



Texas Wins Independence



Explore These Questions

- Why did many Americans settle in Texas?
- How did Texas become an independent nation?
- What challenges did the new Republic of Texas face?

Define

- siege
- annex

Identify

- Stephen Austin
- Antonio López de Santa Anna
- Tejanos
- Sam Houston
- Alamo
- William Travis
- Battle of San Jacinto
- Lone Star Republic

SETTING the Scene

In late 1835, the word spread: Americans in Texas had rebelled against Mexico! Joseph Barnard, a young doctor, recalled:

“I was at Chicago, Illinois, practicing medicine, when the news of the Texan revolt from Mexico reached our ears. . . . They were in arms for a cause that I had always been taught to consider sacred, . . . Republican principles and popular institutions.”

Along with hundreds of other Americans, Dr. Barnard made his way to Texas. Their fight led to the creation of a new nation.



This seal from Mexican Texas shows an eagle, serpent, and cactus—symbols of Mexico.

Meanwhile, Mexico won its independence from Spain. The new nation let **Stephen Austin** lead settlers into Texas. Only about 4,000 Mexicans lived there. Mexico hoped that the Americans would help develop the area and control Indian attacks.

Mexico gave each settler a large grant of land. In 1821, Austin and 300 families moved to Texas. Many of these newcomers were slaveowners who brought their slaves with them. Under Austin's leadership, the colony grew rapidly. By 1830, about 20,000 Americans had resettled in Texas.

Conflict With Mexico

In return for land, Austin and the original settlers agreed to become citizens of Mexico and worship in the Roman Catholic Church. However, later American settlers felt no loyalty to Mexico. They spoke only a few words of Spanish. Also, most of the Americans were Protestants. Conflict soon erupted with the Mexican government.

Mexico enforces its laws

In 1830, Mexico forbade any more Americans to move to Texas. Mexico feared that the Americans wanted to make Texas part of

Americans in Mexican Texas

Since the early 1800s, American farmers, especially from the South, had looked eagerly at the vast region called Texas. At the time, Texas was part of the Spanish colony of Mexico.

At first, Spain refused to let Americans move into the region. Then in 1821, Spain gave Moses Austin a land grant in Texas. Austin died before he could set up a colony. His son Stephen took over the project.

Independence for Texas



Key

- ← Texan forces
- ★ Texan victories
- ← Mexican forces
- ★ Mexican victories

0 100 200 Miles
0 100 200 Kilometers

Geography Skills

After a brief but bloody war, Texas gained its independence from Mexico.

- 1. Location** On the map, locate: (a) Rio Grande, (b) Nueces River, (c) Gonzales, (d) San Antonio, (e) the Alamo, (f) Goliad, (g) San Jacinto.
- 2. Movement** (a) Where did Santa Anna's army first fight the Texans? (b) Describe the movement of Mexican and Texan forces after the Alamo.
- 3. Critical Thinking** Refer to the map of the United States in the Reference Section. How do the boundaries of the Republic of Texas compare with the boundaries of Texas?

the United States. Mexico had some reason for this fear. The United States had already tried twice to buy Texas.

Mexico also decided to make Texans obey Mexican laws that they had ignored for years. One was the law requiring Texans to worship in the Catholic Church. Another law banned slavery in Texas. Texans resented the

laws and the Mexican troops who came north to enforce them.

In 1833, General **Antonio López de Santa Anna** came to power in Mexico. Two years later, he threw out the Mexican constitution. Rumors spread that Santa Anna intended to drive all Americans out of Texas.

Texans take action

Texans felt that the time had come for action. In this, they had the support of many **Tejanos** (teh HAH nohs), Mexicans who lived in Texas. Tejanos did not necessarily want independence from Mexico. However, they did want to be rid of Santa Anna, who ruled as a military dictator.

In October 1835, Texans in the town of Gonzales (gahn ZAH leh) clashed with Mexican troops. The Texans forced the Mexicans to withdraw. Inspired by the victory, Stephen Austin vowed to "see Texas forever free from Mexican domination." Two months later, Texans stormed and took San Antonio. Determined to stamp out the rebellion, Santa Anna marched north with a large army.

