



2 The Texas Revolution

TERMS & NAMES

Stephen Austin

Tejano

Antonio López de Santa Anna

Sam Houston

William Travis

Juan Seguín

Battle of the Alamo

Lone Star Republic

MAIN IDEA

American and *Tejano* citizens led Texas to independence from Mexico.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

The diverse culture of Texas has developed from the contributions of many different groups.

ONE AMERICAN'S STORY

Son of a bankrupt Missouri mine owner, **Stephen Austin** read his mother's letter, written in 1821, in stunned silence. His father, Moses Austin, was dead. In his last moments, she told her son, "He called me to his bedside, . . . he begged me to tell you to take his place . . . to go on . . . in the same way he would have done."

Stephen knew what that meant. Moses Austin had spent the last years of his life chasing a crazy dream. He had hoped to found a colony for Americans in Spanish Texas.

Stephen's dream, though, was to be a lawyer—not a colonizer. Yet as a loving and obedient son, how could he deny his father's dying wish? A week after his father's death, Stephen Austin was standing on Texas soil. From that day on, his father's dream was to be his destiny.

This section explains how Stephen Austin, along with others, worked hard to make the lands of Texas a good place to live. Their spirit would create an independent Texas Republic. Later, Texas would become a state in the United States.

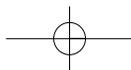


Stephen Austin, shown in this painting, helped fulfill his father's dream by establishing an American colony in Texas.

Spanish Texas

The Spanish land called *Tejas* (Tay•HAHS) bordered the United States territory called Louisiana. The land was rich and desirable. It had forests in the east, rich soil for growing corn and cotton, and great grassy plains for grazing animals. It also had rivers leading to natural ports on the Gulf of Mexico. It was home to Plains and Pueblo Native Americans. Even though *Tejas* was a state in the Spanish colony of New Spain, it had few Spanish settlers. Around 1819, Spanish soldiers drove off Americans trying to claim those lands as a part of the Louisiana Purchase.

In 1821, only about 4,000 *Tejanos* (Tay•HAH•nohs) lived in Texas. ***Tejanos*** are people of Spanish heritage who consider Texas their home. The Comanche, Apache, and other tribes fought fiercely against Spanish settlement of Texas. The Spanish officials wanted many more settlers to move to Texas. They hoped that new colonists would help to defend against Native Americans and Americans who illegally sneaked into Texas.



Vocabulary

empresarios: individuals who agreed to recruit settlers for the land

To attract more people to Texas, the Spanish government offered huge tracts of land to *empresarios*. But they were unable to attract Spanish settlers. So, when Moses Austin asked for permission to start a colony in Texas, Spain agreed. Austin was promised a large section of land. He had to agree that settlers on his land had to follow Spanish laws.

Mexican Independence Changes Texas

Shortly after Stephen Austin arrived in Texas in 1821, Mexico successfully gained its independence from Spain. *Tejas* was now a part of Mexico. With the change in government, the Spanish land grant given to Austin's father was worthless. Stephen Austin traveled to Mexico City to persuade the new Mexican government to let him start his colony. It took him almost a year to get permission. And the Mexican government would consent only if the new settlers agreed to become Mexican citizens and members of the Roman Catholic Church.

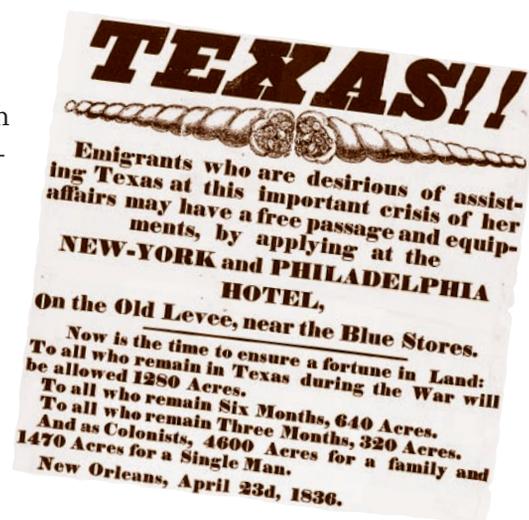
Between 1821 and 1827, Austin attracted 297 families to his new settlement. These original Texas settler families are known as the "Old Three Hundred." He demanded evidence that each family head was moral, worked hard, and did not drink. So law-abiding were his colonists that Austin could write to a new settler, "You will be astonished to see all our houses with no other fastening than a wooden pin or door latch."

