

THE RAVEN

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This paper covers in part the story of the man called "The Raven," a name given him by the Cherokee Indians, who were to be his friends for his whole life. Our Samuel was born in 1783 in the upper valley of Virginia, the fourth generation of the Houston family to live there. He was truly one of the most unusual and able men of this country in the nineteenth century.

The first of the Houston family in this country had been an Ulsterman named John Houston. He came from a substantial family in the north of Ireland and brought his wife and children with him, landing in Philadelphia in 1730. At once he moved to the west of Pennsylvania, and when new lands were opened in the valleys of Virginia, the Houstons, with the other Scotch Irish settlers, took up land there. Settlement was made in the fertile lands near present day Lexington, Virginia. The place was called Timber Ridge, and this name continues to this day.

Robert Houston, son of the emigrant, took over Timber Ridge at the death of his father. Hard work and good farming made the plantation prosper. The size was increased and more slaves were obtained. This area had many hard working new-comers and the whole valley seemed to bloom. However, from time to time there were still Indian troubles nearby and the settlers had to serve with the local units of the Virginia militia. Robert did his part and was in several of the campaigns of the French and Indian Wars.

In the next generation, Timber Ridge passed on to the first Samuel Houston, father of the subject of this presentation. This Samuel was not the most industrious farmer, but he did have many other interests. When the Revolutionary War came, he was to serve in the Virginia Continental Line as a Captain in Morgan's Rifle Battalion, a collection of the finest riflemen ever assembled in any infantry unit. When the War was over, most of the veterans, if they had a sword, went home and beat it into a plowshare. However, this Samuel found the military life to his liking. Serving as a Major and Inspector of the Virginia Militia, his service was required in many places and for various periods of time. The Timber Ridge was to suffer from his neglect. Some property and slaves had to be sold to support the family. When news was received from relatives and friends about the new land over the Alleghenies on the Tennessee River, Samuel purchased a tract and planned to move there. This was not to be, for he died too soon, and in 1807 his widow gathered the nine children, the property and slaves that were left, loaded all on to the wagons, and moved west over the mountain trails to their new Tennessee home site. This was near Maryville, not too far from present day Knoxville, and at the foot of the Great Smokey Mountains.

Our Samuel was the third oldest of the Houston boys. The two older ones took charge of their younger brother. The whole family was excited about going to the new country. Sam had heard of the deep forest and the Indians in this area, and he looked forward to meeting

them and learning about how they lived. School in Virginia had not been very attractive to Samuel. Attendance in total was perhaps about three years. He liked history and geography but objected to learning any mathematics. He soon grew restless at school and resented having to do farm work, so, with dreams in his head and a book under his arm, Sam went to live with the nearby Cherokee Indians living at the shoals of the Tennessee River.

At the head of this tribe was an old Chief, Oo-Loo-Te-Ka, who had no children. He took Sam into his cabin and treated him like a son. The Chief's head man used the name of Jolly but he really was named Rogers. He was the father of two sons who were the same ages as Sam's brothers that he had left back at the farm. In this family was also a sister who was named Tulaquah, but in later life she was to be called Tiana Rogers. This family had a grandfather who was a Scot trader who, during the Revolutionary War, went over the mountains from South Carolina and married into the Cherokee tribe. Many generations later this family was to produce the wonderful cowboy humorist, Will Rogers.

From time to time Sam would visit his home and see his mother. Finally, his brothers persuaded him to stay and go to work in the family general store as a clerk: This he found to be boring so he went back to the Indians and more and more he became like one of them. He learned the language and their traditions. Life here was slow and pleasant, without the rush and problems of civilization. From time to time in his visits to his family he would bring back presents for his Indian friends. Soon his bill at the store reached one hundred dollars and he had to pay off. Sam found that what the settlement really needed was a country school and that he should be the proprietor and teacher. Tuition was to be paid one third in cash, one third in cloth, and one third in corn. The project was successful and his debts were paid off and Sam now looked for new adventure.

There were militia companies and guard units about but these did not appeal to Sam. However, when the recruiting sergeant of the United States Regular Army paraded the flag and put the silver dollars on the drum, our Sam picked up one to show his intentions. He was now enlisted in the 7th Regiment, U.S. Army, encamped at Knoxville.

