

TURBULENCE IN THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS:

1836 - 1838

by

W. Bryan Talley

A THESIS

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TURBULENCE IN THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS:

1836 - 1838

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A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History

Sam Houston State College

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

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by

W. Bryan Talley

August, 1969



## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the person who long ago inspired me to pursue such a course of action.

- The Author

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is with sincere gratitude that the author acknowledges the important contributions of several individuals to this study.

First, I would like to express my regards for and appreciation to my thesis chairman, Dr. John W. Payne Jr., for his sustained concern, direction, and assistance in the planning and completion of this study. My association with him has shaped the development of my attitudes, research interests, and career.

A special word of appreciation is expressed to Dr. Oliver M. Refsell for his guidance and keen interest not only during the present study but throughout my graduate career. I would also like to thank the other member of my committee, Mr. M. B. Etheridge, for his consideration and suggestions concerning this thesis.

The author is indebted to Mrs. Dorothy Knepper and Mrs. Barbara Rawlings of the San Jacinto Museum of History for their cooperation in providing the materials utilized during this study. Mr. Bob Park, Archivist of the Rosenberg Library, Galveston, Texas, and the staff of the Houston Public Library are also extended appreciation for their time and efforts spent in helping me complete this project.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to typists, Barbara McCrary and Mrs. Gloria Couch, for their unending assistance and support in preparing this manuscript.

Talley, W. Bryan, Turbulence in the Republic of Texas: 1836 - 1838. Master of Arts (History), August, 1969, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas. 141 pp.

### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to point out the political, social, and economic turbulence in the Republic of Texas from the time of her independence in March of 1836, until the end of Sam Houston's first administration in 1838. The seriousness of those disorders was studied in detail as well as the attempts of the government to eradicate them.

### Methods

The methods of investigation include a thorough use of local college and university libraries, the archives collections of both the San Jacinto Museum of History and Rosenberg Library in Galveston, Texas, and the Texas Room of the Houston Public Library. Inter-Library loan services were utilized as well as the Spanish Department of South Texas College for an accurate interpretation of Mexican documents. Microfilm sources and original newspapers have also been studied carefully.

### Findings

From the evidence presented in the study, the following conclusions seem to be in order:

1. Texas declared her independence from Mexico at a time when she was barely able to sustain herself.

2. The popularity of Sam Houston, hero of San Jacinto, reached a high point in the Republic during the campaign and election of 1836.

3. Houston appears to have been the right man for the Executive Office of Texas in 1836.


4. Houston's economic philosophy was basically sound.

5. The First and Second Congress of the Republic resorted to the issue of paper money, which resulted in uncontrolled inflation.

6. The turbulence in Texas remained a fact, in spite of Houston's attempts to quell it, and as a result, he temporarily lost considerable support.

7. Lamar's election in 1838 was, for all practical purposes, not necessarily a repudiation of the Houston approach in solving the disorder found in Texas.

Approved:

  
Supervising Professor

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## CHAPTER I

### THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW REPUBLIC

Texas, according to many contemporary sources, represented a terrestrial paradise which too often attracted undesirable characters. In fact, a common expression in many southern states was "Gone to Texas" (or simply G.T.T.), meaning that a person might be only several steps ahead of the sheriff.<sup>1</sup> The Niles' Register argued that Texas would never become anything more than "a nest of pirates."<sup>2</sup> In agreement with this opinion, Reuben Thwaites wrote, ". . . the fine country of Texas will always be a resort for outlaws, and desperate speculators from our country. . . ." <sup>3</sup> Furthermore, Texas would ". . . be the refuge of Negro-stealers, the Elysium of rogues. . . ." <sup>4</sup>

Aside from the fact that a number of disreputable characters had entered Texas, reports concerning the country proved to be rather interesting. William Hale, writing to his brother in 1836, said, ". . . Texas is certainly one of

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<sup>1</sup>Stanley Siegel, A Political History of the Texas Republic (Austin, 1956), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Niles' Register, March 19, 1836.

<sup>3</sup>Reuben Gold Thwaites (ed.), Early Western Travels 1748-1846 (Cleveland, 1905), XVIII, p. 365.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 366.



the finest countries in the world . . . her climate and . . . her soil is [sic] beyond doubt unparalleled in the world,--here it seems to be one perpetual spring. . . ."5

John H. Dyer, writing to Collin McKinney, said that Texas was the most beautiful country in the world and that it was ". . . richly worth fighting for. . . ."6 James Pinckney Henderson stated in a letter to Ashbel Smith that ". . . I have travelled over much of this delightful region and never did man's eyes behold such in any other portion of the earth. . . ."7 Stephen F. Austin, on his way to Mexico City, however, described the Texas plains as ". . . the poorest I ever saw in my life. . . ."8 Nevertheless, Niles' Register reported, ". . . the tide of emigration toward Texas is immense; the whole country is swarming with men. . . ."9

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<sup>5</sup>William Hale to Philip Hale, April 11, 1836, Ernest W. Winkler (ed.), Manuscript Letters and Documents of Early Texians (Austin, 1937), p. 181.

<sup>6</sup>John H. Dyer to Collin McKinney, July 1, 1836, San Jacinto Museum of History.

<sup>7</sup>James Pinckney Henderson to Ashbel Smith, December 4, 1836, Winkler (ed.), Manuscript Letters and Documents of Early Texians, p. 194.

<sup>8</sup>Eugene C. Barker (ed.), Readings in Texas History (Dallas, 1929), p. 71.

<sup>9</sup>Niles' Register, August 27, 1836.



Indeed, large numbers of people were coming to Texas. The most important reason for the immigration was the land hunger prevalent in the United States during the early 1820's.<sup>10</sup> Eugene C. Barker, biographer of Stephen F. Austin, believed that the population movement was stimulated by the problem of universal debt during the decade of the 1820's.<sup>11</sup> Noah Smithwick, a resident of Austin's colony, thought that both dueling and debt were the principle sources of immigration.<sup>12</sup> Regardless of the reasons for immigration, contemporary reports in the United States indicated that Texas lands were cheap and plentiful.<sup>13</sup>

Speculation in land was a financial gamble, and the odds in Texas were not good. The safest investments were those made in the purchase of large tracts of land within the boundaries of the United States. Yet speculators in the United States had to pay the government price of \$1.25 per

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<sup>10</sup>Siegel, A Political History of the Texas Republic, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup>Eugene C. Barker, The Life of Stephen F. Austin, Founder of Texas, 1793-1836: A Chapter in the Westward Movement of the Anglo-American People (Austin, 1946), p. 135.

<sup>12</sup>Noah Smithwick, The Evolution of a State or Recollections of Old Texas Days (Austin, 1900), p. 82.

<sup>13</sup>DeWitt Clinton Harris to Mary J. Harris, March 28, 1836, Briscoe Papers, San Jacinto Museum of History.

acre of land. In spite of the gamble, larger profits were realized in Texas because the price of land was much cheaper.<sup>14</sup>

Those individuals who hoped to increase their financial holdings through the purchase of land found other problems in Texas. Robert Triplett told Colonel Gray, a lawyer and later a clerk in the Texas House of Representatives, that land titles had been loosely granted and the deeds were poorly preserved.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, Colonel Gray was informed that because there was no system for locating grants, several grants might be located on the same land.<sup>16</sup> An example of what could happen to a careless speculator was the case of Samuel Swartwout, who lost \$4,000 in Texas lands.<sup>17</sup> Writing to Colonel James Morgan in Galveston, Swartwout

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<sup>14</sup>William Fairfax Gray, From Virginia to Texas, 1835: Diary of Colonel William Fairfax Gray Giving Details of His Journey to Texas and Return in 1835-6 and Second Journey to Texas in 1837 (Houston, 1909), pp. 59-60. Gray found that the price of land varied anywhere from 25¢ to \$1.00 per acre. Also see Richard Floyd Miller to John W. Quarles, June 7, 1836, San Jacinto Museum of History. Written from Austin's colony, he indicated that there are "bears of land along the Brazos being held at \$3.00-\$7.00."

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Samuel Swartwout later overcame his financial losses in Texas lands as the corrupt collector of the Port of New York. Also see Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Jackson (Boston, 1945), p. 233; and Dexter Perkins and Glyndon G. Van Deusen, The United States of America: A History (New York, 1962), I, p. 360.

perhaps reflected the sentiments of other disheartened speculators, who had lost their investments: ". . . I would like to receive it back," he wrote.<sup>18</sup>

The dubious land practices in some parts of Texas did not appear to deter speculation. In fact, the sale of Texas land continued even when the Mexican armies were moving across Texas. DeWitt Clinton Harris said in a letter: "Confidence is such--that Speculators from the States are buying land. . . ." <sup>19</sup> David Crockett, in his autobiography, remarked that speculators "swarm like crow about car-rion. . . ." <sup>20</sup>

Meanwhile, the Mexican government tried unsuccessfully to halt the rising emigration of settlers and speculators into Texas. Subsequent clashes between the Texans and the Mexican authorities eventually led to armed rebellion. The Louisiana Gazette reflected its disdain for the coming conflict: "You are welcome to the combat, gentlemen, one good result is certain--the world will loose many bad citizens and the devil will gain some faithful

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<sup>18</sup>Samuel Swartwout to Colonel James Morgan, May 28, 1836, Morgan Papers, Archives Collection, Rosenberg Library.

<sup>19</sup>DeWitt Clinton Harris to Mary J. Harris, March 28, 1836, Briscoe Papers, San Jacinto Museum of History.

<sup>20</sup>David Crockett, The Autobiography of David Crockett (Chicago, 1923), p. 223.



servants."<sup>21</sup> The Gazette was probably referring to the particular type of Texan adventurer who sought war and independence from Mexico. The Gazette stated,

Everybody knows that Texas has been to the United States what Botany Bay has been to Great Britain. The emigrants thither, like the followers of King David in the cave of Adullum, have been all those who were oppressed, and all those who were in debt--in other words, vagabonds, and refugees from justice. . . .<sup>22</sup>

Noah Smithwick, however, pointed out that "Faulty statutes in the United States sent many a man to Texas."<sup>23</sup> That Texan apprehension would intensify towards the authoritarian governments of Mexico appears to be only natural and inevitable.

Most of the early colonists who came to Texas, however, were family men seeking new homes.<sup>24</sup> Honesty was so prevalent in the early days of Texas that jails did not exist either in Harrisburg or San Felipe de Austin.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Louisiana Gazette quoted in Niles' Register, September 12, 1835.

<sup>22</sup>Louisiana Gazette quoted in Niles' Register, September 12, 1835. The reference made to the cave of Adullum is found in the Old Testament. While the city of Adullum was being captured, King David remained hidden in the cave and there he was joined by his adherents.

<sup>23</sup>Smithwick, The Evolution of a State, p. 82.

<sup>24</sup>Barker, The Life of Stephen F. Austin, p. 134.

<sup>25</sup>Original Manuscript of Mrs. Dilue Rose Harris, May, 1833, San Jacinto Museum of History. See "The reminiscences of Mrs. Dilue Harris," Quarterly of the Texas State

Eventually, speculators and adventurers began to infiltrate Texas despite Austin's desires to keep them out. John Duval, in his book, Early Times in Texas, pointed out that in 1835, ". . . the settlers from the 'States' [were] determined to throw off the Mexican yoke. . . ."26

Many of these new settlers had been oppressed by mounting debts, which intensified a panic already spreading across the United States in 1833 and 1834. The removal of government deposits from national banks had adverse effects upon otherwise prosperous people. Colonel Gray wrote in his diary: ". . . it is a meloncholy [sic] sight to see so many wealthy, intelligent and useful citizens leaving old Virginia, and many poor families, women and children, going to unknown parts to encounter untried difficulties and hardships. . . ."27 The emigrants into Texas who had suffered under the United States government were not receptive to the stringent provisions of the Mexican government. The attitudes exhibited by these newcomers only further strained the relations between Texas and the mother country.

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Historical Association, IV (July, 1900), pp. 85-127 and 155-189 for the published transcription of her diary. Also see Smithwick, The Evolution of a State, p. 31.

26John C. Duval, Early Times in Texas (Austin, 1892), p. 13.

27Gray, From Virginia to Texas, p. 3.

Undoubtedly, this movement into Texas was the decisive factor that prompted the Mexican government to pass the law of April 6, 1830.<sup>28</sup> Upon the advice of General Manuel de Mier y Terán, the framers of this law intended to stop further legal American emigration into the Mexican nation. Terán, in 1828, had made some alarming observations in Texas and reported: ". . . honorable and dishonorable alike travel with their political constitution in their pockets, demanding the privileges, authority, and officers which such a constitution guarantees."<sup>29</sup> Colonel Jeremiah Strode told Colonel Gray that if the United States did not buy Texas, it would soon be independent, ". . . for it is fast settling with people . . . who know their rights, and are determined to defend them. . . ."<sup>30</sup> Terán bluntly said: "Either the government occupies Texas now, or it is lost forever. . . ."<sup>31</sup>

Recent changes in the Mexican government and the subsequent seizure of power by Santa Anna were witnessed by a Brazoria newspaper:

. . . the general government of Mexico has, for the last two years, been administered, in many

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<sup>28</sup>Barker, The Life of Stephen F. Austin, p. 261.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 261.

<sup>30</sup>Gray, From Virginia to Texas, p. 22.

<sup>31</sup>Barker, The Life of Stephen F. Austin, p. 263.



particulars, on principles which more properly belong to a military despotism, than to a free republic. . . .<sup>32</sup>

Santa Anna was formally invested with dictatorial powers on August 8, 1835.<sup>33</sup>

The Texas movement for independence had been without momentum preceding the Mexican aggression of Santa Anna. Prior to Santa Anna's dictatorship, there was no indication that the movement for independence would have materialized, regardless of the Mexican position. Ostensibly, the movement would have been delayed for a considerable period of time had Mexico maintained the Constitution of 1824.

The Consultation of October, 1835, however, represented the union of all factions in Texas, for by this time it was evident that war was inevitable.<sup>34</sup> On January 16, 1836, Stephen F. Austin in New Orleans wrote to Sam Houston:

. . . the federal party had united with Santana [sic] to invade Texas. . . . This of course leaves

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<sup>32</sup>The Constitution Advocate and Texas Public Advertiser, September 5, 1832.

<sup>33</sup>Homer S. Thrall, A History of Texas (New York, 1876), p. 71.

<sup>34</sup>Nina Covington, "The Presidential Campaigns of the Republic of Texas of 1836 and 1838" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Texas, Austin, 1929), p. 11. Also see Thrall, A History of Texas, p. 75. The term General Consultation was adopted very early during the quarrel with Mexico because the term convention was peculiarly objectionable to the Mexicans.

us no remedy but One, which is an imediate [sic]  
declaration of independence.<sup>35</sup>

Austin's influence over the colonists, who now had split into various camps because of Mexico, cannot be over-emphasized. "If Col Austin is for peace, we are for peace, if he is for war we are for War," wrote Gail Borden, one of the founders of the Telegraph and Texas Register.<sup>36</sup>

Unfortunately for Texas, however, the provisional governor, Henry Smith, was soon to be deposed by the General Council. Quarreling within the new Texas government became so intense that Smith described some of the Council members as endeavoring ". . . to ruin the country. . . ." <sup>37</sup> He also asserted that ". . . Judases . . . has [sic] crept into your councils. . . ." <sup>38</sup> From January 18 to March 1, 1836, when a newly-chosen convention met to declare independence and adopt the Constitution of a Republic, Texas had no effective body exercising a sovereign leadership.<sup>39</sup> There were, in

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<sup>35</sup>Stephen F. Austin to Sam Houston, January 16, 1836, San Jacinto Museum of History. Also see Eugene C. Barker (ed.), The Austin Papers October, 1834-January, 1837 (Austin, 1926), III, pp. 304-307.

<sup>36</sup>Joe B. Frantz, Gail Borden: Dairyman to a Nation (Norman, 1951), p. 79.

<sup>37</sup>John Henry Brown, Life and Times of Henry Smith (Dallas, 1887), p. 189.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 190.

<sup>39</sup>Jim Dan Hill, The Texas Navy (Chicago, 1937), p. 41.



effect, two arguing factions of government. Smith, though deposed and replaced by Lieutenant Governor James W. Robinson, had many sympathizers, especially among the soldiers.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, Smith refused to give up his office and acquiesce to the demands of the Council. Smith was described by Colonel Gray as being ". . . too illiterate, too little informed, and not of the right calibre for the station he has been placed in."<sup>41</sup>

The Texans, despite dissention in their own camps, declared independence from Mexico on March 2, 1836. A Republic of Texas was now official. Yet independence in March of 1836 was far from being secure. Mexican troops were already moving across the new country. Soon the Texans would learn of the tragedies at San Antonio and Goliad.

In order to escape the wrath of Santa Anna's army, settlers began leaving their homes and traveling eastward to the United States. This mass evacuation of Texans has been called the "Runaway Scrape." David G. Burnet, ad interim President of the newly-formed Republic, wrote to Henry Raguet: ". . . Many persons are abandoning us in the hour

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<sup>40</sup>Covington, "The Presidential Campaigns of the Republic of Texas of 1836 and 1838," p. 15. Henry Smith was deposed by an unanimous vote on January 11, 1836. See Thrall, A History of Texas, p. 83.

<sup>41</sup>Gray, From Virginia to Texas, p. 111.

of trials."<sup>42</sup> Ammon Underwood, who witnessed the movement of refugees, said:

men, women and children are oblige[d] to fly with scarcely sufficient food and other necessities of life to support human nature. In one word the whole country are [sic] in a state of great distress. . . .<sup>43</sup>

Conditions were so bad that even remote Galveston Island suffered from a lack of adequate supplies. The commander of the garrison at Galveston was forced to demand a share of a local merchant's flour supply.<sup>44</sup> Accounts of the "Scrape" are not pleasant to read. Everyone, even the animals, felt the effects of the turmoil in Texas. Colegale D'Eve Donaldson, in describing the colonist's horses, wrote: "whenever there was a horse, he looked like dog meat. . . ."<sup>45</sup>

Hoping to stem the tide of retreat, David G. Burnet, the provisional President, issued the following order: ". . . Let every man gird on his sword, take up his rifle . . . instead of turning back on the enemy and running away

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<sup>42</sup>David G. Burnet to Henry Raguet, April 7, 1836, William C. Binkley (ed.), Official Correspondence of the Texas Revolution 1835-1836 (New York, 1936), II, p. 600.

<sup>43</sup>The Journal of Ammon Underwood 1834-1838, San Jacinto Museum of History.

<sup>44</sup>Commander of the Garrison at Galveston Island to Andrew Briscoe, January 18, 1836, Briscoe Papers, San Jacinto Museum of History.

<sup>45</sup>Colegale D'Eve Donaldson to Lawson Moore, May 31, 1836, Ethel Morse Collection, San Jacinto Museum of History.

like a cowardly dog. . . ."46 In spite of Burnet's entreaties, the frightened people continued their flight toward the United States. Adding to the confusion were the deserters from the Texas army who circulated false rumors about the poor management of the army by the officers.<sup>47</sup>

". . . Everybody talking of running from the Mexicans," wrote Mrs. Dilue Harris in her notebook.<sup>48</sup> The situation in Texas was desperate.

Meanwhile, Stephen F. Austin, Branch T. Archer, and William H. Wharton had been appointed commissioners for the Republic of Texas. They were assigned the task of obtaining from the United States the necessary supplies and money to carry on the war against Mexico. More specifically, the commissioners sought capitalists eager to speculate in Texas lands under the guise of loans.<sup>49</sup>

The Texas commissioners made their first and most successful stop in New Orleans. Although they were said to be ". . . all running in the same circle. . . ." about the

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<sup>46</sup>David G. Burnet to the Citizens of Texas, April 6, 1836, Binkley (ed.), Official Correspondence of the Texas Revolution 1835-1836, II, p. 597.

<sup>47</sup>Barker, Readings in Texas History, p. 299.

<sup>48</sup>Original Manuscript of Mrs. Dilue Rose Harris, February, 1836, San Jacinto Museum of History.

<sup>49</sup>Barker, The Life of Stephen F. Austin, p. 427.



wrongs of Texas, they were successful in obtaining a loan.<sup>50</sup> Alex Dienst said that New Orleans was the city through which ninety per cent of the immigration and more than ninety per cent of the financial aid in the revolution came to Texas.<sup>51</sup> Colonel Gray reported, ". . . It certainly is proof of a pretty deep feeling of good will to the cause . . . and it may be that the feeling pervades the mass of the community. . . ." <sup>52</sup> Dienst argued that ". . . it was the city that gave to the Texans their strongest moral support."<sup>53</sup> Harbert Davenport, agreeing that New Orleans was an important city with regard to Texan support, wrote as follows:

Had Santa Anna seized the opportunity of Fannin's surrender to dump his men . . . on the wharves at New Orleans, humiliated, starving, half naked, penniless, homesick, and forlorn, and each with his painful story of Texas mismanagement and Texas neglect, Texas' standing with the American people would have fallen to a new low. . . .<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Gray, From Virginia to Texas, p. 69.

<sup>51</sup>Alex Dienst, "The New Orleans Newspaper Files of the Texas Revolutionary Period," The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, IV, (October, 1900), p. 140.

<sup>52</sup>Gray, From Virginia to Texas, p. 69.

