Texas Revolution

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The **Texas Revolution** was a war fought from [October 2](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/October_2), [1835](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1835) to [April 21](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/April_21),[1836](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1836) between [Mexico](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Mexico) and the Tejas portion of the Mexican state of[Coahuila y Tejas](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Coahuila_y_Tejas). [Tejanos](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Tejano" \o "Tejano) and [Texians](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php?title=Texian&action=edit" \o "Texian) (anglo settlers in Texas) revolted soon after [President of Mexico](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/President_of_Mexico) [Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Antonio_L%F3pez_de_Santa_Anna) appointed himself dictator, claiming that Mexico was not ready for a democracy. There are many reasons given by the Tejanos and Texians for the revolt stated in the [Texas Declaration of Independence](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Texas_Declaration_of_Independence), but the one that tops the list is Santa Anna’s abolition of the [Constitution of 1824](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1824_Constitution_of_Mexico) (which had established Mexico as a [federal republic](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Federal_republic) after brief rule under an emperor). However, many saw the rebels as nothing more than pirates, an accusation not completely without merit as the region had a history of [filibustering](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Filibuster). The motives of many of the volunteers who flooded into the area from the [United States](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/United_States) to aide the rebellion were even questioned by the revolutionary government of Texas itself, which fell apart for a brief time near the start of the war because of heated debate over this issue.

Revolts erupted throughout Mexico after Santa Anna’s controversial actions, but the revolution in Texas began in[Gonzales](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Gonzales%2C_Texas), [Texas](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Texas), when Santa Anna ordered troops to go there and disarm the militia. The war leaned heavily in favor of the rebels after they had won the [Battle of Gonzales](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Battle_of_Gonzales), captured the fort [La Bahia](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Goliad%2C_Texas), and successfully captured [San Antonio](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/San_Antonio) (commonly called Bexar at the time). The tide turned when Santa Anna personally led an army to end the conflict. One detachment of the force re-captured La Bahia and the force led by Santa Anna re-captured Bexar after the most famous battle of the war: the [Battle of the Alamo](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Battle_of_the_Alamo). The war ended in [1836](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1836) at the [Battle of San Jacinto](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Battle_of_San_Jacinto) (about 20 miles east of modern day [Houston](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Houston%2C_Texas)) where General [Sam Houston](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Sam_Houston) led the Texas army to victory over the main portion of the Mexican Army led by Santa Anna, who was captured shortly after the battle. The conclusion of the war resulted in the creation of the [Republic of Texas](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Republic_of_Texas), a nation that teetered between collapse and invasion from Mexico until it was annexed by the [United States of America](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/United_States) in [1845](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1845).

The revolution was a culmination of many turbulent and intricate events, and has roots dating back to the [1810s](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1810s) when Mexico (then part of the Spanish colony of [New Spain](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/New_Spain)) was fighting for independence from the [Spanish crown](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Spain). Several participants in the [Mexican War of Independence](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Mexican_War_of_Independence) were involved with the Texas Revolution.

*See*[*Timeline of the Texas Revolution*](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Timeline_of_the_Texas_Revolution)

A Legacy of Revolution in Texas

**Enter the Filibusters**

In [1803](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1803), the United States of America purchased the [Louisiana Territory](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Louisiana_Purchase) from [France](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/France). The boundaries between the Louisiana Territory and the Spanish colony of New Spain (which would later become Mexico) were never agreed upon between Spain and France. The U.S. consequently claimed that the Louisiana Purchase extended to the [Rio Grande River](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Rio_Grande) (which is the southern border of Texas today). This was disputed by Spain, which had previously established a handful of missions and forts all the way up to the San Antonio River (which runs through the middle of modern Texas).[Native Americans](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Native_American) in the region disputed all of these claims.

Prior to 1803, traders, outlaws, and a few settlers had made homes in this nebulous area (called Tejas by Spain) near the [Sabine River](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Sabine_River_%28Texas-Louisiana%29) (the eastern border of modern Texas). After the [Louisiana Purchase](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Louisiana_Purchase), more people entered Tejas. These people came from many countries but most were from the United States. With the traders, outlaws, and settlers came soldiers of fortune, called [filibusters](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Filibuster_%28settler%29), who were seeking to encourage and join a nascent revolution fomenting in New Spain.

**The Mexican War of Independence**

In September [1810](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1810) a series of rebellions began through out the colony of New Spain. The colonists were unhappy with Spanish rule and sought to form an independent country called Mexico. The Spanish settlers of Tejas, called Tejanos, were struggling economically and considered joining the revolt. One of their grievances was that many of them earned livings by taking [mules](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Mule) and [mustang](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Mustang_%28horse%29) horses to the neighboring Louisiana Territory for trade or sale. However, the Spanish crown had declared all wild animals to be the property of the crown, making this practice illegal. Around 1811, the Tejanos and the filibusters from the U.S. finally joined the rebellion.

