

THE ATTITUDE OF TEXAS TOWARD ANNEXATION

1836-1845

by

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A THESIS

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THE ATTITUDE OF TEXAS TOWARD ANNEXATION
1836-1845

A THESIS

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Sam Houston State Teachers College
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

by

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Purpose

It was the purpose of this study to determine how Texas and Texans regarded annexation while existing as a Republic. Were the people united in their desire for annexation? Did the position of any of the people change during the years of waiting and rejection? Was the attitude of the government and the people identical?

Methods

The following sources were used in obtaining data for this study: (1) the published diplomatic correspondence of Texas, (2) historical periodicals containing articles on Texas annexation, (3) newspapers published during the time of Texas independence, and (4) the published papers and letters of President Houston, President Lamar, and President Jones.

Findings

The evidence presented in this study was divided into the four Presidential administrations:

1. In the beginning of Sam Houston's first administration, Texans and their government were almost unanimous in their desire for annexation. However, after being rejected

by the United States in 1837, the people turned their attention to domestic affairs and the difficulties of obtaining foreign recognition.

2. Mirabeau B. Lamar was elected President to succeed Houston and his opposition to annexation was well known. Lamar attempted to develop Texas nationalism, but most of his schemes ended in failure and financial chaos. This, in turn, caused the people to forget their chagrin at being rejected by the United States and to re-elect Sam Houston, the champion of annexation, to take again the helm of state.

3. Houston made no overt move for annexation despite the clamor of the people. Finally, after many overtures from the United States, he reluctantly agreed to negotiate a treaty of annexation. Houston did not believe the United States Senate would ratify such a treaty and he was subsequently proved correct. He then abruptly turned his back on annexation and instructed his Secretary of State, Anson Jones, to conclude a treaty with England whereby Texas would agree never to be annexed to any country. Even though they were disappointed, the people were not as bitter as Houston. They observed the train of political events in the United States and believed that annexation would soon be offered again.

4. Anson Jones followed Houston as President and few

were sure of his position concerning annexation. Actually, Jones wanted annexation, but played a diplomatic game to secure for the people a free choice between independence, recognized and guaranteed, and annexation. The people were impatient and demanded action on the annexation offer made by the United States in 1845. Even though Jones secured the offer of independence, the people overwhelmingly accepted annexation to their mother country. Jones did achieve annexation as an equal state, being sought--not seeking admittance. This was the fulfillment of his many years of seemingly contradictory labor.

Approved:

Supervising Professor

PREFACE

Texas' efforts to establish diplomatic relations with the United States began on November 12, 1835, with the appointment of three commissioners to that country. Their responsibility was not only to promote good public relations and secure supplies and money, but also to determine the attitude of the United States government toward Texas and the possibility of annexation. For the following ten years of the life of the Republic of Texas, this problem of desire for annexation had a great influence on the policies and actions of the Texas government.

Evidently little investigation has been made of how Texas and Texans regarded annexation during the period of Texas independence. This includes both the official government attitude and that of the people generally. Were the people united in their desire for annexation? Or, were there some who opposed annexation from the start? Of those who strongly supported annexation in the early days of Texas independence, did the position of any of the people change or shift and become dilatory during the years of waiting and rejection? Was the attitude of the government and the people identical? The answers to these questions may be found in many documents of Texas history.

The importance of the posture of Texas was made clear in a memorandum written February 15, 1850, by Anson Jones:

There is one feature in annexation as finally accomplished, which is not less remarkable and worthy of consideration than that the measure was accomplished at all, in the face of the obstacles once interposed. This is the "attitude" in which Texas entered the union. . . . She therefore took her place among her sisters in 1846, as a proud equal, and not a humble inferior--as one conferring a favor rather than receiving one--and this was not demanding too much; I only placed her in her just and true "attitude," and I hope she will always maintain it.¹

The purpose of this study is to trace the development of this "attitude" of Texas and Texans toward annexation during the period of her history as a republic. Since there were four administrations during this period, each has been studied separately to determine both the official posture of the government and the position of the people. Each administration has been studied to determine whether its policy toward annexation was constant or changing.

The following sources were used in obtaining data for this study: (1) the published diplomatic correspondence of Texas, (2) historical periodicals containing articles on Texas annexation, (3) newspapers published during the time of Texas independence, and (4) the published papers and letters of President Houston, President Lamar, and President Jones.

¹ Anson Jones, Memoranda and Official Correspondence Relating to the Republic of Texas, its History and Annexation, 64-65.

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CHAPTER I

THE GENESIS OF ANNEXATION

Late in 1818, the Bank of the United States belatedly took deflationary measures to control the boom then in effect, but the action also touched off the panic of 1819. This brought a sudden stop to land speculation and ruined many people, especially the thousands who were in debt to the government for land purchases.¹ The Land Act of 1800 had provided liberal credit terms with land selling for not less than two dollars per acre. Land could be purchased for one fourth down and another fourth in two years, another fourth in three years, and the final fourth four years after purchase.²

As a result of the panic of 1819, the United States government enacted the land law of 1820 which reduced the price of land to one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre and eliminated credit terms.³ This was an excellent idea if the people had money, which they did not after the panic.

Moses Austin was one of those ruined by the panic of

¹ Samuel Eliot Morison and Henry Steele Commager, The Growth of the American Republic, Vol. I, 441-442.

² Henry Steele Commager (ed.), "Land Act of 1800, May 10, 1800," Documents of American History, 185-186.

³ H. S. Commager (ed.), "Land Act of 1820, April 24, 1820," ibid., 227.

1819, but he was a promoter. He had the idea of going to Texas, establishing a colony, charging fees for his services and giving away the Spanish King's land, which currently was valueless. He felt that if he could get Spanish permission that many Anglo-American families would quickly come to Texas as colonists on the free land.⁴

The idea of giving away free land certainly helps explain the Anglo-American development of Texas as successfully carried out by Moses Austin and Stephen F. Austin. In his essay "The Significance of the American Frontier," Frederick Jackson Turner expounded the thesis that "the existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development."⁵ The forces set in motion in 1820 changed Texas from a Spanish territory to a part of the Anglo-American empire.

Americans left their homeland in the United States and emigrated to Texas. There they became Mexican citizens and apparently loyal ones.⁶ Circumstances, however, caused a change in the attitude of Texans toward Mexico. In 1833 Stephen F. Austin wrote, "There is a decided opposition to

⁴Herbert Gambrell, Anson Jones: The Last President of Texas, 26-27.

⁵Ray Allen Billington, Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier, 1-11.

⁶Eugene C. Barker, The Life of Stephen F. Austin, 202.

separating from the Mexican Confederacy. The people do not desire it and would not agree to it, if they could get a state government, but anything would be better than to remain as we are."⁷ While in prison in Mexico in 1834, Austin did not think that Texas should separate from Mexico even if she could do so. He also felt that it would not be in the best interest of the United States to acquire Texas, for economic as well as geographic reasons.⁸ However, in a short period of time Austin's ideas underwent a considerable change.

That he held the idea of Texas independence prior to his return to Texas in 1835 from prison in Mexico is revealed in a letter written from New Orleans, August 21, 1835.

. . . The situation in Texas is daily becoming more and more interesting, so much so that I doubt whether the government of the United States or that of Mexico can much longer look on with indifference, or inaction . . . It is well known that my object had always been to fill up Texas with a North American population; and besides, it may become a question of "to be, or not to be." And in that event, the great law of nature--self preservation--operates and supersedes all other laws.⁹

In 1835 Austin was thought by his contemporaries to be

⁷Austin to Mrs. Holley, April 20, 1833, ibid., 426.

⁸"The 'Prison Journal' of Stephen F. Austin," Texas State Historical Association Quarterly, II (July, 1898-April, 1899), 204-205.

⁹Austin to Mrs. Holley, August 21, 1835, in E. C. Barker, "Stephen F. Austin and the Independence of Texas," Texas State Historical Quarterly, XIII (July, 1909-April, 1910), 270-273.

inconsistent in his views. However, he had become convinced that independence must come; yet it was the timing and manner with which he was concerned. Austin understood the Mexicans and their great regard for appearances. He knew that appearances must be observed, and that the more Anglo-Americans in the colony, the more easily would Mexico give up Texas, and the more that Texas appeared to want to remain part of Mexico the less determined would Mexico be to hold Texas. There was not time enough to carry out his ideas, for the war was upon Texas.¹⁰

Late in the year 1835, shortly after his imprisonment in Mexico, Stephen F. Austin gave his approval to the colonists for their war against Mexico.¹¹ The Consultation of the Chosen Delegates of all Texas in General Convention assembled on November 3, 1835, and voted against a declaration of independence. The presiding officer stated that Texans were not battling alone but were "laying the corner stone of liberty in the great Mexican Republic."¹²

Changes in attitude were sometimes rapid. On March 1, 1836, there convened at Washington-on-the-Brazos a Convention "with ample, unlimited, or plenary powers as to the form of

¹⁰ Ethel Zivley Rather, "Recognition of the Republic of Texas by the United States," ibid., 163-165.

¹¹ Rupert Norval Richardson, Texas, The Lone Star State, 84-85.

¹² Quoted in ibid., 89.

government to be adopted."¹³ This body drafted and signed a declaration of independence and adopted a constitution. The Convention made itself the government, then created an interim government until the war could be won and a permanent government formed, as set forth in the constitution.¹⁴

Meanwhile, B. T. Archer, S. F. Austin, and William H. Wharton, the commissioners who had been sent to the United States by the "Consultation of 1835" to solicit aid for Texas and to determine if "Texas can become a member of that Republic [U.S.]."¹⁵ reported that "we believe this government [The United States] is prepared to recognize us, and if we wish, to admit us into this Union, on liberal principles, if the people of Texas wish it."¹⁶

Since a large percentage of Texans had been born and reared in the United States, annexation seemed the logical solution to all their problems. Most Texans seemed to think that they would not be able to survive as an independent country without considerable hardship. They were not ready

¹³ Quoted in ibid., 94-96.

¹⁴ John Henry Brown, History of Texas, From 1685 to 1892, Vol. I, 554-596.

¹⁵ Smith to Austin, Archer, and Wharton, December 8, 1835, in Garrison (ed.), "Texas Diplomatic Correspondence," Annual Report of the American Historical Society, 1907, Vol. I, 52-54.

¹⁶ Austin, Archer, and Wharton to the Government of Texas, April 6, 1836, in Garrison (ed.), ibid., 80.

for independence when circumstances forced it upon them. Independence involved many problems which the Texans were not prepared to meet. Even the commissioners had not realized the difficulties that were involved with annexation and did not discover any strong anti-Texas feeling existing in the United States.¹⁷

Taking advantage of the popular support Texas had gained in the United States, President Burnet appointed James Collingsworth and Peter W. Grayson as special agents to the United States.¹⁸ These were the first agents or representatives of Texas to the United States with definite instructions concerning annexation. On this subject their instructions were specific:

You are further instructed to say: that in the opinion of this government, the annexation of Texas to the United States as a member of that confederacy, would be for many weighty reasons highly acceptable to the people of this country. You will . . . inquire the terms upon which, in the opinion of the authorities you address, the proposed event might be attained and you will on your part state with candor the terms upon which, as you think, it would be acceptable to the people of Texas.¹⁹

¹⁷George P. Garrison, "The First Stage of the Movement For The Annexation of Texas," American Historical Review, X (October, 1904-July, 1905), 72-96.

¹⁸LeRoy R. Hafen and Carl C. Rister, Western America, 304.

¹⁹Wm. H. Jack, Secretary of State, to James Collingsworth and Peter W. Grayson, May 26, 1836, in Garrison (ed.), op. cit., 89-90.

The special agents were also instructed on the indispensable points for annexation, which were that (1) all laws of the government of Texas would be validated; (2) land titles and rights would be protected; (3) slavery would be allowed; (4) Texans indebted to foreigners would be protected for a number of years; (5) liberal appropriation of public lands would be made for endowment of schools; and (6) all penal laws would be carried out by the authorities of Texas. The official attitude of Texas was one of an humble applicant setting forth a minimum list of the points deemed essential.

The application of Texas was routinely accepted in Washington. President Jackson informed Collingsworth and Grayson that he had sent an agent to Texas to ascertain the facts and that nothing would be done until this agent reported back. The President then left Washington for the Hermitage where he planned to spend the summer. Secretary of State John Forsyth forwarded to President Jackson the terms upon which Texas was seeking admission and told the two Texas agents that he could do nothing until he heard from the President.²⁰ It is obvious that the United States was cool to the Texas application for annexation.

President Jackson's agent to Texas, Henry W. Morfit,

²⁰ Collingsworth and Grayson to Burnet, July 15, 1836, in Garrison (ed.), ibid., 110-111.

was to report on conditions as they existed. On September 12, 1836, he wrote that

the desire of the people to be admitted into our confederacy is so prevailing, that any conditions will be acceptable which will include the guarantee of a republican form of government, and will not impair the obligations of contracts. The old settlers are composed, for the most part, of industrious farmers, who are tired of the toils of war, and are anxious to raise up their families under the auspices of good laws, and leave them the inheritance of a safe and free government.²¹

Collingsworth and Grayson accomplished nothing further regarding annexation prior to their being superseded by the Honorable Wm. H. Wharton, Minister to the United States.

