

**Daughters of the Republic of Texas Statement to  
National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission**

**11 February 2020**

**Kitty Mellen Hoeck**

**Daughters of the Republic of Texas  
Elisabet Ney Chapter DC, VA and MD  
Chapter Historian**

**The Republic of Texas Legation to the United States**

Good afternoon and thank-you National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission for providing a forum for the Daughters of the Republic of Texas to share with you why we believe that support of H.R. 3349 The Republic of Texas Legation Memorial Act is warranted. Chairman May and members of the Commission thank you for your interest in the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, Elisabet Ney Chapter DC, VA and MD project. One of our chapter goals is placing a memorial in Washington, D.C. where the Republic of Texas diplomatic ministers worked on behalf of the Texas citizens. These diplomats were tasked with getting financial assistance, managing diplomatic relations with Mexico, and ultimately annexation from the United States.

Between 1836 and 1845 the Republic of Texas sent diplomats to London, Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam and Washington, D.C. The legation sites in Paris and London have been marked with historical plaques for many years but not Washington, D.C. We would like a similar memorial at or near one of the listed sites for the Republic of Texas Legation to the United States so that the legacy of the legation, and its importance to our nation, can be remembered here on American soil as well as in Europe.

**Background**

The history of the Republic of Texas and their Legation to the United States represents a pivotal time in American history. Through the newly established 1824 Mexican government's invitation and encouragement, American colonists settled in the sparsely populated northern region of Mexico. Rifts between the new colonists and the Mexican government became apparent early with various issues such as land titles, religion, and slavery, as Mexico had abolished slavery in 1829 the United States had not.

In 1833, Santa Anna was elected president of Mexico. After suspending the Mexican Constitution of 1824, tensions and disillusion with Santa Anna's brutal policies led several Mexican states, Zacatecas, Coahuila, Yucatan and Texas to openly revolt against his rule.

On March 2, 1836 at Washington-on-the-Brazos, a group of Texans declared independence from Mexico, while at the same time, Santa Anna and his army of over 2500 soldiers laid siege to the Alamo for 13 days and its 187 Texans. Santa Anna declared all who took up arms as pirates and rebels deserving of execution.

Texans and Americans angered by the massacre made “Remember the Alamo” their inspirational battle cry. On March 27, 1836 after the Texans lost the Battle of Coleto, 425 to 445 Texan prisoners of war were rounded up, shot, and their bodies burned adding another rallying cry of “Remember Goliad.” The Texas revolution was not over, there would be one more decisive battle.

On April 21, 1836 Sam Houston’s ragtag army surprised Santa Anna at San Jacinto. Santa Anna and his army were caught off guard, were routed as the Texans attacked crying out “Remember the Alamo, Remember Goliad.” Santa Anna was captured, his army surrendered and a peace negotiated in the ensuing days.

### **Establishment of Diplomacy**

To establish legitimacy as an independent nation, the Republic of Texas needed recognition by other sovereign nations. The new Republic’s needs included financial assistance as their treasury was nearly empty and protection from subsequent invasion by Mexico. The Republic’s ultimate goal was annexation by the United States. Other business of the Republic of Texas Legation included negotiating treaties of amity, commerce and navigation, negotiating boundaries as well as securing loans.

To satisfy these needs, the new government established diplomatic relations with France, England, the Netherlands, Belgium and the United States through their new diplomatic corp. With little financial support from Texas these diplomats were not able to establish formal embassies. The term legation was used to describe the Texas diplomatic ministers. Merriam Webster Dictionary defines a legation as: “1: the sending forth of a legate 2: a body of deputies sent on a mission *specifically*: a diplomatic mission in a foreign country headed by a minister 3: the official residence and office of a diplomatic minister in a foreign country”. In other words, where ever the minister worked on behalf the Texas Republic became the official Republic of Texas Legation. The ministers in Washington, D.C. actually worked out of boarding houses where they lived, as did senators, congressmen and others who came to Washington work temporarily.

