

'TEXAS MOVES TOWARD STATEHOOD'



Stories Behind the Mural

For over three hundred years, Texas has existed politically as a state, as an independent Republic, and as a province of Mexico, Spain, and France, in part or in whole. Before that, the geographic region that would become Texas was home to a variety of native peoples for thousands of years. Each new arrival of a different culture brought with it upheaval and change, leaving its mark on the evolving society and government of what is now the State of Texas.

The State Archives and Library Building, built in 1961, was designed to feature an expansive mural in its lobby to depict Texas' rich and intricate past. The mural, creat-

ed by artists Peter Hurd and Peter Rogers, provides an artistic view of historical events, groups and individuals that shaped Texas history.

This exhibit features selected items from the Archives collections that illustrate stories told in this inspiring mural: life during Spanish rule, a key political figure of the Republic, a German pioneer who negotiated peace with the Native Americans, establishment of citizens' rights in a new nation, the path to statehood, and the story of the artistic vision of the mural "Texas Moves Towards Statehood" which has greeted visitors for the past 50 years.

Conservation of the Mural

The mural, now 50 years old, has twice received restoration work, in 1992 and in 2010. An examination of the mural in late 1991 discovered that damage had been caused during ceiling repairs after asbestos abatement; and also that the mural showed some signs of deterioration and was in need of professional cleaning. Painting conservation firm Perry Huston and Associates of Fort Worth undertook the needed restoration and cleaning.

In 2010 after a major renovation of the building, Art Conservation Services of Austin was contracted to inspect the mural and to make necessary repairs which entailed re-adhering flaking paint, filling in paint losses, and cleaning the mural surface. A thorough treatment report details the materials used during the restoration and cleaning and

cites tests conducted to determine the products and methods that would best preserve the integrity of the mural's physical composition and appearance. This careful documentation will allow future conservators to be fully informed of the restoration history and will help guide decisions about further steps to be taken to maintain the mural in its best possible condition.



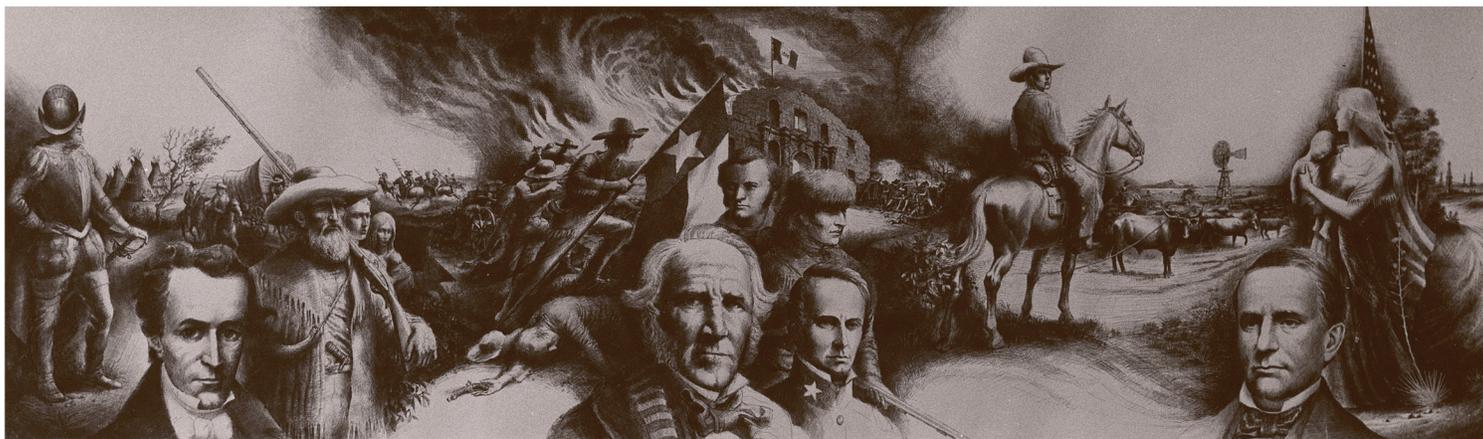
Peter Rogers with scaffolding and TSLAC lobby mural in background, summer 1964. 989/029-1

