

Foreword

THE GREAT MOVEMENT westward which characterized American history from the turn of the nineteenth century until the disappearance of the frontier incidentally embraced the migration to Texas. The pioneering services of Moses and Stephen F. Austin led to the development of this particular wilderness, and the colonizing efforts of the *empresarios* which followed made Texas a flourishing colony under Mexican rule. This happy state of affairs underwent a gradual transition between 1829 and 1836, for the American colonists could not live at peace with their Mexican officials. Differences of temperament and character were accentuated by the desires of the Americans to perpetuate slavery in Texas and to be free of the practice of the Roman Catholic faith. Squabbles over taxation and disputes concerning the lack of judicial safeguards led to the calling of a series of conventions which culminated in the Texas declaration of in-

dependence, March, 1836. Though badly defeated at Goliad and at the Alamo, the decisive victory at San Jacinto assured the independence of Texas.

The annexation of Texas by the United States brought to a close the Republic of Texas' nine-year period of independent existence. During this short era the nation enjoyed all the attributes of sovereignty. A legitimate government, an army in the field, the beginnings of a navy, and the operation of a diplomatic system on a major scale were all features of the Republic's power and affluence. Though hampered by the bad times, which also struck with such devastation in the United States, and by the reliance upon paper-money issues which characterized the administrations of Sam Houston and Mirabeau B. Lamar, Texas was able to weather the storm and to maintain its independence until the date of annexation.

This work is concerned with the political history of the Republic. It is true that political divisions existed prior to the Revolution, and in this period political differences were based upon distinct principles. The faction led by William H. Wharton in the early stages of the trouble with Mexico was eager for a complete break; the faction led by Austin counseled a moderate program and did not agree on the wisdom of independence until late in 1835. However, the political divisions on the basis of principles did not continue in the period of the Republic. Politics were almost wholly of a personal nature between 1836 and 1845. The personality of Sam Houston dominated Texas in that era and made possible the two Houston administrations as well as the election of Anson Jones, who was Houston's chosen candidate. Also, it can be said that the election of Lamar was nothing more than a reversion from the first Houston term in office. There were no political parties in Texas comparable to the Whigs or Democrats in the United States. There were political techniques, appropriate to a developing, more sophisticated nation, but politics in the Republic were primarily of a personal nature.

In conclusion, the individual citizen of the Republic was much like his counterpart in the United States. His principles were in the Jacksonian mold, and his devotion to agrarian pursuits resulted in a distrust of any type of corporate monopoly. Texas was akin to any other Southern state in the ante bellum period, with cotton the chief source of wealth and with slavery a recognized institution. The development of the Republic continued along these lines, so that the state of Texas naturally became a part of the Confederacy at the time of the Civil War. Also, social historians have asserted that the germination of the distinct Texas character and tradition had its origin in the period of the Republic.