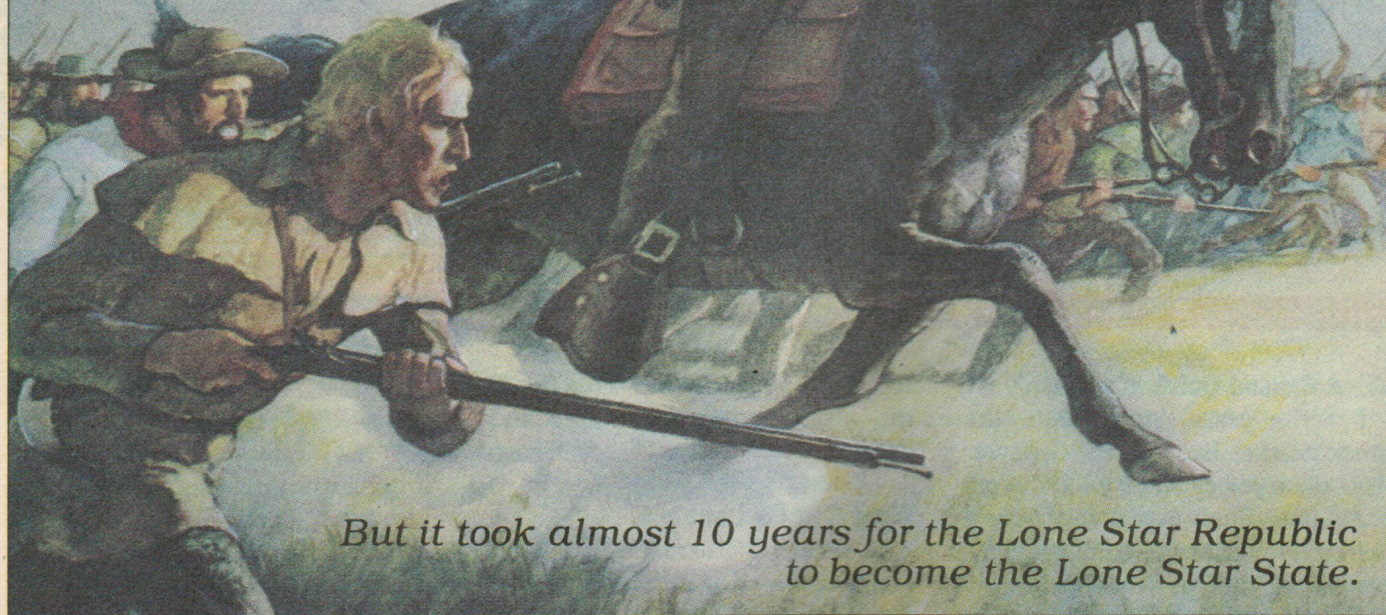


HURRAH FOR TEXAS!

*Texas won its independence
in 1836.*

by Tamar Rothenberg



*But it took almost 10 years for the Lone Star Republic
to become the Lone Star State.*

The Bettmann Archive

CAST

Narrators A-G

Sam Houston

Margaret Lea Houston, his wife

Sam Houston Jr., 16, their son

Nannie Houston, 13, their daughter

Maggie Houston, 11, their daughter ✓

Mary Houston, 9, their daughter

William H. Wharton, Texas envoy to
the U.S. government

Memucan Hunt, Texas official

John C. Calhoun, U.S. Senator from
South Carolina

Andrew Jackson, U.S. President

Mirabeau B. Lamar, second Texas
president

Kelsey Douglass, Texas general

Neosho, Cherokee Indian

Chief Bowles, Cherokee leader

Rafael Vasquez, Mexican general

Rosa Navarro, 14, San Antonio girl

Jessie Logan, 13, her friend

G.W. Terrell, Texas official

Democrats 1 and 2, Polk supporters

Whigs 1 and 2, Clay supporters
Anson Jones, last Texas president

ABOUT THIS PLAY

After 1820, the initials G.T.T.! could be seen on many barn doors throughout the U.S. The initials stood for "Gone to Texas!" Thousands of Americans got Texas fever and moved there with their families. This play tells how Texas came to be a part of the U.S.

Texas belonged to Spain when Moses Austin, a Connecticut man, asked permission to start a colony there in 1820. Austin got permission, but died before he could start his colony. His son Stephen carried out his dream. The first American settlers arrived in 1821.

That same year, Mexico won its independence from Spain, and took control of Texas. To encourage people to move to Texas, the Mexican

government gave large grants of land to new settlers.

As more and more Americans moved to Texas, tension grew between them and Mexico. The Americans wanted to run their own government. And many brought slaves to Texas, even though Mexico had outlawed slavery.