Leaving Texas to come to work in Washington City was a hardship for the Texas diplomats. Often the ministers had to fund their operations themselves and wait to be reimbursed. Charges D’Affaires Isaac Van Zandt’s trip from Texas to Washington required the use of “a carryall (buggy) drawn by a good team of horses”, “steamboat, stagecoach, sleigh and train”. One Texas diplomat, James Reilly, writes to another Texas diplomat, Isaac Van Zandt, “Are you still at Mad Anne Bowen’s. Alias Starvation Hall.” Van Zandt writes to Reilly, “The Government (Texas) starves all its ministers.” and “I view their conduct inexcusable in not paying their foreign ministers promptly.” When Van Zandt’s family arrived in Washington some time later they stayed in Alexandria, Virginia a few months. In KM Van Zandt’s autobiography (Isaac Van Zandt’s son) he writes, “I expect my father wanted to rub some of the country off of us before taking us into Washington.”

The diplomatic work of the Republic of Texas Legation to the United States ultimately came to the end on 29 December 1845 when legislation was signed into law to annex Texas and declare it the 28<sup>th</sup> state.

The annexation of Texas was a major cause of the US-Mexican War in 1846. The war ended in 1848 with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in which the US acquired all or part of New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, California, Colorado, Nevada, and Wyoming for \$15 million. In total, with the annexation of Texas and the acquisition of the land in the Southwest, the US added over 900,000 square miles of territory. The United States now stretched from the one side of the North American continent to the other.

### **Diplomatic Sites of the Republic of Texas Legation**

Our chapter, with the assistance of Professor of History Dr. Kenneth Stevens of Texas Christian University, has located several sites where the Republic's ministers boarded. William Wharton, Branch Archer and Stephan F. Austin traveled to Washington in 1836 to secure aid from the United States. William Wharton became the Republic's first official diplomatic minister. Through his work the Republic of Texas gained diplomatic recognition from the United States opening the door to later annexation and statehood all while operating from various boarding houses.

Our committee and Dr. Stevens' research lists the following focal points for Texas legation diplomatic affairs operations:

1. Mrs. Page's boardinghouse opposite Centre Market which today is a site near the National Navy Memorial.
2. Mrs. Pittman's boardinghouse on the west side of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street West between Pennsylvania Avenue and C Street North, near the center of the block which today is between a section of Constitution Avenue and C Street North, Today this is The William B. Bryant Annex to the E. Barrett Prettyman US Courthouse.
3. Gadsby's Hotel, also known as the National Hotel, at Pennsylvania Avenue and 6<sup>th</sup> Street NW. Today this is the building formerly known as the Newseum.
4. Mr. Lawrence's boardinghouse was near Gadsby's Hotel. Today this is the Canadian Embassy.
5. Mrs. Bowen's boardinghouse west side 6<sup>th</sup> Street west, between D and E Streets north, near D Street was the listing in the 1843 City Directory for the Texas Charges D'Affaires. Today this is the Patrick Henry Building.
6. A site at Pennsylvania Avenue NW, one square west of the War Department is today where there is a huge commercial building.
7. A house on F Street between 13th and 14th Streets. (next door to John Quincy Adams). Today this site is another large commercial building.
8. Mr. Underwood's house was at New Jersey Avenue and Capitol Hill. Today this site appears to be the Cannon House Office Building.

