

9-13-17 County Judge's Article

THE PREAMBLE

Saturday the Masonic Lodges of Milam County are sponsoring the reading of the Constitution of the United States from the steps of the Milam County Courthouse. Various people including several of us elected officials have been asked to participate, but the part I like best is that a student representative from each of the schools in the county has been asked to come and read a section. The Community in Concert band will also be there to play patriotic music. What a great idea, so come out at 9:30 A.M. on Saturday, Sept. 16 for an hour or so of good ole Americana.

I've been asked to read the Preamble which I can remember memorizing back when I was in dear old Yoe High along with other great titles such as the Declaration of Independence, Psalm 1, and others. I said I remember memorizing them back then, I didn't say I could still remember them, so I will be reading, not reciting Saturday morning!

To refresh my memory, I was rereading a little about the history of the drafting of the constitution and the bios of some of the 55 men that were involved, young guys in their early 30s like Madison and Hamilton to Ben Franklin who was in his 80s.

These men were frustrated with the failure of the loose knit Articles of Confederation that left too much power with the individual states, but they were wary of turning too much power over to a central government that would take too much control away from the states. At the same time they did not want to lose their individual freedoms in the process of forming their (our) government either. In fact, before the constitution could gain enough support to be ratified, the Congress had to ensure that the Bill of Rights would be added.

A man named Gouverneur Morris rewrote the Preamble after the constitution was completed with the objective of summarizing the six objectives which the Founders intended for the new form of government to attain, but he began the statement of these objectives with a very important concept that was unique to the world at the time (and unfortunately still is for the most part), and we must never, never, never...forget this concept: "WE THE PEOPLE".

Those of us in elected positions (or in appointed positions for that matter) at all levels of government must never forget that government derives its power from the people, not from the president, not from the senate, not from the Supreme Court, not from the king. The government has no right to rule over us other than the authority given to them by the people themselves. Quoting Jefferson: "I consider the people who constitute a nation as the source of all authority in that nation."

The other side of that coin is that the health, and yes, even the survival of liberty and thus of our nation as we know it depends on the integrity and sufficiency of us citizens to collectively handle this responsibility.

The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States: "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common

defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and to our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution of the United States of America.”