During this time Texans were busy preparing for the first elections for a permanent government. One of the questions to be voted upon was the proposal for annexation to the United States. Part of the proclamation for elections as signed by Provisional President Burnet reads,

And as it is conceived important to the interest of the country that the people should determine whether they are in favor of annexing Texas to the United States, the managers are required to put the questions direct to each voter, and make return of the number of votes for or against it.²²

²¹Garrison, op. cit., 72-96.

²²"Proclamation, By the President of the Republic of Texas, July 23, 1836," Texas Almanac, 1861, 48-49.

The vote was almost unanimous in favor of annexation, with 3,277 votes in favor and 91 opposed.²³

From the beginning of the Anglo-American colonization of Texas until the establishment of the first constitutional government of the new Republic the attitude of Texas toward the United States changed greatly. The colonists came to Texas to start a new life after financial ruin or failure in the mother country. They became loyal Mexican citizens with no thought of changing allegiance. Finally, when the oppression of the Mexican government forced rebellion upon them, their first thoughts were of independence. This brought many problems which they were not ready to face, and another turning point was reached. Their position caused them to turn their eyes toward the country of their birth and asked for annexation. As the first constitutional government of the new republic prepared to take charge of the country, the attitude of the provisional government and the people toward annexation was that of the humble suppliant.

²³Eugene C. Barker, "The Annexation of Texas," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, L (July, 1946-April, 1947), 52.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST ADMINISTRATION OF SAM HOUSTON

The first major project of the Houston Administration was to attempt the consummation of the mandate of the people as expressed in the election held on the first Monday of September, 1836. The first Texas Congress was so anxious for annexation that it officially advised President Houston, by a joint resolution that was passed November 16, 1836, on the necessary action that he should take in carrying out his executive duties regarding foreign policy. The resolution states:

That the President be, and is hereby authorized and requested to dispatch forthwith to the government of the United States of America, a minister, . . . and for immediate annexation to the United States; a measure required by the almost unanimous voice of the people of Texas, and fully concurred in by the present congress.¹

On the formation of the constitutional government and in compliance with this resolution, President Houston appointed Wm. H. Wharton as the first commissioner and prospective minister to the United States. He departed Texas for Washington the latter part of November, 1836.²

¹ H. P. N. Gammel (ed.), "Joint Resolution of the Texas Congress, November 16, 1836," Laws of Texas 1822-1897, Vol. I, 1089-1090.

² John Henry Brown, History of Texas, From 1685 to 1892, Vol. II, 207.

Stephen F. Austin, Secretary of State of Texas, gave Wharton very definite instructions for accomplishing the objects of his mission. "The most important of these objects are: first, the recognition of the independence of Texas, and second, the annexation of this country to the United States." Austin knew that recognition must come before, or at least simultaneously, with annexation. He points out in his instructions the suppliant attitude of the people of Texas and their government for immediate annexation to the United States.

As to the second great object of your mission, which is the annexation of Texas to the United States, you will make every exertion to effect it with the least possible delay using your discretion as to the proper mode of bringing it before the Executive or Congress. . . . In negotiating and forming this treaty, while you bear in mind that it is a favorite measure with the people of Texas and much desired by them, as is proven by their almost unanimous vote in favor of it at the September election (1836).
 . . . 3

On the same day Austin gave Wharton additional and personal instructions regarding Texas' attitude toward annexation. It is important and interesting to note these instructions in detail, for this is the foundation of Texas' policy regarding annexation which was followed for the next ten years. Stephen F. Austin was truly the father of Texas,

³ Austin to Wharton, November 18, 1836, in Garrison (ed.), "Texas Diplomatic Correspondence," Vol. 1, 127-135. Austin seems very emphatic.

leading and guiding from 1820 until his death a month after he wrote the following to Wharton in Washington:

Notwithstanding the vote of the people at the September election, in favor of annexation, you are aware that very many persons of influence who voted for the measure, merely yielded to the peculiar circumstances of the times; and incline strongly to the opinion that Texas ought to remain a separate and independent Republic. . . . England, France and Mexico . . . have it in their power to influence very materially in fixing the political position of Texas. Suppose the two former, and especially England should pursue the course which sound policy evidently dictates and interposes their influence with Mexico to procure an acknowledgement of our independence, and it was known in Texas that favorable treaties could be made with those nations, and suppose at the same time that indifference is manifested by the United States as to receiving us . . . what would be the consequence? The answer is evident. . . . We therefore abandon all idea of annexation. . . . It is a correct exhibition of facts, and what will certainly take place, should the course and policy of the United States be adverse. In the event therefore of discovering any such disposition in the government or Congress free conversations with the British, French and other foreign minister, on the Texas question, explaining to them the great commercial advantages that will result to their nations from our cotton, etc. and finding a market here for their merchandize, and an outlet for their surplus population, on the basis of a system of low duties and liberal encouragement which it would be our interest to establish.⁴

Houston and Austin must have had misgivings or second thoughts about the above independent sounding instructions. Either that or they did not fully trust the judgment of the

⁴Austin to Wharton, November 18, 1836, in Garrison (ed.), ibid., 135-140.

impetuous Wharton and were afraid that he would make an erroneous decision without consultation with the home government. To insure that Wharton did not leave any stone unturned and did not become too inflexible in his attitude, Austin wrote further instructions to Wharton after his departure. He told Wharton that Houston had directed that if Texas could not be admitted as a state, then she was willing to be admitted as a territory. Further, that if the United States wanted to give Mexico a sum of money for a quit claim to Texas, that Texas would not object to entering the Union on that basis.⁵ It was obvious that at this time Houston wanted Texas to become a part of the United States and was willing to enter under any circumstances. Even before he was inaugurated as President of Texas, Sam Houston wrote to the President of the United States, Andrew Jackson, a personal letter. In this he stated that his one great desire was the annexation of Texas to the United States. Houston also told President Jackson that it was to be Texas policy to sustain the idea that Texas could maintain herself against any power even though he knew she could not do it.⁶ This perhaps helps explain some of Houston's subsequent actions in trying to achieve annexation.

⁵Austin to Wharton, December 10, 1836, in Garrison (ed.), ibid., 150-151.

⁶General Houston to Andrew Jackson, November 20, 1836, in Amelia W. Williams and Eugene C. Barker (eds.), The Writings of Sam Houston 1813-1863, Vol. I, 487-488.

The more humble Texas became in her application, the more remote and disinterested the United States became. Wharton was especially disappointed as a result of his first interview with the United States Secretary of State John Forsyth. He was told that President Jackson wanted Texas independence to be recognized by some other power before the United States acted. Forsyth said that Texas' vote for annexation had embarrassed the United States.⁷

Wharton felt that nothing further could be accomplished toward annexation with Congress in recess and, since Mrs. Wharton needed an operation, he requested that he be returned to Texas. However, with communications slow and difficult, other changes took place before this could be accomplished.

On December 27, 1836, Stephen F. Austin died. One writer quotes Austin as saying in his dying delirium, "Texas has been admitted."⁸ J. Pinckney Henderson succeeded Austin as Acting Secretary of State. President Houston, with the idea of placing greater importance to annexation, appointed Memucan Hunt as Minister Extraordinary to the United States of America to work with Wharton. Henderson wrote very explicit instructions to Hunt. According to these

⁷ Wharton to Austin, December 22, 1836, in Garrison (ed.), op. cit., 157-158.

⁸ Clarence R. Wharton, The Republic of Texas, 181.

instructions, Hunt was to urge the annexation of Texas as a state and if this was not possible then as a territory. He was to explain the great commercial advantages that would accrue to the United States through annexation. If Texas were not annexed, then he was to state that she must turn to England and France for commercial treaties. In addition, the expansion of the United States would be stopped and the advantages of commerce, wealth, and strength would be lost to the United States.⁹ Texas, in effect, was begging with every conceivable argument to be annexed to the United States. Where was that great feeling of strength and independence that Texans are so prone to brag about? Was this not an act of begging for admittance?

In the meantime Wharton informed his government that, in an interview with Forsyth, he learned that the subject of annexation would be delayed until the next Congress, that postponement for years or forever was very possible.¹⁰ As Texans became more urgent in their desire, the United States became less receptive to the idea of annexation.

In the latter part of January, 1837, Wharton was informed by President Jackson that he was discussing with General Santa Anna the possibility of Mexico's ceding Texas

⁹ Henderson to Hunt, December 31, 1836, in Garrison (ed.), op. cit., 161-165.

¹⁰ Wharton to Austin, January 6, 1837, in Garrison (ed.), ibid., 168-172.

to the United States. This would be done on the basis of a payment of money to Mexico for a quit claim to Texas.¹¹

Wharton protested verbally to Jackson and on the same day wrote a letter to Forsyth formally protesting the sale or disposition of Texas by Mexico to the United States without the consent of the Texas Government. Wharton went on to say that

This consent I am empowered to give on the part of my government provided the terms and conditions, on which the people of Texas are willing to be annexed as laid down in my instructions, are definitely arranged and guaranteed by this Government [U.S.] beyond the power of doubt and cavil.¹²

Further, Wharton said that Texas could not be considered a competent party to any contract until she was recognized. He asked for recognition prior to any treaty being negotiated which concerned Texas. This, then, would seem to indicate that Texas would not yield further and was not a pawn to be moved about as the United States might desire. Wharton had properly interpreted the instructions given by Austin.

A few days later, in a letter to Jackson, Wharton and Hunt tried to bring pressure to bear on the recognition and annexation problem. They made the point of the results that

¹¹Wharton to Rusk, January 24, 1837, in Garrison (ed.), ibid., 187-192.

¹²Wharton to Forsyth, January 24, 1837, in Garrison (ed.), ibid., 192.

might ensue to the United States if they refused to annex Texas. Such refusal would cause bitter feeling toward the United States and make Texas turn to England and France for commercial treaties and be forever lost to the United States.¹³ The next day Jackson told them that he would do nothing more until Congress acted on the recognition question. They started correspondence with the Ministers of France and England regarding diplomatic exchange and commercial treaties. The original instructions of Austin were being heeded, as Texas would not sit around forever with hat in hand. Finally on March 3, 1837, the United States recognized Texas by a joint resolution of Congress as approved by President Jackson, his last official act.¹⁴

In an address to the Texas Congress when it reconvened on May 5, 1837, President Houston stated that the attitude of Texas toward annexation had not changed since Congress was last in session. The Texas Ministers to Washington had labored diligently but the United States Congress had adjourned without taking action on the question. He hoped for final determination by the United States Congress when it reconvened. In what seems to show a change in personal attitude, Houston said that Texas must follow a policy

¹³Wharton and Hunt to Jackson, February 8, 1837, in Garrison (ed.), ibid., 196-197.

¹⁴Brown, History of Texas, Vol. I, 207.

without regard to possible contingencies. Such a policy would insure Texas remaining independent and becoming prosperous.¹⁵

Houston did not hold to this latter position for long. On June 26, 1837, Secretary of State of Texas, Robert A. Irion, who had succeeded Henderson, wrote to Memucan Hunt, Texas Minister in Washington, who had succeeded Wharton, that President Houston desired to renew the application for annexation and to secure action as quickly as possible. Irion stated that Texas' permanent prosperity and possible continued existence depended upon immediate annexation.

It is useless for us to deceive ourselves on this subject, and it becomes my duty to inform you that the situation of the country is deplorable. We are without credit abroad and our resources are exhausted at home; and things generally are veering toward anarchy, violence and insubordination. Annexation is the remedy, and it is expected that you will exert yourself to effect it.¹⁶

Forty-eight days later Irion wrote again that the policy of the Texas government remained the same. Texas claimed the southern boundary as the Rio Grande but, if this would hold up annexation, Texas would agree to the Nueces River as the southern boundary. If Texas could not be admitted as a state, then status as a territory would be

¹⁵The President's Message, in Amelia W. Williams and Eugene C. Barker (eds.), op. cit., Vol. II, 87.

¹⁶Irion to Hunt, June 26, 1837, in Garrison (ed.), "Texas Diplomatic Correspondence," Vol. I, 127-135.

acceptable.¹⁷ These two communications carried a sense of urgency if not desperation which had not been shown in previous correspondence.

As a result of these instructions, Hunt submitted a formal proposal to the Van Buren administration to negotiate a treaty. This proposal was rejected and returned by Forsyth who said that as long as Texas and Mexico remained at war then any consideration of annexation could involve the United States in war with Mexico. To hold the proposal for future consideration would be placing the United States in a position of supporting the cause of Texas against a nation with which the United States had a treaty of friendship.¹⁸

The rejection of the proposed annexation was a keen disappointment to the people of Texas. Colonel William Fairfax Gray stated in his diary that all persons were disappointed. It was difficult for the people to accept their independence with its attendant responsibilities for debts, self defense, and other heavy financial burdens. From the memoirs of John S. Ford we also learn that the rejection was a hard blow to the people because they had hoped to be relieved of their bad financial condition and their

¹⁷ Irion to Hunt, August 13, 1837, in Garrison (ed.), ibid., 256-257.

