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Noble-Minded Ideals

By James M. Decker

The date was February 28, 1836. Texas settlers were engaged in revolt against Mexico, engaging in several battles with government forces over the previous five months. Around 185 men, led by William B. Travis and James Bowie, were under siege at a mission in San Antonio called the Alamo. And at Washington-on-the-Brazos, near present-day Brenham, forty-one men arrived as delegates to a convention to discuss Texas independence.

The convention opened on March 1 and a committee was appointed to draft a Declaration of Independence. Things would move quickly. The U.S. Declaration of Independence was debated by the Continental Congress, drafted by Thomas Jefferson, and then revised over a period of months, prior to its adoption on July 4, 1776. In Texas, it was a different story. The convention opened on March 1 and a drafting committee produced a document literally overnight. Committee leader George Childress probably arrived at the convention with a pre-written rough draft, to make this possible.

On March 2, the convention adopted the declaration and declared Texas' independence (the matter of independence would not practically be settled until Texas forces defeated Santa Anna's army at San Jacinto on April 21). If you have never

read the Texas Declaration, I encourage you to do so. It is a 185-year old document that is plainspoken and readable in a modern sense. It is clearly inspired by the U.S. Declaration but is also original. It lodges numerous complaints against the Mexican government, from the general to the very specific, some of which were rarely discussed in the province before the revolution.

Some historians view portions of the Declaration as a laundry list of dubious grievances, simply beefing up the independence cause. For example, the declaration complains that Mexico "has failed to establish any public system of education," but schools were not a major priority at this point in the violent frontier province. I see it as more forward thinking. The delegates were not thinking only about the present, they were also thinking about the future and what Texas would need to develop and grow as a successful society. They knew that the despotic Santa Anna was unlikely to cooperate on those matters, leaving independence as the best recourse.

As we see public education constantly debated in the Texas Legislature, with many Texas

elected leaders openly hostile to public education, this clause is particularly striking. Our revolutionary heroes saw public education, financed by "the public domain," as a cornerstone of an ideal society. It was something worth fighting and dying for, along with national security, freedom of arms, absolute freedom of religion, and trial by jury.

The 60 men who signed the Declaration (and our other revolutionary heroes) have complicated personal stories. Only three (Lorenzo de Zavala, Jose Antonio Navarro, and Jose Francisco Ruiz), were native born within the borders of Texas. The rest were immigrants. Perhaps as many as 50 had entered Texas illegally, after the infamous Law of April 6, 1830 which barred Anglo immigration into Texas. Many had checkered pasts. Some would have inglorious futures. Several would die soon. Others would fail in business or were beset by bankruptcy, personal problems, or controversy. But this is the real world, not a Disney movie. Heroes are complicated humans, like you and me. It makes them heroes no less. A complicated, flawed hero rising to the challenge makes heroism more attainable to others, rather than

Death Notices

Dyess

Royce Dean Dyess, age 87, passed away peacefully on Saturday, February 27, 2021, in his home surrounded by his loving family.

Royce is survived by his wife of 63 years, Frances Dyess of Robert Lee; his 5 children, Larry Dyess and wife, Gwen of Bronte, Barbara Utley and Husband Billy of Sweetwater, Carla Wojtek and husband, Harvey of Robert Lee, Scotty Dyess and wife Angela of Houston and Lesa Dyess of San Angelo; special friend, James

Chew of Wichita Falls, Texas; sister, Wanda Jo Morgan of San Angelo; brother, Michael J. Dyess and wife Shirley of San Angelo; sister-in-law, Wanda (Webb) Dyess of Blackwell and sister, Janice Rae Johnson and husband Danny of Ivanhoe, Texas; and brother, Curtis Lynn Dyess of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. He is also survived by 13 grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren, and numerous nieces and nephews.

Services were held at 2 pm, Wednesday, March 3, 2021, at the First Baptist Church in Bronte, with burial following in Fairview Cemetery in Bronte. Arrangements were under the direction of Johnson's Funeral Home in San Angelo, Texas.

NRCS to offer assistance in response to Texas winter storm damage

In response to the winter storms that hit Texas in February 2021, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is offering farmers and ranchers technical and financial assistance to repair and replace certain damaged conservation practices.

NRCS is accepting applications for its Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) for the recovery measures listed below:

- Animal Mortality and Animal Mortality Facility
- High Tunnel Systems
- Irrigation System and Irrigation Pipeline
- Livestock Pipeline
- Obstruction Removal
- Pumping Plant
- Roofs and Covers
- Waste Storage Facility
- Water Well
- Watering facility

NRCS accepts conservation program applications year-round; however, applications for 2021 winter storm recovery funding must be submitted by one of three deadlines: March 5, March 19, or April 2, 2021.

