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Hurd, William A. (unknown–1838)

Thomas W. Cutrer Biography Entry

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HURD, WILLIAM A. (unknown–1838). William A. Hurd, naval officer, commanded the armed schooner *San Felipe*, which returned [Stephen F. Austin](#) to Texas from New Orleans in August 1835 after his incarceration in Mexico. The ship also carried arms and ammunition for the Texas revolutionaries. On September 1, upon reaching the Velasco bar at the mouth of the Brazos River, the *San Felipe* engaged the Mexican revenue cutter *Correo de México*, which had been harassing ships out of the port of Brazoria. The more heavily armed Texas vessel, with a large force of volunteer "marines" aboard, badly damaged the *Correo* and wounded her captain, [Thomas M. \(Mexico\) Thompson](#). The Mexican cutter took flight, but became becalmed during the night and was overtaken the next morning when the Texas steamer *Laura* towed Hurd's ship into position to rake the *Correo*'s stern. Thereupon the Mexican cutter surrendered and was taken to New Orleans, where its captain and crew were tried on charges of piracy. The duel between the *San Felipe* and the *Correo* is regarded by many as the opening battle of the [Texas Revolution](#).

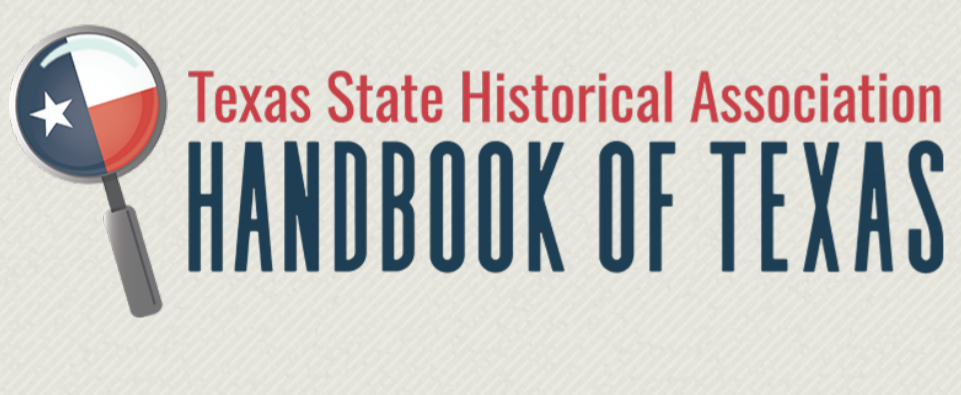
Early in November Hurd and the *San Felipe* again engaged a Mexican revenue cutter, a larger and better armed one. Although details of the engagement are now lost, the episode ended when the *San Felipe* was run aground in Matagorda Bay and severely cannonaded by a Mexican man-of-war. That month the Matagorda Committee of Safety purchased the *William Robbins*, later renamed *Liberty*, and placed her under Hurd's command. On December 19, 1835, authorized by a letter of marque from the [General Council](#), Hurd forced the surrender at Cavallo Pass of the Mexican man-of-war *Bravo*.

With the establishment of the regular [Texas Navy](#) Hurd was given command of the *Brutus*, a newly acquired schooner. In the spring of 1836 he and his crew convoyed a group of vessels from New Orleans to Galveston. Later that summer they participated in the Texas blockade of Matamoros. Hurd quit the blockade, however, and sailed to New York, apparently without either the knowledge or the permission of Commodore [Charles E. Hawkins](#), the commander of the Texas Navy. The *Brutus* was in port at New York from September 1836 to February 1837. Hurd sailed from New York in March, reached Texas in April, and was immediately relieved of his command. He died in New Orleans on September 28, 1838. He has been characterized by naval historian Jim Dan Hill as "arrogant" and "swashbuckling."

[Bibliography](#) [Categories](#) [Citation](#)

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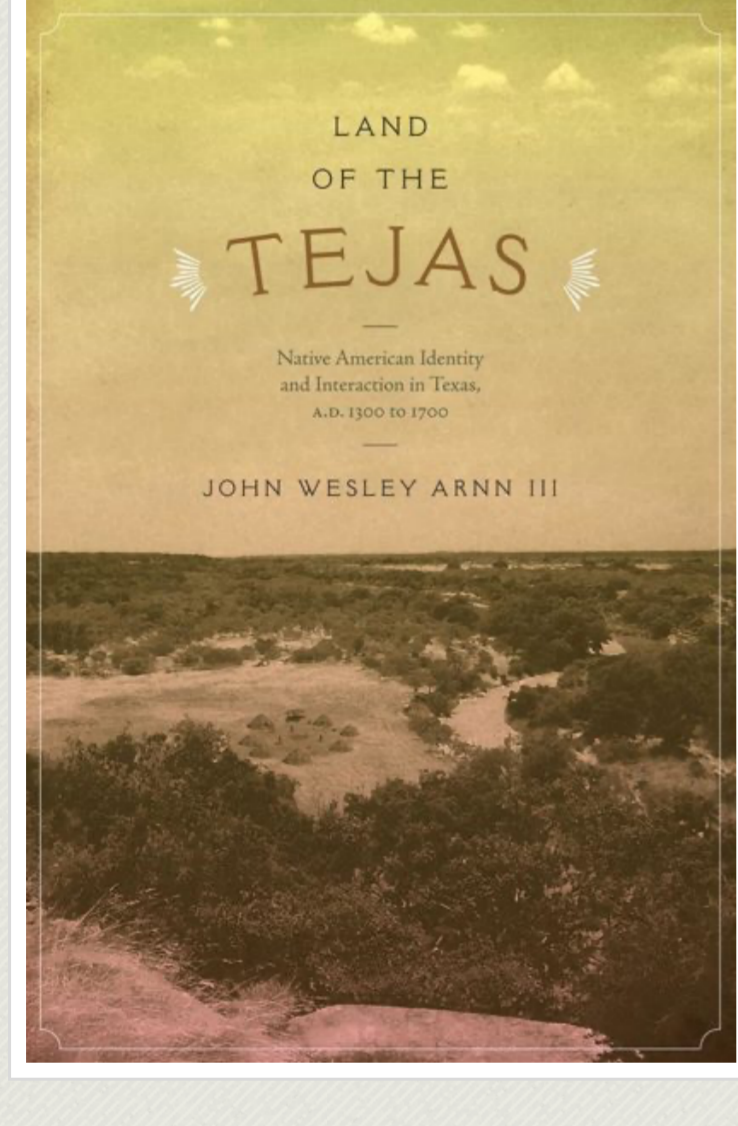
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