¹⁸ John H. Latane, A History of American Foreign Policy, 242.

difficulties of operating the new republic.¹⁹ Alan Crawford, British Consul at Vera Cruz, was ordered by his government to make an inspection trip to Texas and report on general conditions there. He observed, in the fall of 1837, that the opinion of the people had changed as they could see many disadvantages to annexation and now did not wish to be annexed.²⁰ Frederic Leclerc, a Frenchman visiting Texas, observed in late 1837 that the apparent unpopularity of President Houston with the people was attributed to Houston's desire for annexation.²¹

Stanley Siegal, an eminent historian, says that because of the growing dislike for annexation by the people and further developing opposition in the United States Congress, Irion wrote to Hunt that the proposition of annexation seemed to be dead, at least for sometime to come. It appears that the Secretary of State of Texas completely reversed his feeling expressed four months previously. He stated:

No Texan since the battle of San Jacinto has distrusted, for a moment, our capability to maintain our independence; and the experience of every day attests the truth of that conviction. . . . Annexation with respect to

¹⁹ Stanley Siegal, A Political History of the Texas Republic, 1836-1845, 78.

²⁰ Crawford to Pakenham, May 26, 1837, in Ephraim Douglass Adams (ed.), "Correspondence from the British Archives Concerning Texas, 1837-1846," Texas State Historical Quarterly, XV (July, 1911-April, 1912), 209-217.

²¹ Justin H. Smith, The Annexation of Texas, 69.

ourselves alone is not a question of more embarrassment than heretofore. From indications evinced by members of the late session of the Texas Congress the people are becoming less anxious for the success of the measure. . . .

So great has been the change in public sentiment that it is probable, should the vote be again taken at the next September election, that a majority would vote against it.²²

In December then, Irion was confirming the observations made the previous May by Crawford, the British agent reporting from Texas. There were no further changes made in Texas' attitude for the next six months. The Texan Minister to the United States followed a policy of watchful waiting, and kept his government informed of the actions of the United States government. During this time there was much debate in the United States Congress on the subject of annexation. As the northern states did not want to have another slave state in the Union, the question of slavery was the center of the controversy. This made the question of annexation a center of American politics and delayed action. Finally in June, 1838, Memucan Hunt resigned as Texan Minister to the government of the United States.

During these months of waiting the attitude of the Texas Congress was changing. In April, 1838, the Honorable Anson Jones offered a joint resolution to the Texas Congress that authorized the President, at the most opportune time, to

²²Irion to Hunt, December 31, 1837, in Garrison (ed.), "Texas Diplomatic Correspondence," Vol. I, 277-281.

instruct the Texas Minister in Washington to withdraw the proposition for annexation of Texas to the United States.

This resolution was defeated by only one vote.²³ Jones wrote in his diary,

I then urged General Houston to withdraw the proposition, but he declined; but finally in the summer, when he requested me to take the office of minister to the United States, I made it one of the conditions of acceptance, that I should be permitted to withdraw the proposition, which was agreed upon.²⁴

Even though President Houston declined, in April, 1838, Anson Jones' request to withdraw the request for annexation, when Jones arrived in Washington as Minister, he found instructions dated May 19, 1838, to his predecessor Hunt that instructed him to withdraw the proposition. Hunt had resigned and left Washington prior to receipt of these instructions, and the Acting Charge' did not know how to carry them out since there was actually no document before the United States government on the subject. As previously noted, the Van Buren administration had rejected and returned the formal proposal for annexation as had been presented by Hunt.

This was no surprise to Jones because he knew this when he had introduced his resolution to the Texas Congress

²³ Herbert Gambrell, Anson Jones, The Last President of Texas, 129.

²⁴ Anson Jones, Memoranda and Official Correspondence Relating to The Republic of Texas, 64-66.

in April. The formal withdrawal was to be a diplomatic performance with the United States Government for the benefit of France, England, and Belgium. "It was the gesture of locking a door that had been slammed in one's face, so that it could not be reopened at will from the other side."²⁵

On noon of October 12, 1838, Minister Jones formally delivered to the United States Acting Secretary of State Vail the "formal and absolute withdrawal of the request for annexation."²⁶

This overt act of the Texas government raised her in the eyes of the European powers. It displayed the Texans' determination to hold their heads high and really be an independent nation. At the time of this action, Texas was negotiating for recognition by England and France, and the Texas Secretary of State Irion believed this strong action would "have a most favorable effect on our negotiations in Europe."²⁷

Sam Houston's first administration thus ended with the official attitude of maintaining Texas independence and gaining recognition of this by the European powers and Mexico. This was a complete reversal of the position taken by the

²⁵ Gambrell, op. cit., 137-138.

²⁶ Ibid., 145.

²⁷ Irion to Jones, November 29, 1838, in Garrison (ed.), "Texas Diplomatic Correspondence," Vol. II, 350-354.

administration when it came into power two years previously, for then Texas assumed the pose of the humble suppliant. Not only had the attitude of the government changed but so had that of the people. In 1836 they had voted overwhelmingly in favor of annexation and if given the opportunity to vote in 1838 they would probably have voted overwhelmingly in opposition to annexation. This feeling was apparently demonstrated in the Presidential election where a very large majority of the people voted for Mirabeau B. Lamar, long known for his consistent and strong opposition to annexation.

CHAPTER III

LAMAR DEVELOPS TEXAS NATIONALISM, 1838-1841

Beginning in 1837 there was a general movement to push General Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar as a successor to Sam Houston in the Texas Presidency. Many friends wrote urging him to submit his name in the election of 1838. In December of 1837, eleven of the fourteen Texas senators wrote Lamar urging him to accept the nomination. This was followed by public meetings throughout the country in which he was nominated. In reply to all of these urgings, he replied:

I came to this country for the sole purpose of subserving the great objects of the revolution. Until those objects are fully achieved, I do not feel myself at liberty to decline the duties of any station, however, high or humble to which the voice of my fellow citizens may call me.¹

Lamar was elected by a vote of 6,995 to 252 for his opponent. The campaign had been waged on personalities, and even though Lamar had voted against annexation in 1836 this was not used against him in the campaign. In fact, by election time the people of Texas apparently regarded the matter as settled since the United States had refused annexation and Texas had withdrawn her application. Lamar felt that this action was most fortunate for Texas and he

¹A. K. Christian, "Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXIII (July, 1919-April, 1920), 167-170.

impressed upon the people the idea that annexation would have been a national calamity.²

Upon the occasion of his last address to the Senate prior to being inaugurated as President, Lamar said,

If we will but maintain our present independent position . . . I cannot perceive why we may not, within a very short period, elevate our young republic into that political importance and proud distinction which will not only command the respect and admiration of the world, but render it the interest of the nations now discarding our friendship, to covet from us those commercial relations which we vainly solicit from them.³

According to Clarence Wharton the Texas people were resigned to their independent career after the death knell for annexation had been sounded in 1837. From this time until 1842 the question seems to have died out in both Texas and the United States, at least as far as public discussion was concerned.⁴ During these years Texas went through a dark and gloomy period. At home she was financially and militarily weak and abroad she was not thought of very highly.⁵

Lamar bent his efforts to diverting the thoughts of his countrymen from the problems of the moment toward the idea of laying the foundation of a great empire. Starting

²Louis J. Wortham, A History of Texas, 104.

³Christian, op. cit., 231.

⁴Clarence R. Wharton, The Republic of Texas, 220.

⁵Clarence R. Wharton, Texas Under Many Flags, 398.

with his inaugural address, Lamar used a nationalistic theme to give the Texans a feeling of pride in their country and themselves. He devoted a large part of his speech to the great possibilities which were open to Texas as an independent country.⁶ He wanted Texas to develop into an independent nation, to be recognized as such by Mexico and the great European powers, and to become financially sound with no idea of future annexation to the United States.⁷

Regarding annexation, President Lamar, in his inaugural address December 10, 1838, said that regardless of the fact that his fellow citizens almost unanimously supported annexation in the election of 1836, he had never been in favor of it. No advantage would accrue to Texas from such a union. Instead, he felt that annexation would bring a string of consequences which would cause lasting regret especially to the liberty and hopes of Texas. Through annexation Texas would become a small frog in a big pond. Remaining independent, Texas had a glorious future with her strong people, great natural resources and the possibility of extending to the Pacific Ocean on the west. From the time of San Jacinto a great change had come over Texas. Lamar said,

⁶D. W. Winfrey, "Mirabeau B. Lamar and Texas Nationalism," The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, LIX (July, 1955-April, 1956), 186.

⁷Thomas Maitland Marshall, "Diplomatic Relations of Texas and the United States, 1830-1843," Texas State Historical Association Quarterly, XV (July, 1911-April, 1912), 267.

I cannot regard the annexation of Texas to the American Union in any other light than as the grave of all her hopes of happiness and greatness. . . . That the people of Texas should have been in favor of annexation at the time their votes were given on the question is not a matter of surprise, when we consider the then existing condition of the country. She was left, after the battle of San Jacinto, feeble and exhausted. . . . Under such a state of things, no wonder that the people . . . should be willing to purchase momentary security by a surrender of their national independence. We have risen from our prostration with redoubled energies. And shall we now, in the midst of glorious hopes and increasing vigor, persevere in a suicidal policy, originally founded in necessity rather than in choice? Would it not be far better for us, since the reasons which influenced our former verdict can have no further application, to reconsider that verdict, and on good and valid showing, reverse our judgement?⁸

Lamar further pointed out that after San Jacinto, when Texas was prostrate, that he had even then raised his voice against sacrificing Texas through annexation. And now Texas was in a very favorable situation to establish a wise and benevolent government. This thought seems to have been in line with the current sentiment of the Texas people at the close of 1838. The people were resentful of the American rejection of annexation and determined to show the United States that they could get along without the colossus of the north. Everyone appeared to be happy that the United States had rejected annexation. The Texas Congress formally

⁸ M. B. Lamar, "Inaugural Address, December 10, 1838," Gulick and Elliot (eds.), Lamar Papers, Vol. II, 322.

approved Lamar's position by adopting a resolution on January 23, 1839, ratifying the action of the Texas minister to Washington, D.C., in withdrawing the annexation proposal.⁹ During the following three years of Lamar's administration, no effort was made to renew the proposal for annexation.

It appears that the people of Texas were united in their new attitude of opposition to annexation. The new feeling of Texas nationalism was expressed in a newspaper editorial concerning Texas and Mexico during the first year of Lamar's administration.

During the last struggle the country was comparatively disorganized in its departments, with a population small in comparison to its present amount. . . . We consider our strength augmented to a degree incalculably beyond what it was when contending before. We have now a well organized Government to conduct the operations of war with system, an increased population in better means of conveyance--and double claims on the advocates of Republican liberty throughout the world.¹¹

The people were concerned not only with the possibility of invasion by Mexico but more so with recognition of Texas independence by that country. Many Texans felt that if recognition could not be gotten from Mexico by diplomacy then stronger measures were in order. The people were also

⁹Wortham, op. cit., 108-110.

¹⁰Joseph William Schmitz, Texan Statecraft, 1836-1845, 87.

¹¹Colorado Gazette and Advertiser (Matagorda, Texas), July 4, 1839.

concerned with obtaining recognition of their independence by powerful European countries, securing of commercial treaties with European countries, and the negotiation of a foreign loan to ease the financial strain of the Texas government.¹² On September 11, 1839, an editorial in the Richmond Telescope & Register stated,

The prospects of the country for future greatness, are bright and promising. Continued peace upon our Indian frontier, gives promise of future security; and the utter inability as well as disinclination on the part of Mexico to invade this country, ensures uninterrupted peace and tranquility from her.

An editorial in another Texas newspaper later stated:

In another page will be found the treaty between this republic and the king of the Netherlands, ratified by the Senate on Friday last. Although this treaty will be considered less important than the treaties of England and France, still it will be regarded with sincere pleasure by our citizens, as it will extend our national credit and commercial relations abroad, and aid effectively in securing the introduction of the surplus capital of that country to stimulate the enterprise and advance the internal improvements of our republic.¹³

Lamar's foreign policies had a very beneficial effect on the destiny of Texas and had he been able to administer successfully the government of Texas, her destiny might have been different. His vision, of Texas producing raw products

¹² Ibid., October 12, 1839; November 9, 1839; February 8, 1840.

¹³ The Texas Sentinel (Austin, Texas), January 30, 1841.

and exchanging them for finished products of the industrial nations, had a salutary effect on England. It was her growing interest in Texas which helped shape the future history of the Republic which culminated in annexation to the United States.¹⁴ Annexation, of course, he did not intend at that time.

It would appear that Texas was united in her new attitude of opposition to annexation. President Lamar had long opposed annexation, the Congress supported him, the people seemed disillusioned by their rejection by the United States, and the newspapers, reflecting the popular mind for the most part, supported the new foreign policies with no mention of annexation. On the other hand, Eugene C. Barker, writing in 1945, declares, "The people of Texas did not share Lamar's views, however, and it was at Washington on the Potomac rather than at Austin on the Colorado that the annexation was to be settled."¹⁵ Dr. Barker offers no substantiating evidence for this view, which does not appear to follow the facts as previously outlined. It is known that Anson Jones, the Senator Jones from Brazoria, was still in favor of annexation. He wrote in his memorandum book on November 30, 1839, "wrote to C. Hughes at Stockholm, the friend of Texas.

