TEXAS PUBLIC POLICY FOUNDATION

THE TEXAS CENTENNIAL

WRITTEN BY
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October 2025

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Acknowledgements & Special Thanks to:
Joshua Treviño, Dr. Donald Frazier, Jillian Tyler,
Marie Marcalus, Roy Maynard, Paul Woodul, and Jeff Salmon.

THE TEXAS CENTENNIAL

On Jan. 15, 1935, James V. Allred was sworn into office as the 33rd governor of Texas. In his inauguration speech, Allred expressed his belief that the state was entering an era of recovery and progress. With World War I and six years of the Great Depression behind them, the people of Texas would continue to carry on the innovative spirit of their forebearers. By the joint efforts of himself, the 44th Texas Legislature, and the citizens, a path from their current economic crisis to prosperity could be forged.

At the forefront of Allred's vision for solving these "immediate Texas problems" was the upcoming Texas Centennial. The new governor saw in Texas' independence from Mexico the story of a people undeterred by poverty and undaunted by adversity. The commemoration of the state's 100th anniversary would help inspire the next generation to begin a "new cycle of progress" (Texas House Journal, 1935, p. 94).

Governor Allred summarized this point when he said,

> This great State, with its unbounded resources and a citizenship in whose veins still flows the achieving blood of pioneers, can lead the Nation in its recovery march. We can, we must, restore opportunity, vitality, and hope to our distressed people's heritage. (p. 94)

EARLY DEVELOPMENT

Calls to celebrate the Texas Revolution had been made as early as 1900, according to the Texas State Historical Association. The former governor, James Stephen Hogg, gave a speech in which he introduced the idea to the public. World War I prevented major actions from being taken, but the vision was never abandoned (Texas State Historical Association, 1952/2017).

In 1931, the legal foundation for what would be one of the largest state birthday celebrations in the United States was established. State Senator Mary Elizabeth "Margie" Neal filed Senate Bill 106, which created the "Texas Centennial Committee" to research the cost and best practices for conducting a state-wide

celebration (Texas Senate Journal, 1931, p. 74). She also filed Senate Joint Resolution 28, which would amend the Texas Constitution to permit appropriating funds for the purpose of the Centennial Celebration (Texas Senate Journal, 1931, p. 692).

In many ways, Senator Neal embodied the ideals of the Democratic Party of Texas of the time. She not only advocated for "education, good roads, welfare, [and] progress" but had herself been a former teacher and was the first woman elected to the Texas Senate (Capitol Clearinghouse Update, 2002).

Neal's actions were representative of a larger grassroots movement. As a member of the Centennial Governing Board of One Hundred, she worked from 1924 to 1931 to help plan for the Centennial. Although the board's nine directors were political appointees–five of whom were chosen by Governor Pat Neff, two by Lieutenant Governor Thomas Davidson, and two by the Speaker of the House Richard Seagler–its members were popularly elected from the 31 senatorial districts (The Abilene Daily Reporter, 1924, p. 3). Texans largely chose board members who were "philanthropists, entrepreneurs, successful ranchmen, and seasoned politicians" (Wilson & Smith, 2017, p. 6). For instance, the first Chairman of the board, Jesse H. Jones, was the owner of the *Houston Chronicle*, as well as a prominent businessman, politician, and former division head for the American Red Cross.

The Governing Board of One Hundred itself had been the result of a state-wide democratic initiative. The Texas Centennial Survey Committee, a "small group" made up "of advertisers and businessmen," traveled across Texas asking citizens whether they were in favor of celebrating 100 years of independence. The committee reported its findings at a convention in the City of Austin on February 12, 1924 (Wilson & Smith, 2017, p. 5). Having found the majority favored of the proposition, the Governing Board of the One Hundred was made "custodian of the Centennial crusade" (p. 6).

The men and women of the Governing Board of the One Hundred organized the movement and provided substantive recommendations that not only caught the attention of the public but motivated the Texas Legislature. In 1934, 10 years after the creation of the Board of One Hundred and two years after Senator Neal's bills were passed, the Centennial Commission was created by the 43rd Legislature during its second special session. The Commission would use the information gathered by the Centennial Committee to make concrete celebration proposals and plans (Texas House Journal, 1934, p. 505).

Senator Neal's legislation and the broader Centennial Celebration movement became a significant part of the agenda of the Texas Democratic Party during the Great Depression. An official endorsement of the Centennial Celebration was adopted and included in the party's platform on September 11, 1934. The Texas Democratic Party said,

> We unreservedly endorse the proposals of a public-spirited citizenship for a Texas Centennial that shall celebrate in 1936, one hundred years of our incomparable and unexampled progress. To this end, above party or faction or sect or section, we invoke the united support of all the people of Texas. We further call upon the Legislature of Texas, at the earliest opportunity presented, to make ample financial provisions for carrying out existing plans of the Texas Centennial Commission, for holding a great central exposition that shall be Texanic in its proportions, Continental in its ideals, and International in its scope, and for appropriate local celebrations at those historic places and shrines in Texas, treasured as our common sacred heritage. (Texas House Journal, 1935, p. 114)

The Texas Democrats looked at the future with both an entrepreneurial and a patriotic eye. For them, the economic and historical value of the Centennial was not mutually exclusive. This was an opportunity to

create new jobs and boost business while encouraging cultural pride. Throwing a 100th birthday party was essentially the Texas version of President Franklin Roosevelt's Work Progress Commission (WPC).

As such, politicians often emphasized aspects of Texas history that aligned or advanced their political objectives. Leaders like Governor Allred, for instance, used their New Deal liberal ideals as a lens for interpreting the last 100 years. The governor had specific messages that he wanted the public to take away from the Texas Revolution.

One of these was the rule of law. He saw in the settlement of Texas the cultivation of a society during chaos—an important concept because of the rising crime rate in Texas. During the Great Depression, some people took advantage of the unfortunate situation, turning to crime and burglary. With criminals like Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow living in Dallas, Texas had become known as "a sanctuary of gangsters" (Texas State Historical Association, n.d.).

The governor explained during his inauguration speech the predictable consequences of maintaining such civil disobedience and disorder. He said, "No citizenship can be happy, no benefits in government can be worthwhile in a State where that government is not respected" (Texas House Journal, 1935, p. 94).

Gutzon Borglum, the lead sculptor and engineer of Mt. Rushmore in 1935, shared a similar view with the Texas governor. Although not a native Texan nor a member of the Democrat party, he likewise felt that the Centennial symbolized the establishment of order, specifically western civilization. He compared the Anglo-Saxon settlers in Texas to the "Grecians."[1]

After receiving letters from friends asking him to help with the Centennial and corresponding with Jesse H. Jones for some years about creating Texas

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monuments, Borglum believed that Texas finally felt an "urge" to "awake to her historic, if not to her cultural position, in the march of our States."[2]

Two Texas Representatives, McConnell and Stinson, expressed similar views in an address they gave to the House on February 27, 1935. They said,

> …Celebrate the achievements of the patriots and pioneers who paved the way for our present civilization, who blazed their way to the West, and marked the besetting miles with lonely graves of loved ones, who subdued the hostile savages, and handed to us as a heritage the land in which we live. (Texas House Journal, 1935, p. 492)

ON THE RED CARPET

Despite the agreement that the House legislators of 1935 shared regarding the necessity of supporting a celebration for the Texas Centennial, when it came to passing the bill that would expand existing Centennial legislation, a portion of members from both parties placed greater emphasis on fiscal concerns. With a price tag of $3 million (about $70 million today) the introduced version of House Bill 11

1 Correspondence: Borglum, Gutzon, 1935-1936, James Frank Dobie Papers, 1923-1967.

2 Ibid.

by Representative Stinson and his 10 co-authors was an expensive proposition. If passed, the bill would replace the existing Centennial Commission with the "Commission of Control for Texas Centennial Celebrations" and the "Advisory Board of Texas History."

James Frank Dobie, a board member of the Advisory Board of Texas History, wrote in his report to the Commission of Control for the Centennial Celebrations, "One may live in the age of the New Deal and still realize that a thousand dollars is a lot of money."[3]

The commission would be responsible for overseeing the construction of the Centennial Exposition in Dallas, running an advertising campaign, and fulfilling other administrative functions required to oversee state-wide celebratory events. The history board, on the other hand, would decide what events and locations should be commemorated with a historical marker (Texas House Bill 11, 1935).

Both the board and the commission would receive funds from the state's General Revenue. The committee version of HB 11 divided the $3 million into four categories of expenditure:

1. For the construction of buildings at the Dallas Exposition site, $1 million (about $23 million today).

2. For the "furnishing" of those said buildings, $250,000 (about $6 million today).

3. For the funding of local celebrations chosen by the commission, $1 million (about $23 million today).

4. For launching a "nation-wide publicity campaign" and paying basic administrative fees, $750,000 (about $19 million today; Texas House Bill 11, 1935).

On March 12, 1935, several House representatives pushed for decreases in the bill's fiscal note. The most extreme reduction, proposed by Representative Alsup, would have reduced the budget to $500,000 (more than $11 million today). A few of the tamer amendments were Representative Alfred Roark's (D-Saratoga) at $1 million and Representative Walker's at $1,250,000.

