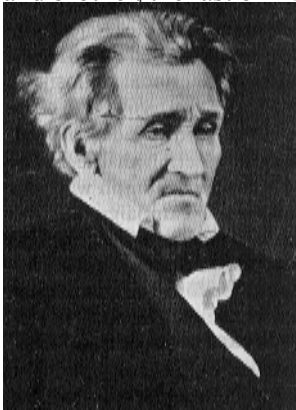


Old Hickory and the Raven, Two Masons for Manifest Destiny

By Robert C. Barnard, MPS

They were united in respect and admiration for each other and in the love of their country from the very first. Yet, they were not even of the same generation.

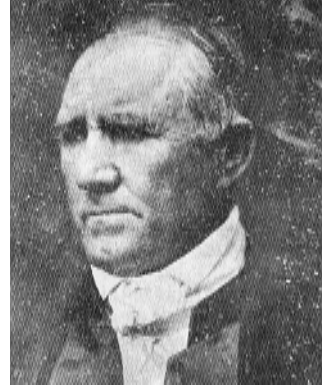
Andrew Jackson was born in 1767 and fought in the Revolutionary War when he was 13. The next year, his mother and brother, the last of his family died and he was left alone. However, he met Spruce Ma-



cay, a friendly lawyer from North Carolina and he was adopted and trained. Jackson was admitted to the bar in 1787 at the age of 20 when he moved to Nashville, Tennessee.

Sam Houston was born 26 years later, in 1793. The war for liberty was long over, but Houston's early life was full of difficulties like Jackson's. His father died when he was 13 and his mother moved to Tennessee and put Sam to work in a trader's store. At the age of 15, he ran away and lived with the Cherokee Indians for 3 years. The young "Colonneh" (Raven) was adopted into the tribe.

It was in March of 1813 that young Sam met the man who was to become his model and hero. He had returned to live with his mother in the frontier hamlet of Marysville, Tennessee.



In the years just past, Lawyer Jackson had become a wealthy man selling land and practicing law. He was also Major General of the Tennessee Militia and had come to recruit men for our second war against the British.

The general was amused and intrigued to see Sam thrash the village bully much bigger than he by challenging him first to a long, rugged foot race and then attacking when the bigger man was tired. Jackson told the young man to use these same tactics in fighting a war. "When the enemy is superior to you in strength, extend him, lead him a chase until he exhausts himself; then close suddenly for the decisive blow." The admiring young Sam never forgot those words and used the system many years later in Texas.

Houston joined the Army and soon found himself in Jackson's command fighting the Creek Indians in Mississippi Territory who were helping the British. Because of his absolute faith in Jackson, Houston charged the enemy when ordered, even when the platoon he was leading quit. He was terribly wounded by many musket balls fired at close range.

The general detailed four men to take his young soldier friend back to Tennessee and they got him there seemingly more dead than alive. However, Sam recovered after many months of his mother's tender care. He then found that Jackson had written him a letter of commendation and sent him a commission as 1st lieutenant.

From this time on, the two men worked closely together. Jackson helped Sam to become a lawyer and then backed him to become district attorney of Nashville at the age of 25. Under the general's tutelage, Sam became a Congressman at 31 and Governor of Tennessee when he was 35.

Jackson had become the great political leader of the West when he won the Battle of New Orleans in 1815, defeating 9,000 British veterans who had just crushed Napoleon at Waterloo. He had only 5,000 backwoodsmen, but their long rifles proved more than a match for the British muskets and his amazing leadership was successful. He was the hero and hope of the common man of the United States from that hour.

By 1829, war hero Jackson was President of the United States; but Governor Sam Houston was struck from the zenith of success to face his darkest moment in life. He married Eliza Allen, a wealthy and completely innocent young lady, who had seemingly no idea what marriage entailed. Historic writers tend to think that the marriage was never consummated and she went home to her parents. Sam was blamed by society in a way that is difficult for us to understand today.