**Battle of Medina River**

In August [1812](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1812), a rebellion led by Bernardo Gutierrez de Lara and Augustus Magee succeeded in caputuring Nacogdoches, La Bahia and [San Antonio](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/San_Antonio%2C_Texas). Spanish forces, led by [Joaquin de Arredondo](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php?title=Joaqu%EDn_de_Arredondo&action=edit) marched north and defeated the "Army of the North". Many Republicans were killed, and 300 men were taken prisoner in San Antonio. They were tightly packed into a [prison](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Prison), where it is said that about 20 died of [suffocation](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Suffocation). The rest soon saw a similar fate as they were [executed](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php?title=Execution_%28legal%29&action=edit) the following day. About five hundred women and children who were family members of the rebels were rounded up and placed in [La Quinta](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php?title=La_Quinta&action=edit) in the middle of the city and force to cook for the Royalist army. Many Texas residents fled to the US. A few Republicans fled to Galveston Island.

**The U.S. Connection**

After the failed Gutierrez and Magee filibuster, the next incursion was lead by the Spanish liberal [Francisco Xavier Mina](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php?title=Francisco_Xavier_Mina&action=edit)in 1816. Mina had traveled to the United States and secured funds from private sources for his invasion. It is speculated that he also met with high officials in [Washington, D.C.](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Washington%2C_D.C.) but this is not certain. Spain learned of Mina’s plans and pressured the U.S. to stop it. On [April 27](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/April_27), [1816](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1816) Mina was at the vanguard of eight ships and 235 men as they sailed into the Gulf of Mexico. His forces fought a few minor skirmishes with Spanish forces before he himself was captured on[October 27](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/October_27), [1816](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1816). He was convicted of treason and executed along with twenty-eight of his men.

Many wealthy Tejano families, such as the Navarros, the Ruizes, the Veramindis, the Seguins and the De Zavalas, had supported the rebellion. One man in particular named [Jose Antonio Navarro](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php?title=Jos%E9_Antonio_Navarro&action=edit) managed to flee to the United States with members of his family. His family had been allied with other noble houses in San Antonio. Navarro returned to San Antonio three years later when Spain declared general amnesty to the people involved in the rebellion. He found his family home in ruins, and had to resort to smuggling to support his family. Navarro considered leaving San Antonio for the United States, but became mayor of the city. Revolution continued to wax and wane through out New Spain.

In 1819, Spain and the U.S. signed the [Adams-Onis Treaty](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Adams-On%EDs_Treaty) in which the U.S. gave up their claim to Texas, and Spain gave up claims to the parts of the Louisiana Purchase. The filibusters Dr. John Long and Ben Milam were unhappy with this treaty and joined a Mexican insurgent named General Jose Trespalacios to help the revolution.

Colonial Texas

**The Welcome of Anglo Settlers**

As the Mexican insurgents and the filibusters fought their battle in New Spain, the [Panic of 1819](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Panic_of_1819) plunged the United States into a major depression that would last many years. An American businessman and former Spanish subject named [Moses Austin](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php?title=Moses_Austin&action=edit) lost his lead manufacturing business during this time, and then attempted banking and land speculation both of which failed as well. After a trip to Tejas, he developed a plan to bring American settlers into the region, which would help Spain develop the area and help him jump-start his business career. In [1820](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1820), he applied for a Spanish grant to settle 300 families in Texas. His son, [Stephen F. Austin](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Stephen_F._Austin), who was studying law in [New Orleans](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/New_Orleans), helped his father secure loans in the U.S. to back this venture. In late 1820, Moses Austin received his grant from Spain but died in June 1821 before he could finalize his plan. Stephen F. Austin inherited his father’s Spanish grant and continued the colonization enterprise. Because of the economic hardships in the U.S. he had no problem finding the 300 families stipulated in the grant to bring to Tejas, or as the Americans called it, Texas.

**The End of Filibustering**

During this time the [Mexican War of Independence](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Mexican_War_of_Independence) was nearing its conclusion after 11 years of fighting. The American filibuster John Long established a headquarters at Bolivar Point near Galveston. In the fall of 1821 he led an expedition to [Goliad, Texas](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Goliad%2C_Texas), to capture the fort called La Bahia, and succeeded. However, it turned out he had conquered insurgents, not Spanish Royalists. General Jose Trespalacios and Ben Milam went to Mexico City but because of Long’s blunder, Trespalacios and Milam were imprisoned. They eventually convinced the insurgents of their intentions and set free. The Mexican insurgents captured Long in San Antonio and took him to Mexico City, where a guard shot him. Though the shooting was ruled accidental, there was evidence that General Trespalacios hired the guard to kill Long. Milam planned revenge but the plot was discovered. He was arrested, but then soon released. This marked the end of the filibustering period in Texas (though some consider the Texas Revolution as the final filibustering expedition). Soon after these events Mexico became independent from Spain.

