

Introduction

President John F. Kennedy said it correctly in his Pulitzer Prize-winning book Profiles in Courage:

Sam Houston was one of the most independent, unique, popular, forceful, and dramatic individuals to enter the stage of American history.

Sam Houston shaped American History. As the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the Republic of Texas, he led the charge in a battle-the Battle at the San Jacinto-that changed the course of American history. Events that followed from that battle led to the annexation by the United States of territory covering at least 8 western states, and completed the manifest destiny of spreading the United States of America from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

He was a man of incredible contrasts. His life was a whirlwind of rising and falling fortunes. He was loved-he was despised. There was no middle ground for opinions. He consorted with American Presidents, but at times he was a rough frontiersman, living in the wilderness in huts and Indian wigwams.

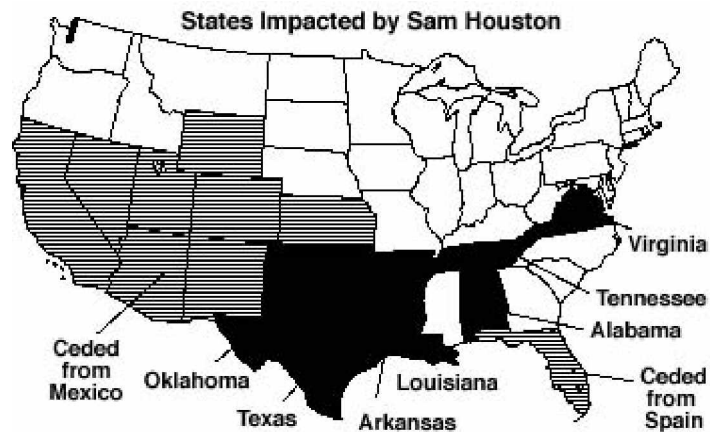
He was a man of destiny. He was the founder of a nation. At one time or another Sam Houston was the governor of two different states, a President, a U.S. senator, and a U.S. congressman.

Join us in this study of the life of a true American Hero.

Using The Video

This dramatization is a springboard to launch a whole study in history of Sam Houston's time-the wars, the westward spread of America, the rise of the American nation. The teaching ideas and exercises included in this book are available to supplement your study. At the end of the video, there is a video quiz for class use, with an accompanying notesheet in the center of this handbook.

The Man for America



Sam Houston's States

- **Tennessee**--Houston grew up with Tennessee. He moved there as a boy. He was Congressman from that state. He was governor.
- **Texas**--Houston was the father of Texas. He led the troops to battle and forged a nation from a rough frontier.
- **California, Nevada, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Colorado**--Because Houston won Texas, the United States won the Southwest. This area was ceded by Mexico in 1848.
- **Alabama**--Sam Houston led the charge in the War with the Creek Indians in Alabama in 1814 that opened that state to settlers. His wife Margaret was from Alabama.
- **Florida**--Events following the Creek Indian War led to the annexation of Florida.
- **Oklahoma and Arkansas**--Houston lived here with the Cherokee Indians in the 1820s, and was a force for Cherokee rights.
- **Louisiana**--He was a young soldier here and a frequent visitor.
- **Virginia**--Houston was born here in 1793.

Houston Chronology

- 1793--**Born**--Born March 2, 1793.
- 1807--**Boyhood**--Moved to Tennessee.
- 1808--**Indians**--Ran away to live with the Cherokee Indians.
- 1812--**Teacher**--Became a school teacher.
- 1813--**Army**--Joined the army with General Andrew Jackson.
- 1814--**Battle**--Wounded with an arrow and two musket balls in the Battle of Horseshoe bend.
- 1818--**Lawyer**--Gave up his dream of a military career, resigned and went to Nashville to study law.
- 1823--**Congress**--Won election as a Congressman for Tennessee.
- 1827--**Governor 1**--Elected governor of Tennessee after a whirlwind campaign.
- 1829--**Tragedy**--Married Eliza Allen and within three short months the marriage failed and Houston resigned as governor in disgrace.
- 1829--**Indians**--Moved to Arkansas to live with the Cherokees.
- 1832--**Texas**--Gone to Texas.
- 1836--**San Jacinto**--As Commander-in-Chief of the Texas army. Sam Houston won the battle of San Jacinto which liberated Texas.
- 1836--**President 1**--Elected President of the Republic of Texas.
- 1840--**Marriage**--Married Margaret Lea in Alabama.
- 1841--**President 2**--Elected for a second term as President of Texas.
- 1846--**Senate**--Elected U.S. Senator from Texas when Texas entered the Union.
- 1859--**Governor 2**--Elected governor of Texas.
- 1861--**Honor**--Removed from office as governor because he opposed secession of Texas from the United States.
- 1863--**Death**--Died in Huntsville, Texas after a short illness, with his wife Margaret at his side.

Sam Houston's Times

Sam Houston's life spanned the times of a number of great episodes and individuals in American history. Background material for some of these is provided here, along with classroom discussion questions.

Manifest Destiny

- **Background**--During the 1840s, manifest destiny was the popular sentiment that the United States was destined to rule North America. At the very least it was believed the nation should spread from the Atlantic to the Pacific. This was considered a destiny because many felt the United States had a superior economic and political system. Sam Houston helped by bringing Texas into the United States.
- **Discussion questions**--What was the concept of manifest destiny? What was Sam Houston's role in manifest destiny? Was manifest destiny a good or bad idea?