<sup>53</sup>Dienst, "The New Orleans Newspaper Files of the Texas Revolutionary Period," The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, p. 140.

<sup>54</sup>Harbert Davenport, "The Men of Goliad," The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XLVIII (July, 1939), p. 5. Also see Rupert N. Richardson, Texas The Lone Star State (Englewood Cliffs, 1958), p. 93.

Most accounts seem to conclude that the basis of Texas support in the United States lay in the city of New Orleans. All but one of the New Orleans newspapers were ardently pro-Texas.<sup>55</sup>

Because of the "petty squabbles" in the Texas government, faith in the revolution soon began to wane in New Orleans.<sup>56</sup> The absence of a rich Mexican trade in the Gulf further accounted for the failure of American privateering capital to come out of New Orleans.<sup>57</sup> Even more important, perhaps, was the disgust of a number of Louisiana volunteers known as the "New Orleans Greys," who returned to Louisiana after refusing to fight for Texas speculators.<sup>58</sup>

Yet the commissioners did a remarkable job in successfully relating to the public the cause of Texas, especially when one considers the fact that they quarreled among themselves. Colonel Gray, in New Orleans, indicated that

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<sup>55</sup>Dienst, "The New Orleans Newspaper Files of the Texas Revolutionary Period," The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, p. 143.

<sup>56</sup>Telegraph and Texas Register, March 12, 1836.

<sup>57</sup>Hill, The Texas Navy, p. 40.

<sup>58</sup>Niles' Register, March 26, 1836. Also see Dienst, "The New Orleans Newspaper Files of the Texas Revolution," The Quarterly of the Texas State Association, p. 142. Dienst contended that the "New Orleans Greys," a volunteer force from the United States, undoubtedly came to Texas because of the patriotic editorials found in the New Orleans newspapers.

Stephen F. Austin was the most sensible commissioner.<sup>59</sup> He described Austin as a ". . . prudent . . . and unpretending business man. . . ." <sup>60</sup> The New Orleans Commercial Bulletin was also quite favorably impressed with Austin. They reported that he was ". . . unassuming in his manners or pretensions, his ambitions seem to be limited to promote the cause of constitutional freedom and the prosperity of his adopted country."<sup>61</sup> Wharton and Archer, on the contrary, were less respected than Austin. Colonel Gray thought that Archer talked too much and was too loud.<sup>62</sup> Austin, in agreement, said that Archer was "very wild," and Wharton was "destitute of political honesty."<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, political, as well as personality, differences kept Austin and Wharton at odds. Political differences between the two commissioners perhaps were the cause for Austin's dislike of Wharton.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Gray, From Virginia to Texas, p. 64.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>The New Orleans Commercial Bulletin, as quoted by the Telegraph and Texas Register, February 27, 1836.

<sup>62</sup>Gray, From Virginia to Texas, p. 64.

<sup>63</sup>Austin to R. R. Royall, December 25, 1835, The Austin Papers, III, p. 293.

<sup>64</sup>Siegel, A Political History of the Texas Republic, p. 18. Also see Barker, The Life of Stephen F. Austin, p. 386.



Back in Texas, amidst the fleeing refugees and government of the Republic, was General Sam Houston in command of the disorganized army. His task was simply to halt the Mexican army before it could crush Texan independence. There was no turning back for Texans, who had begun a war based upon racial pride.<sup>65</sup>

The Mexican people were being flooded with government propaganda concerning the revolutionary actions taken by the former colonists. Juan Nepomuceno de la Garza y Evia, Governor of Nuevo Leon, told his constituents that Santa Anna was determined "to inflict an exemplary punishment on the wicked colonists, who are trying to usurp the national territory."<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, he informed his citizens that the Texans were "wretched adventurers."<sup>67</sup> The adopted children, he said, were "trying to take away Mexican liberties."<sup>68</sup> It is interesting to note that the governor did not mention that Mexican liberty had been formally terminated on August 8, 1835. Garza y Evia firmly believed that "the liberating

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<sup>65</sup>Davenport, "The Men of Goliad," The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XLVIII, p. 2.

<sup>66</sup>Juan Nepomuceno de la Garza y Evia Gobernador del Departamento de Nuevo Leon a Sus Habitantes, January 16, 1836, Houston Endowment, Incorporated, San Jacinto Museum of History.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

general would pulverize these impudent cowards."<sup>69</sup> Such verbal attacks clearly indicated that the Texans had no alternative to victory in the struggle with Mexico. To make matters more difficult, Santa Anna had proclaimed a "no quarter" policy in Texas.<sup>70</sup> The Telegraph, in summing up the problem, tersely stated on March 12, 1836: ". . . No general has ever had more to do. . . ."<sup>71</sup>

Faced with the shocking reports of wholesale massacres at the Alamo and Goliad, Sam Houston decided to retreat. Houston and his army moved eastward despite criticism and censure from the politicians and his own men. The soldiers became enraged over the orders to retreat. Tension began to mount. Sam Houston, fatigued from the state of affairs, may have begun to use opium.<sup>72</sup> Houston's popularity diminished as rumors spread that he was to be

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>Louis J. Wortham, A History of Texas From Wilderness to Commonwealth (Fort Worth, 1924), III, p. 265.

<sup>71</sup>Telegraph and Texas Register, March 12, 1836.

<sup>72</sup>J. Hazard Perry to Colonel Robert Potter, April 9, 1836, San Jacinto Museum of History. The claim by Perry that Houston used opium was based upon hearsay evidence. However, he does point out that Houston was in a condition between sleeping and waking which amounted ". . . nearly to a constant state of insanity. . . ." This type of condition lends plausibility to the conjecture that he was under the influence of a depressant narcotic.



replaced by a new commanding officer.<sup>73</sup> The troops, meanwhile, became more impatient. Houston heard daily threats concerning the possibility of his being deposed.<sup>74</sup>

Impatience and irritability on the part of the Texas army became more intensified as the macabre reports of Goliad and the Alamo were confirmed. Enraged by the dispatches, Texans were ready to fight. Colonel James Morgan in raising his force remarked, ". . . They have promised that their trusty toledos shall drink deep of Mexican blood. . . ."<sup>75</sup> Indignation among the people of the United States was also high because of Mexican atrocities. Samuel Swartwout writing from New York said: ". . . the whole union is up and ready to aid Texas in freeing herself from the . . . brutal massacrery of the Monster Santa Anna."<sup>76</sup> Yet, where was Houston going to fight? He held no councils

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<sup>73</sup>Niles' Register, July 2, 1836. The proposed commander was General James Hamilton of South Carolina. It was furthermore stipulated that a strong Southern party was interested in taking over the affairs of Texas and was willing to pledge \$10,000,000 to the cause.

<sup>74</sup>H. M. Henderson, "A Critical Analysis of the San Jacinto Campaign," The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, LIX (January, 1956), p. 346.

<sup>75</sup>Colonel James Morgan to Andrew Briscoe, March 24, 1836, Andrew Briscoe Papers, San Jacinto Museum of History.

<sup>76</sup>Samuel Swartwout to Colonel James Morgan, April 27, 1836, Morgan Papers, Archives, Rosenberg Library.

of war, and did not consult anyone about what action to take.<sup>77</sup>

As best he could, the retreating Houston tried to organize and discipline his troops. In a letter to Colonel Robert Potter, the Secretary of the Navy, J. Hazard Perry wrote, ". . . these men are entirely without discipline. . . ." <sup>78</sup> Sam Houston was forced to take stern measures. He ordered the arrest of all deserters from the army and the confiscation of arms from those leaving the country.<sup>79</sup> His orders further stipulated that every family moving to safety was entitled to one armed soldier for protection.<sup>80</sup> The Telegraph, in support of General Houston, argued, "Let us suppose that he, on the spot, knows better the plan of attack than those in the chimney corner."<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>H. M. Henderson, "A Critical Analysis of the San Jacinto Campaign," The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, LIX (January, 1956), p. 346.

<sup>78</sup>J. Hazard Perry to Robert Potter, April 9, 1836, San Jacinto Museum of History.

<sup>79</sup>Army Order, Headquarters Camp near Beason's, March 2, 1836, San Jacinto Museum of History. Desertion increased as soldiers became more and more concerned with helping move their families out of Texas. Captain Moseley Baker on March 8, 1836, wrote a letter which was published four days later in the Telegraph pleading for "all people to turn out and help Texas . . . will any man, under these circumstances longer refuse to turn out, because his interest requires his attention." Telegraph and Texas Register, March 12, 1836.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

<sup>81</sup>Telegraph and Texas Register, March 12, 1836.

The Mexican army continued to move deeper into Texas. Meanwhile, the Texas Navy was able to keep open supply lines between New Orleans and Texas. It also prevented the Mexicans from bringing supplies and reinforcements to the Texas coast by ship. Yet Santa Anna was continuing to move without serious opposition. San Felipe and Harrisburg were burned, and the printing press of the Telegraph and Texas Register, the voice of the revolution, was captured. Instead of throwing the press into Buffalo Bayou, Santa Anna should have used it in turning out effective propaganda.<sup>82</sup> In the meantime, the government of Texas was in flight, moving from Harrisburg to Galveston Island by mid-April of 1836.

Finally, Houston ended his retreat on the east bank of Buffalo Bayou. On April 20, 1836, the Mexican commander, who knew of Houston's march to Lynchburg, set up camp about one mile away from the Texans. On the morning of April 21, 1836, about four hundred Mexican soldiers reinforced Santa Anna. Houston decided to attack.

The Battle of San Jacinto took place on the afternoon of April 21, 1836, and it was a famous victory. The battleground was described as being in the shape of a horseshoe,<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>Frantz, Gail Borden: Dairyman to a Nation, p. 109.

<sup>83</sup>Virginia Enquirer, June 24, 1836.



giving neither side any adequate means of retreat.<sup>84</sup> Texans screaming "Remember the Alamo" and "Remember Goliad," broke through the Mexican lines catching the enemy off balance. The rout was complete. The intensity of the Texan's rage was well described in E. C. Barker's account:

After the battle, many dead Mexicans were found into whose heads the heavy knives had been struck with such force as to shatter their skulls like panes of glass.<sup>85</sup>

The Texans clubbed and stabbed more Mexicans than they shot. San Jacinto was one of the few instances where a mob won the battle.<sup>86</sup> Mrs. Dilue Harris, who visited the battlefield at San Jacinto, was glad to leave because it was so horrible. She later wrote, ". . . It was a gruesome sight. camped that night on the prairie. [one] could hear. the wolves howl and bark as they devoured the dead. . . ."87

In retrospect, the battle becomes totally a one-sided affair. Some six hundred Mexicans were killed, as opposed to nine Texans. Sam Houston's ankle was shattered by a

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<sup>84</sup>Siegel, A Political History of the Texas Republic, p. 36.

<sup>85</sup>Barker, Readings in Texas History, p. 302.

<sup>86</sup>Henderson, "A Critical Analysis of the San Jacinto Campaign," The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, p. 361.

<sup>87</sup>Original Manuscript of Mrs. Dilue Rose Harris, April, 1836, San Jacinto Museum of History.

rifle ball during the fight.<sup>88</sup> He soon left for New Orleans to receive medical treatment for the wound. Santa Anna was soon captured, and this all but ended the war in Texas. The cost of independence had been expensive, but at last it seemed secure because of a most unique battle, for which Sam Houston deserved all the credit.

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<sup>88</sup>There is some probability that Houston was shot by one of his own men. See Andrew F. Muir, "The Mystery of San Jacinto," Southwest Review, XXXVI (May, 1951), p. 83. Also see Siegel, A Political History of the Texas Republic, p. 36.

## CHAPTER II

### ADJUSTMENT AFTER SAN JACINTO

The end of the revolution brought a steady increase of immigrants moving into Texas. The new settlers, along with the returning "Runaway Scrape" victims, produced an almost continuous flow of travelers seeking homes and land. The growth of Texas after the war was phenomenal. By election time in September, 1836, there were approximately 30,000 Americans and 22,000 Mexicans, Indians, and Negroes living in the Republic.<sup>1</sup> A. J. Yates of Schenectady, New York, told Stephen F. Austin that he could "charge \$20. for . . . passage [and] send out a 1,000 to 2,000 people within 40 days. . . ."<sup>2</sup> The Niles' Register reported in August of 1836, that, ". . . the tide of emigration is immense; the whole country is swarming with men. . . ."<sup>3</sup> Perhaps, one contributing factor to increased immigration was Mary Austin Holley's book, Texas, which first appeared in 1836. Her descriptions of Texas were vivid. Moreover, the book had a feminine touch, lending itself very effectively to quelling

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<sup>1</sup>Stanley Siegel, A Political History of the Texas Republic (Austin, 1956), p. 39.

<sup>2</sup>A. J. Yates to Stephen F. Austin, May 14, 1836, Eugene C. Barker (ed.), The Austin Papers October, 1834-January 1837 (Austin, 1936), III, p. 352.

<sup>3</sup>Niles' Register, August 27, 1836.

women's fears of emigrating to a frontier republic where life was known to be so harsh. In the preface of her book, she stated her purpose: "To the emigrant, rather than the general reader, by assisting him [to] locate his ideas as well as his land, this volume hopes to be most useful. . . ." <sup>4</sup> Indeed, as Noah Smithwick observed, ". . . Texas was a heaven for men and dogs, but a hell for women and oxen. . . ." <sup>5</sup> Thus, in Texas, one might describe many of these new residents as a part of the "moving generation," all seeking their paradise in the wild. <sup>6</sup>

The main road from the United States to Texas was the one from Natchitoches, Louisiana, to Nacogdoches and San Augustine in Texas. <sup>7</sup> Settlers who preferred water travel could arrive by river steamboat on the Red River, or by sea, normally traveling from New Orleans to Galveston. <sup>8</sup> Frederick Law Olmsted, during his travels through Texas, noted as late as the 1850's that, ". . . Texas has but two

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<sup>4</sup>Mary Austin Holley, Texas (Lexington, 1836), p. vi.

<sup>5</sup>Noah Smithwick, The Evolution of a State or Recollections of Old Texas Days (Austin, 1900), p. 15.

<sup>6</sup>Reuben Gold Thwaites (ed.), Early Western Travels (Cleveland, 1905), XVIII, p. 365.

<sup>7</sup>William Ransom Hogan, The Texas Republic a Social and Economic History (Austin, 1969), p. 5.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 9. Hogan points out that limited ship transportation existed from New York and Galveston.



avenues of approach--the Gulf [of Mexico] and Red River. . . ."9

Immigrants into Texas also included many Europeans. Between 1836 and 1850, the number of foreign-born inhabitants numbered 12,000, two-thirds of whom were natives of Germany.<sup>10</sup> Most immigrants were attracted to the Republic by governmental offers of large quantities of land to citizens.<sup>11</sup> Mary Austin Holley said, ". . . No government has ever offered greater facilities for colonization than . . . Texas."<sup>12</sup> The government of Texas had, in fact, approved of a very liberal land policy within the new constitution of 1836, which provided for an allotment of 4,605 acres to the head of a family.<sup>13</sup> However, between March 2, 1836, and October 1, 1837, the head of a family received only 1,280 acres.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Frederick Law Olmsted, A Journey Through Texas (New York, 1857), p. 43. He also stated that the gulf steamers touched only at two ports, Galveston and Indianola, the latter being a point of debarkation for most of the German immigrants.

<sup>10</sup>Hogan, The Texas Republic a Social and Economic History, p. 10.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Holley, Texas, p. 14.

<sup>13</sup>Hogan, p. 10.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 11.



Another immediate result of the war was that Sam Houston became the hero of San Jacinto. Although detested by many prior to the famous battle, he was proclaimed a hero in New Orleans. Reports of his reception in that city were circulated throughout the country and did much to remove traces of hatred which had been manifest in some parts of Texas. In fact, one Texan said that Houston's victory had excelled that of President Jackson's at New Orleans.<sup>15</sup> As a result of this reaction in Texas, Houston went on to become the first elected President of the Republic. He later served a second term as President, and after Texas became a state in the Union, he was elected first governor and then a United States Senator. Houston, however, did not become President of Texas until the formal election of September, 1836. During the meantime, Texas was beset with many problems, which the Burnet government failed to solve. Sam Houston inherited those problems.

After San Jacinto, Burnet continued negotiations with Santa Anna. Houston had already begun talks with the captured Mexican President before he left for New Orleans. The government soon was quarreling, not only within itself, but also with the army over the question of how to dispose of

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<sup>15</sup>William P. Smith to his wife, April 22, 1836, Ernest W. Winkler (ed.), Manuscript Letters and Documents of Early Texans (Austin, 1937), p. 188.

Santa Anna. The army, as well as some of Burnet's cabinet members, preferred that Santa Anna be executed immediately. Yet Burnet remained adamant. In a letter written to Andrew Briscoe, Burnet wrote, ". . . Santa Anna dead--is no more than Tom Dick or Harry, dead--but living he may avail Texas much . . . I know the popular jealousy--that many men are always ready to impute . . . Such men . . . are not scarce in Texas. . . ." <sup>16</sup> Furthermore, the fact that the Mexican government had not accepted the verdict at San Jacinto made it necessary to maintain a strong standing army.

The army of Texas, after San Jacinto, became saturated with volunteers who had just arrived in Texas. Upon their arrival, they had found that the fighting was over and thus suffered from disappointment, especially after having sworn vengeance against Mexico. <sup>17</sup> More important, perhaps, was that they did not yield to discipline, subordination, or effective organization. <sup>18</sup> Concerned over the situation existing in the army, Sam Houston wrote from New Orleans, " I have heard with regret that . . . dissatisfaction has

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<sup>16</sup>David G. Burnet to Andrew Briscoe, May 21, 1836, Briscoe Papers, San Jacinto Museum of History.

<sup>17</sup>Joseph Milton Nance, After San Jacinto The Texas-Mexican Frontier, 1836-1841 (Austin, 1963), p. 19.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid. Also see Eugene C. Barker (ed.), Readings in Texas History (Dallas, 1929), p. 346.

existed in the army. . . ."19 Mrs. Dilue Rose Harris exclaimed that there had been ". . . a great excitement, among the people, in regard to General Santa Anna . . . some of the Texans, that would have him shot. . . ."20 Furthermore, Burnet's own life was threatened.21 Samuel Swartwout, for example, writing to Colonel James Morgan, vehemently denounced Burnet: ". . . Texas has been betrayed, sold to hell . . . Burnet must die. . . ."22 Mrs. Harris' father told her that Burnet was honorable, but because there were so many ambitious men in Texas, the chances of strife and war were eminent.23

The gravest problem that confronted the provisional government after San Jacinto was that of controlling the

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19Sam Houston to the Soldiers on board Schooner Flora, May 11, 1836, Amelia W. Williams and Eugene C. Barker (eds.), The Writings of Sam Houston, 1813-1863 (Austin, 1942), I, p. 429. It should be understood by the reader, Houston often wrote in the third person when referring to himself.

20Original Manuscript of Mrs. Dilue Rose Harris, October, 1836, San Jacinto Museum of History.

21Ibid. Mrs. Harris said that there had been several threats made against Burnet. She also added that he was glad to become a private citizen once again.

22Samuel Swartwout to Colonel James Morgan, June 29, 1836, Morgan Papers, Archives Collection, Rosenberg Library. It is interesting to note that Swartwout placed his faith in both Sam Houston and Thomas J. Rusk.

23Original Manuscript of Mrs. Dilue Rose Harris, October, 1836, San Jacinto Museum of History.



army.<sup>24</sup> Burnet's actions in dealing with the captured Santa Anna were commendable. Noah Smithwick believed that if Santa Anna had been killed as the army demanded, the Mexican Army under General Filisola would have attacked Texas.<sup>25</sup> Henderson Yoakum, in agreement, wrote: "The rash and imprudent course suggested by the opposition would have rendered Texas obnoxious to the charge of inhumanity, aroused and united the dormant spirit of Mexico, . . ."<sup>26</sup>

Not only did the army oppose Burnet's negotiations. Some of his cabinet, namely, Robert Potter, Secretary of the Navy, and Mirabeau Lamar, Secretary of War, disagreed with the President. Burnet's objective was to force Santa Anna into making a number of concessions in exchange for his life. Objections to this course of action were raised by the more emotional Texans, because of the slaughters at Goliad and the Alamo. More realistic objections were that Santa Anna, by virtue of his defeat, would no longer be a powerful figure in Mexico. Finally, it was argued, Santa Anna's word was simply not to be trusted.

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<sup>24</sup>Rupert N. Richardson, Texas The Lone Star State (Englewood Cliffs, 1958), p. 99.

<sup>25</sup>Noah Smithwick, The Evolution of a State or Recollections of Old Texas Days (Austin, 1900), p. 141.

<sup>26</sup>Henderson Yoakum, History of Texas (New York, 1855), II, p. 156.



Burnet, in spite of popular disapproval and his problems with the army, continued his negotiations. On May 14, 1836, he concluded a public and private treaty with Santa Anna at Velasco. By the terms of the published treaty, Santa Anna agreed to the following conditions:

1. The cessation of hostilities between the two armies.
2. The retirement of Mexican forces beyond the Rio Grande.
3. The protection of private property.
4. The restoration of property confiscated by the Mexicans.
5. The Texan army remaining at least five leagues behind the Mexican forces.<sup>27</sup>

The secret treaty provided that:

1. Santa Anna would issue orders which would remove Mexican forces as soon as possible.
2. Santa Anna would prepare his cabinet to meet with Texan commissioners so that differences could be worked out.
3. Independence of Texas would be acknowledged by Mexico.
4. A treaty of commerce should be established.

