



Making Myth of Emily: Emily West de Zavala and the Yellow Rose of Texas Legend

Denise McVea

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For years, historians have talked about two women connected to the Yellow Rose of Texas legend: Emily West, the beautiful mulatto servant who allegedly distracted Mexican general Santa Anna to help win the Texas Revolution; and Emily West de Zavala, the rich white woman who employed her.

But were there really two like-named women, one white and one black, so close to the San Jacinto battlefield in April 1836?

Spanning the 1800s to the 1990s, *Making Myth of Emily* takes an unorthodox look behind this enduring legend and details how the Yellow Rose of Texas myth resulted from determined efforts to hide the racial identity of Emily West de Zavala. In compelling detail, *Myth* shows that Emily, the wife of Texas' interim vice-president, was beautiful, cultured, well-traveled, wealthy—and black.

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