MEXICAN MILITARY MOVEMENTS IN THE
TEXAN REVOLUTION

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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Denton, Texas
January, 1966
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PREFACE

The rebellion in 1835 of a Mexican province against the centralized government of the most famous of the caudillos, Antonio Lopez de Santa-Anna, called for the organization and supplying of an army to quell the revolt. During the time required for such an army to be outfitted and dispatched to the northernmost part of the republic, the climate of the revolutionary movement changed from a protest by Mexican citizens at the establishment of a dictatorship to an uprising intended to sever all ties with the Republic of Mexico.

Much of the thinking regarding the Mexican army sent to crush the Texan Revolution has been influenced by biased writers and historians who have unjustly pictured the dictator as the personification of that army. In the minds of many Texans, then and now, Santa-Anna and his army merged as one, moving swiftly and viciously across Texas to commit atrocities against Americans who were defending their rights. The description of Santa-Anna and his hatred of meddlesome foreigners, his ungovernable temper and his disregard for the "niceties" of war became a blanket description of his men. Like Cadmus' men, they appeared to spring from one source, for one purpose, and were always at the place where there was an
enemy to destroy. By concentrating on the commander and vilifying him as he deserved, the writers lost sight of the subordinates as people and the problems entailed with supplying and moving the Mexican army.

This thesis describes the art of logistics practiced by Santa-Anna and his staff in the marches from northern Mexico to San Jacinto and Goliad, and the subsequent withdrawal. The method, or methods, employed to keep such an army in fighting condition are analyzed as it moved slowly and uncertainly across desert and semi-desert areas, over burnt-out prairies and flooding rivers.

To obtain the most complete picture of the Mexican army's movements and needs, the letters and diaries of the outstanding Mexican participants were used. Whenever possible American sources were studied to substantiate any seemingly questionable information in the Mexican accounts. The indispensable document for this study was Memorias Para La Historia De La Guerra De Tejas, published by R. Rafael in 1849. General Vicente Filisola, who was second-in-command to Santa-Anna, is listed as the author of this publication, which many have regarded as his personal memoirs of the campaign. In reality, the two-volume work is a carefully-edited chronicle of the history of the war with Texas, of which Filisola's personal memoirs are only a part. The editors included, in redacted form, excerpts from the diaries
and memoirs of some of Filisola's outstanding contemporaries. The biggest weakness of this publication is that the editors did not always credit the original chronicler, so that to utilize this R. Rafael edited history it was necessary to have access to the works from which the excerpts were taken. Many writers who have previously used this two-volume Memorias, bylined by Filisola, have worked mistakenly under the belief that all accounts contained therein were written by him.

On a smaller scale, Carlos E. Castañeda used a similar technique in preparing The Mexican Side of the Texan Revolution, which was published in 1928.

Other valuable Mexican publications used were: General José Urrea's Diario De Las Operaciones Militares De La Division Que Al Mando Del General Jose Urrea Hizo La Campaña De Tejas, published in 1838; Ramón Martínez Caro's Verdadera Idea De La Primera Campaña De Tejas, published in 1837; and J. Sánchez-Garza's edited diary, La Rebelión de Texas. The latter was suppressed by Mexican authorities when it first was published in 1836 by Captain José Enrique de la Peña under the title Reseña y Diario de la Campaña de Texas. Documentos Para La Historia De La Guerra De Tejas, (1952), is a collection of letters, documents and newspaper "tear sheets" which reveals the highlights of that war. Carlos Sánchez-Navarro's work, La Guerra De Tejas, Memorias De Un Soldado, was based on the ledger-diary found
in the University of Texas Archives. In order to study this ledger and translate all the above material from the Spanish, it was necessary to use as a guide J. Villasana Haggard's *Handbook for Translators of Spanish Historical Documents*.

Colonel Juan Nepomuceno Almonte lost his private journal on the battlefield of San Jacinto, but it was recovered and sent to the editors of the New York *Herald*, who first translated and published excerpts in June, 1836. *Evacuation of Texas* is a complete translation and reprint of the representation made to the Mexican government by Vicente Filisola in 1837, when he was accused of mismanagement of the Mexican army after the defeat at San Jacinto. Originally printed by G. and T. H. Borden in 1837, a facsimile reproduction was issued this year by the Texian Press. *Santa-Anna's Memoirs and Manifesto* were used infrequently in this thesis, and then only in cases which could be substantiated by facts presented in American sources. The one general history consulted was Vicente Riva-Palacio's *México a Través de los Siglos*.

As this thesis primarily is concerned with logistics, battles are not covered in detail. In cases where a conflict between American and Mexican sources exists concerning any phase of the Mexican military movements during the Texan revolution, both sides are presented, and an attempt made to
evaluate them objectively. The writer hopes that this account of the movements of the Mexican army will contribute new and objective insights into a revolution too long covered with a veneer of emotionalism.
CHAPTER I

THE GENESIS OF ORGANIZATION

On the last day of August, 1835, Mexico’s Secretary of Relations dispatched a circular to all commandants-general and the principal governors and political chiefs of departments and territories. In part, the circular read:

The colonists established in Texas have recently given the most unequivocal evidence of the extremity to which perfidy, ingratitude and the restless spirit that animates them can go, since—forgetting what they owe to the supreme government of the nation which so generously admitted them to its bosom, gave them fertile lands to cultivate, and allowed them all the means to live in comfort and abundance—they have risen against that same government, taking up arms against it under the pretense of sustaining a system which an immense majority of Mexicans have asked to have changed, thus concealing their criminal purpose of dismembering the territory of the Republic.

His Excellency the President ad interim, justly irritated by a conduct so perfidious, has fixed his entire attention upon this subject; and in order to suppress and punish that band of ungrateful foreigners, has decreed that the most active measures be taken, measures required by the very nature of what is in reality a crime against the whole nation. The troops destined to sustain the honor of the country and the government will perform their duty and will cover themselves with glory.¹

¹Vicente Filisola, Memorias Para La Historia De La Guerra De Tejas (Mexico, 1849), II, 211 [hereafter referred to as Filisola, Memorias...].
The President ad interim spoken of in the circular, General Miguel Barragán, had been named to that post by the Mexican Congress on January 28, 1835, after a political merry-go-round that began with Antonio Lopez de Santa-Anna's election to the presidency in 1833. After he had entered the presidency as Santa-Anna's proxy, Barragán found increasing opposition to the program initiated by Santa-Anna, who had dissolved the Mexican Congress, amended the Constitution of 1824, hand-picked his own Congress, and abrogated the state legislatures. Republican states such as San Luis, Nuevo Leon, Jalisco, Zacatecas and Coahuila y Texas had progressed from vocal protests to armed resistance against the actions of the dictator. Santa-Anna himself suppressed the rebellion in Zacatecas in May of 1833, while lesser officials were sent to the other rebellious states. The northernmost part of the Republic, the area called Texas, at that time part of the state of Coahuila y Texas, was to prove the most troublesome to Antonio Lopez de Santa-Anna.

2Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of Mexico (San Francisco, 1885), V, 136-143. In 1833 Santa-Anna was elected president of Mexico, and Valentín Gómez Farías was elected vice-president. For reasons of his own, but which he attributed to ill health, Santa-Anna retired to his hacienda Manga de Clavo [near Vera Cruz] soon after his election. The vice-president assumed office, but his anti-clerical stand and attempt to reduce the size and influence of the army wrought havoc in the semi-harmonious government. Santa-Anna was asked to return and depose the acting president. In a series of maneuvers, the Mexican Congress disallowed the selection of Gómez Farías, and selected Miguel Barragán as President ad interim when Santa-Anna again retired to Manga de Clavo.
On October 29, 1835, the Mexican Cabinet presented to the Congress reports from General Martin Perfecto Cós in which he advised the government that all the colonies in Texas had risen in protest against the Santa-Anna régime. Even Stephen F. Austin's colony, "which until then had supported the government," had been consumed with the anti-Santa-Anna fever. As a result of Cós' report, the governor and commandant of Zacatecas, General D. Joaquin Ramírez y Sesma, was ordered to march to San Antonio de Béxar and assist Cós, then under siege by Texan forces. Ramírez y Sesma received his instructions from the War Department in a letter dated October 31, 1835, which instructed the general to march upon Béxar with three battalions of army regulars from Matamoros, Dolores and Guerrero, and a battalion of reserve militia from San Luis Potosí. Two eight-pound cannon and two six-pound cannon were assigned to his division, with

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3 Cós was Santa-Anna's brother-in-law and had been sent to Texas [as R. M. Williamson, chairman of a protest meeting at San Felipe, declared on July 4, 1836] to "compel you [Texas colonists] into obedience to the new form of Government; to compel you to give up your arms; to compel you to have your country garrisoned...to compel you to swear to support and sustain the government of the Dictator...." Wilfrid Hardy Callcott, Santa Anna, The Story of an Enigma Who Once Was Mexico (Norman, 1936), p. 124, citing Eugene C. Barker, "Pioneer Municipalities in Texas Revolution--Mina and San Felipe. Documents, 1835," Publications of the Southern History Association, VIII, 9, 13.

4 D. Enrique Olavarria y Ferrari, México Independiente, 1821-1855, Vol. IV of México a Través De Los Siglos, edited by D. Vicente Riva Palacio, 6 vols. (Barcelona, 1889; reprinted in Mexico, 1958), p. 360 [hereafter referred to as Riva Palacio, México a Través De Los Siglos, IV].
corresponding cannon shot and cartridges for all the arms. He was further assured that sufficient artillerymen would be provided to man the cannon.5

Santa-Anna left Manga de Clavo in November and took up residence in the archbishop's palace in Tacubaya, about five miles from Mexico City. From Tacubaya he finalized plans for the invasion of Texas in 1836.6 Preparations for the Texas campaign had commenced early in 1835, and Santa-Anna had repeatedly urged his Secretary of War, José María Tornel, to expedite matters so that the organization and equipping of troops would be completed by the end of November. Ample time then could be allotted for the march to Béxar, which Santa-Anna hoped to reach by the end of February, 1836.7

Conditions in Mexico at this time were unpropitious for the launching of a campaign such as the one Santa-Anna envisioned. Internal strife not only had reduced the size of the Mexican army, but had also emptied government coffers. Secretary of War Tornel claimed that the 1832 and 1833 revolutions had so badly disorganized the army that in order to invade Texas in 1836, companies had to be organized, instructed

5Filisola, Memorias..., II, 214.
6D. Ramón Martínez Caro, Verdadera Idea De La Primera Campaña De Tejas (Mexico, 1837), p. 3. This representation by Santa-Anna's secretary was translated in full by Carlos E. Castañeda, The Mexican Side of the Texan Revolution (Dallas, 1928), pp. 93-159. [In this thesis the original representation was consulted, and hereafter will be referred to as Caro, Verdadera Idea...].
7Filisola, Memorias..., II, 213.
and drilled while on the march. As a result, the majority of the recruits "...fired their first shot against the enemy." 8

By December of 1835 the Mexican dictator had decided to personally lead the invasion force against Texas. 9 This decision was given respectability by the junta of generals who later met at Mexico City and "selected" him for the position of commander-in-chief. In spite of the arbitrary manner in which he became head of the army to invade Texas, there was no other military figure at that time with more prestige or organizational ability. His recent victory over the Zacatecans had made him not only well-known, but popular. This explains why Secretary of War Tornel felt that Santa-Anna's military reputation was "...a potent stimulus to the soldier accustomed to follow in the path of glory of an accredited leader." 10

8 José María Tornel y Mendivil, "Tejas Y Los Estados Unidos De America, En Sus Relaciones Con La Republica Mexicana," translated by Carlos E. Castañeda, The Mexican Side of the Texan Revolution (Dallas, 1928), p. 350. [The original representation, published in Mexico in 1837, was checked at the University of Texas Library and compared with the Castañeda translation. The source quoted in this thesis is the translation; hereafter it will be referred to as Tornel, The Mexican Side of the Texan Revolution.] James Presley, "Santa Anna in Texas: A Mexican Viewpoint," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, LXII (April, 1959), p. 491, credits Filisola with this statement, but he is in error; on the page cited by Presley, Filisola, Memorias..., II, 228, Filisola is quoting Secretary of War Tornel.

The professional soldiers named by Santa-Anna to his executive staff for the Texas campaign were well-known in the Republic. The list included:

General D. Vicente Filisola........Second-in-command
Major-General D. Juan Arago..........Commander of Brigades
Brevet-Brigadier General
D. Adrian Woll....................Quartermaster General
Lieutenant-Colonel
D. Pedro de Ampudia...............Commander of Artillery
Lieutenant-Colonel
D. Esteban Barbero................First Officer of Artillery
Lieutenant-Colonel
D. Jose Maria Ortega.............Commandant of Munitions
Colonel D. Ignacio Labastida.......Commander of Engineers
D. Jose Lopez.....................Commissary General
D. Jose Robelo....................Paymaster
D. Ricardo Dromundo..............Paymaster General

D. Martinez Caro served as Santa-Anna's secretary during the entire campaign. General D. Manuel Fernandez Castrillón and Colonels D. Jose Bátres, D. Juan Maria Bringas, D. Manuel de la Portilla and D. Esteban de la Mora were appointed aides-de-camp of Santa-Anna, while Colonel D. Eusebio Flores was named First Adjutant. Major-General Arago's aides-de-camp were Lieutenant-Colonel D. Juan Diaz and Captain D. Manuel Bachiller, while Lieutenant-Colonel D. Gregorio Gonzalez and Lieutenant D. Anastacio Cobos were named to be adjutants of Quartermaster-General Adrian Woll.

An absence of funds in the national treasury severely hampered the organization of the army and acquisition of

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11 Filisola, Memorias..., II, 341-342.
12 Ibid., 293.
equipment and foodstuffs. "How could war be waged without money in such a far away country, without the barest essentials of life?..." questioned Secretary of War Tornel. President Santa-Anna, while realizing that the only hope of obtaining money for the war was by direct taxation, did not wish to employ this method as taxation of any kind might spark uprisings and popular protests. Forced loans could not be utilized as a previous system of forced loans had drained the public treasury. No revenue from the custom houses was available, as their income also had been mortgaged for a long period. The Congress had authorized funds for the campaign, but the Minister of Finance "... had found all doors closed to his efforts, and was now at wit's end to secure the necessary resources...." Consequently, Santa-Anna decided to secure the necessary funds by pledging the revenue of the country. The most important loan negotiated by Santa-Anna and the one which he characterized as being the only means by which his troops were equipped and the Texas campaign opened was the 400,000 pesos loan obtained November 15 from the firm of Rubio and Erraz in San Luis, Potosí through


14 Antonio López de Santa-Anna, "Manifesto Which General Antonio López de Santa-Anna Addresses To His Fellow-citizens Relative To His Operations During The Texas Campaign And His Capture," translation from the original by Carlos E. Castañeda, The Mexican Side of the Texan Revolution, pp. 8-9[hereafter cited as Santa-Anna, "Manifesto..."]

their agents General Castrillón and Colonel Bátres. Santa-Anna admitted that the loan had its disadvantages, and even seemed ruinous to the government when it came up for Congress' approval; however, he maintained that it was more advantageous than any the government itself had executed. The exact terms of the loan were as follows:

...four hundred thousand pesos, half in silver and the other half in bonds, were to be turned over to me, and furthermore, all supplies necessary for the army were to be delivered at Matamoros at their own expense and cost; these sums to be repaid with the proceeds of the forced loans of the departments of San Luis, Guanajuato, Guadalajara and Zacatecas and the remainder by import duties at the custom houses at Matamoros and Tampico where the receipts for the delivery of the supplies were to be accepted as currency.16

In spite of this loan Santa-Anna was so much in need of money that he mortgaged his hacienda, Manga de Clavo, for 10,000 pesos.17

16 Santa-Anna, "Manifesto...," p. 9. Santa-Anna's secretary, Ramón Martínez Caro, stated that "As a result of the negotiations, the firm of Rubio was authorized to pay duties at the customs house of Matamoros to the amount of 40,000 pesos with worthless bonds which he had bought for less than their face value, bonds that had been declared illegal for that purpose. By the terms of the same contract, the above-mentioned firm was authorized to import through the port of Matamoros food and supplies for the army free of duty. Among the first importations made for this purpose (supplies that never reached the unfortunate army) contraband goods were introduced instead of food, according to the protest presented by the Commissary of that port...." Caro also claimed that General Castrillón's commission was deposited in the treasury of the Army of Operations with Santa-Anna's consent and received a premium of 4 per cent. Caro, Verdadera Idea..., p. 3. This charge is confirmed by a letter written to Santa-Anna on April 5, 1837, by José Reyes López, Commissary General of the Army of Operations. Santa-Anna, "Manifesto...," pp. 53-54.

17 José Fuentes-Mares, Santa-Anna, Aurora y Ocaso de un Comediante (Mexico, 1956), p. 142.
During the month of November Santa-Anna dispatched instructions to his generals and governors. His note of October 31 ordered Ramírez y Sesma to Béxar via San Luis Potosí, Leona Vicario (the present-day city of Saltillo), and Laredo. Santa-Anna then sent word to the commandant-general of San Luis that he was to assist the Ramírez y Sesma division with an immediate 34,000 pesos and remit an additional 50,000 pesos to Saltillo for later use by the army. San Luis also was called upon to conscript another division of state troops to be incorporated into the army for the Texas campaign. A similar order went to General D. Francisco Vital Fernández, governor of Tamaulipas and Nuevo León.

By November 11 Ramírez y Sesma had commenced the long march from Zacatecas to Béxar with a hastily organized transport and approximately 1500 men. The general departed from Zacatecas with two battalions of permanentes\(^\text{17}\) from Jimenez and Matamoros commanded by Colonel D. José María Romero. In addition, Lieutenant D. Ignacio del Arenal commanded an artillery group capable of manning two mortars, two eight-pound cannon, and the accompanying munitions. Ramírez y Sesma marched toward San Luis Potosí, where he had been ordered to incorporate into his group the battalion of permanentes from Guerrero and the activos of San Luis.

\[^{18}\text{In the Army of Operations against Texas, the permanentes were the regular army troops; the activos were the reserve militia provided by the states.}\]
However, upon his arrival in that city, he found that the
34,000 pesos was not available for his use, and that the
populace was filled with alarm because of the news that had
reached them concerning an attack on Tampico by insurgent
forces of General J. Antonio Mejía.

Ramírez y Sesma's concern about the attack on Tampico
was such that he debated whether he should continue on his
way to Béxar or go to the aid of Tampico. He informed the
War Department of his quandary and asked for instructions.
On November 23 Secretary of War Tornel answered that under
no circumstances was Ramírez y Sesma to change his line of
march. He was to continue to Saltillo, where he would be
joined by the battalion of activos from San Luis, with their
accompanying artillery. When this junction was completed,
he was to proceed to Béxar to aid Cós. Under no circumstances
was the numerical strength of this division to fall under
1500. If necessary, men could be conscripted at Leona Vicario
to fill that city's quota of activos. Tornel assured Ramírez
y Sesma that there was no need to worry about money, as
25,000 pesos in bills of exchange were enroute to Saltillo.
If, however, the money had not arrived when Ramírez y Sesma's
division reached there, he was not to falter in his march,
but should use whatever measures proved necessary and
convenient to obtain the supplies he needed from the citizens
of Saltillo. With regard to the Tampico incident, he was
informed that Santa-Anna would leave for San Luis on November 26, and upon his arrival there would be troops dispatched to protect the port city.

General Ramírez y Sesma continued the march to Saltillo, which was reached by the end of the month. The general discovered that the battalion of activos from Saltillo had never been organized, and that the battalion of permanentes from Guerrero had been ordered to return to San Luis. The loss of these two battalions cut his forces to less than 1500 troops, which consisted of the battalions of permanentes of Jimenez, Matamoros, Dolores and Vera Cruz, plus battalions of activos from San Luis and Zacatecas. The division was supplied with a group of artillerymen capable of handling two howitzers, two eight-pound cannon, two six-pound cannon and two four-pound cannon. The latter group transported cannon shot and a reserve supply of cartridges for the small arms.

Money was short, but no one in Saltillo was wealthy enough to produce the needed funds even if force was employed. The governor of the state, D. Rafael Murquiz, helped as much as he could and enough supplies of food and transports were obtained so that on December 4, 1835, Ramírez y Sesma led the First Division [of the Army of Operations against Texas] on its march from Saltillo to Béxar via Laredo. The division was required to purchase staples at the different towns and ranches on the road to Laredo, giving a form of government
debenture signed by Ramírez y Sesma. The appropriation of civilian property and goods for the army caused much ill feeling in the area through which the troops traveled.¹⁹

When the communication concerning Tampico had been dispatched to Ramírez y Sesma on November 23, another billet also was forwarded to Vicente Filisola instructing him to leave Mexico City as soon as possible and proceed to San Luis, where the different battalions of the invasion army were scheduled to rendezvous. He was assigned the task of supervising the construction of saddles, habilments, and footwear. Filisola was on his way to San Luis two days later.²⁰

Santa-Anna remained in Tacubaya issuing instructions to the different departments of government and planning for his trip to San Luis. The War Department, in what could only be called an attempt to rally the Mexican soldiers, issued an open letter to the troops scheduled to campaign in Texas. The contents are worth noting, as it is the only time that the Mexican soldiery was given reasons for the military movements against the colonists in the northernmost part

¹⁹ Filisola, Memorias..., II, 214-220.
²⁰ General Filisola had retired from the service prior to this campaign because he did not want to get involved in the internal strife of the military, clergy and politicians; however, when the news of the troubles in Texas became common knowledge, he wrote to Santa-Anna and offered his services. In an official letter from the Secretary of War, dated November 18, 1835, Filisola was advised of his official appointment as Santa-Anna's second-in-command for the campaign against Texas. Filisola, Memorias..., II, 240-241.
of the Republic. In a style calculated to instill in the troops a hatred for their enemy, the circular emphasized that it was the foreigners within the Texas colony who were causing all the trouble in their attempt to dismember the Mexican Republic. The soldiers were entrusted with the duty of defending Mexican honor against

...the ungrateful colonists of Texas who mocked the laws of Mexico, in spite of this country's magnanimous reception [of them], taking them unto herself and bestowing upon them as many, or even more, benefits than those granted her native sons. Because of the internal turmoil of the Republic, they [the colonists in Texas] believed her to be in a weakened state and incapable to curb their insolence; this multiplied indefinitely, producing countless insults against the nation's flag, and its armies...they indulge in smuggling on the coast, and threw our custom officials out of their stations after defeating the small military detachments stationed at such points. To the Texas colonists, any Mexican name is, and has been, an execrable name, and there has been no end to the insults and violence to which our compatriots [in Texas] have been subjected, even to the point of being reduced to the status of foreigners in their native land....

Disagreement exists as to the date Santa-Anna set off for San Luis; his secretary Caro says he departed during the first days of December.²² Filisola simply states that Santa-Anna quit Mexico City with such speed that he

²¹ This excerpt was taken from the circular which the Secretary of War issued to the troops who would participate in the campaign against Texas; it is quoted in its entirety in Filisola, Memorias...; II, 214-216.

²² Caro, Verdadera Idea..., p. 3.
overtook his second-in-command on the morning of December 5, when they both reached San Luis.\textsuperscript{23} Carlos María Bustamante, who during his life was both pro- and anti-Santa-Anna, recorded Santa-Anna's departure from the capital in the following words:

At long last, on November 28, 1835, Santa Anna left for San Luis, leaving us querulous with respect to the follies he would commit in the campaign. On the other hand, we were relieved to have the boorish tadpole gone...

The dictator's opponents in the government were relieved at his departure because they hoped that his impetuousness would cause him to "render himself unfit to ever return to rule México again."\textsuperscript{24}

At San Luis the Presidente established his general headquarters and took personal command of the army. He spent most of December forming his army, with the exception of Ramírez y Sesma's division, which he had previously ordered to San Antonio de Béxar to relieve Cós.\textsuperscript{25} He sent Ramírez y Sesma a long communication on December 7, detailing maneuvers to be undertaken by the First Brigade. Ten main topics were covered in the instructions, and it is well to

\begin{itemize}
\item Filisola, \textit{Memorias...}, II, 241-242.
\item Riva Palacio, \textit{México a Través de los Siglos}, IV, 361, citing Carlos María Bustamante, \textit{Cuadro Histórico}.
\item Caro, \textit{Verdadera Idea...}, p. 3. In a communication to Ramírez y Sesma, dated November 23, 1835, Secretary of War Torneel had designated that general's division as "the first [brigade] of the Army of Operations against Tejas." Filisola, \textit{Memorias...}, II, 218.
\end{itemize}
summarize them, as they give an insight into the strategy which guided Santa-Anna in the campaign:26

(1) When Ramírez y Sesma arrived in Laredo, he was to call for the reinforcements designated as the Morelos battalion to join him post haste, and distribute among them all of the extra arms and ammunition which the First Brigade had carried. If the reinforcements had already departed for Béxar, they were to be notified to halt their march until the First Brigade could join them.

(2) Along the road to Béxar the general was to take advantage of the citizens' "enthusiasm" and conscript more men for his command.

(3) Scouts should be sent ahead from Laredo to reconnoiter the enemy's strength, movements, and number of artillery, so that the First Brigade's maneuvers could be planned accordingly. A message should be sent to Cós informing him of Ramírez y Sesma's expected date of arrival in Béxar, and an effective system of communications (possibly by relay riders) should be set up.

(4) All necessary precautions (according to the military manual) should be taken while marching to Béxar so that the troops should not run into an ambush or succumb to a night attack.

26Filisola, Memorias..., II, 246. Commenting on this letter, Santa-Anna's second-in-command noted, "The literal meaning and spirit of these instructions demonstrate the principles which guided the General-in-chief and the maneuvers he proposed to execute in this campaign...."
(5) If the First Brigade found itself in an unfavorable position when confronted by the enemy, Ramírez y Sesma was not to engage in battle; but instead should try to maneuver the enemy to ground which was more advantageous to the Mexican troops. The enemy should be outflanked at all times; if battle was inevitable, the artillery should be used first, particularly the trench mortars. Ramírez y Sesma was to try to divert the enemy with small skirmishes upon reaching Béxar, so that General Cós could employ his troops in an attack on the rebels' rear-guard. (General Cós was to be advised of this plan beforehand.)

(6) If the enemy attacked in an open field, Ramírez y Sesma was to waste no time in going into battle formation, and situate the artillery so that it would cause the first damage. The cavalry was to form in two columns and draw the attention of the enemy along the flanks and rear, taking advantage of any carelessness on the part of the enemy to "...receive the battle...." The enemy's cavalry would then be unable to wheel about and cut off a bayonet attack to the front section. Two reserve groups should be left behind, one to protect the artillery and the other to cover the bayonet charge. Once the action had started all indecision was dangerous. (At this point a direct quotation from Santa Anna's order is apropos.)

Victory is obtained by the one that unhesitantly, and with the most order, rapidity, and valor, can attack or resist—as the case may be.
(7) Ramírez y Sesma was not to battle any of the enemy who might be entrenched in either the Espada or Concepcion Missions on the Laredo road. A detour of these missions should be made if they were held by the enemy. If the enemy persisted to battle, the plan outlined in Article Six should be carried out. Santa-Anna emphasized that the only disorder in the ranks should be that caused by the "over-enthusiasm" of the soldiers.