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<sup>27</sup>Yoakum, History of Texas, II, p. 155.

5. The boundary would be established at the Rio Grande River.
6. Texas would return Santa Anna to Vera Cruz, where he could begin to carry out his part of the treaty.<sup>28</sup>

The treaties were not popular in Texas. On June 1, 1836, Santa Anna was placed aboard the schooner Invincible, which was scheduled to sail for Vera Cruz. At this point, however, General Thomas Jefferson Green arrived with an armed band of North Carolinians and demanded the removal of the ex-President of Mexico. Santa Anna was again a prisoner of doubtful status.

On June 9, 1836, Santa Anna officially protested the conduct of Texas in breaking the treaty. The next day, Burnet was forced to make the humiliating confession that Texas had not complied with the treaty because of popular indignation.<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately, this incident clearly indicated how weak and ineffective the Burnet government really was.

As a last resort, Burnet tried to placate the aroused army by changing the commander-in-chief. Hopefully, this change would perhaps give him some support for his treaty

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp. 155-156.

<sup>29</sup>Yoakum, History of Texas, II, p. 175.

with Santa Anna and a faltering government. The plan did not materialize.

General Rusk was already having difficulty in controlling the volunteers in the army. He did take the army to Victoria following the retreating Mexicans. Mirabeau Lamar, the Secretary of War, who differed with Burnet over the disposal of Santa Anna, went to Victoria to take command but was rejected. Smithwick said that Rusk ". . . had the esteem and confidence of his men to such an extent that an attempt to replace him . . . stirred up such a spirit of mutiny [and] . . . Lamar was constrained to withdraw. . . ."30 The "spirit of mutiny" was probably the army's complete rejection of the Burnet government, which had approved the appointment of Lamar to head the army. Moreover, Smithwick readily admitted that Rusk was criticized because of "his easy familiarity with the privates."31

No doubt Lamar was bitter over his rejection by the army. The Niles' Register reported that he accepted the verdict in his ". . . disinterested and patriotic manner. . . ."32 Lamar, however, wrote Burnet that ". . . I

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30Smithwick, The Evolution of a State, p. 152. Rusk was later a frontier hero, but at this time, he was having difficulty. It seems that Smithwick's account may be exaggerated.

31Ibid.

32Niles' Register, August 27, 1836.

had an open rupture with General Rusk believing it to be the secret arrangements of his to supplant me. . . ."33 This incident had the effect of aligning Lamar and Burnet politically. Their eventual alliance proved significant in Texas politics.

Although the Mexican army retired beyond the Rio Grande, there were numerous reports of a new enemy invasion. Some citizens were arrested and even accused of being spies!<sup>34</sup> Edward Hall, writing to President Burnet, said of the fate of the army ". . . The accounts have been brought by so many persons, and with such a variety of versions that the public were [sic] slow to believe. . . ."35

Austin wrote Lamar concerning a possible invasion:

". . . all Mexico is in motion. No treaty made with Santa

<sup>33</sup>Mirabeau Lamar to David G. Burnet, July 17, 1836, Charles A. Gulick, Jr., et al (eds.), The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar (Austin and New York, 1968), I, p. 417. Also quoted in Siegel, A Political History of the Texas Republic, p. 42.

<sup>34</sup>Mirabeau Lamar to Colonel James Morgan, May 9, 1836, Morgan Papers, Archives, Rosenberg Library. In this letter, official orders were given to release Dr. Harrison for lack of evidence. See Meredith Duncan to David Burnet, May 1, 1836, William C. Binkley (ed.), Official Correspondence of the Texas Revolution 1835-1836 (New York, 1936), II, p. 650. Also see Hervey Whiting to Colonel James Morgan, May 3, 1836, Binkley (ed.), Official Correspondence of the Texas Revolution 1835-1836, II, pp. 653-655.

<sup>35</sup>Edward Hall to David Burnet, May 12, 1836, Winkler (ed.), Manuscript Letters and Documents of Early Texans, II, p. 667.



Anna will be respected by them. . . ."36 Ammon Underwood wrote in his diary, ". . . About the 15th of May news arrived of a new invasion. . . ."37 Despite the fears by Texas, the Mexicans did not immediately return to fight. Some 7,000 troops in all left Texas by early June of 1836.38 In fact, Santa Anna's order, issued on April 22, to retreat because of ". . . inadequate troops. . . ." was not received by General Vicente Filisola until April 28, because the mass evacuation of troops had already begun.39 There is no evidence to show that Mexico was sincerely ready to acquiesce to Texan wishes. The war was not over as far as Mexico was concerned. Yet Mexico was not in any condition to renew the conflict.40 General Juan Amador, who had succeeded General Urrea at Matamoros with an invasion force, wrote to his governor, ". . . There is not a single real [one quarter of a peso] for the soldiers and food is very short . . .

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<sup>36</sup>Stephen F. Austin to Mirabeau Lamar, June 27, 1836, Barker (ed.), The Austin Papers, III, p. 372.

<sup>37</sup>The Journal of Ammon Underwood 1834-1838, San Jacinto Museum of History.

<sup>38</sup>Barker, Readings in Texas History, p. 303.

<sup>39</sup>Field Orders From San Jacinto by his Excellency General D. Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna to Major General D. Vicente Filisola, April 22, 1836, San Jacinto Museum of History.

<sup>40</sup>It was not until March, 1842, that any organized attempt was made by Mexico to invade Texas.

soon they will be reduced to a single ration of meat; send any funds possible . . . we look for such aid in our present state of misery. . . ."41 A New York newspaper, in December of 1836, stated in regard to the Mexican state of affairs that the Mexicans had no intention of invading Texas, because ". . . they had as much on hand as they could do, to fight each other. . . ."42

Burnet was interested in a military campaign whose objective was capture of Matamoros, Mexico. The provisional president hoped that such a campaign would alleviate some of the pressure that had been placed upon his administration by the military. Sam Houston opposed the campaign because of his belief in maintaining a defensive rather than offensive military policy.<sup>43</sup> Austin, fearing additional disruption in Texas, told Burnet, ". . . I think that some prudence is necessary to avoid discord with General Houston--any precipitate action by you at this time, may create an excitement in the army and will do it. . . ."44 Regardless of Texan

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<sup>41</sup>General Juan V. Amador to the Governor of San Luis Potosi, October 14, 1836, San Jacinto Museum of History.

<sup>42</sup>The New Yorker, December 10, 1836.

<sup>43</sup>Sam Houston to Thomas J. Rusk, August 8, 1836, Williams and Barker (eds.), The Writings of Sam Houston, 1813-1863, I, p. 436.

<sup>44</sup>Stephen F. Austin to David Burnet, July 2, 1836, Barker (ed.), The Austin Papers, III, p. 376.

disorder after the war, the feeling of the United States was decidedly in favor of Texas. Samuel Swartwout, writing to James Morgan, said that he witnessed a meeting in which 4,000 to 5,000 people spoke out in favor of Texas.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, Swartwout was confident that recognition for Texas would come because of the immense support for it in Congress.<sup>46</sup> Stephen F. Austin made the same conclusion and wrote to Lamar that ". . . There is a general and pretty [sic] universal and ardent interest all over the U. S. in favor of Texas--This feeling pervades both houses of Congress and the Cabinet. . . ."47

The way Santa Anna was handled probably maintained the support given her by the United States and made the commissioners' work somewhat easier. "Texas," as Austin was informed, "had profited by the cruelties of Santa Anna in rousing the sympathy of the U. S. for her. . . ."48 In order to retain this feeling of sympathy, it was essential that the Texans treat the Mexicans kindly. Santa Anna was

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<sup>45</sup>Samuel Swartwout to Colonel James Morgan, May 16, 1836, Morgan Papers, Archives, Rosenberg Library.

<sup>46</sup>Samuel Swartwout to Colonel James Morgan, April 23, 1836, Morgan Papers, Archives, Rosenberg Library.

<sup>47</sup>Stephen F. Austin to Mirabeau Lamar, June 27, 1836, Barker (ed.), The Austin Papers, III, p. 372.

<sup>48</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ to Stephen F. Austin, July 3, 1836, Barker (ed.), The Austin Papers, III, p. 377.



treated with respect and his life was spared by the old residents despite the many who protested. Even Sam Houston spoke out in favor of the treating of Santa Anna in a humane manner. He wrote, ". . . Santa Anna living and secured beyond all danger of escape may be of incalculable advantage to Texas. . . ."49 Continuing, Houston added that the

. . . affairs of Texas connected with General Santa Anna have become matters of consideration to which the attention of the United States has been called, and for Texas . . . to proceed to extreme measures . . . would be treating that Government with his disrespect. . . .50

Unlike Santa Anna, other Mexican prisoners were treated very harshly. They were simply used as servants, or in some cases as an additional free labor force. In Galveston, for example, the non-professionals were used as builders. They worked from 5 a.m. until 10 a.m. Their siesta, a custom which was respected by the Texans in this particular case, lasted until 3 p.m.; work was then resumed and ended at sunset.<sup>51</sup> The professionals, such as carpenters and blacksmiths, were taken to private plantations

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<sup>49</sup>Sam Houston to the Commander in the Field, July 26, 1836, Williams and Barker (eds.), The Writings of Sam Houston, 1813-1863, I, pp. 434-435.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Edward Harcourt to Colonel James Morgan, May 30, 1836, Morgan Papers, Archives, Rosenberg Library.



to work.<sup>52</sup> As late as January, 1838, Mary Austin Holley noted in her diary that she saw a Mexican prisoner serving as a tailor.<sup>53</sup> He was described by her as having a ". . . meloncholy [sic] cast of countenance. . . ." <sup>54</sup> Mrs. Dilue Rose Harris reported in her journal that the Mexican prisoners were reluctant to work and that white overseers were used.<sup>55</sup>

The question of recognition by the United States contrived to plague the Republic despite attempts made by the Texas government to expedite it. Austin, Wharton and Archer, the three commissioners responsible for obtaining aid to fight Mexico, continued to work after the war. They now sought official recognition from the Jackson Administration. The Burnet government, hoping to rush recognition, sent additional commissioners, which only added to the confusion. Finally, all commissioners were recalled and Peter W. Grayson and James Collinsworth were sent to Washington, D. C., but failed in their efforts to secure official recognition.

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>James P. Bryan (ed.), Mary Austin Holley The Texas Diary, 1835-8 (Austin, 1965), p. 55.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Original Manuscript of Mrs. Dilue Rose Harris, May, 1836, San Jacinto Museum of History.

By mid-summer of 1836, order had been partially restored in Texas. Burnet on July 23, 1836, issued a proclamation calling for the election of a new President.

The ad interim government which Burnet headed was at best an unpopular government on the run. At the time of its conception, Texas was near total destruction. The Burnet government moved from Washington on the Brazos to Harrisburg. With the Mexican army approaching Harrisburg, Burnet and the government fled to Galveston and barely escaped capture. After San Jacinto, the government established its headquarters at Velasco. By the end of the administration in October, 1836, it was operating in Columbia and awaiting the arrival of the newly elected president.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE ELECTION OF 1836

The constitution of March, 1836, called for a national election to be held in September. Independence involved many problems which the Texans were not prepared to meet.<sup>1</sup> Texas was in need of someone who could help reduce the turmoil which had so characterized the Republic. Houston proved to be the man that Texas so desperately needed. Indeed, even in the most trying times, Houston possessed a kind of magnetic charm. Colonel Gray described him as follows in early 1836: "General Houston's arrival has created more sensation than that of any other man. He is evidently the people's man and seems to take pains to ingratiate himself with everybody. . . ." <sup>2</sup> Of Houston, John Linn wrote,

. . . He was by no means a classical scholar, nor even a fair grammarian; but he had a remarkable memory and was a good judge of human nature. His personal appearance was grand; standing over six feet in height, his body and limbs were well proportioned. His voice was excellent; and altogether, a more commanding figure and effective speaker would

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<sup>1</sup>Oris Eugene McGregor, Jr., "The Attitude of Texas Toward Annexation 1836-1845" (unpublished Master's thesis, Sam Houston State College, Huntsville, 1963), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>William Fairfax Gray, From Virginia to Texas, 1835: Diary of Colonel William Fairfax Gray Giving Details of His Journey to Texas and Return in 1835-6 and Second Journey to Texas in 1837 (Houston, 1909), p. 121.

be difficult to find. He never failed to command attention from his audience. His was a kindly and generous disposition when pursuing the even tenor of its flow, but harsh and vindictive when thwarted or opposed. Especially did those who had the temerity to cross his political pathway become the objects of his scathing investive.<sup>3</sup>

Because of wounds received at San Jacinto, Houston was absent from the Republic from 5 May to 26 June 1836. Upon his arrival in Texas, Houston tried to hide the fact that his wounds were worse.<sup>4</sup> Houston was no doubt worried over the state of affairs in Texas and the possibility of a Mexican invasion. Houston, cautious and rational, perhaps thought that his unexpected return might stabilize conditions existing in the army. P. H. Bell, writing to Lamar, said that the army was so bad that ". . . God in his wisdom and perfection, could not please the dissatisfied spirits of the army."<sup>5</sup>

Houston was not interested in seeking political office, but in view of the turmoil, he consented to campaign for the Presidency in late August. According to one

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<sup>3</sup>John J. Linn, Reminiscences of Fifty Years in Texas (New York, 1883), pp. 272-273.

<sup>4</sup>Sam Houston to Henry Raguet, July 4, 1836, Amelia W. Williams and Eugene C. Barker (eds.), The Writings of Sam Houston, 1813-1863 (Austin, 1942), I, p. 433. Also quoted in Llerena Friend, Sam Houston: The Great Designer (Austin, 1954), p. 73.

<sup>5</sup>P. H. Bell to Mirabeau Lamar, September 6, 1836, Charles A. Gulick, Jr., et al (eds.), The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar (Austin and New York, 1968), I, p. 447.



biographer, "He was afraid that the election of Austin or Smith would result in a continuation of the weakness and disorders that existed under the ad interim government."<sup>6</sup>

The Telegraph quoted Houston as follows: "The crisis requires it or I would not have yielded. . . ."<sup>7</sup>

There were no political parties, in the sense of the political party of today with its highly organized party machinery of committees, conventions, and bosses.<sup>8</sup> Dudley Wooten said that Texas politics in 1836 were entirely personal.<sup>9</sup> Yet there were groups who aligned themselves with similar interests. The leaders of these opposing interest groups were Stephen F. Austin and William H. Wharton.<sup>10</sup> Both of these men had served as commissioners to the United States, and because of personal differences, came to head two different groups. As a result of working together in the United States for a common cause during the war, they

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<sup>6</sup>M. K. Wisehart, Sam Houston: American Giant (Washington, 1962), p. 275.

<sup>7</sup>Telegraph and Texas Register, August 30, 1836.

<sup>8</sup>Ernest William Winkler (ed.), Platforms of Political Parties in Texas (Austin, 1916), p. 11. Also quoted in Nina Covington, "The Presidential Campaigns of the Republic of Texas of 1836 and 1838" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Texas, Austin, 1929), p. 18.

<sup>9</sup>Dudley G. Wooten, A Complete History of Texas (Dallas, 1899), p. 244.

<sup>10</sup>Gray, From Virginia to Texas, p. 110.

settled their personality conflict and became close friends. Their reconciliation was of far-reaching political importance in Texas. In effect, factions that once resembled political parties in Texas had joined forces.

Stephen F. Austin was the most logical choice for the Presidency of Texas. Houston was not yet in the campaign and ad interim President Burnet believed that Austin would win. Perhaps reflecting upon his own misfortunes, Burnet wrote that Austin would ". . . do well provided he selects a good cabinet. . . ."<sup>11</sup> Austin returned to Texas in June; Archer and Wharton followed later. In the meantime, Wharton wrote Austin and explained that Houston was opposed to the annexation of Texas to the United States.<sup>12</sup> Ashbel Smith, in his reminiscences, agreed and stated that Houston always felt that two self-governing bodies should be best for all concerned.<sup>13</sup> Years later, John G. Tod said of Houston: "when sober he was for annexation but when drunk . . . he

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<sup>11</sup>David G. Burnet to Mirabeau Lamar, August 8, 1836, Gulick, et al (eds.), The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar, I, p. 436.

<sup>12</sup>William H. Wharton to Stephen F. Austin, May 28, 1836, Eugene C. Barker (ed.), The Austin Papers October, 1834-January, 1837 (Austin, 1936), III, p. 360. Also quoted in Stanley Siegel, A Political History of the Texas Republic (Austin, 1956), p. 47.

<sup>13</sup>Ashbel Smith, Reminiscences of the Texas Republic (Galveston, 1875), p. 80.

would express himself strongly against the measure!"<sup>14</sup>

Annexation, of course, was generally favored by most Texans.

Wharton wrote that,

. . . like all triumphant conquerors, he will be omnipotent for a time at least. I plainly see before me the turmoil and confusion and injustice and the demagogueism which must ensue in Texas after the war is over before we can establish an orderly and harmonious independent government.<sup>15</sup>

Wharton, in spite of his reassurances to Austin that he and Houston were ". . . the best of friends," implied that Austin should run for President.<sup>16</sup> A rift between Wharton and Houston appeared logical. Wharton was keenly aware of Houston's vindictiveness, which perhaps precipitated that statement reaffirming his friendship with Houston.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Quoted in Friend, Sam Houston: The Great Designer, p. 147.

<sup>15</sup>William H. Wharton to Stephen F. Austin, May 28, 1836, Barker (ed.), The Austin Papers, III, p. 360. Also quoted in Siegel, A Political History of the Texas Republic, p. 47.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>During the Houston Administration, W. H. Wharton was appointed charge d'affaires at Washington. Wharton accused Houston of sending him into exile honorably. Houston, a few months later, heard of Wharton's remark. Upon appointing a new Naval Commissioner, Houston passed over John A. Wharton, a candidate, whom the politicians thought the President would select. One day, Houston met W. H. Wharton and casually mentioned that he had refused to appoint his brother, "because I did not wish to drive any more of the Wharton family into exile." See Linn, Reminiscences of Fifty Years in Texas, p. 273. Also see Thomas F. McKinney to "Mr. Editor" at Quintana, 1835, Briscoe Papers, September 29, 1835, San Jacinto Museum. McKinney charged



Austin, by July 20, 1836, was an official candidate. Both Archer and Wharton had agreed to support his candidacy. Prior to this time, Branch T. Archer was a candidate for the Presidency, but his support was negligible. Those who urged him to run were unknown to Texas and had no real influence in realizing Archer's election.<sup>18</sup> As a result, Archer simply threw what little support he had to Austin, even though he still allowed his name to be placed on the ballot.

A few days later, Henry Smith, the former governor, became an official candidate. At this time, Smith was supported by the army.<sup>19</sup> He also had the support of many who still belonged to the "Wharton faction,"<sup>20</sup> even though Wharton was not promoting Austin's candidacy.<sup>21</sup>

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Wharton with "manipulating matters so that his election as General of the Texas Army was secure." Houston eventually held the rank that Wharton was so eager to possess and became a hero at San Jacinto.

<sup>18</sup>G. G. Alford to Mirabeau Lamar, August 10, 1836, Gulick, et al (eds.), The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar, I, p. 440.

<sup>19</sup>P. H. Bell to Mirabeau Lamar, September 6, 1836, Gulick, et al (eds.), The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar, I, p. 446.

<sup>20</sup>Friend, Sam Houston: The Great Designer, p. 75.

<sup>21</sup>It is interesting to note that Wharton apparently did not have a very effective control over his following. In spite of his support of Austin, his following refused to endorse Austin's candidacy. This is probably indicative of the lack of political or party ties. Most of the people were backing a personality for the Presidency, rather than specific political views. See Dudley G. Wooten, A Complete



Hence, prior to Houston's announcement of his candidacy for the Presidency, there were two major contenders: Henry Smith and Stephen F. Austin. Although there was no type of reliable poll prediction, reports showed Smith in the lead.<sup>22</sup> Austin, after learning of Sam Houston's intentions to run, sensed defeat.<sup>23</sup> Smith not only refused to campaign against Houston but supported him.<sup>24</sup>

The campaign did not escape mudslinging. Austin received more abuse than any other candidate in the race. The assaults on Austin's character had been building over the years among those settlers that were the older residents, who were joined by many newcomers with no knowledge of what Austin had done for Texas. Austin, aware of the criticism, was forced to publish an open letter to Gail Borden which defended his character.

Austin's supposed involvement in the Montclova land speculation was perhaps the most serious charge held against

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History of Texas, p. 245. He claimed that the "Austin Party" was in reality an anti-Wharton party.

<sup>22</sup>P. H. Bell to Mirabeau Lamar, September 6, 1836, Gulick, et al (eds.), The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar, I, p. 446. Also see Siegel, A Political History of the Republic, p. 48.

<sup>23</sup>Stephen F. Austin to James F. Perry, September 2, 1836, Barker (ed.), The Austin Papers, III, p. 428. Also see Friend, Sam Houston: The Great Designer, p. 76.