In 1830, Mexico halted further American immigration to Texas. Things came to a head when a dictator named Antonio López de Santa Anna took control of Mexico in 1834. He swept away the freedoms granted Texans by the Mexican constitution.

Texas declared its independence in 1836. Santa Anna led an army to Texas to restore Mexican rule. At San Antonio, Santa Anna attacked a band of 187 Texans inside an old mission building called the Alamo. The Mexicans captured the Alamo

and killed all its defenders.

Legendary Texas statesman Sam Houston tells the rest of the story.

SCENE ONE

Narrator A: It is Christmas, 1859. The Houston family is gathered around the fireplace in their Independence, Texas, home.

Maggie: Papa, tell us about your life with the Cherokee Indians!

Nannie: No, tell us about how you won the battle of San Jacinto [*san juh-SIHN-toh*!]

Margaret: You're treating your father like a storybook, instead of the next governor of Texas!

Sam Jr.: Governor? That's nothing. Dad used to be president!

Mary: President of the United States?

Sam: (*laughing*) No, Mary, president of Texas. We were an independent republic for almost 10 years before we became a state. Now *that's* a story to tell. . . .

SCENE TWO

Narrator B: In April, 1836, Sam Houston led the Texans to victory in the battle of San Jacinto. Mexican dictator Santa Anna was captured. Texas was free! It became known as the Lone Star Republic because its flag had a single star. Voters of the new Republic of Texas elected Sam Houston president. He talks with William Wharton. . . .

Wharton: Sam, I've got to be heading back to Washington.

Sam: Good luck! You *must* convince the U.S. to recognize our independence from Mexico.

Wharton: It won't be easy, Sam. President Jackson doesn't want to offend Mexico. And it's an election year. Many people think recognition will lead to annexation. Now, I personally like the sound of that — but a lot of Northerners don't.

Sam: I know. They don't want another slave state in the Union. Well, Texas won't change — so you must change their minds about Texas!

SCENE THREE

Narrator C: Wharton and Hunt meet with President Jackson and Sena-



Mexico and Texas fought over the boundaries of the Texas Republic (1836-1845).

tor Calhoun at the White House.

Wharton: To be honest, President Jackson, we would like annexation. Many of us are from the U.S., and we live by a similar constitution.

Jackson: Mexico might view U.S. recognition — let alone annexation — as an aggressive act.

Hunt: If the U.S. refuses to recognize Texas, we will turn to Britain. As we speak, Texas is negotiating a commerce treaty with Britain in return for recognition!

Calhoun: I say it's ridiculous to turn our backs on Texas and lose good trade to Britain.

Wharton: Then recognize Texas!

Jackson: It's too risky right now.

Narrator C: Not until March 3, 1837, Jackson's last day in office, does the U.S. recognize Texas. But a bill to annex Texas fails to pass Congress. Northerners are opposed to admitting another slave state.

SCENE FOUR

Sam: (*continuing his story*) It wasn't easy holding our young republic together. To grow and prosper, we needed peace with the Indians in Texas and with the Mexicans to the

south. But it didn't work out that way. . . .

Narrator D: In September, 1838, Mirabeau B. Lamar becomes president of Texas. He does not agree with Houston about the Indians.

Lamar: Those Cherokee Indians are taking up good land. I don't want them in Texas! Have you heard that Cherokees have been plotting with Mexican agents?

Douglass: It could be true.

Lamar: I'm going to order their Chief Bowles to take his people and get out of Texas!

Narrator D: Chief Bowles receives the order and calls a tribal council.

Neosho: It is not right that we leave. We have lived here longer than most whites.

Bowles: I have asked the Texas president for time to negotiate and to gather crops. Lamar is not like our friend Sam Houston. But perhaps we can talk peacefully.

Narrator D: Lamar refuses to negotiate, and sends General Douglass and the Texas army to drive out the Cherokees.

Douglass: (*to Chief Bowles*) You rotten Indians! If you don't flee for your

lives, we'll kill you all!

Bowles: But we have done nothing!

Douglass: You exist! That's bad enough.

Narrator D: Bowles and a hundred other Cherokees are killed. Many flee north to Indian Territory (now Oklahoma).

Sam Houston: Lamar dealt the same way with the Comanche Indians. No wonder the Comanches went on the warpath in 1840, kidnapping Anglo-American settlers. Mexico did not appreciate Texan aggression either. . . .

SCENE FIVE

Narrator E: Lamar's term ends, and Houston is reelected. In March, 1842, 500 Mexican soldiers, led by General Rafael Vasquez, invade Texas. They capture three towns, including San Antonio.

Vasquez: (to Rosa Navarro) Take down that Lone Star flag, and raise the flag of Mexico!

Navarro: What are you saying?