(8) No battle should be undertaken with the enemy entrenched in the aforementioned missions, or at any other point in which they were entrenched until their position had been thoroughly examined, and their strength ascertained. In this article, Santa-Anna penned a personal axiom that he should have remembered in his own march through Texas:

Nothing [no battles] shall be undertaken unless there is a certainty of a successful and decisive victory; as, any misfortune (defeat) should be irreparable in those areas so distant from aid [of our reserve forces]. Nothing should be left to fortune.

(9) The document emphasized that the foreigners who made war on the Mexican nation were violating Mexican laws and therefore did not merit any consideration; so for the time being

...they shall be given no quarter [mercy], and this order shall be made known to the troops at an opportune time. In their audacity, they [the rebels in Texas] have declared a war to the death against the Mexicans, and we should retaliate in kind.27

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27 It can be seen by Article Nine, that as early as December 7, 1835, Santa-Anna had already decided to exact public vengeance by the execution of all rebels bearing arms against the Mexican nation.
Bamírez y Sesma was again cautioned not to do battle unless he was certain of a victory. He was also informed that the Presidente had full confidence in the valor and skill which the commander of the First Brigade would use to resolve any situation which Santa-Anna had not mentioned in any of the previous nine articles. 28

Vicente Filisola, since his arrival in San Luis on the fifth of December, had followed his commander's orders to supervise the construction of saddles, habiliments and footwear, the latter the one item which this army, composed principally of infantry, sorely needed. 29 On December 8 Santa-Anna ordered him to take command of the divisions headed by Cós and Bamírez y Sesma. The reason for this unusual order was that Cós and Bamírez y Sesma were of equal rank, and troubles might arise over who was to be the over-all commander at Béxar. Filisola, who was second-in-command of the Army of Operations, easily outranked the two other generals, and could take charge at Béxar until Santa-Anna's later arrival. Filisola was to build up the fortifications and occupy the enemy's attention with skirmishes until Santa-Anna's arrival, so that the commander-in-chief "could then successfully demolish them." Under no circumstances was Filisola to attack the enemy, unless he attempted to retreat

28 Filisola, Memorias..., II, 242-246. The communication from Santa-Anna to Bamírez y Sesma, dated December 7, 1835, is reproduced in full on these pages.
29 Ibid., 339.
from Béxar. If such a move occurred, Santa-Anna was to be notified immediately by special messenger, while a strong rear-guard action was to be employed to bring about a Mexican victory.

Santa-Anna also sent dispatches to Cós and Ramírez y Sesma informing them of Filisola's march to Béxar and subsequent assumption of command of the forces at that point. The Presidente expressed his belief that the two generals would be prompt and courteous in placing themselves in General Filisola's command.

At sunrise the next day Vicente Filisola left San Luis Potosí with an escort from the reserve militia. The general moved at a faster pace than his escort, and at the end of the first day's journey, the escort rested at a hacienda called Guadalupe el Carnicero (Guadalupe, the Butcher), while Filisola stopped at the hacienda of San Cristobal (St. Christopher), over twenty miles ahead of them. The general set such a rapid pace that he reached Saltillo in five days, and Lampazos in ten. At Lampazos, Filisola received the news of Cós' capitulation at Béxar (which had taken place on the tenth). The march continued, however, and on December 19, the group overtook Ramírez y Sesma's troops at a place called Paso de la Laja (Flagstone Crossing), on the right bank of the Salado River.

Ramírez y Sesma had been detained at this point because of high water. D. Blas Esnarreaga, a retired army captain,
who had some knowledge of engineering, had attempted to construct a bridge for the army's use—providing the tools and paying the laborers from his own pocket. The construction of the bridge consumed too much time, and the generals were in a hurry; consequently, rafts were constructed from the lumber gathered for the bridge-building. On the morning of December 22 the troops crossed the river. Ferrying the artillery across was more complicated; however, a type of portable dock (formed of logs laid and tied parallel—then overlaid with logs placed vertically and tied) was constructed to facilitate this job. Officers and men alike took turns struggling in the water to get the artillery across. The entire operation was completed by nightfall and the troops spent that night on the left bank of the Salado.

When Filisola had overtaken Ramírez y Sesma, the latter general was accompanied by the prefect of the town of Villa de Guerrero (formerly Presidio del Rio Grande), who had come to ask for troops to defend that site. Further discussion with the worried town official revealed that about two hundred inhabitants had armed themselves and, along with some soldiers garrisoned there, had taken charge of the town's defenses. Filisola turned down the prefect's request for troops, but did prevail upon him to return to Villa de Guerrero and aid the military commandant of that area in transporting

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30[Hereafter Villa de Guerrero will be referred to as Presidio del Rio Grande].
to Laredo about one hundred and sixty cargas (over 800 bushels) of flour and forty cargas (about twenty bushels) of corn—provisions previously designated for the soldiers at Béxar.

Having dispensed with the problem of Presidio del Río Grande, Filisola sent a special dispatch to Santa-Anna at San Luis, informing him of the defeat of the Mexican forces at Béxar and of the difficulties encountered by the First Brigade. He added that he would continue the march toward Laredo with Ramírez y Sesma's group, and from that point would continue north until he encountered Cós' troops. The defeat at Béxar had clouded, if not obscured, the orders upon which Filisola was acting, so he therefore requested new instructions from his commander-in-chief.

The old campaigner must have feared the deterioration, and even collapse, of the civilian morale when the news of Cós' defeat became public knowledge, for he also took time to send messages to the authorities in charge of the departments of Coahuila, Nuevo-Leon and Tamaulipas. In his communications to these officials he stated that the incident at Béxar was of no consequence and could not affect the success of the operation of the army scheduled to invade Texas.

On December 23 the First Brigade was again on the march to Laredo, a distance of over fifty-seven miles. It was a difficult trip because they were marching during the dry season, and no water was available. The little water carried
in canteens was drastically rationed. An officer quickly was
dispatched to Laredo, with orders to the commandant there that
all the available water-barrels be filled immediately and
transported on the back of mules to succor the thirsty troops.
The officer entrusted with this duty was fleet indeed, reaching
Laredo on the twenty-fifth, at the same time that Cós arrived
there from Béxar. Cós, when appraised of the situation,
expedited matters, so that on the twenty-sixth, the parched
First Brigade was surprised, but relieved, to see thirty mules
laden with water barrels trudging along the road toward them.³¹

The First Brigade arrived in Laredo on the twenty-seventh,
and their entrance did much to boost the morale of Cós' men,
who lamented the fact that if the reinforcements had arrived
earlier, they would not have had to evacuate Béxar. Comparing
these soldiers with the new arrivals of the First Brigade, a
member of Cós' troops³² said "There is the beautiful brigade

³¹Filisola, Memorias..., II, 246-252.
³²D. José Juan Sánchez-Navarro was a professional soldier.
Late in 1835, he led the Morelos battalion of army regulars to
Béxar to reinforce Cós. He acted as quartermaster during Cós'
retreat, and returned to Texas in 1836 as that general's aide-
de-camp. Sánchez-Navarro kept a ledger detailing the supplies
and equipment used by the troops. In the same ledger, he kept
a personal record of the Texas campaign and his observations
concerning its operation. The ledger is now in the Sánchez-
Navarro Collection[Copy Book and Index, 1836-1839] in the
University of Texas Archives. A descendent of the diarist,
Carlos Sánchez-Navarro, compiled and edited the notes from the
ledger and incorporated them into a book he titled Memorias
de un Soldado de la Guerra de Texas (Mexico, 1938). The publishing
company re-issued the work under the title La Guerra De Tejas,
Memorias de Un Soldado (Mexico, 1960). [The ledger at the
University of Texas was examined and compared with the 1960
publication, which is a well-edited source; it is the 1960
publication that is cited in this thesis. The ledger was not
used for the citations as it was not numbered in a manner that
would lend itself for reference.]
commanded by General C. Joaquín Ramírez y Sesma; they look like Mexican soldiers, but we look like Cossacks from Siberia." There seemed to be an undercurrent of resentment directed against the Béxar veterans, who by this time were semi-nude, extremely hungry and enveloped in the misery of defeat. A few of the prouder officers of Cós' troops became bitter at the statements they heard from Ramírez y Sesma's well-dressed, well-shod, well-mounted and well-supplied troops.

Ramírez y Sesma bragged about his troops, and asserted that he could eradicate all the Texas colonists with a group of 100 Mexican lancers. José Juan Sánchez-Navarro, who had already fought against the colonists at Béxar, heard the boast and noted it in his ledger. Next to the recorded boast was this notation: "God grant this were true, but I doubt it."33

A short while before the First Brigade had marched into Laredo, a dispatch from General Santa-Anna caught up with Filisola. It was apparent that the communication, dated December 20 at San Luis, had been written before the Presidente had received Filisola's detailed report dispatched on December 23 from the Salado River. The orders, based on

33Carlos Sánchez-Navarro, La Guerra De Tejas, Memorias De Un Soldado (Mexico, 1960), p. 65. The Béxar veteran noted some of the remarks of Ramírez y Sesma's troops, who flaunted their new uniforms, gleaming weapons, fine baggage train and well-fed horses before Cós' men. "The incomparable Dolores Regiment is excellent," claimed some of the braggarts. "This one regiment is enough to dominate the enemy."
incomplete details concerning the capitulation of Béxar, changed the First Brigade's marching orders, sending them to the Presidio del Rio Grande, to garrison that place and hold it at any cost. While there, Filisola was to incorporate into the First Brigade all citizens who could be encouraged to enlist. The nearby ranches were to provide five hundred well-fed horses, which Santa-Anna would pay for upon his arrival. Filisola also was ordered to collect all the available foodstuffs in the area. Finally, all the Béxar soldiers who had scattered during the retreat were to be formed into a new company.

Santa-Anna enclosed a letter for General José Urrea, who was moving somewhere between Durango and Laredo. The commander-in-chief emphasized the importance of the communication, which was to be forwarded to Urrea as soon as possible. The missive instructed Urrea to join Filisola at the Presidio del Rio Grande instead of continuing his march to Laredo, which had been his destination when he left Durango. Santa-Anna added that a captain of the Vera Cruz Regiment, under escort, was carrying 30,000 pesos designated for Ramírez y Sesma's division. In addition, D. Ricardo Dromundo, recently named Proveyor-General of the Army, was on his way to the Presidio del Rio Grande via Saltillo and Monclova. On this trip the Proveyor-General would gather all foodstuff and other provisions designated for the use of the army and transport them to the
Presidio del Rio Grande. Santa-Anna informed Filisola that he was preparing to march and hoped to reach Leona Vicario on January 6, at the earliest.

The communication of December 20 did not cause a change in the direction of the First Brigade's march, as they were already within sight of Laredo when Filisola received the new orders. It seemed to him that the wisest course was to march on to Laredo, study the immediate problem, and communicate with the commander-in-chief.

After examining the situation, and the geographical area in which they found themselves, Filisola, Cos, and Ramirez y Sesma concluded that the area could not be fortified with less than 10,000 men. The desert areas were frequented for the greater part of the year by Comanches and other savage tribes, a group of which had recently attacked Laredo, killed some soldiers and stolen a number of horses. Aside from the problem of Indians, obtaining enough quarters for the army was impossible, and the majority of the enlisted men were quartered in the corrals, while the officers crowded into the few available huts. The vast number of women and children which always followed the troops added to the problem.34

34 There are grave inconveniences that arise because of the bad habit of the Mexican Army of tolerating camp followers, in the form of families, women and children who attached themselves to the troops. To make more perceptible the sinister consequences that result from this habit, we can say that the least of the bothers they bring is inconvenience, and consumption of needed supplies for the troops... If the soldiers' wives are still young, or the daughters are old enough, the miserable conditions in which they exist following the troops eventually lead them to prostitute themselves, which leads to the spreading of venereal disease among the troops, quarrels over the women and even murder...." Filisola, Memorias... II, 277.
On December 29, 1835, Filisola wrote a long and disconsolate letter to Santa-Anna. He related how the three days' march across the desert area had seemed longer because of the lack of water, and how the horses and mules reached Laredo maimed or crippled because no replacements for these animals had been available in any of the small villages through which they passed. The villages, filled with apathetic and niggardly citizenry, offered no aid to the troops. He reported that Cós had only eight hundred and fifteen army regulars with him at Laredo. The rest were raw recruits who had been armed as well as possible. The horses of the presidial soldiers were of little use because they had suffered much during the siege and the long march to Laredo. Although Cós needed to replace some of these mounts and buy feed for the others, no money was available in Laredo. Not only were Cós' men in need of pay, but so were some of the troops garrisoning the Presidio del Río Grande. In addition to this, some of Ramírez y Sesma's men had not received all of their preceding month's pay, and had to settle for "a real [about twenty cents American money] a day and mess." With regard to conscription of men

Filisola noted that Cós' men had been completely demoralized, not only by their defeat at Béxar, but also by the type of reinforcements which their government had sent them. Instead of regular army veterans, the government had sent six hundred convicts who had entered the besieged city tied together. Filisola, Memorias..., II, 268, information contained in Filisola's letter to Santa-Anna on December 29. The details of the march of the convicts can be found in Sánchez-Navarro, pp. 47-50.
in the area of the Presidio del Rio Grande, Filisola sounded quite bitter as he reported that "The men of Guerrero would rather hide in the woods, or do something worse, rather than take up arms as soldiers." The only bright spot in this otherwise dreary list of woes was Filisola's report that on his way through Saltillo he had obtained five hundred well-fed horses, which the Presidente could pick up on his march through that city.

Filisola next gave Santa-Anna detailed information which he must have hoped would convince the commander that the best base for operations against Texas was Mier, a little villa on the Rio Grande, eighty miles below Laredo. He claimed that Mier was about one hundred and thirty miles from both Monterrey and Matamoros, and within easy reach of Reynosa, Cerralvo, Linares and el Pilon—places where supplies of all kinds could be readily obtained. In addition to this, the states of Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas (in which Mier was located) were adjacent and abounded with mules which the army needed. These two states also could provide large quantities of corn, meat, lard, beans, chile, salt and other supplies. The port of Matamoros, easily
Filisola emphasized that if the Mier-Goliad-San Felipe route was followed, either of two things could happen, both of which would work to the advantage of Santa-Anna's troops:

1. The enemy would remain at Béxar, and could be cut off from Gonzales, which was halfway between Béxar and San Felipe.

2. The enemy would abandon Béxar and attempt to establish themselves at either Gonzalez or Moctezuma [on the left bank of the Colorado on the road to San Felipe].

If the colonists remained in Béxar, they would be lost, and if they abandoned it, the Mexican army could take possession without firing a shot. The possession of Goliad would facilitate the acquisition of provisions by water through Cópano Bay. Filisola thought that the land operations could be aided by the blockade of Texas ports by Mexican ships.

Filisola compared Mier to Villa de Guerrero, previously known as Presidio del Rio Grande, located about six and a half miles from the right bank of the Rio Grande. The estimated distances are his, as taken from his letter to Santa-Anna: From Saltillo to San Felipe, by way of Villa de Guerrero and Béxar equaled about 650 miles; the distance from Saltillo to San Felipe, via Mier and Goliad measured not quite 520 miles. [Using his own figures, the writer gets a total of 572 miles from Saltillo to San Felipe, via Béxar and Villa de Guerrero; and a little less than 520 miles from Mier to San Felipe, via Goliad.] Filisola, Memorias..., II, 263-271.
Filisola, extremely pressed for money at this time, wrote a shorter note to accompany his long dissertation, in which he informed the Presidente that the 30,000 pesos which the captain from the Vera Cruz Regiment was supposed to be carrying to the First Brigade had not yet arrived.\(^{37}\)

In San Luis, Santa-Anna readied his army to march. Although he had received confirmation of the surrender of Béxar while at San Luis, he refused to relay the news to the government in Mexico City. Instead, he set his troops in motion toward Saltillo. Generals Eugenio Tolsa and Antonio Gaona left with their brigades during the latter part of December, accompanied by part of the artillery group headed by General Pedro de Ampudia. On January 1, 1836, the cavalry brigade, commanded by General Juan José Andrade departed, while Santa-Anna and his staff left the next day. The latter group arrived at Saltillo on the seventh, and the brigades arrived a little later.\(^{38}\)

Before leaving San Luis, however, Santa-Anna sent Filisola a very important letter dated December 28, which, it is pertinent to note, crossed Filisola's letter of the twenty-ninth. In this communication, Filisola learned that orders

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\(^{37}\) Filisola, Memorias..., II, 253-268.

\(^{38}\) Caro, Verdadera Idea..., p. 4. Santa-Anna traveled to Saltillo in his mule-drawn carriage, for which fresh teams were provided at intervals. Filisola, Memorias..., II, 294.
had been sent to Cos to march his already exhausted men to Monclova, which was about one hundred and eighty-two miles from Laredo, and then allow the men to rest and regain their strength at that point. Ramírez y Sesma had been instructed to march his troops to the Presidio del Rio Grande. Filisola was charged with seeing that these orders were promptly executed and then to proceed to Monclova and establish his headquarters. Urrea had orders to station himself at Saltillo with his troops. Filisola was told not to worry about Matamoros, as General D. Francisco Vidal Fernández and a regular division of troops were securing the port. Santa-Anna emphasized that he did not want either Cos' or Ramírez y Sesma's groups broken up, and that no changes were to be made in his orders by anyone except himself.

For the first time Santa-Anna put into writing the plan he had been formulating with regard to the Texas campaign. Leaving no doubt that his first objective was to recapture Béxar, he stated that the troops would march along the route which led from Saltillo to Béxar via Monclova and the Presidio del Rio Grande. The President revealed that he planned to arrive in Saltillo on January 5, 1836 and re-establish his general headquarters in that city.39

Filisola was dismayed upon receipt of this letter, as it presented a plan which ignored the importance of having a base

39 Ibid., II, 269-271.
for receiving supplies by water, called for a long march across a desert area, and was contrary to the advice of many of the army officers who had dared to voice their opinions to Santa-Anna. 40

Although he felt Santa-Anna's commands were unjust, Filisola could do nothing more than obey, so he began the ordered movements on January 5, 1836. Ramírez y Sesma crossed the river and marched toward the Presidio del Río Grande on that day, reaching his destination on the sixteenth. Cós and his men took two days to cross the river, and in their weakened condition did not begin the march to Monclova until the seventh. 41 As it was the same road previously traveled by Ramírez y Sesma, Cós' men were beset by the same troubles the First Brigade had suffered. They traveled in the cool of the evening, however, and as Cós had taken as many water-barrels as possible, the first two days of traveling were not

40 Filisola believed that it would have been just, more convenient and more economical for Cós and his men to remain at Laredo, since this group were in the worst possible condition, semi-nude, barefooted, unarmed, unfed and unpaid. They had just completed the long march from Béxar and were in no condition to undertake the fifteen-day march to Monclova. Filisola, Memorias..., II, 271.

41 Sánchez-Navarro, pp. 68-69. Under the date of January 7, 1836, the man who had led the Morelos Battalion to Béxar in December wrote: "...there is a great scarcity of pack mules and other necessities for such a march because there is no money, and because the Brigade of señor Sesna [sic] who has an overabundance of everything including money, has appropriated even the few aids [foodstuffs and mules] which this town has contributed...."
too taxing. On the third day, the marchers were plagued not only by extremely high temperatures, but the endless dust stirred up by the great number of shuffling feet choked the parched throats of the men, the majority of whom gave their portion of the rationed fluid to their families, keeping nothing for themselves. Filisola, who was accompanying the group, recorded his feelings when he wrote:

Your heart would break at the sight of so many women carrying babies who were dying of thirst and clamoring for water; the wretched mothers could only give them the water contained in the tears they shed. There was not an officer who withheld his personal supply of water from the needy. Mules bearing empty water-barrels had been driven ahead to the Salado River to obtain more water; when these mules carrying the water returned to where the troops were, bedlam erupted in the ranks. The officers had a difficult time controlling the thirsty men, women, and children. A long time passed before all had quenched their thirst. The Morelos Battalion (the convict troops that had been sent to Béxar in December) were in such an inferior physical state that they fell behind the troops and collapsed on the road. Many died before water was sent to them; others died in spite of the water they were sent, but a few
managed to survive. By nightfall of the third day, Filisola estimated that about thirty-two soldiers and countless women and children had died.42

After crossing the Salado River on the tenth, the troops were fortunate in encountering Captain D. Andrés Sobrevilla, of the Nuevo Leon reserve militia, who was in possession of some corn and beeves which had previously been designated for delivery to Laredo. This food was more than enough for Có's troops, who continued the march toward Monclova the next day. Filisola sent his aide-de-camp, Lieutenant-Colonel D. Juan Cuevas, ahead to attempt to locate the officer who supposedly carried the 30,000 pesos for the Có's and Ramírez y Sesma divisions. The aide was instructed to continue as far as Saltillo if necessary, and there inform Santa-Anna of the complete lack of funds and the necessity of correcting the situation with all possible haste. Filisola set himself the task of riding ahead and obtaining foodstuffs at the ranches where the troops were scheduled to bivouac. Since money was still his greatest problem, he continued to Monclova, which he reached on January 14. The Payveyor-General had still not arrived, so Filisola obtained a personal loan of 1,300 pesos which he dispatched to Có at the villa Candela, about

42 Filisola, Memorias..., II, 271-277. "...On the march, discipline is hard to maintain with families along, because the men worry when their women and children fall behind the pace set by the troops. Many leave the ranks to go with their women to help carry the children....when the poor soldier in the ranks is allowed a rest period, he does not have water to drink because those people, in the manner of locusts--have devoured it...."
forty miles from Monclova. With the receipt of this small amount Cos was able to purchase sufficient supplies to continue the march to Monclova, which he reached on January 21. 43

Meanwhile, in Saltillo, Santa-Anna continued preparations for the invasion. Jose Urrea joined him there on January 9, and his forces incorporated into the main body of the troops. His stay in Saltillo was brief, as he was ordered to march on the fifteenth to Lipantitlan, via Matamoros. 44 By this time the army had reached its greatest strength with a force of 6,019 officers and enlisted men recorded on the numerical table prepared for the commander-in-chief. 45

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43 Ibid., II, 300-303.
44 Jose Urrea, Diario de Las Operaciones Militares de La Division Que Al Mando Del General Jose Urrea Hizo la Campana de Tejas (Durango, 1838), p. 6. This is the only mention that will be made of Urrea at this point, as the movements of his division of the Army of Operations are the subject of a later chapter [hereafter cited as Urrea, Diario...].
The vanguard of the army, commanded by Brevet-General D. Joaquín Ramírez y Sesma, totaled 1,541 men. The following shows the strength of the forces that composed the vanguard of the army.

**TABLE I**

**MEXICAN VANGUARD**

**Infantry**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corps:</th>
<th>Battalions:</th>
<th>Number of men:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jimenez <em>permanentes</em>, commanded by Brevet-Colonel D. Mariano Salas .... 300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Matamoros <em>permanentes</em>, commanded by Colonel D. José María Romero .... 350</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>San Luis <em>activos</em>, commanded by Colonel D. Juan Morales .......... 460</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Artillery, commanded by Captain D. Mariano Silva ................... 62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Total: ... 1,110</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Cavalry**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corps:</th>
<th>Regiments:</th>
<th>Number of men:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dolores <em>permanentes</em>, commanded by Brevet-General D. Ventura Mora .... 280</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Veracruz <em>permanentes</em> ..................... 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Coahuila <em>activos</em> ......................... 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Presidial .................................. 50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Total: ... 369</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to this force, the vanguard took two eight-pound cannon, two six-pound cannon, two four-pound cannon and
two seven-inch mortars. Colonel D. Euologio Gonzalez served as this group's "mayor de órdenes."

The First Infantry Brigade was commanded by Brigadier-General D. Antonio Gaona, with Brevet-Colonel D. Miguel Infansón as "mayor de órdenes." It carried two twelve-pound cannon, two six-pound cannon and two four-pound cannon, with corresponding shot and ammunitions for all arms. Table II shows the strength of this brigade.

TABLE II
FIRST INFANTRY BRIGADE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corps</th>
<th>Number of men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Artillery group headed by Captain D. Agustin Teran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Battalion of zapadores (sappers) headed by Brevet-Colonel D. Agustin Amat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Battalion of permanentes from Aldama headed by Lieutenant-Colonel D. Gregorio Uruñuela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Battalion of Querétaro activos headed by Colonel D. Cayetano Montoya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Battalion of Toluca activos headed by Colonel D. Francisco Duque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Guanajuato Auxiliares (state troops) headed by Lieutenant-Colonel D. Ignacio Pretalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Presidials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Second Infantry Brigade was commanded by Brevet-Brigadier General E. Eugenio Tolsa, with Brevet-Colonel D. Agustín Ferralda as "mayor de órdenes." Table III shows the battalions that composed Tolsa's command.

TABLE III
SECOND INFANTRY BRIGADE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corps</th>
<th>Battalions:</th>
<th>Number of men:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Artillery, commanded by Lieutenant D. José Miramon</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Morelos permanentes, commanded by Colonel D. Nicolas Condelle</td>
<td>393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Guerrero permanentes, commanded by Colonel D. Manuel Céspedes</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>México activos, commanded by Brevet-Colonel D. Francisco Quintero</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tres Villas activos, commanded by Brevet-Colonel D. Agustín Alcerrica</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Guadalajara activos, commanded by Brevet-General D. Manuel Cañedo</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Presidial cavalry attached to this group</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,839</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General Tolsa's artillery consisted of two eight-pound cannon, two four-pound cannon and two seven-inch mortars, with the corresponding munitions for all types of arms.

Brigadier-General D. Juan J. de Andrade commanded the Cavalry Brigade, aided by Lieutenant-Colonel D. Antonio Estrada as his "mayor de órdenes." The composition of this brigade is shown in Table IV.
### TABLE IV

**CAVALRY BRIGADE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corps</th>
<th>Regiment:</th>
<th>Number of Men:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tampico <em>permanentes</em>, commanded by Colonel D. Francisco G. Pavon ...</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Guanajuato <em>activos</em>, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel D. Julian Juvera ...</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>437</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The section under the command of Brevet-Brigadier General D. José Urrea had as its "mayor de órdenes" Lieutenant-Colonel D. Antonio Estrada. Table V lists the infantry and cavalry troops which composed this division.

### TABLE V

**GENERAL D. JOSÉ URREA'S DIVISION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corps</th>
<th>Number of Men:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Infantry Battalion of Yucatan <em>activos</em> ... 260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pickets from other corps ... 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cuautla Cavalry Regiment of <em>permanentes</em>, commanded by Brevet-Colonel D. Rafael de la Vara ... 148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tampico Cavalry Regiment of <em>permanentes</em>, commanded by Captain D. José Ramirez ... 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Durango Cavalry Squadron of <em>activos</em> ... 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Guanajuato Cavalry <em>Auxiliares</em> (State troops) ... 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cavalry of Tamaulipas and Nuevo Leon <em>activos</em> ... 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>594</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Six presidial cavalrymen were added to Urrea's group, which gave him a total strength of six hundred and one. This division carried only one four-pound cannon and corresponding shot.

A resumé of the brigades which composed the Army of Operations against Texas shows the following totals:

| Artillery                      | 182 |
| Zapaadores                     | 185 |
| Army infantry                  | 4,473 |
| Army cavalry                   | 1,024 |
| Presidial cavalry              | 95  |
| Presidial infantry             | 60  |

Total force 6,019

The army had a total of twenty-one artillery pieces which included two twelve-pounders, four eight-pounders, four six-pounders, seven four-pounders and four seven-inch mortars. It carried with it six extra gun carriages, two campaign forges and two transportation wagons loaded with the numerous types of shot, fuses, flares and extra arms.