<sup>24</sup>Friend, Sam Houston: The Great Designer, p. 76.

him. Although he denied the charge, many old settlers would not accept his explanation. Austin defended his position, saying that he was not a volunteer candidate. ". . . I agreed to become one from a sense of duty, because I was solicited to do so by persons whose opinions I could not disregard," he announced openly.<sup>25</sup> Austin was urged into the campaign by such noteworthy Texans as William H. Wharton, Branch T. Archer, Bailey Hardiman, and S. Rhoads Fisher.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, scandal and censure remained a part of Austin's legacy despite his pleas for good sense and judgment. The attacks involved not only land fraud but also his dealings with Santa Anna.

Austin had allowed Santa Anna to write a letter to President Andrew Jackson concerning his views on an independent Texas. Austin hoped that, with Santa Anna's aid, annexation could be expedited. As a result of the letter, accusations were made that Austin was the man responsible for allowing Santa Anna to live. Austin believed that political slander was being used against him by his

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<sup>25</sup>Stephen F. Austin to Gail Borden, Jr., N. D., Printed Handbill, Barker (ed.), The Austin Papers, III, p. 418.

<sup>26</sup>Memorandum by Stephen F. Austin, July 20, 1836, ibid., p. 399.

opponents.<sup>27</sup> Striking back, he wrote, ". . . I have had no hand in saving him and he was saved by the armistice entered into by General Sam Houston . . . and by the cabinet. . . ."28

Austin's wartime activities were also questioned. It was charged that Austin, as one of the commissioners to the United States, had preferred "to eat fine dinners, drink wine, etc. . . ." rather than secure aid for Texas.<sup>29</sup> Austin denounced the charge as outrageous and proceeded to defend his efforts to help Texas.

Austin's platform consisted of one recurring statement: a promise to secure annexation for Texas, provided the people wanted it.<sup>30</sup> The remainder of the campaign was a rebuttal of attacks made upon his career and character. Indeed, Llerena Friend wrote, "Austin's campaign was a defensive battle against accusations, . . ."31 Distraught over

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<sup>27</sup>Stephen F. Austin to General E. P. Gaines, July 27, 1836, ibid., p. 404.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Stephen F. Austin to Gail Borden, Jr., N. D., Printed Handbill, ibid., p. 420.

<sup>30</sup>A number of Stephen F. Austin's letters written during the campaign of 1836 point out that as a candidate and as a private citizen, he wanted Texas annexed to the United States. See Stephen F. Austin to W. S. Archer, August 15, 1836, Barker (ed.), The Austin Papers, III, p. 415. He wrote, "I am in favor of annexation."

<sup>31</sup>Friend, Sam Houston: The Great Designer, p. 76.

the whole affair, Austin wrote to a former Virginia Congressman, W. S. Archer, ". . . I am truly uneasy and sick of everything connected with public affairs . . . If I am elected, my favorite object will be annexation . . . that effected, I am determined never again to have anything to do with public affairs. . . ."32

Unlike those made of Stephen F. Austin, the criticisms of Houston had less impact and were practically negligible. The hero of San Jacinto was reminded of his Fabian type of warfare during the revolution. Even though this charge did not have much effect upon the Houston campaign, it did tend to alienate the South and West against the East politically.<sup>33</sup> The East became pro-Houston; the West and South became anti-Houston.

An incident which could have had serious political repercussions was a charge made in certain New York newspapers that the three commissioners had plotted to oust Houston. General James Hamilton, who could be influential in securing needed money for the Texan cause, was the man supposed to succeed Sam Houston.<sup>34</sup> Apparently Hamilton's

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<sup>32</sup>Stephen F. Austin to W. S. Archer, August 15, 1836, Barker (ed.), The Austin Papers, III, p. 416.

<sup>33</sup>Covington, "The Presidential Campaigns of the Republic of Texas of 1836 and 1838," p. 20.

<sup>34</sup>James Hamilton to Stephen F. Austin, June 28, 1836, Barker (ed.), The Austin Papers, III, p. 373. Also see



frank denial of the scheme left little for the scandal-mongers to utilize.<sup>35</sup> "The objections to Houston," as Joseph Ficklin wrote to Austin during the height of the campaign, "can not equal the confidence the world has in him. . . ."<sup>36</sup> Austin realized that defeat was inevitable. He prophetically wrote,

. . . Houston will, I am told, get all the east, and Red River now--Many of the old settlers who are too blind to see or understand their interest will vote for him, and the army I believe will go for him, at least a majority of them--So that I have a good prospect of some rest this year, and time to regulate my private affairs, which need regulating very much. . . .<sup>37</sup>

The Vice-Presidential race was quite different from the campaign for Presidency. As late as August there was no candidate in the running for Vice President. Finally, on August 8, 1836, Lamar was asked by the outgoing President to

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Niles' Register, July 2, 1836. The New York Courier and Enquirer and New York Evening Star were the newspapers which allegedly published the plot.

<sup>35</sup>Niles' Register, July 2, 1836. The plot to replace Houston with James Hamilton was one that was supported by a "strong party" in the South. Once the plan was accomplished, ten million dollars would be given to the commissioners for aid in helping Texas fight Mexico. The commissioners did not accept the offer. In fact, Wharton stated that he had never held any direct or indirect communications with Hamilton over the removal of Houston as Commander-in-Chief.

<sup>36</sup>Joseph Ficklin to Stephen F. Austin, August, 1836, Barker (ed.), The Austin Papers, III, p. 426.

<sup>37</sup>Stephen F. Austin to James F. Perry, September 2, 1836, *ibid.*, p. 428. Also quoted in Friend, Sam Houston: The Great Designer, p. 76.

seek the office.<sup>38</sup> Later in August, Thomas J. Rusk, a good choice for the Vice Presidency, declined because of his youth and lack of interest in political office.<sup>39</sup> Lamar was now virtually unopposed in his bid for the position of Vice President. He was told that the army, prior to Houston's announcement to enter the race, favored a "Smith and Lamar" ticket.<sup>40</sup> With few exceptions, Lamar was acceptable as Houston's running mate.<sup>41</sup> Lamar was still hurt over the army's rejection of him by a vote of 1500 to 170.<sup>42</sup> Yet, convinced of the fact that the army rejected him because he represented Burnet and possibly wishing to supercede Houston in command, he consented to seek the office.

Election day was relatively peaceful. Mrs. Harris stated that, "There were [sic] no drinking or fighting, the ladies, spent the day quilting. the young people, began

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<sup>38</sup>David Burnet to Mirabeau Lamar, August 8, 1836, Gulick, et al (eds.), The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar, I, p. 436.

<sup>39</sup>Thomas J. Rusk's Announcement Declining Candidacy for Vice President to the Public, August 31, 1836, ibid., pp. 443-444.

<sup>40</sup>P. H. Bell to Mirabeau Lamar, September 6, 1836, ibid., p. 446.

<sup>41</sup>There were some army men who supported a Major Montgomery, but after he was found in "bad keeping" the political scheme quickly terminated. See P. H. Bell to Mirabeau Lamar, September 6, 1836, ibid., p. 446.

<sup>42</sup>Wisehart, Sam Houston: American Giant, p. 274.

dancing at 3 o'clock kept it up till next morning. . . ."43 Apparently, future elections in the Republic were not quite as calm as the 1836 campaign. She admitted that this was her last time to participate in an Election Ball, because there was too much whiskey drunk for ladies to be present.<sup>44</sup> Ammon Underwood was more pessimistic about the whole affair. He related in his diary, "Much maneuvering is taking place. Electioneering is carried to a great length . . . Scenes of drunkenness, dissipation, gambling etc etc may be expected to their full extent and grandeur."<sup>45</sup>

When the votes were counted, Sam Houston was overwhelmingly elected President. Lamar was easily elected Vice President over Alexander Horton.<sup>46</sup> Austin received only 587 votes; and Smith, who was not a candidate, got 743 votes. Houston received 5,119 votes, or 80 per cent of the popular vote. The constitution drawn up during the war was adopted

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<sup>43</sup>Original Manuscript of Mrs. Dilue Rose Harris, September, 1836, San Jacinto Museum of History.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>The Journal of Ammon Underwood 1834-1838, San Jacinto Museum of History.

<sup>46</sup>See Siegel, Political History of the Texas Republic, p. 55. He explains that Lamar's victory was because of General Thomas J. Green's running for political office, and that Felix Huston was in command of the army. Both Green and Huston were principal leaders in the efforts to persuade the army to reject Lamar as their new commander.



unanimously. A proposal allowing Congress to possess the right of amendment failed. On the question of annexation, more than 6,000 voted for it, while only 93 opposed it.

Austin, who was so ill it was thought that he could not run for office, suffered a humiliating defeat in his bid for the Presidency.<sup>47</sup> Reminiscing, perhaps, he had written General E. P. Gaines in July, 1836: "The prosperity of Texas has been the object of my labors, the idol of my existence--it has assumed the character of a religion, for the guidance of my thought and actions, for fifteen years. . . ."<sup>48</sup> Although bitter, Austin continued to serve Texas in the Houston Administration. His goal after his political setback was still to get Texas recognized and annexed. He died on December, 1836, before his dream could be realized.

It appears doubtful that either Henry Smith or Stephen F. Austin could have adequately handled the problems inherited from the weak provisional government. Texas desperately needed a man like Sam Houston. Houston was perhaps, as John Linn believed, "the right man in the right place."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>John Henry Brown, Life and Times of Henry Smith (Dallas, 1887), p. 324.

<sup>48</sup>Stephen F. Austin to General E. P. Gaines, July 27, 1836, Barker (ed.), The Austin Papers, III, p. 403.

<sup>49</sup>Linn, Reminiscences of Fifty Years in Texas, p. 275.



## CHAPTER IV

### HOUSTON'S FIRST ADMINISTRATION 1836-1838

Sam Houston realized that if Texas was to exist on a permanent basis everyone would have to work together harmoniously. In his Cabinet appointments, Houston reflected these feelings by naming to Cabinet positions a number of men who had opposed him in the election. Both of his opposing candidates were given key positions, Austin as Secretary of State and Smith as Secretary of Treasury. Rusk, popular with the Army, was named Secretary of War, and S. Rhoads Fisher, an Austin supporter, was named Secretary of Navy. James Pinkney Henderson was given the post of Attorney General and Robert Barr was made Postmaster General.

The Congress elected members to the Supreme Court and judges to four judicial districts within the Republic. James Collinsworth, later a presidential candidate, was chosen as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Texas. Too often the judges were forced to use the weapon as well as the gavel. Robert M. Williamson, a district judge, for example, found that the people under his jurisdiction did not want any courts. Williamson sat down behind a table, placed a rifle at one elbow and a pistol at the other and said, "Hear ye, hear ye, court for the Third District is either now in

session or by God somebody's going to get killed."<sup>1</sup> Colonel William Fairfax Gray noted that the "lawyers . . . are young men; the judge is young, and all the proceedings are loose, and not very ceremonious. . . ."<sup>2</sup> Williamson, on another occasion, found that a lawyer in his argument for the case pulled a dirk, claiming it was the law, whereupon the judge aimed a pistol at the obstreperous lawyer and remarked, "Yes, and there's the Constitution."<sup>3</sup>

By the terms of the Constitution, the Houston government would not actually begin operation until the second Monday in December. David Burnet and his Vice President, Lorenzo de Zavala, both resigned in late October, after requesting the First Congress to convene on October 3, 1836. Houston was sworn in on the same day Burnet resigned. On October 22, 1836, the Houston-Lamar government commenced functioning. Inauguration was conducted in a rather primitive manner. The ceremony took place in the capital at Columbia under an oak tree. Nearby were two rough unfinished cabins that were to house the Congress. In his address, Sam Houston pointed out some of the problems which

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<sup>1</sup>Marquis James, The Raven (New York, 1966), p. 225.

<sup>2</sup>William Fairfax Gray, From Virginia to Texas, 1835: Diary of Colonel William Fairfax Gray Giving Details of His Journey to Texas and Return in 1835-6 and Second Journey to Texas in 1837 (Houston, 1909), p. 226.

<sup>3</sup>James, The Raven, p. 245.

the Republic then faced. The Army of Texas, Indians, finances, annexation, and Santa Anna's disposal were the main problems he mentioned. In a private letter to Edward Hall, Houston told his friend that the voters expected ". . . a wise and prudent administration. . . ."4

Texas, in the winter of 1836, presented a depressing picture. The national treasury was empty, the land devastated, the frontier harassed by Indians. A bedraggled army on the lookout for excitement constituted a danger to law and order, and there was a very real possibility that the Mexican armies might, at any time, march against Texas. Times were hard, prices high, and the future anything but auspicious.5

Houston first began dealing with the army because of the need for national security and internal morale. Conditions within the standing army at that time were appalling. Clark Owen, a Kentucky volunteer, wrote in August of 1837, to Doctor Joseph Rogers: "The Army is encamped on the Arenoso in Victoria County. The officers and soldiers have all suffered much from ill health. Some had died . . . I am

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<sup>4</sup>Sam Houston to Edward Hall, November 3, 1836, Amelia W. Williams and Eugene C. Barker, (eds.), The Writings of Sam Houston, 1813-1863 (Austin, 1942), II, p. 26.

<sup>5</sup>Stanley Siegel, A Political History of Texas Republic (Austin, 1956), pp. 56-57.

here in bad health. . . ."6 In March of 1838, he wrote, "Humphrey Porter, W. E. Probert, Capt. McClure and many others of the 1st Regiment of Permanents have fallen victims to the climate [and] other causes since you have left us. . . ."7

Complaints were common in the Army of Texas. A. B. Gersuch, an Indiana volunteer, wrote, "we had a tough time, I tell you, privation and sickness in camp. We [were] not accustomed to the climate or the diseases of Texas."8

Lysander Wells, a Lieutenant Colonel suffering from rheumatism wrote to Deaf Smith:

. . . Poor, bleeding, miserable Texas--Smith--our army has gone to Hell . . . what has become of the 150 men he [Secretary of War] promised to send me-- I wish to Heaven you was [sic] here to see what is going on--Grading, Horse racing, speculating, Stealing, Dancing, Fighting, Gambling, besides another thing not be mentioned. . . .9

Discharged soldiers were as much a problem for the administration as were the soldiers within the ranks. Many left the army hungry and almost naked, carrying with them

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6Clark L. Owen to Doctor Joseph H. D. Rogers, August 15, 1837, Louis Kemp Collection, San Jacinto Museum of History.

7Ibid., March 2, 1838.

8A. B. Gersuch to the Sons of Colonel Joseph H. D. Rogers, May 17, 1886, Kemp Collection, San Jacinto Museum of History.

9Lysander Wells to Deaf Smith, November 26, 1837, Lysander Wells Papers, San Jacinto Museum of History.



their claims against the government, which they were forced to sell to speculators.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, the going rate on money scrip and soldier discharge claims was practically negligible.<sup>11</sup>

Two days after his inauguration, Houston issued general orders to the army, informing them of his concern for their state of affairs. His message told of his awareness that there were too many officers absent from duty. Furthermore, many officers who were given the privilege of commanding special forces were also away without leave. "Such practices . . . is forbidden," he wrote.<sup>12</sup> A penalty of desertion was placed upon any individual who, by virtue of his absence, allowed something detrimental to the Republic to occur.<sup>13</sup> Although sometimes harsh with his army regulations, Houston could be personally sympathetic if the occasion warranted such action.

An incident at Columbia in 1837 shows how effective Houston was in dealing with a recalcitrant army. A ragged

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<sup>10</sup>"Notes on Texas," The Hesperian or Western Monthly Magazine, I, (Columbus, 1838), p. 432.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>General Orders from the Executive Office, October 24, 1836, Williams and Barker (eds.), The Writings of Sam Houston, 1813-1863, I, p. 452. Also see Telegraph and Texas Register, November 2, 1836.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

veteran of San Jacinto appeared before Houston and demanded a coat. Houston explained that he had only the coat he was wearing on his back. Far from being satisfied, the soldier demanded an order giving him store privileges. The President explained that the merchants would not honor such an order and proceeded to take off his coat when he saw that the soldier was not accepting his explanation. "Take my coat, my comrade; the defenders of Texas shall be clothed. Take my coat!" The soldier fled.<sup>14</sup>

Yet, Houston could use caution in controlling the army. Ashbel Smith recalled an incident in San Antonio, in which Houston refused to act. Major Weston, the commanding officer, opposed Houston. He referred to the Houston administration as the "one horse government in the city of Houston."<sup>15</sup> Despite Houston's anger over the remarks, he refused to issue an order recalling or relieving Weston because it would probably be disobeyed.<sup>16</sup>

Houston's plan for the army was to diminish its size. ". . . The army will be curtailed as it ought to be

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<sup>14</sup>John J. Linn, Reminiscences of Fifty Years in Texas (New York, 1883), p. 277.

<sup>15</sup>Ashbel Smith, Reminiscences of the Texas Republic (Galveston, 1875), p. 30.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

for the benefit of the country. . . , " he said.<sup>17</sup> "We will never have another volunteer army . . . ." <sup>18</sup>

Houston's disgust with the army probably centered around the conduct of his officers. Houston had once been a Lieutenant in the United States Army. Later, he held the rank of Major General in the Texas Militia, and finally General in Chief of the Texas Army during the war. The petty squabbling found among high ranking officers infuriated him. Typical was General Thomas Jefferson Green, who, after being refused the rank of Major General, appealed to Houston. Irritated, Houston replied, ". . . The curse of the country has been an excess of officers, as you well know, for when I came into office, the force in the field was reported at 650, and the number of officers commissioned 592 as well as I recollect. . . ." <sup>19</sup>

Green was not the only high ranking officer who gave Houston trouble. Felix Huston, a former Mississippi politician and lawyer, was also rash and impetuous. While attending a wine party given by a United States Senator from

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<sup>17</sup>Sam Houston to Anna Raquet, December 2, 1837, Williams and Barker (eds.), The Writings of Sam Houston 1813-1863, III, p. 8.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Sam Houston to Thomas Jefferson Green, December 27, 1836, ibid., V, p. 7.

Mississippi, Huston became angry and broke a bottle over the head of a local doctor.<sup>20</sup>

The conduct of commissioned officers in any army should be beyond reproach. In the Texas Army, officers squabbled among themselves and, in some cases, shot each other to death. Frances Lubbock, while in Velasco, Texas, witnessed a fatal shooting in which an army captain entered a billiard room and shot a lieutenant because he was absent from his post.<sup>21</sup> The incident which eventually forced Houston to furlough the army was a duel fought between two of the highest ranking generals in the Texas Army, Felix Huston and Albert Sidney Johnston. Both Huston and Green had been nominated by the President for commissions of Junior Brigadier General and Senior Brigadier General respectively. Both men were trouble makers. The Senate of the First Congress of the Republic refused to confirm either appointment. Congress finally acquiesced on December 22, 1836, and confirmed Huston's appointment. Sam Houston then substituted Albert S. Johnston's name for the rank of Senior Brigadier General and his appointment was confirmed. Huston

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<sup>20</sup>The Journal of Major General Thomas Jefferson Chambers 1836-1837, May 30, 1837, San Jacinto Museum of History, p. 60.

<sup>21</sup>C. W. Raines (ed.), Six Decades in Texas or Memoirs of Francis Richard Lubbock (Austin, 1900), p. 35.



was upset over the appointment, which, he thought, would indirectly affect his political future.

On February 4, 1837, at Camp Independence, Huston challenged Johnston to a duel. Johnston accepted the challenge. In stating his position on the matter, Huston wrote,

You assuming command of the army would have excited in me no feelings but those of respect and obedience to you, as my superior officer, were it not for the fact that your appointment was connected with a tissue of treachery and misrepresentation, which was intended to degrade me and blast my prospects in the Texian army.<sup>22</sup>

Albert S. Johnston was in a sense the substitute for Sam Houston, whom Felix Huston would have preferred to shoot. Johnston was severely wounded in the duel. After the incident, Felix Huston, feeling remorseful, wrote Johnston concerning his disappointment in Houston's failure to carry out the Matamoros campaign.

The whole affair was further marred by the conduct of the army, which had been exposed to some three barrels of brandy.<sup>23</sup> The army was decidedly for Huston, whom they

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<sup>22</sup>William Preston Johnston, The Life of General Albert Sidney Johnston (New York, 1878), p. 75. Also quoted in Charles P. Roland, Albert Sidney Johnston (Austin, 1964), p. 59.

<sup>23</sup>Joseph Cinnius to Colonel Rogers, June 26, 1883, Kemp Collection, San Jacinto Museum of History. Joseph Cinnius wrote this letter in an attempt to obtain identification from Dr. Rogers so that he could receive land he was entitled to for military service in Texas 1836-37. Cinnius claimed that he was on guard duty the morning Johnston was shot. He said that three cases of brandy were passed around

dubbed "Old Longshanks" and "Old Leather Breeches."<sup>24</sup> It was believed that had Huston been severely wounded or killed that a riot would have occurred.<sup>25</sup> Sam Houston was outraged when he received the news. Throughout his career, he never accepted challenges, though he received many of them.<sup>26</sup> Two

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the camp and that the soldiers cheered upon hearing the news of Johnston's injury. Also see Samuel E. Asbury (ed.), "Extracts From the Reminiscences of General George W. Morgan," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXX, (January, 1927), p. 193. General Morgan recalled, "Early in the morning of the fight, whiskey made its appearance in the camp and kettles filled with it were passed from tent to tent. Where it came from I do not know, I not only believe, however, but I am morally certain that . . . Huston was ignorant of the fact."