Slavery and Politics

- **Background**--The politics of slavery played a key role in determining the fate of Sam Houston and the United States in the early 1800s. As President of the Republic of Texas, one of Sam Houston's chief objectives was to have Texas admitted to the United States, but the North did not want another state in which slavery was legal. There were inherent economic differences between the North and South, but slavery was the catalyst that pushed the nation toward Civil War during these years. As the United States moved westward, a series of political compromises maintained a balance between the number of slave and non-slave states, preventing civil war, preventing civil war for the short term. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 allowed for the admittance of Missouri as a slave state and Maine as a free state, and prohibited slavery in the northern part of the Louisiana Purchase. In 1845 Texas was admitted as a slave state, and the subsequent Mexican War added additional new territory with the potential for slave territory. In the Compromise of 1850, the Congress agreed to admit California as a free state, and organize the New Mexico and Utah territories without mention of slavery, among other matters. In 1854, the Kansas-Nebraska Act allowed U.S. territories to decide for themselves such domestic matters whether to allow slavery.
- **Discussion Questions**--What were the root causes of the Civil War? Why was it so difficult to end slavery in America? Why was Texas not immediately admitted to the United States? What was the Missouri Compromise? What was the Kansas-Nebraska Act?

The War of 1812

- **Background**--Sam Houston fought in the War of 1812. He was a young recruit from Tennessee in the troops led by General Andrew Jackson. This war was the

result of years of conflict between the United States and Britain. Immediate causes of the war were trade problems, as well as the impressment of American seamen by British ships. The British would board American ships at sea to search for sailors they thought were deserters from the British navy. The trade problems were a part of the continuing conflict between Britain and Napoleon's France, in which U.S. trade to these nations was an unwilling victim. The United States declared war on Britain on June 1, 1812. Battles were fought on the Great Lakes, in Canada, in the capitol at Washington, and in Baltimore. Perhaps the most famous battle of the war was at New Orleans where Andrew Jackson defeated a British army of 8000. During this time Sam Houston fought with Andrew Jackson against the Creek Indians who were supplied by the British. The war of 1812 was ended by the treaty of Ghent, in Belgium. Neither Britain nor the U.S. gained much since the treaty restored borders and conditions that existed before the war. However, the U.S. began a period of great industrial expansion as a result of having to be self-sufficient during the war years. Also, there was a new sense of U.S. national pride, American authority in the territories west of the Appalachians was established, the U.S. gained Florida, and several American heroes gained fame, including Andrew Jackson, the friend and mentor of Sam Houston.

- **Discussion questions**--What were the causes of the war? What were the results of the war? Where were the major battles fought? What was Andrew Jackson's role in the war? What was Sam Houston's role in the war?

Andrew Jackson

- **Background**--Andrew Jackson was the seventh president of the United States, a war hero, and a close friend of Sam Houston. Jackson was born in the Carolinas and orphaned during the Revolutionary War. He wandered west to what is now Tennessee and became a lawyer. From his home in Nashville he eventually served as a U.S. congressman and senator, and first ran for President in 1824. To many in the new states west of the Appalachian Mountains, he was a symbol of a new democratic, egalitarian society. In 1824, he won the most votes for U.S. president, but the election was decided in the House of Representatives, and John Quincy Adams was elected instead. In 1828, and again in 1832, he ran for president and won easily. This increased the power of his party, which became known as the Democratic Party. Jackson's military career began in the Revolutionary War, when he was captured by the British at the age of 13. In the War of 1812, Jackson fought the Creek Indians in Alabama, along with Sam Houston. After that he fought the Seminoles in Florida, and his actions led to the annexation of Florida by the United States. Jackson also led the Americans to victory at the famous Battle of New Orleans. Sam Houston and Andrew Jackson shared a lifetime friendship. The two discussed many issues and plans, including the role of Texas in the future of America.
- **Discussion questions**--What positions did Andrew Jackson hold in government? How did he lose his first bid for the Presidency? In what wars and battles did Jackson fight? Describe the relationship between Andrew Jackson and Sam Houston.

The Cherokees and the Trail of Tears

- **Background**--The Cherokee Indians occupied the lands in the southern Appalachians before white settlers entered this area. At first they fought the advance of the whites, siding with the British during the American Revolution, but after the war they began to adopt the economic and political structures of the whites. However, there was pressure by the white settlers to claim Cherokee lands and have the Cherokees removed to the western frontier in Oklahoma. During the early 1800s some of the Cherokee bands did move west, including the tribal group under Oo-loo-te-ka, the Cherokee "father" of Sam Houston's boyhood. However, most remained in the Appalachians. In 1835 a few Cherokee groups agreed to move west based on a treaty they signed with the U.S. government, but most resisted under the leadership of Chief John Ross. During the winter of 1838-1839, and based on the treaties, federal troops forcefully moved some 13,000 to 17,000 Cherokees to Oklahoma. The path of their march became known as the "Trail of Tears," because thousands died along the way. Today the city of Talequah, Oklahoma is the center for the Cherokees of that area.
- **Discussion questions**--Where did the Cherokees originally live? Where were they forced to go and why? What is the name of the trail along which they marched? Why was it given this name? Was the government fair to the Indians? What was Sam Houston's relationship to the Cherokees?

