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Period: 8

Texas History 7

My Dear Fellow Revolutionists,

Today I am standing in front of you not as your first empresario Stephen Fuller Austin, who because of my father’s vision brought Anglo American settlers into Texas, granted them the best lands, and founded the first Anglo-American colony. Instead, today we have a different challenge to face, we want to liberate Texas for our future generations. Our journey into Texas began on 17 January 1821 when Moses Austin was granted a new system of Spanish frontier defense by allowing him to settle a colony of North Americans in the wilderness of Texas. Before this date, Texas was inhabited by uncivilized population who robbed the settlers. The Spanish could not defend the population from these robbers, as their posts or presidios only covered and protected areas in their immediate vicinity. As a result of this the civilized settlements were limited to the garrisoned towns. Therefore, a country like this was spending millions in its defense and was not advancing in population or improvement. This is an example of a weak country, only being an expense to the government and a dead weight. This land required a hard working and enterprising population to which the savages will become submissive. Broadly a system counteracting the ruinous system and bringing prosperity to the land and in general to the government. When Mexico achieved its independence from Spain, the new government opened doors to the immigrations of foreigners and enacted colonization laws. Immigrants were earnestly invited to enter under the operations of those laws. Colonies began to flourish in the wilderness of Texas, civilized population began inhabiting it bringing with them enterprise, education, and perseverance. These immigrants did not receive any protection from the government to defend themselves from the Indians, their settlement did not cost anything to the government. They were only given title to the land that was then valueless to Mexico or to civilized men. Through their resources and own perseverance, vision, and enterprise they conquered the wilderness by developing its resources. They also contributed to the frontier defense by populating the area and defending it. They paved their ways through the famine, dangers of savage foes, hardships, privations of the wilderness, sickness and darkness with a deeply embedded freedom and hope of a great tomorrow. Thus converted this land of wilderness into the abode civilization, of abundance and happiness. They made possible to bring immense value to this wild land thus repaying the government more than thousand fold for the privilege of settling in Texas. The untiring perseverance of immigrants triumphed over all natural obstacles and established commercial intercourse with the rest of the world. For the first 6 or 7 years after the commencement of our settlements in Texas there was liberality and kindness of the Mexican government. Our hopes of this immense achievement were founded on the colonization laws, on the broad invitation given in those laws to the whole world to settle in Texas. We receive land titles and were left alone in freedom during the federalist’s regime in the 1820s. We established ourselves to our fullest potential. When the Centralist Party came to power in 1829, many restrictive laws were imposed on us. We were alarmed after years of hard work and settling down on the Law of April 6, 1830 proposed by the Centralist Government since our prosperity depended upon trade with the United States of the north. Colonists wanted their friends and relatives to come to Texas and settle beside them. We needed servants to aid in our work. We began distrusting the Mexican Government’s intentions. I realized that a serious damage had already occurred in relations between Texas and the Mexican government. A series of clashes were bound to happen. Still we were loyal to the Mexican government and did not want any separation. However, a few of us started thinking of an independent Texas, but the majority just wanted Texas to be a separate state from Coahuila y Tejas. In 1826-1827 neither the Anglos nor the United States of the north supported the Fredonian Revolt. The Mexican officials suspected us for the revolt even though we proved that we were with Mexico against the rebellions. Bad and desperate men will always be found in every community that generally is limited to an insignificant number. After the United States of the north suggested Mexico to sell Texas to them we were subjected to the Law of April 6, 1830. This law was completely unfair to us and to our loyalty to the Mexican government. The passage of this law was mortifying and melancholy occurrence for Texas. It blasted all our hopes and defeated all our calculations, and disheartened our enterprise. It was injurious to the national revenue and to the prosperity and development of resources. It admitted into Texas all other nations except our friends and countrymen of the United States of the north. This law closed the doors upon people who generously and heroically aided Mexico in her revolutionary struggle, and who were the first to recognize and rejoice at the attainment of her independence. Had the first immigrants known that they would have been deprived of the privilege of settling by their sides a son or daughter an aged father or widowed mother, a brother or sister, an old and affectionate friend or neighbor, they wouldn't have labored and suffered as they have done to bring value, character, and credit to Texas. The colonies were built keeping in mind the permanency of colonization system. If the doors to immigration are kept shut without any apparent reason and without any violation of duty on the parts of the immigrants, they