

The Bandera PROPHECY

October 11, 2022

Today in Texas History

By Bandera Spirits of Texas

On this day in 1847, Texas gubernatorial candidate Isaac Van Zandt died of yellow fever.

Van Zandt, born in Tennessee in 1813, moved to Texas in 1838 and is considered by many to be the founder of Marshall. In 1842 Sam Houston appointed him the Republic of Texas chargé d'affaires to the United States, in which capacity he worked for annexation.

He was stricken while campaigning in Houston and was buried in Marshall; George T. Wood won the election.

Yellow fever was a persistent threat in 19th century Texas; there were at least nine epidemics of the disease in Galveston alone between 1839 and 1867. In one such outbreak, in 1853, approximately 60 percent of the city's residents became sick and more than 500 persons died.

With dramatic improvements in sanitation and better control of the mosquito that carries the yellow fever virus, the disease receded.