

Independence for Texas

Essential Question

Why did Texans fight for their independence from Mexico?

Reading Guide

Content Vocabulary

Tejano (p. 367) decree (p. 368)

empresario (p. 367) annex (p. 371)

Academic Vocabulary

establish (p. 367) remove (p. 368)

Key People and Events

Stephen F. Austin (p. 367)

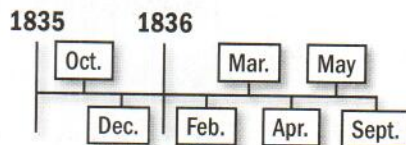
Antonio López de Santa Anna
(p. 368)

Alamo (p. 369)

Sam Houston (p. 370)

Reading Strategy

Taking Notes Use a time line like the one below to list key events in Texas history.



American Diary

Thomas Jefferson Pilgrim was an immigrant who heard about opportunities in Texas. In New Orleans, he bought a ticket to Texas and a new life. "We were now on the Gulf. . . . Soon all on board were seasick except the crew and me and many wished that they had never started. . . . [After landing at Matagorda Bay] the others went eastward to the Brazos, I on foot and alone, made my way north to San Felipe, about 60 miles distant."

—from the diary of Thomas J. Pilgrim

Settlers lived on estates in southeast Texas.

A Clash of Cultures

Main Idea People from the United States and Mexico settled Texas.

History and You If someone from a different culture offered you a large amount of land on the condition that you adopt his or her language and customs, would you take it? Read to find out how settlers in Texas reacted to a similar situation.

Conflict over Texas began in 1803, when the United States bought the Louisiana Territory from France. Americans claimed that the land in present-day Texas was part of the purchase. Spain protested. In the Adams-Onís Treaty, the United States agreed to drop its claim to the region.

Land Grants

At the time, few people lived in Texas. Most residents—about 3,000—were **Tejanos** (teh•HAH•nohs), or Mexicans who claimed Texas as their home. Native Americans, such as the Comanches, Apaches, and Kiowas, also lived in the area. Because the Spanish wanted to promote the growth of Texas, they offered vast tracts of land to people who agreed to

bring families to settle there. The people who obtained these grants and recruited the settlers were called **empresarios**.

American Moses Austin received the first land grant in 1821. He died, however, before he could **establish**, or set up, his colony. Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821. Austin's son, **Stephen F. Austin**, received permission from the new Mexican government to organize the colony. Austin recruited 300 American families to settle in Texas. Austin's success made him a leader among the American settlers.

From 1823 to 1825, Mexico passed laws offering new settlers land at extremely low prices. In return the colonists agreed to learn Spanish, become Mexican citizens, convert to Catholicism—the religion of Mexico—and obey Mexican law. Mexican leaders hoped to attract settlers from all over, but most settlers came from the United States.

Growing Tension

By 1830 Americans in Texas far outnumbered Mexicans. Further, these American colonists had not adopted Mexican ways. In the meantime, the United States had twice offered to buy Texas from Mexico.

Primary Source Migration to Texas

Texas's Appeal By 1830 there were 4,000 members of Austin's colonies and approximately 16,000 Americans in Texas—four times the Mexican population. Inexpensive land drew many to Texas. The efforts of Mary Austin Holley, a cousin and close friend of Stephen F. Austin, also helped. Holley's books and letters provided information for settlers. Her descriptions of Texas as a land of "surpassing beauty . . . a *splendid* country—an enchanting spot" attracted many settlers.

Cost of Land in 1825

Land in the U.S.	\$1.25 per acre
Land in Texas	4¢ per acre



Critical Thinking

Predicting How do you think settlers made a living in Texas?



The Mexican government viewed the growing American influence in Texas with alarm. In 1830 the Mexican government issued a **decree**, or official order, that stopped all immigration from the United States. At the same time, the decree encouraged the immigration of Mexican and European families with generous land grants. Trade between Texas and the United States was discouraged by placing a tax on goods that were imported from the United States.

These new policies angered the Texans. The prosperity of many citizens depended on trade with the United States. Many had friends and relatives who wanted to come to Texas. In addition, those colonists who held slaves were uneasy about the Mexican government's plans to end slavery.

Attempt at Reconciliation

Some of the American settlers called for independence. Others hoped to stay within Mexico but on better terms. In 1833 General **Antonio López de Santa Anna** became

president of Mexico. Stephen F. Austin traveled to Mexico City with the Texans' demands to **remove**, or take away, the ban on American settlers and to make Texas a separate state of Mexico.

Santa Anna agreed to the first request but refused the second. Austin sent a letter back to Texas, suggesting that plans for independence get underway. The Mexican government intercepted the letter and arrested Austin.