## **Precedents for Commemorative Works**

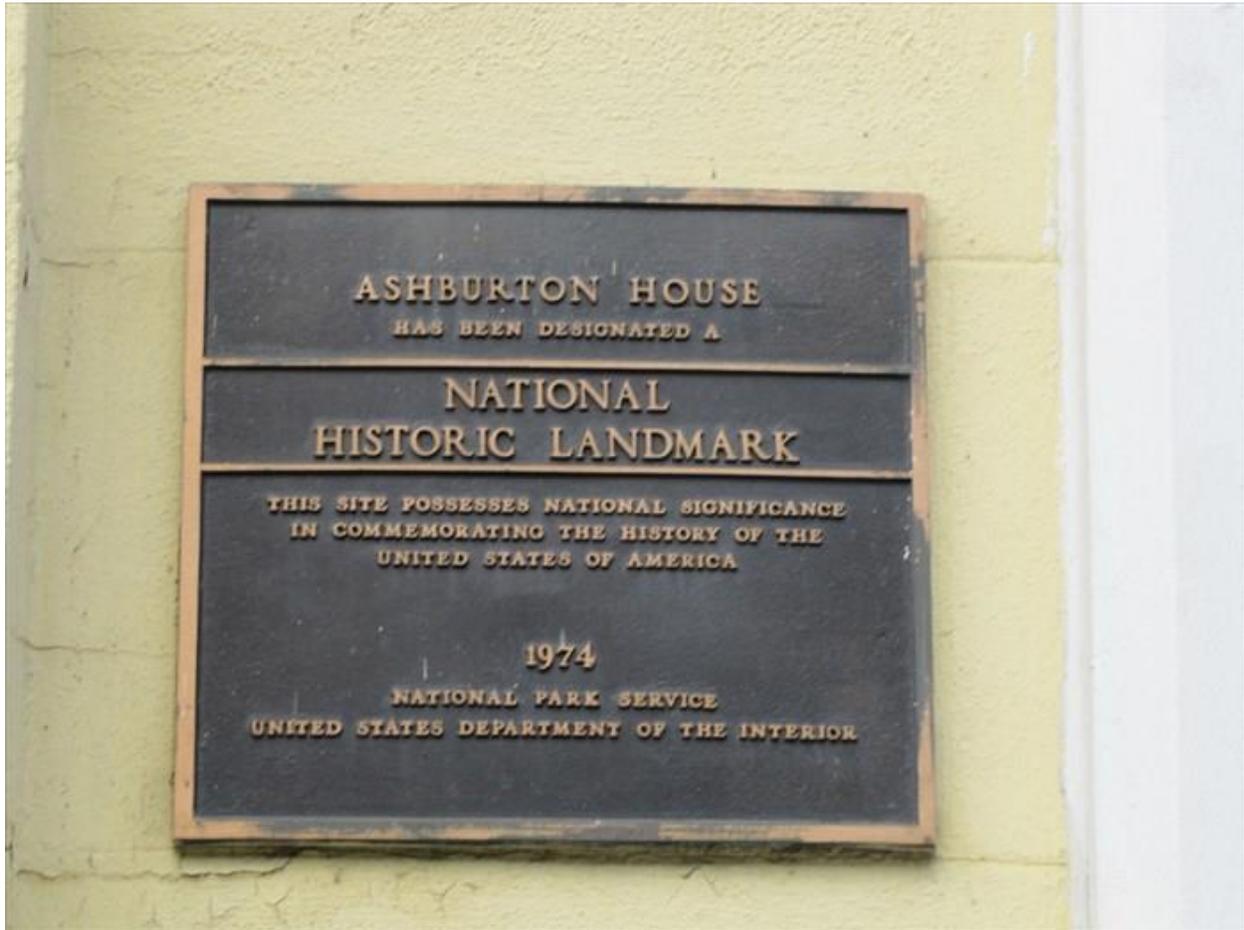
Since the enactment of the 1986 Commemorative Works Act there have been 35 commemorative works authorized by Congress in the Capitol area. We noticed 4 memorials are for people, places or tragedies occurring outside the United States. Also as a precedent, in 1974 the National Park Service placed a plaque honoring a diplomatic site at Ashburton House, 1525 H Street, NW, Washington D.C. As an independent and sovereign nation for nearly ten years, the Republic of Texas sent eight diplomatic ministers to the US during the ten-year history of the Republic of Texas and we need a memorial to commemorate this part of our history in the area where they served, our Nation's capital.

