



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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Cesar Garza  
Communications Officer  
cesar.garza@tsl.state.tx.us, (512) 463-5514

### **State Archives Unveils Exhibit on Rediscovered Papers from Republic of Texas History**

AUSTIN, TX – The Texas State Archives has unveiled a new exhibit featuring rediscovered papers of the Republic of Texas Legation to the United States. This is a unique collection of documents that captures the pressing diplomatic activities of the short-lived Republic as it grappled with boundary issues, relations with Mexico, and the strenuous path to statehood in Washington, D.C.

Part of the Archives and Information Services Division of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC), the State Archives presents this exhibit in the lobby of the Lorenzo de Zavala Building, 1201 Brazos St., Austin. The public may view the exhibit in person, for free, at any time during the lobby's operating hours, Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The public may also view part of the exhibit's contents online at <http://bit.ly/tslac-legation>

As an independent nation from 1836 to 1846, the Republic of Texas sent diplomatic representatives to form a legation or diplomatic mission in Washington, D.C. The legation wrestled with many issues, among them annexation, Native American raids, and how to finance the government of a new nation. After Texas was annexed by the U.S. in December 1845, the legation office closed. Sam Houston, U.S. Senator from Texas, retained the papers instead of conveying them to the Texas Secretary of State in Austin, and they were passed down to his descendants.

In 1973 Houston's descendants donated to TSLAC the portion of the legation papers dated from 1839 to 1845. For decades these were the only known records of the Texas legation. The earlier records dating from 1836 to 1839 remained unaccounted for until 2004, when they were offered for auction. TSLAC and the Office of the Texas Attorney General claimed these documents as official state records on behalf of the people of Texas.

Following a temporary arrangement in which the rediscovered legation papers were housed and displayed at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth for five years, the documents entered the permanent collection of the State Archives in Austin in December 2012.

Today the State Archives' exhibit in the Lorenzo de Zavala Building lobby paints a detailed, diplomatic picture of a struggling new nation. Highlights include an 1836 letter from Stephen F. Austin (Republic of Texas Secretary of State) to the

Lorenzo de Zavala  
State Archives and  
Library Building

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

1201 Brazos Street  
Austin, Texas  
78701

[www.tsl.state.tx.us](http://www.tsl.state.tx.us)

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*Director and Librarian*  
Edward Seidenberg

*Preserving yesterday,  
informing today,  
inspiring tomorrow.*

Texas ambassador in D.C., stating that Mexican General Santa Anna has left for D.C. and that copies of the public and secret versions of the Treaty of Velasco are enclosed.

An 1838 letter from the U.S. Secretary of State to Anson Jones notifies the Republic of Texas President that the U.S. received notification that Texas withdrew its proposition to be annexed by the U.S.

In a letter dated March 1, 1838, Samuel F. B. Morse offers the Republic of Texas the exclusive use of the telegraph he invented.

Other documents deal with a variety of topics, including boundary issues, Native American raids, and the Texas Navy.

The Republic of Texas Legation Papers will remain on exhibit until August 30, 2013.

#### **DOCUMENT ATTACHED**

“Republic of Texas Legation Papers,” a detailed exhibit summary.

#### **PHOTOS ATTACHED**

Captions 1 and 2: Stephen F. Austin to William H. Wharton, November 25, 1836, stating that Santa Anna has left for Washington, D.C. and that copies of the public and secret versions of the Treaty of Velasco are enclosed.

Caption 3: Samuel F. B. Morse to Memucan Hunt, March 1, 1838, offering the Republic of Texas the exclusive use of the telegraph he invented.

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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](http://www.tsl.state.tx.us)*



