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**MIRABEAU B. LAMAR: POET, PRESIDENT,
AND NAMESAKE FOR A UNIVERSITY**

Mary Scheer

Sitting on a pedestal in the center of the Lamar University quadrangle in Beaumont, Texas, is a bust of Mirabeau B. Lamar, the second president of the Republic of Texas. Like many heroic figures of Texas history, the bust is larger-than-life and gazes over the campus as a reminder to all that a “cultivated mind is the guardian genius of Democracy.” Sculpted by local artist David Cargill in 1966, the bust serves as an artistic focal point, a gathering place for free speech, and an iconic symbol of the university itself. Yet despite its imposing presence, few students who pass by know very much about Mirabeau B. Lamar or even pause to read his words or reflect on his legacy.¹

So why do so few students and others remember Lamar? Why has he failed to attract the devotion on the scale of other such statesmen as Sam Houston and Stephen F. Austin? And why has it been over a quarter century for any scholarly interest in a revisionist biography of him? First, he was a nineteenth-century southern aristocrat whose presidency was sandwiched between the two terms of popular President Sam Houston, the hero of San Jacinto. Thus, he lived in the shadow of Houston who possessed great personal charisma and personified frontier individualism. Second, Lamar was highly cultured and not of the frontier. His appearance—described as “of the French type, five feet seven or eight inches high, with dark complexion, black, long hair, inclined to curl, and gray eyes” was in contrast to other rugged individualists and frontiersmen of the era. Even his dress, according to recent Texas immigrant Francis R. Lubbock, was peculiar for the time and place: “His clothes very loose, his pants being of that old style, very baggy, and with large pleats, looking odd, as he was the only person I ever saw in Texas in that style of dress.” His name Mirabeau Buonaparte, named after Napoleon Bonaparte, sounded foreign and elitist and also set him apart from the common man. Third, he was always more southern than western. He had grown up on a Georgia plantation, possessing talents in the arts and classics that appealed to the educated, elite classes rather than to those who immigrated to Texas as dirt farmers or opportunistic adventurers. And fourth, Lamar was an idealist who envisioned a Texas empire that would

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ultimately expand to the Pacific Ocean, rather than a practical politician with realistic goals to solve the serious problems facing an infant Republic. Anson Jones, the last president of the Republic, characterized Lamar as “an elegant writer,” but whose mind was “altogether of a dreamy, poetic order. A sort of political troubadour & Crusader...” Ironically, Jones also believed that Texas was just “too small” for a man “of such wild visionary ‘vaulting ambition.’”²

Lamar was born on August 16, 1798, and came of age during the early years of the nineteenth century. The son of John and Rebecca Lamar, he was a descendant of a Georgia Huguenot family and received his name from his eccentric, self-taught uncle Zachariah Lamar. An avid reader Zachariah chose historical names for the four male offspring of John and Rebecca: Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus, Jefferson Jackson, Thomas Randolph, and Mirabeau Buonaparte. Growing up on Fairfield plantation in Georgia, Lamar received “the best education which the schools of the country afforded.” But living in a rural, frontier area with schools some distance from home, Lamar and his siblings’ education was inconsistent, alternating from regular school attendance to self-instruction. Nevertheless, during his early years as the son of a prosperous Georgia plantation owner, Lamar pursued his studies both independently and under the direction of Dr. Alonzo Church, principal of Eatonton Academy near his home. There he developed an interest in the classics, which consisted of a combination of art, history, literature, drama, and poetry. Fencing and horseback riding were also among his interests, but writing verse and oil painting became his real avocations.³

Throughout his life Lamar composed and published poetry. As a young man he had come under the influence of the Romantic poets—Wordsworth, Byron, Gibbon, Pope, Scott, and others. At the end of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a basic change had occurred in the consciousness of western culture. Romanticism, as a new world view, rejected the ideas of the Enlightenment, with its emphasis on science, order, and reason, in favor of spirituality, sentiment, and emotion. To the Romantic mind, imagination, self determination, and ambition, in contrast to the classical view of authority, obedience, and hierarchy, were virtues which the individual should strive to fulfill. Poets and artists of the time recognized this radical change in traditional patterns of behavior and thought and reflected it in their creative works. It was into this environment that Lamar matured, fusing his southern cavalier tradition of honor and valor with the sentimentalism and emotionalism of the Romantic literary movement. The result for Lamar was a poetry that was “spontaneous

effusions,” written for those “more interested in feelings of the man than in the genius of the poet.”⁴