House members were willing to consider fiscal changes which led to a majority voting in favor of tabling Walker and Roark's bills for later consideration. Their amendments may have been brought up sooner, but that Tuesday's session was interrupted by a message from Governor Allred.

Edward Clark, the governor's secretary, stood at the bar of the House chamber and read Governor Allred's words: "I trust this Legislature will make adequate provision, including a reasonable appropriation, for a real Centennial celebration" (Texas House Journal, 1935, p. 619).

The governor's encouragement to get in line was received. That afternoon, the House debate resumed, but all amendments to reduce the bill's funds were tabled or failed to pass. The following day's proceedings, which started at 10 a.m., ended with similar results.

After hearing 19 other bills, Texas House members took up HB 11's pending business. The first action taken was to table the three remaining fiscal reduction amendments. From then on, the primary focus of proposals shifted to ensuring that the $3 million invested would be safe from corruption and that important historical sites received funding.

As one can easily understand, these legislators felt a duty to protect the state's limited resources from being taken advantage of. The Great Depression's widespread job scarcity was a heavy burden on the government of Texas. For instance, according to Governor Allred, in 1935, there were about 250,000 families on the relief roll (Texas House Journal, 1935, p. 106). With so many in need, the House's appropriation bill needed to be carefully worded to prevent the funds from being squandered or exploited.

3 Reports to Commission of Control for Texas Centennial Celebrations, June 1935-June 1937, James Frank Dobie Papers, 1923-1967.

Representative Roark motioned to add the first amendment relating to fiscal responsibility. This amendment required that construction on the Dallas Exposition Center be postponed until the city accrued the funds it had promised to raise by selling bonds. The amendment was adopted.

He also successfully passed an amendment preventing Centennial funds from being "expended for salary or expenses, directly or otherwise, for envoys outside of Continental North America." The proposal may have been intended to prevent paying a dignitary to visit Texas, or it could have been a way to eliminate the possibility of covering a person's travel to other countries as an envoy for the Centennial on behalf of Texas. Either way, the Texas House Journal does not provide enough information to determine Roark's purpose for the amendment.

Both interpretations would have been consistent with the New Deal's effort to help people by funding economic development projects within America's borders. For instance, the House's approved version of the bill required that only Texans could be hired for the construction of the Dallas Exhibition (Texas House Bill 11, 1935, p. 6).

This vision was held by non-legislators as well. Bonnie McLeary, the artist who later sculpted the Benjamin R. Milam Statue for the Texas Centennial, explained in a letter to the Honorable John V. Singleton, the Chief of the Board of Control in 1935, three reasons she believed work should be kept within the borders of the United States. "This avoids long delays and generally secures both better materials and workmanship. Also, in these times, it is a very important point since it gives employment to Americans," McLeary said.[4]

One of Representative Roark's other amendments to HB 11 penalized a Commission or Advisory Board member for taking the two following actions. The first prohibition was against accepting a "fee, commission, retainer, or brokerage, out of any fund or funds received by the Centennial Commission." The second was against members having "any interest" in land, materials, or commissions contracted with the commission. Violations of these rules would result in immediate removal from the office and misdemeanor criminal charges. The amendment was adopted (Texas House Journal, 1935, p. 628).

Another amendment against members gaining personal benefits by serving on the Commission or Board was to cap the highest possible annual salary to $4,000. This would be (about $93,000 today). The amendment, authored by Representative Lonnie Smith (D-Ft. Worth), passed and was added to the provisions of HB 11 (p. 643).

Representative John Patterson (D-Austin) passed an amendment to help fund the Texas Memorial Museum, which would be built on the University of Texas' campus in downtown Austin. The $250,000 contribution from the state was adopted, but restrictions on the manner in which the money given may be used were included as well. The University's Board of Regents was constituted as the museum's Board of Directors. All expenditures were to be made by vouchers and approved by the Chairman and verified by the secretary of the university's Board of Regents. Additionally, the text clarified that all transactions would be subject to its current state voucher laws as supervised by the Texas Comptroller and Treasurer (p. 632).

That same day, March 13, once anti-corruption measures were heard and voted on, legislators began making recommendations for appropriating funds for a limited number of historical sites. By listing a few historical projects in the text itself, the legislature was choosing to compel the prospective Centennial Commission to fund them. As such, these places most likely represented what the House viewed as essential to the history of the Texas Revolution.

4 Letters: MacLeary, Bonnie, August 1935, James Frank Dobie, Papers, 1923-1967.

Representative Harry Graves (D-Georgetown) wanted $500 (about $11,000 today) to be used to construct a monument for Sam Bass at his burial ground in Round Rock, in Williamson County. Bass was a Texas cowboy and outlaw who lived during the late 1800s. Although Bass and his band were known for robbing trains around Dallas, when the 27-year-old was killed, he became a Texas legend (Gard, 1952/2018). The amendment failed to pass, and although the exact reason this amendment failed to pass is not mentioned in the Texas House Journal, these members probably assumed that the Commission would fund such a monument after the bill was adopted.

The decision foreshadowed later disagreements among some of the Centennial planners. A portion of the Advisory Board of Texas historians thought that cowboys were nearly inconsequential in the state's development. J. Frank Dobie, an English professor at the University of Texas in 1935, believed that cowboys were essential to the story of the Lone Star State. He said,

> In the popular mind the Western bad man and the cowboy are associated together. The early-day cowboy wore a six shooter and generally knew how to shoot it. In his code there were several things worse than killing a man who deserved killing and then dying. One of those things was the loss of liberty or personal rights…the story of the bad man and of the gunman on the side of the law is a part of the story of the range.[5]

Cowboys weren't the only complex issue lawmakers had to grapple with. Representative Walter Pope (D-Corpus Christi) wanted the Dallas Exposition to have one building with a hall, recognizing "all religions, without discrimination against any and for this purpose the sum of seventy-five thousand dollars" (p. 629). This proposal was adopted.

One amendment that failed to get a majority vote was drafted by Representative Benjamin Quinn (D-Jefferson). The proposal would have changed page 4, line 31 , in HB 11 so that $50,000 of the $1 million allocated toward the funding of local celebrations would be used to reclaim the Sabine Pass Battleground. The Sabine River Pass was a popular port of trade during the Civil War because of its connection to the Gulf of America.

The site was where Lt. Richard "Dick" Dowling and his men defeated two gunboats of union soldiers on September 8, 1863. This was an important victory for the Confederates. Lt. Dowling had only 46 men, while Union General William Bull Franklin had 5,000 soldiers. By preventing General Franklin's men from capturing the port, the Confederates kept the Union from entering Texas (American Battlefield Trust, n.d.).

In the House Engrossed version, the members settled the question of which historical sites would be included. In addition to the Texas Memorial Museum, they chose the San Jacinto Battlefield and the Alamo. An amendment was passed which mandated that of the $1 million appropriated for local celebrations, $350,000 must be spent to build a monument at the San Jacinto Battlefield, and $350,000 for the funding of a San Antonio celebration in honor of the Alamo was passed (Texas House Bill 11, 1935, p. 6).

On March 14, 1935, with a total of 104 "yeas" and 31 "nays," House Bill 11 passed the House floor with a supermajority. The bill's first vote was 90 "yeas" and 44 "nays" but was reconsidered due to several representatives wishing to change their vote.

Representative Charles Rutta (D-Columbus) and Representative Gus Herzik (D-La Grange), who both changed their votes, explained their decision with the following statement:

> I opposed the appropriation of $3,000,000 for the purpose of a Centennial Exposition

5 "Forty-Four Range Country Books," an Annotated Bibliography by J. Frank Dobie, James Frank Dobie Papers, 1923-1967.

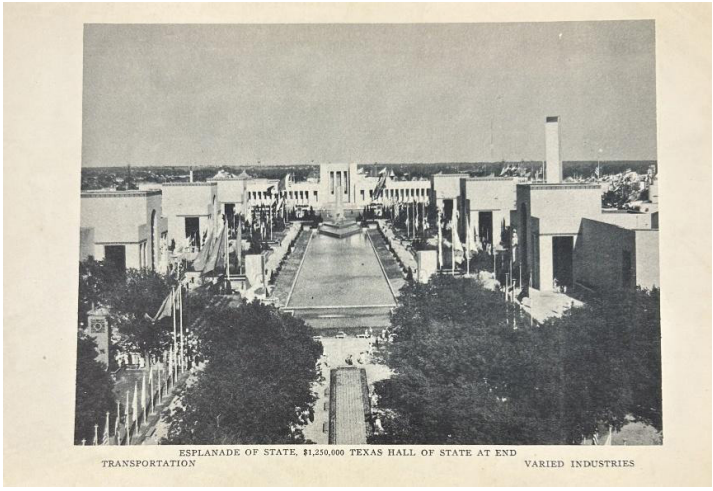
because of the financial condition of the State and its people, but when it became clearly apparent that a majority of the people of Texas, speaking through their representatives, desired the appropriation, and as a Democrat believing that the majority should rule, I changed my vote on reconsideration of the vote by which it passed on third reading, from "nay" to "yea," so that I might not stand in the way of the majority. (Texas House Journal, 1935, p. 656)

IN THE GREEN FISHBOWL

Having won passage in the House, HB 11 was then sent to the Texas Senate. On March 15, 1935, the bill was read for the first time and sent to the Senate Committee on Finance. The Finance Committee voted to recommend that its substitute version of the bill be reported favorably to the full Senate on March 18.

