

## **Report by Gen. Thomas Rusk and Samuel Dexter**

Following the victory at San Jacinto, General Sam Houston traveled to New Orleans to receive treatment for the wounds he sustained during the battle, leaving Brigadier General Thomas J. Rush as acting commander in chief of the Texas army. After following the Mexican army's westward retreat, to ensure they in fact crossed the Rio Grande, Rush and his men went to Goliad to bury the men who had been killed during the Goliad Massacre. The following reports detail the conditions they found there and the memorial held for the fallen heroes.

---

La Bahia June 4th 1836

On our arrival at this place we found no difficulty in discovering the ground where Fannin and his gallant Band were shot by order of Santa Anna. Most of their bodies were burned, yet there were many bones and some entire skeletons scattered over the plains for some distance.

It had long been determined that as soon as practicable after the arrival of our army here, their remains should be collected and a day set apart for their burial with all the honors of War.

Accordingly on Wednesday the 1st inst Gen Rusk issued the following order

As a token of respect as well to the memory of the men who fell here a sacrifice to the treachery and bad faith of our enemy, as a duty which we owe to the relations of the unfortunate deceased and ourselves. It is ordered, That the skeletons and bones of our murdered Countrymen be collected into one place in front of the Fort and buried with all the honors of War.

Thos J. Rusk  
Brig Genl. Com'g

On the evening of the ensuing day, the bones having been collected. The following order was given.

At general parade of the Army will take place to morrow morning at 1/2 past 8 OClock AM. The funeral will take at 9 OClock AM. Col. Sidney Sherman will take command and conduct the procession in the following order.

- 1st Artillery
- 2 Music
- 3 Major Morehouse's Command

4th 6 Comd. Officers 6 Comd. Officers  
5 Mourners

Those of Fannins Command who are in the Army and who have so miraculously escaped will attend as mourners.

6 Commanding General and Staff  
7 Medical Staff  
8 2nd Regiment  
1st Regiment  
10 Regulars

Major Poe will order a minute gun fired from the fort commencing at the time the procession moves and until it arrives at the Grave.

Major Morehouse's Command will fire the usual rounds of blank cartridges at the Grave.

Signed Thos J. Rusk  
Brig Genl. Com'g

The following morning being friday June 3rd The army was paraded within the walls of the Fort at the hour appointed. And at nine OClock with arms reversed the procession moved slowly towards the place of burial.

On reaching the Grave Genl. Rusk delivered a short but feeling and eloquent address.

Fellow Soldiers:

In the order of Providence we are this day called upon to pay, the last sad offices of respect to the remains of the noble and heroic Band, who battling for our sacraed rights have fallen beneath the ruthless hand of a Tyrant. Their chivalrous conduct entitle them to the heartfult gratitude of the people of Texas. Without any further interest in the Country than that which all noble hearts feel at the bare mention of Liberty, they rallied to our standard. Relinquishing the ease, peace and comfort of their homes; leaving behind them all they held dear their Mothers, Sisters, Daughters and Wives. They subjected themselves to fatigue and prevation and nobly threw themselves between the people of Texas and the Legion of Santa Ana. Here unaided by reinforcements and far from help and hope they battled bravely with the minions of a Tyrant ten to one. Surrounded in the open Praire by this fearful and cut off from provisions and even watter, they were in descedants the sacred promise of receiving the treatment usual to prisoners of War to surrender. They were marched back, and for a week treated with the utmost inhumanity and barbarity. They were marched out of yonder Fort under the pretence of getting provisions, and it was not until the firing of Musketry, and the shrieks of the dying. That they were notified of their approaching fate. Some endeavored to make their escape, but they were pursued by the ruthless Cavalry and most of them cut down with their Swords. A small number

of them now stand by the grave, a bare remnant of that Band. Our tribute of respect is due to them. It is due to the Mothers, Sister and Wives who weep their untimely end, that we should mingle our tears with theirs. In that mass of Bones and fragment of Bones, many a Wife her once beloved and affectionate Husband. But we have a consolation yet to offer the,. Their murderers sunk in death on the plains of San Jacinto under the appalling words. Remember La Bahia. Many a tender affectionate Woman will remember with tearful Eye, La Bahia. But we have another consolation to offer. it is. That wile liberty has a habitation and a name, their chivalrous deeds will be handed down upon the bright pages of History.

We can still offer another consolation, Santa Anna, the moek Hero, the black hearted murderer, is within our grasp. yea - And ther he must remain tortured with the keen pains of a corroding conscience. he must often remember La Bahia. And while the names of those whom he murdered shall soar to the highest pinnacle of Fame, his shall sink down into the lowest depths of infamy and disgrace.

During the delivery of this address, the General had the undivided attention of the whole Army. When he spoke of the suffering of these Martyrs in the cause of Liberty, I observed the tear-drop, fall from the eye of more than one brave Man. In its conclusion I observed several compress their lips and involuntary grasp their weapons more firmly as if the scenes of San Jacinto had not compensated the brutal murder of their friends at La Bahia.

The Army then marched back to their Quarters.

Samuel Dexter  
Aid De Camp

SOURCE: SOURCE: John H. Jenkins, ed., *Papers of the Texas Revolution*. (10 vols.; Austin: Presidial Press, 1973), 7:17-20.