**The American Settlers Arrive**

In December 1821 Austin’s settlers arrived by land and sea to settle around San Felipe. To Austin’s disappointment, the government of newly independent Mexico refused to approve the original Spanish grant. But Austin traveled to and from Mexico City for three years to settle the issue. During this time he learned to speak Spanish. Jose Antonio Navarro and Austin became friends and worked together to bring people to Texas and create a great deal of autonomy. They based the new colony's economy on cotton, a product which grew well in East Texas and had made the Southern United States wealthy. Slaves were brought into the area by the settlers, which would become an issue as Mexico struggled to end slavery in their new country over the coming decade.

Under the rules of the grant, each new settler had to convert to [Roman Catholicism](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Roman_Catholicism), meet high standards of moral character, become a Mexican citizen, and change their names to Spanish equivalents. Each were given over 4,000 acres (16 km) of land. These new anglo settlers were called Texians. The colony flourished and three years after it was started, its population had grown to 18,000. Navarro found himself to be the owner of more than 25,000 acres (101 km) of land by 1830.

**The Start of Mexico and the Texas Colony**

In 1822, [Aguston de Iturbide](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Agust%EDn_de_Iturbide" \o "Agust�n de Iturbide), one of the victorious Mexican insurgents, was crowned Emperor of the newly formed[Mexican Empire](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Mexican_Empire) and in 1823, Emperor Iturbide finally approved Austin’s grant. Under his [Plan de Iguala](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Plan_de_Iguala) slavery was formally abolished for the first time, but it still continued through out the nation. Iturbide’s regime soon became unstable and in the same year, [Guadalupe Victoria](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Guadalupe_Victoria) and [Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Antonio_L%F3pez_de_Santa_Anna) issued the [Plan de Casa Mata](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Plan_de_Casa_Mata). It called for the overthrow of the Emperor in order to establish a republic. Iturbide abdicated and was executed a year later. Austin had to restart negotiations to maintain his grant with the new government but was eventually successful.

Mexico became a republic and under the new [Constitution of 1824](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php?title=Constitution_of_1824&action=edit), and Texas was merged with [Coahuila](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Coahuila) to form the state of [Coahuila y Tejas](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Coahuila_y_Tejas). The borders of the Texas part of this state were considerably different than those world-famous today. The lower border only extended to the [Nueces River](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Nueces_River) (where [Corpus Christi](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Corpus_Christi) sits today). Below that was the state of [Tamaulipas](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Tamaulipas). The western border of Texas ended about 200 miles west of San Antonio where the state of[Chihuahua](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Chihuahua) began. And a 200-mile wide strip of land extended between Tamaulipas and Chihuahua 100 miles southwest across the Rio Grande River to connect Texas to Coahuila.

Mexico formally abolished slavery for a second time under the Constitution of 1824 but it again continued throughout the entire nation. Austin gained three more grants from the newly formed Mexican Republic to settle 900 additional families in 1825, 1827, and 1828 under the new empresario system of immigration, which Mexico instituted. As an empresario Austin was given the duties of both bringing in qualified families and then governing them when they arrived. Many others were made empresarios such as Dr. Lorenzo De Zavala, Haden Edwards, and the old filibuster Ben Milam (he had renewed his friendship with Trespalacios, who was now prominent in the new government). During all of this, however, illegal immigrants from the U.S. trickled in with the legal immigrants.

Descent into revolution

**The Fredonian Rebellion**

By 1826, Haden Edwards had been in several land and political disputes with various settlers. These cumulated in a final dispute that resulted in a massive financial loss to Edwards. So, Edwards organized a small resistance in Nachogdoches and proclaimed the area an independent republic called Fredonia. Lt. Col. Mateo Ahumada was ordered to Texas. Austin gathered the Texian militia and joined Ahumada’s forces. Together they marched on Nachogdoches. Edwards and his followers immediately fled Texas without a shot fired.

**Mexico becomes concerned**

In 1827, [John Q. Adams](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/John_Q._Adams) offered Mexico [USD](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/USD) $1 million to buy Texas, which was rejected. Two years later, in 1829,[Andrew Jackson](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Andrew_Jackson" \o "Andrew Jackson) tried again with an offer of $5 million dollars, which Mexico also rejected. The same year Spain attempted to re-conquer their former colony. [General Santa Anna](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Antonio_L%F3pez_de_Santa_Anna) swiftly defeated the invading Spanish army at[Tampico](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Tampico) and was hailed as a national hero. In 1830, Mexico became alarmed by the illegal immigrants crossing the border from the U.S. into Mexico. With the recent Fredonian Rebellion and the U.S. so obviously hungry for Texas, there was concern about who was entering the state. Mexico passed a law that would annul prospective or incomplete settlements previously approved in various grants given to various empresarios. Austin eventually got the law repealed after three years of working with the Mexican government but in the meantime military measures were enacted to enforce this law, which triggered an uprising in [Anahuac, Texas](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Anahuac%2C_Texas). This was the first of what would be called the [Anahuac Disturbances](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php?title=Anahuac_Disturbances&action=edit).