The Senate's version of HB 11 was more institutionalized and less progressive than the House's in several ways. First, Representative Walter Pope's amendment creating a hall for the recognition of "all religions" was cut. Likewise, the Board of Control was instated to oversee all "expenditures and contracts" made by the Commission, rather than simply those of $50,000 and over (Senate Amendments to HB 11, 1935, p. 53).

HB 11 omitted the conditional language the House had regarding the funds that the City of Dallas promised to pay the state in exchange for being selected to host the central Centennial Exposition. At the same time, it also increased the Commission of Control's authority over the Texas Central Centennial exhibit. For example, in the House version, it was a requirement that Dallas procured the necessary funds before any construction could begin. The Senate replaced the House's "shall" and "unless" with Dallas showing "the ability and intention…to carry out said plan." Although the standard was relaxed, since the determination would be made by the Commission of Control it decreased Dallas' autonomy. The



Courtesy of the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History. "Official Souvenir Guides," Sarah Reveley Collection.

Senate also gave the Commission a credible-threat mechanism for encouraging compliance. The Board of Control was prohibited from granting funds until the Commission submitted a "resolution" approving Dallas' plans (p. 47).

Changes were also made to historical expenditures. The headquarters of the Advisory Board of Texas History was placed in Austin and the text clarified that members of the board would not be compensated. The funding of the San Jacinto Battlefield monument and a commemoration of the Alamo was removed from the text. They substituted these instead with a memorial to "the pioneer womanhood of this State" and to funding an "authoritative history of Texas" and a "Dictionary of Texas Biography" (p. 52).

The Senate voted to pass its version of HB 11 on April 2, and the following day, the bill returned to the Texas House floor. Representative Jefferson Stinson (D-Dallas), the primary author of the bill, moved to concur with the changes, while Representative Jesse James (D-Cameron) motioned not to concur with the Senate. Failing to concur with Senate changes would mean that the bill must be sent to a conference committee.

The conference committee would be the last hurdle that HB 11 needed to pass before reaching the

governor's desk. With five members appointed from each chamber, the committee was responsible for deciding on a single version of the text. If consensus was not reached, the bill would die.

Representative Stinson withdrew his concurrence, which let the non-concurrence motion go up for a vote. The bill was sent to the conference committee, where members negotiated differences in language. The committee's report was then delivered to the House floor on April 17, 1935 (Texas House Journal, 1935, p. 1026).

The Conference Committee substitute for HB 11 made several changes. The bill reinstated the house's provisions for the San Jacinto Battlefield and the Alamo but cut its memorial hall to "all religions." The Senate's memorial to pioneer womanhood was included, but its "authoritative" Texas history book and dictionary were not (HB 11 Conference Committee Report, 1935).

The committee also retained the Senate's more relaxed requirement for Dallas' proof of financial contribution, as well as the Senate's provisions for oversight from the Board of Control (p. 69).

The final bill version distributed the $3 million differently than the House committee and approved versions of HB 11. The money for the publicity campaign was reduced to $500,000 so that the money for local celebrations could be increased to $1,075,000. The Texas Memorial Museum's appropriation to help purchase items of "natural and civic history" for its exhibits and interior furnishings was cut to $222,500 (HB 11 Conference Committee Report, 1935, p. 62).

After months of negotiations, the Texas Centennial's appropriation bill was finally passed. The task of planning and pulling off a world fair was now placed in the hands of the newly created Commission of Control for the Centennial Celebration and the Texas Advisory Board of History.

THE TEXAS CENTENNIAL: THE RHINESTONE COWBOY

Although Texas inherited its understanding of democracy from the United States, those who banded together to defend their land and freedom from Mexico were representative of different cultures than those of the 1776 eastern coast. As such, Texas' expression of liberty was unique to its people.

T. R. Fehrenbach describes westward expansion as perhaps "something of natural selection" in which the "evidence indicates that those who went were more vigorous than those who stayed behind" (Fehrenbach, 1968/2000, p. 86).

The settlers of Texas shared the same independent, entrepreneurial spirit of early American "frontiersmen," but the land they moved to in 1824 was vastly different. Texas already had an established, albeit distant government in addition to Native American tribes.

The Republic of Mexico hoped that by allowing Americans to "colonize the country between Bexar and the Sabine," the threat of Comanche hostility imposed on the people of Cohoahila y Tejas would end (Fehrenbach, 1968/2000, p. 135). The Anglo-Saxon families in Stephen F. Austin's "Old 300" and those who came later swore their allegiance to Mexico.

The United Mexican States influenced the culture of Austin's colony. The 27-year-old empresario was strongly encouraged to select only families of good character. This meant that Austin's settlers were literate, moral, and not "idlers." In essence, they were "the first Anglo planter-gentry in the province" (Fehrenbach, 1968/2000, p. 141).

The political atmosphere of the northern territory of Mexico caused the Texas Revolution and the subsequently created state to contain "elements that aren't distinctly American," said Dr. Donald Frazier, the current Director of the Texas Center at Schreiner University and the Convening Officer of the 1836 Project.

In fact, the state had passed through the hands of many nations: France, Spain, Mexico, the Republic of Texas, the United States, and the Confederacy. Of the early nations that occupied the region, Spain and Mexico were the most influential.

Although these two governments had the largest influence on the formation of the Texas identity, there were other nations that, through immigration, played a significant part. In 1850, only 11 years after the end of the Texas Revolution, more than 5% of Texans were ethnic Germans (Terry, 1976/2019). In the same year, about 7% of the population were "of Mexican origin" (De León, 1976/2023). The Irish ethnicity was representative of 0.65% (Fry, 1976/2019). About 28% were Black. The total population size of Texas, at that time, was 212,592 (U.S. Census, 1850).

Despite the nuance of the history and ethnicity of Texas, the Commission of Control had to adopt a more utilitarian methodology for telling the story of the Lone Star State. Texas needed to be simplified for the market.

"Nuance doesn't fit on a bumper sticker," said Dr. Frazier.[6]

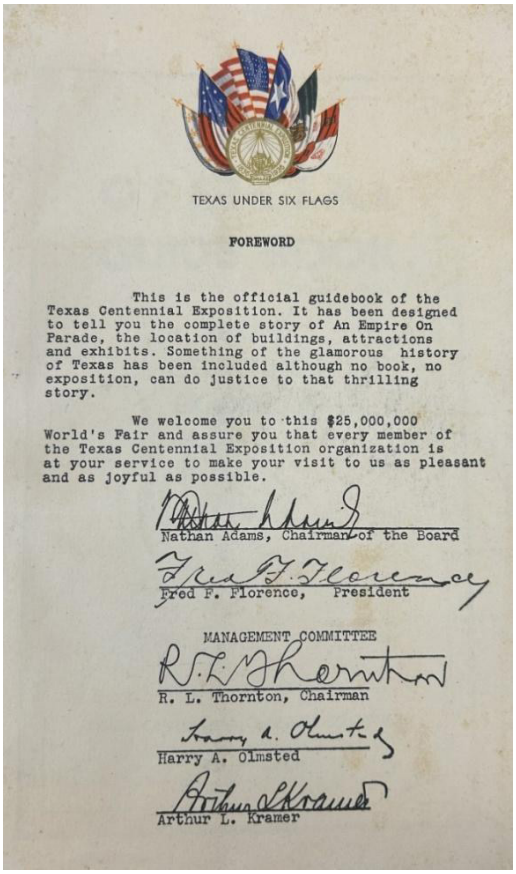
The Texas Centennial would be a study in contrasts, not a study in subtleties.

The popularity of cinema had conditioned Texans to being entertained with simple storylines. They were used to binaries with little to no room for complexity. Like in a film, the Centennial needed a plot with villains and heroes and no middle ground, Frazier said.

And that approach had its own limitations.

"When we make Indians two dimensional: all bad or all colonized, we take away their humanity," he said.

Connecting with mainstream culture also influenced the Centennial's presentation of Texas history. In the early 1900s, the ethnic population with the dominant culture were the descendants of Anglo-Saxon settlers.



TEXAS UNDER SIX FLAGS

FOREWORD

This is the official guidebook of the Texas Centennial Exposition. It has been designed to tell you the complete story of An Empire On Parade, the location of buildings, attractions and exhibits. Something of the glamorous history of Texas has been included although no book, no exposition, can do justice to that thrilling story.

We welcome you to this $25,000,000 World's Fair and assure you that every member of the Texas Centennial Exposition organization is at your service to make your visit to us as pleasant and as joyful as possible.

Nathan Adams, Chairman of the Board

Fred F. Florence, President

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

R. L. Thornton, Chairman

Harry A. Olmsted

Arthur L. Kramer

Courtesy of the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History. "Official Souvenir Guides," Sarah Reveley Collection.