The Governor of Tennessee resigned and went back to live with the Cherokee Indians, drinking heavily to forget the episode. The Indians ceased to call Sam Colonneh, The Raven, and nicknamed him "Big Drunk." It took about five years for Sam to take any interest in the world again.

In 1833, the 44 year old Houston fought his way out of the alcohol induced stupor. He found that his Cherokee friends were being robbed and oppressed by their government agents. These officials stole a large portion of the Indian rations and sold them elsewhere at a profit.

Sam induced the three paramount chiefs to sign a treaty making him "Ambassador of the Cherokee Nation;" then he returned to Washington in full savage regalia to visit his hero, President Jackson. The old man was delighted to see him again and Sam was able to right many of the wrongs done the Cherokees.

In this manner, the old friends were able to confer together. Jackson was worried about the future of the United States, whose boundary at no point reached across the Rocky Mountains. Mexico claimed most the old Spanish territory in the Southwest and West and Great Britain and Russia were reaching for the Northwest and the Pacific Coast. The weak United States could well be crushed in the land grabs of the great powers.

The president convinced Houston that our country's only safety lay in being able to procure all of the land from the Atlantic to the Pacific; this was our "manifest destiny." He felt that the Mexican province of Texas was the key to unlock the continent of North America for the United States.

The Raven went back to tell the Cherokee of the better laws and honest agents who would deal with them. Then, he left for Texas with Jackson's last words ringing in his memory: "Texas will trigger the United States in an explosion across the continent.

He was there to be elected general of the Texas forces when El Presidente Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna brought up the entire Mexican Army of about 6,000 men to abolish the Constitution of 1824 and destroy the American colonists. He found few men and less munitions to stop the depredations. Texas fighters were wiped out at Goliad and at the Alamo.

Sam began his tactics with Santa Anna by retreating again and again. His own men began to question if "ole Sam really knowed what he was doin'."

In the ensuing weeks, the Mexican forces became extended and only about 3,000 continued to pursue the little Texan Army of 750. On reaching the bayou near San Jacinto, Sam crossed Vince's Bridge and then had his lieutenant, Deaf Smith, burn it so that no reinforcements could reach Santa Anna. Having tired out and extended the enemy, Sam was through retreating.

He trotted out in front of the little force on his big white gelding, drew his sword and bellowed, "Remember the Alamo!" "Seven hundred desperate and enraged Texans took up the cry and began to run toward the Mexican lines. In less than half an hour, the survivors of the Mexican Army were on their knees imploring, "Me no at Alamo" and the war was over. "El Presidente" was captured the next day. Sam and his men were heroes and he would soon be the first president of the Texas Republic.

However, the United States, no longer under "Old Hickory's" leadership, would not annex Texas to the Union, for they knew it would mean war with Mexico. Sam was a strategist, as well as a soldier, and he pretended to consider bringing Texas into the British Empire. An alarmed President Polk and Congress agreed to annex Texas.

Mexico then declared war on the United States and on the bloody conflict's conclusion, the "manifest destiny" which Old Hickory had discussed with The Raven came to pass. Our nation received not only Texas, but the territory that is now Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah and California. Texas had truly "triggered us in an explosion" across the continent from sea to shining sea.

Houston had been true to his trust. On his deathbed in June of 1845, Andrew Jackson knew and said that "All is safe at last." America owes much to these great men and Masons.

Masonic Affiliation of Sam Houston and Andrew Jackson:

Sam Houston was raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason in Cumberland Lodge #8 of Nashville, Tennessee on July 22, 1817. In Texas, he joined Holland Lodge #1 in 1837 and presided over the establishment of the Grand Lodge of Texas.

Although the exact date of Andrew Jackson's becoming a Master Mason is in doubt, we know that he was a member of Harmony Lodge #1 of Nashville, Tennessee by 1800. He was Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee from October 7, 1822 to October 4, 1823. On May 4, 1825, he introduced the visiting Marquis de Lafayette to the Masonic brethren in Nashville.

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