**Texian disillusionment**

Texians were becoming increasingly disillusioned with the Mexican government for a variety reasons that differed from person to person. They were all very displeased with the tariff laws. They were all sick of the rigid Mexican bureaucracy. Also, the unstable government in Mexico City had sent a questionable military to overlook and protect the settlers. Most of these Mexican soldiers were convicted criminals who were given the choice of prison or serving in the army way out in Texas. Corruption became a major problem. This led colonists to become very unhappy with the location of their state capital, which moved periodically between [Saltillo](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Saltillo) and [Monclova](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Monclova), both of which were in southern Coahuila, some 500 miles away; they wanted Texas to be a separate state from Coahuila (but not independent from Mexico) and to have its own capital, which would be closer and thusly help to stem corruption and facilitate other matters of government. Some less agreed upon issues included the fact that many were use to the rights they had in the U.S. that they did not have now in Mexico, such as all the ones found in the [Bill of Rights](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/United_States_Bill_of_Rights). Militant slaver traders were unhappy with the limitations imposed upon them. These disparate problems however could not incite the settlers to revolt as a whole.

**Mexico becomes a dictatorship**

Between 1829 and 1832, a series of Mexican presidents were killed in a series of coups. Santa Anna had a hand in each of these events. The Mexican Republic became heavily divided between two factions known as Conservatives, who were for a centralized, monarchial government, and Liberals, who were for a democratic, federal government. In the presidential elections of 1833 Santa Anna ran as a liberal and won. He angered many when he immediately decided that Mexico was not ready for a democracy, became a centralist, and appointed himself dictator. Santa Anna also began to antagonize the U.S. by claiming that the Odins-Adams Treaty was invalid and thus the Mexican border extended to the [Mississippi River](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Mississippi_River).

Though disturbed by Santa Anna’s turn, Austin and the settlers had backed the man in his bid for power and now wanted to capitalize on it. Austin therefore traveled to Mexico City with a petition asking for separate statehood from Coahuila, a better judicial system, and the repeal of the law that had caused the Anuhuac Disturbances, among other things. They were all approved except for separate statehood. Despondent over not getting Texas separated from Coahuila, he wrote an angry letter to a friend, which seemed to encourage rebellion. Mexican officials intercepted the letter and Austin was arrested for sedition.

By this time, the trickle of illegal immigrants entering Texas had become a flood. Santa Ana believed that the influx of immigrants to Texas was part of a plot by the U.S. to take over the region. In 1834, due to perceived troubles within the Mexican government, Santa Anna went through a process of dissolving state legislatures, disarming state militias, and abolishing the Constitution of 1824. These actions triggered outrage throughout the nation of Mexico. The country then became divided between Centralists, who backed Santa Anna’s dictatorship, and Federalists, who wanted the Constitution of 1824 re-instituted. Santa Ana then ordered all illegal immigrants out of Texas.

Revolution

**Revolution in Zacatecas**

The Mexican state of [Zacatecas](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Zacatecas) revolted in 1835 when Federalists there refused to disarm their militia. Santa Ana personally led an army to Zacatecas and brutally crushed the rebellion. He then granted his soldiers two days of rape and pillage in which 2000 non-combatants were killed. Soon after this, due to his impressive military successes and his perceived political similarities, Santa Anna began calling himself “The Napoleon of the West”, which made the U.S. (nowhere near a superpower at this time) nervous.

**Revolution in Texas**

Throughout 1835, as many tried to incite revolt, Texians informally debated the issue. In July, Austin was released from jail having never been formally charged with sedition and was in Texas by August. Despite their disgust over what had happened to Austin, the horrific events in Zacatecas, the call to disarm militias, the order to expel all illegal immigrants, and particularly the dissolution of the Constitution of 1824, the Texians as a whole were relatively loyal to Santa Anna until a spark ignited the powder keg when a Mexican soldier bludgeoned Texian settler Jesse McCoy with a musket in an altercation. Following this incident, and having severely damaged his standing in Mexico City, Austin began to see little choice but revolution. A consultation was scheduled for October to discuss possible formal plans to revolt and Austin sanctioned it.

**Battle of Gonzales**

Before the consultation could happen, however, in accordance with Santa Anna’s nationwide call to disarm state militias, Colonel [Domingo Ugartechea](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Domingo_Ugartechea), who was stationed in San Antonio, ordered the Texians to return a cannon given to them by Mexico that was stationed in Gonzales. The Texians refused. Ugartechea sent Lieutenant [Francisco Casta�eda](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php?title=Francisco_Casta%F1eda&action=edit) and 100 dragoons to retrieve it. When he arrived at the rain-swollen banks of the Guadalupe River near Gonzales, on the other side, there were just eighteen Texians to oppose him. Unable to cross, Casta�eda established a camp, and the Texians buried the cannon and called for volunteers. Two Texian militias answered the call. Colonel John Henry Moore was elected head of the combined militias and they dug up the cannon and mounted it on a pair of cartwheels. A Coushatta Native American entered Casta�eda’s camp and informed him that the Texians now had 140 men.