Philip Graham, who published Lamar’s collected poems in 1938, observed that “Lamar’s private life is the only proper setting for [understanding] his poems”—not his public career. With a few exceptions, that was generally true. The bulk of his poetry provided a window into the private Lamar—his trials and tribulations, joys and sorrows. During periods of melancholia and grief, he often sought solace through poetic expression to soothe his wounded spirit and provide an emotional outlet. For example in 1830 he wrote the poem “Thou Idol of My Soul” following the death of his wife Tabatha from tuberculosis, who was just 21 years of age and had bore him a daughter.

Thou idol of my soul, adieu!
 With one so loved, ‘tis hard to part;
 Thine angel-form still haunts my view,
 And lives within the constant heart
 That soon must break for thee.⁵

In the months following Tabatha’s death the grieving Lamar traveled quite a bit, adhering to a nineteenth-century notion that a change of surroundings would be good therapy. He therefore wandered restlessly throughout Georgia and Alabama visiting friends and relatives. Also therapeutic for Lamar was poetic expression. Two years later (1832) he wrote an elegy to his late wife titled “At Evening on the Banks of the Chattahoochee,” in which he fondly remembered their evening strolls along the Chattahoochee River in Georgia. It reads:

But all the loveliness that played
 Around her once, hath fled;
 She sleepeth in the valley’s shade,
 A dweller with the dead;
 And I am here with ruined mind,
 Left lingering on the strand,
 To pour my music to the wind,
 My tears upon the sand.⁶

The years following the loss of his wife were filled with more setbacks and grief for Lamar, resulting in his immigration to Texas. In 1833 he failed to secure a U.S. congressional seat from Georgia, followed by the tragic deaths

of his sister, brother, and father. During this time Lamar described himself in his "Journal of My Travels" as "miserably dyspeptic and melancholy." By 1835, however, Lamar had sufficiently recovered and resolved to "visit Texas with a view of settling there, if pleased with the province." He therefore set out for Texas, a Mexican province whose abundant land and prospects for economic betterment were attracting Anglo settlers. Traveling by stage, steamer, and horseback, Lamar crossed into Texas on July 17, 1835, near Gaines Ferry on the Sabine River, which he described as "a narrow, muddy stream." Following the old *El Camino Real* or King's Highway Lamar "broke for Nacogdoches." He observed: "To me the country seems delightful; the woods green with grass; abundantly watered; very easily cleared and remarkably fertile when opened." Continuing southwestward, Lamar visited the settled areas of Washington-on-the-Brazos, San Felipe, Columbia, Brazoria, and Velasco, eventually staking out a land claim near Cole's Settlement.⁷

Like other travelers in frontier areas, Lamar frequently stopped overnight at boarding houses and private homes where he obtained news of the escalating quarrel between Texas and Mexico. On September 9, 1835, he "staid a day or two at Johnson's tavern," attending the public dinner the night before for Stephen F. Austin, who had returned after twenty-eight months in Mexico, much of it in prison. Continuing on to San Felipe he acquired lodging at the boarding house and tavern of Angeline Eberly Peyton, an innkeeper who later fired a cannon to prevent the removal of the state archives to Houston. Then on October 8 he stopped at the public tavern in Brazoria, but the fare was so horrible that he "left for Mrs. Long," a reference to Jane Herbert Wilkinson Long, wife of filibuster Dr. James Long and an early pioneer woman on the Bolivar peninsula. His 1838 poem "Serenade," with a reference to "bonnie Jane," later stirred rumors of a possible romance between them.

