

1

ZAVALA, LORENZO de, Jr. - Born in Merida, capital of Yucatan, Mexico, a son of Lorenzo and Teresa (Correa) de Zavala. In Head-right Certificate No. 186 issued to him February 5, 1838 by the Board of Land Commissioners for Harrisburg County for one-third of a league of land it is stated that he came to Texas in 1835.

Mr. de Zavala's name is not shown on the San Jacinto rolls printed in 1836. In Comptroller's Military Service Record No. 8315, found in the Archives of the State Library, Austin, it is certified that he was aide-de-camp to the Commander-in-chief from April 1 to May 5, 1836. He received Donation Certificate No. 219, dated May 26, 1839, for 640 acres of land for having participated in the battle of San Jacinto.

Mr. Henderson Yoakum one of the outstanding Texas historians made an error in his History of Texas, Vol. 2, p. 116 when he says: "On the 2nd of April, Colonel Zavala joined the camp, bringing information that a visit might soon be expected from Colonel Rusk, the Secretary of War." He based his statement, no doubt, from one made in a letter written April 3, 1836 by General Houston to Thomas J. Rusk, Secretary of War, and published in Vol. 2, pages 489-490, Yoakum's History of Texas. General Houston wrote: "Mr. Zavala has arrived and reported for duty. I am glad of it. He informed me that I should have the pleasure of seeing you; and indeed it would give me pleasure to do so." Mr. Yoakum evidently thought that General Houston referred to Dr. de Zavala. But he was mistaken. He referred to Lorenze de Zavala who was reporting for duty. It is

possible that Mr. Yoakum did not know that the son participated in the battle of San Jacinto, since, as has been stated, his name was omitted from the San Jacinto rolls.

Miss Adina De Zavala of San Antonio, a niece of Lorenzo de Zavala, Jr., has in her possession a paper, date unknown, on "Young Zavala, which she thinks was published in a Galveston paper: "Lorenzo De Zavala, Jr., or 'Young' Zavala, as Foote calls him, was anative of Merida, the capital of the Mexican State of Yucatan. His cavalier conduct upon the occasion of meeting Santa Anna just after the battle of San Jacinto was perfect; and its recent publication has elicited quite a desire for more information in regard to the young patriot. He remained in Merida until thirteen years of age, when he went to New York and entered college there. After four years of study, he w went to Massachusetts to complete his education, Hon. George Bancroft, the historian, having the management of his education. In 1833, he went to Mexico with his illustrious father, and shortly after he received at the hands of the president the appointment of under secretary of legation, his father having been nominated Minister to France. When his father resigned, he of course, did the same, both comingatonce to Texas. He was already a Tejano when the revolution commenced; and took a very active part in the struggle for independence. He was quite a handsome young man, very gifted and accomplished. He possessed much personal magnetism and was fairly idolized by his associated. He is well remembered by several surviving veterans, who are eloquent in praise of the lofty bearing

of the young patriot, whose mind was matured far in advance of his years, and whose manners were as courtly as those of a medieval cavalier. 'He was a perfect prince', says one; and another says he was a knight sans peur et sans reproche. He remained in Texas until the close of the year 1841, when he went to Yucatan - five years after the death of his noble father - and has since resided in the city of Merida. In 1843, when Yucatan seceded from Mexico, he was elected to the Legislature; but since its readmission into the Mexican union, he has uniformly declined all tenders of place, State and Federal, though often made him. He was residing at the old homestead, at De Zavala's Point, during the visit of General Henry S. Foote to Texas in 1839 or '40, and received him there. He supplied Foote much data - including copies of his father's two volumes, "Revolutions en Nuevo Espagne" - which became the groundwork of a considerable portion of his entertaining narrative."

The artist, H. A. McArdle, while preparing to paint his masterpiece "The Surrender of Santa Anna" wrote to many of the surviving veterans for their photographs and for information concerning the battle. The following is extracted from a letter from Mr. De Zavala to Mr. McArdle, dated July 4, 1889:

"Your favor of June 12th ultimo has come to hand. I notice from its tenor that you have been commissioned by the veterans of San Jacinto to paint the surrender of Santa Ann, and that as I acted as interpreter on the occasion, besides the part I took in that memorable campaign, as a volunteer aide to General Sam Houston, you think that

4

circumstance entitles me to appear on the canvas, and you therefore ask for my picture. I am greatly obliged to you for the importance you are willing to give these services that I rendered when we had so few chances to succeed against the formidable army that Santa Anna had brought to Texas to carry on a war of extermination against the colonists. I take pleasure in sending you my photograph, which was executed not long ago. I have no picture of mine made soon after the battle. As for the information you are desirous to get from me concerning the surrender, I shall proceed to tell you something about it, and on which you may rely, -----".