On [October 1](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/October_1), [1835](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1835) at 7 p.m., the Texians headed out slowly and quietly to attack Casta�eda’s dragoons. At 3 a.m. they reached the camp and gunfire was exchanged. There were no casualities except for a Texian who had bloodied his nose when he fell off his horse during the skirmish. The next morning negotiations were held and the Texians urged Casta�eda to join them in their revolt. Despite claiming sympathy for the Texian cause, he was shocked by the invitation to mutiny and negotiations fell through. The Texians created a banner with a crude drawing of the disputed canon and the words “Come and Get It” written on it. Since they had no cannon balls, they filled it with scrap metal and fired it at the dragoons. They charged and fired their muskets and rifles but Casta�eda decided not to engage them and led the dragoons back to San Antonio.

**Capture of Goliad**

On [October 6](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/October_6), [1835](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1835), another group of men, acting on their own, gathered in the coastal town of Matagorda to continue the revolt. The twenty men who had come together elected George Morse Collinsworth as their commander. One of these men was a freed slave once owned by Collinsworth named Samuel McCulloch. The impetus for this expedition was a rumor that General [Martin Perfecto de Cos](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Mart%EDn_Perfecto_de_Cos) had a war chest worth $50,000 at La Bahia, the presidio outside of Goliad. General Cos, Santa Anna’s son-in-law, had landed the month before at Copano Bay with 500 troops and orders to disarm the Texians and expel all troublemakers. The Texians original plans were to capture the money and hold Cos for a ransom.

As the group marched to Goliad they put out a call for volunteers. They stopped in Victoria to rest and learned that Cos had already left La Bahia for San Antonio with his force and the cash. The nature of the expedition came into question. They drafted a document headed, “Compact of Volunteers under Collinsworth, dated Victoria, October 9, 1835”, which stated their loyalty to the federal government, which was dissolved by Santa Anna. Forty men signed the document.

By the time they reached the town, they had a force of approximately 95 Texians and 30 Tejanos. They learned that General Cos had left only 50 men commanded by Lieutenant Colonal Francisco Sandoval to guard the presidio. As they marched toward it, they happened upon Ben Milam, who was returning from [Monterrey](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Monterrey). He joined the small army as a private and during the pre-dawn hours of [October 10](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/October_10), they attacked La Bahia. With axes given to them by local Tejanos, they chopped down the doors of Sandoval’s quarters. Sandoval immediately surrendered. Awakened by the commotion, the Mexican soldiers fired at the Texians and Tejanos from their barracks. Samual McCulloch was hit in the shoulder. The Texians and Tejanos returned fire. During a lull in the gunfight, a Texian called for an immediate surrender. The Mexicans did.

La Bahia was strategically significant because it sat near Capano Bay, the only port where Mexicans could land soldiers, and thus avoid an inconvenient and time-consuming march across land. The capture of the presidio also cut General Cos off supplies from and efficient communication with Mexico City.

**Battle of Concepcion**

The revolt had started haphazardly and terribly disorganized but was successful enough that most of what was left of the Mexican army in Texas sat in San Antonio, cut off from communications and supplies. The sad force there under General Martin Perfecto de Cos was mostly made up of convicts. The revolt in Zacatecas a few months before had diverted most of Mexico’s resources away from the rest of the nation, so the 647 men in San Antonio were ill equipped to fight 30,000 Anglo settlers and their Tejano allies.

On [October 11](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/October_11), [1835](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1835) volunteers gathered around Gonzales and elected Stephen F. Austin as their general. The next day, the army, wearing a spectrum of clothing from civilian to military, marched off to San Antonio. Ben Milam, now a captain with his own small force, met them on the way there. On [October 15](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/October_15) a scouting party encountered ten dragoons, exchanged fire with them, and chased them to San Antonio. The main force reached the outskirts of San Antonio on[October 19](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/October_19). General Austin decided that the only way to take the town was by siege. He organized a search party headed by [James Bowie](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Jim_Bowie) and [James Fannin](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php?title=James_Fannin&action=edit) to find a suitable base of operations. Another addition to this group was a well-known scout named [Erastus Smith](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php?title=Deaf_Smith&action=edit), also known as "Deaf Smith" because he was hearing-impaired. Smith had planned to stay out of the revolt but as he and his son-in-law, a black freedman named Hendrik Arnold, returned to San Antonio to see their family, a Mexican sentry disallowed them entrance and hit Smith in the head with a sheathed saber. From him, Austin learned that the morale of Cos’ soldiers was already very low.

Bowie’s old friend [Juan Seguin](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php?title=Juan_Seguin&action=edit) arrived with news that the citizens of San Antonio supported the Texians. Austin made him a captain and ordered him to raise a company of mounted troops. He gave the same order to [Lieutenant William Travis](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/William_B._Travis). Meanwhile, Bowie’s ninety-man search party found that the Mission Pur�sima Concepcion appeared a suitable base of operations. It took them all day to decide this so they set up camp near the mission. This infuriated Austin who had ordered him to return before dark; now the forces were divided. General Cos learned of the separation and took 300 dragoons, 100 infantry, and two cannons to attack Bowie’s forces.