The majority of this army came from the southern and central part of Mexico. Few were from the northern part of the Republic, the approximate area in which the campaign began.

Amelia Williams, "A Critical Study Of The Siege Of The Alamo And Of The Personnel Of Its Defenders:II. Santa Anna's Invasion of Texas and His Investment And Assault Of The Alamo," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXXVII (July, 1933), 5-6, quoting from El Mosquito Mexicano of Tuesday, March 4, 1836, showed the following:

1st brigade composed of 1500 men under Ramírez y Sesma
2nd brigade composed of 1500 men under Gaona
3rd brigade composed of 2000 men under Tolsa
4th brigade composed of 1000 cavalry under Andrade
1000 infantry and 500 horse under Urrea

[Hereafter this entry will be referred to as Williams, SWHQ.]
would be waged. The bulk of the army, composed of raw recruits from the tropical zone, was to go into the campaign without knowledge of the terrain and totally unprepared for the severe northerners that were to sweep Coahuila y Texas during the winter and spring of 1835 and 1836. They would also take into the campaign a numberless mass of camp followers who were likewise unprepared for the rigors of the Texas campaign. The addition of this latter group increased the problem of logistics, which Santa-Anna would have to master if he intended to move his Army of Operations successfully across the waterless and semi-desert area from San Luis Potosí to the Presidio del Rio Grande, and thence across the vast nothingness between the Rio Grande and Béxar.

Although a count was never taken of the camp followers, a conservative estimate would still produce a large figure. For example, if out of the 6,019 men, half brought a woman and at least two children along— that would mean an extra 9,027 marchers. (This would mean that 15,046 people marched in the invasion force.) The number of camp followers might have been greater; however, it is safe to estimate that the invasion body marching into Texas did not number less than 15,000 people. "Besides this number, there were countless sutlers who went along."
CHAPTER II

ON THE "HIGH ROAD" TO BÉXAR

The most arduous road to travel when going to Texas is that which lies between Rio Grande [Villa de Guerrero] and Béxar...this is what they call the "high road..."1

This was the road over which Antonio Lopez de Santa-Anna was determined to lead his army on its way to recapture Béxar, which he planned to use as a base of operations to strike secondary blows against the rebellious colonists in the interior.2 As a precautionary measure he had sent General José Urrea to lead a division into Texas via the port city of Matamoros, with orders to follow the coastal area up to Lipantitlán, clearing the coast of all rebel forces.

In spite of repeated advice to abandon the route, which stretched over monotonous semi-desert areas devoid of

1Juan Nepomuceno Almonte, Noticia Estadística Sobre Tejas (Mexico, 1836), reprinted in Filisola, Memorias..., II, 535-577. On page 541, Almonte stated that the "high road" was the old presidio road that connected Saltillo and Béxar via the Presidio del Rio Grande, today called Villa de Guerrero. Travel over this road was difficult, not because of the condition of the road, but because of the wilderness through which it stretched, making it necessary for travelers to carry with them all the supplies they would need. Ibid., 541 [hereafter this entry is referred to as Almonte, "Noticia Estadística..."].

2Santa-Ana was not the only one who realized the importance of Béxar as a base of operations. The Texas Telegraph and Register, October 10, 1836, p. 1, reprinted a letter from William B. Travis to Henry Smith dated February 13, 1836, in which Travis said of Béxar: "It is the key of Texas from the interior. Without a foothold here, the enemy can do nothing against us in the colonies."
settlements, the obstinate commander-in-chief would not consider the suggestion of Filisola, Cós and Ramírez y Sesma that he adopt the artery from Mier to Goliad. Filisola later recorded that the decision to travel the most difficult path became a "fatal obsession" to Santa-Anna, despite the fact that he realized the reconquest of Texas had to be accomplished in the "...shortest possible time, at any cost..." The Presidente's choice of this tedious and desolate route was incomprehensible to his generals, and in 1849 Filisola stated that Santa-Anna may have had justification for choosing the worst route, but "...we [the generals] did not then, and do not now, understand his reasoning."

On January 14 Filisola received a letter from his superior, which instructed him to advise the Purveyor-General, D. Ricardo Dromundo, that besides the food which he had been ordered to purchase, he must also have made about three to four thousand arrobas (76,200 to 101,600 bushels) of hardtack. Filisola

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3 Filisola, Memorias..., II, 289; this is part of an excerpt quoted from Santa-Anna's Manifesto.

4 Ibid., 197.

5 Ibid., 204; Umberto Daniel Filizola, "Correspondence of Santa-Anna During the Texas Campaign, 1835-1836," Unpublished Master's Thesis, Department of History, University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 1939, p. 21. Letter of Santa-Anna to Filisola, dated December 23, 1835, informed Filisola that Dromundo had marched to Villa de Guerrero with instructions to purchase supplies enroute. In addition to this, Filisola was to furnish Dromundo with money to purchase one thousand cargas (5,200 bushels) of flour, corn, beans, rice, lard and salt; this would be rations for six thousand men, for a two-month period. [Hereafter, this entry will be cited: Filizola thesis.]
attempted to follow Santa-Anna's orders, but the task proved impossible although Governors Musquiz and D. N. Leon, as well as the prefect of Saltillo, aided the general in his work. In the surrounding area, only three or four ranches were located, all in run-down conditions. In the few wretched villages the people were irritated by the methods the army employed to get supplies. These same people, however, exhibited sufficient patriotism to sacrifice their small reserve of corn and horses to meet the need of the troops. The scarcity of money was alleviated somewhat when the Purveyor-General arrived with 28,000 pesos. Filisola sent 19,000 pesos to Ramírez y Sesma at Villa de Guerrero and retained 9,000 pesos in reserve at Monclova to pay the troops.

Colonel Dromundo's method of gathering supplies and preparing them for the troops did not meet with the approval of Filisola, who felt that the Purveyor-General lacked the ability and capacity to do his job. Filisola wrote Santa-Anna a long letter on January 19 in which he complained of the unsystematic distribution of foodstuffs, the excessive number of mules allotted to officers for transportation of personal belongings, and the total absence of any form of bookkeeping to itemize what goods had been distributed, and to whom. Filisola suggested that in order to economize on finances, the foodstuffs and other needed supplies which were given to the troops should take the place of their allowances. Monthly records should be kept by the commissary officer of each division,
so that soldiers could buy goods on credit, then pay on this with salary deductions. He emphasized especially the need for a bookkeeping system.

In the same communication, Filisola informed the commander-in-chief that the Ramírez y Sesma and Có’s divisions, plus individual pickets in other troops, had been buying supplies of all kinds on credit in the towns and ranches through which they had passed, and that the creditors had descended on Filisola with demands that he pay the bills. Lacking the authority to do this, he had diplomatically side-stepped payment of these bills.

When this communication reached Saltillo, Santa-Anna was supervising the instruction of the recruits which made up the major part of his army and attempting to obtain shoes and coats which the army badly needed. Although he was ill, he dispatched letters to Filisola and the governors of San Luis, Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas and Coahuila-Texas to the effect that all the troops which made up the Army of Operations had individual incomes and had no reason to buy goods on credit. He emphasized that if the troops obtained anything from the people, they were to pay for it. Filisola was instructed to transmit this order to all persons under his command and to work to abolish a practice Santa-Anna considered an abuse of the public.6 In a separate letter on the same day, he ordered

Ramírez y Sesma and Cós to pay the debts incurred by their troops, using for that purpose the money they had received after Colonel Dromundo's arrival at Monclova.  

Before the orders to march were issued by the commander-in-chief, a circular issued by Secretary of War José María Tornel was published in *El Mosquito Mexicano* on January 22. The circular declared that the war against Texas was a national one, and all Mexican soldiers realized that the campaign they were undertaking would result in privations and heavy loss of life. The nation, as a whole, must comprehend that

Civil wars are always bloody; our soldiers ever aspire to shed the blood of foreigners who seek to take away from us our rights and menace our independence. This war is righteous, and should be without remorse...

In the same circular, announcement was made of a new medal which the government would award to all those who took part in the campaign in Texas. The award was designated as the Legion of Honor, the highest honor that a Mexican soldier could earn.

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7 Ibid., p. 54, General Santa-Anna to General Filisola, dated January 22, 1836.
8 Amelia Williams, SWHQ, XXXVII, pp. 106-107. "The insignia of the Legion of Honor shall be a cross or a star with five radiants. The center shall be surrounded by a crown of laurel; at one side shall be the national arms, on the other the motto Honor, Valor and Country. On the reverse side of the medal in the center shall be the name of the campaign or action for which this decoration is awarded with the words Republica Mexicana. This cross shall be silver for the cavalrmen, but gold for all the officers. The grand crosses will wear a band with red border on each edge across the right and left shoulders."
The army, which by now should have been infused with the highest degree of enthusiasm and patriotism, received its orders to march on January 22, the same day they were told of the creation of the new military award which they alone could merit. The orders of the day set the time and the manner of the departure of the different brigades. The First Infantry Brigade, commanded by Brevet-Brigadier General D. Antonio Gaona, would march on the twenty-sixth. Brevet-Brigadier General D. Eugenio Tolsa and his Second Brigade were scheduled to leave on the twenty-eighth. [The commissariat general and the supply depot would accompany this group.] On the thirtieth, the cavalry brigade would depart under the command of Brigadier-General D. Juan J. de Andrade. The general of each brigade was given an itinerary of his march, but could modify it according to circumstances. The troops would be paid for the month of February before they departed and each brigade would carry one month's supplies for use by those soldiers ranking as sergeants or lower. Whenever possible, supplies were to be purchased enroute, and a reserve of foodstuffs maintained at all times. As the oxen that pulled the wagons set a slow pace, the supply was to travel one day ahead of the brigades.

[Filisola, Memorias..., II, 316. With regard to the officers, Santa-Anna stated that "As the generals and other officials have the right to receive campaign allowances, to collect same when the circumstances allow, they shall not receive rations, but furnish their own supplies..."]
THE MARCH TO BÉXAR
Route Taken By Mexican Army, January, February, March 1836.

Figure 1 - Route of Mexican Army’s March To Bexar January, February, March 1836
The march from Saltillo to Monclova resulted in the loss of some men through sickness and desertion. The troops were plagued with a form of dysentery, which they claimed resulted from eating a small reddish berry which abounded in the woods along the road to Monclova. Gaona's men arrived on February 3, Tolsa's on February 5, and Andrade's on February 27. The commander-in-chief, traveling from Saltillo in his carriage, which was provided with a fresh team of horses at the end of each day's journey, spent only three days on the road and arrived on the fourth.\textsuperscript{10}

At Monclova Santa-Anna found that Filisola and Governor Musquiz, along with the prefect, had worked hard to gather provisions for the army and to prepare the hardtack. A large supply of corn-cakes, hardtack, flour, corn, salt, lard, chile, and beans was on hand, as well as mules and carts to transport the foodstuffs. There were even horses enough to replace the worn-out mounts of the cavalrymen. All of these provisions had been obtained with bills of credit which Santa-Anna was supposed to pay upon his arrival. When the creditors came in from the surrounding ranches and villages to present their bills, he sent them on an endless carousel, attempting to collect from the governor, the prefect, the Commissary General, etc., so that the creditors were not paid before the

\textsuperscript{10}Filisola, Memorias..., II, 317, contains an error in dates--instead of saying that Santa-Anna arrived on February 4, the Memorias reads January 4. Caro, in Casteñeda, The Mexican Side of the Texan Revolution, 99, says it is February when the move is made to Monclova.
army left for Béxar. He left so many disgruntled and disillusioned patriots in his wake that Filisola feared "...the sad results of such impolitic behavior..." would detract from the honor of both the nation and its army.

Santa-Anna's behavior continued to baffle his men. He alternately displayed profound disgust, depression, rage and asperity. His scorn and contempt were readily vented on all who came in contact with him, so that within a short while only a few of the older generals could still deal with him and not become targets of his venemous tongue. He was especially curt and rude in his dealings with the men who had contracted to provide oxen, mules, wagons and drivers for the transportation of supplies. It was only through the intervention of one of the generals that Santa-Anna finally agreed to pay the muleteers and allow them to receive rations of corn while on the march.\footnote{Filisola, Memorias..., II, 217-324.}

A former army friend of Santa-Anna's who was at Monclova observed that the Presidente attended to the most minute matters. He undertook jobs which should have been relegated to the quartermaster, commissary-general, generals of the brigades, colonels, captains, and even the corporals of the artillery. One of the biggest weaknesses of this army was the inability of the subordinates to assume responsibility—not because they were not adaptable—but because the commander had never allowed them to function in the positions to which
they had been assigned.\textsuperscript{12} Santa-Anna never communicated his plan of operations to anyone, not even his second-in-command, Filisola.\textsuperscript{13} The old chronicler was only one of thousands in that army who feared what would happen to the army in case its commander-in-chief was killed. He realized that in such an event the confusion of the officers would only be compounded by the confusion in the ranks since "only his Excellency knows the main springs which activate this mass of men, which he calls an army."\textsuperscript{14}

A few of the officers braved Santa-Anna's anger and made two suggestions regarding the march. First, they thought that four companies of presidiales, soldiers who had served in garrisoning the frontier, should be incorporated into the invasion force. These troops were well-acquainted with the desert area over which the army would march and were veterans of campaigns against hostile Indians and skilled in the art of tracking an enemy. They were also excellent marksmen, horsemen, and swimmers. Such men would have been excellent guides and couriers. Santa-Anna declined to use these troops, treated most of them with contempt, and only selected about forty to join his division. Filisola later maintained this

\textsuperscript{12}Sánchez-Navarro, p. 76.

\textsuperscript{13}Vicente Filisola, "Representacion Dirigida Al Supremo Gobierno por el General Vicente Filisola, en Defensa de su Honor," translated in Carlos E. Castañeda, The Mexican Side of the Texan Revolution, p. 179 [hereafter cited as Filisola, "Representacion..."].

\textsuperscript{14}Sánchez-Navarro, p. 76.
type of soldier would have been of the most help to the Presidente on April 21 at San Jacinto.

Secondly, the officers expressed their belief that it would be safer and more convenient for the divisions to march together, thereby presenting a united front to the enemy, which would be unable to resist such a mass of troops. By moving together, the army could progress in a more orderly fashion, the divisions could bivouac simultaneously, the recruits could be instructed and drilled more effectively, and the transportation and distribution of supplies for the army could be more easily managed. This suggestion was also disregarded by the intractable commander, who ordered that the army move out by brigades, allowing two days' travel distance to separate each group, with the vanguard of the army traveling nine days ahead of the rest of the army.

Definite orders for the march were contained in two dispatches. The first, sent to Ramírez y Sesma at Villa de Guerrero, ordered him to leave for Béxar on February 12, taking with him his entire division, which now totaled about 1600 men. The general was ordered to take one month's rations for the division, plus a reserve of corn and flour to be carried in ox-carts or other available means, as there would be no supplies available in Béxar. The daily marches of the vanguard were to be of such distance and speed that the troops could remain in good condition in case of an encounter with the enemy. Before his departure Ramírez y Sesma was to
select twenty-five well-mounted lancers from the Dolores regiment and leave them at Guerrero under the command of a trustworthy officer. This group would be used by Santa-Anna as his personal convoy when he arrived at Guerrero on the eleventh or twelfth. Finally the commander-in-chief intended to catch up with Ramírez y Sesma before the vanguard reached Béxar.  

The second communication, addressed to Filisola and dated February 6, 1836, directed Filisola and Woll to remain at Monclova to expedite the departure of the different brigades and of the supply train that was to trail the army. Gaona's brigade was to depart on February 8 followed by Tolsa's brigade, on February 10 and Andrade's cavalry group on February 12. Each infantry brigade was to take a month's supply of foodstuffs transported in ox-carts and on pack animals. Extra oxen were to be taken along as replacements, and three empty carts were to accompany each brigade to carry any soldiers who might become ill, or to replace another cart which might become unserviceable. A sergeant and ten soldiers of the garrison companies were to be assigned to each brigade for the purpose of caring for and feeding the mules and oxen, while foremen were to be designated to take charge of the transport carts. In addition to this, Filisola was admonished to set

15 Filisola, Memorias..., II 327. This letter was also translated in the Filisola thesis, pp. 58-59.
up a hospital for the sick who were unable to travel, and provide this group with a doctor and funds for medicines and utensils. ¹⁶

Santa-Anna with his secretary and staff set off for the Presidio del Rio Grande on February 8. That night a number of muleteers deserted the troops, taking with them their mules which had been contracted for by the army, while other muleteers and drivers fled empty-handed, obviously glad just to get out of the invasion army. It became necessary to replace these experienced men with soldiers who had little training handling teams or driving wagons. ¹⁷ That Santa-Anna had anticipated desertions would plague his army even before it decamped is evidenced by the orders he gave Captain D. Vicente Arriola before he departed. Beginning early in the morning of February 8, ten men of the garrison companies led by a trustworthy officer, were to be placed at Casteños, located about nine miles south of Monclova, for the purpose of

¹⁶José Enrique de la Peña, "Reseña y Diario de la Campaña de Texas," edited by J. Sanchez-Garza and titled La Rebelión de Texas (Mexico, 1955), p. 260. In a letter printed in El Mosquito Mexicano on September 30, 1836, Dr. José F. Moro, head surgeon in the army during the invasion, stated that he personally informed Santa-Anna in Monclova that the army lacked medical supplies and doctors. After ascertaining the truth of this, Santa-Anna claimed that there was no money to purchase the supplies in Monclova and that Mexico City was too far away to order them from there. In view of this evidence, the last part of the instructions given to General Filisola with regard to the care of the sick could be regarded as "window dressing," to cover the commander's neglect in obtaining doctors and medicines. [hereafter cited as Sanchez-Garza].

¹⁷Filisola, Memorias..., II, 328-331.
patrolling the trails and road to arrest deserters. This group was to remain on duty up to the time that the last division moved out, at which time the patrol would move to the Hermanas hacienda, about twenty-six miles north of Monclova, and perform the same job.18

The brigades began leaving Monclova on February 8, with Gaona's infantry brigade leading the way. An astute military observer noted that "the battalions which formed it [the brigade] are of good quality [capable], but they are overburdened with women, children, equipment, and munitions and cumbersome wagons."19

The desertion of the muleteers and drivers so delayed Tolsa's departure that he did not leave for Béxar until the eleventh. The multitude of camp-followers, sutlers' wagons and pack mules which trailed behind the brigade slowed the pace of the march. Andrade's cavalry regiment, also behind schedule, left on the thirteenth. The brigades gave the appearance of being an immense and slow-moving caravan instead of an army headed for an arduous campaign.20

Filisola reported that about 1800 mules were taken along to be used to transport supplies and pull an estimated 1833 wagons, and there were about 200 carts pulled by about twice as many oxen. A large number of mules and carts traveled at

18 Filizola thesis, p. 64, Santa-Anna to Filisola, dated February 7, 1836, at Monclova.
19 Sánchez-Navarro, p. 75.
20 Ibid., p. 80; Filisola, Memorias..., II, 331.
the rear of the army, some of these owned by speculators who had foodstuffs, liquor and other goods which they planned to sell to the army. No planned distribution of pack animals and wagons had taken place, so that many of the wagons carried sandbags, excessive ammunition and other useless objects. Also out of proportion was the number of officers and the mules and carts required to carry their personal belongings. The recruits were loaded down with knapsack, armaments and personal munitions.

This was an army composed primarily of infantrymen, yet it marched without sufficient footwear and clothing to supplement that which was worn daily. Their meager clothing allotment was matched by the food rationing, under which each soldier received eight ounces of hardtack or cornnack per day. The ration was insufficient for a single man who marched hard all day carrying his equipment; for a man whose wife and children followed the army, it was an impossible ration. If by chance exposure to the cold or debilitation from lack of food lowered a soldier's resistance, and he became ill, no medical assistance was available. Even if there had been a doctor, the army had no medical supplies or instruments, two essentials in the conservation of human life.21 Santa-Anna's

21 Filisola, Memorias..., II, 338-341; Sanchez-Garza, La Rebelión de Téxas, p. 250. D. José F. Moro, First Surgeon of the Army, was left at Monclova to care for the sick when the army departed for Béxar. In his letter to El Mosquito Mexicano on September 30, 1836[previously cited] he claimed that Santa-Anna ordered the army to march in spite of the lack of medical aid; and, that about the middle of February, Dr. D. Andrés Hurtado arrived at Monclova with an apothecary. This doctor, Dr. José Reyes, and four assistants went on to join the army.
personal secretary maintained that the medical corps which the commander-in-chief had said would march with the army never appeared. "During the entire campaign the army had to depend on medical students and a small and inadequate supply of drugs secured at Saltillo, whose cost did not exceed 300 pesos...."22 Deprived of the most basic physical needs, the soldiers of this army were also without the spiritual comfort of a single priest. This army, the majority of whom had no idea of what the war in Texas entailed,"...marched confiding only in Divine Providence...."23

That faith was sorely tried on the march from Monclova to Béjar, when even the elements themselves seemed to conspire to make conditions worse. The winter of 1835-1836 had been relatively mild until February 13, 1836, when a norther that blew across Coahuila first brought rain that drenched the soldiers, and then low temperatures that almost froze the wet clothing to their bodies. Their misery was intensified that night by a snowstorm. Andrade's cavalry crossing of a massy thicket of mesquites resulted in chaos when enveloped by the whirling snow. The men lost sight of one another and straggled out of the ranks, with no sense of direction and with their vision obscured by the snow. The pack animals added to the confusion by breaking away from the muleteers and becoming entangled in the thorny overhanging branches of the mesquites.

22 Caro, Verdadera Idea..., p. 7.
23 Filisola, Memorias..., II, 341.
The thicket resounded with the shouts of soldiers attempting to locate their companions, and the frenzied bray of the terrified mules. Andrade, who had been entrusted with the army's money chest containing 80,000 pesos, decided that the safety of both his men and the money depended on an immediate bivouac until the snow storm abated. The army spent the night knee-deep in snow, and although a great number of the cargo animals perished, all of the regiment survived the ordeal.

Tolsa's group weathered the storm at a ranch about twenty-six miles above Monclova. Gaona's brigade was on the march toward the same ranch when the snow storm began, and although the men and camp-followers suffered terribly from the snow, intense cold and fatigue, there were no casualties. The brigade did lose more than fifty oxen during the snowfall, but these were replaced by some which Filisola previously had contracted for at the ranch where Tolsa's brigade had waited out the storm. The vanguard of the army headed by Ramírez y Sesma had already crossed the Rio Grande and suffered little from the snow and cold because they were at a lower altitude than the brigades of the rearguard.24

24 Filisola, Memorias..., II, 347-350. After February 13, the temperature vacillated from one extreme to the other; some days were excessively cold, while others were temperate [even warm]. This was to be the case, all during March and part of April.
His Excellency, General Santa-Anna, reached the Presidio del Rio Grande before the snowstorm battered his troops.\textsuperscript{25} During the period he remained at the presidio, the dictator wrote to the Secretary of War asking for new\textsuperscript{26} instructions from the government detailing the policy which would be followed in dealing with the colonists during the campaign and after the suppression of the rebellion. Tornel's answer, dated March 18, made it clear that Santa-Anna had asked for two different types of instructions; one needing executive approval and other needing legislative sanction. The approbation of these requests became the basis on which Santa-Anna later justified the actions which he had already decided to use in his campaign against the Texas colonists.

The Mexican dictator was given carte blanche in dealing with the rebels. Whenever a capitulation occurred and was approved by Santa-Anna as commander-in-chief of the army, said capitulation was to be "...religiously observed according to international law...." All persons who had taken an active

\textsuperscript{25} Filisola, Memorias..., II, 363. When Santa-Anna arrived at the Presidio del Rio Grande [Villa de Guerrero] on February 12, Ramírez y Sesma was still there. Santa-Anna remained at the presidio for a few days after Ramírez y Sesma departed on the twelfth. Caro, Verdadera Idea..., p. 6. The following entry in Colonel Almonte's diary for the date of February 12 is important: "We arrived at Rio Grande, having left Nava 14 leagues to the left..." "The Private Journal of Juan Nepomuceno Almonte," with introduction by Samuel E. Asbury, Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XLVIII(July, 1944), p. 14 [hereafter this entry is referred to as "Almonte's Journal," SWHQ].

\textsuperscript{26} The word new is used to show that he wants instructions other than those included in the government's decree of December 30, 1835.
part in the rebellion were to be tried and executed according to law. All foreigners who had come to Texas to bear arms against the Mexican Republic were to be tried and punished as pirates in conformity with the government decree of December, 1835. All who had aided the rebels, but had not actually borne arms, were to be expelled from Texas; however, foreigners who lived on the coast or near the United States border but did not participate in the rebellion would be allowed to remain in Texas provided they moved into the interior of the province. Colonists who had come into Texas illegally and seemed to be dangerous were also to be expelled. All landholders who had not obtained their land through a Mexican colonization grant were to be expelled from Texas. All land taken from colonists in any of the three previously described ways was to be parcelled out to all officers and soldiers who wished to settle in Texas. The surplus land was to be sold at one dollar per acre to Europeans, with five million acres being sold to the French and English, slightly more acreage to the Germans and unlimited acreage to those of Spanish-speaking countries. Finally, the Texans were to pay for all expenses incurred in quelling the rebellion, and also were to free all their Negro slaves.

27 Filisola, Memorias..., II, 364. A complete translation of this circular was printed in Casteñeda, The Mexican Side of the Texan Revolution, pp. 55-56.

28 Filisola, Memorias..., II, 363-379. The entire communication concerning the instructions of the Supreme Government is reproduced on pages 371-379. [Although dated March 18, 1836, these orders took over two weeks to reach Santa-Anna; which means that he was not acting under these instructions when he ordered the executions at San Patricio and Goliad.]
Santa-Anna left the Presidio del Rio Grande on February 16 with an escort that had been provided by Ramírez y Sesma, whom he overtook on February 19 at the Frio River. Two days before this, while encamped on the Nueces River, Santa-Anna issued a proclamation which was intended to infuse his troops with the fervor and dedication needed for a successful campaign. He called upon his "comrades" to punish those responsible for the Mexican soldiers killed at Anahuac, Goliad and Béxar the previous year. He bitterly assailed the ungrateful colonists who had insulted the Mexican nation and were attempting to dismember it, and termed as insignificant the volunteers from New Orleans, Mobile, Boston, New York and other cities of the United States. He stressed that

Our most sacred obligations lead us to these deserts, and necessitate combat with a rabble of wretched adventurers upon whom our authorities have incautiously lavished benefits not even offered native Mexicans....they [the Texas colonists] appropriated this fertile and vast area, persuaded that our internal dissentions would prevent our defense of this part of our native soil. The miscreants will soon realize their stupidity.

29 "Almonte's Journal," SWHO, p. 14, gives this as the date when Santa-Anna overtook Ramírez y Sesma. Filisola, Memorias..., II, 379, claimed that Santa-Anna overtook the vanguard at the Nueces, he is undoubtedly mistaken; as Caro, Verdadera Idea..., p. 6, said they joined Ramírez y Sesma after a two-days' journey. This latter statement is strengthened by Sánchez-Navarro, pp. 81-82, which shows a log that proves the Nueces is four days away from Béxar while the Frio is two days away.

