

# Texas Ancestors and History

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**T**exas is certainly renowned for the six flags that have flown over it during its storied past. However, as Texans in general, we are probably most familiar with the Republic of Texas days from our 8th grade Texas history classes. To this day, Texans still cherish the legends of the Wild West and many people from outside still view our state in that way. From the

Alamo, to Goliad, and San Jacinto, Texans have always shown their grit and determination for survival and independence.

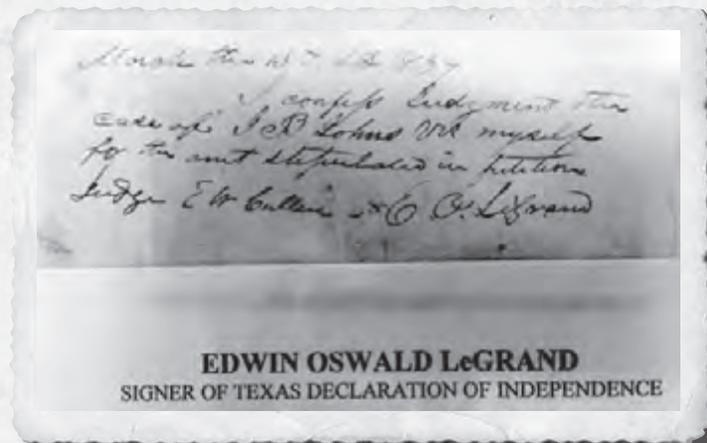
Some of my German ancestors immigrated to Texas via Indianola on Matagorda Bay and, like many of the Germans and Czechs, headed for central and west Texas looking for their future in a new land. During that time, I also had a great-great-great uncle named Edwin O. LeGrand who signed the Texas Declaration of Independence and later served as chief justice in San Augustine County.

As far as famous dentists in Texas' past, five American Dental Association presidents come to mind but the most famous dentist is probably Doc Holiday. Doc Holiday practiced in Dallas for a short time although he would not likely be the target of a new member campaign promoting the ethical standards of the TDA and our profession today.

Aside from the Alamo heroes who fought with Jim Bowie and Davy Crockett, I suspect it would be hard to find a group of Texans more revered than the Texas Rangers. Although the baseball Texas Rangers have made their mark recently, I am speaking of the hardcore, rough and tumble frontiersmen that helped tame and protect pioneering Texans from Indians, hoodlums, and thieves in the early years. In 1823 Stephen F. Austin actually hired the first Rangers, but on November 24, 1835, Texas lawmakers instituted a special force known as the Texas Rangers. This orga-



A pocket-sized copy of the U.S. Constitution given to each sitting representative of Texas when Texas joined the U.S. This copy was a personal one of Sam Houston, who signed it at the top.



The signature on the right is of Dr. Herwig's great-great-great uncle, E.O. LeGrand, a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence.

nization had 56 men in three companies. During the late 1800s, when the last Indian skirmishes were winding down, I had three great-great-grandfathers that served in various companies of the Texas Rangers. Two were on my dad's side and one on my mom's side that overlapped time in service but did not know one another. The early Rangers evolved in both strong and lean times over the next century to become a part of the Texas Department of Public Safety as it exists currently.

This rich history of Texas and my ancestors has led me to collect a few things related to the Republic of Texas, including early maps, money, and a few documents signed by famous Texans. Pictured is an early French map of Texas by Lapie that shows the heart-shaped Texas of 1838. Also shown is a land grant in Austin signed by Sam Houston. The small signature (on page 176) is of my great-great-uncle, E. O. LeGrand, one of the signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence.

Finally, the most significant piece I have would be the pocket-sized copy of the U.S. Constitution that was given to each sitting representatives of Texas when we joined the United States. This particular copy was a personal one of Sam Houston's that he signed and gave as a birthday gift to one of his relatives.

The past may be gone but is certainly not forgotten and sometimes it is fun to reflect on our past as we look forward to a bright future in the Lone Star State.



*Pictured is Dr. Herwig's great-great-grandfather, Heinrich Neimann, a Texas Ranger in the late 1800s.*



*An Austin land grant signed by Sam Houston.*



*An early French map by Lapie in 1838 shows a heart-shaped Texas.*