

The Bandera PROPHECY

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Today in Texas history

Sensational court-martial convenes for son of Alamo Hero William Barret Travis

By Bandera Spirits of Texas

On March 15, 1856, the court-martial of Captain Charles Edward Travis, one of the most sensational courtroom dramas in history, convened at Fort Mason.

Charles, son of beloved Alamo hero William Barret Travis, was born in Alabama in 1829 and reared by his mother and stepfather in New Orleans after his father's death. He moved to Brenham in 1848 and became an attorney and Texas legislator.

Travis received a commission as captain in the Second United States Cavalry in 1855. At Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, a fellow officer charged Travis with slander, and he was also charged with cheating at cards and unauthorized absence from camp during a subsequent journey to Texas.

Col. Albert Sidney Johnston relieved him of command and confined him to quarters. At the court-martial at Fort Mason, Travis conducted much of his own defense and pleaded not guilty to "conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman."

Col. Johnston himself and other officers testified against Travis, and Johnston's wife Eliza commented in her diary that Travis was "a mean fellow."

He was pronounced guilty and dismissed from service. After attempts to exonerate himself he died of consumption in 1860.