
TEXAS

ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHT

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1800 North Congress Austin, Texas 78701

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Secession steps

Texas sided with the Confederacy



Alamo Secession flag, ca. 1861

Courtesy the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History,
The University of Texas at Austin

The seeds of secession in Texas were planted in the fall of 1860 after Abraham Lincoln's election to the presidency. South Carolina left the Union in December 1860, followed by five of the lower Southern states. Now it was Texas's turn, reasoning that "her institutions and geographical position established the strongest ties between her and other slave-holding States of the confederacy (Ordinance of Secession)."

"All political power is inherent in the people. That power, I assert, you now represent," stated Oran M. Roberts, Presiding Officer, in his opening remarks to delegates at the Secession Convention, January 28, 1861. There was little debate as the motion to secede eventually passed by a 166-8 margin. However, perhaps heeding Roberts's words — "all political power is inherent in the people" — the Convention called for a popular vote to determine the secession decision. This was a step not taken by the previous five seceding states.

On February 23, Texans formally agreed with their representatives, voting to leave the Union by a 44,317-13,020 vote count. But even before Texans went to the polls, the Convention's committee on public safety authorized the seizure of all federal property in Texas, including the arsenal in San Antonio. This forced the evacuation of the almost 3,000 federal troops in Texas. The actions of the committee on public safety made the popular vote seem insignificant.

Following the departure of the federal troops, this flag was flown over the Alamo for one week. It was later presented to the Guadalupe Rangers, Company D, which became part of the Fourth Texas Infantry also known as Hood's Brigade. The flag was constructed of light wool fabric and pieced together with hand-stitching by women from Seguin.

The Bullock Museum is a non-collecting museum and different artifacts are installed daily. This is one of several artifacts recently installed. It can be viewed on the second floor.

DID YOU KNOW?

U.S. Army Col. Robert E. Lee was in command of Fort Mason on the western frontier of Texas when secession was declared in February 1861. Lee and other federal troops escaped possible capture by Confederate Texas officials in San Antonio on their way east. In April, Lee was offered command of the Union troops, but his beloved Virginia had just seceded and he resigned his command from the U.S. Army on April 20, 1861.



Next issue: June 14, 2013