## **Proposal**

With plaques already venerating Texas diplomats in Paris and London we feel a memorial honoring the men of the Republic of Texas Legation in Washington DC is richly warranted. Therefore, the Daughters of the Republic of Texas would like to place a similar memorial within the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site or nearby to memorialize the Republic of Texas Legation at one of the above listed sites. This proposal is a bipartisan issue costing the citizens of the United States \$0.00 with memorial funding provided by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas. Please consider assisting us in honoring these men by supporting HR 3349, The Republic of Texas Legation Memorial Act.

**“Remember the Alamo”** is emblazoned in American history and commemorating the Republic reminds us of the proud heritage and rich history, not only of Texans, but of what it means to be American. Let's commemorate this part of American history.

## Ashburton House 1525 H Street, NW



DIPLOMATIC AFFAIRS Ashburton House (Saint John's Parish House) 1525 H Street, NW For ten months in 1842, this was the scene of negotiations that resolved the long-standing dispute with Great Britain over major segments of the boundary with Canada. The Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842 also saw the U.S. government protect and respect the rights of the states in international affairs and stand firm against British impressments of sailors aboard American ships. Built in 1836, the house was altered in 1853-56. DC listing November 8, 1964, NR listing November 7, 1973, NHL designation November 7, 1973; within Lafayette Square HD; see Bibliography (Sixteenth Street Architecture II)

"The D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites" from the DC office of Historic Preservation. In the Table of Contents is the topic "THE FEDERAL CITY (1790-1860)" and under that the subtopic "Diplomatic Affaires".

# H.R. 3349

## Republic of Texas Legation Memorial Act

**STATEMENT OF DAVID VELA, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, OPERATIONS, EXERCISING THE AUTHORITY OF THE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS, AND PUBLIC LANDS ON H.R. 3349, A BILL TO AUTHORIZE THE DAUGHTERS OF THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS TO ESTABLISH THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS LEGATION MEMORIAL AS A COMMEMORATIVE WORK IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

**December 4, 2019**

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Chairwoman Haaland, Ranking Member Young, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department of the Interior on H.R. 3349, to authorize the Daughters of the Republic of Texas to establish the Republic of Texas Legation Memorial as a commemorative work in the District of Columbia, and for other purposes.

The Department recognizes the contribution to the shaping of our Nation's history that is represented by the subject of H.R. 3349, but we recommend that the Committee defer action on this legislation until the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission (Commission) has an opportunity to review the proposal.

H.R. 3349 would authorize the organization named the Daughters of the Republic of Texas to establish a commemorative work in honor of the Texas Legation (Legation), a diplomatic mission that represented the independent Republic of Texas in Washington, D.C. from 1836 to 1845. The bill requires compliance with the Commemorative Works Act (40 U.S.C. Chapter 89) (CWA) and prohibits Federal funds from being used to establish the memorial.

The Legation's initial goal was to seek United States recognition of Texas as independent from Mexico, and it then became the pursuit of annexation of Texas to the United States. Texas President Sam Houston proposed annexation in 1836; however, Congress did not agree to annexation for another nine years, primarily because of controversy over the addition of a slave-holding state. During that time period, the

Legation worked with the U.S. Government on foreign policy, Texas boundary refinement, immigration, and Native American issues. In February 1845, Congress finally passed a Joint Resolution to annex the Republic of Texas to the United States. In November 1845, Texas voters approved annexation by a landslide and the Legation mission in Washington, D.C., closed.

Ideas for new memorials benefit greatly from the review they receive through the Commission. We note that the proposed commemorative work has not been reviewed by the Commission. Established by the CWA, the Commission is staffed and chaired by the National Park Service and is composed of key government agency representatives who have a critical role or expertise in the location and design of monuments and memorials on Federal lands in DC. A key role of the Commission is to provide advice to the Senate and House Committees with jurisdiction over the National Park System on pending legislation that would authorize new commemorative works. The Commission plans to make recommendations to Congress on H.R. 3349 immediately following its next meeting, which is expected to be scheduled for February 2020.

