

## Texas Statehood Day

Texas Statehood Day is February 19, an important date in Texas history. On this day in 1846, the formal transfer of sovereignty from The Republic of Texas to the State of Texas took place in Austin. While the legal entry date of Texas into the United States was December 29, 1845, authority to the new State of Texas was not given until February 19, 1846. For almost ten years, Texas had stood as an independent nation. Now she would take her place among the states of the U.S. There were no television cameras to record the events, but newspaper accounts of the day and published memories of those who were there provide details.

The formal transfer of authority from republic to state took place in a ceremony in Austin on the steps of the old Capitol. The building was a two-room cabin built in 1839 of Bastrop pine. According to newspaper accounts of the day, the Capitol was decorated with flags and 2,000-3,000 people attended the event. President Anson Jones and Governor-elect James Pinkney Henderson appeared with joint committees of both Houses of Texas Congress. Following introductions and a prayer given by the Honorable R.E.B. Baylor, the last president of Texas, Anson Jones, delivered his farewell address to the crowd. He concluded by declaring the end of Texas' independence and the beginning of U.S. statehood. "The final act in the drama is now performed. The Republic of Texas is no more." said Jones. (*The Texas Democrat (Austin, Tex.)*, Vol. 1, No. 5, Ed. 1, Friday, February 20, 1846) Witnesses described intense emotions as Jones, himself, lowered the flag. Heads were bowed, tears shed, and sadness shown on the faces of the Texians, as they fully realized the significance of lowering forever the flag for which they had fought so hard. The United States flag was then raised and a brass cannon boomed a salute to the twenty-

eight state of the Union. Once the Stars and Stripes came into view, the sadness of the crowd quickly changed to joy. Cheers went up and hats were thrown high in the air as the new Americans celebrated the beginning of the State of Texas!

Fast forward through 167 years of statehood. Lone Star State accomplishments have brought national and international admiration. Texans have many reasons to celebrate the success and prosperity of our State. A few accomplishments are cited below which demonstrate the enterprising spirit and result of a work ethic common to our unique Texas heritage.

Six of the 25 largest cities in the United States are in Texas: #4 Houston, #7 San Antonio, #9 Dallas, #16 Austin, #17 Ft. Worth, and #21 El Paso. Texas has more highway miles than any other state (310,850). Texas maintains more rail miles than any other state (14,361). The Texas railroad system is the second largest in the U.S. with 47 freight railroad operators. Texas has twelve deep-water ports along the Gulf of Mexico, and among them, The Port of Houston is the second busiest in the U.S. by cargo volume and the 12th busiest in the world. The Ports of Beaumont and Corpus Christi rank in the top 10 among all U.S. ports by cargo volume. Six of the 50 busiest airports in the U.S., measured by annual passengers boarded, are in Texas: #10 Houston George Bush Intercontinental; #33 Houston William P. Hobby; #38 Austin Bergstrom International; #46 San Antonio International; and #48 Dallas Love Field. Texas ranked No. 1 among all states for exports for the tenth consecutive year in 2011. Finally, our gross state product (GSP) for 2011 was estimated at \$1.3 trillion by the State Comptroller, making the Texas economy the 14th largest in the world!

Statehood Day is one of twelve Texas Honor Days designated by The Daughters of the Republic of Texas. The D.R.T. is the oldest women's patriotic organization in Texas and is dedicated to the preservation and education of Texas history. For more information on Texas Honor Days and the work of the D.R.T., please visit the website at [www.drinfo.org](http://www.drinfo.org)

*Sources: Texas Historical Association, <http://www.tshaonline.org>; Anson Jones: *The Last President of Texas* by Herbert Gambrell, 2nd. Ed., 1964; U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, <http://history.state.gov/milestones/1830-1860/TexasAnnexation>; Ford, John S., editor. *The Texas Democrat* (Austin, Tex.), Vol. 1, No. 5, Ed. 1, Friday, February 20, 1846, Newspaper, February 20, 1846; digital images, (<http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph48306/>: accessed February 04, 2013), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Austin, Texas.; *The Evolution of a State* by Noah Smithwick, Austin, Texas, Gammel Book Company, ca. 1900; *Austin Treasures, Online Exhibits from the Austin History Center*, [www.austinlibrary.com/ahc/capitol/early.htm](http://www.austinlibrary.com/ahc/capitol/early.htm); *Texas, Logistics Hub of the Americas, 2012, Office of the Governor | Economic Development & Tourism* [http://www.governor.state.tx.us/files/ecodev/Logistics\\_Report.pdf](http://www.governor.state.tx.us/files/ecodev/Logistics_Report.pdf); *Overview of Texas Economy*, <http://www.texaswideopenforbusiness.com/resources/files/texas-economic-overview.pdf>;*