The Artists and the Vision Behind the Mural

As the Texas State Archives and Library Building neared completion in early 1961, a vital decorative element remained undecided. The lobby was designed to accommodate a large artistic rendition of Texas history and in April 1961 Governor Price Daniel wrote to artist Peter Hurd, inviting him to attend the next State Building Commission meeting in Austin to propose ideas for the mural. Hurd, a student of prominent illustrator N.C. Wyeth, had created other murals showcasing Texas history

including one at the West Texas Museum in Lubbock.

After visiting the State Archives and Library Building and presenting his impressions of an appropriate design to the commission in May 1961, Hurd requested that a scale model of the lobby be sent to him so that he could work on the composition as it would appear in the actual lobby. In January 1964, Hurd wrote to Governor Connally with photographs of the mural design and explanation of the theme.



This black and white photograph of Roger's proposed design shows most of the final elements of the mural already in place. Mural – Peter Hurd, Texas State Library and Archives Commission Administrative Division records, 1989/015-2.

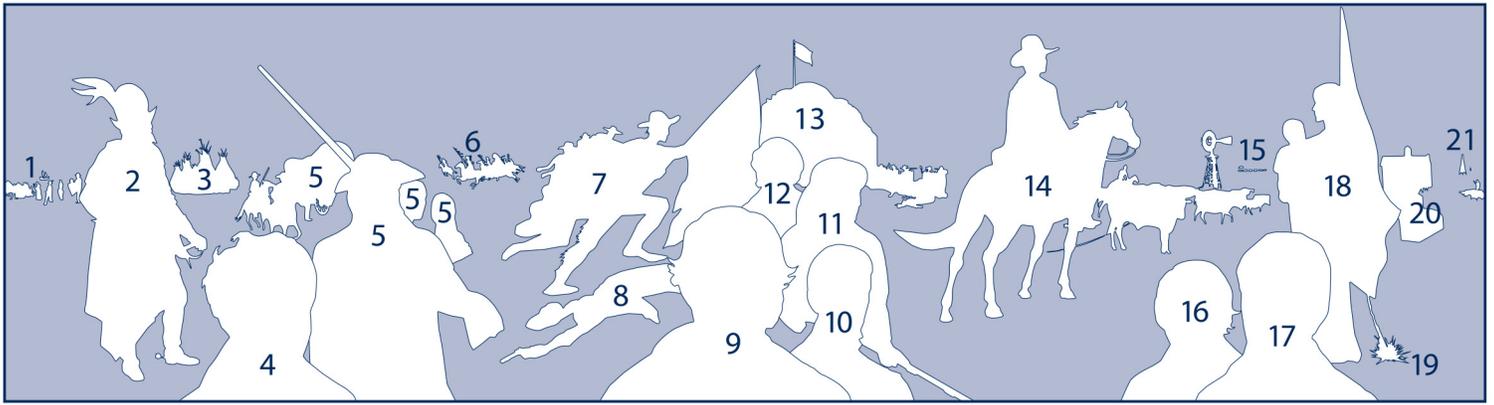
In 1964 Hurd wrote the State Building Commission to introduce his son-in-law, British artist Peter Rogers, as his artist associate on the project. Ideas by Rogers for the extreme left and right portions of the mural represented the earliest days of human habitation in the area that would become Texas, as well as its advancement to statehood and entry into the industrial era. While Peter Hurd turned over the final design and execution of the mural to Peter Rogers, he remained a central figure in the development of the mural's focus on Texas history, and it was his reputation as an accomplished painter and muralist that helped win the commission for the artwork.

News articles of the mural's progress noted that Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar, third president of the Republic of Texas, was not featured among the portraits of Texas leaders. Protests against this omission came from many sides, including a descendant of Lamar who wrote an impassioned letter to the State Librarian. Rogers insisted that it was his own artistic judgment to add Lamar's portrait

to the mural to balance the composition, and that public sentiment did not influence him to do so. Reaction to the mural was positive, both from the State Building Commission and the Texas Library and Historical Commission, as well as the general public.