¹⁴Wortham, op. cit., 110.

¹⁵Eugene C. Barker, "The Annexation of Texas," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, L (July, 1946-April, 1947), 55.

Annexation is the policy for Texas now; but how to obtain it is the question."¹⁶ Christopher Hughes, a diplomat in the United States foreign service, had been cultivated in Washington by Jones. He liked Texas and Jones. On the eve of his departure for Europe, Jones had given him a lengthy memorandum "setting forth arguments calculated to appeal to England and France in connection with Texas."¹⁷ Hughes used the memorandum in England and France for the benefit of Texas. Thus we have Jones' two-headed operation working to achieve annexation for Texas. This will be covered in more detail later. The opinion of Anson Jones and others like him may be the basis for Dr. Barker's statement.

Two editorials appear also to substantiate Dr. Barker's position. The first from the Morning Star of Houston,

We are happy to learn that it is the intention of our citizens to celebrate the coming 4th of July in a becoming manner. Although we are now in a foreign land, still so similar are our habits and tastes, and the nature of our institutions, that it becomes us who are proud to claim a birthright in the United States, to observe in an especial manner the natal day of liberty.¹⁸

The people of Texas still felt very close to the United States and probably wanted, subconsciously or otherwise, to be a part of that nation. This feeling is further

¹⁶ Anson Jones, The Republic of Texas, 36.

¹⁷ Wortham, op. cit., 31-41.

¹⁸ The Morning Star (Houston, Texas), June 27, 1839.

exemplified in an excerpt from another editorial over a year later, concerning a public dinner honoring General Felix Huston, and the following toast was made:

By Hon. B. T. Wharton -- Texas -- our country:
 -- too young for dissension -- too small for
 division; united we achieved our independence
 -- united we reared up our free institutions:
 -- By union alone can we perpetuate these
 blessings.¹⁹

The attitude of the people of Texas may have been with President Lamar when he was inaugurated December 10, 1838. Then they were disillusioned and hurt by the rejection of the United States to their proposal for annexation. This coupled with Lamar's strong appeal to the spirit of Texas nationalism may have caused public opinion to veer away from annexation. However, the failures of most of Lamar's foreign ventures, especially non-recognition by Mexico, continual threat of war with Mexico, and failure to secure a favorable foreign loan--all tended to bankrupt the country and place it in a precarious financial and political condition. A Roman Catholic Priest described the situation in writing of his problems in establishing a mission at Galveston. The Priest observed:

I arrived last night at this place [Houston]
 and found the people in pretty low spirits.
 Everything looks dull. No money in the coun-
 try, people move back to the states much
 faster than they come in. . . . In the states

¹⁹ Austin City Gazette, September 9, 1840. Underscor-
 ing supplied.

a log church may be at least put up, but here in Texas there is nothing to be done without money, and money can be had nowhere.²⁰

Under these conditions the people wanted a change and turned their attention to the upcoming elections. There they expressed their disapproval of Lamar and re-elected Sam Houston, who had tried so hard for annexation in his first administration. So perhaps Dr. Barker was right in stating that the people were not united behind President Lamar in his opposition to annexation. At least, if they were originally behind Lamar they did not hold to that feeling continually.

²⁰ Stanley Siegal, A Political History of the Texas Republic, 1836-1845, 184.

CHAPTER IV

SAM HOUSTON ONCE AGAIN, 1841-1844

On December 13, 1841, Houston again took the oath of office as President of the Republic of Texas. He was immediately faced with the most difficult tasks, for the fortunes of Texas were at a low ebb. Lamar had left a penniless and powerless government. In addition to financial ruin, Texas still faced the ever present danger of invasion by Mexico.¹ Having been a member of Congress during Lamar's administration, Houston was fully aware, before assuming office, of the state of affairs and how they were reached. As a result, his inauguration was a memorable affair.

There were about a thousand persons in the audience listening to him condemn the Lamar administration.² Among the many failures of Lamar he held up for public ridicule was the hasty abandonment of annexation proceedings. Yet on his intentions regarding annexation, Houston made no comment, saying only that a treaty of commerce with the United States was needed.³ Having been repeatedly rebuffed by the United

¹Stanley Siegel, A Political History of the Texas Republic, 1836-1845, 184.

²Maurice Garland Fulton (ed.), Diary and Letters of Josiah Gregg, 1840-1847, 109.

³Amelia W. Williams and Eugene C. Barker (eds.), The Writings of Sam Houston, 1813-1863, Vol. II, 391-408.

States during his first administration, he was cautious and cool to the idea during his second administration. From appearances he was bent on developing Texas into a strong Republic. Whatever measures he took were never final. If Texas were to remain independent, she must begin growing strong now. On the other hand, if annexation appeared imminent, then a strong Texas would be in a much better bargaining position. A historian of Texas politics says, many of Houston's policies might therefore appear against annexation when actually he favored annexation.⁴

To carry out his foreign policy and deal with the subject of annexation, Houston appointed Anson Jones as Secretary of State. From the time of his appointment on December 14, 1841, until he turned over the government to the first elected state official, Anson Jones dominated Texas foreign policy. The foreign policy of the new administration as constructed by Jones consisted of two bridges, one to the east, one to the west. "To the east the road was annexation . . . to the west the road was secure independence, recognized by Mexico and all the world."⁵ Jones felt that either road would serve Texas if completed in time. At this point of time the problem was not which road was better, rather which, if either, could be reached. Houston early adopted

⁴ Joseph W. Schmitz, Texan Statecraft, 1836-1845, 176.

⁵ Herbert Gambrell, Anson Jones, 231.

the policy of using the American fear of the British influence in Texas to bring about annexation.⁶ Whether this was Houston's original policy or Anson Jones' policy is a moot question. Jones has stated:

I had a difficult task to perform, to secure success to this great measure [annexation], by exciting the rivalry and jealousy of the three greatest powers in the world, and at the same time so to act as to effect my object and maintain the perfect good faith of Texas towards all these powers.⁷

Not only was annexation the policy of the new administration but it was apparently again the desire of the people. Writing from Austin on the twenty-ninth of December, 1841, Joseph Eve, United States Charge d'Affaires to Texas, wrote to John White, saying,

From various conversations which I have had with intelligent gentlemen from all parts of this Republic I do not entertain a doubt but that a very large majority of the citizens are anxious to become annexed to the United States, nor can I bring my mind to doubt but that it would promote the interests of both nations.⁸

The Telegraph and Texas Register of Houston in an editorial stated that people in high offices in other countries who were traveling in Texas were writing home that a change

⁶ Louis J. Wortham, A History of Texas, 118.

⁷ Anson Jones, Republic of Texas, 42.

⁸ Joseph Milton Nance (ed.), "A Letter book of Joseph Eve, United States Charge d'Affaires to Texas," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XLIII (July, 1939-April, 1940), 218.

was taking place in the sentiment of the Texas people toward annexation. The Telegraph further stated its opinion as follows:

We believe . . . that the "American" feeling predominates in our Republic, and if any evidence were given on the part of the government of the United States, that the proposition for annexation would be favorably received by that government, our citizens almost to a man would assent to the measure.⁹

The Red Lander in East Texas supported the same view, "The question of annexation of Texas to the great mother of Republics, is regarded by our citizens with the liveliest solicitude, united with the hope for its speedy consummation. . . ."¹⁰

To carry out the will of the government and of the people, James Reily, the Texas Charge d'Affaires at Washington, was instructed by his government to ascertain the current attitude of the United States government toward annexation.¹¹ Reily kept his government well informed on the current position of the United States government. On March 11, 1842, he wrote that on his initial meeting with Daniel Webster, the United States Secretary of State, the subject was not broached. However, Reily had the feeling Webster

⁹ Telegraph and Texas Register (Houston, Texas), January 19, 1842.

¹⁰ The Red Lander (San Augustine, Texas), April 14, 1842.

¹¹ Dudley G. Wooten, A Comprehensive History of Texas, 1885 to 1897, Vol. I, 384.

would not talk on the subject until he was assured that Reily had the power to enter into positive agreements.¹² Later, on April 14, 1842, Reily wrote that he was fully satisfied that the United States Administration was in favor of annexation and probably a majority of Congress, but he was not sure that a two thirds majority of the Senate was favorably inclined, the number necessary to ratify a treaty. Texas was growing in reputation and many northern businessmen thought Texas would be a valuable acquisition.¹³ On May 12, 1842, Reily was instructed by his government to "suffer matters to glide along quietly until the United States Government decides upon the policy of annexation."¹⁴

Reily followed these instructions and kept his government informed of the changing position of the United States toward annexation. On July 11 he wrote to Jones that he had recently had a conversation with President Tyler on the subject of annexation. Tyler had remarked "that he was anxious for it, and wished most sincerely he was able to conclude it at once." Reily pointed out that Tyler would not act now for fear a treaty would not be ratified by a two thirds

¹² Reily to Jones, March 11, 1842, in Garrison (ed.), "Texas Diplomatic Correspondence," Vol. I, 541.

¹³ Reily to Jones, April 14, 1842, in Garrison (ed.), ibid., 551-554.

¹⁴ Waples to Reily, May 12, 1842, in Garrison (ed.), ibid., 559.

majority as required. Tyler was having the opinion of the Senate sounded out to determine the support available for the proposition. Reily suggested to Jones that he be given plenary powers to work with and conclude a treaty of annexation if the government of the United States decided to attempt annexation.¹⁵

At the time Reily was sounding out the United States government on annexation, the Texas government was concerned with Mexican raids and Texan counter raids. The Texas Congress authorized a military expedition against Mexico which was vetoed by President Houston. The general feeling of the public on annexation was expressed by Adolphus Sterne, postmaster at Nacogdoches, who wrote in his diary:

Oh--dear Texas have I worn chains for thee, to see such fellows try to fatten on thy ruin! Confound all demagogues--all Political gamblers, god grant that Texas may belong to the great union of the Land of Washington--if it does not soon I'll give up all hopes of ever seeing this a happy Country!!!¹⁶

The minor military expeditions against Mexico and their failure had a cooling effect on the United States Senate's approach to Texas annexation. Reily despaired of any action and asked to be relieved. Houston accepted his

¹⁵ Reily to Jones, July 11, 1842, in Garrison (ed.), ibid., 567-569.

¹⁶ Harriet Smither (ed.), "Diary of Adolphus Sterne," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXXIII (July, 1929-April, 1930), 325.

resignation and appointed Isaac Van Zandt to replace him. Van Zandt followed Jones' guidance very well and in the fall of 1842 and spring and summer of 1843 dropped broad hints about England's efforts to dominate Texas and that the only way to stop this was to annex Texas.¹⁷ He wrote the Texas Secretary of State in December of 1842 that he had used every opportunity to ascertain discreetly the views of the President, Cabinet members, and Congressional members, on the subject of annexation. Van Zandt felt that he would soon have the opportunity to accomplish the objective of annexation if the Texas government still desired it and would grant him the necessary power.¹⁸

While Van Zandt was hinting in Washington, D.C., about England's interest in Texas, Houston was playing a game to whet the interest of England, apparently hoping a jealous reaction from the United States would lead to annexation. Captain Charles Elliot was the British diplomatic agent in Texas and played an important part in trying to prevent annexation. In January, 1843, Houston wrote Elliot that

There is a subject now meeting in Texas, which, it seems to me, will appeal directly to her Majesty's Government: I mean the subject of "Annexation to the United States." Some of our journals are much in favor of the measure. I find from the incertitude of our position,

¹⁷Wortham, op. cit., 120.

¹⁸Van Zandt to Terrell, December 23, 1842, in Garrison (ed.), op. cit., 633.

that nine-tenths of those who converse with me, are in favor of the measure upon the ground that it will give us peace. Upon this point of our national existence, I feel well satisfied that England has the power to rule. "Annexation" is to be a question with the political parties and aspirants in the United States. To defeat this policy, it is only necessary for Lord Aberdeen to say to Santa Anna: "Sir, Mexico must recognize the independence of Texas." Santa Anna would be glad of such a pretext. . . . I am honest in my convictions that Texas and England would both be beneficiaries by this course.¹⁹

About the same time Houston was writing the above to the British Charge, Anson Jones was replying to Van Zandt's letter of December 23, devoting his entire letter to the proposition of annexation. Jones reviewed the rejection of annexation by the United States in 1837 and said this placed Texas in such a position that it would be improper for her to renew her application. Jones instructed Van Zandt to convey this fact to the United States Secretary of State in verbal communication. Further, that before Texas could take any action it would be necessary for the United States government "to take some step . . . of so decided a character as would open wide the door of negotiation to Texas. . . ." In order to do this the United States would have to review its action of 1837, reverse the action taken then or take the matter up from the beginning. If the United States did reverse its decision of 1837, then Van Zandt was authorized to renew

¹⁹

Quoted in Williams, op. cit., Vol. III, 299-302.