While we believe it is premature for Congress to authorize this memorial, we support that H.R. 3349 requires the proposed memorial to be established in accordance with the CWA. This provision ensures that the memorial, if authorized, will be subject to the framework for planning and review that Congress established for all proposed commemorative works in areas administered by the National Park Service and the General Services Administration in the District of Columbia and its environs. This planning and review ensures there will be a thoughtful and deliberative process that will yield the most appropriate results.

In addition to subjecting the proposed memorial to the processes of the CWA, we note that the proposed memorial is also consistent with the act's subject matter requirements; specifically with Section 8903(c), which states that "a commemorative work commemorating an event, individual, or group of individuals... may not be authorized until after the 25th anniversary of the event, death of the individual, or death of the last surviving member of the Group." The time period of the Legation's service, 1836 to 1845, assures that we are well past the 25th anniversary of the death of any of the individuals who were part of the Legation.

We strongly support the bill's prohibition on Federal funds being used to establish the memorial, which assures that the cost of establishing this memorial will not be borne by the National Park Service. However, the Committee should be aware that once constructed, the National Park Service would need to use funding for the maintenance

of the memorial that could otherwise be used to help reduce the \$11.9 billion backlog of deferred maintenance in national parks and address other critical park needs.

Finally, the bill contains a provision we strongly support including in all legislation authorizing memorials under the CWA--the requirement that unspent funds for the construction of the memorial be provided to the National Park Foundation for deposit in an interest-bearing account, as stated in 40 U.S.C. Section 8906(b)(3).

Chairwoman Haaland, this concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other members of the Subcommittee may have.

February 2, 2020

Ms. Beth Porter, NCMAC Secretary

[Beth\\_Porter@nps.gov](mailto:Beth_Porter@nps.gov)

Dear Ms. Porter and Members of the Commission:

I am writing to support HR 3349, the Republic of Texas Legation Memorial Act, which proposes to install a commemorative plaque near the site of the former Texas Legation embassy in the District of Columbia. As is well known, Texas was an independent republic from 1836 until 1845 when it became a state in the union. Texas is unique among the states in its history as a foreign nation with an embassy in Washington. These were dramatic years in the history of the United States marked by intense conflict over slavery and manifest destiny and Texas occupied a critical part in those events. The addition of Texas as a slave state at once deepened the conflict over slavery and contributed to the outbreak of the Mexican-American War in 1846.

I am a historian currently writing a diplomatic history of the Texas Republic. (I was an editor of the Diplomatic Papers of Daniel Webster at Dartmouth College, a National Historical and Public Records Commission project, and taught American history at Texas Christian University for thirty-six years before retiring last year). As my work on this topic has become known I have received numerous requests from individuals, organizations, and the media asking about the location of the Texas embassy in Washington during the time Texas was a republic. A number of persons have noted that there are plaques recognizing the sites of the former Texas embassies in London and Paris, but not one in Washington.

Of course, there was no single site for the Texas embassy in Washington. These shirt-tail diplomats operated out of boarding houses in the District. But the site at the Navy Memorial seems especially apt since Texas diplomat Memucan Hunt became Secretary of the Navy for the republic and the place of his diplomatic residence is now occupied by the National Archives.

The Daughters of the Republic of Texas, in locating the various places Texans represented their fledgling nation, has done exemplary service in regard to the history of the United States as well as Texas. I hope the Commission will support this bipartisan effort.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Stevens  
Professor of History, Emeritus  
Texas Christian University

## Daughters of the Republic of Texas

December 2, 2019

The Honorable Representative Lloyd Doggett  
2307 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington DC 20515

Dear Representative Doggett,

The Daughters of the Republic of Texas wish to express their gratitude for your sponsorship of H.R. 3349, the Republic of Texas Legation Memorial Act. This letter is to inform you that Daughters of the Republic of Texas wholeheartedly support H.R. 3349.