Sam made good progress in the Army training. In six months he was given a commission as an Ensign in his regiment. The preparations were going forward for the campaign to be waged against Indians to the south who were on land sought after by new white settlers. The whites who were there were being attacked by the Indians who had lived and farmed there for many years. These Indians had a good way of living and resented the intrusion of the whites. The Creek tribe here was under the leadership of Chief Weathersford, a respected half breed well known to many of the whites. The Indian defenders selected a horseshoe bend in the Tallapoosa River as the place to make their stand and protect their homes. Entrenchments were prepared and the Indian women and children put back from the line of attack. It was March 26, 1814 and Ensign Sam Houston was 20 years old when the American Army attacked. The first American over the barricades was the Regimental Commander Montgomery. He was shot down as he led his men forward. Seeing this, and without hesitation, Sam waved his sword and was over the wall with the troops following him. The center of the fight was around Sam until he was wounded with an Indian arrow shot deep into his leg. He was moved aside and lay under a tree and the battle continued. General Andrew Jackson himself soon passed by, saw Sam lying there and ordered him to stay put

until help could be given him.

Prior to this battle the Indians had been told by their Medicine Men that clouds would appear in the sky and that at that point they would win. The clouds did not appear and band after band of the Indians were slaughtered. Nearly all resistance was over except for a small group of defending Indians that had taken refuge in a log redoubt and who continued to fire from the portholes. Our wounded Sam saw this situation, rose to his feet, and again led his men in a direct attack. While firing into one of the portholes, he was hit with two balls that imbedded in his shoulder. Bleeding profusely, he was again taken from the field of battle. There was no medical attention available, and he was to lie under a tree all night. The next day Sam was put on a litter carried between two horses and started the long journey back to his home in Tennessee. When he arrived there and was taken to a doctor, his condition was such that he was told that nothing could be done for him and he was returned to his mother's home. In several weeks, however, he had recovered enough to be taken back to the doctor. The wound was opened, one of the balls removed. The shoulder was repaired, but he suffered from pain the rest of his life. As badly wounded as he was, he recovered enough to rejoin his military regiment, now stationed in Nashville where General Andrew Jackson was in command. The General had decided to stay and build at a nearby place to be called the Hermitage.

The next year was taken up with recovery from the wounds of battle. From Nashville he was sent to New Orleans, still on administrative duty. The climate there, and the social life was not helpful to his recovery. The Army sent him to a surgeon in New York City who operated upon his wounded shoulder. The return trip was to be most valuable to him. Returning through Washington, D.C., he saw the Capital of the country for the first time. This was shortly after the British Army had burned many of the buildings. The President's home was being repaired from the damage and would thereafter be known as the "White House." The things that Sam saw on this return, and the people that he met, would influence his later life.

The year was now 1816 and was to see a treaty signed between the U.S. Government and the Indian Tribes in the Southeast. The chiefs of the tribes were dealt with unfairly and their trust was misplaced. Promises were made for the lands that they were to occupy beyond the Mississippi River. These lands were in wild country never farmed and certainly not as good as the soil that the Indians had cultivated for many generations in the Southeast. The Indian Agents who were to supervise the living in the new lands were corrupt in many cases and took further advantage of the trusting Indians. Sam Houston had been detailed from the Army to help with moving the Indians. He knew many of them, could speak the Cherokee language, and was trusted by the red men. This transfer of Indians was the source of much suffering as the families gave up their homes to move to territory that was wild, poor and difficult to farm.

After a year, a number of the Indian leaders gathered and talked of their problems and the lack of honesty on the part of the agents of the government. It was decided to send a delegation to Washington to tell the President of their plight. Their travels took them through Nashville and there they were able to persuade Sam Houston, their long-time friend and helper, to go with them to Washington as their speaker. Sam reverted to his earlier days when

he had lived with the Cherokees at the shoals of the Tennessee River. Putting on Indian garb, he led the group into the nation's Capital. This, of course, created a stir as groups of Indians in their native dress walked the streets and visited the offices of the government. After calling upon John C. Calhoun, then Secretary of War and deeply involved in carrying out the movement of the Indians, it was discovered that Houston was still an officer in the U.S. Army and on leave. Secretary Calhoun summoned Sam and severely rebuked him for his appearance and activities. This was to have two most serious results. First, Houston decided to resign his commission in the Army. Next, his opinion of Calhoun was such that in later years he would join with others to block Calhoun's candidacy for the Presidency of the United States.

