

The Bandera PROPHECY

January 26, 2022

Today in Texas History

By Bandera Spirits of Texas

On this day in 1839, the Congress of the Republic of Texas passed two important pieces of legislation: a homestead act and an act setting aside land for public schools and two universities.

The homestead act, patterned somewhat after legislation of Coahuila and Texas, was designed to encourage home ownership. It guaranteed every citizen or head of family in the republic "fifty acres of land or one town lot, including his or her homestead, and improvements not exceeding five hundred dollars in value."

The education act was inspired by President Mirabeau Lamar's determination to establish a system of education endowed by public lands, but failed to produce the desired results immediately because land prices were too low for this endowment to provide revenue. There was also some popular indifference on the county level to the establishment of schools, as evidenced by the fact that by 1855 38 counties had made no effort even to survey their school land.

Nevertheless, Lamar's advocacy of the program earned for him the nickname "Father of Texas Education."