While Santa Anna tried to regain San Antonio, Texans declared independence on March 2, 1836. They set up a new nation called the Republic of Texas and appointed **Sam Houston** commander of the army. Volunteers of many nationalities, as well as African Americans and Tejanos, joined the fight for Texan independence from Mexico.

Siege at the Alamo

By the time Santa Anna arrived in San Antonio, many of the Texans who had taken the city had drifted away. Fewer than 200 Texans remained as defenders.

In spite of the tremendous odds against them, the Texans refused to give up. Instead, they retired to an old Spanish mission called the **Alamo**.

Against tremendous odds

Texans who gathered in the Alamo in the winter of 1835–1836 were poorly equipped for a battle. Supplies of ammunition and medicine were low. Food consisted of some beef and corn, and access to water was limited. Worst of all, there were only about 150

Why Study *History?*

Because History Is All Around You

Historical Background

Did you know that we almost lost the Alamo? After 1836, it was used as an army supply depot, a warehouse, and a general store. For a time, its neighbors included a beer garden and a meat market. In 1903, there was even talk that it might be turned into a hotel.

Then, the Daughters of the Republic of Texas stepped in. They urged the state government to save the Alamo from destruction. Adina De Zavala gained public attention by barricading herself inside the old mission. In 1905, the state of Texas entrusted the Alamo to the Daughters of the Republic.



The Alamo

Today, ordinary people are restoring and living in historic buildings. Some have transformed old train stations, schools, or factories into restaurants, shops, or apartment buildings. Several cities have revitalized old run-down neighborhoods and warehouse districts. These historic areas attract new businesses and residents.

Connections to You

History is all around you. It is there for you to visit and explore. Check out the *National Register of Historic Places* in your

local library. It lists thousands of places and structures that have played a role in your nation's history. To find out how you can help preserve American history, contact your local historical society or the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Connections to Today

Each year, thousands of tourists visit the Alamo. They walk the same ground where Texans fought for independence.

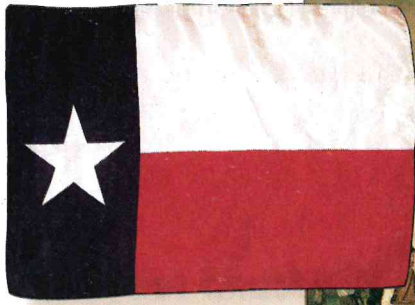
Throughout the nation, government and citizens work to save and restore important historic sites. Federal laws protect a variety of places, including ruins of Native American towns, homes of famous Americans, and even old factories. The National Trust for Historic Preservation, a nonprofit educational group, helps people to acquire and preserve historic properties.

- 1. Comprehension** What have ordinary citizens and local government done to save important historic sites?
- 2. Critical Thinking** How can visiting an historic site be more interesting and informative than reading about it?

★Activity

Visiting an Historic Site

Visit a nearby historic site. In a brief presentation, explain the site's importance and describe how it has been preserved and restored.



▲ Republic of Texas flag



Viewing HISTORY

Winning Texas Independence

Sam Houston was wounded in the leg during the Battle of San Jacinto. Despite tremendous pain and a boot full of blood, Houston fought on to victory. This painting shows Houston accepting the surrender of Mexican commander Santa Anna.

★ Why was San Jacinto a turning point in Texas history?

Texans to defend the Alamo against 6,000 Mexican troops!

Young **William Travis** commanded the Texans inside the mission. Among the volunteers were the famous frontiersmen Jim Bowie and Davy Crockett. Several Tejano families, two Texan women, and two young male slaves were also present.

“Victory or Death!”

On February 23, 1836, Mexican troops began a siege of the Alamo. In a **siege**, enemy forces try to capture a city or fort, usually by surrounding and bombarding it. The Texan defenders fought bravely. Still, Travis knew that unless he received help, he and his troops were doomed. He sent a mes-

senger through the Mexican lines with a letter addressed “to the People of Texas and all the Americans in the World”:

“The enemy have demanded a surrender. . . I have answered the demand with a cannon shot and our flag still waves proudly from the walls.

