judge McKinstry. His friends and relations have sustained an irreparable loss; his country, just merging in existence, the best and tenderest of fathers; the sons and daughters of Texas have now full cause for mourning, with one solitary consolation, that they will meet the just man above.*

*His remains will leave for Peach Point, for interment at twelve o'clock to-day.*

*Columbia, December 28, 1836.*

"The Patriarch"...."the best and tenderest of fathers"....the Father of Texas. This is the first time we see this title.

"On the morning of December 29 [1836], Austin's body was carried on board the steamboat *Yellowstone* at Columbia for the short trip down the Brazos River to Peach Point [his sister Emily's plantation]. Sam Houston, members of the cabinet, a military escort, Moses Austin Bryan and assorted friends accompanied the remains. From James Perry's river landing the mourners traveled the two miles to the family burial plot, where the empresario was laid to rest. Houston threw the first handful of dirt on the coffin."

Stephen F. Austin remained buried at Peach Point for 75 years. In 1851, when the State Cemetery was opened in the state capital of Austin (named after Stephen F.), the family was asked if his remains could be moved to the highest point in the new cemetery. For their own reasons, the family decided to let Stephen rest where he was.

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“In 1910, the Texas legislature made arrangements for Austin’s remains to be exhumed from their resting place at Peach Point plantation in Brazoria County and buried with high honors in the State Cemetery in Austin. On October 18 a group of legislators and Austin relatives opened Austin’s grave and found the empresario’s bones “in a state of complete preservation.” Services were held in Houston, and then the bones were brought by train to Austin, where a military escort accompanied them to the state capitol. From there they were taken to the State Cemetery and reinterred on the highest point on the grounds.” You may visit his gravesite in the State Cemetery today.

The Father of Texas has completed his journey.

### **Finis**

Quotes are from Gregg Cantrell’s **Stephen F. Austin – Empresario of Texas**  
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) .  
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## Texas Heroes June Performances

**Day Organization**

1	Kerr Middle School, Burleson (2 performances)
10	Subsonic Aerodynamic Testing Association, Washington-on-the-Brazos
11	The Terrace at Clear Lake, Webster
11	Remington Park at Baytown, Baytown
11	Atria Collier Park, Beaumont
16	Heritage Place, Fredericksburg
17	Patriot Heights, San Antonio
18	Independence Hill, San Antonio
22	Three Fountains, Dallas
22	Parc Place Retirement, Bedford
23	Trinity Terrace, Fort Worth
23	Lakewood Village Christian Care Center, Fort Worth
23	Highland Springs, Dallas
25	Meadow Lakes Retirement Community, North Richland Hills
25	Chambrel at Club Hill, Garland
26	Isle at Watermere, Southlake
26	The Conservatory at Plano, Plano
29	The Summit at Westlake Hills, Austin
30	Forum at Lincoln Heights, San Antonio

This is the reservation list as of the issuance of this newsletter. For an up-to-date list, check our website at:

[http://www.TexasHeroes.net/Texas\\_Heroes\\_calendar.htm](http://www.TexasHeroes.net/Texas_Heroes_calendar.htm)

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