

Erastus “Deaf” Smith

1787 – 1837

“Texas Independence War Hero”

Erastus “Deaf” Smith was born in New York and moved with his family to live in Mississippi and Texas when he was 11 years old. He traveled all over Texas and moved there permanently after 1821 and became an expert scout, hunter and Indian fighter. He married a Mexican woman and had four children in Old San Antonio, Texas.

Deaf Smith, a deaf man, was personally chosen by General Sam Houston to become the leader of the Texan army’s spy and scout company during the Texas Revolution in November, 1835.

It was at the Battle of San Jacinto on April 21, 1836, the most important event in the Texas history, that Smith became the true hero of the Texas Revolution. Houston and about 900 Texans made a surprise attack against 1,400 resting Mexican soldiers serving under General Santa Anna. Prior to the attack, Smith and his scout company destroyed a key bridge that made a Mexican retreat impossible. After destroying the bridge he rode back and forth across the field behind the Texans waving his axe. He shouted to his fellow soldiers:

“I cut down Vince’s Bridge, now fight for your lives and remember the Alamo!”

After the war a year and half later, Smith died of consumption in Richmond, Texas, at the age 50. The exact location of his burial site is unknown.