

## Today in History December 29

In 1845, Texas was admitted into the United States as the 28th state. Unlike every other state, Texas did not enter the union by a grant of statehood. It entered by treaty. Texas was, at the time, a nation. The treaty was a good deal for both Texas and the US. Both gained substantially because of the merger of the two nations. There were several consequences of Texas entering the union as it did.

Texas gave up a significant portion of its land. Originally it included about half of what is now New Mexico, part of Oklahoma, and the eastern most portion of Colorado. Westward expansion in the US would have been severely hampered because the US and its citizens could not legally pass through the nation of Texas to get to its own territory. That meant when someone was going through the southernmost part of the Indian Territory (now Oklahoma), upon arriving at the Texas border, they would have to go north as far as Wyoming, then go west, before turning south. It could easily be 1000 miles out of the way. Thus the US had a great interest in acquiring the Republic of Texas.

Texans think what we should have done was keep the land, but still joined the US, set up toll booths, and then charge folks for crossing the ~~Republic of Texas~~ Great State of Texas. Even if we didn't set up toll booths, keeping the land would keep Alaskans from claiming they will divide into two states and make Texas the third largest state.

While Texas agreed to give up a portion of its land, it kept its own public land. Other states' public land became federal land because, since they were already US territories, the land already belonged to the federal government. In Texas, that was not true. Even today, the State of Texas owns public land in Texas, not the US government. The only land the US government owns in Texas is land it bought and paid for.

Some claim that Texas is the only state that was a country before joining the US, but that is incorrect. California was also a republic when it entered the US, but it entered by grant of statehood. Thus California has the same deal with the US that every other state except Texas does. For the record, Alaska and Hawaii entered by grant of statehood as well.

Because of Texas being a nation and entering the US by treaty, the Texas flag is properly flown at the same height as the US flag if they are flown on different flagpoles. All other state flags are to be flown at a lower height than the US flag. Like every other state, the Texas flag is properly flown under the US flag if both are on the same pole. What if the flags are flown on different poles? In that case, the Texas flag can properly be flown on a lower pole, but not a higher pole, but the flags should be the same size.

When displayed with other state flags, the Texas flag is not to be flown higher than any other state flag (much to the disappointment of Texans!). In that respect, the Texas flag is treated like every other state flag, but it does present a problem. What if several (or perhaps all) state flags are to be flown together with the US flag? One proper solution is to fly the US flag on the tallest

pole, with the Texas flag directly under it. Then all other state flags are to be flown on separate poles at the same height as the Texas flag.

What did the US get in the deal? A lot. Texas has led the nation in the production of beef, oil, cotton, wool, ... wait a minute, I don't have time to name them all. But Texas is a land rich in natural resources. In Texas, it is the biggest (the only reason Alaska EVER gets mentioned by name!), the best, or the worst, or we don't talk about it! Texas troops lead every other state in battlefield medals, despite the fact that Texas has never been the most populous state. And that is even considering that Texas was on the other side in the War Between the States. (For the record, the last battle of the War Between the States was fought in Texas on June 19, 1865, more than two months after Lee surrendered. Texas forces soundly defeated the Yankee troops, and then surrendered to become the last of the Confederate states to stop fighting.)

Texas has a state song. When I was a child, we sang it almost as often as we sang the Star Spangled Banner, but not at sporting events. It's a very pretty song. Below are the words.

## **"Texas, Our Texas"**

Texas, Our Texas! all hail the mighty State!  
Texas, Our Texas! so wonderful so great!  
Boldest and grandest, withstanding ev'ry test  
O Empire wide and glorious, you stand supremely blest.

(chorus)

Texas, O Texas! your freeborn single star,  
Sends out its radiance to nations near and far,  
Emblem of Freedom! it set our hearts aglow,  
With thoughts of San Jacinto and glorious Alamo.

(chorus)

Texas, dear Texas! from tyrant grip now free,  
Shines forth in splendor, your star of destiny!  
Mother of heroes, we come your children true,  
Proclaiming our allegiance, our faith, our love for you.

Chorus

God bless you Texas! And keep you brave and strong,  
That you may grow in power and worth, throughout the ages long.  
God bless you Texas! And keep you brave and strong,  
That you may grow in power and worth, throughout the ages long.

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Now every real Texan knows that what really happened was that Texas admitted the rest of the United States in the union, thus creating the United States of Texas.

*Rex L. Hogue*

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