

The Texas Revolution

The Goliad Massacre - March 27, 1836

As part of the Mexican invasion of Texas in early 1836, Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna and his main force of at least 5000 men attacked San Antonio. At the same time, Mexican General Jose Urrea with 900 troops moved through southern Texas.

As Urrea and Santa Anna marched through Texas, James Fannin and his remaining force of about 350 men were asked to help Travis and the Alamo defenders. Fannin was also ordered by Sam Houston to retreat with his men to Victoria. This dilemma caused Fannin to wait several days before he decided to take his men to San Antonio.

It was not long, however, before the Texians found themselves surrounded on an open prairie. In the Battle of Coleto Creek, Fannin was unprepared and wounded. Heavily outnumbered and with no water and few supplies, the Texians waved the white flag of surrender on March 20, 1836. They believed that they would be taken captive and eventually returned to their homes. Fannin and his men were escorted back to Goliad as prisoners.

When news of their capture reached Santa Anna, he was furious that the Texians had not been executed on the spot. Citing a recently passed law that all foreigners taken under arms would be treated as pirates and executed, Santa Anna sent orders to execute the Goliad prisoners. General Urrea protested, but was unable to convince Santa Anna to spare the Texians.



Santa Anna's orders were followed. On Palm Sunday, the 27th of March, the Texian prisoners were divided into three groups, marched onto open prairie, and executed. All of Fannin's men except a few that managed to escape during the slaughter were massacred. The bodies of the Texians were stacked together and burned. The Mexican army left the charred remains of the Texian soldiers behind as they continued in their pursuit of the remaining portion of the Texian army under Sam Houston.

Nearly 350 Texians were executed in the Goliad Massacre. More Texians would have been massacred, except for one woman, the "Angel of Goliad", Francita Alavez, who convinced a Mexican colonel to spare the lives of approximately 20 men.

The Runaway Scrape - Spring 1836

Santa Anna's arrival in Texas started a panic. Settlers were afraid that if they were captured by Santa Anna, they would be executed - and they were right. When the news spread of the massacres at the Alamo and Goliad, American colonists fled their towns in fear. Accompanied by Sam Houston's army, the civilians of Texas left their homes in a panic. Their goal was to cross the Sabine River and reach the safety of the United States. Women and children experienced terrible conditions as they took everything they could carry and started marching east. The towns of Gonzales and San Felipe de Austin were burned to the ground to prevent the Mexicans from getting supplies. Many women and children died in the months that followed because of disease and hunger.