The success of Austin's colony attracted more land speculators and settlers to Texas from the United States. Some were looking for a new life, some were escaping from the law, and others were looking for a chance to grow rich. By 1830, the population had swelled to about 30,000, with Americans outnumbering the *Tejanos* six to one.

Rising Tensions in Texas

As more and more Americans settled in Texas, tensions between them and the *Tejanos* increased. Used to governing themselves, Americans resented following Mexican laws. Since few Americans spoke Spanish, they were unhappy that all official documents had to be in that language. Slave owners were especially upset when Mexico outlawed slavery in 1829. They wanted to maintain slavery so they could grow cotton. Austin persuaded the government to allow slave owners to keep their slaves.

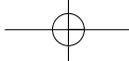
On the other hand, the *Tejanos* found the Americans difficult to live with, too. *Tejanos* thought that the Americans believed they were superior and deserved special privileges. The Americans seemed unwilling to adapt to Mexican laws.



Posters such as the one above encouraged Americans from the East to settle in Texas. Some people scrawled G.T.T. on their doors to indicate they had "gone to Texas."

Reading History

A. Analyzing Causes Why was there growing tension between Americans and *Tejanos*?



The Mexican government sent an official to Texas to investigate the tensions. He was not happy with what he found. In 1829, he reported to his government, “I am warning you to take timely measures . . . Texas could throw this whole nation into revolution.” His advice turned out to be right.

Responding to the warnings, the Mexican government cracked down on Texas. First, it closed the state to further American immigration. Next, it required Texans to pay taxes for the first time. Finally, to enforce these new laws, the government sent more Mexican troops to Texas.

ReadingHistory

B. Summarizing

What three actions did the Mexican government take to control Texas?

Texans Revolt Against Mexico

These actions caused angry protests. Some Texans even talked of breaking away from Mexico. Most, however, listened to Austin, who remained loyal to Mexico. In 1833, Austin set off for Mexico City with a petition. This document listed reforms supported by both Americans and *Tejanos*. The most important request was that Texas become a self-governing state within Mexico.

In Mexico City, Austin met General **Antonio López de Santa Anna**, the Mexican president. At first, the general agreed to most of the reforms in Austin’s petition. But then Santa Anna learned of a letter Austin had written. The letter said that if the changes weren’t approved Austin would support breaking away from Mexican rule. This was rebellion! The general had Austin jailed for an entire year. The Texans were furious and ready to rebel.

Santa Anna’s answer to talk of rebellion was to send more troops to Texas. In late September 1835, Mexican soldiers marched to the town of Gonzales. They had orders to seize a cannon used by the Texans for protection against Native Americans. Texas volunteers had hung a flag on the big gun that said, “Come and Take It.”

The Mexican troops failed to capture the cannon. Two months later, Texans drove Mexican troops out of an old mission in San Antonio that was used as a fortress. It was called the Alamo. Among the Texas volunteers were free African Americans such as Hendrick Arnold and Greenbury Logan. Angered by these insults, Santa Anna and 6,000 troops headed for Texas.

ReadingHistory

C. Analyzing Causes

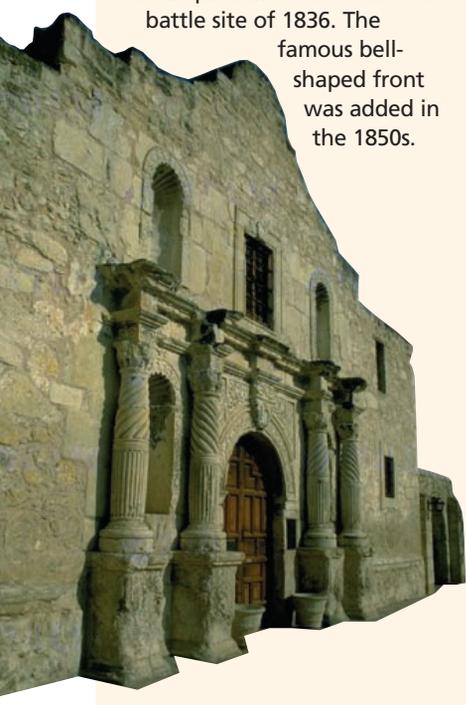
What Texan actions moved Santa Anna to head toward Texas?