In other words, Texas history had to be "chicken fried"—meaning complex information was given a familiar and predictable external shell to help the public digest it. This meant it was mostly "surface level," Frazier said.[7]

The aesthetic style in which the Centennial and therefore Texas was presented became an endorsed brand adopted by the public.

"So much of the Texas identity was established in 1936," Donald Frazier, the current Director of the Texas Center at Schreiner University and the Convening Officer of the 1836 Project, said. "That's when we kind of decided this is who we are."

6 D. Frazier, personal communication, 2025.

7 D. Frazier, personal communication, 2025.

THE DALLAS EXPOSITION

The Dallas Exposition officially opened on June 12, 1936, but its success was dependent on the nearly year-long advertising campaign that started in August 1935.

Charles Roster, the director of the Publicity Department of the Commission of Control for the Centennial Celebration, moved to the city of Dallas in August of 1935 to establish his department's headquarters. He seemed to have had difficulty at first and found that things were "shaping satisfactorily, although rather slowly" in September.[8]

However, within a short period of time, Roster managed to turn the slow-moving-wheels of the Department's media campaign. From commissioning businesses, to having collector's stamps designed, to conducting weekly history dramas on the radio, the department made several strategic investments that helped insert the Centennial into the minds of Texans.

One of those investments was in the Centennial News, a state-funded newspaper that reported on recent celebratory events and the Dallas Exposition's construction progress.[9] In the Centennial Review (another publication maintained by the Department of Publicity), readers could find columns about significant battles and events in Texas history.

"In a sense the REVIEW reflects the progress of the Centennial year up to June 25, 1936, when it was replaced by 'next week in Texas,' a straight-forward selling medium," said Roster in a letter written on November 20, 1935.[10]

The Department's weekly radio programs covered historical people or events in Texas History. On November 3, 1935, The Texas Quality Network of WBAP aired a 15-minute radio program titled "Tribute to Stephen F. Austin." The total cost of putting on the program was $104 (more than $2,000 today).

The Commission also paid for books to be published for the Centennial. For instance, the book *This is Texas* was created and then purchased from the Steck Company in Austin.

On April 14, Lieutenant Governor Woodul requested that Roster send a copy of the book to J. Frank Dobie.

"It is certainly a beautiful book and the pictures in it are informative as well as attractive," Dobie responded.

A copy was also saved and given to the University of Texas at Austin.

The committee initially purchased 1,000 copies of the book. According to a letter sent to Mr. C.E. Castenada from Roster, there were some published in Spanish.[11]

On the opening day of the Exposition, President Franklin D. Roosevelt gave the welcoming address from the Cotton Bowl Stadium. He encouraged the state to celebrate its achievements as one part of the union. He extolled the state for its adoption of New Deal policies and praised it for exemplifying the ideals of democracy. The state of Texas had prospered and flourished because it "discovered that democracy in government could not exist unless, at the same time, there was democracy in opportunity," President Roosevelt said (Roosevelt, 1936).

The Dallas Exposition had 50 buildings on its Centennial grounds. A few of them were the Travel and Transportation Building, the Texas Hall of State, the Hall of Petroleum, the Ford Motors building, the Hall of Religion, the Museum Natural History, Roads of the

8 Commission Correspondence, Correspondence, 1934-1938, Correspondence, Records, Texas Commission of Control for Texas Centennial Celebrations. Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

9 Centennial News (and Centennial Cypress), 1935-1936, Correspondence.

10 Centennial Review, *Texas Centennial Review*, 1935-1936, Correspondence.

11 Commission Correspondence, Correspondence, 1934-1938.

Southwest, the Negro Life Building, and the Horticulture building. More than 6 million people came to visit these buildings and halls, which demonstrated the achievements of Texas since its independence from Mexico (Texas State Historical Association, 1952/2017).

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT

On May 7, 1935, when Governor Allred signed House Bill 11, he no longer spoke as an idealist but as a pragmatist. His message to the 44th Texas Legislature commended them for listening to the voices of the people by enabling Texas to celebrate its Independence, but he did not linger long on accolades. "Where is the money coming from?" he asked.

House Bill 11 stipulated that the money would be withdrawn from the General Revenue Fund, but Texas had an "appalling deficit," its treasury was low, and the state's federal grant would run out soon. "It is not the part of wisdom to spend money unless you have it, either in the Treasury or know where it is coming from," the governor said (Texas House Journal, pp. 2271-2326, 1935, p. 2293).

The Commission of Control turned to Washington, D.C., for help. Although President Roosevelt's administration had conditioned states to depend on the federal government for financial aid, Texas' inclusion of the United States in the commemoration of its independence was not merely a product of its time. The Lone Star State and America had been tied together long before its statehood.

Fehrenbach described Stephen F. Austin's colony as economically dependent on trade with America. In the early years of living in the Texas coastal plain, the settlers were "removed from and outside the economic sphere of San Antonio de Béxar. Lack of money and the absence of good roads handicapped trade with San Antonio; the Anglo colonies looked back north, toward the United States (Fehrenbach, 1968/2000, p.143).

Roosevelt himself described the economic development of Texas as the result of its cooperation with the rest of the states. During his address at the Dallas Exposition's opening ceremony, he said,

> The prosperity which has come to Texas through the products of its farms and ranches, the products of its mines, the products of its oil fields, and the products of its factories, has been made possible chiefly because other parts of the Nation were in possession of the buying power, the consuming power, to use what you have produced. (Roosevelt, 1936)

Thankfully for the Centennial, it had a powerful friend inside the presidential administration to advocate on its behalf. President Roosevelt had appointed Jessie H. Jones, the previous chairman of the Board of One Hundred, to serve as the chair of the Reconstruction and Finance Corporation (RFC). From that position in D.C., Jones was able to help the cause.

In the instance of the San Jacinto Monument, he secured donations from the state, the federal government, and local communities in the amount of $1,500,000 million (about $35 million today) (San Jacinto Museum and Battlefield, n.d.).

Jones was not the only advocate for the Texas Centennial on Capitol Hill. The federal government went so far as to create its own Texas Centennial Commission.

"I want to call your attention to the fact that a great deal of this work is to be accomplished through the Federal Government Commission. The first thousand dollars' worth of work at Goliad is an example," said James Frank Dobie.[12]

The U.S. Congress voted to give $3 million from the national treasury to help fund the Dallas Exposition, the Texas Memorial Museum, and Texas monuments of national significance. This was accomplished by

12 Correspondence: Borglum, Gutzon 1935-1936, James Frank Dobie Papers, 1923-1967.

passing Senate Joint Resolution (SJR) 167, which was the amended version of SJR 131.

Senate Joint Resolution 131 began moving through the halls of Congress at the beginning of the summer of 1935. On May 28, Senators Sheppard and Connaly defended their bill before the U.S. Senate. The Joint Resolution's authors argued that the Texas Centennial's significance could not be restricted to its geographical boundaries because the Republic of Texas had always been an American story. From its inception, the Lone Star State was a series of "events so romantic and meaningful to our own national history" (Congressional Record, Senate, 1935, p. 8313).

Like a son, Texas had left its home to forge a new path. In 1836, the state reached its full maturity, enacting the principles that its mother, America, had labored so intensely to inculcate in its spirit and mind.

Connaly and Sheppard said,

> Thus was set up the Republic of Texas, for the reconquest of which Mexico still labored; for the sovereignty over which both Spain and France still played their hands in the field of diplomacy; a separate nation among the nations of the earth, whose people longed to be united with their mother country; a government whose fate for nearly 10 years was the football of American politics, until at last the lone star was added to the stars of the American flag. (p. 8315)

Senate Joint Resolution 131 was passed in its original chamber and sent to the United States House of Representatives. On June 18, the members resolved to hear, debate, and amend the bill (Congressional Record, House, 1935, p. 9612).

Three days later, the House took SJR 131 back up. The floor opened with a speech made by U.S. Representative Lanham from Texas. Like the Senate authors, he centered his argument on the national significance of the Republic of Texas. "Every American may justly take pride" in the state of Texas because its revolutionaries were representative of nearly every state, he said (Congressional Record, House, 1935, p. 9872).

With the conclusion of his opening statements, representatives were allowed to challenge the bill. Many of the House members did not support the text's vague language. They wanted specific limitations on how the $3 million could be spent.

"The resolution is so wide open you could drive a pair of Texas steers right through it," said U.S. Representative Martin from Massachusetts (p. 9876).

On July 29, 1935, SJR 131 (as replaced by SJR 167) was signed by the Speaker of the House and enrolled (p. 12543). That same day, the Senate also confirmed its executive nomination of Cullen P. Thomas of Texas to serve as the United States Commissioner General for the Texas Centennial Exposition and Celebrations over the United States Texas Centennial Commission (Congressional Record, 1935, p. 12568).

Senate Joint Resolution 167 specified that the commissioner and his staff would be paid from the $3 million given by the bill and that money could not be withdrawn six months after the exhibition closed (United States Congress, 1935, p. 542).