Filisola, Memorias..., II, 379-380. Some of the "miscreants" were well aware of the Mexican army's vanguard at the Presidio del Rio Grande. J. C. Neill wrote to the Provisional Government on January 28, and sent by express rider, a letter informing them that Ramírez y Sesma was at the Presidio del Rio Grande with a force of 1600 infantry and 400 presidial cavalry. William C. Binkley, editor, Official Correspondence of the Texan Revolution 1835-1836 (New York, 1936), I, 294-295.
Santa-Anna and Ramírez y Sesma proceeded toward Béxar and on February 21 arrived at the Medina River, where they spent the night. The troops were unable to march on schedule the following morning as they had to dry and clean their weapons, equipment and clothing, which had become waterlogged during the heavy rainfall the previous night. Santa-Anna later claimed that the sudden downpour prevented the surprise attack on Béxar the twenty-second. On February 23 at three o'clock in the afternoon Santa-Anna and the vanguard of the Mexican Army of Operations against Texas occupied Béxar with what Santa-Anna called "...the greatest possible order...." The rebels retreated into the Alamo and Ramírez y Sesma's forces took control of the city.

The vanguard's march to Béxar had been accomplished by a series of forced marches which pleased Santa-Anna, although marked with tragedy. The road from the Presidio del Rio Grande to Béxar was strewn with stragglers, ruined boxes of hardtack, carcasses of dead mules and oxen, and abandoned carts with the oxen still hitched to them. One of the officers with General Cóz,

32 Filisola, Memorias..., II, 381. In a letter to the Secretary of War on February 27, 1836, Santa-Anna stated that he had planned a surprise attack on the city for February 22, but that heavy rains cancelled this action. The force that he led into Béxar was composed of the Matamoros and Jimenez battalions of permanentes, the San Luis activos, and the Dolores Cavalry. The artillery of the division consisted of two eight-pounders, two six-pounders, two four-pounders and two seven-inch mortars. The total strength of this force was about 1390 men; ibid., p. 333.
who was trailing behind the vanguard, penned the question, "Where does such a march end?" He wondered why Santa-Anna traveled in such haste, leaving behind him the major part of his army. Many soldiers had brought wives, children, parents, brothers, sisters and mistresses along. Of this latter group, the children were the greatest casualties, and few places existed where the troops had camped that were free from small crosses marking the graves of these puerile camp-followers. Infantrymen who trudged past the crude markers that indicated a soldier's grave, would sometimes remark bitterly, "That one has already taken possession of Texas...."

The vanguard entered Béxar at the same time that the rear-guard of the army left from Monclova. Filisola and Quartermaster-General Adrian Woll accompanied this group which was burdened down with thirty-three wagons [loaded with hardtack, corn, beans, salt and other foodstuffs] and one hundred pack mules. Major-General of Brigades, D. Juan Arago, who was in ill health, insisted on accompanying the force to Béxar; so Filisola placed his personal carriage at the disposal of the infirm but determined old campaigner, and rode all the way to Béxar on horseback.

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33 Sánchez-Navarro, pp. 80-81. Cos had been traveling with his small escort since he left Monclova on January 15, trailing the brother-in-law who told him he needed "...to redeem, if he could, his wavering reputation...." Williams, SWHG, p. 6, citing Cos' letter to Tornel, dated February 1, 1836, University of Texas Transcripts, Guerra, Frac. 1, Leg. 3, Op. Mil., 1836, Texas, Exp. de Febrero.

34 Filisola, Memorias..., II, 360-361.
If suffering from saddle-sores had been Filisola's greatest worry, then the campaign would indeed have been the military jaunt which some had imagined it would be. The invasion had begun badly with snow, rain and fluctuating temperatures harassing the troops. The rainfall that had soaked men and beasts also caused the rivers to rise, which made crossing the Rio Grande, the Leona, the Nueces and the Frio difficult undertakings. The pack animals and troops were able to ford these for the most part; but provisional bridges had to be constructed from trunks, branches and mud to facilitate the crossing of the heavily-laden wagons, the carts and the artillery. In spite of the many precautions, much of the hardtack carried by the mules was ruined.

In addition to the weather, a scarcity of good waterholes in the desert area plagued the troops on the way to Béxar. The waterholes at the majority of the places where the troops bivouacked barely supplied enough water, which was not very tasty or clean when the first brigades arrived. This water became less palatable after soldiers and camp-followers waded in to get the water they needed. Carcasses of mules, horses and oxen littered much of the area surrounding the waterholes. The mules and horses were victims of one of two ailments: (1) the contagious mal de lengua [illness of the tongue] was
blamed on dry pasture and lack of water that brought about an inflammation and desiccation of the tongue, which made it impossible for the animals to eat. (2) A type of brain fever which the Mexicans called the telemé, believed to be the result of the hot weather and stagnant water the animals were forced to drink. The oxen collapsed and died from fatigue, lack of food and mistreatment by the soldiers, who prodded them with their bayonets to keep them moving. Filisola noted that the wounded and bloody oxen fell dead in their tracks, "...so emaciated and dehydrated that their meat could not be utilized for food." The wagons pulled by these hapless beasts were abandoned along the road as soon as the oxen pulling them died. The provisions and equipment from these discarded vehicles were apportioned and loaded on other wagons, and the cycle continued.

A food shortage developed which had no remedy. The beeves which accompanied the army got little rest, drank a minimum amount of water and found nothing but inferior pastures. As a result, many died, and those that were butchered for the army produced stringy, tasteless meat which had little

\[36\] Filisola, Memorias..., II, 350-353. The soldiers attempted to cure the mal de lengua by applying pieces of maguey, cactus or other moist thing to the tongue, on the assumption that this would facilitate the flow of saliva to alleviate the swelling. They also believed bleeding the animals and sponging them with cool water would defeat the telemé.

\[37\] Ibid., p. 358. Most of the wagon drivers and muleteers had deserted, and their jobs assigned to inexperienced recruits, who fed, watered and drove them inexpertly and inanely.
food value. Discontent became evident throughout the ranks when soldiers attempted to feed themselves and their camp-followers on the half rations issued to them. The officers experienced similar circumstances, as they had been forced to purchase and transport their own foodstuffs. Many of the mules that had died and the wagons that had been abandoned carried the officers' provisions. The farther the troops moved from villages and ranches, the more acute the problem of food became. Filisola emphasized the gravity of this situation when he said that food shortages, illness and malaise were so acute that

...the soldiers began to show indifference to their responsibilities as soldiers...this gave way to deterioration of both morale and discipline. The confidence and enthusiasm which are precursors for victories were lacking [in this army]....

While the rearguard moved from Monclova toward Béxar, Santa-Anna was making plans in which confidence and enthusiasm played an important role. Since the occupation of Béxar on February 23, Mexican artillery had kept up an almost continuous bombardment of the Alamo, encircled it with entrenchments, and demanded that the zealots within surrender at discretion. To a man with Santa-Anna's

38 Filisola, Memorias... II, 359-361.

39 The Texas Telegraph and Register, March 12, 1836, p. 3. In a letter written by William Barrett Travis on March 3, 1836, it was learned by the Convention that "a blood red banner waves from the church of Béxar, and in the camp above us, in token that the war is one of vengeance against rebels; they have declared us as such, and demanded that we should surrender at discretion, or that this garrison should be put to the sword." Travis emphasized that there was no way out of the fort, as the enemy had sealed the rebels in by a series of entrenchments on all sides.
military training and background it was ludicrous and intolerable that a small force, such as the one in the Alamo, should be able to keep their position secure against more than 1,600 Mexican soldiers.

Santa-Anna had begun his military career while still in his teens, fighting first for the royalists and then for the insurgents during the Mexican Revolution. During this period he observed, and participated in, events that shaped his attitude toward rebellions and rebels. Both the royalists and revolutionists made it a practice to shoot their prisoners. In November, 1811, the commander-in-chief of the royalists forces issued a decree stating that all rebels captured with weapons in their possession and who had used them or attempted to use them, were to be shot. Santa-Anna's government issued a decree almost identical to this in 1835 with regard to the rebels in Texas. His mania for unconditional surrenders can also be traced back to the period when the Spanish Cortes openly declared that it was below that body's dignity to sanction any capitulation with insurgents who had demanded terms. The metamorphosis which changed the neophyte into

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40 Bancroft, History of Mexico, IV, 226, 230, cites instances at Guanajuato and Villadolid when Calleja and Hidalgo, respectively, both made it a practice to shoot all of their prisoners; other examples of this procedure are given on pp. 249 and 337.


42 Ibid., p. 337, citing the Decree of April 10, 1813.
a hybrid took place when young Santa-Anna entered Texas in 1813 with the troops commanded by Don Joaquin Arredondo, who had been ordered to rid Texas of the miscible crew of rebels who were attempting to take over the Texas area in conjunction with Hidalgo insurgents. About two thousand Spanish infantrymen and cavalry took part in this operation, which resulted in the death of about 750 American freebooters at the Battle of the Medina and in the execution of over two hundred more Americans in San Antonio. Before the expedition was completed, many San Antonio civilians had been executed at the whim of Arredondo and the soldiers granted the barbaric rights of pillage and rape. The young soldier returned from Arredondo's expedition with the belief that the best way to handle rebels was to crush them with overwhelming forces and then execute the defeated participants to preclude a repetition.

In a dispatch to Gaona on February 25, Santa-Anna ordered him to send, by forced marches, three "picked" battalions

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43 José Fuentes Mares, p. 156. This is one of the best recent Mexican biographies of the dictator; in it, the author calls Santa-Anna a hybrid, who "roared like a lion and fled like a gazelle."

44 Callcott, pp. 10-11. A more detailed version of this campaign is found in Filisola, Memorias..., I, 66-78. Casteñeda, Our Catholic Heritage, VI, 115-116, citing Arredondo to Viceroy Calleja, Béxar, September 13, 1813, Historia, Operaciones de Guerra, Arredondo, IV, 156-160, A. G. M.; "An Anonymous Account of the Battle of Medina," Special Agents, II, State Department Records, N.A.W. "Both Arredondo and the Anglo-Americans estimated the number of rebels left dead on the field at approximately 1,000."
from his brigade. Almonte records that the Presidente personally supervised and inspected the mounting of batteries and the digging of trenches. The temperature dropped to thirty-nine degrees on the twenty-sixth and a biting wind swept through Béxar, numbing the ill-fed soldiers whose provisions were almost gone. As a result, Santa-Anna wrote Filisola on the twenty-seventh, and admonished him to speed the pace of the rear guard, send Woll ahead with foodstuffs for the vanguard, and provide an escort so that the money chest could be taken along with the commissary on its forced marches to Béxar. In order to obtain temporary foodstuffs, a detachment of cavalry was twice sent to the nearby ranches to bring back corn, cattle and hogs. Ramírez y Sesma left Béxar on the twenty-ninth, at the head of an infantry battalion and a cavalry regiment. He worked his way along the Goliad road, hoping to encounter the reinforcements that were rumored to be on their way to the Alamo. In the communication authorizing Ramírez y Sesma's move to prevent reinforcement of the Alamo, the commander-in-chief made the statement which has been quoted most often in any work dealing with the Texan revolution. The brief sentence which revealed Santa-Anna's basic and basest

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45“Almonte’s Journal,” SWHC, p. 20; Sánchez-Navarro, p. 83. Both sources recorded that General Gaona sent the Battalion of Sappers, under the command of Brigadier-Colonel D. Agustín Amat, the Aldama Infantry commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel D. Gregorio Uruñuela, and the Toluca Battalion of Reserve Militia commanded by Colonel D. Francisco Duque. The total strength of this group was about eight hundred and twenty-nine men.
tenet during the Texan revolution was:

In this war, you know that no prisoners will be taken.46

March 3, 1836, proved to be a cold, windless day which found the city resounding with the ringing of churchbells that heralded the news of Urrea's defeat of Dr. Grant's force at San Patricio. Colonels Amat, Uruñauela and Duque arrived on the same day with their battalions of sappers and infantry and raised the total of Mexican troops surrounding the Alamo to about 2,270.47 Cos had arrived the previous day with about a dozen men. An officer of this latter group wrote in his diary, under the date of March 3, that Santa-Anna constantly exposed himself to danger, while Ramírez y Sesma was overly cautious. The same officer's entry for March 4 had an ominous sound to it.

...Food is scarce and it is very cold, but we ignore this because we are gripped by the apprehension of what we will be ordered to do. The enemy proves inalterable. We only know there are men in the Alamo because they [periodically] discharge their cannon and rifles; and because nothing else is heard except the pounding of hammers and [uttering of] many vulgarities.48


47 This estimate was arrived at by using the army rosters printed in Filisola, II, 333-338. Calcott, p. 130, says 5,000. Henderson K. Yoakum, History of Texas (Austin, 1935), II, 80, sets the figure at over 4,000; Wortham, I, 197, estimated 2,400.

48 Sánchez-Navarro, p. 83.
On March 4, Santa-Anna held a conference of his generals and colonels to discuss his proposed assault on the Alamo. The meeting was attended by Generals Cós, Castrillón and Ramírez y Sesma and Colonels Duque, Uruñuela, Almonte, Romero and Amat. Santa-Anna, with the verbal support of Ramírez y Sesma and Colonel Almonte, pressed for an immediate assault. Cós and Castrillón, backed by Colonels Uruñuela and Romero, insisted that the attack should wait until Monday, March 7, on which day two twelve-pounders were scheduled to arrive; this cannon and two mortars could be used to open a breach in the Alamo wall prior to the actual assault. The other officers in attendance voiced no opinions. Nothing definite was decided at the council. Santa-Anna must have made the decision on his own sometime during the night of March 4, because on the fifth he issued orders for the assault on the following day.

49 "Almonte's Journal," SWHQ, p. 20. "...Generals Amador and Ventura Mora did not attend—the former having been suspended, and the latter being in active commission....The Colonels of battalions of Jimenez and San Luis did not attend, being engaged in actual commission...." At this time, rumors circulated among the troops regarding the fact that the rebels had supposedly mined the exterior and interior of the fort so that both attackers and defenders would be blown up in case of an assault. Camp gossip also said that Santa-Anna was the only one favoring an immediate assault. Sánchez-Navarro, p. 84.

50 This thesis is not concerned with the fine points involved in the siege and assault on the Alamo, and as a result, these have been dealt with briefly. For a more comprehensive study of this episode in the Texas Revolution, the reader is referred to Amelia Williams, "A Critical Study of the Siege of the Alamo and of the Personnel of its Defenders" unpublished doctoral dissertation, Department of History, University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 1931. The best study by a contemporary of the Alamo defenders is Ruben Marmaduke Potter, "The Fall of the Alamo," Magazine of American History, II (January, 1873), I, 21. Another well-known study, which can be classified as more literary than historical, is Lon Tinkle's Thirteen Days to Glory (New York, 1958).
Terrain comprised in the zone of fire of the Mexican batteries toward the fortress of the Alamo, with their locations, and the radius of fire of the batteries within the works, during the bombardment, the final assault, March 6, 1836.

Full lines, original streets and buildings
Dotted lines, later streets and buildings

A. Alamo
B. Courthouse
C. City Hall

Figure 2 - Plan of Siege of the Alamo
Cós, whom Santa-Anna considered to be in disgrace since his evacuation of Béxar, was named to head the first attack column, with Santa-Anna as his alternate in case of injury or death. There is no doubt that, after denying him a command since his return to Monclova in January, the dictator was now giving his brother-in-law a chance to redeem himself. The other three attack columns were headed by Colonels D. Francisco Duque, José María Romero and Juan Morales, with Castrillón and Colonels Mariano Salas and José Miñon named as the alternates. Ramírez y Sesma headed the cavalry which was to "...scour the country to prevent the possibility of an escape...." Santa-Anna headed the reserve group. In spite of the freezing temperatures, overcoats and blankets were ordered discarded in

51 Eugene C. Barker, editor, Readings in Texas History (Dallas, 1929), pp. 268-269. Santa-Anna's orders for the assault are translated on these pages; "Santa Anna's Orders for the Assault," reprinted in Barker, Readings in Texas History, pp. 268-269. After his defeat at Béxar and the long retreat that terminated in Monclova on January 20, 1836, Cós left the remnants of his troop under the command of Filisola and went with a small escort and his aide to Saltillo, possibly to talk to Santa-Anna. The interview must not have been a pleasant one, for he was attached to no regular command, although he remained at Saltillo from January 28 to February 6. Sánchez-Navarro, pp. 68-78. He had made his own way with the same small group, traveling first with one brigade, then another, arriving at Béxar on his own. He is named to head the first assault column, the most dangerous job of all. He tells his aide, Sánchez-Navarro of the "honor" and orders him to be at his side in the attack. Cós' old friend and aide noted in his ledger: "...General Cós will command the first column and has ordered me to head it. God help us all!" Ibid., p. 84.
order to facilitate movement. The soldiers were ordered to retire early on the fifth, as the attack columns would begin to form at midnight.\textsuperscript{52} Anticipating the results of the forthcoming assault, the veteran soldier who was scheduled to help Cos at the head of the first column pondered this question:

Why is it that General Santa-Anna always wants his triumphs and defeats to be stained by blood and tears?\textsuperscript{53}

The final assault on the Alamo began on March 6 at five in the morning, and by 6:30 A.M. it was completed. A brief but concise description of the encounter was penned by a Mexican soldier who participated in the assault. After two attempts to scale the walls were repulsed, the Mexican army pushed forward once more and

Our officers and their troops, as if bewitched, crowded to the top of the ramparts of the Alamo and hurled themselves inside to continue the conflict with the steel arm [by the use of bayonets]. By six-thirty in the morning, not one of the enemy remained alive. I witnessed some heroic actions which I envied. Some of the atrocities horrified me...\textsuperscript{54}

The reduction of the Alamo to the state of unresisting stillness filled Santa-Anna with cold pride, and in his report to the Secretary of War, written a short while after the

\textsuperscript{52} Barker, \textit{Readings in Texas History}, p. 269.
\textsuperscript{53} Sánchez-Navarro, p. 84.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
battle, he stated that

Victory belongs to the army, which, at this moment, 8 o'clock a.m. achieved a complete and glorious triumph that will render its memory imperishable.

He then described the battle, praising the heroism and valor of his soldiers. Santa-Anna set the strength of the assault group at 1,400 infantry, a believable figure when checked against the original roster of the groups that made the assault. The number of the defenders was estimated at one hundred and eighty three. The alcalde of Béxar, Francisco Ruiz, was ordered to accompany Santa-Anna into the Alamo to identify the dead leaders of that stubborn band that held off a superior force of Mexican troops for almost two weeks. Castrillón, who was also viewing the dead within the walls, remarked incredulously to a fellow officer, "Who would have believed it?"

Estimates of the

55 Barker, *Readings in Texas History*, pp. 270-271, contain Santa-Anna's report to the Secretary of War. The battalions of Matamoros, Jimenez, San Luis, Aldama, Toluca and Zapadores were the ones engaged in the assault. Their recorded strength at Saltillo had been 1,939. Santa-Anna ordered that no raw recruits participate in the assault. That, plus desertions on the march from Saltillo, would account for the difference in numerical strength. This claim is supported by Caro, *Verdadera Idea...*, pp. 9-10. [At the time he wrote this representation he was anti-Santa-Anna and refuted most of the statistics quoted by the dictator, but agreed on this one.]

56 Barker, *Readings in Texas History*, pp. 271-272, contains a reprint of the alcalde's report of the fall of the Alamo.

57 Sánchez-Navarro, p. 85. While still at Monclova, Sánchez-Navarro had warned Castrillón of the determined resistance he should expect, but Castrillón had laughed and said it was impossible.
Mexican dead vary from seventy to fourteen hundred. A study of the rosters and other data available indicates that there were not less than three hundred and fifty killed in the assault and about two hundred wounded.

A twentieth century Mexican general who made a study of the Alamo siege claimed that

The senseless bloodshed was brought about by the perversity of the commander-in-chief; there is no rational explanation for this [the assault and deaths] except to make known [to all other rebels] the name of the puerile, vengeful, vain and vulgarly ignorant military chief. Sánchez-Navarro voiced his opinion in a briefer manner, as he said, "...With another victory like that we will wind up in hell...." Much criticism has been made of the manner in which Santa-Anna disposed of the Alamo dead. Texans from that time to this, including historians, have condemned him for ordering that funeral pyres be formed and the bodies of the enemy dead be burned. These same critics fail to mention that after San Jacinto the victors made no attempt to bury, burn

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58 Barker, Readings in Texas History, pp. 270-271. Santa-Anna's official report claimed he had 70 men killed and 300 wounded; "Almonte's Journal," SWHO, p. 23, claimed 65 dead and 223 wounded; Sánchez-Navarro, pp. 84-85, said 110 dead, while 247 soldiers and 19 officers were wounded.

59 Filisola, Memorias..., II, 474-475; 332-338.


or dispose of the dead Mexican soldiers, allowing them to remain where they fell, deteriorating and fouling the air to the extent that citizens living near the field were compelled to leave their homes, and Houston had to move his camp. At that time Santa-Anna made a statement that seems to be characteristic of him and which, at least in his own mind, would change the act of burning the Alamo dead from an act of barbarity to one of expediency. He volunteered the information to his captors that "...where fuel was abundant and convenient, incremation was a ready solution..." for problems involving the disposal of the corpses of slain adversaries.

Santa-Anna, in complete possession of the place that he had designated as the pivotal point for his secondary thrusts against the colonists, waited impatiently for the

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62 George Bernard Erath, Memoirs of Major George Bernard Erath, edited by Lucy A. Erath (Austin, 1923), p. 42; John J. Linn, Reminiscences of Fifty Years in Texas (New York, 1883), p. 263; Barker, Readings in Texas History, p. 332, citing Mrs. Dilue Harris, "Reminiscences," Quarterly of the Texas Historical Association, IV, pp. 124-127, 156-179. After a visit to the battlefield on April 26, Mrs. Harris noted: "...We visited the graves of the Texans that were killed in the battle, but there were none of them that I knew. The dead Mexicans were lying around in every direction...We were glad to leave the battlefield, for it was a gawesome[sic] sight...."

The alcalde of Béxar was ordered to bury the Mexican dead. There were so many of these that there was not enough room for them in the graveyard; the alcalde "...ordered some to be thrown into the river, which was done on the same day." Barker, Readings in Texas History, p. 272 [from the alcalde's report].

63 Linn, pp. 243, 263-264. Colonel Pedro Delgado, a member of Santa-Anna's staff, noted in his diary under the date of April 27 that Houston and his men "...had not the generosity to burn or bury after the time-honored custom...."
arrival of the rest of his army, so that he could initiate
the second phase of his operations, which involved consolidating
his troops with those of Urrea, who was waging a successful
campaign from Matamoros to Goliad.
CHAPTER III

ON THE "LOW ROAD" TO GOLIAD

On January 9 Urrea had joined Santa-Anna at Saltillo as the dictator with "...pure contrariness and a stubborn determination to have his own way..." was finalizing plans for his march on the upper presidio road to Béxar. The one-time governor of Durango, and former enemy of Santa-Anna, did not remain in Saltillo very long. When Santa-Anna received news that a party of rebels was on the march to attack Matamoros, he ordered Urrea to the port city to secure it against the enemy. On the fifteenth Urrea departed with two hundred cavalymen of the Cuautla Regiment of permanentes, Durango Squadron of activos, Tampico Regiment of permanentes and the Guanajuato State Cavalry.¹ Urrea was informed that three hundred infantrymen from Yucatán would join his division at Matamoros and continue with him in his campaign against the rebels in the area between Matamoros and Lipantitlán.² Nothing in Urrea's

¹A breakdown of the strength of the individual regiments would show: Cuautla Regiment - 148 men; Durango Squadron - 21 men; Guanajuato State Cavalry - 35 men; and Tampico Regiment - 64 men. Filisola, Memorias..., II, 337, quoting from report of Urrea's "mayor de órdenes" during the campaign, D. Francisco Garay.

²Urrera, Diario..., p. 6; Filisola, Memorias..., II, 402-403; Almonte, "Noticia Estadística...", p. 541. The road that connected Matamoros and Goliad was known as the "low road." [In the previous chapter it was shown that the "high road" ran between Béxar and Saltillo, via the Presidio del Río Grande (Villa de Guerrero).] Presley, "Santa Anna in Texas..." SWHO, mistakenly called the Laredo-Béxar road the "low road."
diary indicates his orders were anything other than to secure Matamoros and then clear the area between Matamoros and Lipantitlán. Filisola noted later that Santa-Anna consistently failed to reveal his plans for military operations to his subordinates. Urrea inferred there was no plan when he wrote:

...it [the Mexican government, synonymous with Santa-Anna] never adhered to any policy nor did it ever decide upon any plan, for often its ambition or desire of ostentation, or making it appear that great things were being accomplished, when nothing worthwhile was being done, compromised our military operations.3

Santa-Anna himself stated that Urrea's orders to march to Goliad were given to him on February 27.4

On the march to Matamoros, Urrea received word on the fifteenth that Mier was menaced by an ex-Mexican army officer, Colonel José María González, and a group of rebels. Urrea countermarched to aid the settlement on the twenty-first. When he arrived at Mier the following day he was chagrined to find that González sympathizers had warned the rebel of Urrea's approach. The pursuit continued to Guerrero, about eighteen miles north, but residents of that town helped González elude Urrea a second time. Although the leader escaped, twenty-four of his men were captured and Urrea discovered that the majority of these were former presidial soldiers. Instead of punishing them he conscripted them for use in his division and later commented favorably on their

3Filisola, "Representacion...," p. 172; Urrea, Diario..., p. 9.
performance as guides and scouts. Despite the fact that he
had broken up González's band of filibusters, Urrea was still
provoked at the behavior of the inhabitants of Mier and
Guerrero. In his diary, under the date of January 22, 1836,
he ruefully noted:

In the towns of the north, from Matamoros to
Guerrero, great adherence to the constitution
of 1824 was noticed, and the people believing
that the colonists were upholding it, kept in
touch with them, being disposed to take up arms
and join their cause.

Making no further attempt to capture González, Urrea ordered
his troops to resume the march to Matamoros, which was reached
on January 31.5

Urrea remained in Matamoros about two weeks, during which
time he was unsuccessful in obtaining sufficient supplies for
his troops. On February 16 he sent a scouting party to
reconnoiter the area north to the Nueces River. The following
day Urrea and General Francisco Vidal Fernández [Commandant-
geneneral of Nuevo-Leon and Tamaulipas] began moving troops
across the Rio Grande to combat a group of three hundred
Texans that had been reported on its way to attack Matamoros.

5 Urrea, Diario..., pp. 6-7. This is only one of the many
instances in this diary which can be used to counter the state-
ment found in Williams, SWHQ, p. 30, in which the author claims
that "The Mexican scout service was excellent. Santa Anna
knew of Fannin's plan to reinforce the Alamo almost before
that officer had started from Goliad. This fact is one of our
strongest evidences of the unfriendliness and treachery of the
Mexican population in Texas to the Texan cause...."
URREA'S MILITARY MOVEMENTS
February 17 through April 22, 1836

Figure 3 - Urrea's Military Movements
The expected encounter failed to materialize and Fernández returned to Matamoros. Despite a shortage of foodstuffs, Urrea decided to push the march to San Patricio, to which the enemy was reportedly retreating.

The exact strength of Urrea's forces at this time is difficult to determine. In his diary he claimed that his division was composed of

320 infantry from Yucatán and other places, 230 dragoons from Cuautla, Tampico, Durango, and Guanajuato, and one four-pounder. Of these, I left about 200 men in Matamoros which were to follow later.

