

The Arrest of Stephen F. Austin (1834)



Stephen F. Austin arrived in Mexico in July of 1833 after a 3 month journey from Texas. He was unable to meet with Santa Anna. A cholera epidemic was killing thousands of people and the government was in chaos. Santa Anna was away from Mexico City fighting against another Mexican state that was rebelling. After months of waiting to meet with the president, Stephen F. Austin wrote a letter to the people of Texas suggesting they go ahead and form a state government.

In November of 1833, Stephen F. Austin was finally able to meet with Santa Anna. Santa Anna agreed to a few of the Americans' demands, like allowing immigration from the United States, but he refused to allow Texas to become a separate state. Recognizing that he could do no more, Stephen F. Austin began his journey home.

Stephen F. Austin was unaware that his letter home had been intercepted - and even worse, that the Mexican government viewed it as treason. Stephen was arrested in the city of Saltillo and brought back to Mexico as a prisoner. Two and a half years would pass before SFA was finally able to return to Texas. He had left Texas in 1833 and wouldn't return until September of 1835. IN addition to his lengthy travel, he was in prison for over a year. While in prison in Mexico City, he was kept in solitary confinement and then later released to house arrest. His opinion of the Mexican government completely changed because of his arrest and imprisonment. When he left Texas in 1833, he was wanting to repair relations between Texas and Mexico. He returned and advocated war. SFA claimed that Santa Anna turned into a dictator. Stephen said, "War is our only recourse. There is no other remedy. We must defend our right, ourselves, and our country by force of arms."