The federal government passed other Texas Centennial bills. House Joint Resolution 335 exempted all products purchased from another country for the Dallas Exhibition from any tariff (United States Congress, 1935, p. 456). House Joint Resolution 307 gave the state of Texas ownership over any of the property purchased or created with federal Centennial funds. This included all monuments and artwork (United States Congress, 1935, p. 1137). The Dallas Exposition in Dallas received over $1 million from Congress.13 One of the federal government's main contributions to the exposition was the Negro Hall

13 Centennial News (and Centennial Cypress), 1935-1936, Correspondence.

at the Centennial Exhibition in Dallas. The building cost $500,000 (worth over $12 million today).[14]

STATEWIDE CELEBRATIONS

The photograph on the cover of the brand-new Centennial Review was striking.

White fabric—clumped like cotton balls—lined the peak of the miniature mountain erected on top of a Gonzales city parade float. The grainy black-and-white photograph couldn't capture the color of the Mexico pennant hanging from the mountains' side or the multi-patterned clothes of the band of passengers. Three men wearing sombreros and two women with their long hair pulled in braids, stood staring at the camera.

Directly above the photograph of the Mexican float, the words "Gonzales Fires Opening Gun" were printed across the front page in bold, black ink. This was the first edition of the "Centennial Review." The news feature, published November 21, marked the beginning of a year of local Centennial celebrations, some of which were funded by the Commission of Control.

The City of Gonzales was not the only community in Texas celebrating the Texas way of life. All across the state, people gathered together to remember the ideals that many of their great-great grandparents fought and died for.

Although the first gun in the Texas Revolution had been fired in Gonzales on October 2, 1835, the City commemorated the event with a parade and a ceremonial artillery shot on November 3. The six-day "jubilee" was attended by Governor Allred, Texas Attorney General McCraw, Congressman Kleberg, and 30,000 people.[15]

The Publicity Department would send employees to help cities organize Centennial Celebrations. These events mostly consisted of parades and commemoration ceremonies for the revealing of memorials and monuments gifted by the state. As the Director of the Publicity Department's Schools and Club Division, Edith Hamilton Beal traveled to towns across Texas and helped them prepare for local centennial celebrations by speaking to civic clubs, federated clubs and schools. As early as November 1935, she traveled to Midland and Abilene.[16]

Dale Miller, another employee of the Department of Publicity, submitted a travel expense invoice on November 21, 1935, for the time he spent in Huntsville. While there, he gave an address on the county's participation in Centennial celebrations at its County-Wide Civic Revival meeting.

Later, the City of Huntsville hosted an Indian celebration on New Year's Day in 1936. Ayres Compton, who worked for the Department of Publicity, covered the event and met with Huntsville Chamber of Commerce Secretary Bill Lawson.[17]

Since most of the statues for the Centennial took a significant amount of time to be completed, many dedication ceremonies were not held until after 1936.

The Texas State College for Women dedicated the Pioneer Women of Texas on Tuesday, December 6, 1938.[18]

Sabine County held a dedication for the Dick Dowling Memorial at Sabine Pass on May 22, 1938, at 3 p.m. The statue had been given to the county by the State of Texas. The event was hosted by the State U.D.C. Committee to Obtain Memorial Park at Sabine Pass.[19]

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14 Official Souvenir Guides, the Sarah Reveley Texas Centennial Collection.

15 Centennial Review, *Texas Centennial Review*, 1935-1936, Correspondence.

16 Accounts Paid, October 1935-June 1936, Correspondence.

17 Accounts Paid, October 16, 1935-December 23, 1935, Correspondence.

18 Correspondence: General, 1923-1964, James Frank Dobie Papers, 1923-1967.

19 Correspondence: Monuments & Centennial Celebration, July 1937-June 1938, James Frank Dobie Papers.

On November 3, 1938, the town of San Felipe de Austin held a ceremony for theunveiling of its Stephen F. Austin memorial. Governor Allred gave a speech of commemoration at the event.[20] Members of the Texas Advisory Board were also invited, and although Dobie was unable to attend the event, he said, "the program as printed strikes me as the most fitting I have seen connected with any of the Centennial enterprises."[21]

The statue not only honored the man widely regarded as the "Father of Texas" and credited for establishing the first lasting Anglo-Saxon settlement in Texas but also marked the historic town. In addition to being the home of Austin and the capital of his colony, San Felipe De Austin was also where the Consultation of San Felipe De Austin was held in 1835.

At the Consultation in 1835, the men present issued a statement saying that they would oppose the Mexican government if it did not respect the Constitution of 1824. The Declaration of the Consultation was issued on November 7, 1835. In part, it reads,

> The people of Texas, availing themselves of their natural rights, solemnly declare that they have taken up arms in defense of their rights and liberties which were threatened by the encroachments of military despots and in defense of the Republican principles of the federal constitution of Mexico of 1824. (Texas State Library and Archives Commission, 1835)

Colleges likewise participated in honoring 100 years of Texas. For instance, the University of Texas at Austin hosted a "considerable" Centennial Exposition. The Director of the Historical Exhibits used two cases of James Frank Dobie's "horn artifacts" to demonstrate the "phases of southwestern culture."[22] Although a detailed catalog of these "horn artifacts" was not included in Dobie's account of the University of Texas Centennial exhibition, his extensive research on longhorns suggests that these were the horns of longhorns or bison.

James Frank Dobie's research on the species led him to believe that longhorns were an integral symbol of the culture of Texas. He even became a leader of the preservation of this endangered species. Only five years after 1936, the longhorn was "more nearly extinct than the bison," according to a TIME Magazine article on Dobie's conservation efforts. In the article, Dobie was quoted to have said, "I do not believe that any kind of riding will pump virtue into a man like that in pursuit of wild, strong, might-horned cattle plunging for liberty or just walking like phalanxes of destiny towards the tail end of the world." The English professor wrote the book *The Longhorn* with the intention to "lift the Longhorn into the U.S. animal pantheon" by accumulating lore about the iconic animal (TIME, 1941).

POLITICS IN AUSTIN

Although the Texas Centennial presented an opportunity for Texas representatives to cash in on the outpouring of public spirit and gain approval from their constituents, they weren't the only ones affected by politics. The Board of Historians and the Commission of Control played the game as well. The Department of Interior even went so far as to describe the Texas Advisory Board's "process for receiving and vetting applications" for monuments and markers as "inherently political" (Wilson & Smith, 2017, p. 14). This was largely due to the authority of the Board of Control.

When the Texas Senate institutionalized House Bill 11 by making the Board of Control the overseer of all contracts for the Commission of Control, it gave bureaucratic interest authority over historical preservation efforts as well. For example, the Board of Control "stressed" to L. W. Kemp, James Frank

20 Correspondence: General, 1923-1964, James Frank Dobie Papers, 1923-1967.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

Dobie, and Paul Foik the importance of allocating "a minimum of $14,000 to each of the 31 senatorial districts in Texas" (p. 14). The pressure from the state, in addition to those of private groups, encouraged the board members to make plans strategically. L.W. Kemp said in a letter to Dobie on September 18:

> We must admit that we have all played some 'politics'. In your letter you wrote that you were in favor of adding $5,000 to Huntsville because it deserves to be added and at the same time because it 'might win over Beretta and Elkins to our side.' I feel toward your Beretta the same as I do toward Perry. I do not want to win him over. If you want to further cater to Beretta, vote for a $50,000 German pioneer monument at New Braunfels. Berretta, without waiting for our recommendation, has pledged himself to Dielman to vote for it.[23]

The ability to choose which sculptors were hired was not deemed to be within the scope of the Advisory Board's powers.

Borglum had written letters to Kemp and Dobie outlining projects that he would be willing to work on. These included the Alamo, Gonzales, and Goliad. Although both Kemp and Dobie seemed in support of Borglum, the decision of which sculptor to hire was ultimately left up to the Commission of Control.

Several of the Commission Board members opposed his being commissioned for the Centennial because of his involvement with the Stone Mountain Confederate Monument in Georgia, according to Borglum. On February 5, Borglum sent a five-page letter to John V. Singleton, the Chief of the Board of Control, in which he attempted to refute the "rumors" circulating about him.

He began by explaining that in 1925, three men from the Stone Mountain board offered him $200,000 (over $4 million today) to leave the country and travel for a year. According to Borglum, they intended to steal a portion of the Stone Mountain project's funds while he was away. When he refused, they launched a campaign to slander his reputation. Borglum publicly confronted the man at the next committee meeting and had to "knock the scoundrel down."

By the spring of 1936, Borglum had grown tired of the Board of Control dragging its feet. He wanted a definitive answer on the status of his commission. His first letter of response to the Commission's inquiry about his work had been delivered back in July 1935. Since then, he had sent several letters to Dobie and Kemp and even displayed one of his models for Lieutenant Governor Walter Woodul and other members of the Commission to view in Dallas.

"I am perfectly certain that I might as well bark up a tree as to give time for these kind of letters. But I'm getting a little bit fed up [with] the left-handed methods that are flourishing in Austin," said the sculptor in a letter to Dobie.

Instead of hiring sculptors by reputation or review of a design solely, the Commission decided to review all the applicants' monument models before extending any contracts. The Board of Control would then hire those from the applicant pool who demonstrated the best idea and most appealing design. Borglum was unwilling to participate.[24]

THE TEXAS ADVISORY BOARD

Lieutenant Governor Woodul appointed L.W. Kemp, Paul Foik, and James Frank Dobie to serve on the Texas Advisory Board. These three men represented a wide range of experiences and philosophies.