Sam Houston now decided on his plan of action for his further life. He took up the study of law and passed the Bar Examination to practice. Soon he was appointed the prosecuting attorney for a circuit court near Nashville. His friends from military days helped him to become the Commander of the State Militia. These two opportunities to travel and meet other people were to be helpful in his political life. At this time, General Andrew Jackson was surrounding himself with able young men and political powers in his attempt to obtain the nomination for President of the United States. Sam was certainly one of these. As part of this plan, Sam was elected to Congress in 1823 and served there for four years. Here again he made many friends and also a few enemies. Now 30 years old, he certainly had a lot of experience that would help in his later life.

While in Congress, one job that was given him by General Jackson was to sidetrack the appointment of John R. Erwin as Postmaster of Nashville. This was a strong political office and Erwin was the son-in-law of Henry Clay, a rival of General Jackson. Sam did his job, but in doing so offended Erwin, who issued a challenge for a duel. This was still common but, of course, was against the law. Erwin had this challenge presented by John Smith, a professional gunman. The challenge was refused by Houston's second because the gunman was not a Tennessee resident. The challenge was next presented by Colonel William A. White, a well-known political figure, and Houston accepted it. Sam made his preparation under the guidance of Old Hickory who had participated in a number of these events. Sam was taught to hold a lead bullet between his teeth to steady his nerves when firing.

The day for the duel finally arrived. Both of the participants and their followers moved up to Duncan's Tavern, just over the Kentucky border line and about 40 miles north of Nashville. Here the laws of Tennessee against dueling would not apply. Shortly after dawn, the distance was measured, the pieces cocked, and at the signal, Colonel White fired and missed. Sam then fired and seriously wounded his adversary. All then present hastily left the "field of honor" and returned to Nashville. In time Colonel White was to recover and Houston was to be indicted for assault with a weapon by the Grand Jury of Simpson County, Kentucky, whose Foreman was a strong supporter of Henry Clay. No arrest was ever made.

The great notice given this duel enhanced Houston's popularity with the people of his state. Sam was still in Congress but had been nominated and was soon elected Governor of the State of Tennessee. The date was now 1827, Sam was 34.

The election to the position of Governor was a great honor for Houston, and he

delighted in it. The approach that he took to the duties of this office was that he was to be the people's governor. Building roads and bridges so that farmers could get their crops to market and enabling them to move about from their isolated villages was of prime concern to him. Sam was also ready at all times to go to the Court House of any county in the state and talk to the people. He was a most effective speaker and he enjoyed the crowds who cheered his appearances. This was to be his position for his term of office and he intended to get everything he could from it. His efforts at home helped to support the presidential plans of his sponsor, General Andrew Jackson. Old Hickory was successful too, as General Jackson became President of the United States in 1829.

This was the time that the prosperous and lively City of New Orleans was to have their celebration of the great victory of General Jackson and his American Army over the British in the last battle of the War of 1812. This War had been over for many years and even the victory itself had been after the Peace Treaty that ended the war had been signed. The city of New Orleans was growing in importance, cotton was king, and prosperity was everywhere. Governors and National figures from all over were invited for the festivities and celebration. Sam was there to see and be seen.

General Jackson was now the President of the United States, and there were already those who thought that someday in the future another gentleman from Tennessee would hold this office - this to be our Samuel Houston.

Sam was still unmarried. When he served in Congress he had perhaps some ideas about marriage, but they had not materialized. He was now Governor, and a beautiful young girl that he had watched grow up was now a young lady of 18 years. Eliza Allen lived in nearby Gallatin, Tennessee, and was the daughter of Colonel John Allen, a well-established planter who was also a powerful political figure. Eliza had two brothers, well known to Houston from the Indian Wars that he had fought in Alabama against the Creek Indians. The parents and family of Eliza were very ambitious and thought that the Governor, even though twice the girl's age, would make an excellent match for her. The young girl was persuaded by her parents that marriage to the Governor was the thing for her to do. The great wedding took place at the Methodist Church in Gallatin, Tennessee, before a large and colorful congregation. This was January 1829, and this was perhaps one of the events that would change some history of our nation in the years to come.