will be shut from the balance of a civilized world. As a result of the Law of April 6, 1830 we began to distrust the Mexican government. On the other hand the Mexican government distrusted us. A relation built on distrust cannot flourish. The government thought that we wished to separate from Mexico and to unite with the United States of the north. Texas could gain nothing by a separation of Mexico. However, we tried to warn the government that we will not oppose separation if these ruinous restrictions are not taken off. Our fellow colonists were imprisoned, we were subjected to numerous changing restricted laws, our trade with the United States of the north was impeded due to custom duties on goods imported into Mexico, we were even subjected to military restraints and imprisonments. The inhabitants of Texas wanted that Texas become a state of the Mexican Confederation. Law of May 7, 1824 stated that Texas would be a state as soon as it’s population and resources were sufficient. This law gave the immigrants hope and perseverance of building and populating Texas. For more than two years, we peacefully thought that the law would change and the government would do justice to us. At that time the heroic and patriotic general Santa Anna was rebellious against the centralist government and for the colonists he appeared as a vindicator of liberty and the constitution. We united General Santa Anna as fellow-laborers in the same sacred cause. Our intentions were pure. We had high hopes from Santa Anna and wholeheartedly supported him as evidenced by the Turtle Bayou Resolution. When centralist Bustamante resigned, as President of Mexico in 1832 and Santa Anna became serving as president in 1833 we thought Santa Anna would support Texas because he had declared himself federalist. When president of the United States of the north was determined to make the Naches River, instead of the Sabine, the line between the two republics, Texans united with Mexico on the injustice of such a demand. But by closing the door between us and the United States of the north, both the colonists and the Texas Government would suffer a loss in the national revenue. Posts were formed in Texas, garrisons became crowded with soldiers, we were further subjected to restrictive laws. These laws trespassed in every respect upon the rights and privileges of the colonists. Revolutionary times are not peaceable times. In such times, any measure is bad that tends to irritate or produce excitement, any measure is good that is calculated to soothe, bind up, and bring about tranquility and good order. Colonel Bradburn could have avoided all the evils. I gave my deliberate judgment to the government of Mexico that Texas will be lost if we didn't take measures for it’s well fare. We tried to peaceably and respectfully request our demands by the consultations San Felipe de Austin. We wanted to live in Texas according to the constitution of 1824 but both governments had killed the constitution long ago. The Law of April 6, 1830 was a turning point in the conflict between the Mexican government and the colonist. None of our actions convinced the Mexican government. They were always suspicious of our growing population. They always thought we were scheming against Mexico to acquire Texas. The government although put a stop on immigration from United States of the north, but they began encouraging immigration of the Mexican and European families to Texas. How could they forget that it was due to our relentlessness, resources and enterprise that we conquered the wilderness of Texas. Neither did the central government nor the government of Coahuila gave any serious consideration to our consultations. We kept on demanding that Texas should be separated from Coahuila y Tejas, we asked the government to grant us increased representation in the state legislature. Santa Anna accepted some of these demands. He increased our representation in the state legislature; he also introduced American Judicial Concepts ot Texas. For example: trial by jury. English was also authorized as a second language. These measures increased our hope that our relations with the national government were improving. This however did not occur for long. We again had trouble at Anahuac about custom duties and this lead to arresting of merchant Andrew Briscoe. Travis forced Tenorio to surrender. On which General Martin Perfecto de Cos wanted the colonists who created the disturbances to be turned over for military trial under the order of Santa Anna. Santa Anna of course was elected as a federalist but he had now become a centralist. We were not willing to turn our friends over to Mexican Military Court. We were left with no choice but to prepare for war. I knew that for us war was our only recourse. There is no other remedy. We must defend our rights, our country, and ourselves by force of arms. I had no choice but to return to Texas and call for war. My dear revolutionists, I urge you to stay strong, we are taking up arms only to defend ourselves and to oppose rule of Santa Anna. We urge all Mexican citizens to join the struggle for a democratic government. Keep your hopes high and lets all try to make Texas an independent Republic that is of utmost importance for the prosperity of your Texas, my Texas, and our Texas. We all will soon be called citizens of the Republic of Texas. Since Santa Anna has violated the liberties guaranteed under the Mexican Constitution of 1824, therefore, Texans are deprived of freedom of religion, the right to trial by jury, the right to bear arms, and the right to petition. There is no system of public education and our protests against these policies are met with force. We have no choice but to declare independence from Mexico and constitute a free sovereign independent republic.