His "mayor de órdenes", D. Francisco Garay, set the number at 300 infantrymen from Yucatán and other places, 293 dragoons from Cuautla, Tampico, Durango, Guanajuato, Tamaulipas and Nuevo-Leon, 8 presidial soldiers, and one four-pound cannon. Garay's figure will be accepted as the most probable approximation. On February 29, Urrea claimed a total of 382 men in his command. This could only be possible if he entered Texas with at least 400 men, giving him a loss of 18 at San Patricio and Agua Dulce Creek. It is possible that Urrea, like Santa-Anna, expected to find a large number of the Mexican citizenry

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6 Riva Palacio, Mexico a Través De Los Siglos, IV, 367.

7 Urrea, Diario..., p. 7. Under the date of March 19, Urrea noted "Although we still lacked almost all the resources to continue our march, I decided to push forward with only 500 pesos worth of bread and hardtack which General D. Francisco Vidal Fernández had delivered to me on the evening of the eighteenth."

8 Filisola, Memorias..., II, 336-337.
of Texas sympathetic to their countrymen and for that reason thought it safe to invade with a small force of three hundred and fifty, leaving the two hundred soldiers at Matamoros to follow later with needed supplies.  

The march from Matamoros to Lipantitlán consumed about ten days. Between the Rio Grande and the Arroyo Colorado the troops had to wind their way through chaparral and palmetto thickets and skirt the edges of resacas in order to reach the twenty-mile stretch of level, but briar-infested, grassland that led to the Arroyo Colorado. Urrea recorded difficulty crossing this creek because of high water produced by the recent rains and the absence of proper equipment. The lack of potable water along the way led to Urrea's supervising the digging of wells at one of his campsites in this desolate area which the Mexican rancheros called El Desierto de los Muertos, the Desert of the Dead. Waterholes were few and

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9 By February 6 the colonists at San Patricio had been informed that three hundred cavalry and three hundred infantry were in Matamoros. Lieutenant Placido Benevides of the Texan Revolutionary Army had gone to within fifty miles of the port city and learned from the first alcalde of Matamoros that "...Santa Anna wishes to draw the troops of Texas out of Matamoros[sic] in hopes to throw a strong force in their rear while he makes his attack on the upper part of the Colonies." Binkley, II, 399-400; letter of Robert Morris to J. W. Fannin, dated February 6, 1836 at San Patricio.

10 Descriptions of the area between the Rio Grande and San Patricio have been taken from Tom Lea, The King Ranch (Boston, 1957), I, 94-95, in which the author was citing Lloyd Lewis, Captain Sam Grant (Boston, 1950), p. 135.

11 Urrea, Diario..., p. 8.
far between in the area, which "...required a man familiar both with the country and the season to locate the seeps and sweet-water bogs where thirst could be slaked." There was no respite from the emptiness that beat down from the sand dunes that lined the route.\textsuperscript{12}

Brevet-Colonel D. Rafael de la Vara was sent ahead on the twenty-second with one hundred and twenty dragoons for the purpose of acting as a vanguard and protective cover for the scouts who were deployed in the area toward the Nueces. On the twenty-fourth a rendezvous took place between de la Vara and Urrea, in which the former was ordered to continue his operations as the vanguard unit, and reconnoiter the Nueces River and determine the best place for a crossing. If possible the vanguard was to advance as far as San Patricio. Urrea remained behind for the arrival of the troops he had previously outdistanced.

On the twenty-fifth a severe norther brought pelting rains and chilling wind. To Urrea's men, accustomed to the tropical climate of their homes, the cold was penetrating and benumbing. The weather especially affected the Campeche Indians from Yucatán. The entry in Urrea's diary under the

\textsuperscript{12} Lea, \textit{op. cit.}
date of the twenty-fifth graphically noted that "...Six soldiers of the battalion of Yucatán died from exposure to the cold." By the end of the day's march the division had reached a point about a hundred and twenty-four miles north of the Rio Grande, five miles below Santa Gertrudis Creek, which was known as the Santa Gertrudis de la Garza Land Grant [which later became the nucleus of the King Ranch empire.] The scouting party had sent word earlier that San Patricio was occupied by the enemy. Urrea dispatched a message to a certain Salvador Cuéllar, who was an inhabitant of that settlement and from whom Urrea expected to receive more detailed information concerning the occupation of San Patricio. He requested Cuéllar to obtain exact information on conditions in the Irish settlement and then junction with Urrea somewhere between Santa Gertrudis Creek and San Patricio. On the twenty-sixth the general departed from the Santa Gertrudis camp with about two hundred dragoons. The

13 Urrea, Diario..., p. 8. The majority of these men were Mayan Indians accustomed to the tropical climate of their home peninsula, and as a result suffered the most during the freezing weather in the campaign. It is this group that General Woll called inefficient rabble who could not even speak Spanish. Linn, p. 268.

14 This location is estimated by a study of Urrea's brief description of the locality, and then by comparison with the photostated copy of the map that accompanied the Spanish land grant given to José Lorenzo de la Garza, José Domingo de la Garza and Julian de la Garza in 1806. The map and grant, along with the surveyor's report, were reproduced and translated in Lea, The King Ranch, I, 384-394.
infantry and some of the most poorly mounted dragoons were left encamped in the woods with Lieutenant-Colonel D. Nicolás de la Portilla, who had orders to remain there until the rain stopped.\textsuperscript{15}

Urrea and his dragoons arrived at the Nueces, about two miles above Lipantitlán, near midnight on the twenty-sixth, and held a conference with Cuéllar and two other San Patricians who joined him. The trio reported that a group of seventy rebels occupied the town, awaiting the return of Dr. James Grant and a party of sixty who had gone toward the Rio Grande in search of horses. This estimate exaggerated the strength of the enemy. The group at San Patricio totaled forty-one men and the group headed by Dr. Grant was composed of twenty-three men.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{15}Urrea, Diario..., pp. 8-9. Colonel de la Vara's advance group was made up of 120 men; Urrea claimed he led 100 infantry and 100 dragoons to the campsite near the Santa Gertrudis on the twenty-fifth. He admitted that some dragoons were left behind on the twenty-sixth; however, if he only took an estimated 75 along, the attack force would be about 200 when he joined de la Vara.

\textsuperscript{16}This estimate is based on the contents of a letter written by John Sowers Brooks, Fannin's aide-de-camp, to his sister Mary Ann Brooks on March 4, 1836 from Fort Defiance at Goliad. The letter was reproduced in full in Barker, Readings in Texas History, pp. 285-287. This estimate is further strengthened by Johnson himself, who said that there were sixty-four men left in the Johnson and Grant parties. Frank W. Johnson, A History of Texas and Texans, 5 vols., edited and brought up to date by Eugene C. Barker and Ernest William Winkle (Chicago, 1914), I, 421[Hereafter this entry is cited: Johnson, Texas and Texans]. Harbert Davenport, "Men of Goliad," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XLIII(July, 1939), p. 19, wrote: "Johnson [F.W.] and Grant, after a horse-buying visit to Rancho Santa Rosa and beyond, had separated; Johnson returning to San Patricio with a hundred horses, so acquired, and thirty-four men; while Grant wandered toward Camargo, with twenty-six men, for more horses." [Hereafter this entry is cited as:Davenport, "Men of Goliad," SWHQ.]
In spite of continued rain and cold, Urrea wanted an immediate attack; so the march continued to San Patricio, which was reached about three o'clock in the morning of the twenty-seventh. Urrea ordered Captain Rafael Pretalia to take a detachment of thirty men and proceed the few miles to a ranch where the rebels had left their large remuda. He then converted forty of his dragoons into infantrymen and divided them into three separate attack units led by his most able officers. The remainder of the dragoons were to remain mounted and protect the flanks and rear, making sure that none of the rebels escaped the surprise attack on the houses where the Johnson men were quartered. The attack came at three-thirty and caught the

17 Urrea's Diario...was translated by Carlos E. Casteñeda, The Mexican Side of the Texan Revolution (Dallas, 1928), pp. 207-284, and has been cited regularly in studies of this type. However, it is well to point out that the translations which cover the moves of Urrea's division from February 26-28, pp. 215-216, have a number of errors that completely changed the meaning of the original entries. For example, on February 26, the Casteñeda translation reads: "I immediately gave orders to Lieutenant Colonel Nicolás de la Portilla for the infantry and the mounted cavalry to encamp in the woods..." In the original, the same entry reads: "I then gave my orders to Lieutenant-Colonel D. Nicolás Portilla, instructing him to set up camp in the woods with the infantry and those dragoons who were poorly mounted..."

In the entry describing the attack, the translation reads: "...The enemy was attacked at half past three in the morning in the midst of the rain, and although forty men within the fort defended themselves resolutely, the door was forced at dawn..." In the original diary, the entry reads: "...I had forty dragoons dismount and divided them into three groups, led by good officers, and ordered them to move against the quarters [of the rebels]..." Cuartel is a word that can mean soldier's quarters or fort; Casteñeda used the latter meaning.
sleeping Americans by surprise. Harbert Davenport, who made a thorough study of this phase of the Texan Revolution, claimed that Johnson had not even bothered to post sentinels.\textsuperscript{18} Once the element of surprise was gone, the Americans "...defended themselves tenaciously..." prolonging the engagement until daybreak. The Mexican general claimed that sixteen Americans were killed and twenty-four captured. The victory gained luster when Captain Pretalia returned and reported that he had executed a successful surprise attack on the guards assigned to the remuda. Of his own men, Urrea claimed to have lost one man and had four wounded in both encounters. The biggest prize for the victors was the horses, which were given to those dragoons whose own mounts were worn-out.\textsuperscript{19} Urrea detailed his victory at San Patricio to Santa-Anna in a letter which informed him of the number of prisoners taken. Among these were five Mexicans whom Urrea wanted to pardon. He asked for special instructions as to the policy to follow with regard to the Mexicans captured at San Patricio. This latter query and the sentiment which prompted it displeased the Presidente, who in a communication of March 3, first congratulated and then

\textsuperscript{18}Davenport, "The Men of Goliad," SWHC, p. 19. Johnson, \textit{Texas and Texans}, I, 420, gives the American side of the fight at San Patricio. It substantiates the details given by Urrea. Johnson said the attack came on the night of the second day after they had arrived in San Patricio. Johnson and three other men escaped through the rear door of the house in which they were quartered, while the Mexican troops were attempting to gain entrance to the dwelling.

\textsuperscript{19}Urrea, Diario..., pp. 8-9. Davenport, "The Men of Goliad," SWHC, pp. 28-29, says that of Johnson's group there were 6 dead, 18 captured and 6 who escaped.
reprimanded his subordinate for not following the orders previously laid down concerning prisoners. Santa-Anna emphasized that

...the foreigners who had invaded the Republic and been captured bearing weapons should be treated as pirates [and executed accordingly]. It is my belief that any Mexican becomes a traitor when he aligns himself with this type of adventurer, and said Mexican forfeits his rights as a Mexican citizen, according to our laws. The five prisoners of whom you speak should be treated in the same manner as the others.20

Urrea further was reminded of his orders of January 27, in which he had been ordered to advance from San Patricio to Goliad. The commander-in-chief granted Urrea the right to "spoils of war" as all rebel supplies which Urrea captured should be distributed for use by the Mexican troops. When Urrea was later criticized for carrying an excessive confiscation of rebel property, he quoted a sentence from this letter which said, "You may also take [appropriate] for the subsistence of those troops the cattle belonging to the rebel colonists, and any other property that might belong to them."

Exultant over the victory at San Patricio, Urrea remained at San Patricio for three days awaiting word from the scouting parties which he had fanned out covering the area north to

20 Santa-Anna to Urrea on March 3, 1836. Letter is reprinted in full in Urrea, Diario..., pp. 54-55. [The five prisoners to whom he referred as traitors were five Mexicans captured with Johnson's men, whom Davenport in his extensive study dismisses as "Five San Antonio Mexicans, in the service of Texas, including Arreola and Zambrano, members of well known families of Béxar. The Mexican archives should contain a list of these men." This letter was received by Urrea on March 12. Ibid., p. 10.
Goliad and south to about the present area of Alice. From the Goliad scouts he learned that Fannin was at Fort Defiance with "...600 men and 19 pieces of artillery...."\(^{21}\) He also received information from his scouts in the south that Grant was on his way back to San Patricio with a drove of horses.\(^{22}\) Urrea's scouts had no doubt also observed and reported Fannin's half-hearted and futile movement to reinforce Béxar on the twenty-seventh. Perhaps this led to Urrea's decision to strike at Grant first, and then proceed to Goliad. The destruction of Grant's force would leave the area between Matamoros and San Patricio free from rebel troops.

Urrea and Colonel Garay left San Patricio on March 1 with eighty dragoons, moving south along the same route by which Grant was traveling north. The weather was excessively cold and Urrea decided not to continue the march, but instead to

\(^{21}\)Urrea has again exaggerated slightly, as John Sowers Brooks, Fannin's aide-de-camp stated that the fort was manned by 500 volunteers. Barker, Readings in Texas History, p. 286. Sowers' letter to his father, dated February 25, 1836, and reproduced on pages 283-284, tells of the plans to reinforce Béxar on the following day. He says 320 men and 4 pieces of artillery will be taken. He comments on this group in a disconsolate tone: "...without the interposition of Providence, we can not rationally anticipate any other result to our Quixotic expedition than total defeat...." Urrea, Diario..., p. 9, claimed that on February 28 his forces were composed of 199 infantry and 183 cavalry.

\(^{22}\)Most of the horses that Grant's party was bringing back had been stolen from Mexican ranches below the Nueces. Only a few had been purchased at a dollar a head. Johnson, Texas and Texans, I, 422.
deploy his troops in an ambush about twenty-six miles from San Patricio at a place he called "...el puerto de los Cuates de Agua dulce..." In the translation of the diary in 1928 Dr. Carlos E. Casteñeda translated this phrase as "...the port of Los Cuates de Agua Dulce..." capitalizing some words which were not capitalized in the original, thus altering the phrase. Urrea undoubtedly meant that the attack would take place at a sheltered area near the point where the Agua Dulce Creek and the Petronila Creek merged.23

The dragoons were divided into six sections and concealed in the woods along the trail, from which they attacked Grant's party on the morning of March 2. Urrea recorded in his diary that those killed in battle were "...Grant and forty-one riflemen..." and that six prisoners were taken. Again it is evident that Urrea exaggerated the number killed, for in his

23"...puerto de los Cuates de Agua dulce..." translated literally means "haven of the Twins of Water sweet." [Spanish adjectives all follow the nouns they modify.] In the area below San Patricio there are two creeks that flow close together in the same direction and merge into one larger creek. Both of the creeks contain sweet water. In Spanish puerto can be translated as port [which is the meaning Dr. Castañeda used], but it can also mean haven, a sheltered place.

R. R. Brown, one of two men who escaped the ambush, wrote an account of it which was reproduced in Johnson, Texas and Texans, I, 420-426. Brown said that the attackers surprised them "...between two large motts..." Since the rebel reports and communications contain many corruptions of Spanish words, it is highly probable that motts was a corruption of monte, a wooded area. It can be assumed then that the area near the juncture of the two creeks was heavily thicketed.
letter to Santa-Anna in which he reported the events of that morning, he claimed that "Dr. Grant, twenty adventurers, and three Mexicans that were with him were killed." The latter figure is closer to being correct. The horses captured from Grant were also used to replace Mexican cavalry mounts. Urrea then returned to San Patricio, where he remained the next four days.

During the time that they were quartered in San Patricio, Urrea received and sorted the reports from his scouts in the Goliad area. On the seventh, the troops he had left in Matamoros arrived and were re-incorporated with the division. On the same evening Jesus Cuéllar, who had deserted his troops during the siege of Béxar in December of 1835 and gone over to the enemy, rode into San Patricio. His brother, Salvador, was a member of Urrea's division and a good friend of the general, a fact resented by the officers and men who knew of his brother's

24Caro, Verdadera Idea..., pp. 10-11. Davenport has made perhaps the most extensive study of this battle, and lists 12 killed, 6 taken prisoner and 6 escaped. Davenport, "Men of Goliad," SWHG, p. 29. Urrea seems to feel, at this point at least, that it was better to report all of the command killed in order not to antagonize Santa-Anna by mentioning any prisoners taken.

Since the size of Urrea's forces has always been questioned, it is well to note that R. R. Brown, who survived the ambush near Agua Dulce Creek, later claimed that Urrea had tried to bargain with him, wanting him to tell Fannin that Urrea had a large force that could easily overwhelm Fannin. Brown said he refused, on the grounds that Urrea was asking him to deceive Fannin with information that "...was not true, that the Mexican forces under him were very large, and as such would overpower him...." Johnson, Texas and Texans, I, 424, citing R. R. Brown's account.

25Urrea, Diario..., pp. 9-10.
defection to the enemy and of his present position as a member of Fannin's command. They thought that he had been sent as a spy by Fannin, but Urrea was not as skeptical as his men. Their distrust of the man was justified, as the officers in Fannin's command could certify. El Comanche, otherwise Captain Jesus Cuéllar of the Texan Revolutionary Army, had conceived a plan to lure Urrea and part of his command out of San Patricio on the pretext that he could lead them to a place where Fannin could be ambushed. While the Mexican forces were divided, Fannin could easily defeat both parties.26

Jesus Cuéllar claimed that he had deserted the Texas rebels when he found out that Fannin planned to attack Urrea's troops after joining forces with the colonists occupying the mission at Refugio. The one-time Mexican soldier professed his loyalty to the Mexican government and claimed that he had gone over to the enemy in order to get valuable information which could later be used by Mexican troops. He offered to prove his good faith by leading Urrea to a position from which he could safely attack and destroy all of Fannin's command as it proceeded to San Patricio. Salvador Cuéllar guaranteed his brother's veracity, which convinced Urrea of the truth of the

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26 Cuéllar's plan carried a greater risk for him than for anyone else. He did his part as subsequent events show, but Fannin reneged on his. A detailed account of this incident is found in Herbert Davenport, "Captain Jesus Cuéllar, Texas Cavalry, Otherwise 'Comanche'," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXX(July, 1926), 56-62.
report. On the strength of this report, two hundred infantrymen, one hundred and fifty dragoons and one artillery-piece departed from San Patricio before daybreak on March 8 on their way to a place called Arroyo de las Ratas, about twenty miles from San Patricio. When the troops reached the designated area, El Comanche left the group, and Urrea proceeded to prepare the ambush. This was a difficult feat to accomplish for there were few places of concealment in the sparsely wooded area, and at that time of year the trees and shrubs were devoid of foliage. The troops would have been easily seen by anyone approaching on the plains. Even the dry creek-bed proved too shallow to be used for concealment. Even Urrea finally realized the uselessness of the position, and at midnight he ordered his troops to countermarch to San Patricio. One of his officers noted that everyone was glad to hear the command to retreat since "...nothing good would have come of our remaining in that place." Urrea must have realized that El Comanche had made a fool of him, but did not want it known. There is no record in Urrea's diary of Jesus Cuéllar and the ambush of March 7. Urrea's entry for that day reads simply: "In ambush on the Ratas Creek."

27 The details of this ruse were taken from the diary of Colonel D. Francisco Garay, Urrea's "mayor de órdenes" and reprinted in Filisola, Memorias..., 405-407. There was a difference in the figures given by Urrea concerning the troops he took to Arroyo de las Ratas. He claimed to have taken 300 men and a four-pounder. Urrea, Diario..., p. 10.
After the abortive ambush of the tenth of March, Urrea remained at San Patricio until the twelfth, a busy day for Urrea and his division. Twenty-one prisoners taken in the encounters with Johnson and Grant were sent to Matamoros with an escort. Urrea also designated a small detachment to remain at San Patricio after his departure for Goliad, which he had informed Santa-Anna he would reach by the fourteenth. His diary entry for the twelfth notes that he received a letter from his commander-in-chief thanking him and praising him for his capture of San Patricio and defeat of Grant. He also emphasized the fact that Santa-Anna had granted him the right to confiscate the colonists' cattle, foodstuffs and personal belongings. He made no mention of the reprimand that he received for not having executed the prisoners taken in battle. Although he did not record any action taken with regard to the instructions sent him by Santa-Anna, it can be assumed that he complied with orders and dispatched a detachment to intercept the supplies which Santa-Anna believed the enemy was scheduled to receive at the Lavaca River. That same afternoon a presidial sergeant arrived in San Patricio at the head of about thirty


30 Santa-Anna's letter to Urrea, dated March 3, 1836, is reprinted in Urrea, Diario..., pp. 54-55.
well-armed and well-mounted Mexican residents of the Bahía area, who had come to offer their services to Urrea. This volunteer group, headed by D. Guadalupe de los Santos, departed later in the day with Urrea and his command, which he designated as the "Division of Operations against Goliad." The night of the twelfth was spent at Abras del Aguila, about eighteen miles from San Patricio.

The troops were already in formation on the morning of March 13 when the courier arrived from Béxar announcing the fall of the Alamo. The news was celebrated with bugle calls and exuberant yells. Taking advantage of the moment's display of emotion, Urrea praised his troops for the way they had conducted themselves during the actions against Johnson and Grant, and admonished them to display the same exemplary conduct in all future engagements with the enemy.

The march was interrupted later in the day when Urrea received news that the enemy had detailed some troops to seize Copano, and that on their way to that port, the troops

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31 "Unlike the Mexican citizenry of San Patricio and Victoria, who came, for the most part, of good ranchero stock, the Badenños, as they called the people of Goliad, were descendents of the presidial soldiers stationed at La Bahía through the years, and were not too highly regarded by their countrymen, or by anyone else." Davenport, "The Men of Goliad," SWHQ, p. 12.

32 Urrea, Diario... , p. 10.
would halt at the Refugio Mission.33 He immediately dispatched Captain Pretalia with a squad of dragoons and the group of volunteer civilians headed by D. Guadalupe de los Santos to the mission. Pretalia was instructed to detain the enemy at the mission until Urrea's later arrival. After Pretalia and de los Santos left with their groups, Urrea selected one hundred dragoons and one hundred eighty infantrymen to accompany him to Refugio. This group left for the mission on March 14, about three o'clock in the morning, taking with them a four-pound cannon. A detachment of troops was left encamped on the Aranzazu Creek.34

33 The news of the capture of San Patricio, plus the arrival of the few survivors of the Johnson group, frightened the populace of Refugio to the extent that by February 29, only three families had not fled to safety. The defeat of Grant scared these, but they found they were unable to flee because the other colonists and some Mexican raiders had taken all available transportation. Lewis Ayers went to Goliad to ask Fannin's aid on March 2. Fannin's wagons were busy carrying supplies from Cópano; so it wasn't until the ninth or tenth that Captain King was sent with a detachment to escort the wagons that were to transport the three families to safety. The families had gone to some neighboring ranches and it was to these that King had to go to get them, an added hazard considering Urrea was already on the march. On their way back into Refugio the group was attacked by a group of Bandeños and Indians which forced King, his men and the families to take refuge in the mission. King managed to send Fannin an appeal for help, which arrived in Goliad on the eleventh." The Lewis Ayers Journal; Lamar Papers, I, 136, 334-338, cited in Hobart Huson, Refugio, A Comprehensive History of Refugio County from Aboriginal Times to 1953 (Woodsboro, 1953), I, 287-294. [Hereafter, this entry will be cited as: Huson, Refugio.]

34 Urrea, Diario..., p. 10. Colonel Garay claimed the force Urrea took to Refugio mission consisted of 200 dragoons and 200 infantrymen, with one four-pounder. The group left at the creek at 7 A.M. the same day.
When Urrea arrived at Refugio Mission on March 14, he found that Captain Pretalia had the enemy pinned down in the church. Urrea reconnoitered the area and claimed that the position of Ward and his men...

This good defensive position which Urrea described also had been described by a member of a volunteer unit from New Orleans, who had camped in the area in January. He said the mission was located on an elevated prairie like the ones at San Antonio, and that at this time the high walls were decayed and the roof weather-beaten. Small houses surrounded the church, and

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35 Lieutenant-Colonel William Ward had been sent to relieve King on the thirteenth, with a party of about one hundred and fifty men. They managed to drive off the enemy, and Ward took command of the situation with the intention of taking King's party and the Refugio families back to Goliad. His men were tired, so he decided to spend the night in Refugio. [One group was not too tired to attack the enemy camp across the river during the night, however.] On the morning of the fourteenth, King went off to some near-by Mexican ranches which he raided and burned; Ward remained at the mission and sent out scouts to reconnoiter the enemy. This group found the enemy approaching in what appeared to be a formidable number, and Ward and his men were forced to take refuge in the mission about ten o'clock in the morning. A small group was dispatched to bring water from the river, and a messenger was sent to Fannin. By the time King returned in the afternoon, Urrea had already arrived and laid siege to the mission. Texas Almanac, 1860, pp. 82-88, cited in Huson, Refugio, pp. 294-296.

36 Urrea, Diario..., p. 10.
a river flowed to the southeast. 37

Ward held the mission with about a hundred men while King and his group were concealed in a thicket about five hundred and eighty yards from the church. By three o'clock in the afternoon all of Urrea's division was at Refugio Mission. 38 The first unsuccessful assault on the mission was made under cover of cannon fire by a group composed primarily of Yucatán recruits who did not speak Spanish, and whose native officers deserted them during the assault. They were hard hit since they could not understand the orders given them to retreat. Colonel Gabriel Nuñez and his dragoons operated against King's group during the afternoon and evening of the fourteenth. Urrea's cavalry failed in an effort to get the artillery in position to fire at the door of the mission. The last major assault of the first day's battle accomplished nothing. Urrea placed guard units around the mission during the night, while the troops that had arrived by forced marches that morning were allowed to get whatever rest was possible in the rain-chilled night.


38This thesis is not intended to deal with the detailed events of the actual battle at Refugio; so the encounter will be reported as briefly as possible. For a more extensive and heavily-documented study of this battle, the recommended source is Huson, Refugio, I, pp. 286-308. Filisola, II, 411, reproduced Colonel Garay's report of the battle.
The next morning Urrea prepared to battle again, but found that Ward and his men had retreated under cover of darkness and rain the previous night. The occupation of the mission revealed "...six wounded men, four others, some colonist families and several Mexicans who had been commandeered..." Urrea sent a cavalry detachment in pursuit of Ward's group that had escaped from the mission, and also reinforced the scouting units which were operating on the roads to Goliad and El Cópano. D. Guadalupe de los Santos and his party of Bandeños rode out to follow King's groups which had fled from their position in the woods on the south side of the river. King and his men attempted to return to Goliad but became lost in the darkness and rain of the previous evening. The party of Bandeños overtook them at a

39 Urrea, Diario..., pp. 11-12; Filisola, Memorias..., II, 411-414, using quotations from Colonel Garay's diary. Garay's men had captured a messenger bearing a communication from Fannin to Ward, ordering him to evacuate his position upon receipt of the order "...regardless of sacrifices he might be compelled to make and the difficulties to be overcome, directing himself without delay to Fort Defiance (so he called La Bahia), where he would expect him without delay on the following day." Garay permitted delivery of this message, without letting the messenger know he could understand its contents. It was this message that resulted in Ward's evacuation of the mission.

40 Urrea, Diario..., p. 12. Colonel D. Rafael de la Vara was left at San Patricio with the wounded, baggage and a detachment of troops to garrison San Patricio and keep El Cópano under observation.
ranch only three miles from the mission. 41 The search parties captured thirty-one rebels on the fifteenth, and fourteen on the sixteenth. Of this group, thirty later were executed in conformity with orders issued previously by Santa-Anna. Urrea claimed that necessity forced him to authorize the executions before his departure on the sixteenth, and that he had spared lives of those who were either colonists or Mexicans. 42 This

41 Urrea, Diario..., p. 10; Filisola, Memorias..., II, 410-413, citing Garay, agree that the leader of the group of civilians that accompanied them to Refugio was D. Guadalupe de los Santos. It was his group that captured King's men.