There was no time for an extended honeymoon trip for the newly married couple. Residence was established in the Inn in Nashville where Sam had lived as a bachelor. The Governor was immediately to resume his active political life and travels. There were ceremonies to attend all over the state, speeches to be made and also a reelection campaign to pursue if he was to get his second term of office as Governor. The forthcoming election campaign was to be a hard one. The opponent was a previous governor who had been out of office long enough to qualify to run again.

The campaign itself evolved into a series of debates. Each day they would be held in another town. The first thinking about the chances of Sam's reelection changed and it was apparent that his popularity would carry him back by a large majority. Houston then returned to his bride who had been left in Nashville. What he found was most shocking. The forlorn

bride was reading her old love letters from one of her old beaux and was crying. She was certainly having second thoughts about the situation that she found herself in. She realized that she had been persuaded by her parents to make a choice which was the wrong one for her. There were many angry words spoken and Sam left to tell her family to take her back to Gallatin to the family home. Houston went into seclusion and would not talk about what had happened. Many rumors were passed along, but Sam kept silent. Finally he summoned his friend, the Sheriff of the county, and gave him the letter of resignation as Governor of the State of Tennessee to be delivered with the statement that he was leaving at once for the Indian country in the West. As he was about to board a boat, he did tell one of his close friends, "I exonerate Eliza freely. But it is no part of the conduct of a gallant or generous man to take up arms against a woman. If my character cannot stand the shock, let me lose it." Sam Houston until the day of his death kept his silence about his parting from Eliza Allen, regardless of what it was to cost him.

Houston made up his mind as to what his life would now be. Going to the west where his Indian friends had gone before was his desire. The boat that he boarded went down the Cumberland, then the Ohio and finally the mighty Mississippi. There he would change to another boat and go up the Arkansas as far as it would go and then follow the paths to the Cherokees. These Indians were his oldest friends from the days he lived with them in his restless youth. He felt sure Chief Oo-Loo-Te-Ka and his headman, John Rogers, would comfort him and he could shed his troubles from civilization and regain the pleasures of his youth.

Word travelled to the Cherokee Indian villages in the Arkansas Territory ahead of Sam on his journey. After leaving the river, travel was up the Indian paths and not the dirt roads used by the military. All along the way there were old friends to greet and a warm welcome was given him. His friend Chief Oo-Loo-Te-Ka invited him into his cabin and said that he was sure that the gods had sent him to help with their problems. White frontiersmen were again trying to move them, this time further west, and to take over their new land. The old chief was familiar with Houston's recent problems in Tennessee and assured him that this would soon be past for him now that he was in the land of the redmen.

These Cherokees who had been forcefully moved from their ancestral lands in the southeast to this new and raw country had found many disappointments. Not only were there white squatters on their lands, but there were to be raids by unfriendly Comanche and Pawnee tribes who lived to the west. The American Fur Company of the Astor's was operating here. The prices they charged the Indians for their supplies were too high and the prices they paid for the Indians' furs were much too low. Indian agents of the U.S. Government dealt unfairly and there were also some white traders selling the Indians hard liquor.

News passed among the Indians quickly that Sam Houston would see that justice would be done as he had friends in high places. There were still a few tribes that did not know about Houston and also there were some white traders and agents who resented Sam's interest in this area. Sam planned to visit and assure them of his good intentions. In the meantime many of the younger Indians planned an Assembly to state their grievances against the government and to plan their future actions. Sam was a bit leery of this and took Colonel

Arbuckle, local military commander, into his confidence. Visits were made to both Indians and whites, to the end that when the Indian Assembly was held no actions were taken. The chance of Indian wars at this time was avoided. Sam sent his messages to Washington and the Indians felt that better treatment was to come. General Jackson was happy to hear that Houston was being helpful and not causing trouble as some had alleged.

Houston's travels took him further west where he was to meet August Pierre Chouteau, son of the founder of a fur and trading company long established there. Chouteau had spent 20 years in this business after leaving the Army. He had graduated from West Point but had chosen to return to live in the country where his mother had been born. Chouteau had earned a most respected position by his fair and honest dealings both in prices for his goods and the payment for the furs that he purchased. He had now decided in his mid-forties to retire and was looking for someone to take over his operations. He thought that perhaps Houston would be interested. They did become fast friends and later Chouteau would travel to Washington to testify on behalf of Sam when charges of fraud were unjustly levied against him.