Texas' application for annexation. It appears that Texas officially wanted annexation and needed only assurance from the United States that she was wanted. Jones went on to say, "It is believed that the present period is favorable for the consummation of such a Treaty, on the part of this country, the feeling of the people being very unanimous in regard to the same."²⁰

Houston writing to Joseph Eve, United States Charge d'Affaires in Texas, indicated the same opinion of the attitude of the people of Texas regarding annexation. He wrote on February 17, 1843, ". . . the subject of annexation is one that has claimed much attention, and is well received. I find that even the oldest settlers, even some of the original 'Three Hundred' are as anxious for the event to take place as any that I meet with."²¹

Annexation continued to claim the attention of the people especially during the fall of 1843. There were repeated newspaper references to the proposition. Some of the typical comments were:

So far from being willing to reunite with Mexico, place ourselves under the protection of England, or modify our domestic policy in any way to suit the opinions of foreign

²⁰ Jones to Van Zandt, February 10, 1843, in Garrison (ed.), op. cit., Vol. II, 123.

²¹ Quoted in Williams, op. cit., 322.

powers--a large majority of our citizens would, we believe, reject an unconditional offer to annexation.²²

We believe that a majority of the people of Texas at the present period are favorable to a union with the United States; but let two or three years elapse and a fair proportion of European emigration and peace; and there will not be one voice where there are now ten favorable to annexation.²³

So far as our own observation extends, we consider that there is at this time as great a proportion of the people of Texas in favor of annexation as there were at the time of the adoption of the Constitution.²⁴

We doubt not--so strong is the tie which binds men to the land of their nativity--that an almost unanimous voice of our people would hail as the proudest era of their lives, the time that would again permit them to assume the hefty title of American Citizens.²⁵

. . . the good people of Texas almost to a man are in favor of annexation.²⁶

Even though the people wanted annexation, this did not mean that the United States wanted Texas. In March, 1843, Van Zandt wrote a private letter to Jones to the effect that many people in the United States thought that Texas would give anything to be annexed and this attitude of the

²²Civilian (Galveston, Texas), September 16, 1843.

²³"Columbia Planter," Telegraph and Texas Register (Houston, Texas), September 27, 1843.

²⁴Telegraph, ibid.

²⁵Ibid., November 8, 1843.

²⁶Ibid., December 27, 1843.

suppliant was looked down upon. The United States did not feel that Texas would make any arrangements with European countries which would be prejudicial to them. Van Zandt proposed and Jones agreed to alarm the United States by overt advances to England.²⁷

Francis Moore, editor of the Telegraph and Texas Register and a Senator, had an excellent understanding of the strategy of Anson Jones. Texas had asked England, in addition to France and the United States, to mediate in the Texas-Mexican affair and to use her good offices to effect Mexican recognition of Texas independence. He wrote an editorial in June in which he stated that the British's first wish was for Mexico to retain Texas for this would be to England's advantage because of her close ties with Mexico. However, if England found this impossible then she would do all possible to prevent the annexation of Texas to the United States. He further declared, "The United States government, we hope, in this crisis will not be an uninterested spectator."²⁸ Later Moore wrote:

It is important only as evincing the jealousy with which the American statesmen are now watching the movements of Great Britain, and the fears they entertain that she is endeavoring to obtain a controlling influence in the affairs of Texas. We should be happy if these

²⁷Wortham, op. cit., 121-122.

²⁸Telegraph and Texas Register (Houston, Texas), June 28, 1843.

fears should awake the American Cabinet to a true sense of duty, and induce it to take a proper stand. . . . It has hitherto displayed so much apathy and . . . indifference to . . . Texas that our citizens were beginning to view the United States as . . . having no interest in common with Texas. . . . A large majority of our citizens are Americans, and would prefer to lean on the American government for support.²⁹

Elliott, the British Charge d'Affaires in Texas, then laid before Houston Santa Anna's agreement to an armistice and to receive Texas Commissioners to work out a settlement for retaining Texas as a part of Mexico. Houston, on June 15, 1843, declared an armistice. In doing so he was playing for time, as he believed no possible agreement could be reached. He further knew that Texans would never agree to becoming a part of Mexico. He and the people desired annexation to the United States. Houston felt that with both England and France interested that some good might follow the armistice and Texas might be placed in a strong position. If Texas was to remain independent, she needed strength and powerful friends. Furthermore, Mexican recognition of Texas independence would strengthen the possibility of Texas annexation and make her, as one writer says, "less a pauper and more a prince."³⁰ The fact that Texas loved the United States and wanted annexation seems to justify the actions

²⁹ Ibid., September 13, 1843.

³⁰ Schmitz, op. cit., 198.

taken to produce jealousy and cause the love to be reciprocated. As a result the diplomacy of Texas moved in many mysterious ways.³¹

Jones followed Houston's course by writing instructions to Van Zandt on July 6 to the effect that since the United States had taken no definite action toward annexation, while professing interest for a year and a half, Houston desired Van Zandt to take no further action pending the outcome of other diplomatic events then in process. Jones pointed out that it was now the policy of the Texas government to devote its full attention to settling her difficulties with Mexico and that Van Zandt's instructions of February 10, 1843, regarding annexation were suspended.³²

Van Zandt verbally informed the President of the United States and Secretary of State of his new instructions, and it had the effect of firing anew their interest in the proposition of annexing Texas. By the autumn of 1843, President John Tyler had reached the conclusion that the best way to discourage British influence in Texas would be to annex the Republic. On September 18, Van Zandt wrote to Jones that the Secretary of State, Abel P. Upshur, had repeatedly asked if the Texas Charge had received new

³¹Wooten, op. cit., 417.

³²Jones to Van Zandt, July 6, 1843, in Garrison (ed.), op. cit., 195.

instructions concerning annexation to which he had replied in the negative. On the date of this letter, Van Zandt, in an official discussion with Upshur, had learned of the new policy toward annexation. Upshur stated that President Tyler expected to take early action on the proposition if Texas still desired annexation. He was told to find out if Texas would agree and, if so, to obtain the necessary power to act upon the proposition. Van Zandt, expressing his own opinion to Jones, stated that he felt that nothing would contribute so much to Texas welfare and prosperity as annexation. However, he would take no action pending receipt of instructions from the Texas government.³³

Van Zandt wrote to Jones again on October 16 enclosing a communication from Upshur asking if Texas was ready to negotiate a treaty of annexation. He expressed the opinion that the time was now favorable for Senate action. The possibility of England's having a great influence on Texas and dominating her foreign trade had spurred the interest of northern business.³⁴ On October 22 he wrote a personal letter to Jones expressing the hope that Texas would accept annexation and that he felt that it was best for Texas. Jones wrote on the margin of the letter: "Mr. Van Zandt does

³³Van Zandt to Jones, September 18, 1843, in Garrison (ed.), ibid., 207-210.

³⁴Van Zandt to Jones, October 16, 1843, in Garrison (ed.), ibid., 221-223.

not understand my position. I am as willing for annexation as he is, but I do not believe it can be effected in the manner now proposed, and am unwilling to risk everything on a single throw of an uncertain die."³⁵ Houston and other leading Texans who knew the situation in the United States shared the view of Jones. J. Pinckney Henderson, formerly Texas Minister to Great Britain, after a trip in the United States, wrote:

I am extremely anxious to see such a thing take place; but it does seem to me that Texas would be placed in an extremely awkward situation in regard to her intercourse, should the treaty be signed, and afterwards rejected by the United States.³⁶

George L. Hammekan, a friend of Jones writing to him from San Luis, Texas, said, "if you big folk at the head of affairs procure either recognition or annexation, I believe San Luis will exhibit the beneficial effects . . . as speedily as any other point."³⁷

England had been working for Mexican recognition of Texas independence. When Captain Elliot, the British Charge d'Affaires, heard that Upshur had proposed annexation, Elliot immediately asked Houston what was the position of Texas. He intimated that if Texas were interested in

³⁵ Jones, op. cit., 260-261.

³⁶ Quoted in Wortham, op. cit., 133-134.

³⁷ Jones, op. cit., 274.

annexation, then England would leave to the United States the problem of securing Mexican recognition for Texas. In a personal interview with Elliot on October 31, Houston said that England "might rest assured that with the Independence of Texas recognized by Mexico, he would never consent to any treaty or other project of annexation to the United States, and he had a conviction that the people would sustain him in that determination."³⁸ Houston was strongly playing the Texas diplomatic game of courting England to make the United States jealous and more desirous of Texas.

Finally on December 13, 1843, Jones answered Van Zandt's letters, playing the diplomatic game and instructing him how to answer the communication from Upshur. Houston had spent considerable time studying the situation Jones said, and came to the conclusion that Texas should not negotiate a treaty of annexation at this time. The Texas government felt that, should negotiations be started, Mexico would break off the armistice. England and France would cease their mediation efforts. Of course, these probable results would be of no consequence if annexation were achieved. On the other hand, if the treaty failed to be ratified, then Texas would be worse off than at present. Her European friends would have been lost, and Mexican hostility would have been aroused

³⁸Quoted in Justin H. Smith, The Annexation of Texas, 148-149.

again. Jones said also that the President's present position did not stem from a change in policy as from a change in Texas relations with other powers. The Texas officials did not believe other men of the United States government were as eager for annexation as President Tyler. Van Zandt was instructed to inform President Tyler that whenever the Congress or the Senate of the United States would by resolution authorize him to propose a treaty, then the Texas government would quickly respond.³⁹

Upon receipt of those instructions, Van Zandt replied in January, 1844. He withheld giving this information to the United States government pending clarification. Van Zandt declared that it was the considered opinion of many people in the United States government that a resolution as suggested by Jones was improper, since treaty making was a responsibility of the Executive. He went on to say that if the treaty were rejected, then it could be used as a basis of a law to be passed by both houses of Congress by a simple majority. Under his present instructions Van Zandt could give no assurance that Texas would agree to annexation if such a law were passed. The most important of Van Zandt's arguments, and the one that Houston was most interested in, was as follows:

I am authorized by the Secretary of State, who speaks by the authority of the President of the

³⁹ Jones to Van Zandt, December 13, 1843, in Garrison (ed.), op. cit., 232-233.

United States, to say to you that the moment a treaty of annexation shall be signed a large naval force will be assembled in the Gulf of Mexico, upon the coast of Texas, and that a sufficient number of the Military force will be ordered to rendezvous upon the borders of Texas, ready to act as circumstances may require, and that these assurances will be officially given preliminary to the signing of the treaty, if desired by the Government of Texas, and that this Government will say to Mexico that she must in no wise disturb or molest Texas.⁴⁰

Before Jones and Houston received this letter the Eighth Texas Congress had assembled on December 4, 1843. Houston's message was not delivered until December 12.⁴¹ In this he pointed out the friendship of England in promoting the armistice with Mexico and urged that this friendship be preserved. From the United States, he declared, Texas had received only harsh treatment.⁴² These remarks of the President were not well received by the Congress, for the sentiment for annexation was again developing in Texas. An editorial in the Morning Star stated: "So far as our own observation extends, we consider that there is at this time as great a proportion of the people in favor of annexation as there was at the time of the adoption of the constitution."⁴³

⁴⁰ Van Zandt to Jones, January 20, 1844, in Garrison (ed.), ibid., 239-243.

⁴¹ Wooten, op. cit., 421.

⁴² Siegel, op. cit., 225-226.

⁴³ Morning Star (Houston, Texas), October 5, 1843.

Houston apparently understood this public sentiment but was making no commitment until he was sure of the action the United States would take regarding annexation. The Texas Congress, in response to a suggestion by W. S. Murphy, the United States Charge' d'Affaires in Texas, acted on annexation. Several bills were introduced, and on December 19 one such bill was referred to the Foreign Relations Committee. Then the Senate asked Houston for information on the state of Texas' negotiations with the United States, England, France, and Mexico, which Houston refused to give. The Congress then circulated a nearly unanimous declaration that at least nine-tenths of the people wanted to join the American Union. This was dispatched to the Congress of the United States. Houston said later that but for this declaration he would have frightened the United States into ratifying the treaty.⁴⁴ Following the publication of this declaration by the Texas Congress, the Houston Telegraph said,

We consider . . . that our government is compelled by the sovereign voice of the people, to accept any overtures for annexation made by the government of the United States whenever the opportunity is offered.⁴⁵

Since Congress seemed determined to take the initiative and forcefully pursue annexation, Houston appeared before the Congress on January 20 and read a secret message.

⁴⁴Smith, op. cit., 160-161.

⁴⁵Telegraph, op. cit., January 24, 1844.

He admonished Congress on the need to keep the message secret until the negotiations for annexation were terminated.

Houston said that during his present administration he had expressed no preference for annexation and was expressing none now. He went on to say,

It will be perceived by the Honorable Congress that if any effort were made on the part of this government to effect the object of annexation, which is so desirable, and it should fail in meeting responsive and corresponding action on the part of the United States, it might have a seriously prejudicial influence upon the course which England and France might otherwise be disposed to take in our favor.

. . .⁴⁶

Houston added that he had not mentioned annexation in his first message to Congress a month previous because he felt that Texas was in the best possible position, and any action on the part of Texas would embarrass the subject. Action must first be taken by the United States and Texas would respond thereto. "If we evince too much anxiety, it will be regarded as importunity, and the voice of supplication seldom commands in such cases great respect."⁴⁷ Houston then asked for an appropriation of \$5,000 to send a special minister to the United States to assist in the negotiations and this was granted.