## **On Exhibit at the Lorenzo State Archives and Library Building:**

### ***The Republic of Texas Legation Papers, 1836-1845***

As an independent nation from 1836 thru early 1846, the Republic of Texas sent diplomatic representatives to form a legation in Washington, D.C. The legation wrestled with many issues, including boundaries of Texas, relations with Mexico and Native Americans, and annexation to the United States. After annexation and the closure of the legation office in 1845, Charles Mariner, the acting Texas Secretary of State, directed Sam Houston to send the records of the legation to Austin where they would be preserved by the state. Houston instead took them to his home in Huntsville. The papers passed to Houston's son Andrew Jackson Houston, and then granddaughters Ariadne and Marguerite. In 1973, the descendants of Sam Houston donated more than 4,800 of his papers to the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, which became known as the Andrew Jackson Houston Collection. Among them are approximately 250 official documents created or received by the Republic of Texas legation to the United States between 1839 and 1845. For decades, the legation documents in the Andrew Jackson Houston Collection were the only known records of the Texas legation, covering the years 1839-1845; the earlier records dating 1836 to February 1839 remained unaccounted for until 2004, when they were offered for auction. The Commission and the Attorney General's Office claimed these documents as official records of the Republic of Texas government on behalf of the people of Texas. Following an agreement with the Texas State Historical Association, the documents were auctioned with the buyer naming a university in Texas as the temporary home of the documents. Texas Christian University was the university selected and it displayed and housed the documents for five years. Returned to Austin at the end of 2012, these unique documents are now part of the permanent collections of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

#### **Case 1: Uniting the papers of the Texas Legation**

- Proclamation signed by Texas President Sam Houston appointing Fairfax Catlett Secretary to the Texas Legation in the United States, December 13, 1836 (Andrew Jackson Houston Collection)
- President Sam Houston to Republic of Texas Senate, explaining reasons for nomination of Memucan Hunt to replace William H. Wharton as Minister Plenipotentiary, circa 1837 (Andrew Jackson Houston Collection)
- Original engraving of Memucan Hunt, Minister Plenipotentiary, undated (Prints & Photographs)
- Texas Secretary of State Charles Mariner to U.S. Senator Sam Houston: Authorization to take possession of the records of the Texas Legation, March 7, 1846 (Andrew Jackson Houston Collection)
- Photograph of Andrew Jackson Houston with Governor Pappy O' Daniel (Prints & Photographs)
- "Andrew Jackson Houston—Late Senator from Texas—Memorial Addresses Delivered in Congress," June 27, 1941, May 25 and June 24, 1942 (Andrew Jackson Houston Papers, Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center)

#### **Case 2: Story of the Legation Papers**

- Box opening, June 9, 2006: Preservation Officer John Anderson, Director and Librarian Peggy Rudd, Assistant State Librarian Edward Seidenberg, Texas State Archivist Chris LaPlante.
- Papers received, June 9, 2006 (showing evidence of fire damage on several of documents)
- Peggy Rudd, J.P. Bryan, John Crane, J.B. Bryan, and Texas State Library and Archives Commissioners Sandra Pickett and Martha Doty Freeman, with some of the Legation documents, November 3, 2006
- Documents on exhibit in the Archives search room, November 3, 2006 (all images from TSLAC, Executive Services, Communications Office photograph collection)

- *The Texas Legation Papers, 1836-1845*, Kenneth R. Stevens, Editor, The Center for Texas Studies at TCU, TCU Press, 2012

### **Case 3: Work of the Legation**

- Stephen F. Austin to William H. Wharton, December 16, 1836, informing Wharton of an illegal plot to introduce slaves into Texas from the U.S. via the Sabine River (Legation correspondence)
- Peter Wagener Grayson to William H. Wharton and Memucan Hunt, January 13, 1837, regarding prevention of raids by Native Americans (Legation correspondence)
- William Bembeck (from Chambersburg, Pennsylvania) to William H. Wharton, February 11, 1837, noting that he could not arrange transportation for the Germans recruited (Legation correspondence)
- Samuel Rhoads Fisher to William H. Wharton, March 7, 1837, unofficial report on what he witnessed on the brig *Pocket* (the merchant ship taking provisions to Santa Anna when it was captured by the Texas Navy in April 1836) (Legation correspondence)
- U.S. Secretary of State John Forsyth to William H. Wharton and Memucan Hunt, March 13, 1837 (Legation correspondence)
- Samuel May Williams to Anson Jones, December 6, 1838, sending the Minister Plenipotentiary Texas bonds for the Texas Navy (Legation correspondence)

### **Case 4: Treaties**

- Engraving of Stephen F. Austin, December 18, 1836 (Prints & Photographs)
- Stephen F. Austin (Republic of Texas Secretary of State) to Wharton, November 25, 1836, stating that Santa Anna has left for Washington, D.C.; copies of the public and secret versions of the Treaty of Velasco enclosed (Legation correspondence)
- Treaty between U.S. and Texas on boundary, April 25, 1838, with wax seals (Artifact Collection)