We owe our gratitude, my love,
 To Sol's enlivening ray;
 And yet I prize the moonlight, love,
 Above the glare of day.
 O bonnie Jane, thou art to me
 Whate'er in both is best—
 Thou art the moonbeam to mine eye,
 The sunbeam to my breast.⁸

After a brief trip to Georgia to settle his affairs in November of 1835,

Lamar returned in late March the next year to a Texas embroiled in a full-scale revolt. Following months if not years of political differences over new restrictions on immigration, repeal of tariff exemptions, cessation of Mexican land grants, threats against the institution of slavery, and the overthrow of the Constitution of 1824 in favor of an authoritarian centralist government, Texans were now engaged in armed conflict with the forces of General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna at Gonzales, Goliad, and San Antonio. Furthermore, a convention of delegates meeting at Washington-on-the-Brazos had declared Texas independence and prepared a provisional constitution for a new nation. At the same time chaos reigned as settlers in central Texas fled eastward after the fall of the Alamo on March 6 to escape the approaching Mexican army. By April 10, 1836, Lamar wrote: "Texas is in a dreadful state of confusion; the Mexicans thus far are prevailing."⁹

During the months of armed resistance beginning in the fall of 1835, Lamar contributed several poems, including "Arm for the Southern Land," which was originally written in 1833 as a defense of slavery and southern rights. Lamar revised the poem to reflect the approaching Mexican-Texan struggle:

Arm for your injured land;
 Where will you find a braver?
 Low lay the tyrant hand
 Uplifted to enslave her.

Each hero draws
 In freedom's cause,
 And meets the foe with bravery;
 The servile race
 Will turn their face,
 And safety seek in slavery!¹⁰

He also composed his first poem on Texas soil titled "Give to the Poet His Well Earned Praise." This poem, published just six months before the battle of San Jacinto on April 21, 1836, in the Brazoria newspaper *The Texas Republican*, deviated from Lamar's introspective, sentimental poems to address the impending Texas crisis. He wrote:

When shall I meet the audacious foe,
 Face to face where the flags are flying?

I long to thin them, "two at a blow,"
 And ride o'er the dead and the dying!
 My sorrel steed shall his fetlocks stain
 In the brain of the hostile stranger;
 With an iron heel he spurns the plain,
 And he breathes full and free in DANGER¹¹

Lamar's lament about an imaginary battlefield would soon be fulfilled. He had returned to Texas just in time to join the Texan army as a private after the fall of the Alamo and the Goliad massacre. As the Mexican and Texan forces faced each other at San Jacinto on April 21, 1836, Lamar distinguished himself in battle, received a verbal commission to colonel, and commanded the cavalry to victory over the forces of General Santa Anna. Following the battle, he retired to his tent and penned the poem "San Jacinto."

Mourn the death of those
 Who for their country die,
 Sink on her bosom for repose,
 And triumph where they lie.

Laurels for those who bled,
 The living hero's due.
 But holier wreaths will crown the dead—
 A grateful nation's love!¹²

With the success of the Texas Revolution Lamar, as vice-president (1836-1938) and then president of the Republic of Texas (1838-1841), put aside his poetry for awhile in favor of statecraft. But the Texas Constitution of 1836 was silent on the duties of the vice president and since his relationship with President Houston was strained, he spent much of his term in Georgia. Lamar preferred his own home and personal pursuits, such as visiting friends, settling his private affairs, studying Spanish, and adding to his historical collections, rather than an inconsequential role in the Houston administration. He also found time to promote the new Republic while his admirers praised him as a Texas hero. Then, in late 1837 at the behest of his supporters, he returned to Houston, the newly established capital, to consider his political future in Texas.¹³

Since the Texas Constitution restricted President Sam Houston from running for another consecutive term, Lamar announced his candidacy for

president. After a harsh campaign of accusations and the apparent suicide of his principal opponent, Lamar overwhelming won the race. But the Texas he faced was adrift in insurmountable problems, including a possible re-conquest by Mexico, severe financial difficulties, menacing Indians, the location for a permanent capital, and the failed Santa Fe expedition to secure that region. As president of the Republic he therefore found little time to compose, producing only six known poems in three years. Additionally, his health was frail and in late 1840 he took a necessary leave of absence to seek medical attention in New Orleans, returning to his post by February of 1841. Although the nature of his illness is uncertain, he later described its severity as leaving him "almost wasted to the grave."¹⁴

Following the end of his presidential term and freed from the responsibilities of public office, Lamar resumed his literary efforts in earnest. In 1841 he retired to his home in Richmond, intending to write a comprehensive history of Texas and a proposed biography of Stephen F. Austin. He also continued to write poetry, producing over 100 poems during his lifetime, including "On the Death of My Daughter" in 1843 following daughter Rebecca Ann's death at age 16.