At about the same time Jones wrote to Van Zandt that

⁴⁶Quoted in John Henry Brown, History of Texas, 293-295.

⁴⁷Ibid.

if Van Zandt were satisfied that the United States Congress would approve annexation he was then authorized to open negotiations for a treaty. Jones then proceeded to outline Texas' requirements in line with Austin's instructions in 1836.⁴⁸ This was followed by a personal letter from Houston in which he told Van Zandt that if the attitude of Congress were favorable, to open negotiations and conduct them in the strictest secrecy.⁴⁹

In the meantime Jones had also written to Murphy that extended negotiations, and their failure, would cause serious difficulties with England, France, and Mexico. However, if he would assure, in the name of his government, that the United States would send adequate armed forces to the vicinity of Texas and, in case of failure of negotiations, guarantee Texas independence, then Houston was ready to appoint a special minister to Washington to conduct negotiations. Murphy, going much beyond his authority, pledged protection in very broad terms. "The United States," he wrote, "having invited that negotiations will be a guaranty of their honor that no evil shall result to Texas from accepting the invitation."⁵⁰ Houston then dispatched J.

⁴⁸ Jones to Van Zandt, January 27, 1844, in Garrison (ed.), op. cit., 248-251.

⁴⁹ Williams, op. cit., Vol. III, 538-539.

⁵⁰ Smith, op. cit., 163-165.

Pinckney Henderson to the United States as special minister and sent his personal secretary W. D. Miller to record the negotiations and, probably, to keep Houston informed of the proceedings.

Before the arrival of Henderson, Van Zandt had asked Upshur to have President Tyler guarantee to protect Texas while the negotiations were underway. Believing Upshur's assurances that the guarantees would be given, Van Zandt had entered unofficially into discussions, and apparently he and Upshur had agreed upon the principal items of the treaty when Upshur was killed by an explosion on a battleship. This happened about the time Henderson arrived in the United States. John C. Calhoun became Secretary of State following Upshur's death. This was unfortunate for Texas because this Southerner, who favored annexation, made it a national political issue.⁵¹ Jones had written Henderson on the fifteenth of February not to enter into negotiations until he had obtained positive assurances of protection of Texas in line with the commitment of W. S. Murphy.⁵² Calhoun assured Van Zandt that Tyler would use the armed forces to prevent hostile action against Texas by Mexico. Furthermore, naval forces had been moved to the Gulf of Mexico and military

⁵¹ Siegel, op. cit., 229-230.

⁵² Jones to Henderson, February 15, 1844, in Garrison (ed.), op. cit., 252-253.

detachments had been sent to the Texas border on the Sabine. These assurances satisfied the Texas ministers and the negotiations proceeded. Finally on April 12, 1844, the treaty of annexation was signed.⁵³ The easy part was over; now ratification was the problem.

Houston had been pushed by the Texas Congress into submitting to the negotiations for this treaty. What really was his position regarding annexation at this time? On February 3, 1844, he had written to Murphy on the matter:

The subject of annexation has been one of deep interest here, and in which I partake largely of the feeling which a patriot should entertain. My position in 1836 was very well understood, and since then I have maintained studious silence; nor can I perceive that I have given any indication of sentiment different from what I entertained at that time.⁵⁴

A few days later he wrote to his old friend Andrew Jackson. This outpouring of his heart to a trusted friend reveals his true feelings.

So far as I am concerned, or my hearty cooperation required, I am determined upon immediate annexation to the United States.

Now, my venerated friend, you will perceive that Texas is presented to the U. S., as a bride adorned for her espousal. But if, now so confident of the union, she should be rejected, her mortification would be indescribable. She has been sought by the U. S., and this is the third time she has consented. Were she now to be spurned, it would forever terminate

⁵³ Schmitz, op. cit., 204.

⁵⁴ Williams, op. cit., Vol. IV, 238-239.

expectation on her part, and it would then not only be left for the U. S. to expect that she would seek some other friend, but all Christendom would justify her in a course dictated by necessity and sanctioned by wisdom.⁵⁵

Houston expressed the same position in a letter to the Texas ministers in Washington upon receipt of the signed treaty:

The Treaty is well. . . . If the present measure of annexation should fail entirely, and we are thrown back on our resources. . . . I again declare to you that every day which passes only convinces me more clearly that it is the last effort at annexation that Texas will ever make, nor do I believe that any solicitation or guarantee from the U. S. would at any future day incline her to consent to the measure.⁵⁶

Nearly three weeks later on the seventeenth of May Houston again wrote Van Zandt and Henderson. At this time he seemed to be coming to the realization that the United States Senate would not ratify the treaty, and he was disillusioned.

We must therefore regard ourselves as a nation to remain forever separate. The desires of the people of Texas, with my love of repose-- (this far I am selfish) had determined me in favor of annexation. My judgement though rendered subservient to their inclinations and my own, has never fully ratified the course adopted. Yet in all good faith I have lent and afforded every aid to its consummation.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Ibid., 260-265.

⁵⁶ Houston to Van Zandt and Henderson, April 29, 1844, in Garrison (ed.), op. cit., 274.

⁵⁷ Houston to Van Zandt and Henderson, May 17, 1844, in Garrison (ed.), ibid., 281-283.

Houston was like the people of Texas. When they thought annexation was assured everyone was for it, but now as the months dragged on the enthusiasm waned and they began to rationalize their position. In February the Telegraph said that "there is now scarcely a solitary voice raised in Texas against the measure."⁵⁸ In June, this statement was made: "If the confederacy, to which we once belonged, refuse to receive us back on a footing of equality: We shall go for the absolute and unqualified Independence of Texas."⁵⁹ From the La Grange Intelligencer in March we have, ". . . upon the subject of annexation--this question, so anxiously watched by all our citizens is again reviewed. The Democrat, at Houston, . . . comes . . . fully satisfied . . . that we will be annexed. The Telegraph is uncertain."⁶⁰ Later this is said: ". . . we give it as our opinion, that expediency, perhaps, once might have demanded that we should be annexed; but is it now proper policy for men of a new Republic . . . dispose of ourselves? We answer, no."⁶¹ The Civilian was not in favor of annexation, "For ourselves we freely admit

⁵⁸ Telegraph, op. cit., February 7, 1844.

⁵⁹ Ibid., June 26, 1844.

⁶⁰ La Grange Intelligencer, March 28, 1844.

⁶¹ Ibid., May 20, 1844.

that our solicitude for annexation is none of the strongest.

. . ."⁶² Finally, when the United States Senate failed to ratify the treaty the people had been prepared and the reaction was generally that as stated in the Telegraph:

"Well, the question has been decided, and the Treaty rejected. But we have long been prepared for this, and our disappointment is not great."⁶³

For Texas the rejection of the treaty was fortunate in the long run. Under the terms of the treaty she was to be admitted only as a territory, to lose her public lands, and to be divided by the United States at will.⁶⁴ Texans were not happy about the way annexation had become a bitter political controversy in the United States. Houston, feeling that it was futile to try further, ordered Henderson home. When Henderson received the letter, James K. Polk, a friend of annexation, had been nominated for the Presidency of the United States. With this turn of events, Henderson wrote Jones suggesting that Houston await the United States election results before moving further. Jones noted on the margin of this letter: "General Houston is not willing to wait the results of the Presidential election. The instructions from the City of Houston were hasty, and not known by

⁶² Civilian, op. cit., April 17, 1844.

⁶³ Telegraph, op. cit., July 10, 1844.

⁶⁴ Smith, op. cit., 279.

me. I am in favor of following the advice of this letter."⁶⁵
 Houston and Jones were drawing apart in their thinking. On Houston's instructions Henderson left Washington, Van Zandt resigned, and the Secretary of the Texas Legation, Mr. Raymond, was left in charge of Texas affairs in Washington.

Very soon after the treaty had been rejected, the British Foreign Office proposed to Ashbel Smith, the Texas minister in England, that a "Diplomatic Act" be passed to enhance peace between Texas and Mexico. The proposal read in part:

If Texas desired to remain independent, to settle the whole matter by a Diplomatic Act . . . guaranteeing the separate independence of Texas, etc., etc. . . . Such an Act [Smith pointed out] would . . . give to the European Governments . . . a perfect right to forbid, for all time to come, the annexation of Texas to the United States, as also even the peaceful incorporation of any part of Mexico . . . with Texas. . . .⁶⁶

Upon receipt of this communication Jones felt the price for guaranteed independence was too high. He also believed that after the Presidential elections in the United States, Texas might receive a better proposition. At the end of September, Houston came into the Texas capital and read the proposed "Diplomatic Act." He immediately instructed Jones to quickly accept the proposal. Jones argued with Houston who did not

⁶⁵Wortham, op. cit., 179-180.

⁶⁶Quoted in Gambrell, op. cit., 357-358.

insist. However, as he left town there remained on Jones' desk the hand-written order of the President:

Let our Representative [Dr. Smith] be instructed to complete the proposed arrangement for the settlement of our Mexican difficulties as soon as possible--giving the necessary pledges, as suggested in the late dispatch of Dr. Smith on this subject . . .⁶⁷

This placed Jones in a quandary. He had just a few days before been elected President of Texas, and if he obeyed Houston's instructions then it would have the effect of Houston charting the future policy of Jones' administration. In addition, the coming elections in the United States might still offer chances for annexation.⁶⁸ Jones, therefore, quietly ordered Smith home to be his Secretary of State and pocketed Houston's memorandum, writing on the back:

The within order cannot be obeyed, for it would either defeat annexation altogether, or lead to a war between Europe and America. Besides, it would directly complicate our relations and entangle us with France and England, produce disturbances and revolutions at home, and probably render it very difficult, if not impossible for me to administer the government of Texas successfully. General Houston has furnished no explanation of his motives for the course of policy. If they are to defeat annexation, produce a war, or break down my administration, (about to commence) I cannot favor any of these objects, and can conceive of no other.⁶⁹

⁶⁷Quoted in ibid.

⁶⁸Wortham, op. cit., 184.

⁶⁹Anson Jones, Letters Relating to the History of Annexation, 20-21.

This apparently marks a very definite break in the thinking between Houston and Jones on annexation. Houston was willing to forget the entire idea of annexation and pledge independence forever, while Jones wanted to keep both bridges clear for the people eventually to have a free and open choice between the two. During the remainder of Houston's administration and his infrequent visits to the Capital, he and Jones did not talk on this matter.⁷⁰

For the remainder of Houston's term of office no official act was taken toward annexation. What the future held for Texas, no one knew. The position of President-elect Jones regarding annexation was a mystery to many. During the election he had been supported by both annexationists and anti-annexationists. The newspapers were generally convinced that Jones was against annexation. The Vindicator from La Grange warned that "Jones is opposed to Houston and annexation." The Northern Standard charged, "He [Jones] has all along been opposed to annexation."⁷¹ The Telegraph said, "But the people of Texas must now remember that this is the true position in which Dr. Jones has placed himself. He has all along been opposed to annexation."⁷² And three months later,

⁷⁰ Gambrell, op. cit., 360.

⁷¹ Ibid., 344-364.

⁷² Telegraph, op. cit., August 21, 1844.

During the late canvass the slightest intimation by us that Dr. Jones was opposed to annexation, was violently resented, and couriers with dispatches were sent over the country to contradict such injurious imputations. . . . the Civilian has been the only journal in the country openly and boldly opposed to annexation.⁷³

Jones did not make too strong an effort to take a positive stand openly on annexation. This was in keeping with his idea of having two bridges open, annexation or independence. In order to secure annexation he had to appear to be for independence, thus making the United States the more eager for union. This essentially was also Houston's strategy.

Following the election of Polk as President of the United States the La Grange Intelligencer reported that Polk had been elected because he favored annexation. Now the people of Texas were mingling their voices with their American cousins in shouts of triumph.⁷⁴ The Houston Telegraph reported that the United States people in their election had reversed the action of Congress "by a popular majority of one hundred thousand." As a result the future policy of the United States would be to annex Texas, and the people of Texas should be ready for this proposal.⁷⁵ This portends

⁷³ Ibid., November 13, 1844.

⁷⁴ Intelligencer, op. cit., November 7, 1844.

⁷⁵ Telegraph, op. cit., December 4, 1844.

the action which Houston refused to wait for when he ordered Henderson home with the rejection of the treaty.

Houston gave his final official opinion on annexation in his valedictory to the Texas Congress, December 9, 1844, the day he turned over the Presidency to his successor, Anson Jones.

The attitude of Texas now . . . is one of peculiar interest. Let her . . . maintain her position firmly as it is, and work out her own political salvation. Let her legislators proceed upon the supposition that we are to be and remain an independent people. If the U. S. shall open the door, and ask her to come into her great family of states, you will then have other conductors . . . to lead you into the beloved land from which we have sprung-- . . . But let us be as we are until that opportunity is presented, and then let us go in, if at all, invited in a phalanx, and sustained by the opinion of the world.⁷⁶

This is a very different approach to that of September 24 when he instructed his Secretary of State to conclude the "Diplomatic Act" with Great Britain.