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23 Correspondence: Monuments, June 1935-November 1936, James Frank Dobie Papers, 1923-1967.

24 Correspondence: Borglum, Gutzon 1935-1936, James Frank Dobie Papers, 1923-1967.

L.W. Kemp, an entrepreneur and oil businessman, spent his free time as a self-appointed Texas historian. For nearly 10 years, he researched the locations of the graves of soldiers who died in the Battle of San Jacinto.[25] This devotion to the cause of the Centennial was most likely why he was chosen to chair the board (Gilchrist,1976/1995).

Father Paul Foik was an ordained Catholic priest from Canada. He had been a librarian at the University of Notre Dame, until the order of the Congregation of the Holy Cross reassigned him in 1924 to serve at St. Edward's College in Houston. He used his doctorate in History to research Catholicism in Texas (Bresie,1952/2019). While on the Advisory Board, he continued his work on Texas history. The Commission of Control had him write a Catholic history book for the Centennial. It was "two volumes of the history of the Catholic Church in Texas."[26]

J. Frank Dobie had a passion for description, a flair for adventure, and a strong belief in the vibrancy of history. He grew up in Live Oak County, where his family owned a ranch. He served in World War I, was a member of the Folklore Society, and taught English at the University of Texas at Austin (Abernethy, 1976/ 2020).

He summarized the three men's differences in a letter he sent to Kemp on September 11, 1935. He said,

> I am writing you in all friendliness, but I realize that there is a fundamental gulf between the ways our minds work. I live more by imagination; you more by literal facts. At the same time, I think we can get nearer together on relative values…Father Foik will vote straight through with you any way you vote. That makes two votes for one mind. I have but one vote, but I also have a mind.[27]

Despite their differences, the Advisory Board of Texas History and the Commission of Control accomplished a great deal. According to the United States Department of the Interior, between 1935 and 1939, the state built 1,100 "buildings, monuments, and markers" (Wilson & Smith, 2017).

DIGGING UP BONES

On May 27, 1938, the remains of the "only American mother with two sons ranking as brigadier general" were reburied in the Texas State Cemetery in Austin. The funeral oration was given by the Chairman of the Centennial Commission, the Lieutenant Governor Walter Woodul (Kemp, 1938).

The original grave of Frances F. Lenoir McCulloch in Maypearl, Texas, had been in disrepair "for years." Despite being the mother of a San Jacinto and a Confederate general, her resting place had been used to store garbage and unwanted items. When the property's fence fell, "hundreds of farm fowls and hogs" began traipsing through the cemetery grounds.[28]

Nearly forgotten and apparently deemed unremarkable by McCulloch's descendants, the dead woman's epitaph could still be read by Mr. R.E. Sparkman from Italy, Texas, when he first found it.

It said,

> Frances F. Lenoir McCulloch, 1779-1866, aged 87 yrs., 10 mos., and 27 days. Wife of Major Alexander McCulloch, mother of 12 children, devoted wife, affectionate mother,

25 Lists of San Jacinto Veteran's Graves, undated, James Frank Dobie Papers.

26 Centennial News (and Centennial Cypress), 1935-1936, Correspondence, 1934-1938, Correspondence, Records, Texas Commission of Control for Texas Centennial Celebrations. Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

27 Correspondence: Monuments, June 1935-November 1936, James Frank Dobie Papers, 1923-1967.

28 Correspondence: Monuments & Centennial Celebration, July 1937-June 1938, James Frank Dobie Papers, 1923-1967.

consecrated Christian, member of the Methodist Church 47 years (L.W. Kemp, 1938).

L.W. Kemp, who wrote to Mr. Sparkman, inquiring about the grave's condition, was given an uncertain answer. "You wrote about taking care of the grave," he said, "I doubt if this can ever be done on account of its location."

The damage may have indeed been too great, and McCulloch was given a new headstone and buried with her son.

McCulloch and her son are just two examples of Texans who the Advisory Board found and honored with a proper headstone, grave marker, or new gravesite. In 1935, the graves of many Texas heroes had been neglected.

"It is thought that the graves of many of them have been hopelessly lost, while others are buried in unmarked but known graves," said the Board of Texas Historians in a Report on the lists of San Jacinto Veteran's Graves.[29]

Although the hunt for veteran graves was spearheaded by L.W. Kemp, on behalf of the Advisory Board, his actions were part of the broader goal of the Texas Centennial to preserve and honor the past.

In 1934, Texas history was in a dire situation and at risk of being "completely lost to posterity, for, as someone…aptly expressed it, 'Texas boasts more of her glorious history and her martyred heroes and yet does less to preserve their historic shrines and to honor their illustrious dead than: any other State.'" This statement was included in Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 26, which passed in the Texas House on February 25, 1934. The resolution was to create a building that would function as a "repository for relics" and "historical data" (Texas House Journal, 1934, p. 457).

Courtesy of The Historical Marker Database. "Frances and Benjamin McCulloch Marker." Photographed by Richard Denny.

The Advisory Board, called the Board of Texas Historians, was also required by HB 11 to "investigate" and determine whether a historical event, place, or person was worthy to receive funding (HB 11, Conference Committee Report, 1935, p. 9).

As a means of fulfilling this responsibility, many hearings were held at the Capitol of Texas in Austin. Delegates, representing historical associations, counties, and organizations, were invited to testify and explain their proposed historical monuments and general requests. For instance, the Stephen Fuller Austin Park Association attended a hearing held on the Texas Senate floor to request a memorial to Stephen F. Austin at San Felipe De Austin. The association's memorial was approved and given $14,000, worth over $300,000 today.

This became a kind of competition between the different interest groups. Cities and towns were eager to prove they deserved a larger portion of the state's Centennial funding. The general appeal of these "monuments, markers, museums, and replicas" was that they "were a way to drive heritage tourism from the Central Exposition in Dallas across Texas," according to the Department of the Interior (Wilson & Smith, 2017, p. 13).

29 Reports to Commission of Control for Texas Centennial Celebrations, June 1935-June 1937, James Frank Dobie Papers.

Dobie thought many of those who testified were unreasonable. He said,

> The bulk of requests—the requests mounting to the much talked of millions—have mainly come from communities that are merely joining in the national Democratic movement to grab from the public barrel while it is still open—a movement that is making America a nation of pap-suckers instead of upstanding individuals like Sam Houston, Jim Bowie, Brit Bailey, Charlie Goodnight, Jack Hays and the general run of real Texians whom we are supposed to be honoring.[30]

To comply with HB 11's requirement that local communities be consulted in the planning process, the Advisory Board worked closely with Centennial County Advisory Boards. These Advisory Boards were established in each county in Texas. The 10- to 20-member board researched historical events, people, and places within their respective counties.[31]

Their findings were reported to the Texas Advisory Board, which would give a "yes" or "no" to a project recommendation. For instance, the Advisory Board of Matagorda County evaluated the Grimes Hide and Tallow Factory's historical data and concluded that it should not have a marker.[32]

Kemp agreed with Matagorda's determination because it was the Advisory Board's policy to only award markers for places with "definite information" and "concrete facts connected with its history."[33]

The Advisory Board used the data it had gathered from hearings and letters and correspondences with counties to draft a report outlining the number of historical monuments, markers, and statues that the

Courtesy of the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History. "Foard County: Margaret Town Site." Calendar with Photos of Texas Historical Markers, Sarah Reveley Collection.

Commission should fund. Members had intended to draft only one document, but disagreements necessitated a minority and majority report. The majority report was sent to the Commission of Control in October.[34]

In November of 1935, the unpaid Advisory Board realized it needed more help. They asked the Board of Control to hire an expert to aid in authenticating historical information and writing marker's inscriptions. The Board of Control hired Dr. Lota M. Spell. She was a well-known researcher but not an expert in Texas History. She had earned her doctorate in English from the University of Texas at Austin in 1923 (Wilson & Smith, 2017).

THE MAJORITY AND MINORITY REPORTS

John Hart had been a student at the University of Texas at Austin. He enjoyed writing and was the president of the North and East Texas Press Association while working for the Commerce Journal in 1936. As the great-great grandson of a veteran of the Battle of San Jacinto, James Walker, he was passionate about the genealogy of his family. Raised with the stories of his great great-grandpa's adventures flooding

30 Appropriation Report, Historical Markers and Monuments, October I, 1935, James Frank Dobie Papers, 1923-1967, p. 8.
31 Correspondence: General, 1923-1964, James Frank Dobie Papers, 1923-1967.
32 Correspondence: Monuments, June 1935-November 1936, Frank Dobie Papers, 1923-1967.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.

his ears, he felt that the history of his family—and all Texans—should receive greater attention. A close friend of his had taken one of James Frank Dobie's classes in college.

