

The Personality Behind the Pen

Good letters can never be made on paper until they are first made in the mind.

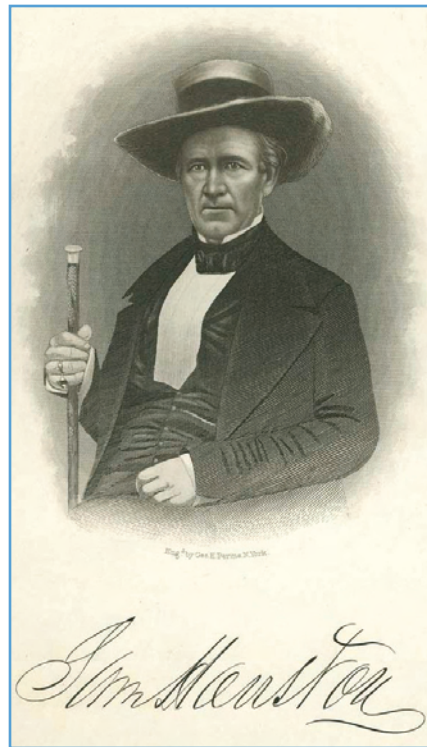
“The Science of Practical Penmanship,” by Thomas Pearce Dolbear, 1850

There were 59 “signers” of the Texas Declaration of Independence—60 if you count the secretary, Herbert S. Kimble. Each of them made a bold and indelible statement by simply signing their name. What can we learn about them from their signatures?

The popularity of scientific handwriting analysis, or formal trait-stroke graphology, emerged in the 19th century. It was a popular belief that certain handwriting strokes and formations often correlated with personality characteristics. It was also believed that one’s penmanship was linked to the principles of physiology and the anatomy of the hand and arm.

Perhaps the most recognizable signature on the Texas Declaration of Independence is that of Sam Houston. In 1839, Dr. W. N. Humphries asked Dr. W. Byrd Powell of Columbus, Mississippi—who was considered an authority on the subject—to conduct an analysis of the handwriting of Sam Houston.* Not knowing at the time whose script he was studying, Dr. Powell’s analysis was strikingly accurate! He concluded-

- “His issues and plans are always upon a large scale—there is nothing in his character that is small & contracted except that he is probably somewhat close in money matters.”
- “He is ambitious, energetic and persevering; difficulties only tend to increase his abilities.”



- “He does not know what defeat is.”
- “In matters that lie within the compass of human achievement, he is fond of his family, loves his wife & children and adheres to his friends as long as they adhere to him or so long as he can make them mutually serviceable.”
- “He is, in the Language of the day honorable and honest-- that he may be biased in favor of his own purposes I think probable, but he aims to be honest.”
- “He is prompt, decisive and commanding.”
- “He would make a bad soldier but a good leader.”
- “When acting under a special motive he is concealed and prudent, but his general manner is communicative and frank.”

After the analysis, Dr. Humphries stated, “Dr. Powell did not know to whose character the preceding remarks referred until after they were written. And the opinion above expressed was formed exclusively from a specimen of the gentleman’s hand writing which I submitted for

the purpose of testing the power and accuracy [of] his discrimination. The writer was General Houston, Late President of Texas.”

It appears Dr. Powell proved himself a skilled graphologist. Few could argue with his conclusion!

*document from the collection, Star of the Republic Museum

Record Crowds Celebrate Texas' 175th Anniversary

Record crowds flocked to Washington-on-the-Brazos on February 26-27, to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the signing of the Texas Declaration of Independence. Honored guests included the descendants of the 59 delegates who signed that historic document, including Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, a descendant of delegate Charles S. Taylor.

The Museum had enlisted the aid of dozens of volunteer genealogists to research the lineage of the "Signers" and had identified almost 2000 living descendants. Over 1500 descendants showed up, thrilled that their ancestors were to be recognized. Of the 59 delegates, 50 were represented at the celebration—quite a remarkable turnout considering that 8 had no offspring! The families were encouraged to register upon their arrival, and were provided nametags with ribbons that identified their ancestor. Many were pleased to meet distant relatives with a common ancestor. The descendants come from 25 states, from as far away as Washington, Florida, and even Japan! During the program on Sunday in the amphitheater, the name of each delegate was read in a dramatic roll call, and the descendants present answered "here" for their ancestor. The largest family represented was that of Martin Parmer, with over 200 people, followed by the Charles S. Taylor family, with almost 140.