42 Urrea's claim that the executions were necessary was based on the following remarks he noted in his diary: "The many hardships endured by my division, and the rigor of the climate that was felt particularly by the troops accustomed to one more mild, made my position extremely difficult because of the necessity of properly guarding the adventurers that I had taken prisoners. I constantly heard complaints, and I perceived the vexation of my troops. I received petitions from the officers asking me to comply with the orders of the general-in-chief and those of the supreme government regarding prisoners. These complaints were more loud on this day, because, as our position was not improved, I found myself threatened from El Cópano, Goliad and Victoria. I was obliged to move with rapidity in order to save my division and destroy the forces that threatened us. Ward had escaped with 200 men; the infantry was very poor and found itself much affected by the climate. I was unable, therefore, to carry out the good intentions dictated by my feelings, and I was overcome by the difficult circumstances that surrounded me...." Urrea, Diario..., pp. 12-13. Davenport, "The Men of Goliad," SWHQ, p. 31, prepared a roll that showed seven colonists who were spared by Urrea. Since only thirty out of forty-five were executed and seven of these were colonists, then the other eight spared had to be Mexicans fighting with the American volunteers.
execution, as well as others that were carried out during Urrea's campaign have been severely criticized by those who have failed to consider the type of government that had organized the army in which Urrea served. Santa-Anna, dictator of Mexico and commander-in-chief of the Army of Operations, had caused a decree to be issued in which all foreigners who invaded Mexican territory and bore arms in battle against that government were to be treated as pirates and executed. The Americans in the ill-fated Tampico expedition had been captured and executed in accordance with that decree. Technically, Texas was as much a part of Mexico as Tampico, and there was no reason for the decree to be suspended in the war against Texas. Urrea attempted to save from execution as many as he could possibly classify as "colonists." This was a difficult task at the time, since Fannin himself stated in unequivocal terms that

...among the rise of 400 men at, and near this post [Mission of Refugio], I doubt if twenty-five citizens of Texas can be mustered in the ranks--nay, I am informed, whilst writing the above, that there is not half that number..."

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43 Binkley, I, 402-405. J. W. Fannin to J. W. Robinson and General Council, dated February 7, 1836 at Mission of Refugio. Binkley, I, 285-287; John Sowers Brooks to his sister, dated March 4, 1836 at Fort Defiance, declared that the force at Goliad totaled "...500-all Volunteers..." [The thesis is using primarily the letters, reports, etc., of the war. Later research might have shown more than 25 native-born citizens serving with Fannin. However, by his own words, his roster does not show this.]
If Fannin had used code in his letters, as he had advised his brother-officers to do, then Urrea would not have been in possession of the information that made him determined to pursue and destroy Ward's company. One of Fannin's couriers was captured on the sixteenth with communications addressed to Colonel A. C. Horton at Matagorda and Captain Samuel A. White at Victoria. The two letters revealed that Fannin was awaiting the arrival of Ward and his two hundred men from Refugio so that he could proceed to Victoria as ordered by General Sam Houston. Horton was to evacuate Matagorda and join Fannin in the projected withdrawal, which would consolidate all the effective forces at Victoria. White was ordered to obtain gunpowder and ammunition from Matagorda. With this information in his possession, Urrea, who was on the march to Goliad with a force he numbered at two hundred dragoons and infantrymen, directed Captain Mariano Iraeta and sixty

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Ibid., pp. 474-476; J. W. Fannin to Captains Francis DeSauque and John Chenoweth, dated March 1, 1836. Fannin feared that the enemy would gain valuable information through intercepted communications, so he advised that a code be used that would "...double the alphabet and uniformly an A. for Z. B. for Y. and X for C...inform all officers of this and should any dispatches fall into their hands they will not be the gainers by it."
men to take a position on the road between Victoria and Goliad which would prevent further communication between Fannin and White.  

On March 17 Urrea and his troops left their camp by the San Nicolas Lakes [about nine miles north of Refugio on the road between the missions of Nuestra Señora del Espiritu Santo de Zuñiga and Nuestra Señora del Refugio] and proceeded to the banks of the San Antonio River, where Urrea halted to

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45 Urrea, *Diario...*, pp. 12-13. Santa-Anna had planned to send Urrea reinforcements as soon as he knew the date Urrea planned to reach Goliad. After being informed that Urrea planned to near that town on March 14, Santa-Anna dispatched Colonel Juan Morales to join him on March 11. Morales left Béjar at the head of the San Luis *activos* and Jimenez *permanentes* with a twelve-pounder, an eight-pounder, a mortar and a month's supply of rations. On March 16, Colonel Cayetano Montoya was also sent to reinforce Urrea. He took with him the Tres Villas and Querétaro *activos*, a twelve-pounder and a month's rations. [On March 11, Ramírez y Sesma and Woll had left Béjar for San Felipe at the head of seven hundred and fifty men. General Tolsa was sent to join him on March 16, with the Guerrero Battalion, First Battalion of *activos* from México and forty dragoons from Tampico.] [Almonte's Journal," SWHQ, pp. 23-24; Filisola,"Representacion...", pp. 169-170. [These troop movements were all part of Santa-Anna's secondary thrusts at the colonies after the victory at the Alamo, and will be discussed in detail in Chapter IV of this thesis.]

46 Urrea, *Diario...*, pp. 12-13. Although Fannin's communication to Horton had been intercepted by Urrea's men, he nevertheless joined Fannin at Goliad sometime between the fourteenth and sixteenth. On the eighteenth Horton took his mounted troops and scouted the area toward Béjar, where they encountered Urrea's reinforcements from Béjar camped on the Manehuilla Creek. Horton's riders engaged part of this group in a series of skirmishes on the eighteenth. Davenport, "The Men of Goliad," SWHQ, p. 24; Urrea, *Diario...*, p. 13. Walter Prescott Webb and Carroll H. Bailey, editors, *The Handbook of Texas* (Austin, 1952), II, 559. Davenport says Horton rode into Morales camp on the seventeenth. This error probably resulted from use of Castañeda's *The Mexican Side of the Texan Revolution*. On page 222, the entry for the March 18 has been combined with the events of March 17. The original diary does not contain this error.
reconnoiter the area around Goliad. By this time he had an efficient band of scouts covering the areas between Victoria and Goliad, San Patricio and El Cópano, Refugio and Victoria, and Goliad and Béxar. Prior to Horton's arrival Fannin had been without a cavalry arm and unable to receive exact information concerning either the strength or movements of Urrea's command. Urrea's scouts in the Goliad area had frequently taken advantage of this weakness by riding up to the very walls of Fort Defiance on their scouting soirées. One of these highly effective scouting parties led by Don Juan Antonio de los Santos reported Colonel Morales' approach on the seventeenth. The reinforcements consisted of the Jiménez permanentes and the San Luis activos with a combined strength of five hundred men and three cannon. Urrea sent word for Morales to camp at the previously designated area on the Manahuilla Creek, about two and a half miles north of Fort Defiance, at which point he joined him the next day.

It was into this camp that Colonel Horton inadvertently rode on the afternoon of the eighteenth. Colonel Morales and a large detachment of "picked" troops from the Jiménez and

47 Barker, Readings in Texas History, pp. 286, 289. [Letter of John Sowers Brooks to Mary Ann Brooks, dated March 4, 1836, reprinted on pp. 285-287. Letter of John Sowers Brooks to James Hagerty, dated March 9, 1836, reprinted on pp. 287-289.] In this last cited letter, the writer says that the men at Goliad "...have just been advised that he [Santa-Anna] intends detaching 1,000 men from Béxar to form a junction with the 650 at San Patricio, and then reduce this place. We have 450 men here, and twelve pieces of small artillery. We have strengthened the fort very much; and he will find it difficult with his 1650 men to drive us from our post."
San Luis battalions engaged Horton's band, and drove them back into the fort, from which they employed cannon against Morales' group. Urrea returned to his camp on the San Antonio River and remained there until the nineteenth. To make sure that this quarry would not escape him during the night as Ward's men had done at Refugio, he reinforced all the cavalry units which had been stationed to guard against an unexpected withdrawal.\(^48\)

Urrea was taking no chances on allowing Fannin's command to slip away during the night as Ward's group had done at Refugio. The conditions were similar as Fannin also had received an order to withdraw, and Urrea's pickets were at their assigned places to prevent an escape during the night. The big difference, however, which made it possible for Urrea to rout the Texans at their battle on the twentieth was that Ward acted promptly in response to his order, but Fannin procrastinated.

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\(^{48}\)Urrea, Diario..., p. 13. The night of March 18 brought not only a drop in the mercury, but a strong north wind and continuous rain which made rest impossible.
CHAPTER IV

ENCINAL DEL PERDIDO

The terrain Urrea studied so intently on the afternoon of March 18, and with which his civilian allies were so familiar, stretched away from the town of Goliad, which was situated on the left bank of the San Antonio River, almost a hundred miles from Béxar and about twenty-six miles from the landing of El Cópano. In March of 1836 Goliad was a typical Mexican frontier settlement with a presidio and mission. There were a few stone houses with flat roofs and shuttered windows in which the wealthier citizenry lived. The greater part of the population lived in what the Mexicans called *jacales*, a type of hut-dwelling. The town was bounded by vast Mexican ranches, and it was to these the Mexican inhabitants had fled as early as October of the preceding year. One of Fannin's

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1 Almonte, "Noticia Estadística...", pp. 546-547, described El Cópano as being perfectly situated for a maritime custom house since it was an ideal place for the heavier ships to dock. The area was elevated and heavily wooded, with the Aransas River less than eight miles away and Refugio Creek about an equal distance. There were two roads from El Cópano to Goliad; one was used by carts and wagons while the other was simply a path wide enough for horses. "The port of El Cópano has been inhabited at various times, but right now [1835] there is only one house there."
men described the situation in Goliad at the time of Urrea's approach in this manner:

At the commencement of difficulties between this country and Mexico, this village contained not less than a thousand inhabitants...Since this period the inhabitants, who were...native Mexicans, had gradually retired down the river to another port, and this place is now inhabited...by volunteers. I do not believe there are ten native citizens here at this time. One-third of the place affords ample and comfortable quarters to the soldiers, and the residue is abandoned to cattle and dogs.²

The men whom he hoped to defeat were entrenched in the old presidio which Fannin had rebuilt and strengthened with a type of "half-moon battery," which John Sowers Brooks had designed to cover the entrance to the fort. It had been named Fort Defiance and by March 4 the Americans fully realized the type of war in which they were engaged.

This on the part of the enemy, is to be a war of extermination...They show no quarter; we do not require it; and, indeed, both parties seem to have tacitly contracted, that it shall neither be asked nor given...³

On the night of March 18, when Urrea was encamped by the San Antonio River and Colonel Morales by Manahuilla Creek, Fannin and his officers decided to abandon the fort the following morning and proceed to Victoria.

²Davenport, "The Men of Goliad," SWHQ, p. 11, quoting from accounts of Dr. James Barnard and Joseph T. Williams, who served with Fannin.

³Barker, Readings in Texas History, p. 286. This quotation is taken from a letter written by John Sowers Brooks to Mary Ann Brooks on March 4, 1836, and is reprinted in its entirety on pp. 285-287.
The thick fog which enveloped Goliad and vicinity the next morning could have been turned to Fannin's advantage if he had begun his retreat at any early hour, but he did not initiate the move until about nine or ten. Urrea's scouts, who reported Fannin's departure to Urrea, must have noticed that the Americans were burdened with nine cannon and a slow-moving train of heavily-laden wagons and unmanageable oxen.\(^4\) Urrea followed Fannin around noon with, he claimed, three hundred and sixty infantrymen and eighty dragoons. Colonel D. Francisco Garay remained with the rest of the section and the baggage train at the San Antonio River. He was instructed to explore the fort and occupy it. Urrea preferred to relegate this task to a subordinate and follow the enemy himself in order to "...celebrate my birthday with a military victory...."

After traveling about five miles the ever-active advance scouts reported that Fannin's group was not far ahead, but

\(^4\) Davenport, "The Men of Goliad," SWHQ, p. 24. "...Amateurs to the end, his men brought out all their arms, including the nine cannon and five hundred spare muskets, but loaded all the ammunition in a single oxcart, and forgot to bring along anything they could eat." Ehrenberg, one of the young volunteers later described their retreat in this manner: "...The number and size of the provision and ammunition wagons that we took with us were too large and the power to move them was too small; so that before we have gone half a mile, the way was strewn with objects of all kinds and here and there a wagon that was left standing or knocked to pieces...." Bartholomae thesis, p. 175.
that they appeared not to have retreated with their full force. Afraid of an attack on the artillery and ammunitions which were following him, Urrea ordered one hundred of the infantry to countermarch and protect that unit on its march to overtake him. About 1:30 P.M., Urrea overtook Fannin's command in an open prairie about two miles from the Coleto Creek. The Mexican general positioned his cavalry at the edge of the oak groves closest to Coleto Creek. This maneuver prevented Fannin's advance into the shelter of the timber.

The Americans found themselves isolated on an open prairie and surrounded by Mexican troops. In his diary, Urrea noted that...

...Seeing themselves forced to fight, they decided to make the best of it and awaited our advance with firmness, arranging their force in battle formation with the artillery in the center.5

When Urrea overtook Fannin's command on the prairie he claimed that his troops were "inferior" to Fannin's, but not in numerical strength, since he commanded a force of about fourteen hundred,6 while Fannin's strength did not exceed

5Urrea, Diario..., p. 14. The map which follows this shows the position of the two armies during The Battle of the Coleto. [The map was in the Pearl Hendricks Collection at the University of Texas Archives, and had been used by Andrew Jackson Houston to illustrate his book, Texas Independence (Houston, 1938).]

6This estimate was reached in the following manner: Urrea led 360 infantrymen and 80 dragoons toward Goliad on the nineteenth, but sent 100 infantrymen back to escort the artillery and munitions and this left him with a total force of 340. Morales arrived from Béxar with 500 men. Combined strength of both forces was now 940. Urrea, Diario..., pp. 13-14. We can be certain that two groups of civilian militia and two groups of ranchero scouts were with Urrea, and give a conservative estimate of a total force of 200 for this group. Urrea, Diario..., p. 16. Filisola, "Representacion...," p. 196, shows Morales' group had 667 on April 24, and some had died in the Battle of Coleto by then. Therefore, they could conceivably have numbered about 697 when they joined Urrea.
four hundred. He meant that Fannin had nine cannon which were expertly manned to rain grapeshot that shattered the bayonet-charges Urrea ordered his infantry to execute. The superiority of Fannin's artillery repeatedly impressed Urrea in the first day's battle. He called it a "withering fire ...lively and well directed..." and he was most graphically impressed when it was directed at the cavalry charge which he personally led. Urrea's troops fought well that day, considering the fact that although larger in number, they could not advance without exposing themselves completely to the Americans, many of whom Urrea claimed had "...three and sometimes four loaded guns which they could use at the most critical moments..."

The battle the first day was indecisive. Although they were defending themselves in an open plain, the Americans had set up as bulwarks their wagons and baggage, and from behind these kept up the accurate and murderous fire which repelled the incessant attacks by Urrea's infantry and cavalry. Urrea stubbornly kept ordering his hapless infantry to execute the bayonet-charges, even when they were almost out of ammunition. His insistence in victory at any cost was evident in the frenzied manner that he reassured his troops:

*You do not need your cartridges, for you have your bayonets, and your courage is boundless. The enemy is terrified, and will not be able to resist any longer the charge of such brave Mexicans. I promise you a complete victory.*

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7This estimate is based on Davenport's compiled role of Fannin's command. Davenport, "The Men of Goliad," SWHQ, pp. 32-38.
Duval wrote that the Texan Infantry was in three lines, behind the breastworks. Shackelford and others wrote that they had 10 cannons in action. The Mexican cannon, found at Goliad by Fannin, was the obsolete, split trail type. The Texan cannon, from the United States, was of the single trail type.

Figure 4 - Battlefield of Encinal Del Perdido
That night Urrea ordered his buglers to harass the Americans with false reveille calls, while he moved about the battlefield inspecting his outposts. His scouts revealed that the Americans were also busy digging a ditch all around the "hollow square" they had formed for fighting, and were reinforcing their barricades with the carcasses of dead horses and oxen.

At daybreak Urrea ordered his troops to fall into battle formation, after which they were issued breakfast rations consisting of hardtack and roast meat. The latter was made available to the Mexicans when they captured the enemy's oxen. After breakfast the artillery and ammunitions arrived, escorted by the one hundred infantrymen Urrea had assigned to it the previous afternoon. The artillery was set up about one hundred and seventy feet from Fannin's "square", and the infantry formed a column to advance on the left side when the artillery opened fire. The infantry started moving when the first cannonade sounded, but instead of answering the

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8Urrea, Diario..., pp. 16-17. Urrea claimed he had received two four-pounders and a mortar. Yoakum, II, 95-96, erroneously reports the arrival of Morales on the twentieth; in reality, Morales was already at the battle area.
fire, the Americans raised a white flag.9 Urrea then sent Lieutenant-Colonel D. Juan José Holzinger and the captain of militia D. José de la Luz Gonzalez to learn the enemy's intentions. Holzinger returned with the information that the Americans wished to capitulate. Urrea's reply was that he could only accept a surrender at discretion. Colonels Mariano Salas and Juan Morales joined Holzinger and they returned to the field and parleyed with the enemy's commission, headed by Major B. C. Wallace and Captain Benjamin H. Holland. The Mexican general himself was finally called upon to go to the enemy's camp, and by means of an interpreter addressed Fannin and his officers in these words:

If you wish to surrender at discretion, the matter is ended, but if to the contrary, I shall return to my camp and continue the attack.

9It has been claimed that the Mexicans hauled up a white flag first. Joseph E. Field, Three Years in Texas (Boston, 1836), p. 51; Henry Stuart Foote, Texas and the Texans; or Advance of the Anglo-Americans To The South-West[sic] (Philadelphia, 1841), II, 237, citing an account given by Dr. Jack Shackleford. This hardly seems possible since the arrival of artillery gave Urrea's numerical strength the added power it needed to break down the barricades the Americans had set up. Dr. J. H. Bernard supported Urrea's claim that the Americans showed the white flag first. Wortham, II, 251. Colonel Holzinger, who was no close friend of Urrea's, pictured the surrender in a letter to John A. Wharton on June 3, 1836. He said, "...General Urrea received next morning two pieces of artillery which were placed in a favorable position, but were not to fire unless the enemy made a movement. On learning from one of our outposts that the enemy was moving, orders were given to attack him with the artillery, but when on the third time of firing we perceived that he did not return it, ours was suspended and a quarter of an hour afterwards he was seen to hang out a white flag...." Urrea, Diario..., p. 129.
Under the circumstances Urrea could say nothing else since Santa-Anna’s harsh reprimand for his leniency with King and his men was still fresh in his mind. The most Urrea could offer Fannin was his promise that he would present his recommendations [for clemency] to Santa-Anna. After further talks, Fannin surrendered his forces to Urrea, thus ending what the Americans call the Battle of the Coleto, and which the Mexicans call the Battle of Encinal del Perdido. Urrea claimed that this victory resulted in the enemy’s turning over nine pieces of artillery, three standards, over a thousand rifles, countless pistols in good condition, daggers, and many wagons. He claimed the enemy lost twenty-seven dead, ninety-seven wounded, and about

10Castañeda, The Mexican Side of the Texan Revolution, p. 229, translated this part of the diary to read: "All I could do was to offer him to use my influence with the general-in-chief, which I did from the Guadalupe." This translation is misleading, as it gives the impression that Urrea believed he had influence with Santa-Anna. After receiving the letter dated March 3, it is inconceivable that he entertained any such thought.

Colonel Holzinger stated later that he and the rest of the commissioners who negotiated with the Americans were aware that Santa-Anna had decreed the death penalty for all of those foreigners caught bearing arms in battle against Mexico, and therefore knew that no agreement could be made other than a surrender at discretion. He claimed that Urrea told him that he could give Fannin personal assurance that Urrea would use "influence and endeavors with the Supreme Government for the alleviation of his fate and that of his men, treating them, during the time which would transpire previous to receiving the answer from said Government, as prisoners of war, according to the right of Nations." Urrea emphatically turned down Fannin’s request that Urrea give him a written guarantee that the men would receive clemency. Fannin is quoted as finally saying, "Well, then, I have no water; my wounded need attendance. I particularly recommend to you those unfortunate men, and will deliver myself up to the discretion of the Mexican Government." Urrea, Diario..., pp. 129-130.
two hundred and thirty-four prisoners.\textsuperscript{11} On the Mexican side, Urrea counted eleven killed and fifty-four wounded. He had definitely altered this figure, as a study of the muster rolls after San Jacinto showed that in Morales' two battalions alone there was a drop of ninety-three from their original strength at Saltillo. Granting that two-thirds of this number deserted, died en route to Béxar and at the assault on the Alamo, there are still thirty-one men unaccounted for.\textsuperscript{12}

The type of surrender effected that day near Coleto Creek has been the object of much controversy. The Texans have always maintained that an honorable capitulation took place. Captain Benjamin H. Holland, who acted as one of Fannin's commissioners for negotiating the peace terms, believed that Fannin had surrendered under the conditions that all his men "...should be received and treated as prisoners of war, according to the usages of civilized nations...." Paroles were to be immediately granted to the officers upon their arrival in Goliad. The enlisted men were to be sent to El Cópano within an eight-day period and from there be sent by boat to the United States, under the stipulation that they would not take up arms against Mexico "...until exchanged." In addition to this, all private

\textsuperscript{11}Urrea, \textit{Diario}..., pp. 18, 60-61. Urrea exaggerated the number of prisoners, claiming to have captured about 400. Colonel Garay, in his report to Santa-Anna, said 234 were taken prisoner. This figure is the one accepted by the writer.

\textsuperscript{12}Filisola, II., 474-475. Since civilian militia were fighting with Urrea, the number of dead cited here is only "army dead." The number of civilians dead cannot be determined, since no rosters were kept for those groups.
property was to be respected, the officers’ swords returned when they received their paroles or were released, and all should receive "every comfort and be fed as well as their own men."¹³ Dr. Joseph H. Barnard, another survivor, claims that he saw Fannin and his adjutant Joseph M. Chadwick writing these same articles of capitulation within the lines of the Texan camp, and that these were reproduced in both Spanish and English and signed by both parties.¹⁴

Urrea recorded that a surrender at discretion had taken place. Colonel Holzinger supported this statement in his letter to Wharton, when he stated that Fannin and his officers had held a meeting after Urrea had stipulated that they must surrender at discretion. The Mexican commissioners had waited half an hour within the enemy lines while the Americans talked. When the meeting ended, Fannin and his officers

...declared to us the meeting had come to the resolution of obtaining a guarantee for their lives and effects, and also that their wounded should receive the same treatment as the Mexicans, in virtue of a document to be drawn up, signed by me and ratified by General Urrea. When the General was informed of this, he repeated that he could not make any public treaty, to be signed by anyone on the Mexican side, and that Fannin should show in writing, his surrender at discretion, in which General Urrea insisted, under the promise before made, individually.


¹⁴Ibid., p. 358, citing from John H. Barnard's Journal, p. 21; Field, pp. 51-52.
Urrea's secretary was to write up the surrender terms in both languages, stipulating that a surrender at discretion had been made. After the declaration had been signed, each commander was to retain a copy. The Americans were given an hour to prepare for the surrender. Holzinger definitely states that negotiations ended on the battlefield without any signed document.  

The document that Dr. Barnard insists Fannin was preparing must have been one written during the meeting of which Holzinger spoke in his letter. This assertion is strengthened by a collaborative statement of Urrea. The written terms proposed by Fannin must have been interpreted for Urrea sometime during the talks, because he wrote in his diary that he "...refused to subscribe to [to accede to] the capitulation which they asked for in three articles."  

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16 Ibid., p. 17. "..."repetí á su gefe la imposibilidad en que me hallaba de acceder á otra cosa que á una rendicion en los terminos que habia mandado proponer, por lo que rehusé subscribir la capitulacion que me pedian en tres articulos." Caro, Verdadera Idea..., pp. 12-13, also claims that Fannin had written terms and presented them to Urrea. Talking about the contents of Urrea's report to Santa-Anna concerning the Battle of the Coleto, he noted that Urrea wrote "...that on the following morning he renewed the attack after he had received two pieces of artillery and reenforcements; that the enemy then sent him a short note, written in pencil, proposing several articles of capitulation; and that he replied to this note by saying that he had no authority to enter into any terms, being able to grant only an unconditional surrender." Caro also said that Urrea had enclosed this demand for terms with his report to Santa-Anna.
Professor Eugene C. Barker of the University of Texas found the original surrender document in the files of the Mexican War Department, and it is reproduced in facsimile in Castañeda's *The Mexican Side of the Texan Revolution*.\(^1\)

The document found by Dr. Barker reads:

Art. 1st. The Mexican troops having placed their artillery at a distance of one hundred and seventy paces and beginning to open fire, we raised a white flag and following this Colonels D. Juan Morales and D. Mariano Salas, accompanied by Lieutenant-Colonel of engineers D. Juan José Holzinger, came over and we signified our intention of surrendering at discretion, to which they agreed.

Art. 2nd. That the wounded and their commander Fanning[sic] should be treated with all consideration possible since they intended to surrender their arms.

Art. 3rd. That all the detachment should be treated as prisoners of war and placed at the disposal of the Supreme Government. Camp on the Coleto between Guadalupe and la Bahia, March 20, 1836.--B. C. Walloe Mor. coronel[sic].---J. M. Chadeveek[sic], adjutant.--Approved.--J. W. Fanning, commandant.

[On the bottom of the document, Urrea added this notation:]

When the white flag was raised by the enemy, I sent word to their commander that he had no other recourse but to surrender at discretion, without other conditions, and he agreed to this through his negotiators, the officers before-mentioned; the other demands which the subscribers to this surrender make will not be granted. I have told them this and they are satisfied; as I ought not, cannot, nor wish to, grant any other terms. José Urrea.

\(^1\) Castañeda, *The Mexican Side of the Texan Revolution*, pp. 60-61. Of all the conclusions reached concerning the surrender of Fannin, and the one which seems the most logical and the result of careful study was voiced by Dr. Carlos E. Castañeda who said, "The truth of the matter seems to be that Fannin and his men proposed to surrender on terms; that these were not accepted by Urrea, who nullified all the proposals by his note added at the end of the said terms; and that, due to the fact that all the negotiations were conducted through an interpreter, many were left with the impression that the surrender had been on terms, and not unconditionally." *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63.
The copy of the surrender terms Urrea published in his diary are exactly as the above, except for the last phrase. In the diary, the phrase reads: "...I ought not, cannot, grant any other terms."

The document looks genuine, but one thing which indicates that it might have been tampered with between the time that it was written and the time that Professor Barker found it in the war department archives is that all of the terms were neatly written, as was the notation which Urrea added at the bottom; the words "nor wish" had been inserted at an angle after the notation had been made. Today's student would probably ask that scientific means be used to determine if the same ink was used to write the entire phrase, and if the document had been changed. Until such an experiment is made, this writer cannot accept the words "nor wish" as being written by Urrea. There is too much that argues against Urrea's feelings in that manner. He did not order King and his men executed immediately, nor did he order the death of Fannin and his men. He did all in his power to keep Fannin and Ward's commands alive at Goliad. A man who would risk Santa-Anna's fury to attempt to save American filibusters could never have added the phrase in question.