<sup>24</sup>Johnston, The Life of General Albert Sidney Johnston, p. 75. Also see Roland, Albert Sidney Johnston, p. 59. It is not uncommon for army heroes to have nicknames. In the following description, Huston appears to be a man of interesting paradox: ". . . dashing, generous and brilliant; with an audacity which bounded on recklessness . . . he did not seem to have any idea of discipline . . . but absolutely controlled his troops by his personal magnetism . . ." See Asbury (ed.), "Extracts from the Reminiscences of General George W. Morgan," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, p. 187.

<sup>25</sup>Roland, Albert Sidney Johnston, p. 61. Also see Johnston, The Life of General Albert Sidney Johnston, p. 79.

<sup>26</sup>Roland, Albert Sidney Johnston, pp. 61-62. See Asbury (ed.), "Extracts From the Reminiscences of General George W. Morgan," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, p. 191. Also see Walter Flavis McCaleb (ed.), Memoirs by John H. Reagan (New York, 1906), p. 47. Reagan asked Houston why he never fought duels. Houston replied that it was not necessary for him to engage in a duel to establish his character for courage,--that had been tested on the field of honor, and in battle, of which he bore the scars.

doctors were immediately sent to care for the wounded Johnston.<sup>27</sup>

Johnston continued to serve as the Texas commander and kept the respect of his troops, including Felix Huston. His acceptance of the challenge to duel, subsequent injury on the field, and a later reconciliation with Huston, produced positive results. Within a short time, however, his command over the army began to weaken and was highlighted by the assassination of a Regimental Commander and a mutiny led by several junior officers. Johnston's troubles were probably caused by the fact that the troops did not have an enemy to fight.

Reports indicated that in Matamoros large numbers of Mexican troops were being organized and readied for action. Houston refused to act. Johnston lost his respect for the President's action and resigned his command. Meanwhile, Felix Huston was in contact with him as he attempted to cajole Congress into invading Mexico.

Houston accepted Johnston's resignation after a short delay on May 7, 1837. On May 18, 1837, the President furloughed about two-thirds of the men, thus virtually disbanding the army. Superficially, Houston's actions were

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<sup>27</sup>Friend, Sam Houston: Great Designer, p. 77. See Johnston, The Life of General Albert Sidney Johnston, pp. 80-81. Johnston wrote that the only prescription made by the two doctors was rest.



perhaps worthy of some criticism. Johnston, suffering from a painful hip wound, had won a victory despite his loss on the field. He was respected by his men. Houston's reluctance in ordering a counteroffensive to threats of a Mexican invasion created more dissent within the ranks of the soldiers. The army threatened to become more harmful to the Republic than to its enemies. Finally, Houston's course of action cost Texas its Commander of the army.

Yet, in defense of Houston, it must be clearly understood that Texas was too weak to conduct any type of offensive, especially into South Texas or Mexico. Houston gambled on Mexican dissention at home and won. Mexico was not ready to fight. Considering the fact that Houston only had 1,300 well-trained soldiers as opposed to some 8,000 to 9,000 Mexican soldiers, it is easy to defend his policy.<sup>28</sup> He acted wisely in spite of protest and condemnation, which would continue throughout the administration.

The tranquility Houston sought in the army never came to pass. Nevertheless, the country did begin to settle down once the United States recognized Texas' existence. The fact that Mexico could only make verbal broadsides helped to increase the general tranquility of the country. As John

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<sup>28</sup>Reports tend to vary concerning Mexican troop numbers. It is quite obvious, however, that the odds were much against Texas, especially when one proposes an invasion of enemy soil.



Linn wrote, "Mexican dissension proved to be the best friend Texas had."<sup>29</sup>

Houston's dealings with the Texas Navy also brought him criticism. Even though the expected Mexican invasion failed to materialize, the Mexican Navy did blockade and harrass the new country. Mexican naval strength was far superior to that of Texas. Yet, this strength was never coordinated with an invasion force because of inadequate Mexican leadership.<sup>30</sup> The blockade had been planned as early as January of 1836, but was not placed into effect until March and April of 1837.<sup>31</sup>

The Mexicans' seizure of the Texas ship Independence forced Houston to act. To make matters worse, William H. Wharton was on board the captured vessel. Wharton was returning to Texas after working in Washington, D. C. for United States recognition of his country. Houston, despite opposition, refused to sanction an official rescue mission. The Secretary of the Navy, S. Rhoads Fisher, then issued rescue orders of his own. Houston dismissed Fisher, which stirred up Congress. Fisher, popular with Congress, was a

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<sup>29</sup>Linn, Reminiscences of Fifty Years in Texas, p. 290.

<sup>30</sup>Jim Dan Hill, The Texas Navy (Chicago, 1937), pp. 66-68. Hill claimed that the capture of Santa Anna stopped Mexico because Santa Anna had what most Mexican politicians lack--the power of decisive and aggressive action.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 68.

known member of the opposition of the Houston administration.<sup>32</sup> The Senate in secret session voted for a reinstatement of Fisher and notified the President of its dislike for his ' . . . disrespectful, dictatorial and evincive of a disposition on the part of the Executive to annihilate those coordinate powers conferred upon the Senate . . ."<sup>33</sup> A joint resolution then authorized the President to send two armed vessels, the Brutus and the Invincible, with a flag of truce to treat with the Mexican officials. The resolution further stated that if such a release of prisoners failed, the ships would be authorized to take the necessary steps to effect their objective.<sup>34</sup>

Houston countered and sent a lengthy discourse to the Senate on why he was not going to carry out such an authorization as Congress proposed. He objected to sending his ships, not knowing Mexican naval strength in the Gulf of Mexico. Moreover, he did not believe they would respect a flag of truce. The release of the two ships would leave the

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<sup>32</sup>Siegel, A Political History of the Texas Republic, p. 56. In the House of Representatives the opposition to Houston included the following: Branch T. Archer, Thomas Jefferson Green, John Wharton, and Moseley Baker. The Senate had Alexander Somervell and Stephen H. Everitt to oppose the administration.

<sup>33</sup>Ernest William Winkler, (ed.), Secret Journals of the Senate Republic of Texas 1836-1845 (Austin, 1911), p. 73.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

coast unprotected and trade could be completely cut off. More important, perhaps, was his statement concerning the Congressional violation of his executive rights as Commander-in-chief of the army and navy.<sup>35</sup>

In the meantime, John A. Wharton, the captured minister's brother, persuaded Houston to grant him permission to charter a ship and sail to Matamoros. Wharton hoped to exchange thirty Mexican prisoners of war for his brother and the other captured crew members. Wharton's trip was a fiasco. Shipwrecked and without his prisoners to exchange, Wharton became a prisoner of Mexico. During his brief imprisonment, he learned of his brother's earlier escape. Shortly thereafter, he and several others were able to escape with the assistance of a Catholic priest. John Wharton and his small party made their way back to Velasco, Texas. Here, they were greeted by William H. Wharton, who had completed his return to Texas almost two months earlier.<sup>36</sup> William H. Wharton was now working with the opposition to Houston in Congress to get Fisher reinstated.

Congress continued to push for naval supremacy. It authorized the purchase of ships without raising sufficient

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., pp. 60-62.

<sup>36</sup>Hill, The Texas Navy, p. 80.

money to buy them.<sup>37</sup> Though it sought a naval campaign against Mexico, it found that Houston was consistently hostile to such a course of action.

Texas, throughout its brief nine years of existence, suffered from a perennial problem of hostile Indians. Houston's attitude toward the Indians was always one of peace and conciliation. He held great respect and admiration for the Indians; in turn, they loved and trusted him.<sup>38</sup> As a youth in Tennessee, Houston had become the adopted son of a Cherokee Chieftan. He lived with the tribe for four years and was known as "The Raven." Speaking of himself in the third person, which was an Indian custom, he had remarked, "Houston has seen nearly all in life there is to live for and yet he has been heard to say that when he looks back over the waste . . . there's nothing half so sweet to remember as the sojourn he made among the untutored children of the forrest."<sup>39</sup> Years later, his memoirs reveal that he distrusted the white race. He found the Caucasian's

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<sup>37</sup>Winkler (ed.), Secret Journals of the Senate Republic of Texas 1836-1845, p. 83. Also see Hill, The Texas Navy, p. 67.

<sup>38</sup>Joseph L. Clark and Dorothy A. Linder, The Story of Texas (Boston, 1955), p. 216.

<sup>39</sup>James, The Raven, p. 25.



capacity for coldness and treachery superior to that of an Indian.<sup>40</sup>

Nevertheless, the frontier Indians which plagued Texas were indeed savage. Everyone was on his guard against a surprise attack. Travel was unsafe, especially on the frontier. Mary Maverick noted that both men and women traveling from Houston to San Antonio were armed with rifles, pistols, and Bowie knives.<sup>41</sup> It was customary for Texans to travel in large numbers, camping by day, moving at night, and remaining alert for signs of hostile Indians.<sup>42</sup>

Treatment received by prisoners of Indians was horribly barbaric. The very sight of released or escaped captives aroused a burning hatred within most Texans.<sup>43</sup> Mathilda Lockhard was a good example. Her face mutilated by torture; she told her friends that she could never again hold up her head. She wanted to hide and never show her face again.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>41</sup>Rena Maverick Green (ed.), Memoirs of Mary A. Maverick (San Antonio, 1921), p. 25.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>44</sup>John Henry Brown, Indian Wars and Pioneers of Texas (Austin, n.d.), pp. 51-52. Also see Green (ed.), Memoirs of Mary A. Maverick, pp. 44-46.

Houston's Indian policy was difficult for most frontier Texans to understand. Most never did. Robert A. Irion, Secretary of State, explained Houston's policy to a friend in the following manner,

The object is not a general war but to chastise those small vagabond tribes whose depredations on our frontier, especially on the Brazos and Colorado, are of almost daily occurrence . . . The President seems averse to the policy of sending an expedition against any of the Indians, and whether this measure will meet his approbation I think is doubtful. His principal apprehension appears to be that the indiscretion of the one in command might bring on a general war, which I believe is the principle danger. . . ."45

In view of Houston's recent trouble with the army, Irion's remarks reflect the cautiousness of Houston and his realization that the military could precipitate Indian warfare, in which Texas would be hard pressed to succeed. Thomas J. Rusk, Secretary of War and close friend of Houston, disagreed and as a result parted company with Houston because of the latter's advocacy of the Cherokee land claims in East Texas.<sup>46</sup> The Niles' Register reported that citizens on the frontier held Indians in complete contempt because of their

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<sup>45</sup>Robert A. Irion to Henry Raquet, May 12, 1837, Ernest William Winkler (ed.), Manuscript Letters and Documents of Early Texans (Austin, 1937), p. 205.

<sup>46</sup>Lois Foster Bount, "A Brief Study of Thomas Jefferson Rusk Based on His Letters to His Brother David, 1835-1856," The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXXIV, (April, 1931), p. 284.

indiscriminate plundering.<sup>47</sup> Comanches, Tonkawas, Witchitas, and Lipans were all considered treacherous.<sup>48</sup>

The humanitarian Indian policy of Sam Houston was too idealistic for frontier conditions. The white and red man simply could not live in "brotherly love."<sup>49</sup> Houston realized this fact, but never gave up hope of solving a problem which would become more severe after his term expired. Both sides were guilty of wrongdoing. The difference was that the Indians, after having been angered by whites, simply

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<sup>47</sup>Niles' Register, September 29, 1838.

<sup>48</sup>In Texas the Comanche Indians appeared to be the most hostile of all tribes. See Clark Owen to Dr. J. H. Rogers, May 26, 1838, Kemp Collection, San Jacinto Museum of History; Mildred P. Mayhall, Indian Wars of Texas (Waco, 1965), p. 80; Gray, From Virginia to Texas, p. 78; and Green (ed.), Memoirs of Mary A. Maverick, pp. 20-27. The Tonkawas as described by Mary Maverick were, "vile, intimate, cannibalistic . . . cruel and noted thieves and murderers. . . ." See Green (ed.), Memoirs of Mary A. Maverick, pp. 18-20. For a different view of the Tonkawas see W. W. Newcomb, Jr., The Indians of Texas From Prehistoric to Modern Times (Austin, 1961), p. 343. He claimed that the Tonkawas were never a direct threat to settlers. They were thieves and beggars, which made them only nuisances. Newcomb also refutes the allegation that the Plains tribes were more deadly than the Eastern Indians. See Newcomb, Indians of Texas, p. 349. Contemporary accounts, however, have shown him to be in error. The Witchitas created problems for Texas because of their alliance with the Comanches, who invariably broke their treaties. See Mayhall, Indian War of Texas, p. 80. The Lipans were feared because of their potential alliance with the Mexican Government and possible attack on Texas. See Niles' Register, October 13, 1838.

<sup>49</sup>Bount, "A Brief Study of Thomas Jefferson Rusk Based on His Letters to His Brother David 1835-1856," The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, p. 284.



took their vengeance out on any white, rather than track down the guilty party. Houston once told Smithwick, "If I could build a wall from the Red river [sic] to the Rio Grande, so high that no Indian could scale it, the white people would go crazy trying to devise means to get beyond it."<sup>50</sup>

Attempts were made by Houston to promote friendship between settlers and Indians. Invitations were extended to the various tribes to visit the capital and make peace. Visits were usually productive, in that some type of treaty or agreement was worked out. Communication was not too difficult, for all frontier tribes spoke Spanish.<sup>51</sup> Houston's appearance at these meetings was quite impressive. John H. Reagan wrote,

General Houston wore a suit of purple velvet embossed with figures representing a fox's head, and took along with him a bowie knife of great size, which he purposed [sic] to wear when he met the Indians. In answer to my inquiry as to the reason for the figured suit, he observed that it would awe the Indians as a sort of mystery, and that the big bowie knife would impress them with the idea that he was a

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<sup>50</sup>Noah Smithwick, The Evolution of a State or Recollections of Old Texas Days (Austin, 1900), p. 194.

<sup>51</sup>Jonnie Lockhart Wallis and Laurance L. Hill (eds.), Sixty Years on the Brazos The Life and Letters of Dr. John Washington Lockhart 1824-1900 (Waco, 1967), p. 99. See Green (ed.), Memoirs of Mary A. Maverick, p. 48. Also see Winkler (ed.), Secret Journals of the Senate Republic of Texas 1836-1845, p. 22. Houston believed that a mastery of Spanish precluded any appointment to Indian Commissioner.



great warrior. He understood the Indians' character.<sup>52</sup>

The treaties were, however, never taken very seriously by either Texas or the Indians.<sup>53</sup> Francis Lubbock recalled the aftermath of an Indian visit to Houston in early 1837, after a treaty was signed: "When out of sight, they forgot all their fine talk . . . and on their way back to their country killed and scalped several whites. . . ." <sup>54</sup>

The Houston administration failed to establish a well-organized manner of dealing with Indian affairs.<sup>55</sup> Arising from this condition was the fact that, regardless of what Houston had tried to do, Indian attacks had not sufficiently decreased and treaties were being broken.<sup>56</sup> It was not uncommon to hear people accuse Sam Houston of favoring the Indians, namely the Cherokees, over his own fellow Texans.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>McCaleb (ed.), Memoirs of John H. Reagan, p. 48.

<sup>53</sup>Newcomb, Indians of Texas, p. 351. Newcomb is very critical of the Texas Indian policy. He claimed that Texas sought concessions from the treaties, but gave little or nothing themselves.

<sup>54</sup>Raines (ed.), Six Decades in Texas or Memoirs of Francis Richard Lubbock, p. 52.

<sup>55</sup>Anna Muckelroy, "The Indian Policy of the Republic of Texas," The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXVI, (July, 1922), p. 28.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>57</sup>J. W. Wilbarger, Indian Depredations in Texas (Austin, 1889), p. 169.

Moreover, the Congress was pressuring Houston into stronger action in order to satisfy its constituents as well as satisfy themselves. On December 8, 1836, the Committee on Indian Affairs reported that Indian attacks were attributable to the trading houses on the Red River. The trade that was being conducted allowed the Indians to swap stolen Texan property for arms, munitions, and other supplies.<sup>58</sup>

After the furloughing of three army regiments in May of 1837, there was no organized military organization established for the Republic. Instead, the citizens had to rely upon the militia for protection.<sup>59</sup> Criticism of Houston centered primarily in the frontier west where the settlers preferred army troops and forts to trading posts and the periodic call for militiamen. In response to popular demand, Congress did pass a bill providing for better protection of the frontier. The bill provided for the establishment of 280 mounted riflemen, forts, block-houses, trading houses, and other measures necessary to prevent future Indian depredations.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Journals of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Texas First Congress First Session (Houston, 1838), p. 242.

<sup>59</sup>Asa K. Christian, "Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar," The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXIII, (April, 1920), p. 255. Also see Nance, After San Jacinto, p. 38.

<sup>60</sup>Journals of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Texas First Congress First Session, pp. 171-172.

The opening of the land office in 1838 further antagonized the Indians. Noah Smithwick said that speculators upon Indian hunting grounds provoked the Indians.<sup>61</sup> Surveyors working for the government were continually harassed and attacked. Land encroachment by the Texans provided an excellent opportunity for Mexican agents working within the tribes to further their discontent.

The interference of the Mexican agents in late 1838 brought forth the most serious Indian threat to Texas sovereignty. The setting was East Texas; the Indians were the Cherokees and their associated tribes--the Delawares, Kickapoos, Seminoles, Shawnees, and others. Numbering some twelve tribes, they had settled in eastern Texas as early as 1822.<sup>62</sup> They enjoyed title to their lands from Spanish grants which had been confirmed by Mexico at the time of its independence.<sup>63</sup> In February of 1836, the ad interim government appointed Sam Houston, John Forbes, and John Cameron as Indian Commissioners. They negotiated a treaty with the Cherokees in which Texas pledged to respect their land titles in return for Indian neutrality during the Texas-

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<sup>61</sup>Smithwick, Evolution of a State, pp. 213-214.

<sup>62</sup>Wilbarger, Indian Depredations in Texas, pp. 167-168.

<sup>63</sup>Siegel, A Political History of the Texas Republic, p. 67.



Mexican war. That the Texans were not wholly convinced of the Indian's respect for the treaty was obvious, for they asked General Gaines to move across the Sabine River with his troops to prevent a possible uprising. The Cherokees either respected the treaty they had signed, or they were awed into submission by the five hundred troops now stationed at Nacogdoches. Whatever the reason, they remained neutral and did not take part in the war.

Houston urged the First Congress to respect their part of the treaty, and pointed out the advantages for Texas if the treaty was guaranteed. He told the Senate that there was a

. . . very great necessity of concilliating the different tribes of Indians who inhabited portions of country almost in the centre of our settlements as well as those who extend along our frontiers. This becomes the more judicious at present when we are at war with Mexico, the authorities of which have been labouring to engage the different tribes to war against us . . . these Indians are among the number who have already engaged to join the Mexican army against us in the event of a second invasion.<sup>64</sup>

The Congress refused to ratify the treaty and laid it aside for future reference. On October 12, 1837, the Cherokees were officially denied legal title to their lands.<sup>65</sup> In the

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<sup>64</sup>Winkler (ed.), Secret Journals of the Senate Republic of Texas 1836-1845, p. 36. The entire treaty with the Cherokees can be found on pages 36-39.

<sup>65</sup>Muckleroy, "The Indian Policy of the Republic of Texas," The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, p. 17.



meantime, Indian unrest had begun to mount and sporadic raiding became a more frequent occurrence. By July of 1838, an organized band of insurgents, led by Mexican agent Vincente Cordova, was ready for war.<sup>66</sup> When it became known throughout Texas that Mexican agents were inciting the Indians, the result was a strong sentiment for a more militant policy toward Mexico.<sup>67</sup>

The inevitable confrontation occurred on August 4, 1838, when the rebel band fired upon a group of Texans searching for their stolen horses. One Texan died in the fighting. Finding the alliance of Mexicans and Indians too large, the Texans gave up the chase.<sup>68</sup> Houston issued a proclamation which told the insurgents to disperse immediately. In Nacogdoches, on August 10, 1838, Cordova countered Houston's action by releasing the following statement, which made his position quite clear: "The citizens of Nacogdoches, being tired of unjust treatment and of the usurpation of their rights, cannot do less than state that they are embodied, with arms in their hands, to sustain

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<sup>66</sup>Wilbarger, Indian Depredations in Texas, p. 151. In July of 1838, Cordova wrote Manuel Flores, the Indian-Mexican agent at Matamoros, claiming that he held a commission from General Filisola to raise Indian troops as auxiliaries to the Mexican army.

<sup>67</sup>Louis J. Wortham, A History of Texas (Fort Worth, 1924), p. 54.

<sup>68</sup>Wilbarger, Indian Depredations in Texas, p. 170.

those rights and those of the nation to which they belong . . ."<sup>69</sup> By this time, Cordova, according to reconnaissance reports, had approximately 600 men.<sup>70</sup>

Without an alternative, Houston sent out a military expedition under General Rusk to chastise the Indians and Mexicans. Upon the arrival of Rusk and his troops, Cordova's band of outlaws fled.<sup>71</sup> Several months later, the Texas army was again in pursuit of a gang of outlaws thought to be Cordova's men. Trapping them at Kickapoo Town in October, Rusk led a charge and routed the enemy.<sup>72</sup>

Rusk's efforts provided only temporary relief for President Houston. Desperately seeking to avoid total war against his friends, the Cherokees, whom he believed innocent, Houston tried to contain the Indians on the one hand, and restrain the settlers on the other by effective use of the Rangers.<sup>73</sup> Houston's policy, however, was one of his failures and it created a critical hatred of him in the

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<sup>69</sup>J. M. Morphus, History of Texas (New York, 1874), p. 400.