Houston's official attitude toward annexation seemed to swing as a pendulum during his second administration. In the beginning he adopted a wait and see attitude. Then in response to overtures from the United States, he reluctantly agreed to negotiations for a treaty of annexation. He was reluctant because of serious doubts about the ratification of such a treaty by the United States Senate. These doubts were

⁷⁶ Quoted in Williams, op. cit., Vol. IV, 401-405.

justified by the rejection of the treaty by that body. Houston in disgust then instructed his Secretary of State to accept a proposal from Great Britain in which Texas would agree to forgo forever annexation to the United States and remain independent. When these instructions were not followed, Houston closed his term of office with the policy of Texas remaining independent until the United States irrevocably invited Texas to join her sister states on an equal basis. The attitude of the people was more constant during this period. One of the reasons for Houston's re-election had been his previous support of annexation. The people were more eager to enter the treaty negotiations and less dejected when they failed. They looked forward to the time when changed conditions in the United States would make it possible for Texas to be annexed.

CHAPTER V

ANNEXATION COMPLETED UNDER ANSON JONES, 1844-1846

In his Valedictory, Houston had clearly recommended the path of independence for Texas. All of Texas now wanted to know the attitude of the new President. Was Jones in favor of annexation or independence? But the people were not to have a definite statement from Jones at this time. The proposition of annexation was not mentioned in either his inaugural address or in his first message to Congress. On this problem he was non-committal in all public statements.¹ Captain Elliot, the British Chargé, described Jones as "remarkably cautious and reserved."² Anson Jones was not to be rushed. He wanted to wait and watch developments in the United States as well as Europe and Mexico.³ Then he would be able to guide Texas in the way most advantageous to her. As Elliot reported to his government, the policy of the new administration was one of making no overtures to the United States but waiting for her proposals, reserving the right to accept or reject them.⁴ Anson Jones, according to his biographer, was continuing the policy he had started three years

¹ Joseph W. Schmitz, Texan Statecraft, 224.

² Herbert Gambrell, Anson Jones, 376.

³ Schmitz, op. cit., 224.

⁴ Gambrell, op. cit., 376.

before, that of keeping two bridges open. To have committed himself solely to one policy, he felt would only work to the detriment of Texas. He had always personally favored annexation, but, after so many rejections, he was not going to place Texas in a position of being rejected again. Time was in favor of Texas and the tide of events seemed to portend that Texas would soon have an opportunity to choose between the two alternatives. On his inaugural day, Anson Jones wondered if the legislators and the people would be patient enough to await the proper time of choosing and then give deliberate and due consideration to the alternatives. He later wrote that on this day he felt, "I had the right to be silent and the grave keeps not its counsels more safely than I did mine."⁵

The new President was soon to find that the Texas legislators and people were not as patient as he. On the twenty-third of December, 1844, Jones' old friend and former landlord, Ammon Underwood, wrote from Brazoria that a mass meeting had been held there of about two hundred people. Regardless of Underwood's assertions to the contrary, the assembled people believed that Jones was opposed to annexation and was steering Texas on a course of independence. As a result, resolutions were introduced, being approved by a

⁵Ibid., 372.

vote of 199 against Mr. Underwood's 1 vote, to inform the Texas Congress that the people favored annexation.⁶

The Citizens of Colorado County met at Columbus the seventeenth of December, 1844, and resolved:

that the representatives of both houses of congress, President Jones, and all others in authority take all proper steps to assure annexation. This meeting further recommended that every county hold a meeting and instruct their representatives on this subject.⁷

Similar assemblies were held and resolutions adopted in other parts of the Republic.

The Planter said that "for this question [annexation], the people are a unit."⁸ Noah Smithwick, a Texas pioneer, observed in his memoirs that,

. . . the condition of the country was so unsatisfactory that many of the inhabitants looked to annexation as the only hope of peace and prosperity. The last presidential contest being along that line, and though General Burleson, who led the annexation party, was defeated by the opposition candidate, Anson Jones, the sentiment in favor of annexation grew so rapidly that the first year of his administration saw the Lone Star absorbed into the glorious constellation established by the fathers of its citizens, and with few dissenting votes.⁹

This was done with the people probably knowing full

⁶ Anson Jones, Republic of Texas, 410-411.

⁷ La Grange Intelligencer, January 2, 1845.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Noah Smithwick, Evolution of a State, 281.

well the alternatives they would soon be facing. But the people were not interested in alternatives, only annexation.

On December 4, 1844, the Telegraph had published an editorial which pointed out that there was now before the Texas government a proposition whereby England and France, or England alone, would try to procure the recognition of Texas by Mexico and guarantee Texas independence if Texas would renounce forever annexation to the United States. The editorial also declared that a few months previous the United States Senate by a two-thirds vote had rejected the annexation of Texas. However, the people of the United States subsequently had reversed that decision in a national election by a hundred thousand votes. This then would leave little doubt as to the future action of the United States toward Texas annexation. The editorial further stated:

. . . we have made these remarks for the purpose of preparing the public mind to decide upon these alternatives that must for ages determine the future destiny of this infant Republic.¹⁰

During the first six weeks of Jones' administration, the legislature did nothing about annexation; but the clamor of the people caused them to spend the following two weeks on nothing except annexation. The Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate asked the executive for all correspondence on

¹⁰ Telegraph and Texas Register (Houston, Texas), December 4, 1844.

annexation. After reading the State Department files the committee reported "the time has not yet arrived when action on the part of the Government of Texas would be either appropriate or availing," and that annexation had been "already emphatically willed by the people of both countries." The House Committee studying the same problem reported, "Let Texas demand . . . that Texas be restored to the Union without further unnecessary delay."¹¹ Jones was glad when the legislature adjourned, for he knew what he was about in securing the necessary alternatives for Texas, and he was afraid the legislature would ruin his chances of success.¹²

Of the alternatives Jones was seeking, that of annexation was the one most coveted. Ashbel Smith, the Texas Secretary of State, wrote to Charles H. Raymond, acting Charge d'Affaires of Texas in Washington, D.C., on February 11, 1845, that Jones wished Raymond to remain in Washington and to use his best efforts to accomplish annexation for Texas, "a measure earnestly desired by this [Texas] government."¹³

Mr. Raymond continued his diplomatic work in Washington, attempting in every way possible to assist the Congress

¹¹ Gambrell, op. cit., 377-378.

¹² Ibid., 379.

¹³ Smith to Raymond, February 11, 1845, in Garrison (ed.), "Texas Diplomatic Correspondence," Vol. 11, 558-559.

in providing for Texas annexation. Finally, a joint resolution providing for the annexation of Texas to the United States was passed by the House of Representatives on the twenty-fifth of February and by the Senate on the first of March, 1845. On the same day President Tyler signed the resolution.¹⁴

The resolution gave to the President of the United States the option of annexing Texas on the conditions set down in the resolution or negotiating a treaty with Texas for later submission to the Congress or Senate. There was not time left in his administration for Tyler to negotiate a treaty, and it was his desire to effect annexation. On March 3, 1845, he instructed A. J. Donelson, the American Charge' to Texas, to present to the Texas government the proposal for annexation on the conditions laid down in the resolution.¹⁵ The resolution provided: (1) The United States would settle all boundary disputes with other governments, (2) Texas must adopt a constitution and present it to the United States Congress prior to the first day of January, 1846, (3) Texas would cede all public buildings and means of public defense to the United States, (4) Texas would keep her public lands and be responsible for her public debt and liabilities, and

¹⁴Dudley G. Wooten, A Comprehensive History of Texas, 432.

¹⁵Louis J. Wortham, A History of Texas, 188-189.

(5) new states, not exceeding four, could be formed out of the Republic with the consent of the Texas people.¹⁶

Unofficial news of the action of the United States reached Texas days before the President received the official communication on March 30, 1845. When the news was received in Bastrop, the district court was in session with Judge R. E. B. Baylor presiding. Judge Baylor announced the news and quoted Chief Justice John Marshall as saying that "No man should be considered drunk on Independence Day, so long as he could pronounce the word Epsom." Baylor thought the same ought to apply on that occasion and adjourned court until the next day so that the people might celebrate.¹⁷ When the news was received in La Grange, the people gathered in the public square and made arrangements to fire the cannon in celebration. Soon after sunset twenty-eight rounds were fired as part of the expression of the joy of the people.¹⁸ From his old friend Ammon Underwood, Jones received a letter on April 5: "From all sections of the country . . . a universal voice of acclaim is raised in favor of annexation!--annexation on the terms of the joint resolutions of the Congress of the

¹⁶ Ibid., 186-187.

¹⁷ Smithwick, op. cit., 282.

¹⁸ Intelligencer, op. cit., March 22, 1845.

United States."¹⁹ Ashbel Smith, writing from Galveston on the ninth of April, said,

I find . . . everywhere, very great, very intense feeling on this subject. . . . I am forced to believe that an immense majority of the citizens are in favor of annexation--that is of annexation as presented in the resolutions of the American Congress--and that they will continue to be so in preference to independence, though recognized in the most liberal manner by Mexico.²⁰

Before the President received the official news of annexation Elliot and de Saligny, British and French Chargés respectively, hurried to Washington on the Brazos for a conference with President Jones. They had been authorized by their governments to mediate with Mexico in an attempt to prevent annexation.²¹ There they found Jones home, ill in bed. However, he pulled himself from the bed and drove to town to meet with the Chargés. Though ill with fever, he listened intently to the proposals, for he knew he was about to get the alternatives simultaneously. The fruit of four years labor was beginning to ripen.²² After numerous discussions with his cabinet and the Chargés, he finally agreed on the twenty-ninth of March to delay action on annexation for ninety days to allow time for the Chargés to procure a treaty

¹⁹ Jones, op. cit., 442-443.

²⁰ Ibid., 446-447.

²¹ Clarence R. Wharton, Texas Under Many Flags, 420.

²² Gambrell, op. cit., 390.

with Mexico in which she would recognize the independence of Texas; boundaries would be set by arbitration; and Texas would agree not to be annexed to any other country.²³ Jones made no commitment to accept such a treaty. All that he agreed to do was present it to the people for their consideration. He made it plain that if the people rejected a Mexican treaty and accepted annexation there would be no "breach of faith."²⁴ Jones would soon be able to present to the people the alternatives for which he had striven so hard.

A few miles out of Washington, on their way to Mexico, Elliot and de Saligny met A. J. Donelson, the United States Charge to Texas, hurrying to Washington with the treaty of annexation. They told him nothing except that Jones was probably waiting to receive him and the treaty of annexation. Donelson found Ashbel Smith packing his papers in the State Department and learned nothing from him, as he was on a leave of absence and Attorney General Allen was temporarily in charge of foreign affairs. What Donelson did not know was that Smith was on his way to Europe to be available there if the people of Texas were to choose the alternative, independence. Donelson found that Allen, also, had been given a leave of absence.²⁵

²³Wharton, op. cit., 421.

²⁴Gambrell, op. cit., 391.

²⁵Ibid., 392-393.

Donelson next saw Jones who welcomed him as cordially as might be expected in the state of Jones' health. Jones said that the treaty was a grave subject which would require deliberation and consultation with his cabinet, two members now being on a leave of absence. Jones was playing a game of delay for ninety days in order to get the other alternative. Donelson recognized the delaying tactics but did not know the reason why. The United States was eager for annexation and Jones was sure that Mexico was anxious to prevent it. Jones had previously told Donelson that annexation, when offered, would be presented fairly to the people. He had also told Elliot and de Saligny that the treaty of independence would be presented fairly to the people. Until he had both alternatives firmly in hand, his lips were sealed. Jones returned to his home to recover his health and look after his farming interests.²⁶

Jones was in a very difficult position. He felt that better terms could be obtained from the United States by negotiation, if the people would be patient. When the word was spread that annexation was offered, the people were not patient, but clamored for action. Jones' lack of action gave substance to the old charges that he was against annexation and dominated by the British. According to one historian, such was not the case. He was simply pro-Texan and

²⁶
Ibid.

attempting to offer the people the alternatives for which he had worked so long.²⁷

Leaving Jones for the moment to his own reflections, Donelson turned to another prominent Texas figure, Sam Houston, for the support of annexation. The rumor had reached Donelson that Houston favored delay and negotiation of a treaty. A visit with Houston confirmed the rumor that the ex-President was opposed to the terms of the annexation resolution.²⁸ On the ninth of April, Houston wrote,

The overture is now made by the United States to Texas; and by an act of Congress, of the former, conditions are proposed, by which the latter may be admitted as a part of the Union.

I am in favor of annexation, if it can take place on terms mutually beneficial to both countries.²⁹

Some of Houston's objections were that Texas was being placed in the position of a suppliant, and the constitution of Texas might not be acceptable to the United States and annexation then rejected. Donelson gave Houston a letter from Jackson urging annexation. Other pressures were brought to bear on Houston to support annexation including rumors of Presidential possibilities. Nevertheless, Donelson left Houston "under a full conviction that if the adoption of our

²⁷Wortham, op. cit., 190-191.

²⁸Justin H. Smith, The Annexation of Texas, 437-443.