While on the battlefield on March 20, Urrea still dispatched and received communications. Colonel Garay sent a message reporting that he had taken possession of Goliad [Fort Defiance], where he found eight artillery pieces which the enemy had left
behind. When the Mexicans had entered the settlement the houses were still burning from the fires set by Fannin's men before the retreat. Combustible material prolonged the fires and few of the houses had been saved. In turn, Urrea asked Garay to dispatch a message to Béxar, informing Santa-Anna of the battle. Urrea's reason for not making the report himself at that time was that he was marching to Guadalupe Victoria immediately after issuing instructions for two hundred cavalry to escort Fannin and his command back to Goliad. Urrea then left for Victoria with what he called "...the greater part of the infantry, one cannon, and all the cavalry available." He still feared that Ward's group would successfully hold Victoria and control the crossing of the Guadalupe River at that point.

Urrea occupied Victoria early in the morning of March 21. Some "Mexican tories" were in the settlement, as Urrea stated that

The inhabitants--Mexicans, French and Irish--had been in communication with me, and when I arrived they had arrested six of the enemy who were in the town.

18 Bartholomae thesis, p. 151. Ehrenberg, a member of Horton's group, said that under Fannin's orders his men "...destroyed the whole town of La Bahia by fire, battering down all ruined walls, so as to secure a full sweep of the enemy, should they attack the fort." He also claimed that the artillery left at the fort had been spiked, and excess food burned so it would not fall into the enemy's hands. "A stack of dried meat from near onto 700 steers and the remainder of our meal and corn was set on fire..."

19 Urrea, Diario..., pp. 17-18. Lieutenant-Colonel José Nicolás de la Portilla was appointed commandant of Goliad and given charge of the prisoners who "...to are to remain [there] and await the pleasure of his Excellency..." Caro, p. 13.
About nine o'clock that morning Urrea issued orders for the capture of a party of about twenty Americans which had been sighted on the banks of the Guadalupe River. While this chase was being completed, Captain Pretalia, who was on his way to Victoria, ordered the execution of seven other stragglers who had been picked up in the area between Goliad and Victoria.\footnote{After his retreat from the mission Ward and the major part of his group had marched in a circuitous route to the San Antonio River, which they reached on the third day. Stragglers from this group were picked up at intermittent points by the civilian militia or Mexican soldiers. The group was within the sound of the fighting at the Coleto on the nineteenth, and then continued on through the swamps to Victoria. Smaller groups detached themselves from the main body. One of these groups was arrested in Victoria and turned over to Urrea; some were taken prisoner and converted to workmen; and, others were frequently shot. Ward and the major part of his command reached Victoria about noon on March 21. \textit{Texas Almanac}, 1860, p. 84; Johnson, \textit{Texas and Texans}, I, 434-435.} Urrea also received information, either from scouts or tories, that about one hundred of the enemy had been sighted on the outskirts of town but had managed to evade a group of cavalry which was scouring the area. Urrea believed that the elusive group was heading for Lavaca Bay and decided to march in that direction and cut off their retreat. Before departing on this task, he relayed orders to Goliad for Colonel Morales to join him with the rest of the troops. Morales also received instructions for the safeguarding both of El Cópano and the Goliad prisoners.

The next morning Urrea marched toward "the port known as Linn's House" or Linville. About two o'clock in the afternoon his command of two hundred infantry, fifty horses, and one cannon arrived at a place about twenty-six miles from Victoria.
and two miles from Dimmitt's Landing. Urrea called the place "...the Juntas where four creeks come together...." He was undoubtedly describing the juncture of the Lavaca and Navidad rivers with Sandy Creek and Yerbanís Creek (Mustang Creek). He located Ward and his missing command in some nearby woods. After capturing several Americans who had been assigned to forage for food, one was sent back to Ward's camp with Urrea's message that all avenues had been blocked off and escape from the timbered area was impossible. Ward was to surrender at discretion immediately or "...they would all perish shortly...." After a conference with Urrea, Ward surrendered about one hundred men, including ten officers.21 The Mexican troops spent the night at the capture point, while the cavalry was sent to Linnville, where they confiscated flour, sugar, rice, and potatoes.22 The next morning Urrea returned with his troops and prisoners to Victoria.

21 Huson, Refugio, I, pp. 368-369, cites various "Texian" accounts which claimed that Ward had demanded, and received terms similar to those which Fannin's group claimed they had received. S. T. Brown, in Johnson, Texas and Texans, I, 435; Texas Almanac, 1860, p. 84, also have similar accounts. It is inconceivable that an officer with a large force like Urrea's, and subordinate to Santa-Anna, would even dare to make any concession to the Americans whom Santa-Anna was determined to eradicate.

22 Whenever he confiscated supplies, property, foodstuffs, etc., Urrea seemed compelled to record it and cite Santa-Anna's order to provide for the troops in this manner, as per the letter of March 3.
Word was received from Goliad that Colonel D. Rafael de la Vara, with a command of twenty dragoons and thirty Yucatán infantrymen, had captured eighty prisoners at El Cópano and escorted them to Goliad. Urrea also learned that the second group of reinforcements from Béxar, the Tres Villas and Querétaro activos commanded by Colonel D. Cayetano Montoya, had arrived in Goliad on the twenty-second. After perusal of the communication from Goliad, Urrea instructed scouting parties to cover the area of the Lavaca and Navidad Rivers. His secretary was quite busy that day, judging by Urrea's account of the communications completed. He noted:

I dictated ten orders for the security of Cópano and the prisoners at Goliad, the establishment of hospitals, and the rebuilding of the forts there by the prisoners, excusing from this work only those who were officers. I gave instructions also for all the forces with which I was to continue the campaign to join me, bringing the artillery and the corresponding ammunition.23

He also conducted a survey of the prisoners "...to determine the views and principal aims..." which motivated the officers in Ward's command to fight against Mexico.

23 Urrea's good intentions toward Fannin's command are confirmed by the commandant at Goliad, Lieutenant-Colonel D. Nicolás de la Portilla, who wrote in his diary under the date of March 24: "In compliance with General Urrea's order, we undertook to rebuild the town, beginning with the fort, with the prisoners working all day, except those who are officers." [The scene he related next was one that is more in the line of human interest, but is inserted nevertheless.] "...Their commander Fanning[sic] ate with me today, (meat and a bottle of wine). He proposed a toast to General Urrea. I thanked him and responded with a toast for the Mexican Nation...." Colonel de la Portilla's diary entry, reprinted in Urrea, Diario..., p. 61.
On the twenty-fifth, Ward and seventy-nine others were escorted to Goliad. Among his prisoners Urrea had found some which were skilled in carpentry and boat-building, so he retained about twenty-one workmen at Victoria. He had also decided to send some of the captured surgeons from Goliad to Béxar to tend to those wounded in the taking of the Alamo.24

Ward and his men arrived at Goliad on the twenty-sixth, as did a communication from Urrea requesting that Portilla send him three hundred guns and some ammunition. Handling of the request and receipt of the prisoners was routine work for the commandant at Goliad. At seven that evening a special messenger arrived at Goliad from Béxar with instructions from Santa-Anna for a task that Portilla had never imagined would need to be undertaken. The letter was coldly explicit, stating:

From a communication I have just received from Colonel D. Francisco de Garay, written from there [Goliad], I am informed that there exist two hundred and thirty-four prisoners sent to you by General D. José Urrea, captured [by him] in the action at Encinal del Perdido on the nineteenth and twentieth of this month; and as the Supreme Government has decreed that all foreigners captured bearing arms, warring against the nation shall be treated as pirates, it seems strange that said decree has not been complied with in this

24Ibid., pp. 21, 61. Under the entry for this day, Portilla wrote: "I received orders from General Urrea in Guadalupe Victoria, dealing with various things. He particularly charges me with the care of the wounded." Davenport, "The Men of Goliad," SWH, p. 32, gives the list this historian compiled of the men at Victoria. Foote, II, 245-246. Doctors Joseph H. Bernard and Jack Shackelford were sent to Béxar on April 20. Dr. Shackelford believed that the commander at Béxar had requested a surgeon.
case; for that reason I order you to immediately comply [with said decree] as regards those foreigners subdued by force of arms, who have had the audacity to come to insult the republic, burn the towns, as they have done in Goliad, causing notable damage to the interests[property] of the citizens; and finally, shedding the most worthy blood of Mexicans, whose only crime is to be faithful to their country. I expect your reply to assure me that you have satisfied public vengeance with the punishment of such detestable delinquents. I am transcribing this to you so you will attend to its [the decree's] fulfillment, taking care that hereafter there shall not be even a moment's violation of supreme decrees.25

The order unnerved Portilla to the extent that he kept it a close secret, which he imparted only to Colonel Garay.

To further complicate matters, a communication arrived from Urrea about an hour later, in which he urged Portilla to

Treat the prisoners well, especially Fannin. Keep them busy rebuilding the town and erecting the fort. Feed them with the cattle you will receive from the mission at Refugio.26

By daybreak Portilla had decided to comply with Santa-Anna's command, because he "...considered it superior...." However, the wording of the letter was such that he could interpret it


26 Ibid., pp. 61-62. Translated and reprinted in Castañeda, The Mexican Side of the Texan Revolution, p. 236; Huson, Refugio, I, pp. 373-374, citing Brown, History of Texas, I, 617-618. The emotions that moved him are evident in his two brief comments after receiving Urrea's message: "What a cruel contrast in these instructions! I spent a restless night."
literally, which he did, and thus spared the eighty that had been captured at Cópano by Colonel de la Vara. 27 The most graphic report of the executions was written by Portilla himself when he noted in his diary under the date of March 27, 1836:

I assembled the whole garrison and ordered the prisoners, who were still sleeping, to be awakened. They numbered 445. (The eighty that had just been taken at Cópano and had, consequently, not borne arms against the government, were set aside.) The prisoners were divided into three groups and each was placed in charge of an adequate guard, the first under Agustin Alcerrica, the second under Capt. Luis Balderas, and the third under Capt. Antonio Ramírez. I gave instructions to these officers to carry out the orders of the supreme government and the general-in-chief. This was immediately done. There was a great contrast in the feelings of the officers and the men. Silence prevailed. 28

In Victoria, about ten o'clock in the morning on March 27, Urrea received a communication from Lieutenant-Colonel Portilla, dated at Goliad on the previous evening. Portilla reported receipt of Santa-Anna's orders and his intention to comply with them the following morning at four o'clock. He stated his reason for exempting from execution the prisoners taken at

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27 Binkley, I, 487, 488, 502; Texas Almanac, 1860, pp. 74-75; Yoakum, II, 97; contain detailed information on this group headed by Colonel William P. Miller.

28 Urrea, Diario..., pp. 61-62; Castañeda, The Mexican Side of the Texan Revolution, p. 236. More detailed accounts of Goliad prisoners and massacre can be found in Huson, Refugio, I, pp. 371-379, citing from accounts of survivors; Barnard's Journal, pp. 24-26; Johnson, Texas and Texans, I, 434-436; Bartholomae thesis, pp. 186-190. Most complete list of Goliad victims is found in Davenport, "The Men of Goliad," SWHQ, pp. 28-38. [Portilla's figure 365 as the number to be executed. His letters and diary show he would have not wanted to exaggerate.]
El Cópano, and asked for specific directions as to how to deal with them. The news stunned Urrea, as well as many of the officers of his division. However, they all knew the provisions of the decree by which Santa-Anna meant to destroy all "foreign" opposition in the Texas campaign, and even Urrea must have sensed that his appeal for clemency, which Santa-Anna acknowledged in a letter of March 24, would fall upon deaf ears. Caro, Santa-Anna's secretary, reported the Presidente's anger and displeasure at Urrea for once again daring to ask clemency for the Americans that Santa-Anna hated. He stormed his displeasure because he felt that Urrea should not "...stain his triumphs with a mistaken display of generosity." Santa-Anna's displeasure is the best recommendation that could be given to show Urrea's attitude toward his prisoners.

29Urrea, Diario..., p. 62; Caro, p. 13-14. Caro claimed that Santa-Anna had wanted the eighty men taken at El Cópano, but finally consented to grant them clemency due to the intervention of Captain D. N. Savariego, who plead for mercy as the proxy of Colonel de la Vara who had taken the men prisoners and knew the conditions under which they surrendered. An elaborate investigation was ordered, to be conducted by Cós, to determine the circumstances of the surrender. Until the investigation was concluded, Santa-Anna ordered that the men should only be allowed "one ration of meat a day." Caro was convinced that only Captain Savariego's insistence on clemency, in the face of Santa-Anna's glowering bitterness, had saved the men under Colonel Millier's command. [The letter from Santa-Anna to Urrea, dated March 24, 1836, and which gives a striking verbal picture of the Mexican "hybrid's" impious rationalizations has been translated, and is included in the Appendix.]

The kindness of the camp-follower who was given the title of "The Angel of Goliad," has become a legend of the Texan Revolution. All of the survivors who wrote about their ordeals mentioned her. Shackelford even called her "a ministering angel." Foote, II, 245.
The effects of the massacre on those in the Mexican army who were directly involved varied. Santa-Anna rationalized his conduct in ordering the mass execution by explaining it in this manner:

If, in the execution of a law, no discretion is allowed a judge, can a general in a campaign be expected to exercise greater freedom? ... I cannot be held responsible for the manner in which that officer [Portilla] carried out the law....

Urrea, who had tried to circumvent the decree he considered a license for unwarranted murder, and yet did not want to compromise his personal responsibility as a soldier and Mexican, recorded in excoriating retrospect:

The orders of the general-in-chief with regard to the fate decreed for prisoners were very emphatic. These orders always seemed to me harsh, but they were the inevitable result of the barbarous and inhuman decree which declared outlaws those whom it wished to convert into citizens of the republic. Strange inconsistency in keeping with the confusion that characterized the times!

Colonel Holzinger unjustly accused the "rabble," as he termed the recruits at Goliad, and specifically the Yucatán Indians, of applying pressure to their officers, so that permission would be granted for inhumane treatment of the prisoners and

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30 Santa-Anna, Manifesto..., pp. 18-19.

31 Urrea, Diario..., p. 22. Urrea believed that Santa-Anna issued the order for the execution directly to Goliad because he knew that Urrea might attempt to plead for clemency a second time, and expose Santa-Anna to ridicule. [The underlining is the writer's and was not in the original.]
their ultimate execution. This was untrue, since the execution did not take place until Santa-Anna insisted on it. The leader of the execution troops, Colonel José Nicolas de la Portilla, wrote a bitter and disconsolate letter to Urrea on the afternoon of March 27, after the bodies had been stacked and burned on the outskirts of town. He chastized himself verbally for the cold-blooded murders duty had compelled of him. He said that heretofore he had been willing to accede to all of his superior's wishes, yet no man

...should be required to do more than he is capable of; they [the Yucatán Indians] and I have no doubt been deemed capable for the purpose for which we seem destined; I repeat my conformity to all your commands except the one that turns me into an executioner, with an order to kill more people....

When Portilla's letter reached Urrea on the twenty-eighth, he was already finalizing plans for the continuation of the campaign against the rebels. The part which Urrea's command was to play in this secondary thrust had been outlined for him by Santa-Anna in his letter of March 23. His troops were to sweep the entire coastal area between Victoria and Galveston. [He was to be covered on the left flank by troops commanded by Ramírez y Sesma.] Under no circumstances was he to disregard the decree of the government concerning prisoners.

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32 Caro, p. 77.

33 Urrea, Diario..., pp. 62-63. Letter of Colonel José Nicolás de la Portilla to José Urrea, dated March 27, 1836, at Goliad.
All points to the rear of the march were to be garrisoned for protection against rearguard attack. Generals Tolsa, Ramírez y Sesma and Gaona were heading other units of this operation and Urrea was urged to keep in close contact with each one. In compliance with these orders, Urrea divided his troops into two infantry brigades, the first of which consisted of the Jimenez battalion of permanentes and Queretaro battalion of activos, commanded by Colonel T. Mariano Salas. This group departed on the twenty-eighth with instructions to reconnoiter the ports of Lavaca Bay, and carried with it a twelve-pounder and corresponding artillerymen and munitions for the cannon and guns. The cavalry set off on the twenty-ninth toward the Lavaca and Navidad River areas, while the second brigade departed on the thirtieth for the Villa of Santa-Anna. This last group was composed of the San Luis and Tres Villas battalions of activos, commanded by Colonel Juan Morales, and took with it an artillery unit of two pieces with corresponding shot and munitions for all arms. Captain Telésforo Alavez was left as commandant at Victoria. Urrea left on the last day of March to join the Army of Operations in the second phase of the operation, which was later to be known as the San Jacinto Campaign.

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CHAPTER V

BÉXAR—MARCH, 1836

The strategical plan to be employed by the Mexican army after the capture of Béxar had been alluded to in a communication to Filisola on February 27 in which Santa-Anna had written:

After taking Fort Alamo I shall continue my operations against Goliad and the other fortified places, so that before the rains set in, the campaign shall be absolutely terminated up to the Sabine River, which serves as the boundary line between our republic and the one of the North.1

These plans could not be put into effect until all of his troops were mobilized in Béxar, which did not occur until March 11, when Tolsa's Second Brigade straggled in.2

The new arrivals found that conditions at Béxar were no better than those they had encountered on the march from

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1Filizola thesis, p. 72. This letter is translated in its entirety on pages 70-73.

2Filisola, Memorias..., II, 430-431; "Almonte's Journal," SWHQ, pp. 23-24. Gaona arrived on the seventh with the Querétaro Battalion of activos, Guanajuato auxiliares, two twelve-pounders, two eight-pounders, and two seven-inch mortars, plus corresponding munitions. Woll arrived the same afternoon with a small escort and supplies requested by Santa-Anna, while Filisola and Araga reached Béxar the following day. Andrade's cavalry arrived on the tenth with the commissary and the treasury, and Tolsa's Second Brigade trailed in on the eleventh.
Monclova. Supplies, money, and medicines were still lacking, and the Alamo wounded were dying from lack of medication. Doctor Arroya, who had remained with Cos's wounded in December, had exhausted the drugs left with him at that time, and Santa-Anna had brought only a limited apothecary. Beds were non-existent, so the wounded and sick had to lie either on the ground or on pallets improvised from old cowhides. This condition was not improved up to the evacuation of Béxar in May. The troops existed on a daily ration of a pound of hardtack and one real (about nineteen cents), while the officers found it difficult to buy food on their salaries, since they were not receiving campaign allowances. The men with dependents in camp fared the worst. Although a type of "government store" had been established and flour, chocolate, corn, loaf sugar, and other foodstuffs were available, their prices were exorbitantly high and payment

Sanchez-Garza, pp. 259-262. In a letter published in El Mosquito Mexicano on September 30, 1836, D. Jose F. Moro claimed that Doctors D. Andrs Hurtado and Jose Reyes, along with two assistants, arrived at Béxar after the assault on the Alamo. They found over 200 Alamo wounded, but no provisions made for a hospital, and no surgical supplies available. The apothecary the doctors carried to Béxar was soon consumed, and later requests sent to Matamoros for medical supplies were either ignored or turned down.

Sánchez-Navarro, pp. 85-86; Juan José Andrade, Documentos Que el General Andrade Publica Sobre la Evacuacion de la Ciudad de San Antonio de Béjar, del Departamento de Tejas, A Sus Compatriotas (Monterrey, 1836), reprinted as Section I, in Documentos Para La Historia De La Guerra De Tejas (Mexico, 1952), pp. 1-23 [hereafter this entry will be referred to as Andrade, Documentos...].
was demanded in cash. 5 Sánchez-Navarro claimed that Santa-Anna had enough money in the army treasury to alleviate this suffering, but made no effort to do so. 6

Santa-Anna believed that the capture of Béxar and Urrea's victories over Johnson and Grant marked the end of the major portion of the war, and only small divisions were needed for "mopping up" the remaining pockets of rebels and garrisoning the strategic positions in the three departments of Texas. 7

On March 11 Ramírez y Sesma, accompanied by Woll, left for San Felipe with the Aldama, Matamoros and Toluca Battalions, one hundred dragoons from the Dolores, Vera Cruz and Tampico regiments, and an artillery unit with two six-pounders and

5Filisola, "Representacion...", pp. 169-170; Sánchez-Navarro, p. 86. "...loaf sugar is sold for one peso, flour at a peso a pound, sweet chocolate is two reales per square, corn is three pesos for the almud [two and a half bushels], and so forth.... They tell me that only señor Sesma's table is sumptuous...."

6Santa-Anna's frugality was legendary in the army. It was generally reported by those who had served under him that "...he would rather bestow the rank of colonel on a man than loan him ten pesos...." Ibid., p. 77.

7Filisola, "Representacion...", p. 169; Filisola, Memorias..., II, 436; At this time, Mexico considered the state of Coahuila y Texas to be subdivided into seven departments, four in Coahuila and three in Texas. The departments in Texas were Béxar, Brazos and Nacogdoches. The municipalities in the Department of Béxar were Béxar, Goliad, Victoria and San Patricio. The Department of Brazos consisted of the municipalities of San Felipe, Columbia, Matagorda, Gonzales and Mina (Bastrop), as well as the settlements of Brazoria, Harrisburg, Velasco and Bolivar. The municipalities of Nacogdoches, San Augustine, Liberty and Johnsburg, plus the settlements of Anahuá, Bevelport, Terán and Tanaha, comprised the Department of Nacogdoches. Almonte, "Noticia Estadística...", pp. 544, 553, 560.
corresponding munitions for all arms. This division, which numbered seven hundred and twenty-five men, carried two weeks' rations of hardtack, one month's salaries in cash, and guides familiar with their designated route. They were charged with ferreting out and destroying any rebel units that appeared to be on their way to reinforce Fannin at Goliad or attempting to consolidate. The governmental decree concerning prisoners continued in effect, and foreigners who were in Texas illegally, although not engaged in the revolution, were to be expelled and their goods and property confiscated. All contraband goods were to be appropriated and sent to Béxar to be sold, and the money deposited in the public treasury. Since slavery was prohibited by Mexican law, slaves were to be set free and placed under the protection of the Mexican troops. Ramírez y Sesma was to use his own judgment in dealing with situations not mentioned in his orders.8

On the same day that the Ramírez y Sesma division marched for San Felipe Colonel Juan Morales left for Goliad with the San Luis and Jiménez Battalions, an artillery group with a

8Filisola, Memorias..., II, 436-439; "Almonte's Journal," SWHQ, pp. 23-24. In Filisola, "Representacion..." the general says Ramírez y Sesma took "the battalions of Aldama, Matamoros, and Toluca, 50 men from the mounted regiment of Dolores, and 2 six-pounders, altogether a total of 725 men..." [In cases where the translated "Representacion..." conflicts with the edited Memorias..., the thesis will use the figures given in the latter. Filisola, Memorias..., II, 439, has the letter of instructions from Santa-Anna to Ramírez y Sesma dated March 28, which is probably a misprint, as the orders were issued on March 8.]
twelve-pounder, an eight-pounder, a mortar and sufficient corresponding munitions. One month's rations were issued to this group, which was scheduled to reach Goliad on the eighteenth and join Urrea's division. These troops, as well as Urrea's, would have to depend on foraging for the major part of their needs. Both Morales' and Ramírez y Sesma's divisions were trailed by a horde of camp followers who usually slowed the progress of the troops.9

The divisions also carried with them copies of the proclamation issued by Santa-Anna after the fall of the Alamo. The circular, addressed to the inhabitants of Texas, declared that the Mexican army was in Texas because malicious adventurers under the protection of the United States had invaded Mexican territory with the intention of dismembering it from the republic. The filibusters at the Alamo and San Patricio had been dealt with, but in the process it was discovered that some colonists who had accepted land grants and repeated benefits from the Mexican government had joined the rebels. Since Texas colonists did not have a just reason

9"Almonte's Journal," SWHQ, pp. 23-24; Filisola, Memorias..., II, 431; Urrea, Diario..., pp. 55. "...On the march, discipline is hard to maintain with families along, because the men worry when their women and children fall behind the pace set by the troops. Many leave the ranks to go with their wives and help carry the children. Many times these men also steal, intimidate civilians and use force to get material things for their women and children...." Filisola, Memorias..., II, 277.
for complaint, those found with rebel bands would receive the punishment which Mexican law and public vengeance demanded. In an obvious attempt to conciliate those colonists who had not borne arms, the following was magnanimously included in the decree:

...if we are bound to punish the criminal, we are not the less compelled to protect the innocent. It is thus that the inhabitants of this country, let their origin be whatever it may, who should not appear to have been implicated in such iniquitous rebellion, shall be respected in their persons and property, provided they come forward and report themselves to the commander of the troops within eight days after they should have arrived in their respective settlements, in order to justify their conduct and to receive a document guaranteeing to them the right of enjoying that which lawfully belongs to them ....the good will have nothing to fear. Fulfill always your duties as Mexican citizens, and you may expect the protection and benefit of the laws...

Filisola felt that the Presidente's strategy of detaching the two divisions from the main body of the troops was ill-advised, a concern shared by Captain Sánchez-Navarro, who had been with Cós since the siege of Béxar. This veteran officer wrote in his ledger-diary:

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10 *Telegraph and Texas Register*, October 11, 1836, p. 2. As word of the decree spread, most of the colonists believed that "...all Americans, whether combatants or not, were to be driven from the country, and that the women brought by Santa-Anna with his army were to join his soldiers in forming the advance of a Mexican population that was to occupy the province...." Yoakum, II, 109.
The army has been reunited, and again divided into small units. Take heed! We have to fight a clever [shrewd] enemy, aided [whose maneuvers will be helped] by immense deserts, large forests, and many rivers....señor Sesma marched with his Brigade for the Colorado River, but everyone says he will not be able to cross it unless his excellency the Presidente or one of the other generals goes to assist him...11

Santa-Anna made another decision about this time, to which Filisola also objected. He ordered the following to depart for San Luis Potosí on April 1: General Juan José Andrade and his cavalry regiment; pickets and detachments from the Guerrero, Matamoros and Jiménez battalions of permanentes; pickets and detachments from the Querétaro and First Mexico battalions of activos; all artillery at Béxar and thirty-two transport wagons belonging to the José Lobardero Company. The Presidente thought that the departure of these groups would cut down on the expenses for the rest of the campaign. Filisola's first protest against this move was ignored, as had been his previous observations concerning the campaign. This time, however, the dictator's second-in-command decided to voice his objections in a formal protest which he deemed necessary to safeguard his "...responsibility to the nation for any adverse consequences in our military operations resulting from the measures taken...." Colonel Almonte, one of Santa-Anna's confidentes, agreed to present the letter of

11Sánchez-Navarro, p. 86.
expostulation, in which Filisola advised that Béxar, Goliad and El Cópano be garrisoned prior to the final move against the remaining rebel groups. He emphasized that the army should march en masse to crush the remaining rebel resistance up to the boundary of the Sabine. In addition, vigilant rear guard detachments should be left at all the major river crossings between Béxar and the coast.12

A special courier arrived on the fifteenth, and the news he brought relegated Filisola's protest to a position of secondary importance as far as Santa-Anna was concerned. Barragán, the dictator's puppet-president-ad interim, had died and been replaced by D. Justo José Carro, a political nonentity. The selection of Carro displeased Santa-Anna, who would have preferred that his old friend General D. Nicolás Bravo be selected. The political implications behind Carro's selection worried Santa-Anna to the extent that he seriously considered returning to Mexico and leaving Filisola to continue the campaign. Subsequent communications rendered this departure inadvisable, and on March 18 a carefully worded letter was expedited to the capital expressing the Presidente's cold displeasure at the selection of Carro.13

12 Filisola, "Representacion...," pp. 170-172. Filisola does not specify the date his protest was presented to Santa-Anna, but it had to be prior to the fifteenth, because Almonte left Béxar on that date.