I shall never surrender or retreat.

I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism, and of everything dear to the American character to come to our aid with all dispatch. . .

Victory or Death!”

Travis also sent scouts to seek additional soldiers and provisions. About 40 men were able to sneak through enemy lines and join the fighters in the Alamo. However, no large force ever arrived.

For 12 days, the defenders held off Mexican bombardment. Then, at dawn on March 6, Mexican cannon fire broke through the Alamo walls. Thousands of Mexican soldiers poured into the mission. When the bodies were counted, 183 Texans and almost 1,500 Mexicans lay dead. The Texan survivors, including Davy Crockett, were executed.



Connections With Geography

Santa Anna crossed the Rio Grande on February 16, 1836, in the middle of a harsh Texas winter. Many of the army's cattle died from the brutal cold and inadequate grazing land. For the final thirty days before reaching the Alamo, soldiers ate only eight ounces of corn cake per day.

Texan Independence

The fall of the Alamo set off cries for revenge. The fury of the Texans grew even stronger three weeks later, when Mexican forces killed several hundred Texan soldiers at Goliad after they had surrendered. Volunteers flooded into Sam Houston's army. Men from the United States also raced south to help the Texan cause.

On April 21, 1836, Houston decided that the moment had come to attack. Santa Anna was camped with his army near the San Jacinto (jah SEEN toh) River. With cries of "Remember the Alamo!" the Texans charged the surprised Mexicans.

The **Battle of San Jacinto** lasted only 18 minutes. Although they were outnumbered, Texans killed 630 Mexicans and captured 700 more. The following day, Texans captured Santa Anna himself. They forced the general to sign a treaty granting Texas its independence.

The Lone Star Republic

In battle, Texans had carried a flag with a single white star. After winning independence, they nicknamed their nation the **Lone Star Republic**. They drew up a constitution based on the Constitution of the

United States and elected Sam Houston as their president.

The new country faced several problems. First, Mexico refused to accept the treaty signed by Santa Anna. Mexicans still claimed Texas as part of their country. Second, Texas was nearly bankrupt. Most Texans thought that the best way to solve both problems was for Texas to become part of the United States.

In the United States, Americans were divided about whether to **annex**, or add on, Texas. Most white southerners were in favor of the idea. Many northerners, however, were against it. At issue was slavery.

In the 1830s, antislavery feelings were growing in the North. Because many Texans owned slaves, northerners did not want to allow Texas to join the Union. President Andrew Jackson also worried that annexing Texas would lead to war with Mexico. As a result, Congress refused to annex Texas.

Over the next 10 years, the Lone Star Republic prospered under Houston's leadership. During the Panic of 1837, thousands of Americans moved to Texas to find land and start businesses. Settlers from Germany and Switzerland also swelled the population. By the 1840s, there were about 140,000 people in Texas, including many Mexicans and African Americans.

★ Section 2 Review ★

Recall

1. **Locate** (a) Mexico, (b) Gonzales, (c) Goliad, (d) Republic of Texas.
2. **Identify** (a) Stephen Austin, (b) Antonio López de Santa Anna, (c) Tejanos, (d) Sam Houston, (e) Alamo, (f) William Travis, (g) Battle of San Jacinto, (h) Lone Star Republic.
3. **Define** (a) siege, (b) annex.

Comprehension

4. Why did Mexico encourage Americans to move to Texas?

5. (a) Why did Texans seek independence from Mexico? (b) How did they finally achieve their goal?
6. Why did northerners and southerners disagree about annexing Texas?

Critical Thinking and Writing

7. **Drawing Conclusions** Why was the fall of the Alamo both a defeat and a victory for Texans?
8. **Solving Problems** Why do you think many Texans believed that annexation by the United States would help them solve their problems?



Activity Writing an Appeal You are trapped in the Alamo with the rebel Texans and Tejanos. Write an appeal to people in the United States to come help you—make it quick!