In March of 1936, John Hart wrote a letter to the professor in which he expanded on his love for Texas:

> All through high school and college I felt this section was neglected by the makers of textbooks on literature. No one has yet described to my complete satisfaction the delicious aroma permeating the air around oil mills in the autumn. I have yet to find pictured in words that ecstasy of pride we native Texans feel.[35]

In many ways, Hart's wish for the culture of his region of Texas to be recognized and shared with the world was the very purpose of the Centennial, but this was no easy task for the Advisory Board. The state represented many regions, each with their own flavor of Texas culture and heritage.

Even in modernity, the question of how to rightly interpret Texas History persists. In 1968, T.R. Fehrenbach wrote *Lone Star* for the very purpose of tackling this "void" and to "correlate the whole." Fehrenbach said,

> Texans have continually tried to capture the imperial vision that created the broad plantations, giant oil corporations, and baronial cattle spreads, as well as the hundreds of thousands of frontier farms. But the state is so wide and varied, and so rich in ceaseless action, that the student trying to grasp the "feel" and meaning of Texas in American history is often baffled. (1968/2000, p. xv)

The Board faced another dilemma. There was no precedent for it to follow, since the legislature had never before made a "definite effort…to conserve the priceless historical relics which are the heritage of Texas" (Texas House Journal, 1934, p. 457).

The Texas Centennial would also set a major milestone for future generations in another capacity. Texas was the first state to "to record its historic development in the form of art productions," said Gutzon Borglum.[36]

The job of Kemp, Dobie, and Foik essentially necessitated them to determine exactly what Texas' cultural identity was and how it should be depicted. These two questions affected nearly every part of the planning process. From choosing markers to deciding on the size of a statue, the board clarified, in many ways, what it means to be a Texan.

About a month before the Advisory Board's report would be submitted, Dobie informed his colleagues that he wanted to increase funding for the statues of Ewen Cameron, Thomas S. Lubbock, and John C. Hays to about $40,000—over $900,000 today.

This demand for the exact sum of $40,000 was influenced by the recommendation of Gutzon Borglum. Throughout the fall of 1935, Dobie frequently corresponded with the well-known sculptor asking for advice. Borglum had initially been contacted by the Commission of Control to create Centennial monuments in July of 1935.

Borglum had informed Dobie that $40,000 would be a necessity for large monuments that are both "unique, illustrative, and an honor and a credit to the state."[37] Dobie believed that these statues were "fundamental" to the story of Texas and if the majority would not agree to give them a larger monument, then he would write a minority report. The other two members were unwilling to make this change. Neither the majority nor minority exceeded $777,500.

35 Correspondence: General, 1923-1964, James Frank Dobie Papers, James Frank Dobie Papers, 1923-1967.

36 Correspondence: Borglum, Gutzon 1935-1936, James Frank Dobie Papers, 1923-1967.

37 Correspondence: Borglum, Gutzon 1935-1936, James Frank Dobie Papers,1923-1967.

They both gave $10,000 to the grave markers of Texas Revolution veterans and $100,000 to historical markers across the state.

The minority and majority reports also both used the 1935 Senatorial Districts as a framework for distributing historical monuments, markers, and statues, with most districts getting at least one. Exceptions included those districts that already had a memorial funded by another part of HB 11. For instance, District 11, which contained Dallas County, was not given a monument (Kemp & Foik, 1935).

According to the majority, the reason for this was that the Centennial Celebration was funded by "all the taxpayers of Texas." Therefore, they believed that every community should benefit from its work.[38]

Dobie disagreed and thought that the Advisory Board needed to put more emphasis on the border and East Texas regions because the majority of the "Anglo-American population" lived there at the time of the revolution.

"Nevertheless, the Advisory Board has sought to give all sections of the state representation," Dobie said.[39]

The main difference between the two reports was how the remaining $667,500 was divided. Dobie added 15 projects to the 89 listed in the original report. The additional memorials were financed by reducing many of the monument's funds to $1,000.

For example, the statues of Collin McKinney and 42 others were given $1,000. This allowed the monument to Charles Goodnight to get $2,500, while the monument to Ewen Cameron and the Mier Men were granted $40,000 respectively.

In the majority report, the funds were distributed more equally. For example, 15 historical figures, including Collin McKinney, were given $14,000. Eighteen statues were awarded $1,000 each, and only four monuments were given $25,000 or more.

From Dobie's perspective, Kemp and Foik viewed the Centennial as a celebration of the "biographies of men who fought in battles, who were leaders in conventions and who were elected to office."[40] These are important, Dobie said, but are not representative of the totality of Texas history. The 100th anniversary was also about "the currents that have contributed to the culture and civilization of our state." These included "factors like cotton and cattle that have changed the ways of life…inspired literature as well as laws." Dobie saw the Centennial as a chance to persuade Texans to "regard history." He believed that people needed to have their imaginations kindled to care about the past. Practically, this meant that large statues should only be made for those who possess an aura of intrigue. He further explained himself when he said,

> I hope that it is not immoral or unpatriotic to prefer a good story to a sermon—even to a sermon that is good.[41] We may esteem a man without finding him very interesting. Jim Bowie riding alligators, wielding the Bowie knife… fighting Indians and looking for a fantastic lost mine at the same time, then dying in the Alamo—a death as brave as his whole life—this Bowie could be immensely interesting in bronze.[42]

Although Dobie had no issue with people like Sidney Sherman and Collin McKinney having a statue, there was no need for the state to spend a large portion of

38 Reports to Commission of Control for Texas Centennial Celebrations, June 1935-June 1937, James Frank Dobie Papers, 1923-1967, p. 2.

39 Appropriations Report, Historical Markers and Monuments, October 1, 1935, James Frank Dobie Papers, 1923-1967, p. 13.

40 Appropriation Report, Historical Markers and Monuments, October 1, 1935, James Frank Dobie Papers, 1923-1967, p. 12.

41 Note: This sentence is crossed out in Dobie's personal papers, but it was done in pencil, so the typewriter block print is still visible beneath. For this reason, it may not be in other copies of the minority report.

42 Appropriation Report, Historical Markers and Monuments, October 1, 1935, James Frank Dobie Papers, 1923-1967, p. 12.

money on them, he believed, when even historians tended to gloss over their accomplishments.[43]

On the other hand, Kemp believed that Texas "heroes" should have more accomplishments than men like Sirengo and Goodnight, he explained in a letter to Dobie. He did not care to prioritize "cowboys, modern Texas Rangers, and cattle drivers" in the Centennial Celebration for this reason. He was not embarrassed by knowing next to nothing about "cowmen." They were not historical figures, and he couldn't respect them because many of them had acquired money from "stealing either land or cattle."[44]

Nevertheless, Dobie was convinced that the days of the cowboy could not be so easily forgotten. The folklore inspired by the range had become part of the backbone of the state's culture. These cowmen—their values, customs, and social institutions—were Texan in every sense of the word.[45]

This difference was so "fundamental" for Dobie that he broke apart from the group and risked his friendship with Kemp to do so. Texans like Ewan Cameron, he believed, should be remembered as heroes. Ewan Cameron is most notably known for his involvement in the Mier Expedition. He was a Scottish immigrant who served in the Texas Revolution. During the days of the Texas Republic, he helped defend South Texas from Indian raids and was a well-known cowboy (Cutrer, 1952/2022). The minority report was rejected, and the monument to Ewan Cameron was never built. "I have been ruled pretty much out of the game," Dobie said.

Borglum was a sympathizer of Dobie's efforts and added the following postscript to one of his letters:

> It pleased me very much recently on being told that you were still acting on the historical advisory committee. For God's sake don't leave it! Without reflecting on anybody, you're the only man with a sense of great art or a clear appreciation of the true spirit that made and is still a part of Texas.[46]

Courtesy of the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History. "Photograph of Ben Milam Statue by Bryant Baker 1937," Sarah Reveley Collection.

A copy of the majority report was given to each County Advisory Board in Texas (except for those that didn't show interest); to each daily newspaper in cities with a population greater than 10,000; to each chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas; and to the Sons of the Republic of Texas, according to Kemp.[47]

43 Ibid., pp. 9-10.

44 Correspondence: Monuments, June 1935-Nov. 1936, James Frank Dobie Papers, 1923-1967.

45 Appropriation Report, Historical Markers and Monuments, October 1, 1935, James Frank Dobie Papers, 1923-1967, p. 12.

46 Correspondence: Borglum, Gutzon, 1935-1936, James Frank Dobie Papers, 1923-1967.

47 Correspondence: General, 1923-1964, James Frank Dobie Papers, 1923-1967.

TEXAS CENTENNIAL MONUMENTS[48]