On September 17, 1890, Mr. De Zavala wrote to him:

"My dear Mr. McArdle:

Your favor of August 25th ultimo, has been duly received. In answer I must say that as for the dress I had on when the battle of San Jacinto took place, I can hardly remember. I only know that I wore no uniform at that time, but simply a common suit of clothes; that is, a pair of pantaloons, and a waistcoat of cloth, dark colored, and a jacket, or short coat of the same stuff - which the Mexicans call Dorman. As for the character of arms I carried, I had a sword with its corresponding sword belt, and a pair of pistols in their respective holsters - That was all ----".

"Gen. Houston's intention had been to engage the Mexican Army on the morning of the 21st of April and consequently, he ordered our men to parade and be ready for the charge, but for some cause or other, that we could not ascertain, the General changed his mind and

5

our Army were ordered to go back to their respective posts. When in the afternoon of that memorable day, the attack was given by our troops - the General's intention being then totally unknown, I happened to be on the other side of the river, Buffalo Bayou. I had gone over to our house, which you know is right opposite the battle ground, and which had been converted into a hospital for the sick and wounded. My object in going there for a moment was to see a friend of mine who had been mortally wounded the day previous, and who desired to have a talk with me before he died ----- . Great was my surprise, when a short time after my arriving on the other side of the river, I saw from my house, our men moving rapidly, as though to engage the enemy. I immediately crossed over the river without knowing the issue of the fight and joined the Army. The affair was almost over, for it was short work -- The Mexicans fled in every direction."

"It was evident that General Houston, by acting as he did, intended to take the enemy unawares, as it proved to be the case, and he was perfectly right, as the issue of the engagement showed. In fact, had he not acted wisely as he did, we should have, perhaps, been in a bad predicament. General Santa Anna told me afterwards, while a prisoner, that he was allowing some rest to his soldiers to give an assault on our encampment by day break on the following day, that is, on the 22nd, and God only knows how the affair would have terminated as they had the superiority in numbers and their arms were far superior to those carried by our men. It is always best, in such cases as this, to strike first, such is my way of think-

6
ing...."

Mr. de Zavala was married to Caroline Patron who was born
_____ in _____ and died February 15, 1893 in Merida, Yucatan.

Children of Mr. and Mrs. de Zavala were:

_____ who married _____; _____ who married
_____; _____ who married _____; _____
who married _____; and _____ who married _____.

Miss Adina De Zavala:

Can you add anything to this sketch. If so I will appreciate
it if you will return one copy to L. W. Kemp, 214 Westmoreland
Avenue, Houston.

7

The following documents are in Memorials and Petitions, Archives, Texas State Library:

"To the Hon.^o the Senate and House of Representatives of the Republic of Texas in Congress Assembled.

Your Petitioner would most respectfully Represent that on the 21st of April 1836 Genl Houston Commander in Chief of the Army then encamped near the Battle Ground of San Jacinto, communicated an order to Col Wharton, Adjutant General to proceed to my Fathers House on the opposite side of Buffalo Bayou and get every thing that could be found necessary for the comfort & subsistance of the Army. He the Adjutant General accordingly proceeded and took a quantity of tools, cooking utensils; and in fact everything. that could be found except articles that were required and appropriated for the Hospital, which were all the Furniture, Wines and Provisions, and the House was made the Hospital for the Army., the accompanying certificates will establish the facts stated, The cost at the lowest Estimates is as follows

A Box of Carpenters tools, the cooking utensils, the shovels spades Axes, and lead, nails, &c &c that were used for shot & Balls, 230 dollars. And the Furniture, Wines, Provisions &c &c 450 dollars, total amount (680 dlrs six hundred & Eighty dollars par funds. And altho three times that amount was required to place the House in as comfortable a situation as it then was, your petitioner would consider the amount thus Estimated (taking into consideration the situation of the Country and the sacrafices due by every Citizen) as a full compensation for these losses --

Columbia 12th Dec^r 1836

To Col Jno A. Wharton)
)
Late Adjutant General)
)
of the Army of Texas)

Sir.

This you will consider as a duplicate of the Verbal order given you on the Morning of the 21st day of April 1836 -- requiring you to proceed immediately to the house of Lorenzo De Zavalla and make requisition of such articles, as were necessary for the subsistence and comfort of the Army &c

Your obt Servt

Sam Houston

(Rubric)

Columbia 17 Decr. 1836

This is to certify that in conformity to the order refered to in the foregoing certificate that I proceeded to the house of Don Lorenzo de Zavalla and took possession of such articles as I could find that I thought to be of use to the army, say a quantity of tools cooking utensils &c &c &c and in fact all that I could find, except those that were taken and appropriated to the Medical Department -- And I further certify that the said Zavalla is justly entitled to pay from the government of Texas for said articles --

John A. Wharton