Vasquez: Texas belongs to Mexico.

Navarro: That's a lie! How dare you?

Vasquez: How dare you Texans presume to take over Mexican land! Your President Lamar sent a Texan expedition to Santa Fe. But we got there first!

Logan: I heard about that. You Mexicans made those poor men march all the way to Mexico City — over a thousand miles!

Navarro: Well, Sam Houston's our president now. He'll fix things.

Narrator E: From the capital at Austin, Houston declares a state of emergency.

Sam: Blockade Mexican ports! Send the militia to San Antonio!

Terrell: (handing him a paper) Sam, our Texas legislature has decided to declare war on Mexico. This bill gives you full powers.

Sam: (after reading it) What? These are the powers of a dictator! This is nonsense — we have no money for all-out war with Mexico! Our Texas Rangers can protect San Antonio. I veto this bill!

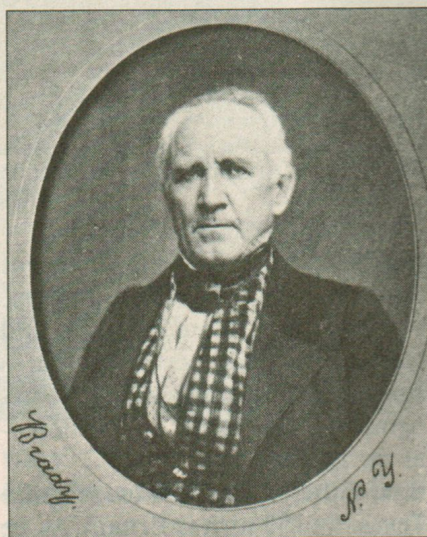
Narrator E: The Mexicans finally withdraw. But a force of 300 Texans crosses into Mexico and attacks the

strongly defended town of Mier — only to be captured. The Mexicans force the prisoners to take part in a deadly lottery. A jar is placed before them in which every tenth bean is black. Prisoners who draw a black bean are taken away and executed.

SCENE SIX

Narrator F: Annexation is the hot issue in the U.S. Presidential election of 1844. James K. Polk, the Democratic candidate, wants to take the Oregon Territory from Britain and annex Texas. The Whigs nominate former Senator Henry Clay, who tries to avoid the Texas issue. He fears he will lose Northern voters if he supports annexation.

Democrat 1: Polk, Texas, and Oregon!



Culver Pictures

"Old Sam" was Texas's president twice.

That's a winning combination!

Democrat 2: Your're right! The South wants Texas, the West wants Oregon, and the North wants to keep the Union in harmony.

Whig 1: There can be no harmony with slavery! The choice is between Polk, Slavery, and Texas — or Clay, Union, and Liberty!

Democrat 1: Hah! We'll see who's right. The voters will go for Polk.

Whig 2: They'll be asking for trouble if they do. If the U.S. annexes Texas, it will mean war with Mexico — for sure! You mark my words!

SCENE SEVEN

Narrator G: Polk wins the election. But just before he is inaugurated,

President Tyler asks Congress to annex Texas. Congress passes a bill to admit Texas to the Union. Texas approves the bill, and on February 19, 1846, Texas President Anson Jones hands over his power to the new state's governor.

Jones: The final act in this great drama is now performed: the Republic of Texas is no more.

Sam Houston (telling his story to his family) And that's how the Lone Star Republic became the Lone Star State!

Sam Jr., Nannie, Maggie, Mary: Hurrah for Texas! Hurrah for the Union!

AFTERWORD

Mexico viewed the annexation of Texas as an act of war. When Polk became President, he sent U.S. troops to Texas. He also sent an envoy to Mexico with an offer to buy California and the Southwest.

Mexico did not want to sell. U.S. and Mexican troops faced each other from opposite sides of the Rio Grande River. The U.S. claimed the Rio Grande River as the border with Mexico. But Mexico insisted the Nueces River to the north (see map) was the border.

In April, 1846, Mexican troops crossed the Rio Grande and attacked U.S. troops. Polk declared that Mexicans had "shed American blood upon American soil." The U.S. went to war with Mexico. When the Mexican War ended in 1848, the U.S. gained the entire Southwest region, from Texas to California.

And Sam Houston? He served Texas as senator and governor before his death in 1863. His last words are said to have been: "Texas — Texas! — Margaret." ☆

YOUR TURN

Word Match

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| — 1. granted | a. warlike |
| — 2. restore | b. acknowledge |
| — 3. recognize | c. gave |
| — 4. aggressive | d. bring back |
| — 5. annex | e. join to a larger unit |

Discussion Questions

1. Why did Americans in Texas want independence from Mexico?
2. Why did the U.S. hesitate to admit Texas as a state?