²⁹Amelia W. Williams and Eugene C. Barker (eds.), The Writings of Sam Houston, 1813-1863, Vol. IV, 410-417.

proposals depended upon his vote, it would be lost." As the days past public opinion had its influence, so that on the fourth of May, after another interview, Donelson reported: "His views have undergone the change I anticipated; I consider the question settled so far as Texas is concerned."³⁰ Earlier on the twenty-second of April Houston had written H. Stuart, editor of the Galveston weekly news:

. . . an extract from the Galveston weekly news met my eye, of which I give one or two sentences:

"The Prospect,--We have already furnished uncontestible evidence that the British policy in opposition to annexation, has so far succeeded, that her Britannic Majesty's Minister has obtained the pledge of President Houston to use his best endeavors to defeat the measure."

This statement is utterly untrue and without any foundation.³¹

Another ex-President was to be heard from also. In 1844 M. B. Lamar had become convinced that it was not practicable for Texas to remain a republic and started to support the annexation movement.³² Lamar belonged to the anti-Jones party and joined with Jones' other enemies in April, 1845, in

³⁰Quoted in Smith, op. cit., 443.

³¹Williams (ed.), op. cit., 418-419.

³²A. K. Christian, "Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXIV (July, 1920-April, 1921), 318.

condemning Jones' delay in effecting annexation.³³ Thus the tables were turned, and the man who had opposed annexation until 1844 was now condemning the man who had worked long and consistently for the project.

From all sides came other criticisms of Jones' policy or rather lack of action. General Memucan Hunt, former Chargé to the United States, toured Texas alarming the people with statements that Jones opposed annexation and that Mexico and England could offer nothing acceptable to Texans who wanted only annexation. A mass meeting in Houston favored acceptance of the annexation proposals immediately. In Brazoria a mass meeting favored annexation "with or without the consent of the Jones administration." About twenty counties met and voted overwhelmingly for annexation. A mass meeting in Brenham on April 11 declared if Jones did not act soon that the county mass meetings would ratify the joint resolutions and form a state government.³⁴

According to his biographer, Jones had misjudged the people. They were not interested in alternatives, only in annexation and on any terms. He had developed his strategy in 1842 when it fitted the temper of the times. Now as he clung to this same strategy it did not fit the desires of the

³³ Smith, op. cit., 447.

³⁴ Gambrell, op. cit., 397-399.

people. Yet he held to his course.³⁵ Finally realizing that the temper of the people was such that further delay might bring unknown consequences, Jones told Donelson on April 12 that he would call Congress soon. On April 15, 1845, he did so, setting the meeting date for June 16 at Washington-on-the-Brazos. At that time Jones would submit such matters as he desired, for necessary action by Congress, including the proposal for annexation.³⁶ This gave him two more months to get the results of Elliot's efforts in Mexico.

This call of Congress did not satisfy the annexation extremists. They felt a convention, as specified in the joint resolution, was necessary to form a new constitution and have it adopted by the existing Texas government. By May 1 many counties had met and instructed their Representatives and Senators to assume conventional powers and carry out the will of the people. This forced Jones to call a convention and still give himself time to hear from Elliot, the British Charge negotiating in Mexico for Texas independence.³⁷ Accordingly he called a convention to meet at Austin on July 4 and specified the distribution of delegates.³⁸ Thus five

³⁵ Ibid., 400-402.

³⁶ Smith, op. cit., 442.

³⁷ Schmitz, op. cit., 232.

³⁸ Eugene C. Barker, "The Annexation of Texas," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, L (July, 1946-April, 1947), 73.

weeks after having received the proposal for annexation, Jones had set in motion the machinery to let the people act on annexation. But he was too late. The people were now convinced that he opposed annexation and had delayed this short time for some, perhaps, sinister motive.³⁹ The Intelligencer reported on April 21, "We have learned with no little surprise that the cabinet of President Jones are opposed to annexation."⁴⁰ And from Matagorda came, "annexation on any terms,--annexation now and forever,"⁴¹ and later "We call . . . upon the people of Texas to make known to Dr. Jones . . . that annexation is their will, and that he cannot and shall not defeat it."⁴²

The people apparently were in no mood to receive the news Jones gave in his proclamation of June 4, 1845. On the previous day Elliot had delivered the preliminary treaty signed by Mexico acknowledging Texas independence. In his proclamation issued the following day, Jones reviewed his actions of the previous months, proclaimed a cessation of hostilities with Mexico and stated that he would submit the Mexican proposals to the people.⁴³ On the same day the Texas

³⁹ Gambrell, op. cit., 397-399.

⁴⁰ Intelligencer, op. cit., April 21, 1845.

⁴¹ Matagorda Despatch, May 19, 1845.

⁴² Ibid., June 2, 1845.

⁴³ Schmitz, op. cit., 233.

government signed a treaty with the last Comanche Chief with whom she was at war.⁴⁴ Jones later wrote in his memorandum book, "Texas was at peace with all the world, Indians, and everybody else; and it was the first time for ten years that this had been the case."⁴⁵

Jones was satisfied with his accomplishments. He had given Texas the necessary alternatives, annexation or independence. The people were now free to cross the bridge they thought best. However, his motives were misinterpreted. Most people thought he was trying to thwart their will rather than giving them a choice of action. The Intelligencer appears to express best the public reaction:

. . . and you are informed by the President that you are now to make your choice between "peace with all the world and independence or annexation with all its contingencies." You are offered on the one hand independence with dictation, on the other Liberty with protection. . . . give us annexation with the contingencies--death before dictation!⁴⁶

With this general sentiment, there was little doubt of the action the Texas Congress would take when it convened on June 16, 1845. Seven days later on the twenty-third of June it approved the joint resolution of annexation as passed by the Congress of the United States and also approved the

⁴⁴Wortham, op. cit., 202.

⁴⁵Jones, op. cit., 46.

⁴⁶Intelligencer, op. cit., June 7, 1845.

convention as called by President Jones. The convention then met on July 4, 1845, ratified the act of annexation, wrote a constitution as required, and submitted it to the people for approval.⁴⁷ On the second Monday in October, 1845, the people approved the constitution and Jones called an election for the state offices. On February 16, 1846, the Republic of Texas ended and the state of Texas was inaugurated.⁴⁸

The administration of Anson Jones thus closed with the consummation of annexation. His policy was best explained in his own words:

The Annexation of Texas is an event the resulting consequences of which are too vast to be yet realized or calculated. Of this measure I was the Architect.

I saved it subsequently from the destructive violence of some potent enemies; as well as of its best friends in the United States and Texas, who, like the boys in the chase of a butterfly, would have crushed it in their imprudent and impatient grasp. The exciting and balancing, and the constantly acting and reacting rival influences of England, France, Mexico, and the United States, and conveying them all to the one point, with the view, and for the purpose of effecting my object, was a labor, in which for five years I did not give "sleep to my eyes, or slumber to my eyelids," and in which I was finally successful.⁴⁹

Throughout his administration the overwhelming

⁴⁷ Dudley G. Wooten, A Comprehensive History of Texas, 434.

⁴⁸ Wortham, op. cit., 207.

⁴⁹ Jones, op. cit., 44.

majority of the people were anxious for annexation. Houston and Lamar as well as most of the public leaders urged annexation, though Houston was slow to make positive statements. The majority of the newspapers helped inflame the people in favor of annexation. In the end, as Anson Jones said, "She [Texas] therefore took her place among her sisters in 1846, as a proud equal, and not a humble inferior--as one conferring a favor rather than receiving one."⁵⁰

⁵⁰
Ibid., 65.

CHAPTER VI

THE CONCATENATION OF TEXAS ATTITUDE

Prior to 1835 there was little thought given to the possibility of Texas joining the United States in any type of union. Citizens of the United States had emigrated to Texas mainly for economic reasons. They remained loyal Mexican citizens, for the most part, until oppressive measures of the Mexican Government caused them to cast about for a solution to their problems. Only then did their eyes turn to the land of their birth in search of liberty and security.

After hostilities with Mexico had begun, the first semblance of a united or central government, the "Consultation of 1835," sent agents to the United States to sound out that government on the possibility of becoming a member of that Republic. This was followed by a convention of the people which, on March 2, 1836, severed all relationships between Texas and Mexico, and established an ad interim government. President Burnet, in this government, then appointed agents to the United States to state, among other things, the terms to which Texas would agree for annexation. So prevailing was the attitude of the people for annexation that any conditions would have been acceptable as long as they included a republican form of government and a guarantee of existing contracts. On the first Monday in September, 1836, the people approved the constitution and voted 3,277 in

favor of annexation with 91 opposed. No conditions were attached to this plebiscite for union. The attitude and position of the government and the people was that of the humble suppliant.

Following this mandate of the people, the first Houston administration attempted to complete annexation. The administration was supported by the Texas Congress through a joint resolution urging action to complete the project. Thus at the close of 1836, the government and the people were united in this one desire.

Accordingly agents were dispatched to the United States with necessary instructions. The Secretary of State, Stephen F. Austin, in his instructions laid out the policy which was followed until annexation was consummated, to wit: if the United States proves reluctant then turn to England and France for aid in maintaining independence. Houston, through letters, used his influence with President Jackson to no benefit. As Texas became more humble the United States became more disinterested. Finally, after repeated attempts by Texas ministers, the application for annexation was formally rejected by the United States on August 4, 1837. The Texas government was learning that assuming the position of the humble suppliant would not accomplish the objective.

This rejection was a disappointment to the people and a keen blow to their pride, causing them to turn away, for a while, from the idea of annexation. In the legislature a

joint resolution was offered authorizing the President to withdraw Texas' application for annexation. The resolution passed the House of Representatives and failed in the Senate by one vote. However, President Houston finally took action, and on October 12, 1838, the application was formally withdrawn. Thus in a two year period the people and their government had undergone a complete reversal of opinion.

This new position in regard to annexation held for nearly three years, during most of the administration of M. B. Lamar. The new President had always been opposed to annexation, being part of the minority of ninety-one original opponents of the proposition. During his administration no action was taken regarding annexation, and the people nursed their hurt pride. But as his administration drew to a close the country was in such a bad financial and military condition that Sam Houston was elected President, probably because he had favored annexation. The people were willing to swallow their pride and try again.

Houston, however, was not eager to place himself again in the position of the suppliant. With Anson Jones as his Secretary of State, a policy of two alternatives was constructed; to the east was annexation, while to the west was independence. Both bridges would be built and the people could choose over which to pass. The people did not understand this two-pronged policy, but were concerned only with annexation, about to the extent of that expressed in the

election of 1836. The first year in office Houston maintained the position of wait and see. Most newspapers advocated annexation and only Francis Moore of the Houston Telegraph seemed to understand the diplomacy of the government.

By the middle of 1843 the diplomacy appeared to bear fruit. The British brought from Mexico such overtures that Houston declared an armistice and instructed the Texas minister to the United States to take no action on annexation. This information being passed to the United States government had the desired effect of rekindling interest in Texas. The United States proposed negotiating a treaty of annexation, but Houston and Anson Jones delayed for months, lacking assurances of United States Senate ratification of such a treaty and fearing European and Mexican reaction to such negotiations. The people did not understand this delay and were impatient. The Texas Congress expressed the urgency of the people's feeling by passing a joint resolution stating that nine-tenths of the people wanted to join the American Union. This resolution was sent to the United States Congress and had the effect of dampening sentiment there for the proposal. Again the more humble Texas became in supplication, the more reluctantly the United States acted. On the other hand, Texas' show of cooperating with England caused favorable reaction in the United States.

Finally Houston submitted to the pressure of the

people in early 1844 and agreed to negotiate a treaty. In mid-year the treaty admitting Texas as a territory was rejected by the United States Senate. Houston now felt that annexation was a dead issue and directed the signing of an act with England and France. This treaty guaranteed Texas independence from Mexico, and in turn Texas agreed never to be annexed to the United States.

Anson Jones had just been elected President when he received these instructions and chose not to obey them, for he wanted Texas annexed to the United States and was not ready to quit trying. By the time Jones was inaugurated, James K. Polk had been elected President of the United States on a platform favoring annexation. This rebuilt the hopes of the Texas people who fervently wanted annexation. Jones, however, was still pursuing the policy of two bridges established in 1841-42.

In response to the recent election, the United States Congress passed, on March 1, 1845, a joint resolution annexing Texas. With the receipt of this news the Texas people wanted immediate action to accept the proposal, the first made by the United States and without Texas application. Jones delayed for ninety days to bring his policy to fulfillment and to be able to offer to the people a choice, annexation or independence. The people, however, were not interested in alternatives, but only in annexation. Few

appreciated the diplomatic maneuvering of Jones which made possible the annexation of Texas in the proper attitude.

She therefore took her place among her sisters in 1846, as a proud equal, and not a humble inferior as one conferring a favor rather than receiving one. And this was not demanding too much; I only placed her in her just and true "attitude," and hope she will always maintain it.¹

The people, led by the newspapers, or their desires expressed by the newspapers, always desired annexation. It was only during the period 1839-1841 that they were generally silent on the subject. The government, except Lamar's administration, constantly worked for annexation even though some of their devious actions might have appeared otherwise. It is possible that Texas might have entered the Union on even more favorable terms had not the eagerness of the people restricted the efforts of their government.

¹ Anson Jones, History of the Texas Republic, 65.

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