**Our Mission:** The Daughters of the Republic of Texas, a lineal organization, shall educate, research, preserve, and protect the history of the Republic of Texas for all future generations.

**Our Purpose:** The objectives of DRT are:

- (1) To perpetuate the memory and spirit of the men and women who achieved and maintained the independence of Texas.
- (2) To encourage historical research into the earliest records of Texas, especially those relating to the Revolution of 1835 and the events which followed; to foster the preservation of documents and relics; to encourage the publication of records of individual service of the soldiers and patriots of the Republic and other source material for the history of Texas.
- (3) To promote the celebration of Texas Honor Days; to secure and memorialize historic spots by erecting markers thereon, and to cherish and preserve the unity of Texas, as achieved and established by the fathers and mothers of the Texas Revolution.

As you see through our Mission statement and Purpose, the Daughters value their heritage and try to educate and preserve it. Again, we thank you and appreciate all you are doing to help us.



Carolyn Thomas Raney  
President General

Daughters of the Republic of Texas

February 7,2020

Ms. Beth Porter  
National Parks Service

Dear Ms. Porter,

I have been told that the National Capital Planning Commission will be reviewing HR 3349, The Republic of Texas Legation Memorial Act, very soon and I write to voice my support of this resolution.

The Daughters of the Republic of Texas are committed to the preservation of Texas heritage and this is not the first time a diplomatic site has been honored with a plaque. In 1974 the National Park Service placed a plaque at Ashburton House, 1525 H Street, NW, Washington DC. DRT would like to place a similar plaque within the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site or some other suitable site to honor the Republic of Texas Legation in Washington that assisted in getting the Texas Republic annexed by the United States. There are already plaques to honor the Texas diplomats in Paris and London.

Please help us share this significant history with all the visitors of our nation's capital.

Sincerely,

Emily Tosch  
Second Vice President  
Daughters of the Republic of Texas  
Hiram Bennett Chapter

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Thu 2/6/2020 11:06 AM

Email to Beth Porter, Secretary, National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission

I support H.R. 3349, the Texas Legation Memorial Act.

Myrlene Johnston Jack  
[myrlenejack@yahoo.com](mailto:myrlenejack@yahoo.com)

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February 7,2020

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Second Vice President  
Daughters of the Republic of Texas  
Hiram Bennett Chapter

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February 8, 2020

Dear National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission,

I am writing to you to acknowledge my support of "The Republic of Texas Legation Memorial Act (H.R.3349)" commemorating the diplomatic ministers of the sovereign and independent nation on the Republic of Texas(1836 -1845). It is the desire of the Elisabet Ney Chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas to assist in any way possible to insure the passage of Bill H.R.3349 by Congress.

With the passage of this bill will allow us to work toward obtaining approval of a commemorative plaque at one of the sites where the Texas diplomats lived and worked for the Republic of Texas Legation to the United States. Paris and London have commemorative plaques, but there are none in Washington, DC.

Eight possible sites have been identified for possible placement of a commemorative plaque. Placement of the plaque would acknowledge Texas' role and the work these diplomats did to secure the annexation of the Republic of Texas which enable the United States to continue its expansion.

With the annexation of Texas, and the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of he U.S. acquired all or part of New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, California, Colorado, Nevada, and Wyoming thereby adding 900,000 square miles to it's countries and contributed greatly to the westward expansion of the United States.

Respectfully,

Ann Johnson

1st Vice President

Elisabet Ney Chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas.

Plaques marking the sites for the Texas Legation to London and Paris.

There is no historical marker for the Texas legation to Washington DC.



Plaque in London marking the site of the Texas Legation to England



Plaque in Paris marking the site of the Texas Legation to France.

February 2, 2020

Ms. Beth Porter, NCMAC Secretary

[Beth\\_Porter@nps.gov](mailto:Beth_Porter@nps.gov)

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