The Texas Revolution

- **Background**--The Texas Revolution was a war of independence fought in the years 1835-1836 by American settlers in Texas, and other Americans and Mexicans, against the government of Mexico. At that time Texas was a part of Mexico, which was ruled by the dictator Santa Anna. Mexico had allowed many Americans to settle in Texas in the 1820s, as long as they swore allegiance to Mexico. However, soon the Americans became dissatisfied with actions taken by the Mexican government. The complaints culminated with armed attacks against Mexican soldiers in the fall of 1835. The soldiers were driven out of Texas. On March 2, 1836, Sam Houston's birthday, Texas political leaders signed a Declaration of Independence. However, in late February of that year, Santa Anna had arrived in Texas with an army to fight the rebellion, and proceeded to win a series of battles against Texas soldiers. At the famous battle for the Alamo in San Antonio (then known as Bexar--pronounced "Bay'-er") all the Texans were killed, but the Mexicans also lost many soldiers. At the city of Goliad, the Texas defenders surrendered honorably, but Santa Anna ordered summary executions. Santa Anna then made the mistake of believing that all Texas resistance was gone, and he split his army into three parts to sweep northward over broad area. His objective was to clear Texas of all "Anglos." Settlers clogged the primitive highways trying to escape eastward, and the remainder of the Texas army under Sam Houston retreated with them, looking for a favorable place to fight. This retreat became known as the "Runaway Scrape." It was with a diminished force of some 1600 soldiers that Santa Anna arrived at the mouth of the San Jacinto River,

where it empties into Galveston Bay southeast of modern-day Houston. He found the Texans under Sam Houston blocking his advance. The next day, April 21, 1836, during the afternoon siesta, the Texans mounted a surprise attack with some 800 soldiers and captured Santa Anna. Sam Houston then forced the dictator to grant Texas independence. The Texas settlers formed the Republic of Texas, which was a sovereign nation until Texas was annexed by the United States in 1845.

- **Discussion questions**--What was the history of Texas before 1835? Why did the Texas settlers fight the government of Mexico in 1835? What happened at the Battle of the Alamo? At Goliad? During the Runaway Scrape? At San Jacinto? What was Sam Houston's role in this war? What happened after the Revolution?

The Mexican War

- **Background**--The Mexican war of 1846-1848 was fought between the United States and Mexico as a part of the fallout from the American annexation of Texas in 1845. The direct cause of the war was a boundary dispute--the Americans claimed the Rio Grande was the international border while the Mexicans claimed the Neuces River to the north as the border. However, there were other disagreements that had been festering for at least two decades between the two nations. As the war proceeded, the Americans first invaded northern Mexico under General Zachary Taylor, who was later to be elected President, and won important battles at Monterrey and Buena Vista. The Americans then landed at the Gulf Coast city of Veracruz under General Winfield Scott. They captured Veracruz and then marched inland and captured Mexico City. There were other battles in California, which was then part of Mexico. As a result of the war, the United States gained the territory of its present southwestern States, including California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and parts of Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado and Wyoming.
- **Discussion questions**--What was the history of Texas and Mexico in the two decades prior to the year 1845? What caused Mexico and the United States to have a war? What happened at Veracruz? At Mexico City? What was Sam Houston's role in this war? What happened after the Mexican War?

The Creek and Seminole Indian Wars

- **Background**--During the War of 1812, the Creek Indians fought American settlers throughout Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi. The Creeks were supplied by the British. In 1813, Creek Indians attacked Ft. Mims in southern Alabama, where they massacred and scalped 400 settlers. The following year, Andrew Jackson fought the major force of the Creek Indians in east-central Alabama at the battle of Horseshoe Bend. Young Sam Houston was among the officers in Jackson's army, and was carried back to Tennessee with the wounds he received. The Creeks signed a treaty with the U.S. government after that battle, giving up a huge tract of land. However, the Seminole Indians in Florida, who were a southern branch of the Creeks, were angered by the treaty and fought the whites

in the First Seminole War in the years 1816-1818. Andrew Jackson marched into Florida, which then belonged to Spain, and fought the Seminoles. He also claimed Florida for the United States, and in later agreements Spain ceded this territory. In the Second Seminole War in 1835, the Indians retreated into the Everglades and continued to fight for some seven years. Many of the Seminoles were killed, and many of the survivors moved west into Indian territory in Oklahoma, but an undefeated remnant remained in the Everglades.

- **Discussion questions**--Where did the Creek Indians live? Who supported the Indians and why? What roles did Andrew Jackson and Sam Houston have in the war? Who were the Seminole Indians? What were the results of the war? Where are the Seminole Indians today?

The Life of Sam Houston

- **The man himself**--Sam Houston was a man of towering proportions and an immense personal presence. There was his height, which was variously reported as short as six feet, two inches, to as much as six feet six. Regardless, the man was tall and handsome, with a warm rich voice. In later years an observer described him during one of his speeches.

There he stood, and old man of seventy years, on the balcony ten feet above the heads of the thousands assembled to hear him, where every eye could scan his magnificent form, six feet three inches high, straight as an arrow, with deep-set and penetrating eyes, looking out from heavy and thundering brows, a high forehead, with something of the infinite intellectual shadowed there, crowned with white locks, partly erect, seeming to give capillary conduction to the electric fluid used by his massive brain, and a voice of the deep basso tone, which shook and commanded the soul of the hearer, adding to all this a powerful manner, made up of deliberation, self-possession, and restrained majesty of action, leaving the hearer impressed with the feeling that more of his power was hidden than revealed.² (See Books)