You tell me that my grief is vain
 My child will not return;
 No earthly tears can wake again
 The ashes of the urn;
 You tell me too that she is gone
 To regions blest and fair—
 And wrong it is her loss to mourn,
 Since she's an angel there.¹⁵

Lamar's retirement, however, was short lived. With Texas annexation to the United States in 1845, an action Lamar had originally opposed on grounds that Texas should remain independent and expand to the Pacific Ocean, he returned to the battlefield and volunteered to join General Zachary Taylor's army in defending the Rio Grande boundary in the War with Mexico (1846-1848). He also fought in the battle of Monterrey, helped organize a municipal government at Laredo, and was a representative to the second Texas legislature. During that time he returned to the theme of Texas and composed an ode to a young Mexican lady in the area named Carmelita whom he met during the recent war.

I soon shall seek the battle-field,

Where Freedom's flag is waving—
 My Texas comrades by my side,
 All perils madly braving;
 I only grieve to think each blow
 That vengeance bids the steel bestow,
 Must make thee mine eternal foe,
 O Donna Carmelita!¹⁶

In the decade leading up to the Civil War, Lamar retained much of his southern sensibilities. Matters of national importance, especially the growing gulf between the North and South, claimed his attention. For example, he denounced the Compromise of 1850, opposed federal encroachment of states rights, and increasingly sided with the secessionists. He also remarried in 1851. During his courtship he penned "To Miss Henrietta Maffitt," for his future bride.

O, lady, if the stars so bright,
 Were diamond worlds bequeath'd to me,
 I would resign them all this night,
 To frame one welcome lay to thee;
 For thou art dearer to my heart,
 Than all the gems of earth and sky;
 And he who sings thee as thou art
 May boast a song that cannot die.¹⁷

In 1857 Lamar wrote his last known poem with a Texas theme. After returning once again to the peaceful serenity of Oak Grove, his small plantation home on the Brazos River, he wrote an idyllic descriptive poem, "Home on the Brazos," in which he expressed his fondness for Texas, his home, and his family.

Full soon I hope in Texan shades—
 Fair land of flowers and blooming maids—
 To roam enraptured by they side,
 As blessed with thee on Brazos' tide
 As when I first, on Galvez' isle
 Walked in the rainbow of thy smile.¹⁸

Not everyone, however, admired or appreciated Lamar's literary efforts.

Some of his detractors, such as Republic of Texas presidents Sam Houston and Anson Jones, ridiculed his composing sentimental, romantic verse as unmanly and frivolous. Houston, in particular, displayed contempt for Lamar's sentimentalism and encouraged his own son Sam to become "any thing but a Poet, or a Fidler, [sic] or a song singer." A later critic, folklorist and U.T. professor J. Frank Dobie, wrote a review of Lamar's collected poems in 1938. Dobie lamented the fact that the bulk of Lamar's poetry had "nothing of the actual land he was supposed to represent." Instead of realistic images of Jim Bowie with his knife, Pamela Mann cussing out Sam Houston who had appropriated her oxen, or Bigfoot Wallace stuffing his clothes full of hickory nuts as armor against Indian arrows, Lamar wrote "saccharine inanities" about "the belle of Nindiri," the "sweet daughter of Mendoza," and "beautiful Irene." His verse, it seemed, was just too lofty and idealistic for many Texans.¹⁹