While Austin was in jail, Santa Anna named himself dictator and overthrew Mexico's constitution of 1824. Without a constitution to protect their rights, Texans felt betrayed. Santa Anna placed Texas under greater central control. This loss of local power dismayed many people. Even Austin, finally released from prison, now saw that dealing with Santa Anna was impossible. He concluded that war was unavoidable.

✓ Reading Check **Explaining** What role did empresarios play in colonization?

Chance & Error in History

What If the Defenders Had Abandoned the Alamo?

William Travis and almost 200 other defenders—mostly volunteers—were determined to hold the Alamo for a cause in which they believed. In February 1836, Travis wrote several unsuccessful letters, asking the people of Texas and the United States for help.

General Antonio López de Santa Anna, Mexico's president, hoped the fall of the Alamo would convince other Texans that it was useless to resist his armies. Instead, the heroism of those in the Alamo inspired Texans to carry on the struggle. "Remember the Alamo!" became the battle cry of the Texas army.



Travis's Appeal for Aid at the Alamo, February 24, 1836

To the People of Texas & all Americans in the world—
Fellow citizens & compatriots—I am besieged, by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna—I have sustained a continual Bombardment & cannonade for 24 hours & have not lost a man. . . . I shall never surrender or retreat. Then, I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism & everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid, with all dispatch. . . . If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible & die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor & that of his country—

Victory or Death
William Barret Travis
Lt. Col. comdt.



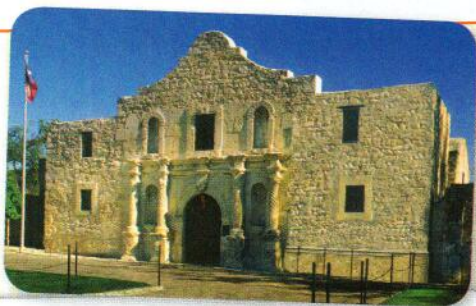
The Struggle for Independence

Main Idea Texans fought for their independence from Mexico.

History and You Did you know that Texas was once a nation? Read why Texas remained independent before it became a state.

During 1835 unrest among Texans sometimes erupted in open conflict. Santa Anna sent an army into Texas to punish the rebels. In October some Mexican troops tried to seize a cannon held by Texans at the town of Gonzales. The Texans taunted the Mexicans. They put a white flag on the cannon, bearing the words “Come and Take It.” After a brief battle, the Texans drove back the Mexican troops. Texans consider this to be the first fight of the Texan Revolution.

The Texans called for volunteers. Many answered, including African Americans and Tejanos. In December 1835, the Texans freed San Antonio from a larger Mexican force.



Santa Anna's Letter Explaining the Attack

“[Travis's] responses were insulting, which made it imperative to assault the fort before it could be reinforced by Samuel Houston. . . . The obstinacy [stubbornness] of Travis and his soldiers was the cause of the death of the whole of them, for not one would surrender.”

Critical Thinking

- Identifying Cause and Effect** What effect did the defeat of the Alamo have on the Texas independence movement?
- Speculating** What do you think might have happened to the independence movement had the defenders of the Alamo abandoned the fort?

Despite these victories, problems arose. Various groups argued over who would lead and what actions to take. In early 1836, when Texas should have been preparing to face Santa Anna, plans had stalled.

The Battle of the Alamo

Santa Anna marched north, furious at the loss of San Antonio. When his army reached San Antonio in late February 1836, it found a small Texan force barricaded inside a nearby mission called the **Alamo**.

Although the Texans had cannons, they lacked gunpowder. The Texans were at a further disadvantage because they had only about 180 soldiers to take on Santa Anna's army of several thousand. The Texans had brave leaders, however, including Davy Crockett and a tough Texan named Jim Bowie. The commander, William B. Travis, who was only 26 years old, was determined to hold his position at the Alamo. Travis managed to send messages through Mexican lines. Several messages appealed to the people of Texas and the United States for aid.

For 12 long days, through several attacks, the defenders of the Alamo kept Santa Anna's army at bay with rifle fire. On March 6, 1836, Mexican cannon fire smashed the Alamo's walls.

The Mexicans were too numerous to hold back. They entered the fortress, killing all the defenders, including Travis, Crockett, and Bowie. Only a few women and children and some servants survived to tell of the battle.

Although the defenders at the Alamo had been defeated, they had bought the Texans time to gather troops and supplies.

Texas Declares Its Independence

During the siege at the Alamo, Texan leaders were meeting at Washington-on-the-Brazos, where they were writing a new constitution. There, on March 2, 1836—four days before the fall of the Alamo—American settlers and Tejanos declared independence from Mexico. They then established the Republic of Texas.