<sup>70</sup>Wilbarger, Indian Depredations in Texas, p. 170.

<sup>71</sup>Niles' Register, September 29, 1838. Reports indicated that Rusk's expedition scared away the Indians, thus forcing the Mexicans to scatter.

<sup>72</sup>Brown, Indian Wars and Pioneers of Texas, p. 67.

<sup>73</sup>Seymour V. Connor, Adventure in Glory (Austin, 1965), p. 77.

frontier west. Ostensibly, the new President-elect of 1838, whoever he might be, would inherit the problem of placating both Indians and frontier whites with a minimum loss of life.

Repelling invasions, whether by Mexicans or Indians, required expenditures of great sums of money. Not only did Texas fail to equip adequately her army for defense, she had tremendous difficulty in meeting her other obligations.

At the time of Houston's inauguration, the public debt amounted to \$1,250,000. The treasury was empty; in fact, writes Professor Andrew Muir, the word "treasury" was presumptuous.<sup>74</sup> Henry Smith, the newly-appointed Secretary of Treasury, began his operation without a cent of money.<sup>75</sup> His department's poverty proved to be rather embarrassing for he could not even buy stationery for his office.<sup>76</sup>

Houston tried to cut government expenses whenever possible. He allowed prisoners to be used by employers so that the government could be relieved of their keep.<sup>77</sup> The

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<sup>74</sup>Andrew Forrest Muir (ed.), Texas in 1837 An Anonymous Contemporary Account (Austin, 1958), p. xv.

<sup>75</sup>Linn, Reminiscences of Fifty Years in Texas, p. 276.

<sup>76</sup>Rupert N. Richardson, Texas The Lone Star State (Englewood Cliffs, 1958), p. 109.

<sup>77</sup>"Notes on Texas," The Hesperian or Western Monthly Magazine, p. 352.



army was furloughed in early 1837, not only because of its lack of order, but also because the government did not have the money to support an army. Houston expressed his feelings in a speech to the Senate on December 20, 1836: ". . . nor will I add to the accumulated expenses of the government, by appointing persons, who can render no corresponding advantages. . . ."78 "Corresponding advantages" probably meant that those men appointed as public officials would have to be able to pay their own way. During the first year of operation, no one in public office was paid, because of the failure in negotiating loans and selling land scrip.79 Even Sam Houston did not escape near bankruptcy. Writing to General William G. Harding, to whom he owed \$500.00, Houston claimed, "I have offered every sacrifice in property, but there is no money in Texas, but our depreciated notes--I have upwards of twenty-five thousand dollars due me and some of it for years, and I cannot collect as much as will pay one fourth of my land tax. . . ."80 A

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<sup>78</sup>Winkler (ed.), Secret Journals of the Senate Republic of Texas 1836-1845, p. 35.

<sup>79</sup>Edmund Thornton Miller, A Financial History of Texas (Austin, 1916), p. 20. Also see M. K. Wisehart, Sam Houston: American Giant (Washington, 1962), p. 307. New Orleans agents were authorized to sell land scrip in the United States at 50¢ an acre. Yet, there were no buyers for the 700,000 acres placed on the market.

<sup>80</sup>Sam Houston to General William G. Harding, June 17, 1841, Strake Collection, San Jacinto Museum of History.



British description of the condition of public servants in Texas proved interesting: "All public authorities and officers support themselves out of their private means, and as their pay tickets are issued dispose of them as best they can. . . ."81

Both the Congress and the Executive were hard pressed to stop what one newspaper had labeled "appalling depression."82 A general appropriations bill of \$150,000 was passed for civil operations, but it did not suffice. Appropriations were met by audited drafts and orders upon agents within the United States, who had land scrip to sell.83

Texas was destined for hard times. In 1837, the United States was hit by a severe depression which had economic repercussions in Texas.84 The credit of Texas was already strained.85 There was, despite Texas' credit

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81Joseph Crawford to Richard Pakenham, May 26, 1837, Ephraim Douglas Adams (ed.), "Correspondence from the British Archives Concerning Texas, 1837-1846," The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, XV, (January, 1912), p. 216.

82Telegraph and Texas Register, November 26, 1836.

83Miller, A Financial History of Texas, p. 21.

84Samuel Swartwout, a New Yorker, who was always interested in business and speculation told his friend Colonel Morgan that in his state, ". . . Hell is to pay here . . ." See Samuel Swartwout to Colonel James Morgan, April 8, 1837, Morgan Papers, Archives, Rosenberg Library.

85Partial blame for this situation can be placed upon the provisional government of Burnet. See Samuel Ellis to

rating, reason to believe that the Texas bonds would have been taken in Europe by optimistic buyers of American stocks. The Panic of 1837, however, created tight money, and the repudiation of some states in the United States of interest payments on their bonds, brought American securities under suspicion in Europe.<sup>86</sup>

As a result, Congress passed an act in November of 1837, creating and issuing treasury notes. Houston, realizing inevitable economic ruin, vetoed the bill, but Congress overrode it, and the country became flooded with paper money.<sup>87</sup> By 1839, the salaries of both the President and Vice President were not substantial enough to meet minimum living standards.<sup>88</sup> Inflation was running rampant and uncontrolled. Within six months, specie value was only fifteen cents on the dollar.<sup>89</sup> Anarchy prevailed in some

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Stephen F. Austin, August 23, 1836, Eugene C. Barker (ed.), The Austin Papers October, 1834-January, 1837 (Austin, 1936), III, p. 422. Ellis stated that the conduct of Burnet and his Cabinet had destroyed all confidence in New Orleans. New Orleans was the most important city as far as Texas was concerned in obtaining men, supplies, and credit. Burnet's government hurt Texas when they appointed new financial commissioners which New Orleans reported was "outrageous."

<sup>86</sup>Miller, A Financial History of Texas, p. 62.

<sup>87</sup>Lucy A. Erath (ed.), "Memoirs of Major George Bernard Erath," The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXVI, (April, 1923), p. 273.

<sup>88</sup>Miller, A Financial History of Texas, p. 20.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

sections of the country; soldiers were claiming the power of impressment and seizing the goods and property of others.<sup>90</sup>

Congress resorted to direct and indirect taxation in order to raise needed revenue. The most effective tax Texas ever used was a tariff levied on imports. The other method of indirect taxation was an excise tax. Direct taxation took the form of a general property tax, a poll tax, and license taxes.

The ad valorem tariff was enacted on December 20, 1836. Rates varied from 1% on breadstuffs to 50% on silk goods.<sup>91</sup> Items of obvious necessity were taxed far less than those of luxury. In June of 1837, the tariff was modified. Many items were given specific duties, which for all practical purposes, was an abandonment of the previous ad valorem tariff. The general trend of duty rates was only slightly higher.<sup>92</sup> To discourage smuggling, a provision was included in the act which declared the offense a misdemeanor.<sup>93</sup> The act also stipulated that all smuggled cargoes

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<sup>90</sup>Wisehart, Sam Houston: American Giant, p. 311.

<sup>91</sup>Richardson, Texas The Lone Star State, p. 109. Also see Miller, A Financial History of Texas, p. 28.

<sup>92</sup>Miller, A Financial History of Texas, p. 28. Also see "An Act to Raise a Public Revenue by Import Duties," June 12, 1837, Laws of the Republic of Texas (Houston, 1838), I, pp. 253-255.

<sup>93</sup>"An Act to Raise a Public Revenue by Import Duties," Laws of the Republic of Texas, p. 258.



were liable for seizure along with the vehicle used to transport the goods.<sup>94</sup>

The tariff was bitterly denounced in West and Middle Texas. Goods from these regions came through Galveston and other gulf ports, where evasion of duties was difficult. The East fared much much better. Bordering on the United States, this region obtained its imports by overland routes along a long land boundary, which made smuggling much easier.<sup>95</sup> Other complaints of the tariff were that it deterred immigration and drove mercantile capital out of East Texas, as farmers could deal more profitably in Louisiana, where tariff duties were not in effect.<sup>96</sup>

Just as the tariff was the most successful form of indirect taxation, so was the property tax, passed in June of 1837, the most successful direct taxation. A direct tax of 1/2 of 1% was levied on all real, personal, or mixed property.<sup>97</sup> This law featured (1) the employment of specific duties; (2) the fixing of a minimum valuation of

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<sup>94</sup>Ibid. It is also interesting to note that the law provided for a public sale of all confiscated goods after a period of thirty days. One half of the proceeds was to be turned over to the public treasury, while the other half went as a reward to the informer.

<sup>95</sup>Miller, A Financial History of Texas, p. 31.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>97</sup>"An Act to Raise a Public Revenue by Direct Taxation," Laws of the Republic of Texas, pp. 259-262.



land; and (3) discrimination against properties held by non-residents and/or agents.<sup>98</sup>

Receipts, however, failed to balance with government expenses, in spite of the revenue measures. On June 7, 1837, Congress passed a law to consolidate and fund all public liabilities. Bonds bearing 10% interest would be exchanged for audited claims against the government of Texas. At the same time, two commissioners were sent on a futile mission to the United States to secure a loan for five million dollars. Finally, as a last resort, the Treasury began issuing paper money in the form of interest-bearing notes. These promissory notes bore 10% interest and matured at the end of a twelve-month period. By September, 1838, the government had issued \$34,069.59 more than had been projected. Houston, already adverse to the whole scheme, vetoed a bill to increase the issue of paper money to another 1 million dollars. However, on May 18, 1838, he signed a bill to reissue the notes until an appropriation of \$450,000 could be met.<sup>99</sup> Although depreciation resulted, by April of 1838, in New Orleans, the notes were worth 50¢ on the dollar, and in Texas, from 65¢ to 85¢ on the dollar.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup>Miller, A Financial History of Texas, p. 45.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

Despite the economic depression, which plagued the United States, Texas fared much better during the crisis, because of its frontier existence. A feeling of optimism actually prevailed in many quarters, even as late as 1839. The reason why is relatively simple. First, there was the Texans' spirit. John W. Lockhart observed that although they lived in utter poverty, they were happy and cheerful. "Fun and frolic," he thought, "were the ruling passions of the hour."<sup>101</sup> Secondly, Texas had a constant stream of immigrants, which attracted speculators. They anticipated relief from money constriction chiefly through a belief that choice properties in Texas would rapidly appreciate in value. It was not uncommon, therefore, to find speculators buying up lands and town lots far beyond their means.<sup>102</sup> Ashbel Smith described the activity as follows:

Our currency . . . is greatly depreciated and scarce, bad as it is. . . . This country is on the whole, despite the unsoundness of the currency improving rapidly. Times are brisk--trading goes on--Confidence in the permanence of our Government is already very strong and increasing--lands are rising in value and sales are made for sound funds.

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<sup>101</sup>Wallis and Hill (eds.), Sixty Years on the Brazos The Life and Letters of Dr. John Washington Lockhart 1824-1900, p. 90.

<sup>102</sup>William Ransom Hogan, The Texas Republic a Social and Economic History (Austin, 1969), p. 82.

Capitalists are buying up our Scrip etc to fund, in full confidence of its becoming ere good. . . .<sup>103</sup>

Other contemporary accounts were also favorable. The Hesperian magazine reported that in the new city of Houston, ". . . Lots were selling at enormous prices; in some instances as high as four and five thousand dollars a piece. The spirit of speculation was afloat, which, distorted and displaced everything. . . ." <sup>104</sup> Colonel James Morgan was dismayed at the high cost of real estate. He told Samuel Swartwout, ". . . Lotts [sic] now sell as high in some instances as \$10,000--\$1,000 the lowest price at which rate a block of ten was lately sold: say 10 lotts [sic] in one block for \$10,000!" <sup>105</sup> "Carpenters in Houston," complained Morgan, "[were] offered such 'thundering wages' that no house has been completed." <sup>106</sup> A year later, Mary Austin Holley found "surprising improvement." <sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup>Ashbel Smith to Durant H. Davis, September 28, 1839, William R. Hogan (ed.), Ashbel Smith Papers (\_\_\_\_\_, July, 1937), II, p. 2.

<sup>104</sup>"Notes on Texas," The Hesperian or Western Monthly Magazine, p. 428.

<sup>105</sup>Colonel James Morgan to Samuel Swartwout, May 3, 1837, Morgan Papers, Archives Collection, Rosenberg Library.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid.

<sup>107</sup>James P. Bryan (ed.), Mary Austin Holley The Texas Diary, 1835-8 (Austin, 1965), p. 70.

In a final analysis, it must be remembered that Houston's administration ended with a financial deficit. There was sectional criticism of his policy. The receipts had tallied but \$260,780; while expenditures had reached a total of \$1,777,362.<sup>108</sup> The successor to Houston would, of course, inherit the problem of disposing of the debt. Government spending, however, did not decrease. Over the next three years, expenditures increased to \$4,885,213, whereas the receipts only increased to a total of \$1,083,661.<sup>109</sup> The conclusion is that the Republic was headed toward possible solution to its economic ills as long as a frugal government was in operation. Heavy spending, however, over the next term of office led Texas toward a virtual state of bankruptcy.

The land problem of Texas was inseparably tied to the question of solving the financial problems of the Republic. The country comprised an area of approximately 238 million acres of land. After deducting some 26 million acres, which was claimed under old Spanish and Mexican land grants, Texas still possessed an enormous body of land. Much of this land was being claimed by volunteers who had served in the army

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<sup>108</sup>Christian, "Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar," The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, p. 244.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid.



and by those settlers who were entitled to land under provisions established by the Burnet government.

To expedite the disposition of land titles in Texas, Congress passed a law in December of 1836, establishing a General Land Office. Houston promptly vetoed the act.<sup>110</sup> He argued that the surveying had been improperly handled and that there were too few restrictions on the land officers in the various districts. As Houston so aptly stated, a new land office in operation would be ". . . opening a wide door of confusion. . . ." <sup>111</sup> He furthermore believed that the citizens would be so interested in land speculation that the defense of Texas would become secondary in their minds.<sup>112</sup> Yet, Congress, by a Constitutional majority, on December 22, 1836, overrode the President's veto.<sup>113</sup> Houston then refused to open the land office on the day specified for its operation to begin. Many Texans opposed Houston's position on the land issue. They were awaiting the opening of the land office, which had been closed since the revolution, so

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<sup>110</sup>"An Act to Establish a General Land Office for the Republic of Texas," Laws of the Republic of Texas, pp. 216-224.

<sup>111</sup>Journal of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Texas First Congress First Session, p. 301.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid. Also see "An Act to Establish a General Land Office for the Republic of Texas," Laws of the Republic of Texas, p. 224.

they could file their claims. "Their rights then are claims upon the government . . . but good ones . . . ," so declared one observer.<sup>114</sup> It appeared to many that Houston was purposefully denying them their rights.

As the time approached for the land office's opening, the people became excited. Many, however, believed that the land office, once opened, would not remain open very long. John Willis, writing to John K. Allen, one of the founders of Houston, Texas, asked his assistance in filing his claim because, ". . . we are not certain that the land office will continue open any length of time. . . ."<sup>115</sup>

As the debate over land continued, so did unrest grow in Texas. The basic need was a comprehensive land law that would please the veterans as well as the old settlers.<sup>116</sup> Two bills were finally passed in December of 1837, but they were still imperfect as far as Houston was concerned. Despite passage of the bills over his veto, the land office remained closed.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>114</sup>"Notes on Texas," The Hesperian or Western Monthly Magazine, p. 432.

<sup>115</sup>John Willis to John K. Allen, February 20, 1838, Edbon Collection, San Jacinto Museum of History.

<sup>116</sup>Siegel, A Political History of the Texas Republic, p. 71.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid.

It was during the land squabble that Houston was further criticized because of an alleged involvement in speculation. A bill passed Congress in December of 1836, which incorporated "a railroad, navigation, and banking company."<sup>118</sup> Houston, approving of the measure, signed it into law.<sup>119</sup>

The Texas Railroad, Navigation, and Banking Company, as it was called, was headed by such prominent Texans as Stephen F. Austin, Branch T. Archer, James Collingworth, Thomas F. McKinney, and James P. Henderson.<sup>120</sup> The corporation proposed to build a network of canals and railroads and to establish a banking system similar to the Second Bank of the United States.<sup>121</sup> Thomas Jefferson Green, a stockholder, writing to Branch T. Archer, declared that the privileges enjoyed by the corporation's charter were ". . . beyond arithmetical calculations."<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>118</sup>Journal of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Texas First Congress First Session, p. 297.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid.

<sup>120</sup>Siegel, A Political History of the Texas Republic, p. 63. Also see Telegraph and Texas Register, September 16, 1837. The newspaper indicated Branch T. Archer was the President of the Corporation.

<sup>121</sup>Hogan, The Texas Republic a Social and Economic History, p. 97.

<sup>122</sup>Telegraph and Texas Register, September 16, 1837.



From the very outset, the company was under suspicion because of its land and monopolistic privileges. Hostility to banking was not uncommon. Many Texans were already aware of President Andrew Jackson's determination to destroy the Bank of the United States. Once published, Green's remarks set off a violent opposition, which resulted in numerous political repercussions.<sup>123</sup> The primary reason for such a reaction was a fear that the government would allow the choicest lands in Texas to be pre-empted by the company.<sup>124</sup> The fact that Houston had not opposed passage of the bill made him suspect. Francis Lubbock believed that the chartering of the company was the most sharply criticized act of Houston's first administration.<sup>125</sup>

The sanction given to the banking company was the first real political issue in Houston's first term of office.<sup>126</sup> The company, however, soon failed because of

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<sup>123</sup>Branch T. Archer lost his seat in Congress because of his association with the company. Austin was forced to repudiate his connection with the company prior to his death in December of 1836. Both Collinsworth and Henderson tried to clear themselves of the charges of complicity in the company. See Siegel, A Political History of the Texas Republic, p. 65.

<sup>124</sup>Hogan, The Texas Republic a Social and Economic History, p. 86.

<sup>125</sup>Raines (ed.), Six Decades in Texas or Memoirs of Francis Richard Lubbock, p. 91.

<sup>126</sup>Siegel, A Political History of the Texas Republic, p. 65.



depression in the United States. To save its charter, the corporation was required by law to pay a \$25,000 bonus.

Within a short time after his inauguration, Houston saw that Columbia was unsuited to serve as the capital. Accommodations were wretched. One Senator offered a resolution in November of 1836, requesting that the door-keeper be excused to go to Brazoria to purchase a stove.<sup>127</sup> Francis Lubbock, who attended Houston's inaugural, lived in Columbia and slept under a live oak tree at night.<sup>128</sup> He tersely remarked, "This was the lodging place of many."<sup>129</sup>

Aware of the situation in Columbia, two brothers, Agustus and John Allen, decided to promote a city capable of accommodating the government of Texas. The city would be named Houston City in honor of the new President. After much debate and balloting in Congress, a joint committee announced on November 30, 1836, that Houston would be the new seat for the government.<sup>130</sup> The second session of

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<sup>127</sup>Journals of the Senate of the Republic of Texas First Congress First Session (Columbia, 1838), p. 65.

<sup>128</sup>Raines (ed.), Six Decades in Texas or Memoirs of Francis Richard Lubbock, p. 36.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid.

<sup>130</sup>Journals of the Senate of the Republic of Texas First Congress First Session, p. 68. Also see Journal of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Texas First Session, pp. 211-213. On the 4th ballot taken by the joint committee, Houston was selected with 21 votes. Washington

Congress would meet in Houston on May 1, 1836. The Allen brothers glibly promised that the necessary construction would be completed by that time.

The site of Houston City was ideal. Situated on the congruence of White Oak and Buffalo Bayou, it was a natural turning basin for vessels. Although Buffalo Bayou was described as a "miserable stream for navigation,"<sup>131</sup> the Allen brothers were promoters of the highest order.<sup>132</sup>

The growth of Houston was amazing. One description read, ". . . when I arrived Houston was not only the center of most of the spirit and enterprise of Texas, but it seemed to be the focus of emigration from all directions. . . ." <sup>133</sup> The arrival of newcomers often resulted in trouble. Too many of these unfortunate migrants, seeking new endeavors, turned to crime. An Englishman wrote, "Murder and every other Crime is [sic] of great frequency in Texas. . . ." <sup>134</sup>

followed with 14 votes, Matagorda received 4 votes, and Columbia only 1 vote.

<sup>131</sup>Wallis and Hill (eds.), Sixty Years on the Brazos The Life and Letters of Dr. John Washington Lockhart 1824-1900, p. 78.

<sup>132</sup>Wisehart, Sam Houston: American Giant, p. 297.

<sup>133</sup>"Notes on Texas," The Hesperian or Western Monthly Magazine, p. 429.

<sup>134</sup>Francis Sheridan to Joseph Garraway, July 12, 1840, Adams (ed.), "Correspondence from the British Archives Concerning Texas, 1837-1846," The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, p. 221.