### **Case 5: Annexation**

- Stephen F. Austin to William H. Wharton, November 18, 1836 (Legation correspondence)
- Aaron Vail (acting U.S. secretary of state) to Anson Jones, October 13, 1838, regarding notification that Texas has withdrawn its proposition to be annexed to the U.S. (Legation correspondence)
- Henry Clay campaign ribbon, 1844 (anti-annexation) (MS collection)
- Statement of the number of votes polled in the Republic (by county) on annexation, constitution and ordinance from returns received at the Texas Department of State up to November 10, 1845 (Secretary of State election returns)
- Anson Jones engraving, from D.W.C. Baker, *A Texas Scrap-Book* (1875, 1991) (Prints & Photographs)

### **Case 6: Other Notable Correspondence within the Legation Papers**

- Letter from U.S. President Andrew Jackson to Mexican leader Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, September 4, 1836, concerning the U.S. position on the Texas conflict with Mexico (Legation correspondence)
- Lorrain Thompson Pease to William H. Wharton, December 24, 1836, asking for information about his son, Elisha Marshall Pease (future Governor of Texas) (Legation correspondence)
- James Pinckney Henderson (Secretary of State of the Republic of Texas who replaced Stephen F. Austin) to William H. Wharton, December 31, 1836, regarding his and Memucan Hunt's credentials as agents of Texas to the U.S., and the death of Stephen F. Austin (Legation correspondence)
- Joel Roberts Poinsett (first U.S. minister to Mexico, 1825-1829) to William H. Wharton, February 2, 1837 (Legation correspondence)
- Samuel F.B. Morse to Memucan Hunt, March 1, 1838, offering the Republic of Texas the exclusive use of the telegraph he invented (Legation correspondence)
- James Logan to Isaac Van Zandt, May 30, 1844, discussing the conflicts around the Red River (Legation correspondence)
- Isaac Van Zandt engraving, undated (Prints & Photographs)

Columbia Nov 25 1856

Department of  
State

Hon W A Wharton

Dear Sir

Col. Hookley  
and I start to-morrow with Gen Santa  
Anna for Washington City -

The President confidently  
believes that much good will result to all the  
parties concerned by an interview between Gen  
Santa Anna and the President of the United  
States. It is very evident that the true interests of Mex-  
-ico, of the U.S. and of Texas, all demand a  
speedy termination of the war in this country,  
and the annexation of Texas to the U.S.

Gen. Santa Anna distinctly says that he is satis-  
-fied of this fact, and will use all his influence  
to effect it. He thinks that it is all important  
he should return to Mexico by Washington  
City, in order to have an interview with the  
President of the U.S. and he is permitted to do  
so -

I inclose you a copy of the secret treaty made  
with President Burnet, It is still considered  
a secret, and therefore ought not to be published

by any of us - Also a copy of the public treaties  
you may probably need them - Copies of them  
were enclosed to Genl. Jackson by Santa Anna  
in his letter of 4<sup>th</sup> July

There is nothing new  
except the total loss of the steam boat  
Ocean - She sunk yesterday at Prozarica  
with a full load of merchandise, just  
from the mouth of the river

Yours Respectfully

J. F. Austin

Secy of State



To General M. Hunt. Minister and Envoy Extraor-  
dinary of Texas at the Government of the  
United States. -

Dear Sir,

Wishing to show some evidence of my  
interest in the rising character of the new and  
independent state which you represent, I take  
this opportunity to offer unconditionally for  
the acceptance of your Government the per-  
petual use of my Electro-Magnetic Telegraph in  
the State of Texas. -

In my arrangements to dispose of my  
rights as inventor of this Telegraph for other coun-  
tries, I have made, and shall continue to make,  
the single exception in favor of Texas. -

Sincerely wishing that your fine country  
may be as distinguished for its religious, moral,  
and intellectual character, as it is for that  
of courage and energy, I remain D. Sir

With high personal respect and esteem

Washington city March 1.<sup>st</sup>  
1838. -

Y<sup>r</sup> Excellency's mo. ob. servt.  
Sam: P. Morse.:

*[Signature]*