1. La Salle Monument (Indianola): *Funded by the Texas Government*.
2. San Jacinto Monument: *Funded with the help of the United States Government.*
3. First Shot of the Texas Revolution Monument (Gonzales County): *Funded by the Texas Government.*
4. Erath Memorial Arch: *Funded by the Texas Government.*
5. Jackson County Monument (At Edna): *Funded by the Texas Government*.
6. Matagorda County Monument: *Funded by the Texas Government.*
7. San Patricio de Hibernia Monument (San Patricio): *Funded by the Texas Government.*
8. Lipantitlán Monument (San Patricio): *Funded by the Texas Government.*
9. Soldiers of Refugio Grave Monuments (San Patricio): *Funded by the Texas Government.*
10. Misión Nuestra Señora de Refugio Monument (Refugio): *Funded by the Texas Government.*
11. Amon B. King's Men Monument (Refugio): *Funded by the Texas Government.*
12. Felipe Henrique Neri, Baron de Bastrop (Bastrop): *Funded by the Texas Government*.
13. Cenotaph (San Antonio): *Funded by the Texas Government.*
14. Town of Scottsville: *Funded jointly by the Texas Government and "relatives and friends."*
15. Agua Dulce Monument (Nueces County): *Funded by the Texas Government.*
16. Juan De Padilla (Amarillo): *Funded by the Texas Government and the Texas Knights of Columbus.*
17. James Gillaspie (Huntsville): *Funded by the State of Texas and W.O.B Gillaspie.*[49]
18. Presidio del Norte*: Funded by the State of Texas.*
19. Marion County Monument: *Funded by the Texas Government.*
20. Victoria County Monument: *Funded by the Texas Government.*
21. Mier Expedition and Dawson's Men Monument and Tomb (La Grange): *Funded by the Texas Government.*
22. Shelby County Monument (Center): *Funded by the Texas Government*.
23. Jasper County Monument: *Funded by the Texas Government*.
24. Washington County Monument: *Funded by the Texas Government.*
25. Sabine County Monument (Hemphill): *Funded by the Texas Government*.
26. McMahan's Chapel Monument (Sabine): *Funded by the Texas Government*.
27. Dick Dowling and Men Monument (Jefferson): *Funded by the Texas Government*.
28. Liberty County Monument: *Funded by the Texas Highway Department*.
29. Pilgrim Predestinarian Regular Baptist Church Monument (Near Elkhart): *Funded by the Texas Government*.
30. Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Van Zandt (Canton): *Funded by the United States Government* .[50]

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48 Note: this list and the following three were taken from The Texas Advisory Board's Majority Report and fact-checked with the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form written by Wilson & Smith, and the Historical Marker Database.

49 Not included in the Majority Report.

50 Note: being funded by the United States could still mean that there was some contribution of state funding as well.

31. Fort Inglish Site Monument (Bonham): *Funded by the Texas Government*.
32. Colorado Monument (Columbus): *Funded by the Texas Government*.
33. Henry Smith Monument (Brazoria): *Funded by the United States Government*.
34. Mission Nuestra Señora del Refugio Monument (Calhoun): *Funded by the Texas Government.*
35. Dewitt County Monument (Cuero): *Funded by the Texas Government.*
36. Robert Jones Rivers Monument (Georgetown): *Funded by the Texas Government*.
37. Spanish Fort Town Monument (Montague County): *Funded by the Texas Government.*
38. Fort Griffin Monument: *Funded by the United States Government*.
39. John C. Muesebach Monument (Fredericksburg): *Funded by the Texas Government*
40. El Camino Real Monument (El Paso County): *Funded by the Texas Government*.
41. Thomas S. Lubbock Monument: *Funded by the Texas Government*.
42. Hank Smith Monument (Hank Smith Park in Crosby County): *Funded by the United States Government*.
43. General R. A. Mackenzie Monument (Plainview): *Funded by the United States Government*.
44. Erath Memorial Arch (Stephenville): *Funded by the Texas Government*
45. Original Site of Villa De Laredo Monument (Laredo): *Funded by the Texas Government.*

TEXAS CENTENNIAL STATUES[51]

1. Jim Bowie (Texarkana): *Funded by the Texas Government.*
2. Thomas J. Rusk (Henderson): *Funded by the United States Government.*
3. James Pinckney Henderson (San Augustine): *Funded by the Texas Government.*
4. Henry Smith (Brazoria): *Funded by the United States Government.*
5. Ben Milam (San Antonio): *Funded by the United States Government.*
6. Moses Austin (San Antonio): *Funded by the United States Government.*
7. David Crocket (Crockett): *Funded by the Texas Government.*
8. Jose Antonio Navarro (Corsicana): *Funded by the United States Government.*
9. David G. Burnett (Clarksville): *Funded by the Texas Government.*
10. James B. Bonham (Bonham): *Funded by the United States Government.*
11. Collin McKinney (Mckinney): *Funded by the Texas Government.*
12. Dr. George Washington Hill (Navarro): *Funded by the Texas Government.*
13. Stephen F. Austin (San Felipe): *Funded by the United States Government.*
14. Sidney Sherman (Galveston): *Funded by the Texas government.*
15. Mirabeau B. Lamar (Richmond): *Funded by the United States Government.*
16. Peter H. Bell (Belton): *Not clear*
17. Anson Jones (Jones County): *Funded by the Texas Government.*
18. John O. Meusebach (Fredericksburg): *Funded by the United States Government.*

51 The Texas Advisory Board had listed a German Pioneer Statue; however, this ended up getting funded by a private organization, the Monument Association for the German Pioneers of Texas, Inc.

19. George C. Childress (Washington on the Brazos): *Funded by the Texas Government.*
20. Richard Ellis (Waxahachie): *Funded by the Texas Government.*
21. R.E.B Baylor Statue: *Funded by the Texas Government.*
22. Pioneer Woman (Texas Woman's University Denton, Texas): *Funded by the United States government.*

RESTORATIONS AND OTHER EXPENDITURES

1. The Old Stone Fort (Nacogdoches)
2. Sam Houston Park
3. Constructing a replica of Fort Parker near Groesbeck
4. Washington State Park
5. Completing monument at Valasco
6. Elizabet Ney Studio (Austin)
7. Constructed replica of Fort Croghan (Burnet)
8. Fort Richardson
9. Fort Belknap (Young County)
10. Purchasing land and restoring San Saba Presidio (near Menard)
11. Camp Colorado Replica
12. Paying off debt on the "Coffee Mill" Memorial Building (Fredericksburg)
13. Repairing one building at the Fort Concho (San Angelo)
14. Archeological Museum (At Sul Ross State Teachers College at Alpine)
15. Enlarging Archeological Museum Building at West Texas State Teachers College (Canyon)

TOTAL NUMBER OF PROJECTS NOT LISTED[52]

1. Historical Markers: 495
2. Highway Markers: 264
3. Grave Markers: 273

LOOKING FORWARD

The past isn't always just the past. Texans have another important anniversary coming up.

With the Texas Bicentennial nearing in 2036, it is crucial to the future of Texas that the people of this state not only recognize the significance of this event but take the necessary measures to celebrate 200 years of freedom from an authoritarian government.

Texas has "four legislative sessions to get things through," said Jeff Salmon, the Director of Frontier Texas.[53]

Events of this scale—such as the Olympics and World Cup—can take about 10 years' worth of advertising to secure a large attendance and build the necessary infrastructure. With only 11 years left to plan a Bicentennial Celebration fit for the world stage, the state will have to make its plans efficiently, he said.

"Texas is at a very interesting place in its history," Donald Frazier said. "Instead of having to create an identity, in 2036, we're having to either rethink that brand, modify that brand, maybe rebrand."[54]

Since 1936, Texas has seen a lot of changes. The population, for one, has rapidly grown since the Centennial. In 1930, there were just more than 5 million citizens, while in 2020, there were more than 29 million people (U.S. Census, 2020).

52 List from the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form by Wilson & Smith.

53 J. Salmon, personal communication, 2025.

54 D. Frazier, personal communication, 2025.

The state is currently the eighth largest economy in the world and is still known as a land of opportunity. Texas has the second largest legal immigrant population in America, with the top three regions of origin being Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Texas Legislative Study, 2024).

The Bicentennial "is a great opportunity to coalesce that Texas identity that right now is kind of getting overwhelmed by change," Frazier said.

These last 100 years need to be accommodated for, and new Texans must see how they have and can continue to contribute to the story of Texas.

"We need a shared identity," he said. "If we're all looking to the same…star we can actually do a lot of healing and…resist attempts to fracture and destroy."

Only by appealing to "the universal truths" adopted by every Texan, no matter what country they were born in, will the Bicentennial properly represent its history.

The people in this state have "a yearning to live free, a yearning to pursue…happiness and…a yearning for human thriving," Frazier said. "If we can show how Texas can deliver that then we have a product."

BICENTENNIAL LEGISLATION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Texas Bicentennial Commission should be required to adopt a mission for the Bicentennial, so that legislators and Texans can know what they are paying for.

2. Lawmakers should make the 1836 Committee an advisor to the Bicentennial Commission. It would function like the Texas Advisory Board of Texas Historians. Current legislation, SB 1350 (2025), does require that the Bicentennial Commission have a historian appointed to the board, but considering the success of precedence, the state should create a separate advisory board to give greater feedback. Furthermore, since the 1836 Project has already contributed to Texas history education, these members would be able to build on previous work.

3. The Legislature should establish an additional advisory board of travel and tourism, which would make recommendations to the Bicentennial Commission.

4. The Bicentennial appropriation bill, which should be passed during the 90th Legislative Session, should stipulate that every year, a portion of the surplus tax revenue be set aside and transferred into the "Bicentennial Fund." Money could also be taken from the State's General Revenue.

5. New historical markers should be created for important events in the last 100 years. ■

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