John Hamtramck was an agent with the Osage Indians and John Brearly was assigned to other tribes in the west. From what Sam saw and was told about their operations, he believed that they should be removed from their governmental positions. Later Houston was to have contacts with a Major duVal who the Cherokees labeled as bad. Strong charges against him were made in the distribution of their annuity. The Cherokees were to receive these payments for the land that they had left behind when they were moved from the Southeast. deVal passed out paper scrip telling the Indians that there was no coin and that this paper would be exchanged for money. The Indians knew little about paper transactions and squandered the scrip on shoddy merchandise at high prices. Also the liquor dealers were to come in and accept the paper. Soon all this distribution was in the hands of a few white traders and the Cherokees had nothing. It did not take the Indians long to find that they had been defrauded.

Malaria had been contracted during Houston's travels. His friend the old Chief took him into his cabin and had the tribal medicine man nurse him. Houston was to recover in spite of the treatment that was prescribed - much smoke and chanting. Sam was taken into the tribe and given full citizenship. Appointment was also made to him to be an Ambassador to Washington with a group of Cherokees who were to present their complaints and protests. White settlers were again encroaching upon their lands.

Houston wore Indian clothes to the nation's Capital, buckskin breeches and a blanket over his shoulder. This appearance created quite a stir when a former Congressman, Militia General and State Governor was to visit officials and offices so attired. At this time there were also negotiations going on for a feeding contract which the government was to furnish the Indians until their land became productive. There were a number of bidders including Houston and the Secretary of the Army. Charges of collusion and fraud were made. However, after full investigation, Houston was cleared. Several years later this issue would again be raised.

The contacts that Houston still had in Washington helped solve many of the

Cherokee's problems. Hamtramck and four other Indian agents were dismissed. Major duVal was to die of natural causes at this time. Sam was now to return to the Indian lands and build a large log home and settle down for a quiet period of this life. Talahqua, Tiana Rogers, the Indian girl whom he had known from his restless youth on the shoals of the Tennessee River, was now a widow with two children and she became his housekeeper. There was soon to be another thing that occurred to change Sam's life. His mother died in Tennessee, and he returned there for her funeral. Seeing this civilization again caused him to make the decision to again strive to be a leader of men.

Soon the Cherokees were to send another delegation to Washington and Sam was asked to go as their spokesman. This he realized would give him the chance to talk with General Jackson, his old advisor. Sam and the General had discussed Texas before but Sam had been advised to avoid taking part in the controversy. The President had hoped to be able to handle the problem with diplomacy. Anthony Butler had been sent on a mission to deal with the leaders in Mexico City and to offer five million dollars to buy Texas. The other side was interested in the money going into their pockets and not the National Treasury. This plan was uncovered and was to fail. Other more responsible Mexicans resented this offer and considered it bribery. As a result, the Mexican government would now restrict further Americans moving into the territory.

Texas and slavery were two great areas of public discussion. The slave states wanted to bring in more new states that would allow the institution of slavery as practiced in the Old South. The Easterners, where many anti-slavery organizations were operating, did not want to see any further expansion and, in effect, were trying to cut it down and eliminate it entirely.

During this trip another matter arose in which Houston was to take part. Jackson was trying to keep his policies in place and to see that his successors were of his selection. John C. Calhoun was Vice President and was very eager to follow as President. Houston recalled the insult given him by Calhoun years before when he was still in the Army but acting as a spokes-man for the Cherokees. Houston produced a letter long held in the War Department files in which Calhoun had made charges against General Jackson's actions in the Florida War. As a result of the conflict which this provoked, Calhoun's plans for the Presidency were thwarted, and he was also to resign as the Vice President.

Houston's visit with the Cherokee delegation this time was to see an affair about a matter long closed. Congressman Stanberry of Ohio, when he heard that Sam was in town, brought up in the House of Representatives the old matter of the ration contract for the Cherokees. Reviving this old matter enraged Houston and he was determined to seek revenge. Late one night he accosted Stanberry on a dark street and challenged him. There was a scuffle and the congressman pulled out a pistol. This he fired but it failed to go off. Houston had his strong hickory walking stick and put it to good use. He administered a severe beating and then picked up his opponent by the feet and kicked. This incident Stanberry reported to the Speaker of the House of Representatives as a violation of Stanberry's rights. An inquiry was held; Sam was to testify and upon vote was to be found guilty. He was then censured by the Speaker in a most mild manner. Sam and the Speaker were old friends.

