

November 3, 2014

**Pearson School Education
To the editors of Pearson Education's *Texas History***

Dear Sirs,

At the request of the Texas Freedom Network Education Fund, I reviewed the 7th grade Texas history textbook you are submitting for adoption in Texas this year. I evaluated the sections of your product that are pertinent to my field of expertise – 19th century American history and U.S./Mexican relations during the early National period (i.e. topics 3-4 and parts of 5). I also reviewed the sections related to Mexican-American history during the 20th century.

Enclosed with this letter is a detailed report of my observations, as well as suggested revisions to improve your materials.

Overall, I found coverage of these areas in your product to be outstanding in some respects, but there are some very important details that caused concern on my part. While my more detailed comments are included in the enclosed report, I wanted to call your attention particularly to the following issues:

- I would like to start by congratulating Pearson on the section dealing with Mexican Independence through the Mexican period of Texas. This section is very well researched and written. Pearson selected a very capable person or group of people to draft and edit that part of their text.
- In comparison, the section on the Texas Revolution is not as strong. It does not engage in the level of analysis that is apparent in the section dealing with the Mexican period.
- Some assertions that are made in your text would indicate that more research needed to be conducted concerning the history of American territorial ambitions in the Southwest especially as it pertains to Andrew Jackson.
- In terms of the Texas Revolution, the section dealing with Urrea's coastal campaign is thin and merited more detailed treatment.
- I was concerned that the text did not appear to acknowledge that during the Early Republic, Texas and Mexico engaged in multiple armed disputes.
- I found the section on the Mexican-American War disappointing in its scope and coverage, especially when one considers the importance of that war to the history of both nations and specifically Texas. The continued scant treatment of this conflict is not exclusive to Pearson, but it does give the appearance of bias. In spite of its obvious historical importance, it is an event in which it is difficult to paint the United States in a positive light. For this reason, historians like me feel that such uncritical examinations of the Mexican-American War are a deliberate attempt to avoid confronting a problematic era in American history.
- Finally, I examined 20th century history pertinent to the affairs of Mexican Americans in Texas. I found the treatment in your text uneven. I was impressed that your text examined the Mexican Revolution and its importance to Texas history. I also appreciated the section acknowledging the

service of Mexican Americans in WWII. Unfortunately the text did not examine the deportation of Mexican legal residents and Mexican American citizens during the Great Depression, the founding of LULAC and La Raza Unida Party.

A word about my qualifications. I am currently an assistant professor of teacher education at the University of Texas at El Paso, specializing in social studies education. I previously taught the subject for eight years at Ball State University and the University of Houston-Downtown. I earned my PhD in history from Purdue University, specializing in early 19th century American history and am considered an expert on US/Mexican relations during Mexico's early National period (1821-1848). In addition, I have ten years' experience as a Texas public school teacher, with nine of those years either teaching fourth or seventh grade (i.e. the two grades in which Texas History is taught).

The views expressed here and in the enclosed document are my own and reflect my own long experience conducting archival research in this period of history. I hope you find the observations valuable in your efforts to provide the best educational product for Texas school children.

Sincerely,

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Texas History

1. The section dealing with Mexican Independence through the Mexican period of Texas is very well researched and written. Pearson selected a very capable person to draft that part of their text.
 - a. Author needs to point out how people like De Zavala, Burnet, and Poinsett were connected through economic and social ties (Masonic influence played a very important role in Mexico during this period as well as the Texas Revolution).
 - b. While Mier y Teran is mentioned, his influence on the events after the passage of the law of April 6 and his actions as commander of the region should be more prominent. His mysterious death in 1832 was a boon for pro-independence forces in Texas, as it removed a capable political and military leader of high stature who likely would have handled the events of 1832 with a great level of competency. His replacements in the region were not at his measure and bear a certain level of responsibility for losing control in the years leading up to the Texas Revolution.
2. The Texas revolution section is not as well written, although it is well detailed. The author does not provide the quality and depth of analysis provided by the one who drafted the Mexican era section:
 - a. He skirts over the legality of many of the Anglo settlers who came to Texas. While some people may think that is irrelevant, considering how current the issue of legal and illegal immigration is open the political scene, glossing over this issue seems too deliberate.
 - b. The author deemphasizes the importance of slavery as a point of provocation for the Texas Revolution. Again, something that feels deliberate rather than an oversight.
 - c. Keep in mind that prominent Texas “leaders” like Houston and Travis were essentially illegal immigrants and had no legal standing to be in Texas much less complaining about conditions.
 - d. The author finds a way to continue the myth that the US government had a minor agency in fomenting the Texas Revolution. Poinsett himself had laid the blueprint for how the US would acquire Texas (in his diplomatic dispatches to Secretary of State Henry Clay in the summer of 1825) and as a Jackson confederate, he certainly had the ear of Jackson on matters pertaining to Mexico when he became president in 1829.
 - e. The author is not sufficiently well versed in the history of Andrew Jackson, especially as it pertains to his career from the early 1800’s onward. Makes a laughably naïve statement about Jackson’s character that holds no weight under close scrutiny. Whatever you can say about Jackson, niceties like treaties and promises were optional if they ever got in the way of his ambitions.
 - f. The author does not address the events after San Jacinto concerning the Mexican Army with sufficient detail even though there is excellent scholarship that will provide the needed information.
 - g. The omission of Samuel Swartwout is unpardonable, especially since an entire section was devoted to American Aid in Texas. He was by far the most important individual (in financial terms) providing funds to the Texas Revolution (likely as a proxy for Jackson) and he ended up embezzling over a million dollars from his post as Customs Collector of New York. The Customs Collector of New York was the most valuable political patronage post available