Artist Peter Hurd is shown creating lithographs of his artwork in his studio at Sentinel Ranch in New Mexico. Peter Hurd – The Lithographs, 1968, The Baker Gallery Press, p. 8.



1. The mural begins in the left corner with the small ship coming in from the sea, bringing some of the first settlers and missionaries, shown trying to "civilize" the Indians.

2. The figure of the conquistador symbolizes the large part the French and Spanish explorers had in our history.

3. Behind him, a group of Indians are sitting in front of their tipis. The blue design around the front tipi indicates the chief's residence and what appear to be tassels on top of the poles extending from the top are actually scalps. Buffalo jerky is hanging up to dry above the woman to the right.

4. Stephen F. Austin is shown for his participation in the settlement of Texas, bringing over 300 families to this area.

5. The characters behind Austin represent the different types of people that came to Texas with their various means of travel.

6. The small group of Indians on the warpath – traveling in the opposite direction of the flow of the painting – represent the Indians' opposition to the White man's settlement of the land.

7. The center portion of the mural depicts Texas fighting for independence from Mexico and eventual statehood (symbolized by the man carrying the flag of the Republic, which became the state flag).

8. The young man lying face down to the left of Houston not only symbolizes all the fallen fighters, but it is also a self-portrait. By painting his own image into the mural, Peters Rogers was following a long-standing tradition of artists to include their own images in large works, usually in unflattering situations.

9. In this scene, Sam Houston takes center stage because of his victory at the Battle of San Jacinto.

10. Behind Houston are the heroes of the Alamo: Travis is shown in blue uniform.

11. David Crockett

12. Jim Bowie

13. The sky over the Alamo is shown the way it looked at the actual time of the battle; Santa Anna attacked at 4 a.m. and that is the reason for the pre-dawn

darkness. Mr. Rogers even did research to determine the phase of the moon at the time of the battle. The flames behind the Alamo represent the fires of revolution.

14. The next scene shows Texas developing her resources and becoming a state. The cowboy takes us into the trail-driving days. The rope around the longhorn represents our beginning to control the land and the windmill became a trademark for developing it.

15. The small steam engine in the background indicates more people and new industry coming to Texas.

16. The man on the left in the last scene is Mirabeau B. Lamar, the second president of the Republic of Texas (Sam Houston was the first). It is said that no matter where you stand in the lobby of the building, the eyes of Lamar will appear to be staring directly at you.

17. On Lamar's right is Anson Jones, the last president of the Republic. Jones was a noted politician and physician who played a key role in bringing Texas into the Union.

18. The woman with the child represents the United States bringing Texas into the Union as a young state. (Peter Rogers used his wife Carol as a model for this woman.) Originally, Mr. Rogers was going to depict Texas as a baby, but then he decided that Texas had been getting along on its own for nearly 10 years as an independent republic, so he changed it to a child to show more growth and development. Behind her is the United States flag, on which Texas is the 28th star.

19. In the corner is the state flower, the bluebonnet. The other plants are those typically found in Texas: the yucca and century plant.

20. The bales of cotton represent the cotton industry introduced to Texas and the two men in front of the white building are confederate soldiers symbolizing Texas' contribution to the Civil War.

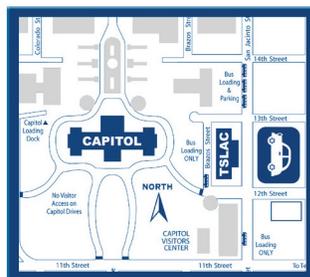
21. The sheep and oil wells on the far right show new growth and development that launched Texas into a greater industrial era.

While this exhibit will be only be on display for a limited time in the lobby of the Lorenzo de Zavala State Archives and Library Building, its online complement can be viewed at www.tsl.texas.gov/highlights/lobby-exhibits.html

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