John W. Lockhart related that it was not uncommon, ". . . to see men passing on the streets with from 2 to 4 pistols belted around them, with the addition of a large Bowie knife."<sup>135</sup>

Always to be found in a frontier region was the saloon. Houston was no exception. It was believed that the climate of Texas made the use of spirits a necessity.<sup>136</sup> Regardless of the rationale, Texans usually over indulged. One description of the Texans' use of alcohol read as follows: "a large majority knew no restraint to their appetites. . . . Drinking was reduced to a system, and had its own law and regulations. Nothing was regarded as a greater violation of established etiquette, than for one who was going to drink, not to invite all within a reasonable distance to partake; so that the Texans being entirely a military people, not only fought, but drank, in platoons."<sup>137</sup> In Houston, it was said that "barrooms were in ascendancy. . . ."<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>135</sup>Wallis and Hill (eds.), Sixty Years on the Brazos The Life and Letters of Dr. John Washington Lockhart 1824-1900, p. 80.

<sup>136</sup>"Notes on Texas," The Hesperian or Western Monthly Magazine, p. 431.

<sup>137</sup>James, The Raven, p. 233. Also see "Notes on Texas," The Hesperian or Western Monthly Magazine, p. 431.

<sup>138</sup>Wallis and Hill (eds.), Sixty Years on the Brazos The Life and Letters of Dr. John Washington Lockhart 1824-1900, p. 80.



Gambling was such a serious problem in Houston that the Congress was forced to pass a law prohibiting the practice. The reason was explained by an observer, who thought the problem lay in the fact that too many Congressmen frequented the gambling tables.<sup>140</sup> The journals lend substance to this accusation. They relate a rather disappointing story of the Congress' inability to get items expedited because of a lack of quorums.<sup>141</sup>

The city of Houston was another disappointment for the Texas government. The Allen brothers failed to house adequately the administration. Within nine days after Congress assembled, they were postponed because of "insufficiency of building, the floor being flooded with water. . . ."<sup>142</sup> Houston did not fare much better. He dealt with his many problems in what Mary Austin Holley described as a cabin with windows made of slats interwoven with blankets, which served as a substitute for glass.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>140</sup>"Notes on Texas," The Hesperian or Western Monthly Magazine, p. 431.

<sup>141</sup>Journal of the House of Representatives First Congress Second Session (Houston, 1838), pp. 5-6, 18, 39, 43, 76-77, 89, and 91.

<sup>142</sup>Journal of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Texas First Congress Second Session, p. 20.

<sup>143</sup>Bryan (ed.), Mary Austin Holley The Texas Diary, 1835-8, p. 38.



In this makeshift capital of Houston, news was received during Sam Houston's first term of office that the United States had recognized the independence of Texas. President Jackson, on his last day in office, had signed a bill passed by Congress appropriating the necessary expense money to send a minister to Texas. Austin, who had worked so zealously for recognition had died three months earlier.

Recognition of Texas by the United States had not been easy to obtain. William H. Wharton, the Texas Minister to Washington, D. C., said that the Senators ". . . speak to me about it Texas every hour in the day. . . ."144 Yet, there had developed a growing opposition to Texas. Led by a number of abolitionists, the opposition began fighting the proposed annexation of Texas to the United States with ". . . unceased fervor and daring. . . ."145

Meanwhile Sam Houston was attempting to obtain the release of Santa Anna so that the Mexican dictator could be sent to Washington. Congress opposed Houston's wishes for a

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<sup>144</sup>William H. Wharton to Stephen F. Austin, May 28, 1836, Barker (ed.), The Austin Papers October, 1834--January, 1837, p. 360.

<sup>145</sup>Telegraph and Texas Register, January 3, 1837. Wharton prophetically wrote, "Annexation, when offered, will agitate the Union more than Missouri, abolition and nullification all combined." See Clarence R. Wharton, The Republic of Texas a Brief History of Texas from the First American Colonies in 1821 to Annexation in 1846 (Houston, 1922), p. 174.

short time. An effective compromise was finally worked out by which Congress agreed that the release of Santa Anna was an executive prerogative.<sup>146</sup> Thus, Houston assumed the responsibility of Santa Anna's freedom.

Houston's purpose in releasing Santa Anna was essentially twofold: First, he wanted to spare the man's life, which coincided with Jackson's wishes.<sup>147</sup> Secondly, Houston, trusting Santa Anna's word, was convinced that he would try to persuade the United States Government to recognize and then annex Texas into the Union.

Santa Anna, his aide, and three Texans sent to accompany them, arrived in Washington, D. C., on January 17, 1837. Failing to accomplish the proposed mission because of the present Mexican government's attitude toward Santa Anna and his staff, he returned to Mexico as a free man.

Despite Santa Anna's failure to aid Texas, Wharton continued to work with the United States Congress for recognition. Assisted by Memucan Hunt, he was eventually successful in procuring Texas' recognition. Congress, however, refused to act favorably on the issue of annexation.

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<sup>146</sup>Journal of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Texas First Congress First Session, p. 144.

<sup>147</sup>Jackson believed that if Santa Anna's life was spared, Texas would not be invaded by Mexican troops. See Winkler (ed.), Secret Journals of the Senate Republic of Texas-1836-1845, pp. 12-13.

Houston eventually ordered the annexation proposal to be withdrawn. Shortly after the presidential election in Texas, Houston's request to remove the proposal was carried out on October 12, 1838. There matters stood on the issue of annexation as Houston left his office.

## CHAPTER V

### THE ELECTION OF 1838

The Constitution of the Republic provided that the first elected president would serve his country for two years. Each succeeding presidential term would be three years in duration. The law further stipulated that the president could not succeed himself to a second consecutive term in office. Mirabeau B. Lamar, the Vice President, was, no doubt, aware of the fact that Sam Houston could not be re-elected in 1838. Political maneuvering for the election began in early 1837. On May 7, 1837, R. R. Royall told Lamar, who was in Georgia visiting relatives, ". . . I think you aught [sic] to Return [sic] to Texas as, soon as your Business [sic] will conveniently admit, you are Frequently [sic] spoken of with much preference as a probable Candidate [sic] for the office of Chief Magistrate at our next Election [sic]. . . ." <sup>1</sup> E. W. Cullen, an opponent of Houston in East Texas, also urged Lamar to return home and campaign for the upcoming election. <sup>2</sup> Lamar, despite this

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<sup>1</sup>R. R. Royall to M. B. Lamar, May 7, 1837, Charles A. Gulick, Jr., et al (eds.), The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar (Austin and New York, 1968), I, pp. 548-549.

<sup>2</sup>E. W. Cullen to Mirabeau Lamar, September 15, 1837, ibid., pp. 569-570.



encouragement, carefully avoided any forthright announcement of his candidacy.

Lamar addressed the Texas Senate on the subject of politics on October 24, 1836. His speech did not give any indication of his future in politics. He told the senators,

. . . there is another evil of a more serious and alarming character, a vice of giant powers, the parent of 10,000 crimes against which not only yourselves but the whole of Texas should guard with the utmost vigilance and firmness. Do you ask what it is: I answer PARTY; by which the organization of a greater or smaller number of people, for the political elevation of a favored individual.<sup>3</sup>

Houston, meanwhile, was daily becoming more unpopular, and it was to Lamar's advantage to be absent from the Republic while Texas politics were in a state of turmoil.<sup>4</sup> Colonel James Morgan, writing to the Vice President from Anahuac, reported that everywhere he went he found a considerable clamor being raised against the President.<sup>5</sup> Even East Texas, which had been pro-Houston in the election of 1836, was turning against the administration. E. W. Cullen said, ". . . they are entirely opposed to the

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<sup>3</sup>M. B. Lamar Address To The Senate, October 24, 1836, ibid., pp. 470-474.

<sup>4</sup>Herbert P. Gambrell, Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar (Dallas, 1934), p. 164.

<sup>5</sup>Colonel James Morgan to M. B. Lamar, December 7, 1836, Gulick, Jr., et al (eds.), The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar, p. 511.

puesdo [sic] patri [ot] Sam Houston.<sup>6</sup> Continuing, Cullen talked of a ". . . wonderful change in the minds of the people [in East Texas] to Uncle Sam. . . ."7

Not only did Houston become unpopular because of political issues; his personal behavior was also a contributing factor to the overall discontent. Working all day and late into the night, he probably was on the verge of total collapse.<sup>8</sup> His increased use of alcohol and indifference to those around him added to the criticism already prevalent in the nation. Thomas Jefferson Chambers, seeking payment for his claims, complained because Houston would not pay him any attention.<sup>9</sup> Colonel William Fairfax Gray, hoping to exchange his scrip, found Houston unwilling to sign his documents.<sup>10</sup> When asked by Colonel Gray to discuss the

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<sup>6</sup>E. W. Cullen to Mirabeau B. Lamar, September 15, 1837, ibid., pp. 569-570.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Sam Houston to Anna Raguet, May 20, 1837, Amelia W. Williams and Eugene C. Barker (eds.), The Writings of Sam Houston, 1813-1863 (Austin, 1939), II, p. 99. See Sam Houston to Anna Raguet, August 2, 1837, Williams and Barker (eds.), The Writings of Sam Houston, II, p. 134. Also see Sam Houston to Anna Raguet, August 22, 1837, Williams and Barker (eds.), The Writings of Sam Houston, II, pp. 138-139.

<sup>9</sup>The Journal of Thomas Jefferson Chambers 1836-1837, June 16, 1837, San Jacinto Museum of History, p. 55.

<sup>10</sup>William Fairfax Gray, From Virginia to Texas 1835: Diary of Colonel William Fairfax Gray Giving Details of His Journey to Texas and Return in 1835-6 and Second Journey to Texas in 1837 (Houston, 1909), p. 218.

subject, Houston refused.<sup>11</sup> Houston's vindictive action against Robert M. Coleman, a critic of Houston's role at San Jacinto, also caused alarm among Texans. Coleman, a colonel, was placed under military arrest. Without specific charges filed against him, he was imprisoned upon Houston's authorization.<sup>12</sup> Gray's diary revealed that Coleman's treatment in prison had been ". . . harsh and arbitrary. . . ."<sup>13</sup> Secretary of War William S. Fisher, upon his retirement from the Cabinet, said, "The people have lost faith in the administration."<sup>14</sup>

The fact that relations had become strained between Lamar and Houston was of great political benefit to Lamar. Lamar opposed Houston's intemperance and his informal "mingling with the masses."<sup>15</sup> More important from a political standpoint was the fact that Lamar as presiding officer of the Senate had been a leader of the opposition during Sam

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Andrew F. Muir, "The Mystery of San Jacinto," Southwest Review, XXXVI, (May, 1951), p. 77.

<sup>13</sup>Gray, From Virginia to Texas, p. 210.

<sup>14</sup>Joseph Milton Nance, After San Jacinto The Texas-Mexican Frontier, 1836-1841 (Austin, 1963), p. 52.

<sup>15</sup>M. K. Wisehart, Sam Houston: American Giant (Washington, 1962), p. 279.



Houston's administration.<sup>16</sup> Concerned over the opposition, Houston told his friend, Henry Raguet, that, "There is a systematic opposition to the President, and it grows out of . . . feeling of envy, and a disposition to put him down. . . ." <sup>17</sup>

From the beginning of his term as Vice President, Lamar had been looked upon as Houston's successor.<sup>18</sup> Yet Lamar felt that Thomas Jefferson Rusk, should he choose to run, could defeat him. Lamar waited, watchfully and anxiously. John S. Ford said of Rusk, "Rusk was the only man in Texas who could show the shadow of a claim as the peer of Gen. Houston in the esteem, admiration, and love of the people."<sup>19</sup> Historian Herbert Gambrell, in agreement, held that Rusk, who had demonstrated his abilities in law, the army, and government service, had some of the frontier glamour that appealed to the Texans.<sup>20</sup> Even the skeptical

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<sup>16</sup>Louis J. Wortham, A History of Texas From Wilderness to Commonwealth (Fort Worth, 1924), IV, p. 56.

<sup>17</sup>Sam Houston to Henry Raguet, November 16, 1837, Ernest W. Winkler (ed.), Manuscript Letters and Documents of Early Texans (Austin, 1937), p. 209.

<sup>18</sup>Asa K. Christian, "Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar," The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXIII (January, 1920), p. 167.

<sup>19</sup>Seymour V. Connor, Adventure in Glory (Austin, 1965), p. 83.

<sup>20</sup>Herbert P. Gambrell, Anson Jones (New York, 1948), p. 204.



Anson Jones admitted that Rusk had more talent than he had given him credit for.<sup>21</sup>

In October of 1837, Lamar, while in Georgia, was informed that Rusk would not allow his name to be placed in nomination for the presidency.<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile, Lamar's popularity and social recognition in Georgia were widely publicized in the newspapers by friends as campaign propaganda. They knew the opinion of the people of the United States greatly influenced the decisions of Texas voters.<sup>23</sup> Two months later, eleven out of the fourteen members of the Texas Senate sent Lamar a letter asking him to accept the nomination for President. This was the first formal move toward putting Lamar's name before the people of Texas.<sup>24</sup> The Senators had written:

In our anxiety to select the most suitable person to fill the office of President of this Republic, at the expiration of the term of General Sam Houston, we are satisfied from a knowlede [sic] of your character civil and military that you would be his most appropriate sucessor [sic]. We respectfully request that you would inform us if you will permit your name to

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>R. E. Handy to M. B. Lamar, October 4, 1837, Gulick, Jr. et al (eds.), The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar, p. 573.

<sup>23</sup>Nina Covington, "The Presidential Campaigns of the Republic of Texas of 1836 and 1838," (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Texas, Austin, 1929), p. 88.

<sup>24</sup>Christian, "Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, p. 168.

be used as a candidate for that high office. In making this request we are confident and happy in the belief that we express the wishes of a large majority of our fellow citizens.<sup>25</sup>

At this point, Lamar, still apprehensive of Rusk's political ambitions, swallowed his pride and approached Rusk directly to inquire whether he would run.<sup>26</sup> Lamar's action on the matter must have been humiliating, for it was Rusk who had supported the army in their rejection of Lamar as their commanding officer after San Jacinto. On December 7, he wrote to Rusk the following letter:

I have just received a letter from . . . our mutual friends inviting me to become a candidate for the next Presidency. As you have been spoken of frequently for the same high office I am anxious to see you before I give a final answer. It is important that harmony at all times should be preserved in our country and at the present period any violent contest for the Chief Magistracy could not fail to be extremely prejudicial to the peace and prosperity of the country, but might prove fatal to its best hopes. . . . I think it is all important that we should have a free and unreserved conference and by comparing our views come to some conclusion which whilst it may be satisfactory to ourselves will be most conducive to public interest. . . .<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Telegraph and Texas Register, December 1, 1837. Senators in support of Lamar's candidacy were listed in the Telegraph as follows: S. H. Everitt, J. S. Lester, William H. Wharton, E. Rains, Edward T. Branch, G. W. Barnett, S. C. Robertson, John Dunn, A. C. Horton, D. Rowlett, and Issac W. Burton. Also see Christian, "Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar," The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, p. 168.

<sup>26</sup>Connor, Adventure in Glory, p. 83.

<sup>27</sup>Christian, "Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar," The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, p. 168.

To this letter, Rusk responded on the same day:

Your note of this morning has been received informing me of a request having been made by several distinguished gentlemen to you to become a candidate for the Presidency of the Republic at the next election and desiring a free and unreserved conference between us on that subject before you answer their communication. I fully subscribe to the propriety of the Course [sic] you suggest. . . . From a press of business it will not be in my power to call at your room this evening but I hope you will not on my account have any hesitancy in giving your consent to the request alluded to as there is no design or desire on my part to have my name before the people for any office whatever. As the representative of my country I feel bound to discharge to the best of my abilitie's [sic] the duties of the Station [sic]; but beyond this my private affairs and domestic obligations so long neglected imperiously demand my attention and will not permit me to think of public life beyond the discharge of those military obligations in the hour of danger. . . . I shall be pleased to see your name and shall be happy to sustain you in your labors for the welfare of the country. . . .<sup>28</sup>

Because of Rusk's reply, Lamar proceeded to write his colleagues in the Senate letting them know of his interest in the office of President. He stated,

I can only say in answer that as 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.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Christian, "Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar," The South-western Historical Quarterly, p. 169.

<sup>29</sup>Mirabeau B. Lamar to S. H. Everitt and others, December 7, 1837, Gulick, Jr., et al (eds.), The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar, p. 592.



After his nomination by the Senate, meetings throughout Texas supported the candidacy of Lamar. Richmond, Lamar's home town, on April 17, declared its support of both M. B. Lamar and D. G. Burnet.<sup>30</sup> A short time later other communities began to endorse the Lamar-Burnet ticket. They were as follows: Columbia, April 21; Galveston, April 23; San Augustine, May 10; and Houston, May 19.<sup>31</sup> Lamar's candidacy for the election of 1838 was now official.

In choosing an opponent Houston supporters still hoped that Rusk would consent to run. After Rusk declined the offer again, the Houstonites, led by Francis Lubbock, held a meeting in May and selected Peter W. Grayson. The Telegraph said of his nomination:

He permitted himself to become a candidate for the Presidency only upon the urgent solicitation of his friends . . . with the conviction that many of his fellow citizens regarded his consent as a matter of duty.<sup>32</sup>

Grayson was born in Kentucky in 1788. At the age of forty-two he applied for a league of land in Stephen F. Austin's colony and set up a law practice in San Felipe.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Christian, "Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar," The South-western Historical Quarterly, p. 169.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Telegraph and Texas Register, August 11, 1838.

<sup>33</sup>Walter P. Webb (ed.), The Handbook of Texas (Austin, 1952), I, p. 725.



In 1834, Grayson and Spencer H. Jack left Texas to secure Austin's release on bail. During that time in Mexico, Austin and Grayson became good friends. Later Grayson served as aide-de-camp to Austin during the early days of the Revolution.<sup>34</sup>

After the Revolution, Grayson served as Attorney General under ad interim President Burnet, and was assigned commissioner to Washington, D. C., with James W. Collinsworth, a later Presidential candidate, to obtain recognition of Texas as a sovereign power. Because Congress was not in session and its report on conditions in Texas had not been delivered to President Jackson, the Commissioners' efforts proved to be fruitless.<sup>35</sup>

Upon his return to Texas, Grayson served as Attorney General under Sam Houston, and later became Texas' Naval Agent, authorized to negotiate contracts for the fleet with the United States. On December 31, 1837, Houston authorized him to purchase ships for the Texas Navy.<sup>36</sup> Grayson did very little work on the naval contract negotiations and soon resigned to run for the Presidency of Texas.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Connor, Adventure in Glory, p. 84.

<sup>35</sup>Gambrell, Anson Jones, p. 121.

<sup>36</sup>Webb (ed.), The Handbook of Texas, I, p. 725.

<sup>37</sup>Duane Howard, "Historical Studies in the Life of Samuel May Williams" (unpublished Master's thesis, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, 1947), p. 302.

The campaign of 1838 became another personality contest. The politicians and voters alike divided themselves into either pro-Houston or anti-Houston forces or parties. The term party still was not in the truest sense applicable to politics in the Republic of Texas.<sup>38</sup> Party politics, in the modern sense, was much closer to reality in 1841. At any rate, the result of the election was victory for Mirabeau B. Lamar--and tragedy for two of his opponents.

Texas political campaigns were flamboyant, each candidate trying to out-drink and out-talk the other. Ostensibly, campaigning in those days was not an easy task. Historian William Hogan wrote, "Holidays, election days, and campaign speeches were times for unrestrained license in drinking."<sup>39</sup> Liquor was consumed in huge quantities and campaigners not only drank but also were expected to furnish the liquor at political rallies. James B. Woods, a

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<sup>38</sup>Although the word is found in contemporary accounts of the period, there were only slight evidences of issues being debated and discussed in 1838. See Ernest William Winkler (ed.), Platforms of Political Parties in Texas (Austin, 1916), pp. 11-13. Also see Jonnie Lockhart Wallis and Laurance L. Hill (eds.), Sixty Years on the Brazos The Life and Letters of Dr. John Washington Lockhart 1824-1900 (Waco, 1967), p. 58. Lockhart believed that the moving of the capital from Houston to Austin during Lamar's administration caused the Houston and anti-Houston parties to develop.

<sup>39</sup>Hogan, The Texas Republic A Social and Economic History, p. 43.

candidate for Congress from Liberty County, was accused of intemperance. To this charge, he replied in an open letter, ". . . I plead guilty, and call upon him that is exempt from this sin to cast the first stone at me and vote against me. . . ."40

Too often the campaigns of Texas turned into mud-slinging affairs which resulted in tragedy. The election of 1836 was no exception. Lamar, a widower, was accused of having an illicit affair with Olivia Roberts, a resident of Mobile, Alabama, who had followed him to Texas.<sup>41</sup> To counteract the rumor of scandal, Lamar was advised to base his platform on political remedies for the mistakes that Houston had made.<sup>42</sup> David G. Burnet, a Lamar supporter and Vice Presidential candidate, supposedly had intended to

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<sup>40</sup>James B. Woods to Fellow Citizens of the County of Liberty, July 28, 1838, San Jacinto Museum of History.

