

TEXAS MASONIC PRIDE



In 1987, we celebrated the 150th anniversary of the Masonic Grand Lodge of Texas. Masonry and the formation of the Republic of Texas as well as the State of Texas are so interwoven that they cannot be separated. A beloved Masonic historian, Harry L. Haywood, once said, "Texas is truly the daughter of Masonry," and for that and many other reasons, the Masons of Texas have much to be proud of.

From the first shot of the Revolution, fired in 1832 by a Mason, William J. Russell, until the present, Masons have been involved in the history of Texas. In Austin's colony of three hundred, there were thirty-nine known Masons. One of these, James A. E. Phelps, was among the Masons who met near the town of Brazoria and drafted a petition to the Grand Lodge of Louisiana that resulted in the founding of Holland Lodge, the first Masonic Lodge in Texas. In Green DeWitt's colony of approximately one hundred and twenty Anglo-American families were twenty-one known Masons. Among the settlers along the Red River and in east Texas were seventy-two Masons. Thirteen Masons settled in the Robertson Colony. Others came into the territory as the population expanded.

From the Battle of Velasco to the defeat of Santa Anna at San Jacinto, April 21, 1836, Masons led the fighting men. Many sacrificed their lives and are immortalized by the magnificent Memorial Temple of the Masonic Grand Lodge of Texas in Waco. Cities, towns and counties bear their names. Schools, buildings and awards are named for them. It would be difficult, indeed, to forget their names of Austin, Houston, Fannin, Bowie, Sterne, Hall, Travis, Crockett, Kerr, McFarland, Rusk, and DeZavala. Many lodges from Austin to Zavala, bear their names.

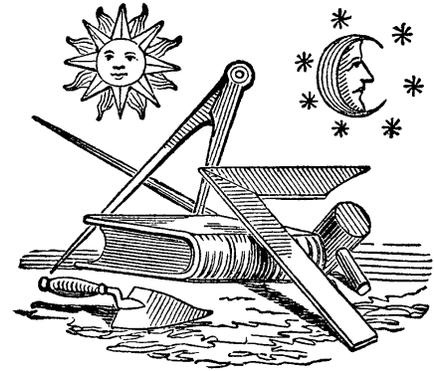
From the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution to the event of the lowering of the Texas flag and the raising of the stars and stripes, Masons took most of the major parts. Each of the presidents and vice-presidents of the Republic were Masons as was the first governor. Many governors since have been members of the Craft. Fifteen Masons were in the first House of Representatives and seven in the Senate. There were eleven in the Executive Branch.



The Grand Lodge of the Republic of Texas was formed on December 20, 1837 in the Senate Chambers of the Capitol of the Republic in Houston. Representatives of the three lodges then chartered in Texas met, and Sam Houston presided. Anson Jones was elected as the first Grand Master. The first meeting of the Grand Lodge took place on April 16, 1838. From that meeting until Anson Jones, as the last president of the Republic, lowered the Texas flag on February 19, 1846, twenty-two lodges were chartered. Fifteen of those lodges survive today. Stephen F. Austin, the Father of Texas, died on December 27, 1836, and did not live to see the formation of the Grand Lodge.

At a celebration of the Festival of St. John the Baptist in 1844 at Portland, Maine R:W: Brother Teulon, a member of the Grand Lodge of Texas, in reply to a toast complimentary to the Masons of that Republic, observed, "Texas is emphatically a Masonic country; all of our presidents and vice-presidents, and four-fifths of our state officers, were and are Masons; our national emblem, the 'Lone Star,' was chosen from among the emblems selected by Freemasonry, to illustrate the moral virtues - it is a five-pointed star, and alludes to the five points of fellowship."

Yes, we can be proud of our Masonic heritage and our involvement in the history of Texas. Proud of the men who died at Velasco, Goliad, The Grass Fight, Coleto and San Jacinto. Proud Masons who led the men those thirteen days at the Alamo and bought time for brother Sam Houston to strengthen the Texas army for the defeat of Santa Anna at San Jacinto. Proud of the many Masons who composed the majority of the membership of the House of Representatives, the Senate, the Executive Branch and the Judicial Branch. Proud of the twenty-eight original members of the Grand Lodge of the Republic of Texas. Long may we remember their names and their deeds and their actions. They established our state and our fraternity under trying conditions and would be proud to see the way it has grown in one hundred and fifty years. Now it is up to us to see that the tradition is carried on. We must educate our children in the values that were cherished enough by our founders that they risked and sacrificed their lives that we might live in this free country. We must see that Masonry in Texas grows, not only in quantity, but in quality. We must seek out those ways in which we can help our fellow man. We must educate our members in the ways of the Craft so that our children's children will be as proud of us as we are of our founders.



Brethren, love your lodge and help it to grow. Love your fraternity and practice its tenets that "the world at large" may be "convinced of its good effects."