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- and only an extremely close confederate of the President (or someone who was owed a humongous debt by the President) would be appointed to that position. If you know the history that ties Jackson, to Aaron Burr and Samuel Swartwout, the implication is that Swartwout collected upon a huge political debt when Jackson appointed him to the post.
- h. Huge historical inaccuracy concerning the Battle of the Alamo. Author claims that battle ended at 8:00 a.m. and lasted for three hours. Walls of the Alamo were breached 15 minutes into the battle, (which started at approximately 5:30 a.m.) and mop up operations were concluded by 6:30.
 - i. Urrea's Coastal campaign should have been more detailed, especially as a tonic against the myth of Anglo martial superiority that tends to be implied in the text. Urrea was well respected as a military commander on both sides and notably he was the most successful military leader of the war. He was undefeated in every battle he led and had he had his way, the rest of the Mexican army would have confronted Houston's Texan force after San Jacinto (he was overruled by Vicente Filisola, Santa Anna's second in command).
 - j. Author's treatment of Bowie (a fairly interesting historical figure in his own right) is lacking in my opinion. His history as an integrated Anglo (and one of the few Anglos in Texas who had a legitimate claim and right to rebel against the Mexican government) would form an excellent bridge between Tejano and Anglo settler society.

3. Early Republic/ Mexican American War

- a. There were a considerable amount of border disputes between Mexico and the Texas Republic. Did I miss it somewhere or did you fail to note these events (Texas Navy used to help Yucatan Rebellion, The Santa Fe Expedition, the two Mexican invasions of Texas, the Mier Expedition). These are pretty significant events in Texas history.
- b. I found the section on the War with Mexico very anemic and without the necessary reflection on how the war came to be or to encourage debate upon American territorial ambitions. I find that the Mexican American War is given too little space and development especially when one considers the importance of the event upon American history. Generally, it has been my experience that this short shift is prompted by one very important fact: this was a war of territorial aggression and when studied in detail, it is very hard for the position of the US and President Polk to be painted in anything but unflattering terms. The war's importance cannot be overstated, for both nations and Texas. It is the foundation of American growth and economic greatness as the lands and resources the US acquired provided great wealth even to this day. In addition, the political infighting over the status of these newly acquired territories helped hasten the American Civil War. The Mexican American War became the training ground for a whole generation of American military and political leaders. In addition, by defeating the only potential rival for hemispheric hegemony, the American victory created a pattern by which the US took free hand in intervening in the internal affairs of other Latin American nations. This pattern of persistent intervention (as the US interfered in the affairs of Latin American nations at will from that point onward until today) essentially set these nations back on their road to political maturation, a problem that is still evident in the present and that we very tangibly experience today with the issue of immigration.
- c. The treatment of Scott's campaign is too brief and lacking in essential detail. Kearney's expedition and the attack and capture of California are practically non-existent. This should be addressed because it goes to the heart of the matter of why the US provoked a war with

Mexico. There was no important military strategic reason to allocate men and resources to invade and acquire New Mexico and California. Mexico certainly did not have sufficient forces in the area to actually “flank” the US and engage in an invasion from that direction (the only militarily legitimate reason that existed for the expeditions). Historians know that Polk had sent the US Navy ships with orders to invade California months before a war was declared. If the US was honestly just seeking peace, why would Polk send a hostile armed force around Cape Horn to California months before the war broke out?

- d. Note the US did not honor the original terms of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The treaty that the Mexican Congress agreed to was not the treaty that the American Congress passed. In essence the US went back on their word.

4. Mexican American History in the 20th century

- a. Section on Modern times. I am glad the book addressed the Mexican Revolution but it should also address the demographic affect that the Revolution had on Mexican migration into the state. Mexican’s of all classes, displaced by the war, filled up cities like El Paso, Laredo and the valley communities and changed their demographic composition. These communities, especially El Paso which was located near the epicenter of the most violent theatres of the Revolution, absorbed significant numbers of upper class, educated Mexicans who changed the relations between Anglos and Mexicans from one of absolute domination to one of accommodation.
- b. Pearson dropped the ball by not addressing the Civil Rights issues of the period. The founding of LULAC should have received a brief mention as well as the forced deportation of Mexicans and Mexican Americans during the Great Depression. In addition, they do not really address the treatment of African Americans during this period either.
- c. I like the addition of the information on the internment camps.
- d. I also liked the section devoted Texan WWII heroes.
- e. How can you not discuss or acknowledge Gus Garcia? He was one of the most effective legal minds in Texas and had a hand in the Felix Longoria case, Delgado v Bastrop and Hernandez v. Texas. His arguments before the Supreme Court in Hernandez v Texas are what won the case and are of equal merit to Thurgood Marshall’s victory in Brown v. Topeka. I just don’t see how you can dedicate a few paragraphs to Delgado v. Bastrop and fail to mention Garcia.
- f. Please mention Felix Longoria by name.
- g. No mention of La Raza Unida Party. That is a big disappointment since its existence was the result of the traditional parties’ failure to address the needs of many Mexican Americans in the state.