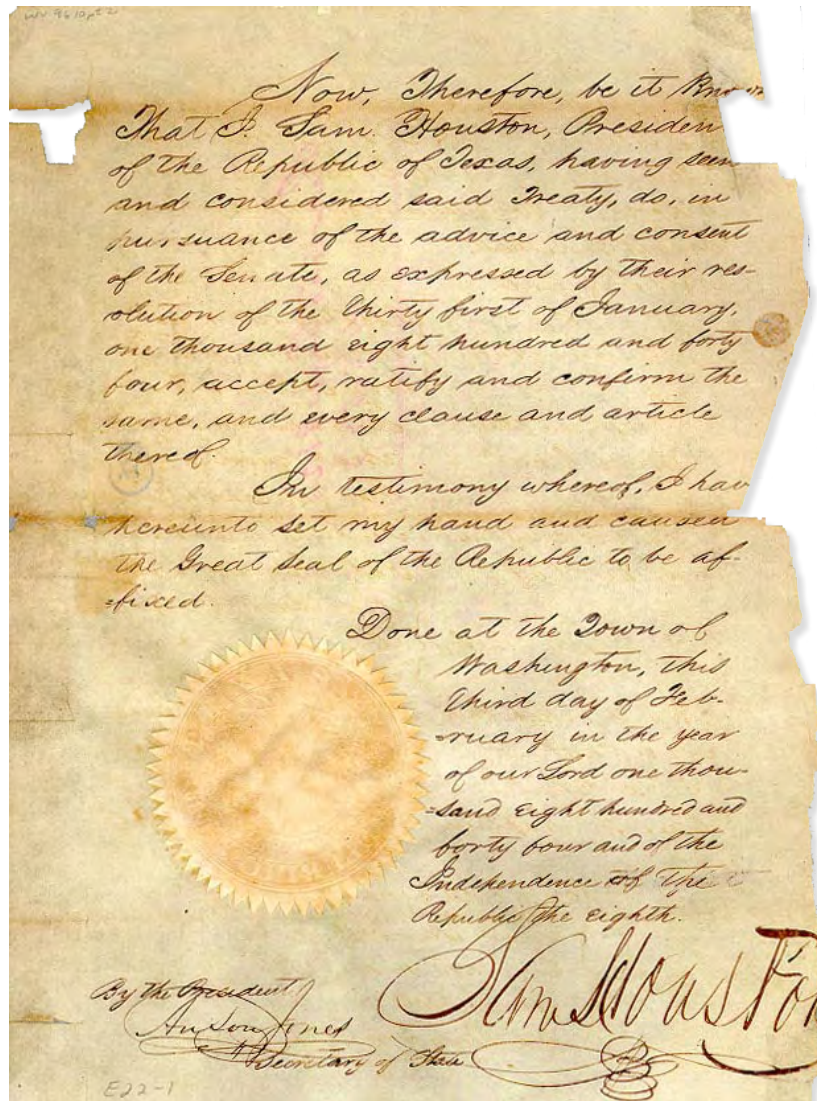


The History of the Treaty of Bird's Fort

BY KERI PANIAGUA



Bird's Fort Treaty Ratification Proclamation, 1843.
Courtesy of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

The President of the Republic of Texas, Sam Houston, spent time living with the Cherokee people in Tennessee. He had a unique perspective of First Americans and used this knowledge as the leader of Texas. During his presidency, he focused on maintaining peace with the tribes in Texas. In order to do this, he wanted to enter into treaties with the tribes and urged his countrymen not to engage in needless hostilities. Houston tried to balance ensuring the safety of the borders with keeping peace with the tribes. His first term of office saw the Republic's legislature in opposition to his methods. Between his first and second terms, Mirabeau Lamar was elected President. President Lamar did not share Houston's attitudes or methods when it came to engaging with the tribes. Instead, he attacked the tribes, namely the Comanche and Cherokee. Although, he was considered successful in driving out these two nations, there was a great loss of life for the tribes and Texans.

During Sam Houston's second term as President of the Republic of Texas, from 1841-1844, his administration was able to negotiate the Treaty of Bird's Fort with nine tribes, including the Chickasaw Nation. Our nation was in close proximity to Texas and often had problems with Texans raiding or encroaching on their lands. We also experienced raids from some tribes who lived in the Indian Territory prior



Map showing Treaty area



Statue of Captain Ishteukatubby

to our forced removal to our new treaty homeland. The Chickasaw Nation likely saw advantage in participating in the treaty talks and signing the treaty. Not only would this curtail Texans and Texas tribes in their trespassing, but it would also provide a means for the local tribes to agree not to continue hostilities against the Chickasaw Nation. This would bring peace to the area.

The Treaty of Bird's Fort was signed on September 29, 1843 between the Republic of Texas, Chickasaw Nation, Cherokee (the band residing within Texas), Delaware, Waco, Tiwocano, Keachi, Caddo, Anadakah, Ionie and Biloxie tribes. This was a treaty of friendship and peace between the parties and a call to cease hostilities. The Republic agreed to regulate trade with the tribes within its boundaries and to punish those who committed offenses against tribal members. This is the only known treaty between the Chickasaw Nation and Republic of Texas.

The representative for the Chickasaw Nation at the signing of the treaty was Ishteukatubby.

He was a Chickasaw Captain who was well respected in the community. He had the reputation of selflessness, strength, honor, courage and the ability to overpower and defeat his enemies. He was described on the record in a case before the United States Supreme Court as "a Chickasaw in whom every confidence can be placed." As a Chickasaw captain, he was responsible for handling the payment of annuities for a certain number of Chickasaw families and patrolling their area and ensuring their protection in the Chickasaw Nation. Captain Ishteukatubby's descendants are still



Peace Plaza at Grapevine Main Station in Grapevine, Texas

active in the Chickasaw Nation today. The signing of the treaty was commemorated in Grapevine, Texas on September 18, 2021. A statue of Captain Ishteukatubby was unveiled along with the other First American leaders and Sam Houston who signed the treaty. The Peace Circle exhibit can be seen at Peace Plaza at Grapevine Main Station in Grapevine, Texas. 📍

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