- **Family**--Sam Houston came from a lineage of Scots who had settled in the Great Valley of Virginia in the early 1700s. His father, also named Samuel Houston, was a member of Morgan's Rifle Brigade during the Revolutionary War, and had a lifelong commitment to military affairs.
- **Born**--Sam Houston was born March 2, 1793 near Lexington, Virginia. He was the fifth child and fifth son of the family, and was named after his father. In total there were 9 children--7 boys and 2 girls. His father died while he was still a teenager. Sam Houston loved books, particularly the ancient classics, and his education came mainly from his father's library. He committed much of Homer's Iliad to memory.
- **The move to Tennessee**--In the spring of 1807, after the death of his father and around his fourteenth birthday, Sam moved to eastern Tennessee with his mother and family. His father had gone bankrupt just before his death, and the Tennessee land was bought with the proceeds of the sale of the family estate. Their new home was near Maryville, just south of Knoxville, in the western shadow of the Great Smoky Mountains. The family became prosperous in their new home, but Sam was a free spirit. He had a talent for shirking work and skipping school, but he was a hard boy to scold. He was definitely not cut out to be a planter, so the family found him a job in a store in Maryville, but Sam was still restless.
- **The Raven**--One morning, at the age of 15, Sam did not appear for work at the store. It was weeks before the family learned that their wayward son had crossed into Indian country and was living with the Cherokees. Sam spent some three years, off and on, with the Indians and was adopted as a son by the chief Oo-loo-te-ka, which translated means "He-Puts-the-Drum-Away." His new father gave him the name Co-lon-neh, which was the word for "Raven."

It was the moulding period of life, when the heart, just charmed into the feverish hopes and dreams of youth, looks wistfully around on all things for light and beauty...

*[Sam Houston, on his boyhood with the Cherokees]*¹ (See Books)

- **A man in two worlds: red and white**--Sam Houston's boyhood stay with the Indians was in his formative years and it shaped his outlook on life. He developed a life-long call to the wilderness, and an instinct bred from a life as the Raven. Many said that at times of conflict, Houston's planning and cunning were those of an Indian--carefully listening and stalking. He could talk in the poetry and images of the Indian. Listen to the words of a letter written when he was President of Texas to an Indian friend who had lost his son named Flaco:

My heart is sad! A dark cloud rests upon your nation. Grief has sounded in your camp. The voice of Flaco is silent....His life has fled to the Great Spirit....Your warriors weep....The song of birds is silent....Grass shall not grow in the path between us.

*Thy brother Sam Houston.*² (See Books)

- **School teacher**--At the age of 19, after returning from his life with the Cherokees, Sam Houston looked for work and then decided to open a school. The school was successful, but only remained open for six months until Sam had enough money to pay his debts. It was 1812, and there was war talk. Andrew Jackson was assembling a militia, and when the recruiters came through Maryville in March, 1813, Sam Houston joined up. To join, a new recruit picked a silver dollar off the drumhead of the drummer who stood next to the recruiting sergeant.

...when a young man in Tennessee I kept a country school, being then about eighteen years of age, and a tall, strapping fellow. At noon after the luncheon, which I and my pupils ate together out of our baskets, I would go into the woods and cut me a sour wood stick, trim it carefully in circular spirals and thrust one half of it into the fire, which would turn it blue, leaving the other half white. With this emblem of ornament and authority in my hand, dressed in a hunting shirt of flowered calico, a long queue down my back, and the sense of authority over my pupils, I experienced a higher feeling of dignity and self-satisfaction than from any office or honor which I have held since.

*[Sam Houston, about the joys of being a teacher]*¹ (See Books)

- **The Soldier and the Gold Ring**--Houston had to have the permission of his mother to join the army because he was still not 21. His mother, Elizabeth Houston, agreed and she gave her son two gifts: a gold ring and a musket. Inscribed inside the gold ring was the word "honor," because she said this one word epitomized the creed that should forever be a part of Sam Houston's life. Houston wore this ring until his death.

...my son, take this musket and never disgrace it; for remember, I had rather all my sons should fill one honorable grave, than that one of them should turn his back to save his life. Go, and remember, too, that while the door of my cottage is open to brave men, it is eternally shut against cowards.

[Elizabeth Houston, on giving her son Sam a musket and ring when he left for the army]¹ (See Books)

- **The Battle of Horseshoe bend**--Sam Houston followed Andrew Jackson to Alabama to fight in a war against the Creek Indians (see the information on the Creek Indian War on page 11). The British supplied the Creeks, and these Indians had attacked settlers. The battle was fought at a place the Indians called To-ho-pe-ka, which means horseshoe, because there is a horseshoe bend in the Tallapoosa River where the Creek Indians had set their defenses. Houston led several courageous charges during the battle and was wounded from an arrow, as well as from bullets to the arm and shoulder. The arrow wound was particularly dramatic because Houston forced a young lieutenant at the point of a sword to pull the arrow out of his leg in the midst of the battle. Andrew Jackson took notice of the bravery of the young officer that day. This was the start of a lifelong friendship between the two men. Sam stayed in the Army until 1818. Originally he had planned on a military career, but John C. Calhoun, the Secretary of War under President Monroe, played politics with the young officer, and Sam Houston resigned in disgust.
- **Nashville**--Sam Houston then went to Nashville and studied to be a lawyer. He began his practice in Lebanon, Tennessee, which is east of Nashville, and quickly began to rise in Tennessee politics. He became a part of the inner circle of advisors to Andrew Jackson. In 1823, he was elected to the United States Congress. Four years later, in 1827, he was elected governor of Tennessee.
- **Eliza Allen**--On January 22, 1829 governor Sam Houston married Eliza Allen, a young girl of 18 from Gallatin, Tennessee, but within a few short weeks the people of Tennessee learned that Eliza had gone home to her parents and that she and Sam Houston were separated. As it turned out the separation was to be permanent. What actually happened became one of the great mysteries of Sam Houston's life, because he refused to tell any other man or woman the story. He carried the secret of Eliza to his grave. The Allen family in their own right protected their daughter and her honor. There were attempts at reconciliation, but pride or perhaps poor communication stood in the way. What had happened? It was known that Eliza had resentments toward Houston from the start, and was perhaps an unwilling bride. Houston himself was a prideful man, and perhaps he thought his wife was unfaithful. There were indications that Houston was deeply unhappy that his new bride might not love him. On April 16, 1829, Sam Houston officially resigned as governor because of a sense of personal disgrace.

