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Been a lot of publicity for our state from the organization itself the Republic of Texas. No sense in reviewing the Fort Davis episode. Citizens fortunate enough to miss such news should be left to enjoy their run of luck. Another pertinent point is writers going around blabbing about uprisings and insurrections may find themselves in need of thicker armor than the one-inch layer of leaf fat covering their heart chambers.

One of the extra expenses for Jeff Davis County during the spring siege of the Texas Republic headquarters was feeding the troopers and government agents ordered to the area. A news story last week in the San Angelo paper claimed the sheriff's office out there bought hundreds of hamburgers and a thousand burritos every day to feed the support people. Safe bet the reporters ate more than their part of the free food. So supposing the press corps put on five pounds a head, the normal weight gain for that length assignment, they still needed more protection than congealed fat in case the assault weapons at the Texas Embassy opened fire on the scene.

Such affairs occur throughout history. Gary Cartwright's book on Galveston Island says that in 1856, a guy named William Walker raised a brigade of 18 year-old boys from Corpus Christi, San Antonio and Galveston Island to sail down to conquer Central America. Whole populace turned out to cheer these kids, who of all things, mustered

under the name of the Texas Rangers. Walker, not to be outdone, promoted himself from "Colonel" to "Generalissimo." He convinced the young filibusters and the public that the enemy was a somnolent tribe of lazy tropical people, given to swinging in palm-leafed hammocks, stupefied by the equatorial heat.

A steamship company provided free passage for this foolish venture, says Mr. Cartwright's book. Enough survived to tell the horrors of defeat and the agony of malaria. Later, on a trip to Costa Rica, I learned the Generalissimo finally became so infatuated with conquering Nicaragua, he declared himself the Emperor of Central America. He must have gained some prominence, as his death at age 37 is called "an assassination" instead of just "a shooting" like common folks experience.

One branch of the Texas Republic group held a constitutional convention over at the old Sherwood courthouse across the river from Mertzon on the Fourth of July. Being so close at hand, I offered to relay covenants for my friends. I figured as many soreheads as I knew and as many firebrands as there are in my immediate family, I'd have to have a mail sack to carry the first wave. I thought for sure my doctor pal who keeps up a steady stream of letters to the newspaper would want his pet peeves expressed in the new constitution. However, the deadline passed without one proposal.

The problem was deciding whether to qualify as a delegate, or sit in the press box. My press card disappeared in a hotel fire drill in Wichita, Kansas, in 1977. The membership card to the Texas and Southwestern Cattle outfit in Fort Worth and the one for the Sheep and Goat Herders Association must have been lost at the same time, because they were always next to a card to earn free car washes in Angelo. Gatekeepers and custom officials tend to frown on such fragile identification. A Texas driver's license and a Golden Age Pass to the National Parks normally solves most of my entrance requirements.

Before I finished breakfast on the Fourth, a lawyer son called and started right in giving reasons why I shouldn't go to Sherwood. Without asking my plans, he said, "Now, Dad, you are too discreet to go around those guys. First thing you will do is start one of your old stories of broncs tied to pack horses bucking down the main street of Sherwood and firing a pistol off the saddlehorn." Barely catching his breath, he went on to say, "Remember how much trouble you got us all in up at school the time you helped write the essay for 'Little Monte' on 18 year-olds' fighting and voting rights?" Paused and then raised his voice, "Hadn't been for Mrs. Brim, Monte would have been an extra year graduating. You remember that, don't you Dad?"

I wasn't about to try to match a trial lawyer of his caliber. Sort of vague-like, I do recall the superintendent's office or maybe a PTA committee dropping my

name from the list to help build booths for the Halloween carnival from my over-ambitious creativity. By the time all eight kids had graduated, unpopular essays and Halloween bans were melted into one of many tales.

Good thing Thomas Jefferson and James Madison lived before long distance telephone service. The convention floor had room for more delegates. I think I'd have made number 14 or 15, or raised the size of the press box to three.