

The Fredonian Rebellion (1826)



Haden Edwards received his empresario contract from the Mexican government in 1825. The contract gave him permission to settle 800 families near Nacogdoches. When he arrived, Edwards found that a number of Mexican families, other American settlers, and Cherokee were already living on the land and had done so for years. Some of the “old settlers had lived in Nacogdoches for over 100 years. Haden Edwards was furious and demanded that people pay him additional fees for land.

Edwards’ actions enraged many of the old settlers. They complained to the Mexican government, which sided with the old settlers. In October 1826, the Mexican government canceled Edwards’ contract, declaring that he wasn’t fulfilling its terms.

A group of Edwards’ supporters took action. Edward, his brother Benjamin, and the supporters, including some Cherokee, declared themselves free from Mexican rule. They arrested the *alcade* (mayor) of Nacogdoches and took control of the town. They planned to establish the **Republic of Fredonia**. On December 21, 1826, they issued the Fredonian Declaration of Independence.

Most Texans, both Tejanos and Anglo settlers alike, opposed The Fredonian Rebellion. Stephen F. Austin supported the Mexican government’s decision and sent his militia to fight with the Mexican army against the Edwards brothers. In a letter written to Haden Edwards, Stephen F. Austin said, “It appears as though the people in your quarter have run mad or worse.”

In January 1827, the Fredonians learned that Mexican troops and the militia sent by Stephen F. Austin were coming. The rebels, including Haden Edwards, fled. The republic collapsed.

The Fredonian Rebellion was short-lived, but its impact was great. The Mexican government became alarmed that American colonists would rebel against its rule. It proved Americans were not loyal to the Mexican government. The Fredonian Rebellion becomes the first event leading to the Texas Revolution.