

March is Texas History Month

March is Texas History Month, a time to fly the Texas flag and celebrate our state's unique history. Recognizing the importance of Texas history, the Legislature enacted legislation on June 20, 2003 declaring March 1-31 of every year as Texas History Month. Several key events which shaped the destiny of Texas occurred in the month of March and have been designed as Texas Honor Days by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas (D.R.T.): Texas Independence Day, Flag Day, and the birthday of Sam Houston on March 2; Alamo Heroes Day on March 6; and Goliad Heroes Day on March 27.

Texas Independence and Flag Day, March 2

In near freezing temperatures, fifty-four delegates elected from all municipalities in Texas convened on March 1, 1836 at Washington-on-the-Brazos. They met in a one-room, unfinished building with no door, and only cotton cloth to cover the windows. A resolution was adopted without debate for the appointment of a committee to draft a declaration of independence from Mexico. Those appointed were George Childress, Chairman, Edwin Conrad, James Gaines, Bailey Hardeman, and Collin McKinney. The next day, March 2, Mr. Childress presented a draft to the convention, and on the motion of Sam Houston, the Texas Declaration of Independence was adopted. Entitled, "The Unanimous Declaration of Independence, by the Delegates of the People of Texas, in General Convention, at the Town of Washington, on the Second Day of March, 1836," Texans had declared themselves a free and independent republic. Five additional delegates arrived, making a total of fifty-nine signers along with the convention president, Richard Ellis, to the Texas Declaration of Independence.

March 2 is also Flag Day for Texas, as declared by the Legislature in 1915. A law was later passed in 1933 establishing rules for proper display of the flag and a pledge to the flag, "Honor the Texas Flag; I pledge allegiance to thee, Texas, one state under God, one and indivisible."

Sam Houston's Birthday, March 2

One of the best known figures in Texas history, Samuel "Sam" Houston was born in Virginia on March 2, 1793. Sam was thirteen years old when his father died and shortly thereafter, his mother moved the family to Tennessee. Houston served in Andrew Jackson's army, studied law, and was elected governor of Tennessee at the age of thirty-four. Within five years, he had set his sights on the promise of new adventures in Texas. Arriving in December of 1832, he quickly became involved in politics. He served as a delegate from Nacogdoches to the Convention of 1833 and Consultation of 1835, and from Refugio at the Convention of 1836. Houston served as Commander-in-Chief of the Texas Revolution Army, twice as President of the Republic of Texas, and along with Thomas J. Rusk, became the first U.S. Senators from the State of Texas. Sam Houston died on July 26, 1863 and is buried in the Oakwood Cemetery in Huntsville, Texas. He is remembered throughout the state with monuments, streets named for him, a state university that bears his name, and the city bearing his name is now the largest city in Texas.

Alamo Heroes Day, March 6

On Alamo Heroes Day, we remember one of the most inspiring moments in Texas history, when the fierce loyalty and determination to the struggle for Texas independence was demonstrated by a small force of Texian soldiers at the Alamo in San Antonio. It was

Sunday, March 6, 1836, when the siege of the Alamo ended and Santa Anna stormed the complex, killing all of the defenders. For twelve days, 189 brave men led by Colonel William B. Travis, had held the fort against a force of almost 2,000 soldiers led by General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna.

On the morning of the thirteenth day of the siege, Santa Anna ordered the final assault, which lasted less than 90 minutes. The unwillingness of the Texians to surrender had bought precious time for the Texian army. Their sacrifice inspired Texian soldiers to greater zeal on the battlefield with cries of "Remember the Alamo." All 189 names of the Alamo heroes who died in the battle are inscribed on a granite memorial in the Long Barrack Museum at the Alamo. The sacrifices made by the men at the Alamo continue to inspire Texans, and today are recognized as a symbol of honor and courage throughout the world.

Goliad Heroes Day, March 27

After the fall of the Alamo, Santa Anna's army attacked Colonel James W. Fannin and his men in the Battle of Coleto, near Goliad. The Texians were defeated and Fannin surrendered, the men believing they would be treated honorably as prisoners of war. The prisoners were marched back to La Bahia presidio at Goliad. At sunrise on Palm Sunday, 1836, those prisoners who were able to walk were marched out in groups along the Bexar, Copano, and Victoria roads. Less than a mile from the garrison, all were executed at close range. Most were killed instantly, but a few managed to escape. Back at the garrison, those who were unable to march, including Colonel Fannin, were also executed. In all, 342 brave Texans lost their lives at Goliad on March 27, 1836. Their remains were burned and left unburied for almost three months until the bones were gathered and buried in a mass

grave with full military honors by General Thomas J. Rusk. In later years, markers were erected, the gravesite authenticated by University of Texas anthropologists, and on June 4, 1938, a massive pink granite monument was dedicated as part of the Texas Centennial. The tragedy at Goliad provoked even greater fervor in the Texians to defeat Santa Anna and his army, and along with "Remember the Alamo," the cry of "Remember Goliad" inspired the Texians to victory at San Jacinto a few weeks later.

Texas Independence Day, Flag Day, Sam Houston's Birthday, Alamo Heroes Day, and Goliad Heroes Day are designated Texas Honor Days 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 the D.R.T., please visit the website at drinfo.org

Sources: Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Texas Declaration of Independence, (www.tsl.state.tx.us/treasure/republic/declare-01.html). Texas State Historical Association, Texas Declaration of Independence, (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/mjtce>). Stephen L. Hardin, "ALAMO, BATTLE OF THE," Handbook of Texas Online (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qea02>), accessed February 17, 2013. Published by the Texas State Historical Association. Sons of DeWitt Colony Texas, Texian Independence Convention, (<http://www.tamu.edu/faculty/ccbn/dewitt/consultations6.htm>). The Convention at Old Washington, March 1, 1836 by Sam Houston Dixon, [texashistorypage.com](http://www.texashistorypage.com), accessed February 16, 2013. Charles A. Spain, Jr., "FLAGS OF TEXAS," Handbook of Texas Online (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/msf01>), accessed February 16, 2013. Published by the Texas State Historical Association. Thomas H. Kreneck, "HOUSTON, SAMUEL," Handbook of Texas Online (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fho73>), accessed February 17, 2013. Published by the Texas State Historical Association. Presidio La Bahia, Goliad, Texas (<http://www.presidiolabahia.org/massacre.htm>), accessed February 17, 2013. Daughters of the Republic of Texas, Texas Honor Days, <http://www.drinfo.org>,