April 9, 1829

Mr. Allen, the most unpleasant & unhappy circumstance has just taken place in the family, & one that was entirely unnecessary at this time. Whatever had been my feelings or opinions in relation to Eliza at one time, I have been satisfied & it

is now unfit that anything should be averted to....Eliza stands acquitted by me. I have received her as a virtuous wife & as such I pray God I may ever regard her, & trust I ever shall.

She was cold to me, & I thought did not love me. She owns that such was one cause of my unhappiness. You can judge how unhappy I was to think I was united to a woman that did not love me....

*[portion of a letter from Sam Houston to John Allen, father of Eliza, at the time of the separation]*¹ (See Books)

...publish in the Nashville papers that if any wretch ever dares to utter a word against the purity of Mrs. Houston I will come back and write the libel in his heart's blood.

*[Sam Houston to representatives of the Allen family]*² (See Books)

- **The camp of Oo-loo-te-ka**--After the resignation, Houston left Tennessee a broken man. He retreated to the western wilderness, and travelled to his old friends the Cherokees, to the home of Oo-loo-te-ka, the Cherokee "father" of his youth. Oo-loo-te-ka had led his small band of Cherokees to new lands along the Arkansas River in modern-day Arkansas. This was before the eventful years of the "Trail of Tears," along which many other Cherokee groups suffered (see the information on the Trail of Tears on page 9). Oo-loo-te-ka had hoped he could move beyond the westward advance of white settlers. Sam Houston adopted Cherokee dress, and proclaimed himself a "citizen" of the Cherokee nation. During this period of his life he took a Cherokee wife, named Tiana Rogers, a widow, whose family became an important part of native-American heritage. Tiana's nephew, several generations removed, was Will Rogers, the beloved American humorist. Sam Houston built a large log house along the Neosho River in eastern Oklahoma, near an apple orchard he planted. The home became known as "Wigwam Neosho."
- **Sam Houston: Cherokee Ambassador**--Through the force of his personality, Sam Houston became a leader among the Indian tribes of the area, serving for them as an ambassador to Washington. He came to Washington dressed Indian-style, which was quite unique. Imagine Sam Houston, tall and forceful, appearing before the President, his friend Andrew Jackson, arrayed in carefully woven blankets, a new one for each occasion, with an elegantly patterned turban tied off to the side of his head, a ruffled shirt collar, a buckskin coat with metal ornaments that tinkled pleasantly as he walked, his face clean shaven in the Indian style.
- **The Stanbery affair**--Sam Houston's time on the western frontier was a low period in his life, following his broken marriage and his resignation as governor. There were several trips to Washington, as well as to Tennessee. On one occasion he returned to Tennessee to his mother's side where she lay on her death bed. Both his mother's death and the Stanbery affair changed his life. While Houston was in Washington in early 1832, a man named William Stanbery made accusations about Sam Houston in a speech on the floor of Congress. Houston later met Stanbery on the street, and there was a scuffle. Houston proceeded to beat Stanbery with a hickory cane. The Congress ordered the arrest of Houston,

and he was forced to defend himself. The trial before Congress dominated the news of the capital for days. Although Houston was found guilty, he was only lightly reprimanded, because his defense had been eloquent and inspiring. The debate and the speeches restored his confidence and his sense of personal destiny, and he then decided to seek a new arena of political fortune. In 1832, Sam Houston left for Texas.

- **Nacogdoches, Texas**--Texas had been on the mind of Houston for some time. It was a land of opportunity. Texas was a part of Mexico at that time, but in the 1820s American settlers had been given land. They had to swear allegiance to Mexico and agree to live under Mexican laws. This worked well for a time, but by the 1830s there was political turmoil in Mexico, and the man who was to become dictator, Antonio López de Santa Anna, known simply as Santa Anna, was consolidating his personal power. The Americans in Texas resented actions taken by the Mexican government, and dissatisfaction was widespread. The stage was set for dramatic and moving events, and Houston entered at just the right moment to take a lead in those changes. In December, 1832, Sam Houston crossed the Red River into Texas. After riding to most of the key cities, he settled in Nacogdoches (pronounced 'Nak-ah-dough'-chez"), an old Mexican frontier city close to the Louisiana border, where he again took up a law practice.
- **The Texas Revolution**--In the fall of 1835, there was armed rebellion by the Texans against Mexico (see the information on the Texas Revolution on pages 9-10). Sam Houston's role was as the commander of the Texas forces, which were nothing more than scattered bands of settlers and adventurers from the United States. Santa Anna advanced across Texas and Sam Houston retreated while he assembled an army and looked for a favorable place to fight. In April, 1836, Santa Anna arrived at the mouth of the San Jacinto River, where it empties into Galveston Bay southeast of modern-day Houston, to find Houston's Texans blocking his way.
- **San Jacinto**--The following day, April 21, 1836, Sam Houston led the charge in what was to become one of the most significant battles in American history--the Battle of San Jacinto (pronounced by English-speaking Texans today with a "j" as in "just" and a "c" as in "cinch"). Some 800 Texas soldiers mounted a surprise attack against the Mexican encampment. Although outnumbered and outgunned, the Texans attacked during the afternoon and caught the Mexicans during siesta. Santa Anna, the President of Mexico was captured alive, and Sam Houston then dictated to him the terms of Texas independence.
- **President**--Texas was a republic from 1836 to 1845, and Houston was elected its first President. He served from 1836 to 1838, and again from 1841 to 1844. A President was not allowed to succeed himself, and so from 1838-1841 Mirabeau B. Lamar was in office. One of Houston's chief objectives was to have Texas admitted to The United States, but this was prevented because of the slavery question. The North did not want another state in which slavery was legal. To keep the United States interested in annexation, Houston courted the favor of both Britain and France. Another of Houston's problems as President was the lack of money and development. Resources and trade in the floundering nation were raw