The appearance before Congress had been good theater and Sam had made the most of it. The new clothes that he wore were of good cloth and had been furnished him by his old friend, General Jackson. His attorney was Francis Scott Key of Baltimore. The galleries were filled by the curious and it was said at the time that the large number of ladies present for the trial indicated that Houston was still remembered.

Houston used this visit to have serious discussions with President Jackson. General Jackson was most concerned about the problems of Texas and Mexico. Sam was asked to go to Texas, investigate problems with the Indians and report back about the whole situation. Jackson even gave Sam five hundred dollars personally to cover his travel expenses.

Houston returned to the land of the Cherokees, sold his property and crossed the shallow river into Texas. He headed for Nacogdoches where he was soon to meet many of his old friends from Tennessee who were there. Most everyone was agitating for freedom from Mexican restrictions and laws. Meetings were being held to plan for further action. Houston attended a number of these meetings in different locations and observed the temper of the people. A trip was also taken to see Stephen Austin who felt at this time that diplomatic means could avoid further trouble. Another trip was to be made to San Antonio de Bexar to see his old friend Sam Bowie. Bowie had married the daughter of the Vice Governor and had two lovely daughters. After all these observations, Sam concluded that nothing should be started until proper organization and military training could take place. Nothing should occur now that would delay final victory. In the meantime, Austin had journeyed to Mexico City and presented his plan and had been jailed for his efforts. War now seemed inevitable and Houston was made Commander-in-Chief of any army that did not yet exist. Sam went directly to New Orleans to obtain support, recruit and purchase a General's uniform.

Fighting was soon to start between small bands of Texans and local Mexican troops. Gonzales was a Mexican outpost used in Indian wars and where they had left behind two small cannons. When the Mexicans tried to retrieve these, a fight ensued, and they were repulsed by local forces. Nearby at Goliad more weapons were stored - 300 rifles, 2 more cannons and plenty of ammunition. Local forces seized the stores and drove off the Mexican storekeepers. Now there was enthusiasm in the air and many of the Texans were marching to San Antonio de Bexar where there was a Mexican garrison under command of General Cos, a brother-in-law of General Santa Anna. Fighting started in the city streets and an old plainsman named Ben Milam led the charge down the streets, and the Mexicans were forced to surrender. There was no way that this large number of prisoners could be fed. General Cos was to sign his pledge and the whole force paroled to return to their Mexican homes in the south. Soon General Cos was to violate his word of honor. Sam tried to avoid and stop these outbreaks as he felt that this would bring on the full force of General Santa Anna's army.

Soon there was to be the siege and massacre at the Alamo that is well known to all. Houston had ordered Travis and his loyal band of fighters to burn the mission and come to join the forces being organized at Gonzales. This order was not to be followed and the defense started against impossible odds. Days of siege and bombing were to follow, then the walls were scaled and all the defenders were put to death. Bodies of the defenders were piled in stacks with firewood and the funeral pyre lighted. This is tragic and colorful history but

was certainly an unnecessary loss of wonderful and valuable men and weapons.

Fannin and his force were at nearby Goliad. A few of these Texans had left to go to the Alamo and were to die there with the other defenders. Houston had given the order to destroy the defenses at Goliad and join his assembly of forces at Gonzales. Fannin was slow in making up his mind to obey. After the Alamo he did decide to move, but it was too late. His troops were intercepted en route, on level open ground and they too were massacred. These Mexicans were under command of General Cos who had signed the parole.

These defeats were learned of by Houston and he had to make the best of it. The decision was made to move this force of about 600 to better defense positions to the east. Here distance and rivers would slow the forthcoming attack by Santa Anna. The Mexicans had made the error of dividing their forces to travel different routes in pursuit of the Texas forces. Houston knew the land and was to obtain some local support. More men came in to join Houston's small army and it was at this time that the two cannons purchased by Cincinnatians arrived. The army of Santa Anna moved to an area between two streams which were surrounded by swamp. Houston found a small rise of land which gave him an advantage in observation and firing and prepared to attack.