On [October 28](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/October_28), [1835](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1835) General Cos approached the Texians under a dense fog. There was a skirmish in the fog but the main battle didn’t start until it lifted. The powder Cos’ men were using was of such poor quality that their musket balls kept falling short and in some cases only caused bruises if they hit their target. The Mexicans fired grape-shot from their cannons at the Texians, who were well hidden in the trees and brush, but it was also ineffective. The Texians were careful and deliberate in their fire and managed to take out the cannons with sniper fire. The Mexicans, who were trained in formal European battlefield tactics and equipped with muskets, were methodically thinned out as the Texians, many of whom were equipped with rifles, employed snipe-and-hide tactics. Cos’ forces fell back. The Texians charged their abandoned cannons, turned them around, and fired on them. Cos and the remainder of his army fled. The Mexicans had lost 76 men, killed or wounded, while the Texians had lost only one man. Austin and the rest of the army came upon the very end of the battle. Spirits were high and the army almost laid siege to San Antonio immediately but after some deliberation, they decided to wait.

**Siege of San Antonio**

When General Austin gave his army of volunteers the boring task of simply waiting for General Cos’ army to starve, many of the volunteers simply left. Through out November of 1835, the Texian army dwindled from 800 to 600 men and the officers began to bicker about strategy and why they were fighting against the Mexicans. Several officers resigned including Jim Bowie who went to Gonzales. Captain William Travis led a small force that managed to capture a small Mexican contingent caught outside of San Antonio de Bexar (or just Bexar as it was commonly called then). But this success boosted morale only briefly. Meanwhile, volunteers from the U.S. were filtering into Texas and terrorizing the Texian settlers on the way to Bexar. The situation was deteriorating for the Texians as rapidly as it was for Cos and his men barricaded in town.

In Gonzales, the consultation scheduled for the month before finally got underway after enough delegates from the colonies arrived to signify a quorum. After bitter debate, they finally created a provisional government that was not to be separate from Mexico but only to oppose the Centralists. They elected Henry Smith as governor and Sam Houston was appointed commander-in-chief of the regular Army of Texas. There was no regular army yet; Austin’s army was all volunteers. So Houston would have to build one. They had more land than money so land was chosen as an incentive to join the army; extra land would be given to those who enlisted as regulars and not as volunteers. The provisional government also commissioned privateers and established a postal system. A merchant was also sent to the U.S. to borrow $100,000. They also ordered hundreds of copies of various military textbooks. They also gave Austin the option to step down as commander of the army in Bexar and go to the U.S. as a commissioner. Austin stayed for the time being.

Back in Bexar, a company of volunteers arrived from New Orleans with two cannons on [November 18](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/November_18), [1835](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1835), which the army promptly used to harass the Mexican force. Mexican deserters began filtering out of the town. Three days later Austin ordered his army to finally storm the town but some of his officers refused and the order was retracted. Bowie returned from Gonzales. Austin ordered him to Goliad to strengthen La Bahia, but Bowie quietly disobeyed the order. On [November 24](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/November_24), [1835](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1835) Austin stepped down as general. Elections were held and [Colonel Edward Burleson](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Edward_Burleson) became Austin’s successor.

From [23 October](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/23_October) to [4 December](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/4_December) [1835](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1835), the town of San Antonio de Bexar was besieged by Stephen Austin and later Edward Burleson. The Mexican troops in San Antonio fought to hold the town from the Texans. The rest of Cos' troops were in the [Alamo](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Alamo_Mission_in_San_Antonio). On [December 9](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/December_9),General Cos surrendered over 1,000 ill trained and poorly supplied troops and retreated south.

**The Grass Fight**

On [November 26](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/November_26), [1835](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1835) Deaf Smith and Hendrik Arnold rode into the Texas camp from a scouting expedition. They reported that a hundred dragoons were heading toward Bexar with a train of a hundred pack animals. Rumors spread that the pack animals carried war chests filled with silver. The unpaid volunteers clamored to go capture it. Colonel Burleson ordered Jim Bowie to take a hundred men to investigate the approaching force. Much of the Texian army, in fear of missing out on their share of the rumored treasure, ran off without orders, following Bowie’s detachment.

The detachment intercepted the dragoons a mile south of Bexar near Alazan Creek and close-quartered combat ensued. From town, General Cos could see that his dragoons were in trouble and sent infantry to their aid. Suddenly, the Texians were in trouble, outgunned and outnumbered. But soon the treasure-hunting volunteers who had followed Bowie arrived. The Mexican force was driven away from their pack animals and had to retreat back into Bexar. The volunteers found no money. The animals were carrying grass to feed the horses in town. Thus the battle was jocularly dubbed The Grass Fight.

**The Storming of San Antonio**

Despite the success of The Grass Fight and the obvious deterioration of the state of the Mexican army in San Antonio de Bexar, morale among the volunteers plummeted. The U.S. volunteers had no intention of joining a regular army. They were essentially mercenaries who wanted money, and were now organizing an expedition to Matamoros. The Texian volunteers still had no unifying reason to continue fighting and were homesick. On [December 2](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/December_2), [1835](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1835) Colonel Burleson attempted to organize an assault on Bexar but was unsuccessful. By this time, the army had melted down to 500 disaffected men, half of which were splintering off into a filibustering party. Houston had been telling Burleson to give up on Bexar and return to Gonzales. On [December 4](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/December_4), [1835](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1835) Burleson announced the cancellation of the siege.

