

**STEPHEN F. AUSTIN**  
**Composed and dramatized by BOB HEINONEN**

**THE LIFE AND TIMES OF STEPHEN F. AUSTIN**

**Part 19: The Republic of Texas**

by Bob Heinonen

During the Texas Revolution, Stephen F. Austin, Dr. Branch Archer and William Wharton were in the United States raising money and men to fight in the Revolution. Then, in May, 1836, his job done, Austin was returning home on a boat coming down the Ohio River when he heard of Sam Houston's victory at San Jacinto on April 21. Austin finally arrived home at the end of June after a sea-sickening voyage from New Orleans. He was exhausted and worn down. He had not gotten real rest since his imprisonment in Mexico, the revolutionary events in Texas, and his six month trip to the United States to raise money and men.

When Austin returned home, he was looking forward to leaving public affairs and get some rest. But rest was not to be his. Austin's friends came to him and said, "Stephen, we need you to be the President of The Republic of Texas. You are the only man the people of Texas will listen to." How could he say "no" to his Texas.

Stephen F. Austin ran for the presidency, but two weeks before the election, Sam Houston, the hero of San Jacinto, in a surprise move, threw his hat in the ring and won the presidency by a landslide.

Austin was actually somewhat relieved for now maybe he could find some peace. Maybe now he could settle on that land that he owned. Maybe he could find himself a wife if a woman would have him at the age of 42.

But, peace was not to be his. Sam Houston, the new President of The Republic of Texas, came to Austin and said, "Stephen, we need you to be the Secretary of State of The Republic of Texas. We need you to convince the other nations of the world, in particular the United States, that we are truly an independent nation." And how could he say "no."

Austin threw himself into his personal and public work. His home had been burned to the ground during the Revolution, so he was renting a one room shack on the side of the home of a friend of his in Columbia, the new capitol of Texas. The room was unheated. His family and friends brought furnishings and blankets for his room.

In December, Austin became ill. His family and friends came to care for him. It was two days after Christmas that he awoke from a dream. He said, "The independence of Texas has been recognized! Dr. Archer told me so. Have you read it in the newspaper?"

With those very words, Stephen F. Austin died, lying on a wooden pallet in a clapboard shack just nine months after his Texas had become a nation.

**Next Month – Part 20: The Father of Texas**

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*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 2009.*