

San Jacinto Symposium

MYTHS, MYSTERIES, AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS OF SAN JACINTO

Symposium will be virtual April 17th, 2021

9:00am Welcome and Introductions

9:05am Stephen L. Hardin, *The Infernal Kind of Book: The Venomous Pamphlet that Shook the Texas Republic*

This presentation will discuss the controversial 1837 pamphlet, *Houston Displayed; or, Who Won the Battle of San Jacinto?*—the first and most influential of the anti-Houston literature. Historians have observed that the Republic of Texas did not have political parties, per se, and that its politics basically broke down into those who supported Sam Houston, “The Sword of San Jacinto,” and those who opposed him. As soon as it hit the streets, the pamphlet provided the anti-Houston faction with its issue, platform, and voice. For the rest of his career, Houston was haunted by what he termed “this infernal kind of book.” The presentation will discuss its anonymous author, Colonel Robert M. Coleman, as well as the cabal of influential men who encouraged him and clandestinely supported his efforts. It will examine how earlier authorities have used and, in most cases, misused, or ignored this vital source. Finally, it will consider many of the controversies Coleman’s polemic initiated—many of which have lingered to the present day.

9:40am James Woodrick, *The Cannons of San Jacinto*

Three cannons played a critical role at San Jacinto – two in Sam Houston’s army and one in Santa Anna’s. The Texian cannons are known as the Twin Sisters, and the Mexican cannon is sometimes referred to as the Golden Standard. Over the years much confusion has existed as to the caliber and material of the Twin Sisters. Were they 6-pounders, or 4’s? Were they iron or brass? The Texans who wrote about the Mexican cannon all thought it was bigger than what the professional Mexican army officers knew they had. What happened to these cannons after San Jacinto? Were the Twin Sisters buried in Harrisburg after the Civil War? Was the Mexican Cannon lost at sea? The digital revolution has now made available archival documents that were virtually impossible for historians to access only a few years ago. Through these records we now know the factual story of the San Jacinto artillery, from the origins of the cannons, how they were used in the battle, and what ultimately happened to them.

10:15am Jesús F. de la Teja, *Recollections of a Mexico-Texan Patriot: Antonio Menchaca Remembers the San Jacinto Campaign*

By the 1870s Antonio Menchaca was one of the best remembered veterans of the Texas Revolution. His stories of early San Antonio, the Mexican War of Independence, and the Texas Revolution received colorful and somewhat fanciful interpretations from Menchaca, who often found a way to become the center of the tales. In his recollections of San Jacinto, he is friend to both the Texian leadership and Santa Anna, and his imaginary ambitions knew no bounds. This presentation will focus on how Menchaca’s version of events have influenced recent writings on the battle, especially as they represent one of only two accounts produced by Tejano participants in the events.

10:50am James Crisp, *The Man Who Wasn’t There: Herman Ehrenberg Tells the Stories of the Alamo and San Jacinto*

Unlike Antonio Menchaca’s story of the San Jacinto campaign, Ehrenberg’s writings are not his “recollections,” because he was at Goliad and at Matagorda when these two battles took place, respectively. This presentation emphasizes that he was writing as a typical citizen of the Texas Republic, freely mixing facts and misconceptions, and using, as most all Texans did, the history of the revolution as a key to understanding and appreciating the Texan character as he saw it. Because Ehrenberg’s take on the Alamo is a key to understanding his interpretation of the Revolution, it must be addressed in order to properly understand his depiction of San Jacinto.

11:25am Sam Haynes, *Monument and Memory in Texas History: From Sacred Site to Martial Symbol*

Since the late nineteenth century, monuments have helped Texans celebrate their state’s past. But like any cultural artifact, the historical monument can be seen in different ways. This lecture will examine the gendered dimensions of commemoration and memory, focusing on the ways in which women’s organizations, such as the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, and male business leaders used monuments such as the San Jacinto Monument to create their own distinct interpretations of the state’s heritage.

12:00pm Q&A with the Presenters



Event registration and information at www.SanJacintoSymposium.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR QUESTIONS,
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