and poorly developed, and revenues to the public treasury were meager. Also, to the south, Mexico continued to threaten the nation with invasion.

- **Margaret Lea Houston**--While he was President, Sam Houston married Margaret Lea. They were wed May 9, 1840 in Marion, Alabama at her mother's home. For Margaret, it was apparently love at first sight. She was in her twenties when they were formally introduced by Margaret's sister in a garden in Mobile, Alabama. They were at a "strawberry festival." Margaret was warned of General Houston as a man of rough history and habits, but none of this mattered, for she was following her heart. Margaret's mother was a strong woman, the daughter of a Baptist preacher, and she travelled to Texas first to meet Houston and make investments before she would permit the marriage. At this time, Houston was free to marry because he had been granted a divorce from Eliza, and Tiana, his Cherokee wife, was dead.
- **Senator**--After Texas was admitted to the Union, Sam Houston served as U.S. Senator for Texas from 1846 to 1859. During this time the United States went to war with Mexico because the annexation of Texas had angered the Mexican government (see information on the Mexican War on pages 10-11).
- **Governor**--In 1859, two years before the start of the War Between the States, Houston ran for Governor of Texas on an antisecession platform, which meant he was opposed to having Texas secede from the Union. However, in 1861, Texas voted to secede anyway. Houston refused to take an oath of allegiance to the new Confederacy, and he was removed as governor. There were rumors that Houston would fight to keep Texas in the Union. Abraham Lincoln wrote him to say that Federal troops could be transported to the Texas coast to support his cause. But he refused Lincoln's offer.

Some of you laugh to scorn the idea of bloodshed as the result of secession, but let me tell you what is coming....Your fathers and husbands, your sons and brothers, will be herded at the point of the bayonet....You may after the sacrifice of countless millions of treasure and hundreds of thousands of lives, as a bare possibility, win Southern independence...but I doubt it. I tell you that, while I believe with you in the doctrine of state rights, the North is determined to preserve this Union. They are not a fiery, impulsive people as you are, for they live in colder climates. But when they begin to move in a given direction...they move with the steady momentum and perseverance of a mighty avalanche; and what I fear is, they will overwhelm the South.

[Sam Houston, with a prophetic warning at the time of the secession of Texas from the Union]² (See Books)

- **Retirement**--Houston then retired to private life to the town of Huntsville, north of modern-day Houston. He kept up with politics and followed the fortunes of his son, Sam, Jr., who fought for the Confederates and was wounded in Tennessee. Sam Houston died in Huntsville in July, 1863, while the Civil War still raged. Margaret was at his bedside at the end. His final words were "Texas-Texas!-Margaret-"

The sunlit balm of Indian summer lay upon the rolling landscape. In a corner of the lawn, under a great oak, General Houston loved to sit and smoke, with a blue velvet cap on his head, soft yellow moccasins on his feet and the San Jacinto leg on a stool. Shadows played on the green hills and the melodies of Stephen Foster floated from Margaret's piano. The General's chair was the dependable rawhide bottom one that had twice served him while president of the Republic...

Thus an old man under an old tree, smoking and thinking, still on the bourne of the dream world that had drawn into the forest a boy with a book and a rifle--half mystic, half showman; half poet, half sage.² (See Books)

