November 2026 Between Woke and Whitewash Issue 39

Tales of Texas NEWSLETTER



November 2026

This issue of Tales of Texas is a Veterans Day edition. We take a look at an American hero and his sacrifice for freedom's sake.

The setting of the edition is Nacogdoches, Texas

The photo at top is the home of the subject of our newsletter: Adolphus Sterne.

Comments? Go to website listed below.

© 2026 Daryl Lott

The "John Hancock" of Texas

Every revolution has a man or woman of means behind it. It takes $$ to finance an armed uprising in the face of a national government. In 1776, the man of means who financed the Revolution in Boston was John Hancock. He was a savvy businessman who knew the principals on both sides.

Adolphus Sterne

Among my family's historical records is a document that connects my great³ grandfather, Elisha Price, to one of the most remarkable figures of the Texas Revolution. Issued during the Republic of Texas in 1841, the land certificate bears the signature of Adolphus Sterne, a Nacogdoches merchant, public official, and one of the men who helped finance the struggle for Texas independence.

For me, that signature brings Texas history a little closer to home. It connects my family's story to the men and women who helped establish and sustain an independent republic.

Most Texans recognize the names Sam Houston, Stephen F. Austin, William B. Travis, and James Bowie. These men occupy prominent places in our history books. But revolutions require more than soldiers and generals. They require money, supplies, weapons, and men willing to risk their fortunes. Adolphus Sterne was one of those men.

Tales of Texas

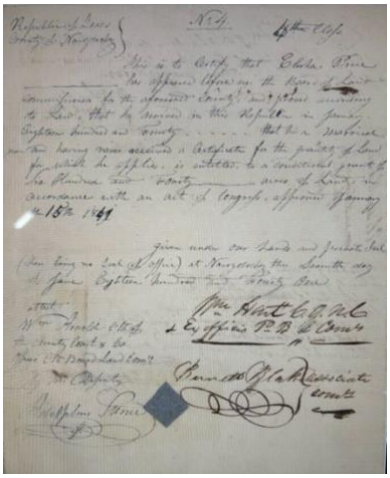


Adolphus Sterne

Nicholas Adolphus Sterne was born in 1801, probably in Cologne, Germany, to a Jewish father and Lutheran mother. At sixteen, facing compulsory military service, he reportedly forged a passport and fled to America. He arrived in New Orleans in 1817, where he entered the mercantile trade and studied law.

His business ventures eventually carried him into Texas. In 1826, Sterne established a mercantile business in Nacogdoches, then part of Mexico. The bustling frontier town became his home and the center of his political and commercial activities.

Sterne soon found himself involved in the Fredonian Rebellion of 1826–1827, an unsuccessful attempt by settlers in East Texas to challenge Mexican authority. He secretly supplied weapons and ammunition to the rebels, reportedly concealing the contraband in barrels of coffee.



Land Grant Signed by Adolphus Sterne

Mexican officials discovered his activities, arrested him, and sentenced him to death for treason. While awaiting confirmation of the sentence, Sterne was imprisoned in Nacogdoches.

Fortunately for Sterne, he was a Freemason, as were some of his guards. Through the intervention of fellow Masons, he eventually secured his release after promising never again to take up arms against the Mexican government.

Sterne kept that promise, at least literally. He would not personally take up arms against Mexico again, but nothing prevented him from financing others who would.

When the Texas Revolution began in 1835, Sterne traveled to New Orleans as an agent of the provisional Texas government. There, he recruited, organized, and helped finance two companies of volunteers known as the New Orleans Greys.

These volunteers traveled to Texas to join the struggle for independence. Sterne supplied the financial and organizational assistance necessary to bring them into the fight. Without men like Sterne, the revolutionary army would have faced even greater difficulties obtaining the manpower and equipment it desperately needed.

Tales of Texas



My daughter and I at the grave of Elisha Price, Pollock, TX



Swearing In: Sons of the Republic of Texas

His contribution was not made from a position of safety or indifference. Sterne had already faced a death sentence for supporting rebellion. He understood the consequences of opposing Mexico, yet continued to support the independence movement.

Sterne's relationship with Sam Houston adds another fascinating dimension to his story. The two men had become acquainted in Tennessee before either settled permanently in Texas. When Houston arrived in Nacogdoches, he stayed in the Sterne household.

In fact, Houston's conversion to Catholicism, necessary to satisfy Mexican requirements for settlers, took place in the Sterne home. Sterne's wife, Eva, served as Houston's godmother. Sterne himself did not participate as godfather because the ceremony required the godfather to be Catholic. Sterne was a Jew.

After independence, Sterne remained active in the political and civic life of East Texas. He served in numerous local offices, including positions associated with the courts, county administration, and land records. Later, following annexation, he represented East Texas in both the Texas House of Representatives and the Texas Senate.

His service in the Nacogdoches land administration provides my personal connection to this remarkable man.

My 3rd Great Grandfather, Elisha Price, lived in the Republic of Texas and received a land certificate bearing Sterne's signature. The document references an act of the Republic's Congress approved January 15, 1841. Sterne served as deputy clerk of the Nacogdoches County Board of Land Commissioners, an office involved in documenting land claims.

That certificate represents more than acreage. It reminds me that the history of Texas was shaped not only by famous battles but also by ordinary settlers, merchants, public servants, and families building lives in a new republic.

Sterne died in New Orleans in 1852, but his legacy remains visible in Nacogdoches, where his historic home still stands.

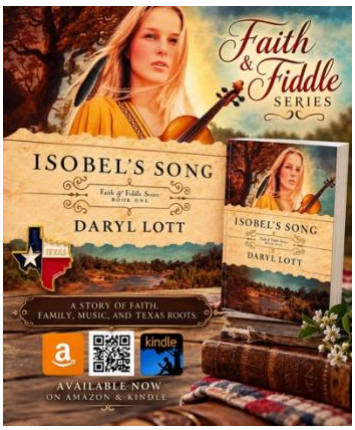
Tales of Texas



Eva Sterne,
Sam Houston's
Godmother

Whenever I consider Elisha Price's land certificate, I am reminded that history is not merely a collection of names and dates. Sometimes it is a signature on an old document, connecting one family's story to the larger story of Texas.

And in this case, that signature belongs to Adolphus Sterne, a man who helped finance a revolution.



My "Faith & Fiddle" series is available on Amazon, Audible, Kindle, and bookstores. The first book in the series, *Isobel's Song*, goes into depth about the Sterne family and their connection to Sam Houston and other Texas heroes.