America’s HERITAGE

REMEMBER THE ALAMO!

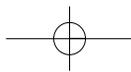
Today the Alamo, shown below, is again under siege. Moisture seeps into the limestone walls and causes them to crumble. Many people view the mission as a memorial to Americans’ willingness to fight for freedom, so a Texas group has begun attempts to preserve the Alamo from further damage. The Alamo looks quite different from the battle site of 1836. The

famous bell-shaped front was added in the 1850s.



The Fight for the Alamo

On March 1–2, 1836, Texans met at a settlement called Washington-on-the-Brazos to decide what to do about Santa Anna’s troops. They believed they could do only one thing: to declare Texas a free and independent republic. **Sam Houston**, the only man at the meeting with military experience, was placed in command of the Texas army.



“Remember the Alamo!”

a Texan soldier

The Texas army hardly existed. At that moment, there were two small forces ready to stand up to Santa Anna’s army. One was a company of 420 men, led by James Fannin, stationed at Goliad, a fort in southeast Texas. The second was a company of 183 volunteers at the Alamo. Headed by **William Travis**, this small force included such famous frontiersmen as Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie. In addition, **Juan Seguín** (wahn seh•GEEN) led a band of 25 *Tejanos* in support of revolt.

On February 23, 1836, Santa Anna’s troops surrounded San Antonio. The next day, Mexicans began their siege of the Alamo. Two nights later, Travis scrawled a message to the world.

ReadingHistory

D. Making

Inferences Why would William Travis address his message to all Americans?

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

The enemy has demanded a surrender. . . . I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, and our flag still waves proudly from the walls. I shall never surrender or retreat.

William Travis, “To the People of Texas and all the Americans in the World”

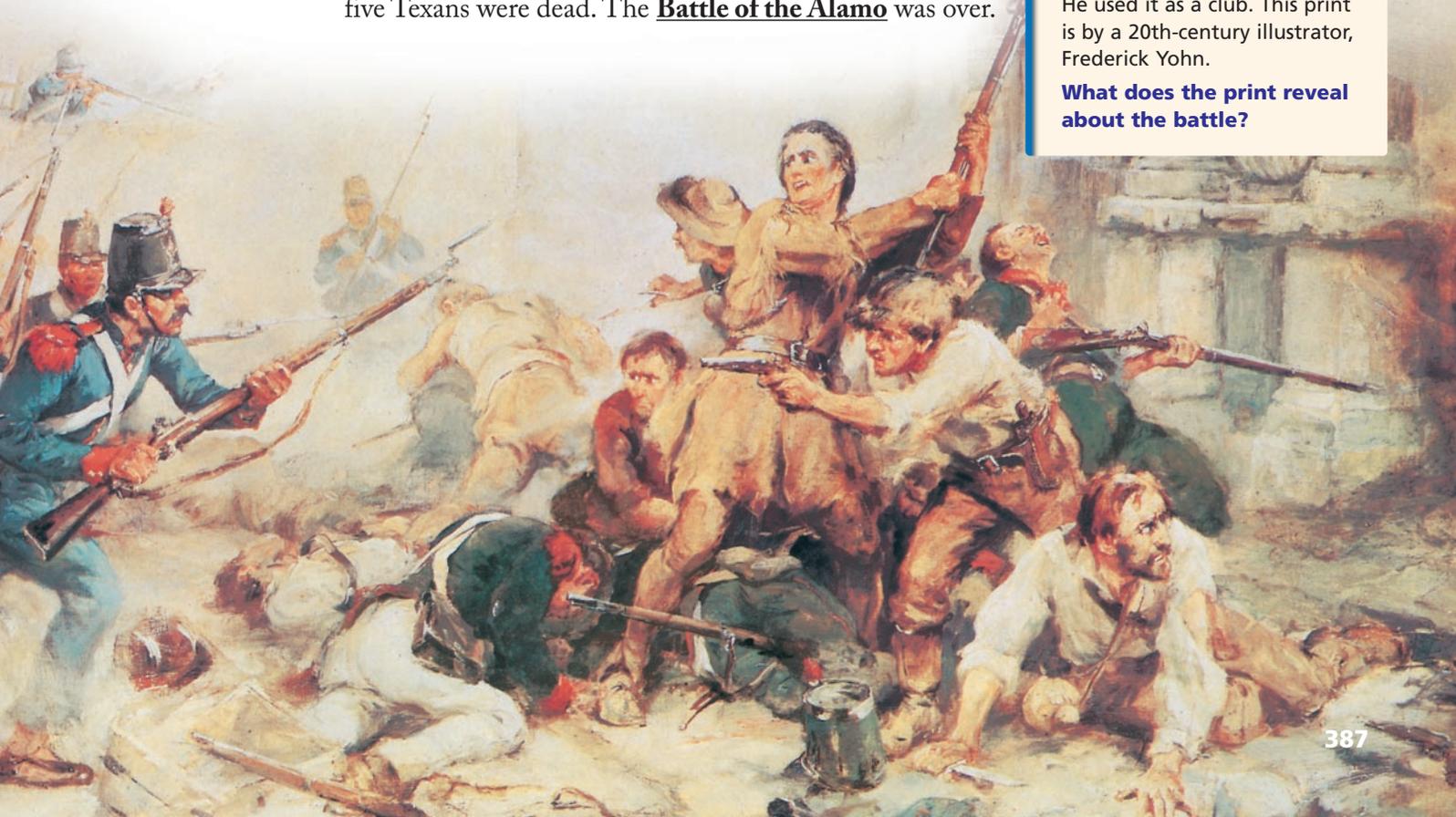
Because Juan Seguín spoke Spanish, he was chosen to carry the plea through enemy lines. Seguín got the message through to other Texas defenders. But when he returned, he saw the Alamo in flames.