Jack Edmondson, as Sam Houston, meets Sam Houston IV



The Texas Army



Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison looks at a picture of her ancestor in the museum exhibit, "Fifty-nine for Freedom"



The Fightin' Texas Aggie Band



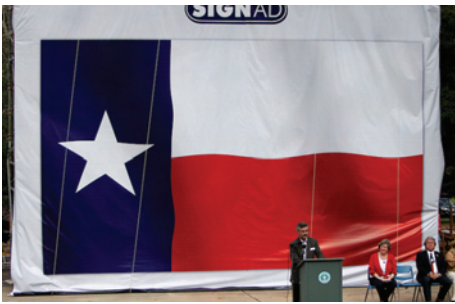
The roll call begins



Descendants of Mathew Caldwell answer the call

“The Big Picture!” Unveiled

The culminating event during the Texas Independence Day Celebration at Washington-on-the-Brazos was the dramatic unveiling of “The Big Picture!”— a “Texas-sized” reproduction of “The Reading of the Texas Declaration of Independence,” by artists Charles and Fanny Normann. The image was divided into 72 segments, and then numerous local artists, both professional and amateur, were assigned a segment of the image to paint on a 2 X 3 ft. panel. The segments were assembled to create a giant reproduction of the original painting, three times its original size:



P. O. Box 317 Washington, Texas 77880

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Teacher Workshop



Imagine life without cell phones, Twitter, or Facebook—almost impossible for today’s students who have grown accustomed to instant access to information! For that matter, imagine life without TV, radio, or computers—al-

most impossible for most of us! So just how did the early settlers in Texas get the news? It wasn’t easy!

Star of the Republic Museum announces a Teacher Workshop entitled “**Communication on the Frontier: Getting a Message from Here to There in the Texas Republic**” on **Thursday, June 9, 2011**. Participants will learn practical, hands-on activities for the classroom, such as how to make paper and write with a quill pen. The TEKS-aligned workshop for teachers in Grades 4-8 will also demonstrate the importance of the newspaper and other primary sources, and look at the postal system of the Republic of Texas. Teachers will take home a packet of interdisciplinary lesson plans and classroom resources. Participants will receive a certificate for six contact hours of Continuing Professional Education (CPE) credits from Blinn College at the conclusion of the workshop.

The cost of the workshop is \$50, which must be paid in advance. Lunch will be available for an additional \$5. Workshop hours are from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Registration forms are available at:

www.starmuseum.org/registration2011.pdf

Deadline for registration is Friday, June 3. Space is limited.

For the Love of Texas

For the Love of Texas, a new book honoring the 59 men who signed the Texas Declaration of Independence in 1836, will feature photographs of Washington County landscapes by Timothy Wolcott, along with musings by thirty-six notable Texans, including Laura Bush, Kinky Friedman, Lance Armstrong, Nolan Ryan, and Lyle Lovett. President George H.W. Bush wrote the introduction, and Gov. Rick Perry contributed the foreword.

To order, go to www.loveoftexas175.com. The cost is \$95 or \$495 for a museum-quality edition. Signed canvases and paper prints also are available. Proceeds will benefit the Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park Association.

STAR OF THE REPUBLIC MUSEUM

Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site

Open Daily
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

936-878-2461 (fax) 936-878-2462

www.starmuseum.org
www.txindependence.org
www.facebook.com/staroftherepublic

Director Houston McGaugh
Curator of Collections & Exhibits Shawn Carlson
Curator of Education & Editor Anne McGaugh
Public Programs Coordinator Sheri Finke
Education Assistant Valerie Purcell
Museum Secretary Effie Wellmann



Articles may be reprinted
with permission.



Proven.