



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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State Library and Archives Commissioners Approve Loan of Iconic Travis Letter for Alamo Exhibit

Lorenzo de Zavala
State Archives and
Library Building

AUSTIN, TX – After months of negotiations and weeks of increased media interest, commissioners of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) voted today to loan William Barret Travis’ 1836 “victory or death” letter to the Texas General Land Office (GLO) for display from February 23 to March 7, 2013, at the Alamo, which the land office oversees.

P.O. Box 12927
Austin, Texas
78711-2927

The exhibition will mark the first time the letter has returned to the place it was written nearly 177 years ago.

1201 Brazos Street
Austin, Texas
78701

“The Travis letter is a true Texas treasure,” said Peggy Rudd, TSLAC Director and Librarian. “When considering the request of the GLO, our archives staff and commissioners made every effort to ensure that the document would receive the best possible care during the exhibition. The letter is too important to put at risk, and we take our responsibility for its safety and continued preservation very seriously.”

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Ms. Rudd’s comment conveyed both the significance of the document to Texas history and the viewpoint of agency staff.

Commission Chairman
Michael C. Waters

Citing the letter’s fragile condition and concerns about its security, state archives staff recommended that the commissioners decline the GLO’s request.

Members
Sharon T. Carr
Martha Doty Freeman
F. Lynwood Givens
Larry G. Holt
Wm. Scott McAfee
Sandra J. Pickett

But today the commissioners voted 6 to 1 to grant the loan after receiving further detailed security and exhibition plans from the GLO.

Director and Librarian
Peggy D. Rudd

“We have always appreciated what the GLO was requesting to do, reuniting two treasures of Texas history, the letter and the Alamo,” said Rudd. “Now that the commissioners have approved the loan, we will continue to work with the GLO to ensure the letter returns to the Alamo and then to Austin safely and securely.”

Assistant State Librarian
Edward Seidenberg

William Barret Travis, a commander of Texas revolutionaries, penned his rousing letter inside the Alamo on February 24, 1836, while under siege by Mexican General Santa Ana.

The state purchased the letter from Travis’ descendants in 1893 for \$85. In the archives’ possession since that time and on display for decades, the letter was removed from continuous exhibition in the early 1980s because of preservation concerns.

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*Preserving yesterday,
informing today,
inspiring tomorrow.*

Other notable public viewings include the 1936 and 1986 state fairs in Dallas; exhibits at the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum and the Star of the Republic Museum between 2001 and 2008; as well as exhibits at the Lorenzo de Zavala State Archives and Library Building, TSLAC's headquarters in Austin, in 2011 and 2012.

For historical background and to view the letter online, visit:

<https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/treasures/republic/alamo/travis-about.html>

In 2009 Governor Rick Perry recorded a reading of the letter as part of TSLAC's Voices of Texas History project: <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/voices/perry.html>

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ABOUT THE TEXAS STATE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES COMMISSION

Formed in 1909, TSLAC is committed to giving Texans access to information and programs they can use to improve their lives and communities. We provide historical and genealogical search assistance, federal and state government documents, electronic research and library services to all Texans, including those who are unable to read standard print material because of physical or reading disabilities. For more information, visit www.tsl.state.tx.us