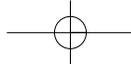
The Alamo’s defenders held off the Mexican attack for 12 violent days. Travis and the defenders stubbornly refused to surrender. On the 13th day, Santa Anna ordered more than 1,800 men to storm the fortress. The Texans met the attackers with a hailstorm of cannon and gun fire. Then suddenly it became strangely quiet. The Texans had run out of ammunition. At day’s end, all but five Texans were dead. The **Battle of the Alamo** was over.

HISTORY throughART

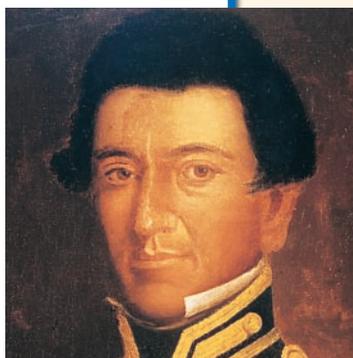
The Battle of the Alamo was so intense that Davy Crockett did not have time to reload his gun, which he called “Betsy.” He used it as a club. This print is by a 20th-century illustrator, Frederick Yohn.

What does the print reveal about the battle?





AMERICA'S HISTORY MAKERS



JUAN SEGUÍN

1806–1890

Juan Seguín was a *Tejano* hero of the Texas Revolution. It was Seguín who dashed through enemy lines at the Alamo with a last desperate attempt for aid.

And after the war, it was Seguín who arranged for the remains of the Alamo defenders to be buried with full military honors.

Newcomers to Texas who disliked all *Tejanos* falsely accused Seguín of planning rebellion. Fearing for his life, he fled to Mexico in 1842, there “to seek a refuge amongst my enemies.”

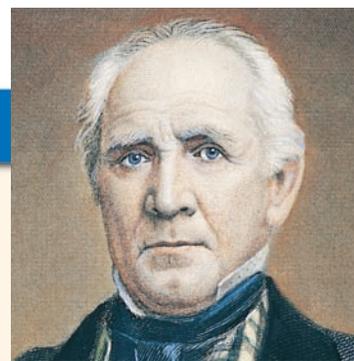
SAM HOUSTON

1793–1863

Raised by a widowed mother, Sam Houston grew up in Tennessee. He lived with the Cherokee for about three years. Later, he served in the U.S. Army, in Congress, and as the governor of Tennessee.

