

BENSON, ELLIS. Born in Vermont in 1808. He arrived at Velasco January 28, 1836, on the schooner Pennsylvania, having been recruited by Captain Amasa Turner in the United States for the army of Texas. He received Bounty Certificate No. 968 for 1280 acres of land for serving in the army from February 13, 1836, to February 13, 1837. He was a member of Captain Amasa Turner's Company but served in Captain Isaac N. Moreland's Artillery Company at San Jacinto. He was issued Donation Certificate No. 723 for 640 acres of land December 28, 1838, for having participated in the battle. On July 15, 1838, he received a Headright Certificate for one-third of a league of land from the Fort Bend County Board.

Mr. Benson accompanied the Mier Expedition as a member of Captain William Ryan's Company and was wounded at the battle of Mier, Mexico, on Christmas, 1842.

At a convention held on the San Jacinto battlefield April 21, 1860, General Sam Houston was endorsed for President of the United States as "the people's candidate." Isaac L. Hill, a San Jacinto veteran, was elected president of the convention and among the vice presidents chosen were the following who had served under General Houston at San Jacinto: Samuel Paschall, Ellis Benson, Andrew Montgomery, William S. Tayler, William Dunbar and David H. Love.

Mr. Benson died at Houston _____ 1892, while a member of the Texas Veterans Association.

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The following letter written by A. A. McBryde, Austin, June 10, 1893, is among the miscellaneous papers of the Archives of the Texas State Library:

On June 2, as a representative of the historical department of the Department of Insurance, Statistics and History, I called on Ellis Benson at his home in Houston and from him obtained the following statement of his connection with the army of Gen. Sam Houston and subsequent participation in the battle of San Jacinto. Mr. Benson is aged 81 and totally blind. He claims to have been in the U.S. Army previously to enlisting in the Texan army.

"I landed at Velasco January 28, 1838," said Mr. Benson, "and enlisted in Capt. Amasa Turner's Company Feb. 13, 1836, and received orders to go to San Antonio. This was before the fall of the Alamo. We started out on the Schooner Tamaulipas, intending to sail around to Corpus Christi and thence march to join the Texans at San Antonio. In going over the bar our vessel was wrecked. This stopped us. In March we were ordered to the main army under Houston at Beason's Ferry on the Colorado. Gen. Filisola, Santa Anna's lieutenant, was on the opposite side of the river with an army. I remember Gen. Houston called for volunteers to make an attack on the Mexicans. Was with Houston in his retreat from the Colorado upon San Felipe de Austin. We experienced great hardships on the march from San Felipe up the Brazos. We had hardly anything to eat. On the last day of March wearied and tired out we struck the Brazos timber opposite Groce's plantation. We heard of Fannin's defeat. We crossed the Brazos on the Steamboat Yellowstone;

there was a rise in the river. We camped in the Brazos Bottom near Groce's till the 13th of April when Gen. Houston began his march to Harrisburg where the enemy were. It was at Groce's that we received the two pieces of artillery given Texas by Cincinnati, called the Twin Sisters. They were of iron and, if my memory serves me right, were six pounders.

The first night of the march we camped at Donoho's place. Thence we marched to Mathew Burnet's place on Big Cypress above the place where Houston now stands. On the march Gen. Houston ordered two wagon loads of lead to be emptied and the lead burned, having other use for the wagons. On the 16th of April, as well as I can recollect, we camped at the head of Little White Oak Bayou, and on the 18th opposite Harrisburg. That evening we captured a Mexican courier having in his possession Col. Travis' saddlebags. From papers found on it was discovered that Santa Anna designed crossing Buffalo Bayou. I was one of those put on guard. My captain, ascertaining the facts, called for me and said, "Benson, I am sorry to see you on guard. We are going to fight the Mexicans." I swore an oath and said I was going too. So the Captain got a man to take my place. Crossing Buffalo Bayou to the south side occupied by the enemy, we marched till 10 o'clock and got down to Earle's place. We had nothing to eat and it was cool misty weather. We were of course armed with the old style flintlock guns and it was difficult to keep powder in the pans and touch holes dry. - - - While in camp somebody accidentally fired off his gun. Gen. Houston was soon on the scene swearing by the Eternal that the next man who did so should

be shot.

From this point we marched down to the grove in the edge of the prairie overlooking the spot which was in a day or two to^{be} the scene of the battle of San Jacinto.

Mr. Benson claims to have handled one of the guns known as the twin sisters and to have cast the shot (lead) used in them, and which did such damage to the enemy before the grand assault was made on the Mexican lines.

Regarding the wound of Gen. Houston, Mr. Benson claims it was done by his own men for the reason that, as he was charging on his horse between the two lines and in front of the Texans, he was shot in the ankle next to the Texans. He says that at the beginning of the charge Houston, fearing the line would fall into confusion, hallooed at the top of his voice to the men to halt. But they would not listen and on they swept upon the enemy. Houston remarked, "I applaud your bravery, but d--n your manners." He says it was the man rather than Houston who, in reality, won the battle of San Jacinto.

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BENSON, ELLIS - When Mr. Benson joined the Texas Veterans Association in 1874 he stated that he was a native of Vermont, sixty-six years of age, and had emigrated to Texas in January, 1836. (See page 586, D. W. C. Baker's A Texas Scrap Book). That he arrived in Texas in January, 1836 is verified in the headright Certificate issued to him July 15, 1838 for one-third of a league of land by the Board of Land Commissioners for Fort Bend County. On January 18, 1838 Samuel Paschall appeared before the Harrisburg Board and stated that he and Mr. Benson had arrived in Texas on the same vessel in January, 1836. (Page 23 of the Headright Book for Harrisburg county in the General Land Office, Austin) As a matter-of-fact they were both recruited in New Orleans for the army of Texas by Captain Amasa Turner and arrived at Velasco on the schooner Pennsylvania, January 28, 1836.

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William Dunbar and David H. Love.

Mr. Benson died at Houston October 27, 1896. The following notice of his death appeared in the Houston Daily Post, October 28, 1896:

The body of Ellis Benson, one of the pioneers of Houston, whose death occurred early Monday morning, was buried in German cemetery yesterday morning at 10 o'clock, from the late home, No. 812 Bremond Street, Rev. Kailon officiated. The pall bearers were J. W. Bell, Henry Curtin, T. B. Howard and W. A. Coyle.