Vocabulary

- **Ambassador**--An official appointed by one country as a representative to another country. Sam Houston was an ambassador to the United States for the Cherokee Nation.
- **Annex**--To add territory to an existing nation or state. The United States annexed Texas.
- **Barb**--A sharp, backward pointing projection as on an arrow or fishhook. Sam Houston received an arrow wound that was ripped by the arrow barb when it was pulled out.
- **Cede**--To surrender, to give up, as by treaty. Mexico ceded a great deal of its territory to the United States following the Mexican War
- **Cherokee**--A nation of native Americans from the Southeastern United States. Originally they lived in the southern Appalachians, but now are mainly in eastern Oklahoma. As a boy, Sam Houston went to live with the Cherokee Indians.
- **Compromise**--A settlement of differences in which each side gives something up. Compromises were reached on the slavery question that postponed civil war.
- **Congressman**--A member of the United States House of Representatives, one of the two divisions of the legislative branch of government. Sam Houston was a congressman.
- **Constitutional**--A walk taken on a regular basis for exercise and health. Sam Houston liked to take an evening constitutional.
- **Contradictions**--Words, events or attributes which occur together but are opposites. Sam Houston had many contradictions in his life.
- **Despot**--An oppressive ruler, with complete authority and power. Santa Anna was a despot.
- **Destiny**--An inevitable course of events, a fate decided ahead of time. It was considered the destiny of the United States to spread across the continent.
- **Dictator**--A ruler having complete authority and power--typically a tyrant. Santa Anna had become like a dictator in Mexico.
- **Emigration**--To leave one country or area and go into another country or area. Americans emigrated to Mexico.
- **Hickory**--A tree common in the southern part of the United States. Hickory wood is very strong and has been used to make baseball bats. Andrew Jackson was called "Old Hickory."
- **Honor**--Personal honesty and integrity, maintained without legal obligation, and typically for self-respect and dignity. Sam Houston's mother wrote the word honor in his ring.
- **Manifest**--Clearly apparent, self evident, obvious. The westward expansion of the United States was considered its manifest destiny.
- **Musket**--A type of rifle used during Sam Houston's time. The gunpowder and the shot (the bullet) were pushed down the length of the musket, and the gun was fired from a spark when a flint piece hit steel. Sam Houston used a musket in battle.

- **Precarious**--Subject to sudden and dangerous change or uncertain conditions. Texas was in a precarious position after its revolution, because Mexico could have attacked at any time.
- **Raven**--A large black bird related to the crow. The raven's feathers often have a deep purple luster, and there may be a touch of dull green on its breast. The bird is mentioned often in mythology, and was believed to symbolize special powers. Sam Houston was called the "Raven" by the Cherokee Indians.
- **Republic**--A country governed by the elected representatives of its people. Sam Houston was the president of the Republic of Texas.
- **Sage**--A wise person. Sam Houston was considered a sage.
- **Secede**--To withdraw formally from membership in a union or an association. Prior to the start of the Civil War, the states in the South seceded from the Union.
- **Senator**--A member of the United States Senate, one of the two divisions of the legislative branch of government. Sam Houston was a senator.
- **Slavery**--The practice of making one person the property of another. In the early years of United States history, Africans were made slaves, and were bought and sold like any piece of property.
- **States' rights**--In the United States, the principle that states have authority in matters not specifically delegated to the federal government. States' rights was an important issue in the South and was considered a cause for which to fight in the Civil War.
- **Strategy**--A plan of action, as in military operations, politics, or business. Sam Houston followed a strategy in the battle against Santa Anna.
- **Texican, Texian, Texan**--A citizen or resident of Texas. The words all mean the same, but Texican or Texian are more often used in purely historical discussions.

Books

(1) Day, Donald, and Harry Herbert Ullom, eds. *The Autobiography of Sam Houston*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1947.

(2) James, Marquis. *The Raven*. Dunwoody, Georgia: Norman S. Berg, Publisher, by arrangement with Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1929.

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Disclaimer

The movie *Sam Houston--Man of Honor* is a fictionalized account of historical events. Some characters have been changed and others added for dramatic effect.

It is important to remember that the handbook and the video are part of interdisciplinary and multi-cultural studies of history, biography, literature, geography, tolerance, and intolerance and should be included in the broader scope of any curriculum.

Classroom Activities

The following activities can be adapted to a range of age levels. In all of these activities, the objective is to make students participants in their learning experiences rather than just observers.

- **Interview Session**--Have students hold an interview of Sam Houston in the same way that Sam Houston was interviewed in the video. The teacher can take the part of Sam Houston. The technique will work for any historical character, and in fact is an excellent way to teach historical information with the students as participants. A student can also take the part of the historical character if preparations have been made. Give specific questions ahead of time so the students can study.
- **Time line**--Have the students draw a time line for Sam Houston's life. Use events from the "Chronology" section of this guidebook.
- **Letter Contest**--After viewing the video have the students write a letter to Sam Houston asking about things they would like to learn. The teacher can use these requests as a guide for a later class. As a variation, have them write a letter from Sam Houston telling about some event of his life. Try a letter from the battlefield at San Jacinto, telling America about the news from the battle.
- **The ball play**--When we study Sam Houston we need to include native Americans, because Sam Houston spent part of his life with the Indians. The young braves taught Sam Houston a game called the "ball play." This was the precursor to the modern-day Lacrosse. The "ball play" was rooted in Cherokee tribal mythology and was a national pastime. It was believed that the first ball play was between the animals, the birds vs. the beasts, with the two teams led by the eagle and the bear, respectively (the birds won because they had a flying squirrel and a bat that the beasts did not want). If you have access to Lacrosse sticks and a ball, show them to your class as a demonstration, and have some of the students try catching and throwing the ball using the sticks in an outdoor situation. Avoid having an actual game, however, since Lacrosse is a contact sport and is best played with proper equipment and instruction.
- **The hoop and pole game**--Sam also learned a "hoop and pole game." This may have been the game popular with Indian youth in many tribes in which the challenge was to throw spears or poles at rolling hoops. The hoops could have been made from bound willow sticks or other pliable wood. You can duplicate this game for a class using balls and hula hoops (for obvious reasons, it's not advisable to use spears). Roll the hoops across a lawn area and have students throw balls at the moving circle. Get everyone involved by having teams and scoring points, or simply make it an individual challenge by seeing who can hit the target in the fewest number of shots. For real effect, you can have the class make their own hoops from natural materials if pliable woods such as willow branches are available.
- **Newspaper**--Have the students produce a newspaper about any of the great events of Sam Houston' time. The section in this guide book entitled "Sam Houston's Times" is a resource in this regard. A front page of a newspaper may be

enough for a small project. Allow two weeks or longer of project time for development of a full paper. Assemble a newspaper team, and give each individual a writing assignment.