Nevertheless in 1857, with the encouragement of his wife and friends, Lamar published a collection of his poems titled *Verse Memorials*. Included within the blue leather-bound volume were selected poems written as a tribute to those "friends, who have been so long the sunshine of his life." He further characterized his verse as "fragments of thought and feeling, rescued from the turmoil of a life that permitted little leisure for literary recreation." Earlier he had refused to allow publication of his poetry because it was "not written for the general public." Moreover, he feared exposing himself to ridicule from his critics, who charged that his poetry was further evidence of a dreamy idealism that, they believed, "rendered him unfit for public life." Lamar eventually overcame his reluctance to publish his poems because he needed money to cover his debts. He also hoped that his poetry would give his small daughter, Loretto Evaline "a better knowledge of her father's heart" than she would derive "from the public records of his political and military life." Unfortunately, even financial gain eluded him due to the bankruptcy of the W. P. Fetridge and Company of New York, the printing firm that published his poems.²⁰

During the months preparing *Verse Memorials* for publication, Lamar actively sought a political appointment to ease his financial situation. Heavily in debt, as early as 1853 he penned his hopes on receiving a diplomatic post from the U.S. government to solve his pecuniary obligations. His nemesis, Sam Houston, quipped at the time: "I will not be surprised to see Lamar come into favor and get a good appointment from Pierce." But it was not until the Buchanan administration (1857-1861) that he finally secured a position as minister to Nicaragua and Costa Rica with a salary of \$10,000 a year. But

his diplomatic duties proved difficult and his health began to decline again. After about twenty months at his post, Lamar resigned and he returned to his home at Oak Grove in October of 1859. Then, on December 19, 1859, on the eve of the Civil War, he died of a heart attack at age 61 and was buried in the cemetery at Richmond. Spared from the costly ravages of the Civil War and the defeat of Texas and the Confederacy, Lamar was eulogized by the editor of the *Houston Telegraph and Texas Register*. He wrote: "A worthy man has fallen; let his name be remembered by the people."²¹

In 1932 the citizens of Beaumont did indeed remember his name by choosing Mirabeau B. Lamar as the namesake of the local junior college. According to John W. Storey, distinguished professor emeritus of Lamar University, Beaumonters wanted to enhance the reputation of South Park Junior College, which had been established in 1923 and housed at the South Park High School. They therefore initiated a process "first, to enhance the college's regional identity and, second, disentangle it from the high school." Essential to the process was to rename the college and create a separate identity by which to attract new students. In August the public was invited to participate in a contest to name the institution by submitting a 150-word essay with justification for the selection. Since Sam Houston and Stephen F. Austin were assigned already to other schools in 1879 and 1923 respectively, the winning entry was Mirabeau B. Lamar, submitted by Otho Plummer, later chairman of the Lamar University Board of Regents. According to Plummer's essay, Lamar was a worthy selection for the name of the new college, citing his military record, his service as the second president of the Republic, and the acknowledged "Father of Texas Education." At the same time the school and athletic teams received a new mascot, with the Cardinals replacing the Brahmas bulls, and red and blue replacing the old maroon and gray colors. Besides the university, Lamar is also the namesake for a county, a city, a naval ship, and scores of schools in Texas.²²

As poet, president, and namesake for a university, Lamar was a gifted writer, a capable leader, and a worthy choice for the name of an academic institution. As a poet he considered his verse merely a private "literary recreation" with little relationship to the realities of frontier life. In 1835 when he splashed across the Sabine River on horseback into Texas, he carried with him the cavalier culture of the Old South that he had absorbed as a youth, which was incongruous with his pioneer surroundings. Through his verse he tenaciously clung to traditional southern themes of beauty, virtue, and womanhood and only occasionally allowed the realities of early Texas to inspire his poetry. By pouring out his emotions and inner conflicts

through his poetry, the private Lamar emerges--sentimental, introspective, romantic, and idealistic--aspects rarely included in history books. As president his enemies once proclaimed that he was a better poet than politician, blaming him for the many problems of the new government. Yet despite his political failures, he did propose many initiatives that would eventually become a permanent part of Texas, such as an educational system, a state capitol in Austin, and annexation to the United States. And as the namesake of a university, Lamar's name was memorialized for future generations to realize his vision of an educational system, one that would be, he said, "a great and moral and intellectual edifice, which will in after ages be hailed as the chief ornament and blessing of Texas."²³

Endnotes

¹ An informal survey of Lamar University history students revealed that only 15 % of freshmen and 40% of upperclassmen even know that he was the second president of the Republic or the Father of Texas Education. *VIP of Southeast Texas*, July 2011, 40-41; Address of Mirabeau B. Lamar to Congress, December 21, 1858, in *The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar*, 6 vols., Charles Gulick, Jr., et. al., eds. (Austin: Pemberton Press, 1968), 2:348 (hereafter referred to as *The Lamar Papers*.)