“I was a General without an army,” wrote Houston, after taking command of the Texas forces in 1836. Yet by the time the war was over, he and his troops had defeated Santa Anna’s larger army.

Houston was elected the first president of the Republic of Texas. When Texas became a state, he served as a U.S. senator.



In what ways did the experiences of Seguín and Houston differ?

Those men who had not died in the fighting were executed at Santa Anna’s command. A total of 183 Alamo defenders died. A few women and children were not killed. Susanna Dickinson, one of the survivors, was ordered by Santa Anna to tell the story of the Alamo to other Texans. He hoped the story would discourage more rebellion. The slaughter at the Alamo shocked Texans—and showed them how hard they would have to fight for their freedom from Mexico.

Victory at San Jacinto

With Santa Anna on the attack, Texans—both soldiers and settlers—fled eastward. Houston sent a message to the men at Goliad, ordering them to retreat. They were captured by Mexican forces, who executed more than 300. The Texans would not soon forget the massacre at Goliad. But even in retreat and defeat, Houston’s army doubled. Now it was a fighting force of 800 angry men. It included *Tejanos*, American settlers, volunteers from the United States, and many free and enslaved African Americans.

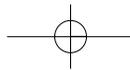
In late April, Santa Anna caught up with Houston near the San Jacinto (san juh•SIN•toh) River. Late in the afternoon of April 21, 1836, the Texans advanced on the Mexican army “with the stillness of death.” When close to Santa Anna’s camp, they raced forward, rifles ready, screaming “Remember the Alamo!” “Remember Goliad!”

In just 18 minutes, the Texans killed more than half of the Mexican army. Santa Anna was forced to sign a treaty giving Texas its freedom. With the Battle of San Jacinto, Texas was now independent.

ReadingHistory

E. Reading a Map

Use the map on page 389 to see where battles were taking place.



Lone Star Republic

In September 1836, Texans raised a flag with a single star. They adopted a nickname—**Lone Star Republic**—and proclaimed Texas an independent nation. The new nation set up its own army and navy. Sam Houston was elected president of the Lone Star Republic by a landslide.

Many Texans did not want Texas to remain independent for long. They considered themselves Americans and wanted to be a part of the United States. In 1836, the Texas government asked Congress to annex Texas to the Union.

Many Northerners objected. They argued that Texas would become a slave state, and they opposed any expansion of slavery. If Texas joined the Union, slave states would outnumber free states and have a voting advantage in Congress. Other people feared that annexing Texas would lead to war with Mexico.

In response, Congress voted against annexation. Texas remained an independent republic for almost ten years. In the next section, you will learn that the question of annexing Texas did lead to a war between the United States and Mexico.

Vocabulary

annex: to join territory to an existing country

ReadingHistory

F. Analyzing Causes Why didn't Congress annex Texas?



- 1. Movement** About how many total miles did Santa Anna travel from Mexico to San Jacinto?
- 2. Movement** Look at the distances traveled by Mexican forces and those traveled by the Texans. Which side do you think had an advantage? Explain.

Section 2 Assessment

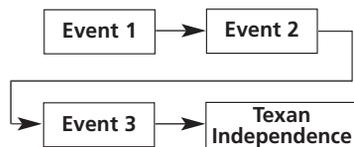
1. Terms & Names

Explain the significance of:

- Stephen Austin
- *Tejano*
- Antonio López de Santa Anna
- Sam Houston
- William Travis
- Juan Seguín
- Battle of the Alamo
- Lone Star Republic

2. Taking Notes

Use a diagram like the one shown to review events that led to Texan independence and put them in order.



3. Main Ideas

- Why did Americans want to move to Texas?
- How did the Mexican government respond to the Texas rebellion?
- Why did Congress refuse to annex Texas?

4. Critical Thinking

Recognizing Effects How did losing the Battle of the Alamo help the Texans win their independence?

THINK ABOUT

- the Texans' and Americans' shock over the loss of the battle to the Mexicans
- the need to recruit more forces to fight with the Texas army

ACTIVITY OPTIONS

ART
TECHNOLOGY

Research a figure from the Texas Revolution. Create a **trading card** or design that person's **Web page** for the Internet.