<sup>41</sup>Stanley Siegel, A Political History of the Texas Republic (Austin, 1956), p. 97. Siegel found no evidence which proved either party guilty of any wrongdoings. Also see Mrs. Aurelia Hadley Mohl, "Recollections of the Texas Presidents Read Before the Ladies Reading Club," May 5, 1896, Newspaper Clippings from the Lubbock Collection, San Jacinto Museum of History. Mrs. Mohl said that Lamar was a man of romance and sentiment. He always became upset over the song "Annie Laurie," which would remind him of his wife, who had been dead for ten years. She noted that his behavior exhibited ". . . an uncommon constancy and devotion. . . ."

<sup>42</sup>Siegel, A Political History of the Texas Republic, p. 97.



desert Texas during a crucial point in the war.<sup>43</sup> A. C. Horton, also seeking the office of Vice President, was charged with conduct unbecoming an officer during the Revolution.<sup>44</sup> Peter W. Grayson, Houston's stand-in, bore the most severe criticism of the campaign. He was attacked by Lamarites as a land speculator and as an opponent of the land law of 1837. The Telegraph, which openly supported the Lamar-Burnet ticket, accused the Houston party of being ". . . engaged in . . . speculations . . . which might be more justly defined to be robbing the public domain."<sup>45</sup> Because Grayson had not fought in the Revolution, supporters of Lamar accused him of cowardice. Rumors were also circulated that Grayson and a "black sheep" cousin in Kentucky were one and the same person.

On July 9, 1838, Grayson committed suicide at Bean's Station in eastern Tennessee. Grayson had proven to be a poor choice as a candidate. The Telegraph stated, "He showed no gratification at his nomination, and expressed no solicitude as to the result."<sup>46</sup> The attacks upon his

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<sup>43</sup>Charles Waldo Hays, "The Island and City of Galveston" (unpublished manuscript, Archives Collection, Rosenberg Library, 1879), p. 143.

<sup>44</sup>Telegraph and Texas Register, August 11, 1838.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.



character had been severe. James Anchincloss told Samuel M. Williams, ". . . Poor Grayson has gone--a victim. I doubt not, to the licentiousness of the press at home! With a mind far too Sensitive [sic] he could not stand the brutal and cowardly attacks on his character, and rather than live with the slightest imputation on his fair fame he chose the sad alternative of death. . . ."47 Anson Jones, who later also committed suicide, said, ". . . I believe party abuse has been the cause acting upon some predisposition to morbid melancholy. . . ."48 Under a personable facade lay the deep emotional problems which caused his untimely death. The Telegraph said,

His kind and obliging disposition, his intelligence, and his pleasant, and instructive conversation, made him the object of high esteem in the social circle and his polite and manly bearing secured him the friendship and respect of all who knew him. He was naturally confiding and affectionate, and nothing could exceed his fidelity to those he conceived worthy of his friendship and favor. It is said that some disappointments and reverses of his early life had damped his ardor, and that they preyed upon his spirits in secret; but if such was the fact, he studiously concealed his uneasiness from his friends, and in society was usually cheerful and communicative.49

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47James Anchincloss to Samuel M. Williams, July 27, 1838, Williams Papers, Archives Collection, Rosenberg Library.

48Gambrell, Anson Jones, p. 134.

49Telegraph and Texas Register, August 11, 1838.

The only motive found was a note to the innkeeper in which he complained of melancholy. Undoubtedly, the personal attacks upon his character by the opposition press in Texas contributed to the decision to take his own life.

When the tragic news reached Texas, the Houstonites hurriedly selected James W. Collinsworth as their alternative candidate. Born in Tennessee in 1806, Collinsworth began a law practice at twenty years of age, and soon became United States District Attorney for the western district of Tennessee.<sup>50</sup> He later came to Texas and settled in Matagorda Municipality. At Brazoria on August 9, 1835, he was one of the signers of a petition asking that delegates be elected from the various municipalities to assemble at San Felipe de Austin to hold a Consultation and declare the independence of Texas.<sup>51</sup> According to the biographical sketch in the Handbook of Texas, "The General Council of the provisional government on November 28, 1835, elected Collinsworth captain of the Texas Regiment of Infantry, a company that was probably never organized."<sup>52</sup> Collinsworth later represented the Brazoria Municipality at the March 2,

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<sup>50</sup>Webb (ed.), The Handbook of Texas, I, p. 377.

<sup>51</sup>"James T. Collingsworth [sic]," Frontier Times, VIII, (October, 1930), p. 1.

<sup>52</sup>Webb (ed.), The Handbook of Texas, I, p. 377.

1836, Convention. Here he signed the Texas Declaration of Independence. It was he who introduced the resolution which, when adopted by the Convention, made Sam Houston commander-in-chief of the army.<sup>53</sup>

During the war for independence, he served in a military capacity as an aide to the refugees of the "Run-away Scrape." On April 8, 1836, he was appointed major, and aide-de-camp to General Sam Houston.<sup>54</sup> At San Jacinto, Sam Houston said of Collinsworth, that he "bore himself as a chief."<sup>55</sup>

After the war, he declined an appointment offered him by President Burnet as District Judge of Brazoria County, but did serve as Burnet's Secretary of State from April 29 to May 23, 1836. Late in May of 1836, he was assigned as Commissioner to the United States and he proceeded to leave Texas, accompanied by P. W. Grayson. As previously noted, their mission was unsuccessful because Congress was not in session. Collinsworth left Grayson, and went to Tennessee to confer with Andrew Jackson. He left for Texas on October 22, 1836.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>"James T. Collingsworth [sic]," Frontier Times, p. 1.

<sup>54</sup>Webb (ed.), The Handbook of Texas, I, p. 377.

<sup>55</sup>"James T. Collingsworth [sic]," Frontier Times, p. 2.

<sup>56</sup>Webb (ed.), The Handbook of Texas, I, p. 377.

Upon his return to Texas, he declined the position of Attorney General offered to him by President Houston. However, he was elected Senator from Brazoria District to the First Congress on November 30, 1836.<sup>57</sup> On December 16, Collinsworth was elected Chief Justice of the Texas Supreme Court.<sup>58</sup>

Ironically, Collinsworth, had he lived to be elected, could not have served his country. He was only thirty-two years of age, and the required age established by the Constitution was thirty-five. Historian Seymour Connor believed that probably in the rush to find a replacement candidate, no one stopped to consider that this distinguished jurist was so young.<sup>59</sup>

Shortly after his nomination, he committed suicide by leaping from a steamboat into Galveston Bay. He had complained of ill health and financial reverses.<sup>60</sup> Henderson Yoakum described him as "a man of fine talents . . . pleasant wit, . . . a most admirable companion, and of

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<sup>57</sup>"James T. Collingsworth [sic]," Frontier Times, p. 2.

<sup>58</sup>Webb (ed.), The Handbook of Texas, I, p. 377.

<sup>59</sup>Connor, Adventure in Glory, p. 85.

<sup>60</sup>James Collinsworth to the President and His Cabinet, May 13, 1836, William C. Binkley (ed.), Official Correspondence of the Texas Revolution 1835-1836 (New York, 1936), II, p. 670.



scrupulous integrity."<sup>61</sup> However, Yoakum stated, "He had emigrated to Texas to rid himself of a false habit."<sup>62</sup> Connor believed Collinsworth had become an alcoholic.<sup>63</sup> The same opinion was given by Herbert Gambrell, who quoted Anson Jones: ". . . Collinsworth's drowning himself was a thing in course I had expected it as I knew him to be deranged and when excited by liquor almost mad."<sup>64</sup> Thomas F. McKinney wrote to his business partner, Samuel M. Williams, that ". . . Collinsworth evidently drowned himself in this bay. . . ."<sup>65</sup> When questioned about alcohol being involved in Collinsworth's death, McKinney replied to Williams,

Collinsworth went exactly as you and B. [sic] presumed. I was here and had been with him to Houston and we had returned and he was under the influence of Ardent Spirits [sic] for a week before hand.<sup>66</sup>

Collinsworth, regardless of his state of mind while intoxicated, was disgusted with Texas political affairs. Colonel Gray said that Collinsworth had become so upset at

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<sup>61</sup>Yoakum, History of Texas, II, p. 250.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>Connor, Adventure in Glory, p. 86.

<sup>64</sup>Gambrell, Anson Jones, p. 134.

<sup>65</sup>Thomas McKinney to Samuel M. Williams, August 21, 1838, Williams Papers, Rosenberg Library.

<sup>66</sup>Thomas McKinney to Samuel M. Williams, October 13, 1838, ibid.

the Convention in March of 1836, that he ". . . got drunk and speaks with much asperity of the conduct of the Convention . . . and shall perform no duties. . . ."67

Collinsworth's disgust did not end with the Convention. Indeed, it remained with him throughout Burnet's term in office and ended with his refusal to accept a Cabinet post from Sam Houston. Writing to President Burnet and his Cabinet, Collinsworth said, "I cannot but notice some things transacted by the government which had given dissatisfaction to many and pain to myself. . . ."68 He disliked the favoritism and patronage given to those who had recently arrived in Texas.

Frantically, but with little hope of success, the Houstonites nominated Robert Wilson, a prominent businessman who had represented Liberty and Harris Counties in the First and Second Senates.<sup>69</sup> Wilson was born in Easton, Maryland, on December 7, 1793. After serving in the War of 1812, Wilson traveled from Missouri to Mississippi, and entered Texas in 1828. In Texas he made claims that may have been fraudulent against an ex-partner's estate; yet,

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<sup>67</sup>Gray, From Virginia to Texas, p. 132.

<sup>68</sup>James Collinsworth to the President and His Cabinet, May 13, 1836, Binkley (ed.), Official Correspondence of the Texas Revolution 1835-1836, p. 670.

<sup>69</sup>Connor, Adventure in Glory, p. 86.

paradoxically, he was known in Texas as "Honest Bob."<sup>70</sup> By 1830, Wilson and his partner, William P. Harris, were operating a successful sawmill business, and they had acquired three sitios of land from the Mexican government.<sup>71</sup>

During the war he served in the Texas army from October 5 to December 13, 1835, participating in the siege of Bexar. After Mexico was defeated, Wilson became an associate of the Allen Brothers, who promoted the city of Houston in the winter of 1836-37.<sup>72</sup> In return for his assistance he received an interest in town lots, and began to deal in real estate. The following real estate advertisement perhaps will indicate the type of promoter "Honest Bob" was:

Hamilton is pleasantly situated on the left bank of Buffalo Bayou--directly opposite the town of Harrisburg at what has heretofore been termed the head of Navigation. It is only five miles from the City of Houston, the present seat of government, and possesses advantages far superior to any other point on the Bayou as a commercial location . . . an abundance of timber such as pine, cypress, cedar, oak, etc. immediately surrounds the place . . . But laying all the "big talk" aside, let those who wish to enjoy health, accumulate wealth, and live comfortably, come and examine for themselves; and if they are not pleased with the place and firmly

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<sup>70</sup>Webb (ed.), The Handbook of Texas, II, p. 921.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

convinced that this is a situation combining all those advantages, and more not mentioned,--then my name is not

Robt. Wilson  
Agent for the proprietors<sup>73</sup>

Wilson entered politics and held a seat in the Senate. He served as Representative of Liberty and Harris Counties during the first three Congresses of the Republic.<sup>74</sup> However, on December 26, 1838, Wilson was expelled from Congress for using defamatory language and resisting the officers of the chambers.<sup>75</sup> Because of his behavior, many voters never considered Wilson to be seriously in the Presidential race.<sup>76</sup>

Election passed without any serious disorder being recorded. Niles' Register said, ". . . there was no brawling nor fighting--nothing to offend the ear or the eye. . . ."<sup>77</sup> The explanation for such unusual behavior on election day was Grayson's death, which left Lamar without a serious rival.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>Telegraph and Texas Register, January 13, 1838.

<sup>74</sup>Webb (ed.), The Handbook of Texas, II, p. 921.

<sup>75</sup>Niles' Register, January 19, 1839.

<sup>76</sup>Christian, "Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar," The South-western Historical Quarterly, p. 170.

<sup>77</sup>Niles' Register, September 29, 1838. Also see Telegraph and Texas Register, September 8, 1838.

<sup>78</sup>Niles' Register, September 29, 1838.



The votes cast on September 3, 1838, resulted in the choice of Vice President Lamar for President, and D. G. Burnet, the ex-Provisional President, for Vice President. Lamar received 6,995 votes; Wilson received only 252. Burnet was elected by a majority of 776 votes over the combined votes of his opponents, A. C. Horton and Joseph Rowe. The inauguration date was set for December 9, 1838.<sup>79</sup>

Inauguration day for President Lamar proved to be a gala affair. Drinking, gambling, a shooting affray, and uncounted street brawls were climaxed by a grand ball that night.<sup>80</sup> Even public opinion in the United States hailed the election of Lamar. The New Orleans Picayune stated,

He appears to be unanimously popular with the people of this country, and will, no doubt, prove to be the best chief magistrate that could have been selected. It is certain that he is strenuously opposed to annexation; . . . and it is expected that almost everything will be changed for the better.<sup>81</sup>

Prior to the commencement of the ceremony, Sam Houston appeared in colonial costume, including a powdered wig, and gave his "Farewell Address."<sup>82</sup> Houston talked for

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<sup>79</sup>Christian, "Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar," The South-western Historical Quarterly, p. 170.

<sup>80</sup>Connor, Adventure in Glory, p. 89.

<sup>81</sup>Siegel, A Political History of the Republic of Texas, p. 102.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., p. 103.

three hours, mingling tall stories and gross innuendoes with an elaborately exaggerated defense of his own administration.<sup>83</sup> According to the Telegraph, Houston's speech was frequently interrupted by applause from the crowd.<sup>84</sup>

Lamar was so upset by Houston's harangue that he ordered his private secretary, Algernon P. Thompson, to read his speech.<sup>85</sup> The Telegraph explained that Lamar's inability to deliver his own address was "on account of indisposition."<sup>86</sup> By the time the speech had been read, Sam Houston and half of the audience had departed.<sup>87</sup> Nevertheless, the Telegraph reported,

It was received with general approbation. It was pleasing to notice the remarkable degree of confidence and esteem that was everywhere manifested toward Lamar. He is almost unanimously regarded as the pride and ornament of his country; and from his administration the most fortunate results are expected.<sup>88</sup>

His speech was modeled to some extent on that of Thomas

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<sup>83</sup>Connor, Adventure in Glory, p. 89.

<sup>84</sup>Telegraph and Texas Register, December 12, 1838.

<sup>85</sup>Siegel, A Political History of the Republic of Texas, p. 103.

<sup>86</sup>Telegraph and Texas Register, December 12, 1838.

<sup>87</sup>Connor, Adventure in Glory, p. 89.

<sup>88</sup>Telegraph and Texas Register, December 12, 1838.

Jefferson in 1801.<sup>89</sup> E. C. Barker explained that Lamar's policy was designed to foster

. . . agriculture, commerce, and the useful arts as the true basis of national strength and glory; and at the same time to lay the foundation of those higher institutions for moral and mental culture, without which no government, on democratic principles, can prosper, nor the people long preserve their liberties.<sup>90</sup>

With regard to foreign policy, Lamar stated that, "we should deal justly with all nations aggressively, to none"; and "court free and unrestricted commerce whenever it may be the interest of our people to carry the national flag."<sup>91</sup> And, speaking of annexation, Lamar said, "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."<sup>92</sup>

In retrospect, Lamar's landslide victory did not necessarily represent a repudiation of Houston's policies.<sup>93</sup> Some historians have disagreed, however, holding to the

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<sup>89</sup>Eugene C. Barker, Readings in Texas History (Dallas, 1929), p. 350.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid. Also see M. B. Lamar Inaugural Address, November 10, 1838, Gulick, Jr., et al (eds.), The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar, pp. 316-323.

<sup>91</sup>M. B. Lamar Inaugural Address, November 10, 1838, ibid., p. 318.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., p. 321.

<sup>93</sup>Connor, Adventure in Glory, p. 86.

belief that neither P. W. Grayson or James Collinsworth could have defeated Lamar.<sup>94</sup> Even so, one must not overlook the fact that Houston could not legally succeed himself, and that the two tragic suicides adversely affected the strength of the opposition to Lamar. Moreover, the fact remains that "Honest Bob" Wilson was hardly the most inspiring candidate to support.

By the close of 1838, Texas was still struggling for existence. Independence remained uncertain because of Houston's defensive war policy. Inflation and the land policy of Texas caused concern. Recognition of Texas by the United States had been secured, but annexation by the Union had failed. The people of Texas blamed Houston for all their misery. The hardships faced since March 2, 1836, would undoubtedly continue into the next administration. The turbulence of the past two years had not ended.

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<sup>94</sup>Siegel, A Political History of the Republic of Texas, p. 99.



## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The growth of Texas was inextricably tied to the United States. Speculators and debtors alike came to Texas seeking economic opportunity. Misunderstanding between the Texans and Mexicans and Santa Anna's militaristic dictatorship eventually led to armed rebellion. In spite of the fact that Texas was barely able to sustain herself, the people of Texas declared themselves free and independent of Mexican rule on March 2, 1836.

After the defeat of Santa Anna at the battle of San Jacinto, Sam Houston emerged as the most popular hero in Texas. Because of the problems facing Texas after the war, Houston consented to run for the Presidency of the Republic in August of 1836. As a result of the election, he was overwhelmingly chosen to lead Texas politically, as he had done militarily. Houston's popularity had reached a high point in the country.

Inheriting the problems of the provisional government, Houston was immediately forced to deal with problems that had been plaguing Texas since March 2, 1836. His furloughing of the volunteer army and failure to acquiesce in demands for an offensive military and naval policy against Mexico cost him considerable support. Continued Indian

depredations and Houston's conciliatory Indian policy created considerable opposition, especially among settlers on the frontier, where attacks were of frequent occurrence. Depression conditions in Texas and eventual uncontrolled inflation, Houston's sanction of a charter for a banking company, the release of Santa Anna, Houston's untempered personal habits, and the failure to secure annexation of Texas to the United States were all issues which were inseparably tied to Houston's considerable loss of popularity. Indeed, the failure of annexation was a major disappointment to most Texans. The issue of annexation had been an important one with the people because the country's existence as an independent Republic would force the Texas government to assume more and more responsibility in fiscal, political, and social matters. Yet, in defense of his work, Sam Houston, in his two years of office kept Texas free and independent of Mexico and was able to obtain recognition of the young republic from the United States.

The turbulence in Texas, nevertheless, remained a fact during the period from 1836 to 1838. As a result, most of the citizens of Texas were disturbed over the events of the past two years. Disorder was still a distinct characteristic of the Republic.

The election of 1838 afforded an opportunity for dissatisfied Texans to register their vote of protest.

Although political parties in Texas existed only in a most rudimentary form, the voters aligned themselves into either pro-Houston or anti-Houston groups. The campaign of 1838 had tragic consequences in that two of the pro-Houston candidates committed suicide, which virtually left the party without a presidential contender. Lamar was easily elected to serve Texas for a three-year term.

Lamar's election was, for all practical purposes, not necessarily a repudiation of Sam Houston's administration. In fact, it was during the inauguration ceremony for Lamar that Houston delivered a three-hour discourse concerning the past glories of his administration. Upon completion of his speech, Houston departed, carrying with him most of the crowd that had gathered earlier to take part in the social event.

Nevertheless, Houston's administration had been filled with turmoil and uncertainty. Yet the actions taken by the President had been practical, especially when one considers the conditions under which he labored. Overruled by Congress on many occasions, Houston was forced to assume the responsibility for mistakes for which he personally should not have been held accountable.

In general, the administration of Houston had been based upon the principle of economy in government. The furloughing of the army, and the defensive foreign policy of

Texas with regard to Mexico had been prime examples of Houston's attempts to maintain frugality within the government's fiscal operations. Furthermore, Houston, foreseeing the inevitable problems of an inflated currency, vetoed a proposal to issue excessive amounts of paper money, but a stubborn Congress overrode his veto. Even so, the inflation of Texas money in 1838 was not as serious a problem as his successor's expenditures, which were practically uncontrolled.

There were other instances in which Houston's policies were most practical for Texas at that particular period of the country's history. For example, his friendly policy towards the Indians, and his advocacy of Texas' ratification of the Cherokee treaty were aimed at minimizing Indian discontent. Once again, Congress, reflecting popular frontier sentiment, refused to fulfill their earlier promises of ratifying the Indian treaty. Hostility of the Indians was a natural reaction to the white man's failure to carry out their end of the treaty. Yet, Indian retaliation during Houston's term in office was less serious than Indian reaction to the extermination policy promulgated by the Lamar administration.

Houston's attempts to keep the land office closed finally failed in 1838. Meanwhile, settlers had already encroached upon Indian lands, and had forced many of the



Indians to fight. It is of interest to note that the most serious Indian depredations of Houston's administration occurred in 1838, the year in which the land office was open to the public.

Houston, apparently, did not feel personally repudiated as a result of the election of 1838. Indeed, he began his campaign for re-election the same day that Lamar took the oath of office.

Houston's successor, Mirabeau Lamar, was a visionary enthusiast. He saw in Texas a destiny that would eventually extend her boundaries to the Pacific Ocean. However, Lamar's schemes to extend Texas boundaries westward were a fiasco. Bankruptcy, demoralization because of the failure to expand her boundaries, and the incessant Indian raids which characterized his administration are strong evidence that Houston's policies, though unpopular at the time, were the practical ones for Texas.

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