² In 1796 Napoleon had changed the spelling of his name from the Italian (Corcican) spelling to French. Philip Graham, *The Life and Poems of Mirabeau B. Lamar* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1938), fn 4, 90; Jack C. Ramsay, Jr. *Thunder Beyond the Brazos: Mirabeau B. Lamar, A Biography* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1985), 206; Sam W. Haynes, "Sam Houston and His Antagonists," in *Major Problems in Texas History*, Sam W. Haynes and Carry D. Wintz, eds. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2002), 167-174. See also Herbert P. Gambrell, *Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar, Troubadour and Crusader* (Dallas: Southwest Press, 1934); C. W. Raines, ed., *Six Decades in Texas: The Memoirs of Francis R. Lubbock, Confederate Governor of Texas* (Austin: Pemberton Press, 1968), 2, 43.

³ The five Lamar daughters received more common names of Louisa, Amelia, Mary Ann, Evangelina, and Loretto Rebecca. Ramsay, *Thunder Beyond the Brazos*, 9-16, fn 3, 212; A. K. Christian, "Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, vol. 23, no. 3 (January 1920): 153-154; James L. Haley, *Sam Houston* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 213.

⁴The term Romanticism began to appear in Germany in 1802, France in 1816, Italy in 1818, England in 1823 and in the United States by the 1830s. Martin Travers, *An Introduction to Modern European Literature: From Romanticism to Postmodernism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 27-31; F. Parvin Sharpless,

Romanticism: A Literary Perspective (Rochelle Park, N. J.: Hayden Book Co., Inc., 1979), 1-4, 46-47, 130-133; Mirabeau B. Lamar, *Verse Memorials* (New York: W. P. Fetridge & Co., 1857), 7; Graham, *The Life and Poems of Mirabeau B. Lamar*, 90-96.

⁵ A rare signed and numbered copy of Graham's book is in the Lamar University John and Mary Gray Library, special collections, Beaumont, Texas. Graham, *The Life and Poems of Mirabeau B. Lamar*, ix, 88-96, 160-161; Stanley Siegel, *The Poet President of Texas* (Austin: Jenkins Publishing Co., 1977), 12; Ramsay, *Thunder Beyond the Brazos*, 10-11.

⁶ Graham, *The Life and Poems of Mirabeau B. Lamar*, 162-165.

⁷ Ramsay, *Thunder Beyond the Brazos*, 19-22; Nancy Boothe Parker, ed., "Mirabeau B. Lamar's Texas Journal," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, vol. 84, no. 2 (October 1980): 197-198, 205-220ff, (hereafter referred to as "Lamar's Journal.") See also map in Parker, ed., "Lamar's Journal," vol. 84, no. 2: 217; Graham, *The Life and Poems of Mirabeau B. Lamar*, 31; Philip Graham, ed., "Mirabeau B. Lamar's First Trip to Texas from the 'Journal of My Travels'" Vol XXI, no. 4, *Southwest Review* (July 1936): 370-389; Christian, "Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar," vol. 23, no. 3: 156-158.

⁸ Parker, ed., "Lamar's Journal," vol. 84, no. 3: 322-325, fn 119; Graham, *The Life and Poems of Mirabeau B. Lamar*, 200; Graham, ed., "Mirabeau Lamar's First Trip to Texas," 383-389; Raines, ed., *Six Decades in Texas*, 43.

⁹ Christian, "Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar," vol. 23, no. 3: 159; Parker, ed., "Lamar's Journal," vol. 84, no. 2: 198-199. *The Lamar Papers*, 1:351; Graham, "Mirabeau B. Lamar's First Trip to Texas," 389.

¹⁰ Lamar, *Verse Memorials*, 173-175; Graham, *The Life and Poems of Mirabeau B. Lamar*, 306-307.