From Independence to Statehood Texas remained independent for several years. At first the United States refused to annex Texas. To pressure the United States, Texas threatened to form an alliance with Great Britain. The United States did not want the British near its southern border, and in 1845 Texas was admitted to the Union as a slave state.

The Republic of Texas had a three-branch government. Its first Congress met in 1837 at this house in present-day Houston. ▼



▲ Texas banknote, 1838

"In my judgment it would be far better for this Country that Texas should remain an independent State if this were possible."
 —Senator James Buchanan

Map Skills

Location What battle was fought northeast of Brazoria?

Maps in Motion See StudentWorks™ Plus or glencoe.com.

The Texas Declaration stated that the government of Santa Anna had violated the Mexican Constitution. It noted that the Texans' protests against these violations were met with force. The declaration proclaimed the following:

PRIMARY SOURCE

"The people of Texas, in solemn convention assembled, appealing to a candid world for the necessities of our condition, do hereby resolve and declare, that our political connection with the Mexican nation has forever ended, and that the people of Texas do now constitute a free, Sovereign, and independent republic."

—The Declaration of Independence of Texas

With Mexican troops in Texas, it was not possible to hold an election to ratify the constitution and vote for leaders. Texas leaders set up a temporary government.

The government named **Sam Houston** as commander in chief of the Texas forces. Houston wanted to prevent the Mexicans from overrunning other forts. He ordered the troops at Goliad to abandon their position. As they retreated, however, they came face to face with Mexican troops. After a fierce fight, several hundred Texans surrendered. On Santa Anna's orders, the Texans were executed. This action outraged Texans, who called it the "Goliad Massacre."

The Battle of San Jacinto

Houston gathered an army of about 900 at San Jacinto (SAN huh•SIHN•toh), near the site of present-day Houston. Santa Anna was camped nearby with an army of more than 1,300. On April 21, the Texans launched a surprise attack, shouting, "Remember the Alamo! Remember Goliad!" They killed more than 600 soldiers and captured about 700 more—including Santa Anna. On May 14, 1836, Santa Anna signed a treaty that recognized the independence of Texas.

The Lone Star Republic

In September 1836, Texans elected Sam Houston as their president. Mirabeau Lamar, who had fought at the Battle of San Jacinto, served as vice president. Houston sent a delegation to Washington, D.C., asking the United States to **annex**, or take control of, Texas.

Andrew Jackson, however, refused their request. An addition of another slave state would upset the balance of slave and free states in Congress. For the moment, Texas would remain an independent country.

The Road to Statehood

After winning independence, Texas still had difficulties with Mexico, and it faced a mounting debt. Many Texans wanted to join the United States. Southerners favored Texas annexation, but Northerners opposed admitting another slave state to the Union. President Martin Van Buren did not want to inflame the slavery issue or risk war with Mexico. He put off the question of annexing Texas. John Tyler, who became president in 1841, supported Texas annexation. The Senate, however, was still divided over the slavery issue and failed to ratify the annexation treaty.

The situation changed with the 1844 presidential campaign. Manifest Destiny was a popular idea at the time. The South wanted Texas. The North favored gaining all of Oregon. Candidate James K. Polk supported both actions. After Polk won, Congress passed a resolution to annex Texas. In 1845 Texas joined the Union.



Reading Check

Identifying

What was the role of Sam Houston in Texas history?

Section 2 Review

History ONLINE
Study Central™ To review this section, go to glencoe.com.

Vocabulary

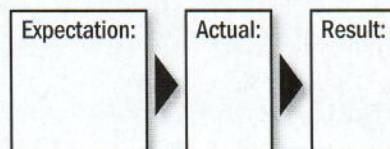
1. Write a short paragraph in which you use all of the following vocabulary terms: *Tejano*, *empresario*, *establish*, *decree*, *remove*, *annex*.

Main Ideas

2. **Explaining** How did Stephen Austin try to resolve tensions with the Mexican government?
3. **Specifying** Why was the Battle of San Jacinto important?

Critical Thinking

4. **Contrasting** In a diagram like the one below, describe the Mexican government's expectations for the settlement of Texas. Describe how the actual settlement differed from these expectations and the result.



5. **Synthesizing** How did the Texan defeats at the Alamo and Goliad affect Texans?
6. **Persuasive Writing** Take the role of Stephen Austin. Write what you would say to President Santa Anna to persuade him to agree to Texans' demand for independence.

7. Answer the Essential Question

Why did Texans fight for their independence from Mexico?