

Episode 21 (Chapter 3 – Audiobook 3) 1830-1861

Hello and welcome to another episode of the Hidden History of Texas. In previous chapters I've discussed life in Texas in the early 1830s. I've told you about some of the affects the Law of 1830 had on the early settlers. I covered Anahuac Disturbances, the battle of Velasco, and the Turtle Bayou Resolutions, in which, in one of the more ironic moments in Texas history, many Texans pledged their support to then-liberal Antonio López de Santa Anna. In this chapter, I want to talk more about the conventions of 1832 and 1833. I will also touch briefly on a 1833 proposed Texas Constitution.

The convention of 1832 took place in the 1st week of October 1832. There were Fifty-five delegates, all Anglos, no Tejanos, and they represented sixteen districts. The district of San Fernando de Bexar (AKA San Antonio) which was populated mostly by Tejanos and the district of Victoria did not send delegations. A group of delegates from La Bahía (Goliad), arrived after the meeting had adjourned, and they approved what had been passed.

During the convention Stephen F. Austin was elected president and Francis W. Johnson secretary. The convention also adopted a series of resolutions requesting a 3 year extension of the tariff exemption to Texas. The delegates also requested a basic modification of the Law of April 6, 1830, which would permit more general

immigration from the United States. Because of the recent land title controversies, they also passed a resolution demanding the appointment of a commissioner to issue land titles in East Texas. The delegates asked for a donation of government lands for the maintenance of primary schools to be conducted in Spanish and English. They also made a request of the ayuntamiento (uh-yuhn-tuh-mee-en-tow) of Nacogdoches to prevent White encroachment on lands that had been guaranteed to Indians in East Texas. The convention also established a plan for organizing a militia and committees of vigilance, safety, and correspondence, which would be able to quickly spread any emergency news. William H. Wharton was selected to present the resolutions to the Mexican Congress and state legislature of Coahuila and Texas. Rafael Manchola of the Goliad delegation was selected to accompany him. However, the resolutions were never presented to the Mexican government.

Historians say there were several reasons the resolutions were never presented to the Mexican Congress. One primary reason was that the refusal of San Antonio to cooperate with the convention made it seem that only Anglo colonists were dissatisfied. In addition, the political chief of the province, Ramón Músquiz, ruled that the meeting was unauthorized and therefore illegal. One of the colonists leaders, Steven F. Austin seemed to think the petition for statehood was

premature. Finally Santa Anna had not yet taken over the national government from Anastasio Bustamante. The resulting inactivity would lead to yet another convention that took place on April 1, 1833, which was the same day that Antonio López de Santa Anna assumed control in Mexico.

The Convention of 1833 did begin meeting at San Felipe on April 1st. This meeting was called to try and complete the work of the Convention of 1832, which San Antonio had refused to send delegates. San Antonio's, Ramón Músquiz, once again disapproved of the meeting; however, approximately fifty-six delegates did attend, including Sam Houston, who served as a delegate from Nacogdoches.

William H. Wharton was elected president, and Thomas Hastings was secretary.

Once again the convention petitioned for a repeal of the anti-immigration section of the Law of April 6, 1830. They also requested better defense from Indians, judicial reform, and improvement in mail service. They also sought exemption from tariffs, and even though they were in favor of slavery, they passed resolutions prohibiting African slave traffic into Texas. They also proposed the splitting of Coahuila and Texas.

In a move that assumed the petition for statehood would be granted, they created a committee who was charged with preparing a constitution for

submission to the Mexican Congress. This document was patterned after the Massachusetts constitution of 1780, which they happened to a copy of.

This constitution provided for a trial by jury, habeas corpus, freedom of the press, and universal suffrage.

David G. Burnet was chosen to head a committee on preparing a memorial to the Mexican government extolling the merits of the constitution and organization of the state government. Juan Erasmo Seguín, Dr. James B. Miller, and Austin were chosen to present the petitions to the government, but since Seguín and Miller were unable to go, Austin went to Mexico alone. The convention adjourned on April 13.

The Constitution of 1833 additionally provided for a legislature composed of a Senate and a House of Representatives, which were to be elected biennially. The state was to be divided into ten electoral districts, with one representative for each hundred voters. The governor was to be at least twenty-seven years old and a resident of the state for three years prior to election. The governor's term of office was to be two years, and he should not serve more than four out of any period of six years. He was to have the usual executive powers, but legislation was to be passed over his veto by simple majority vote in both houses of the legislature.

There was also to be a judiciary which included a Supreme Court, three district courts, and such inferior courts as the legislature should determine. The jurisdiction of the offices of alcalde, comisario, and sindico procurador was to be fixed by law. Judges were to be elected by the legislature for terms of six years, removable by impeachment by vote of two-thirds of both houses of the legislature.

Voting rights were to be granted for all male citizens who were at least twenty-one years old, and officials were to be elected directly. There was a 27 article bill of rights which included trial by jury, prohibited illegal search and seizure, and guaranteed other due-process rights. It also affirmed liberties of free speech but did not mention or protect religious liberty. The legislature was to establish free schools. There were to be no banks and only gold, silver, and copper coins would be considered legal tender.

Stephen F. Austin travelled to Mexico City to present to the government the convention's petitions and the proposed constitution. Rather than accepting the results and constitution, Austin was imprisoned and was another significant development in the chain of events that would lead to the Texas Revolution.

In my next episode, we move to 1835 and the revolution begins. I'll talk about the seige of Bexar, the battle of Gonzales, and some of the early leaders of what was to become the republic of Texas.

So until then, if you want more information on Texas History, visit the Texas State Historical Association. I also have two audiobooks on the Hidden History of Texas one which deals with the 1500s to about 1820, and the other one 1820s to 1830s. You can find the books pretty much wherever you download or listen to audiobooks. Links to all the stores are on my website <https://arctx.org>. Don't forget to follow me on Twitter twitter.com/arctxs and on facebook facebook.com/arctxs – so until next time, please tell your friends about the program, I'd appreciate it.

See y'all later, peace