¹¹ Graham, *The Life and Poems of Mirabeau B. Lamar*, 192-193.

¹² Sometime in the fall of 1835 Lamar made a brief trip to Georgia, returning just prior to the battle of San Jacinto. Graham, *The Life and Poems of Mirabeau B. Lamar*, 194-195; Eugene C. Barker, "Mirabeau Bonaparte Lamar," *The University of Texas Record* (Austin: University of Texas, n.d.), 149-150.

¹³ Ron Tyler, et al., *The New Handbook of Texas*, 6 vols. (Austin: The Texas State Historical Association Press, 1996): 4: 38.

¹⁴ Phillip Graham included only six of Lamar's poems written between 1837-1841 and Lamar in his *Verse Memorials* did not always provide dates for his poetry. In 1837 Lamar also founded the Philosophical Society for "the collection and diffusion of correct information" about Texas. Tyler, et al., *The New Handbook of Texas*, 4: 37-39; *The Lamar Papers*, 1:579, 2: 488-502ff, Ramsay, *Thunder Beyond the Brazos*, 54-63; Siegel, *The Poet President of Texas*, 86;

Christian “Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar,” vol. 23, no. 3:166-170.

¹⁵ An exact number of Lamar’s poems is impossible to determine. Lamar included 65 poems in his volume *Verse Memorials* while Graham included 87 poems in his collection. According to Graham many more were either lost or destroyed. See Lamar, *Verse Memorials* and Graham, *The Life and Poems of Mirabeau B. Lamar*, 236-242.

¹⁶ Graham, *The Life and Poems of Mirabeau B. Lamar*, 250-252.

¹⁷ The Compromise of 1850 admitted California as a free state, abolished the slave trade, enacted a stronger fugitive slave law, and assumed Texas debts in exchange for Texas giving up claims to the New Mexico territory. Lamar married Henrietta Maffitt of Galveston in February 1851. Mirabeau Lamar, “To Miss Henrietta Maffitt,” Archives, Texas State Library and Archives Commission; Graham, *The Life and Poems of Mirabeau B. Lamar*, 98.

¹⁸ Graham, *The Life and Poems of Mirabeau B. Lamar*, 274-292; Tyler, et al., *The New Handbook of Texas*, 4: 38-39.

¹⁹ Houston to Washington Miller, n.d., Margaret Bell Houston Collection, San Houston Memorial Museum, Huntsville, Texas; book review of Philip Graham, *The Life and Poems of Mirabeau B. Lamar* by J. Frank Dobie, *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XLII, No. 2 (October 1938): 162-164.

²⁰ Loretto Evaline was his daughter from his second marriage, born in 1852. For a contemporary—and admiring—review of *Verse Memorials*, see Gulick, et al., eds., *The Lamar Papers*, 6:356-361. Lamar, *Verse Memorials*, 7-8; Graham, *The Life and Poems of Mirabeau B. Lamar*, 90.

²¹ *The Galveston Weekly News* of Dec 27, 1859. Ramsay, *Thunder Beyond the Brazos*, 191-202ff. Gulick, et al., eds., *The Lamar Papers*, 6: 426, 435-437.

²² John W. Storey, “The Origins and Formative Years of Lamar University, 1921-1942: The Pietzsch-Bingman Era,” *Texas Gulf Historical and Biographical Record* (November 1997): 24. Ray Asbury, *The South Park Story, 1891-1971 and the Founding of Lamar University, 1923-1941* (Beaumont: South Park Historical Committee, 1972), 90. Ben Woodhead, *Beaumont at Large* (n.p.: n.p., 1968), 51-52; Louise Wood “From Private to President,” *Cardinal Cadence*, vol. 35, no. 1 (January 2007); Otho Plummer interview by Jo Ann Stiles, Beaumont, Texas, May 24, 1984, Lamar University Oral History Program, John and Mary Gray Library, Lamar University, Beaumont, Texas.

²³ Graham, *The Life and Poems of Mirabeau B. Lamar*, 91, 94, 96; Gulick, et al., eds., *The Lamar Papers*, 2: 349.