This outraged Captain Ben Milam. He stormed into Colonel Burleson’s tent and after hours of discussion, Milam received permission to lead a force into town. Milam emerged from the tent and yelled, “Who will follow old Ben Milam into San Antonio?” Three hundred men volunteered.

A detachment with a cannon was ordered to within range of the [Alamo](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Alamo_Mission_in_San_Antonio). Their job was to fire the cannon, cause a diversion, and signal the start of the attack. Two hundred men stayed with Colonel Burleson to patrol the perimeter, prevent re-enforcements, and cover a retreat in case the attack was unsuccessful. Their goal was to capture the Military Plaza where the Mexican headquarters and main defenses were located.

In the afternoon of [December 5](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/December_5), [1835](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1835) the attack commenced. The feint against the Alamo was successful and the Texians entered the town with no opposition. Once inside, bloody house-to-house combat ensued. Snipe-and-hide tactics were used by both sides. Civilians fled as Texians broke into their homes to avoid being shot. By the end of the first day, the Texians were firmly embedded in the town. The next day, fighting resumed and the Texians slowly made more progress, pushing Cos’ men back toward the Alamo. On [December 7](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/December_7), [1835](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1835) the Texians gained enough ground to plan for a final assault. As Ben Milam stepped into a courtyard to scan the enemy defenses, a sniper killed him. The house-to-house fighting turned into room-to-room fighting as the Mexicans were pushed further and further back. General Cos dispatched 200 dragoons to find Genereal Domingo Ugartechea who had left Bexar to get re-enforcements. The 200 dragoons desserted and headed back to Mexico City. On [December 8](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/December_8), [1835](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1835) the Texians were just yards from the Military Plaza. Cos transferred his headquarters to the Alamo. He then sent a force to attack Burleson’s camp, but the attack failed and they retreated back into Bexar. Late in the afternoon, Ugartechea arrived with re-enforcements: convicts pressed into service. When they were unshackled, the refused to fight and attacked General Cos.

On [December 9](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/December_9), [1835](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1835) Cos raised a white flag and sent Lieutenant Colonel [Jose Sanchez Navarro](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php?title=Jos%E9_S%E1nchez_Navarro&action=edit) to discuss terms with the Texians. Colonel Condelle and his battalion vehemently protested the surrender and attempted with out success to prevent Sanchez Navarro from approaching the Texians. The Texians allowed the Mexicans to keep their weapons and stay in Bexar for a week so they could recuperate and prepare to leave. General Cos in return pledged that he would take his army into the interior of Mexico and never again oppose the re-establishment of the Constitution of 1824. The Texians now considered the war in Texas over.

**Santa Anna approaches and the Texians fall apart**

In late December, Santa Anna gathered an army of 6,019 men at [San Luis Potos�](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/San_Luis_Potos%ED%2C_San_Luis_Potos%ED) and marched for Texas. Santa Anna opted for a pincer attack with one column advancing into Texas from the west and a second one advancing from the south. During the long march, the army suffered many hardships. Native Americans in Mexico had raided the depots set up along the way to Texas. An especially harsh winter also plagued the force. The army also had a large following of women and children. The women, known as *soldaderas,* cooked for the army and served as nurses but were a drain on their resources.

In Texas, the army and government were working at odds with one another. On [December 20](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/December_20), the volunteers at Goliad issued a declaration of independence from Mexico. Aside from splintering authority, the declaration upset the provisional government for separation from Mexico had not been decided upon. In January 1836, volunteers flooded into Texas from the U.S. to help the revolt while the provisional government teetered on collapse. A bitter debate developed about whether to carry the revolt further into Mexico and inspiring federalists to rise up against Santa Anna by attacking Matamoros. The plan was finally approved but as Houston prepared plans the government placed James Fannin and Frank Johnson in command of the expedition. On [January 3](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/January_3), Fannin and Johnson took the volunteers from Bexar leaving a small force of 100 there headed by Lieutenant Colonel J. C. O’Neill. He began work on the Alamo to make it a defensible fort. Governor Smith sent Houston to assume command of the expedition to Matamoros.

A schism formed in the provisional government. Many saw the volunteers from the U.S. as causing more problems than helping. Governor Smith inferred that they were merely pirates undermining the Texian cause. He dissolved the council, but was impeached. Lieutenant Governor James Robison was made acting governor and the Texians found themselves with two quarreling governments.

Houston reached Goliad on [January 16](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/January_16) and ordered Bowie and a detachment of volunteers to Bexar to evacuate O’Neill and blow up the Alamo. News that Governor Smith had been deposed reached the town and Johnson claimed that he was now commander-in-chief. Houston acquiesced but offered some words of wisdom before he returned to Gonzales. Since most of them were U.S. volunteers, he reminded them that the Mexicans in [Matamoros](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Matamoros) would view them as mercenaries not as liberators with much justification.