- **Sam Houston's America**--Using an outline map of the United States, have the students locate all the major cities that were important in Sam Houston's life. These cities can include (1) Lexington, Virginia, (2) Maryville, Tennessee, (2) Nashville, Tennessee, (2) Washington, D.C., (2) Nacogdoches, Texas, (2) Huntsville, Texas, (2) Austin, Texas. The students will have to do atlas or library research. Also have them locate the Battle of Horseshoe Bend in east-central Alabama, the Neosho River in northeast Oklahoma, and the site of the Battle of San Jacinto near Houston, Texas.
- **The Railway Lunch**--Prepare a meal that Sam Houston may have eaten. Corn bread and beef stew are a likely entree.
- **Essays**--Use the "Sam Houston's Times" section of this guidebook for ideas for student essays.
- **Twenty Questions**--Twenty questions is a family game adaptable to many classroom activities. The teacher thinks of something related to Sam Houston, but keeps it secret from the class, writing it on a piece of paper. The class has to guess what it is, and is only allowed twenty questions. The only clue given is whether the secret something is (1) a person, (2) a place, or (3) a thing. Note that the questions have to be phrased to allow yes or no answers.
- **Artifacts**--Some students in a class may have artifacts from the days in which Sam Houston lived. If real artifacts are scarce, have the students make their own artifacts. Have the students use library resources to find books with pictures of artifact-type items.

Suggested Trips

- **Alamo Village**--In Bracketville, Texas, 120 miles west of San Antonio; site of the filming of John Wayne's epic, *The Alamo*. Meet the owner, Happy Shahan. This is a full-sized 19th century western town, with shops, and a reproduction of the Alamo. Open daily 9:00 am; closed Dec. 21-26 (phone 512-563-2580).
- **The Hermitage**--The home of Andrew Jackson, near Nashville, Tennessee. Sam Houston was a frequent guest at the Hermitage. The mansion is restored with original furnishings. Open 7 days 9:00-5:00 (phone 615-889-2941).
- **Horseshoe Bend National Military Park**--Where Sam Houston fought during the War of 1812. Located on Hwy 49, 13 miles north of Dadeville, Alabama. Open 7 days 9:00-4:30, except Christmas (phone 205-234-7111)
- **Sam Houston Memorial Museum**--Part of General Houston's homestead, established 1847 in Huntsville, Texas. Located 1804 Sam Houston Ave. Open 7 days 9:00-5:00 (phone 409-295-7824).
- **Sam Houston School House**--The building where Sam Houston ran a school as a young man, located 3 miles north of Maryville, Tennessee. Open 7 days 10:00-5:00, Sundays 1:00-5:00 (phone 615-983-1550).
- **San Jacinto Memorial Park and Museum**--The site of the Battle of San Jacinto, southeast of Houston, Texas. Take Texas Hwy. 134, off Texas Hwy. 225. Open 7 days 9:30-5:30; museum closed Monday (phone 713-479-2421).
- **Talequah, Oklahoma**--In eastern Oklahoma, considered the capital city of the Cherokee Indian nation. Visit the Cherokee National Museum and the outdoor drama, *Trail of Tears*, which depict Cherokee history. Museum open Mon. to Sat 10:00-5:00, closed Sat. in the winter (phone 918-456-6007).

Video Quiz

Answer the following questions after viewing the Sam Houston video: Sam Houston--A Man of Honor. Note: This on-camera Video Quiz is presented after the closing credits for the video. Please make as many copies as needed for class use.

1. What was Houston's Indian name?
2. What was the name of the battle in which Houston fought under Andrew Jackson?
3. Why do you think Houston left home to live with the Indians?
4. Who commanded the Mexican army at the Battle of San Jacinto?
5. Houston was the governor of which two states?
6. Did the Battle of San Jacinto occur before or after the Battle of the Alamo?
7. Did the Battle of San Jacinto occur before or after the Civil War?
8. What was written inside the ring that Houston received from his mother? Why do you think she did this?
9. What was the name of the Indian tribe in which Houston was adopted?
10. What were the results of the Battle of San Jacinto?

Essay Questions

1. Why do you think Houston is a hero for us today?
2. If you could meet Sam Houston yourself, what question would you like to ask?

Answers to Video Quiz

1. The Raven. In the Cherokee language the word for raven is "Co-lon-neh," and this is what the Indians would have called him.
2. The Battle of Horseshoe Bend. There was a horseshoe-shaped bend in the Tallapoosa River, where the Creek Indians had set their defenses. This was in the War of 1812.
3. Sam Houston was a restless young man who wanted adventure.
4. Santa Anna. His full name was General Antonio López de Santa Anna.
5. Tennessee (1827-1829) and Texas (1859-1861).
6. After. The Alamo fell March 13, 1836, and the Battle of San Jacinto was April 21, 1836.
7. Before. The Civil War began almost 25 years after San Jacinto.
8. The word is HONOR. Sam Houston's mother always wanted him to be a man of courage and honor.
9. The Cherokee Indians.
10. The immediate results were that Texas became an independent nation. The long term results were that Texas eventually became part of the United States, which

precipitated a war with Mexico, and from the victory spoils of the war the territory between Texas and California was also added to the United States.