At San Jacinto there was only one bridge over a swamp. Water was on both sides of this field. Once the battle was begun there would be little or no chance of either side escaping. Houston ordered the bridge chopped down and the wood material burned. Texans knew they had to win to live. All was ready for battle, but Sam decided to wait for the best time. This was not at night or at dawn but in mid-afternoon when he knew that Mexican troops who had moved fast would be resting and their officers taking their siestas. The drums sounded and the Texans moved forward in good formation and soon overran the slight defenses that the Mexicans had erected. The Mexicans had been surprised by the time of the attack and were confused. They did not have leadership or a plan to counter the force which struck. Texans fired their rifles and then used the butts of their guns as well as knives to finish off those who resisted. Some Mexicans tried to escape but they found themselves mired in the muck of the swamp. The fact is that this decisive battle took place in about 20 minutes. The Mexicans had about 1500 men to 800 Texans but spirit and leadership made the difference. Houston had several horses shot underneath him and he was badly wounded in his leg. Santa Anna was captured as he tried to escape in a poor disguise. Sam was to hold Santa Anna his prisoner until he accomplished what he wanted. Santa Anna issued orders to all his Mexican forces to return to their homes below the Rio Grande. Houston sent him under guard to Washington so that General Jackson and others could see his conquest. Also, this would help close the war that had just ended.

Local Texas politics were in a confused state. The head-quarters had been moved many times. The head of the government at the time came to the San Jacinto battlefield after the fighting stopped to inspect but refused to take Sam Houston with him to a doctor on Galveston Island when he returned there.

In short order the Republic of Texas was to be formed. Houston, the hero and the one responsible for freedom from Mexico, was elected the first President of the Republic, the year was now 1836. Houston was also to go to New Orleans for medical treatment and there

he met a very young and beautiful lady, Margaret Lea of Marion, Alabama. It was to be nearly 4 years before they were married in the Baptist Church in Marion.

The negotiations to get Texas into the Union were started by a number of friends of Houston. The north was not anxious to see this because slavery existed in Texas and they did not want to see the institution spread. Many of the farmers and first settlers in Texas came from slave states and brought their slaves with them to farm the new land. The negotiations continued and finally Texas was admitted - but under special conditions. She was to continue to own the open land and also because of her size could in the future vote to become up to four states.

Sam Houston had served two terms as President of the Texas Republic, and when it became a state he was one of the first to be elected to the United States Senate. He was to serve as a Union Democrat member from 1846 to 1859. On many issues he was at odds with others from the south as he did not want to see separation of the South from the Union.

Opposition in the Texas Legislature was strong and Houston was defeated for reelection to the Senate in 1859. Houston returned home to Texas and was again elected by the people as Governor of the State this same year. The Civil War was about to start and there were many and confusing things going on. The commander of all the U.S. troops in Texas was to leave and certainly a void was to exist. The Texas Legislature passed an act that all elected officials would be required to take an oath of allegiance to the Confederacy. This Houston refused to do and he was deposed from his office of Governor of the State.

This was certainly a sad end for this wonderful old man. Picking up the things that he had at the Capital in Austin he returned to his family establishment at Huntsville. Here he was to live two more years with his beloved wife and their eight children. Death was to come quietly on July 26, 1864 - he was 71 years of age.

Henry Steel Commanger, the Historian, wrote of Houston: "The story of Sam Houston is too good to be true. This man wrought such mighty deeds within his lifetime that had he not existed we would have had to create him. It would be absurd to insist that he was a typical American, but it is no exaggeration to say he symbolized the most dramatic qualities of the American character of the mid-nineteenth century. He was a combination of the primitive and the sophisticate, which always delighted the European observer and has never embarrassed the American. He was a school teacher and a lawyer, but he was also a hunter and a fighter. He was equally at home in a courtroom or the Halls of Congress, an Indian teepee or a military tent. He served the history of Texas in the same way as Charlemagne and Alfred and Barbarossa served the histories of the nations they helped to make."

This is the story of Another Raven that passed along our way.

The Literary Club
Cincinnati, Ohio
October 19, 1987

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Gonzales, Texas
San Jacinto, Houston, Texas
Galveston, Texas
Duncan's Tavern, Simpson County, Kentucky