**Santa Anna arrives**

On [February 22](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/February_22), [1836](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1836), Santa Anna's advance troops were seen approaching San Antonio. Some Tejano loyalists greeted the army with open arms. Families and fighters alike—mostly Anglo, but a few Tejano—sought refuge in the Alamo.

Inside the Alamo, command over the forces was split between [Jim Bowie](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Jim_Bowie) and [William Travis](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/William_Travis). When the Alamo became surrounded and Santa Anna requested unconditional surrender, two responses came out. A representative of Bowie's requested a talk while Travis fired a cannon shot, desiring to confront and spite the enemy. Santa Anna then raised the red flag signaling no quarter was to be given.

On [2 March](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/2_March) [1836](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1836), Navarro was with other leaders in Washington-on-the-Brazos, signing [Texas's declaration of independence](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Texas_Declaration_of_Independence). Travis had sent word of the trouble in San Antonio, and repeatedly requested assistance. Only 32 men from Gonzales came to their aid.

On [March 6](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/March_6), after thirteen days of siege, about 1,600 Mexican forces stormed the Alamo, going from room to room and killing every man. Mexican loses are estimated to be about six hundred killed and wounded. All 190-250 Texan and Tejano combatants were killed. *See:*[*Battle of the Alamo*](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Battle_of_the_Alamo)*.*

**Battle of Refugio**

On [12 March](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/12_March), Fannin and his men had improved the fortifications at the old presidio La Bahia and renamed it *Fort Defiance*. News of the fate of Johnson's and Grant's men created confusion rather than stirring the volunteers gather at Goliad into action. On [10 March](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/10_March), he sent Amon B. King and a small force with wagons to collect the families and escort them back to Goliad. King found that the Centralist force in the area was greater than imagined and asked Fannin to send help while he took refuge in the old mission at Refugio. Fannin sent William Ward, commander of the Georgia Battalion, to assist King. The arrival of Ward at Refugio initiated a conflict over command between the two officers. The squabbling caused the insurgents to break into several smaller detachments, each which was subsequently defeated and its survivors captured by Urrea's troops.

**Goliad Massacre**

On [March 27](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/March_27), Mexican troops in [Goliad](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Goliad_massacre) executed over 390 Texan troops who had surrendered following the Battle of Coleto Creek, including [James Fannin](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php?title=James_Fannin&action=edit). Twenty seven managed to escape. Fannin and his forces had left the safety of Fort Defiance and took to the open plains. Urrea gets Fannin to surrender after a brief exchange of gun fire.

Santa Anna's forces continued their sweep along the Texas coast. General Ramirez y Sesma and Vicente Filisola, Amat and Jose Urrea continued to push the Texans and defeated their forces in the field. For most of the spring of 1836, the Texans were on the losing side, until forces led by [Sam Houston](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Sam_Houston) defeated Santa Anna's army at the [Battle of San Jacinto](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Battle_of_San_Jacinto). A rallying cry for the Texas troops was "Remember the Alamo! Remember Goliad!" The battle was decided in about 18 minutes.

A day after the battle, on [April 22](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/April_22), [1836](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1836), Santa Anna was captured. On [May 14](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/May_14), [1836](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1836), Santa Anna signed the [Treaties of Velasco](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php?title=Treaties_of_Velasco&action=edit). The treaties provided for the end of hostilities between the Mexican and Texan armies and the withdrawal of the Mexican army south of the [Rio Grande](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Rio_Grande). The treaties also provided for Santa Anna's return to Mexico and for him to lobby his government for its acknowledgement of Texas independence.

Texas Republic President [Sam Houston](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Sam_Houston) appointed Stephen Austin as Secretary of State. Austin, who had always suffered poor health, died on [27 December](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/27_December) [1836](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1836). This was seen as a blow to the Tejano population, whom Austin had long supported. Navarro saw this hit home as his brother Eugenio was soon killed on suspicion of being loyal to Mexico. Elsewhere, Tejano families who had been on their land for generations were forced out by the Anglo population.

However, Navarro himself was still considered to be a loyal Texan. Many pointed to the fact that, while 3rd-generation Tejano, he had been born in [Corsica](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Corsica), and had noble European blood in his veins.

Statehood

On [29 December](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/29_December) [1845](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/1845), Texas was admitted as the twenty-eighth state to the United States. Texas was admitted as a[slave state](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Slave_state). By that time, more than one million acres (4,000 km²) of Tejano land had been taken by Anglos. Still, Navarro encouraged Tejanos to embrace their new American citizenship, and wrote his "*Apuntes Historicos*" or "Historical Notes" detailing some of what occurred in Texas before anyone ever spoke the words "Remember the Alamo".

Quotation

*"Some were for independence, some were for the Constitution of 1824; and some were for anything, just so long as it was a row."*

*—*[*Noah Smithwick*](http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php?title=Noah_Smithwick&action=edit)

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