

The Texas Revolution

Battle of Gonzales - October 2, 1835

When Mexican General Domingo de Ugartechea, military commander in Texas, received word that the American colonists of Gonzales refused to surrender a small cannon that had been given to the town, he sent Francisco de Castañeda and 100 soldiers to retrieve it. Ugartechea realized that, given the tensions between the Texians and the Mexican government, the slightest issue might start problems. He instructed Castañeda to use force if necessary but to avoid open conflict if possible.

When Castañeda's troops reached the Guadalupe River opposite Gonzales on September 29 they found their path blocked by high water and eighteen Texian soldiers. Castañeda demanded the return of the cannon, but the Texian settlers refused. The men of Gonzales quickly asked for reinforcements from several of the surrounding settlements. The cannon had been previously hidden in a peach orchard. They dug it up and mounted it on a cart. Because they didn't have cannonballs, they gathered metal scraps to fill the cannon. James C. Neill was given command of the cannon. He gathered several men, including Almaron Dickinson who had served in the US Army:

On the night of October 1, Texian troops crossed over the river and towards Castañeda's camp. The Texians raised a homemade flag with an image of the cannon painted in black in the center. It said, *"Come and Take It"*. On the morning of October 2 they attacked the Mexicans, who were outnumbered and didn't have enough weapons. Castañeda ordered a withdrawal toward San Antonio de Bexar. In his report to Ugartechea, Castañeda stated that

"since the orders from your Lordship were for me to withdraw without compromising the honor of Mexican arms, I did so."

Despite Castañeda's efforts to avoid war, the Battle of Gonzales (which was really only a brief skirmish) marked a clear break between the American colonists and the Mexican government. Declaring a victory, this skirmish was the start of the Texas Revolution. It is often called the *"Lexington of Texas"*, comparing it to the first battle of the American Revolution.

Battle of Goliad - October 9, 1835

The Battle of Goliad was the second battle of the Texas Revolution. In the early-morning hours of October 9, 1835, rebellious Texas settlers attacked Mexican army soldiers at Presidio La Bahia, a fort near the Mexican settlement of Goliad.

In September, Texians began plotting to kidnap Mexican General Martin Perfecto de Cós, who was going to Goliad to attempt to stop the unrest in Texas. At first the plan was dismissed. But within days of the Texian victory at the Battle of Gonzales, Captain Collinworth and members of the Texian militia began marching towards Goliad. The Texians soon learned that Cós and his men had already left for San Antonio de Béxar but continued their march.

The fort at La Bahia was understaffed and could not mount an effective defense. Using axes borrowed from townspeople, the Texians were able to chop through a door and enter the fort before the Mexicans even knew they were there. After a 30-minute battle, the Mexicans surrendered. One Mexican soldier had been killed and three others wounded, while only one Texian had been injured. The majority of the Mexican soldiers were instructed to leave Texas, and the Texians took \$10,000 worth of supplies and several cannons. These were given to the Texian army for use in the siege of San Antonio.



Presidio La Bahia