After each deadline, applications will be ranked and approved as soon as possible so conservation work can begin. Producers must submit a separate application by one of the ranking deadlines for this disaster sign-up to be considered.

Farmers and ranchers negatively impacted by winter weather are encouraged to contact their local NRCS office to seek assistance. Find contact information for local NRCS offices at www.farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

Area Churches

Invite You to Worship

Bronte

Bronte Church of Christ
 PO Box 346
 118 S. Jefferson • Bronte
 Sun. 10 am & 6 pm, Wed. 7 pm

Central Baptist Church
 324 S. Franklin • Bronte
 (325) 473-4811
 Dale Patterson, Pastor
 Sun. 10 am Sunday School
 11 am & 5 pm Worship

First Baptist Church
 424 S. Washington • Bronte
 (325) 473-2331 • Pastor George Cooper
 Sunday 9:45 am Sunday School,
 10:55 am Worship, 6 pm Bible
 Study & Worship
 Wednesday 6 pm RA's & GA's,
 6:30 pm Youth & Adults

First United Methodist Church
 Corner of Washington & Holmes
 Bronte
 (325) 473-3281

Rev. Stacy Sprinkle, Pastor
 Sun. 10:00 am Sunday School
 11:00 am Worship

St. James Catholic Church
 215 N. Washington, Bronte
 (325) 365-2687

Rev. Yesu Mulakaleti, Jr., Pastor
 Sunday Bilingual Mass 8 am
4C Cowboy Church
 Drawer R • Bronte • (325) 895-4080

Robert Lemmond, Pastor
 Sunday, 10:30 am - Texas Theater
 Wednesday Bible Study 6 pm -
 4C Feedlot Youth Building

Robert Lee

Bible Baptist Church
 PO Box 938 • 9th & Austin
 Sunday 10 am Sunday School, 11 am and
 5 pm Worship, Wed 5 pm Bible Study

Emmanuel Pentecostal
 PO Box 794 • 1004 Hillcrest
 Pastor Brantly Robertson
 (972) 841-2009
 Sundays 10 am, Wednesdays 7 pm

First United Methodist Church
 PO Box 144 • 9th & Chadbourne
 Robert Lee • (325) 453-2417
 Cyndi Weidner, Pastor
 Sun. 10 am Sunday School
 11 am Worship,
 5 pm Choir Practice

Iglesia Bautista Betel
 101 Houston • Robert Lee
 Sun. 9:45 am • Sunday School
 11 am Service • Bible Study Wed. 6 pm

Southside Church of Christ
 PO Box 698 • 8th & Houston
 Robert Lee (325) 453-2176
 Recardo Reyes, Preacher
 Sun. 10 am, Sunday School
 11 am & 6 pm, Worship
 Wed. 6 pm, Worship

Northside Church of Christ
 PO Box 508
 9th & Chadbourne • Robert Lee
 (325) 453-2685, (325) 763-2118 or
 (325) 473-1053

Services: Sun. 10 am
Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church

601 W. 10th, Robert Lee
 (325) 365-2687

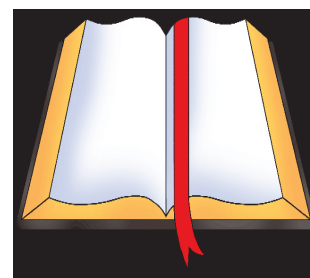
Rev. Yesu Mulakaleti, Pastor
 Saturday Vigil Mass 5 pm
Robert Lee Baptist Church
 PO Box 493 • 22 W. 11th
 (325) 453-2724

Chris Walls, Pastor
 Sun. 9:45 am, Sunday School
 11 am & 7 pm, Worship
 Wed. 7 pm, Prayer Meeting

Victory Assembly of God
 (325) 453-2208, PO Box 638
 202 E. 6th Street, Robert Lee
 Rev. Rocky Youngblood, Pastor
 Sun. 9:45 am, Sunday School
 10:45 am & 6 pm, Worship
 Wed. 6 pm, Bible Study

Coke County
Pecan Baptist
 PO Box 542 • 12 miles West of
 Robert Lee on Sterling City Hwy
 (325) 453-2065, Bill Hood, Pastor
www.pecanbaptistchurchrl.com
 Sun. 10 am, Sunday School
 11 am & 7 pm, Worship

Tennyson
Tennyson Baptist Church
 Hwy 277 • Tennyson
 (325) 473-2040
 Sun. 9:45 am, Sunday School
 11:00 am & 6 pm, Worship
 Wed. 6:00 pm Prayer Meeting



Russell Davis

Agent

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