

Adventures on the American Frontier

BRAVE MEN OF EARLY TEXAS

Part Four
Heroes of the Lone Star Republic



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“Let’s go to Texas!”

Word had spread across the United States of the vast rolling grasslands of Texas, where great herds of buffalo came to spend the winter, huge numbers of wild cattle could be rounded up, and bands of wild horses ran with manes and tails streaming in the wind.



In 1825, the new Mexican government urged Americans to come to Texas to become Mexican citizens and help build up the land. Soon colonies began springing up in east-central Texas as Americans flooded into the open lands.

Among the thousands of Americans who went to Texas during that time were several who would later be remembered as heroes. One of them was Sam Houston. Another was Jim Bowie. A third was Davy Crockett.



SAM HOUSTON

Samuel Houston would become a lawyer, a soldier, a politician, and a leader in the Texas Revolution, but his family wouldn't have believed that to be possible when he was a boy. The only thing they might have believed he would lead was a move to get out of work.

"Laziest boy I ever saw! He just doesn't seem to belong in Major Sam Houston's family," people said when Sam was a young boy growing up in Virginia.

In 1806, when Sam was thirteen, his family moved to Tennessee. Sam's father had bought about 400 acres of land there, but he died suddenly before he was ready to leave. Mrs. Houston decided to take their nine children to Tennessee anyway. She bought a covered wagon, packed their things into it, and off they went.

Sam was a master of getting out of work. There was much to be done on the frontier to start a new farm, but Sam did so little of it that his mother sent him to work



for the storekeeper in town instead. Sam often got out of that work, too. He made friends with some members of a tribe of Cherokees who lived nearby, and he would leave for days at a time to live with them. They adopted him into their tribe and named him *Co-lon-neh*, The Raven. Later, Sam's mother sent him to school, and he became a frontier schoolteacher. But he tired of that, too, and away he went to live with the Cherokees again, this time to stay for many months, until the War of 1812 began.