About the same time as the messenger from Mexico City arrived, a rider from Gonzales brought word that the Convention at Washington-on-the-Brazos had declared the independence of Texas, and that the inhabitants of Gonzales had abandoned the town, leaving foodstuffs, household goods and personal effects behind them as they fled in the wake of the Texan revolutionary army.\textsuperscript{14} Receipt of this information, plus Urrea's communication of the previous day, in which he stated that he was on his way to Goliad to battle Fannin's forces at Fort Defiance, resulted in an order for Colonel Cayetano Montoya to march to Goliad the following day with the Tres Villas Battalion of activos, an artillery unit with a twelve-pounder and a supply train with one month's rations. This battalion marched with Colonel John Davis Bradburn and the Tres Villas Battalion of activos, who had received instructions the previous day to proceed to El Cópano and establish a small fort to secure the bay area.

\textsuperscript{14}John M. Swisher, \textit{The Swisher Memoirs}, edited by Rena Maverick Green (San Antonio, 1932), pp. 30-31. This was the beginning of what was later called "The Runaway Scrape." Sam Houston had arrived in Gonzales on the eleventh and remained there until the thirteenth, at which time he ordered a retreat toward the Colorado after Mrs. Dickinson had arrived there and told her story about the fall of the Alamo, confirming the report brought earlier by a Mexican named Anselmo Borgar[a]sic]. Yoakum, II, 473-477, reprinted letters from Sam Houston to James Collingsworth, Chairman of Military Committee, dated March 13 and 15.
and facilitate the entrance of Mexican supply ships. The Presidente also decided to send General D. Eugenio Tolsa to Gonzales with the Guerrero Battalion of permanentes, the First Mexico Battalion of activos and about two hundred dragoons.

On the sixteenth a dispatch arrived from Ramírez y Sesma, who stated that he had found Gonzales nothing but rubbish, fired by the enemy when it departed. He also reported that same enemy force, with a strength of twelve hundred, had been observed moving toward the Colorado and would probably make a stand at Burnam's Ferry where the Goliad Road crossed the Colorado, near present-day La Grange. That same afternoon Tolsa departed from Béxar with a command slightly smaller than the one assigned to him the previous day. He headed the Guerrero Battalion of permanentes and the First Mexico Battalion of activos, and took with him about forty dragoons from the Tampico Regiment. Almonte and a small escort were sent to join Ramírez y Sesma on the eighteenth.

15"Almonte's Journal," SWHQ, p. 124; Filisola, "Representacion..., p. 170; Filisola, Memorias..., II, 436-437. Urrea's report of the force entrenched at Fort Defiance undoubtedly reminded Santa-Anna of the situation he had faced at Béxar, at which time a much-needed twelve-pound cannon was not available. It is significant that the artillery piece he sent with Montoya was a twelve-pounder.

16Filisola, Memorias..., II, 436-437; Filisola, "Representacion..., p. 170; Johnson, Texas and Texans, I, 443; Poote, II, 268-269; "Almonte's Journal," SWHQ, p. 24; William Moses Jones, Texas History Carved in Stone (Houston, 1958), pp. 81-82; Swisher, p. 33. After retreating from Gonzales, Houston had led his troops to Burnam's, arriving there at 4:30 P.M. on March 17. Two days later he moved his army down the river to Beason's Crossing, three miles west of present-day Columbus, at which point he remained for six days. The total strength of Houston's force during this time was between 1,200 and 1,400. Fort Smith, the Quartermaster-General of the Texan revolutionary army made a sworn statement that by March 26, there were 1,360 men in Houston's command. Anson Jones and John H. Wharton also claimed to have made a count, and found 1,570 men at Beason's. Texas Almanac, 1860 (Galveston, 1859), p. 56.
By March 18 four divisions of the Mexican army were deployed in diverse directions: (1) Urrea and his command, on the outskirts of Goliad, effected a junction with the reinforcements headed by Colonel Morales, after which the combined divisions were scheduled to march against Fannin's command. (2) Colonel Montoya moved toward the coast with orders to incorporate one of his battalions with Urrea's forces while the other continued to El Cópano to build a fort. (3) Ramírez y Sesma was on the march to San Felipe, his advance slowed by the scanty subsistence for animals and the women and children attached to his division.17 (4) Tolsa was between the Cibolo River and Gonzales, on his way to join Ramírez y Sesma. All commanders operated under the same basic instructions to wipe out rebel resistance and adhere to the decree concerning prisoners.18

In Béxar Santa-Anna brooded about the political intrigues that might threaten his power, his inability to return to Mexico and the burning of Gonzales. His disposition worsened

17In a letter written on March 17 from Burnam's Crossing, Sam Houston made the following comments concerning Ramírez y Sesma's advance toward the Colorado: "...if they should advance to the Colorado, it will be some time, as there is such scanty subsistence for animals. I have had the impression that the advance upon the Cibolo was to prevent our co-operation with Fannin, and hold us in check....Do let it be known that, on close examination, and upon reflection, the force of Santa Anna has been greatly overrated...." Yoakum, II, 477-478.

as he read the dispatches sent back from Ramírez y Sesma and Tolsa. They reported that the weather was a greater enemy than Houston's army. The only encounter with the latter had been when scouting parties for the opposing forces had skirmished and the Mexican scouts were forced to withdraw, leaving one of their number dead and another captured.¹⁹

Heavy rains plagued the troops, slowing their marches and rendering their weapons useless so that frequent stops had to be made to clean the guns. The inadequate clothing of the troops reduced their effectiveness in the cold and rain. Since their food supplies had run low, the troops resorted to foraging, having to obtain foodstuffs not only for themselves, but also for their dependents trailing the ranks.

The troops, however, ate better on the march to San Felipe than they had before. A large supply of corn and bacon was found near Gonzales and cattle and hogs were available at many of the abandoned homesteads. Dwellings razed by fires set by owners when they fled, and fields and pastures reduced to blackened stubble became a familiar scene to the Mexican army as it advanced toward the Colorado.²⁰


²⁰Filisola, Memorias..., II, 439; "Almonte's Journal," SWHQ, pp. 25-28; Yoakum, II, 480-482. These pages contain a reprint of the letter written by Inspector-General of the Texan revolutionary army G. W. Hockley to Secretary of War Thomas J. Husk, dated March 23, at Beason's Crossing.
biographer of Santa-Anna described the second phase of the campaign in this manner:

...the military policy of the Texans hinged on winning the final battle and not the intermediate ones; in a country without resources, and against an army that fought thousands of kilometers from its potential supply centers, they [the rebels] applied the scorched earth technique which had enabled the Russians to defeat Napoleon in 1812.21

Ramírez y Sesma's division reached the banks of the Colorado on March 22 and encamped on the left side of the river opposite Dewer's Crossing, two miles above Beason's. After the arrival of Tolsa's force on the twenty-fourth, Ramírez y Sesma assumed over-all command of a force which numbered about fourteen hundred.22

The conflict of military necessities and political uneasiness climaxed in a public display of the Presidente's acerbity on March 21 during a memorial service for Barragán, when Santa-Anna, without any apparent provocation, loudly harangued several officers. Castrillón, at that time a close

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21 Fuentes-Mares, p. 157. By March 21, Houston's scouts had learned that the Mexican army had been divided and two different lines of march established—to San Felipe and Goliad. He knew the approximate strength of Tolsa and Ramírez y Sesma's divisions and the number of artillery pieces they carried. The rebel scouts were active and kept the Mexican troops under constant surveillance, operating in an area that was familiar to them, but foreign to the Mexicans. Inspector-General G. W. Hookley to Thomas J. Busk, letter of March 21, at Beason's Crossing; reprinted in Yoakum, II, 479-480.

friend, later reproached him for such conduct in front of the troops. Santa-Anna excused his actions by saying that circumstances had pressured him to behave in that manner.²³

On this same date Fannin’s command surrendered at Encinal del Perdido, the news of which reached Béxar on the twenty-third. The Presidente had decided by this time to send General D. Antonio Gaona to secure Nacogdoches and then proceed from there to clear the Department of Nacogdoches of all rebel groups. This division’s line of march followed the Old San Antonio Road to Bastrop and Nacogdoches, then through Angelina, Alabama and Zavala. Gaona commanded the Morelos Battalion of permanentes, Guanajuato Battalion of auxiliares, an artillery unit with one eight-pounder, two four-pounders and corresponding munitions, and twenty presidial soldiers. The group, issued rations for forty days, departed from Béxar on the twenty-fourth with an estimated strength of seven hundred and twenty-five.²⁴

²³Sanchez-Garza, p. 117.

²⁴Filisola, "Representacion...,"p. 170; Filisola, Memorias..., II, 431. The description and strength of the force is based on the information in both sources, with one difference; in the former citation, Filisola said that fifty convicts accompanied Gaona’s group. [At Saltillo, the total strength of these battalions was 593; at Old Fort on April 24, they numbered 667, which meant only a slight loss of 26 men in the entire campaign up to the time the retreat began.] Santa-Anna cited the strength of Gaona’s force as 700. Ibid.,p#53, quoting from the dictator’s Manifesto....
The day before Gaona's departure Santa-Anna sent detailed communications to Urrea and Ramírez y Sesma. At that time, he was under the impression that Urrea had already defeated Fannin and that Ramírez y Sesma had occupied San Felipe. Urrea was instructed to move toward Victoria, Lavaca, Matagorda, Columbia, Brazoria and Crozimbo, as far as the Brazos River, north to the San Bernard. Before starting on this second phase of the campaign, El Cópano and Goliad should be secured. Ramírez y Sesma was to leave San Felipe garrisoned and proceed to Harrisburg and the San Jacinto River area. Tolsa's Guerrero Battalion of permanentes, the First Mexico Battalion of activos and forty dragoons were to scour the area encompassing Bolivar, West Bay and Halls Bayou and move as far as Galveston, where Mexican ships were expected to land additional troops scheduled to operate against East Bay, Double Bayou, Anahuac and Liberty. Both Urrea and Ramírez y Sesma were urged to keep in close communication with each other, as well as with Gaona, and to coordinate their troop movements whenever possible.

Since provisions were so scarce, the army was urged to "live off the land." The weather, which had menaced and delayed maneuvers since the beginning of the campaign, was no better; Santa-Anna advocated that all troop movements be carefully planned and executed promptly in order "...to
expedite the completion of the campaign so that it will not be necessary to become bogged down in the rainy season." The only portion of these orders which could be immediately realized were those pertaining to Urrea's command. After receipt of Colonel D. Francisco Garay's communication relaying Urrea's news of the defeat at Encinal del Perdido, the Presidente dispatched a second letter to Urrea expressing his satisfaction at the defeat of the enemy. He repeated his instructions given in the letter written earlier the same day, and reemphasized the necessity of Urrea's maintaining contact with Gaona, Tolsa and Ramírez y Sesma, and of coordinating troop movements whenever possible. For the first time Santa-Anna ordered that collaborators be arrested and sent to Béxar. A third communication, bearing the same date, contained a copy of the letter written that day to Colonel D. Nicolas de la Portilla, commandante at Goliad, ordering him to execute all the prisoners previously captured in battle by Urrea's division. On the following day, March 24,

25Urrea, Diario..., pp. 55-56, contain reprints of letters from Santa-Anna to Ramírez y Sesma and Urrea, dated March 23. "The small rivers and streams are fordable in the summer and winter, and there are some in the department of Nacogdoches that have bridges. At the large rivers one finds ferryboats or canoes used for crossing; however, in the rainy season it is difficult to cross these rivers and streams because of their rocky beds, the miry places formed by their overflow, and uncertain condition of the ferries and canoes; in this case, the crossing is effected on rafts or by swimming....The best time to travel in Texas is March, April and May; and, September, October and November, particularly in the department of the Brazos." Almonte, "Noticia Estadistica...," p. 577.
Santa-Anna sent a personal letter, in which the Presidente congratulated Urrea on his victory over Fannin, reminded him of the governmental decree concerning rebels captured in battle, and set forth the dictator's tenets regarding the type of war being waged.26

When news of Santa-Anna's order to execute the Goliad prisoners spread through Béxar, the majority of the officers found it hard to hide their disgust. They knew of Urrea's plea for clemency, and the Presidente's inflexibility in that regard. The animosity aroused by Santa-Anna's decision was so extensive that even his close friends were embittered by the realization that such an infamous act would cause later generations to believe that the Mexican army which invaded Texas in 1836 was "...as barbarous as some of the armies of the Middle Ages."27 When Santa-Anna ordered the execution of Major W. P. Miller and his men, he found himself opposed by a small body of determined officers whose tenacity resulted in an unexpected reprieve for the men captured at El Cópano. Cós was appointed to head an investigating committee to determine the circumstances surrounding the surrender of this group.

A deposition concerning Major Miller's surrender was given by Captain D. N. Savariego, who, on behalf of Colonel Rafael de la Vara, had first urged clemency for Miller's men. Action

26Urrea, Diario..., pp. 55-56, 59-62. [Letters are reprinted in full.]

27Sanchez-Garza, p. 116-117.
on the fate of the prisoners was delayed until additional information could be secured from Goliad. It was only by the intercession of these officers that the volunteers taken by de la Vara at El Cóp ano were spared execution as decreed solely by Santa-Anna. Since they had surrendered without having borne arms against the Mexican government, the government decree did not apply in their case.28

On March 25 special couriers were sent to Urrea and Gaona with instruction to converge on San Felipe de Austin after crossing the Colorado. Urrea would march toward the rendezvous point after occupying Brazoria, while Gaona would proceed there after taking possession of Bastrop. On the twenty-sixth an express rider reached Béxar with a detailed communication from Ramírez y Sesma on the Colorado. Santa-Anna learned that after Tolsa's arrival at Dewer's on the twenty-fourth, the troops had dried and cleaned their weapons and equipment,

28 Caro, Verdadera Idea..., pp. 13-14; Sánchez-Navarro, p. 86. A nineteenth-century Mexican historian wrote: "Unfortunately for us, acts of cruelty were perpetrated in this campaign not deserving extenuation, such as that of Fanning[sic], the Refugio and others. But the national censure which fell on their authors proved that they had been viewed with disgust. The responsibility ought to be borne exclusively by those who committed them. Other acts of clemency and humanity frequently repeated in this war and afterwards exonerate us from the charge which has been made of barbarity and wickedness...." Ramon Alcaraz, Notes for the History of the War Between Mexico and the United States, translated and edited by Albert C. Ramsey (New York, 1850), p. 169.
while Ramírez y Sesma, Woll, Tolsa and Colonel Almonte held a council to discuss the military situation. Twelve hundred rebels camped on the opposite side prevented their passage of the river. Any attempt to cross would probably result in a considerable loss of men, as the rebels defending Dewer's were well-situated in a wooded area extremely favorable for both observation and defensive purposes. The flanks and front of their position had been reinforced by barricades of trees and brush.  

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The communication requested that the commander-in-chief make either of two moves: (1) Send a group of reinforcements to the Colorado, swelling Ramírez y Sesma's command to a strength of almost two thousand, which could then be divided into two sections for operations to effect the crossing of the Colorado in spite of rebel resistance. One section would divert the enemy's attention by pretending to attempt crossings at Beason's, Dewer's and Atascosito, while the other section would march forty miles farther down the river and cross at that

29Filisola, Memorias..., II, 440-441; Filisola, "Representacion... p. 172; Houston's men, encamped at Beason's, had deployed sizeable detachments at Dewer's Crossing and the Atascosito Crossing, below Beason's, about eight miles below present-day Columbus. Houston intended "...to remain stationary, unless offensive operations shall be justified by circumstances or reinforcements.... The enemy are undoubtedly near to the opposite bank, and will probably soon attempt crossing the Colorado; but, from our present position, we can effectually command any point at which he may attempt it.... They are building a boat and intend crossing near us...." G. W. Hockley, Inspector-General of the Army to Thomas J. Rusk, Secretary of War, dated March 23, 1836, at Beason's; reprinted in Yoakum, II, 481-482. [As has been seen, however, Ramírez y Sesma, cautious as usual, remained on the west bank of the river, awaited Tolsa's arrival, then held a council and asked Santa-Anna for help.]
point. (2) Dispatch a force to approach the Colorado from the Lavaca River at a point well below the Atascosito. This strategy would divert the attention of the rebels, so they would dispatch troops to battle the Mexican force approaching from the Lavaca River, and reduce the strength of the detachment opposing the crossing at Dewer's. If the enemy were occupied in this manner, no help could be sent to Fannin's command at Goliad. Even if an attempt were made to send troops to Goliad, the revolutionary forces would be divided further into small groups that could be more easily defeated.

Santa-Anna also was informed that, awaiting his orders, the troops would build rafts to transport the troops and equipment across the river at the earliest opportunity. Consequently, Santa-Anna ordered post-haste that Ramírez y Sesma not attempt a crossing unless the rebels abandoned their defenses at that point. Colonel Augustín Amat would depart to reinforce Ramírez y Sesma on the twenty-ninth, at the head of the Battalion of Zapadores and the Guadalajara Battalion of activos taking two four-pounders, and one mortar. The supply train would carry enough munitions for all the weapons and one month's rations for six hundred men. Santa-Anna, his staff, Filisola, Cós, and a cavalry escort would leave to join Ramírez y Sesma on March 30. Andrade's departure for San Luis was cancelled, and he was ordered to remain at Béxar with his cavalry regiments (which had lost over two hundred horses since their departure from Monclova), a detachment of infantry
and all the sick and wounded, plus a multitude of camp-followers. Santa-Anna gave Andrade an order to notify Mexico City of his departure for San Felipe. Other than this, he gave no further instructions, but did leave five thousand pesos to defray expenses, an incomplete commissary, artillerymen with the twelve-pounders and eight-pounders, and all the equipment belonging to the pontoniers and sappers. Captain José Juan Sánchez-Navarro was ordered to head the escort that would accompany Generals Arago, Cañedo and Mendoza to Matamoros.

When Santa-Anna left Béxar on March 31, he left behind him a general fuming from lack of orders, over two hundred hospital cases dying from lack of medical supplies and a perplexed veteran officer who wondered

Why does his excellency not remain in this city?...he takes with him his excellent señores Filisola and Cós...and leaves here all the twelve-pound and eight-pound artillery pieces, and all the equipment belonging to the pontoniers and sappers. I believe that his excellency has no idea of the great rivers, deep arroyos, lakes and dense forests through which he will have to travel. I pray for God to look with favor upon his excellency and all

30Filisola, Memorias..., II, 441-442; Filisola, "Representacion...," p. 172; "Almonte's Journal," SWHO, p. 27; Andrade, Documentos..., Section I, pp. 3-5.

31Andrade, Documentos..., Section I, pp. 4-5; Sánchez-Navarro, pp. 87-88. Sánchez-Navarro had requested to accompany Cós during the remainder of the campaign, however "...it was denied me because he [Santa-Anna] says that the campaign is already finished. I cannot persuade myself that this is true."
those who accompany him! However, I very much fear the realization of that old adage "He who triumphs by luck alone [without making plans for battle], loses everything when he meets defeat." 

This was a stark description of what lay ahead for Santa-Anna as his carriage rolled out of Béxar on the road which would end at San Jacinto.

32 Ibid., p. 88.
By the time Santa-Anna left Béxar on the last day of March, Houston's troops had abandoned their defense of the Colorado and retreated to the Brazos. During the five-day period that the opposing armies faced each other, neither had undertaken major action. Scouting parties skirmished occasionally and enough Mexican prisoners were taken to keep Houston informed of activities in Ramírez y Sesma's camp. The cold weather slowed the Mexican soldiers

1 In a letter to R. R. Royal, dated March 24, Sam Houston declared his intention to make a stand on the Colorado. Yoakum, II, 485. He ordered a retreat from that place on the twenty-sixth, after learning of Fannin's defeat at the Coleto. The retreating army moved back toward San Felipe, stopping at Mill Creek on the twenty-ninth and arriving at the Brazos on the evening of the thirty-first. They camped "...in a secure and effective position, with excellent water from a lake immediately ahead, and a most beautiful spot of the Brasos[sic] timber, about three-fourths of a mile ahead, on the road leading to Groce's ferry...." Houston had also appropriated a steamboat at the landing. G. W. Hockley, Inspector-General to Thomas J. Rusk, Secretary of War, dated April 1. Yoakum, II, 488-489.

It is evident that there was more than the usual amount of dissension in Houston's camp, for in a letter written to Thomas J. Rusk on March 29, he flatly stated: ". . . had I consulted the wishes of all, I should have been like the ass between two stacks of hay...." In one respect, Santa-Anna and Houston were undeniably alike, since they both kept their own counsel, and told no one their strategy. In the same letter to Rusk, Houston stated, ". . . I consulted none--I held no councils-of-war. If I err, the blame is mine...." Yoakum, II, 485-486.

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assigned to raft construction, while the heavy rains not only raised the river to flood level but kept weapons and equipment waterlogged.

On March 26 the Mexican troops marched down the river to the Atascosito Ford about eight miles below present-day Columbus, while Houston's army retreated toward the Brazos. The latter group had learned of Fannin's defeat before they left Beason's, but the Mexican troops received the news while marching to the lower crossing. Due to the miry roads, they did not arrive at the Atascosito until noon of the following day. Reconnaissance units reported that the enemy had retreated, and the construction of rafts commenced about three in the afternoon. The first attempted crossing was made at approximately ten o'clock that night, but failed. Successive attempts also failed, and the project was discontinued shortly after midnight.

Heavy rains and biting winds plagued the Mexican troops and kept them pinned down at the Atascosito for one week. The problems besetting Ramírez y Sesma were best described by Santa-Anna's close friend, Colonel Almonte, who wrote:

[March 28] Commenced cloudy, and rained until 8 o'clock, and afterwards at intervals; a violent gust of wind passed over the camp in the night; continued working at the rafts, and at a bridge for the infantry, but little was done at the rafts, and the bridge could not be made on account of the strength of the current....[March 29]...The river commenced rising in the night, and half past 9 o'clock, had already risen 4 1/2 feet....[March 30] At daylight, the river had risen 3 1/2 yards, and the crossing ropes were broken 4 times.
The weather cleared on the first, and a division of troops, the baggage train and stock were successfully ferried over. Rain impeded the work on the second, but clear weather on the third enabled the last group of soldiers to cross.² The ever-cautious Ramírez y Sesma dispatched a courier to his commander-in-chief advising him that due to the incessant rainfall the Colorado was rising dangerously and that ferrying the troops, cannon, supplies and ammunition was extremely hazardous. He assured the Presidente, however, that he was doing everything possible to hasten the operation.³

Communications from Santa-Anna Arrived on the thirtieth and thirty-first informing Ramírez y Sesma that

²"Almonte's Journal," SWHQ, pp. 27-29. In his statistical report on Texas, Almonte stated that both the Brazos and Colorado rivers overflowed during the rainy season, flooding adjacent areas up to five miles distant. Almonte, "Noticia Estadistica...," p. 558.

In a letter to Thomas J. Rusk on April 3, Houston claimed the Mexican troops would find "...it is almost impossible for them to pass the prairies, owing to the rains that have fallen since we passed - then it was only possible for us to pass with our wagons. If they come, their artillery must come. They must raft it over the Colorado, which is very high, as I am informed. It must be out of its banks." Yoakum, II, 489-490.

³Vicente Filisola, Evacuation of Texas. Translation of the Representation Addressed To The Supreme Government By General Vicente Filisola, In Defence Of His Honor And Explanation of His Operations As Commander-In-Chief Of The Army Against Texas, with an introduction by James M. Day (Waco, 1965), p. 11. [This is a facsimile reproduction of the original translation by George Louis Hammeken which was published by G. and T. H. Borden, public printers in 1837. Hereafter, this entry will be cited as Filisola, Evacuation of Texas....] Santa-Anna had left Béxar on schedule and received Ramírez y Sesma's communication on the second day's journey. Caro, Verdadera Idea..., p. 17.
Colonel D. Agustin Amat was on his way with six hundred men and that Santa-Anna himself would leave Béxar on the thirty-first to assume command of those troops now in the field. Horsemen reached the Colorado on March 31 and April 2 with dispatches from Urrea, detailing his march to Matagorda, which he intended to reach by April 4. He emphasized Santa-Anna's orders that the divisions slated to converge on San Felipe keep in constant communication and requested that all messages for him from Gaona or Ramírez y Sesma be sent to Matagorda. He also enclosed two copies of Santa-Anna's letter of March 27 which included the lines of march of the three divisions. Ramírez y Sesma was to forward one copy to Gaona, along with the letter informing him of Urrea's whereabouts. The rider who arrived on March 31 returned to the coast the same day to report that Ramírez y Sesma planned to arrive in San Felipe by April 5.4

On April 3 an American prisoner was sent to reconnoiter the Texan camp opposite Dewer's, and his report definitely confirmed the fact that the Americans had abandoned their positions on the Colorado and retreated toward San Felipe.5

On the following evening Santa-Anna and his staff arrived at the Atascosito and joined Ramírez y Sesma the following


5 The prisoner was captured on April 1 and identified simply as "...Smith, supposed to be of those who were routed at Goliad." "Almonte's Journal," SWHQ, p. 29.
morning. He left Filisola at the Guadalupe River supervising the crossing of Colonel Amat's small division, Ampudia's artillery unit, and about a dozen supply wagons. A courier arrived from Gaona on the sixth and reported that Mexican troops were in possession of Bastrop.

Had Gaona gone into details, Santa-Anna would have learned that after leaving Béjar on March 24 Gaona's division had executed an uneventful march along the old Béjar road to Nacogdoches, arriving at the Colorado on April 2. The biggest problem encountered on the week-long march had been a scarcity of foodstuffs, which was remedied by the appropriation of some beeves at San Marcos and the killing of game in the same area. Captain D. Nicolas Infanzon's reconnaissance group had preceded the division to locate a crossing and obtain a ferry or canoes to transport the division across the river. They failed to obtain any mode of transportation and reported an absence of material to construct rafts. This bad news was offset by their discovery of foodstuffs at an abandoned homestead. Transportation was finally obtained and the troops began crossing the river early in the afternoon on April 3. Captains Infanzon and Morlet were the first to cross

6Ibid., p. 30. "The 2d of April we arrived at Gonzales; the river was swollen, and it was necessary to construct a raft to pass it, &c. The impatience of his Excellency did not admit of delay, and on the 3d he determined to continue on to the Colorado with his staff and a picket of cavalry, to join Mr. Sesma; leaving to me the charge of the operation of passing the river…." Filisola, The Evacuation of Texas..., p. 11.
with segments of the Guanajuato Battalion of auxiliares, and they immediately moved into the abandoned town of Bastrop and began sacking it. Two companies of the Morelos Battalion joined the looters, while the rest of the troops remained on the west bank of the river. The most vivid picture of the pillagers was given by an officer who accompanied the group and was disgusted by their conduct. He wrote:

...when muster was sounded the soldiers who had dispersed through the town fell in, weighed down with booty, ridiculously attired and the majority inebriated, having discovered large quantities of liquor in the abandoned homes.

Infanzon collected the plunder and stored it in a house he had appropriated for his quarters, promising to redistribute it accordingly among all the men in the brigade. Twenty men were assigned to guard the spoils, which were never divided, but instead were secretly taken to Gaona's personal commissary and kept under guard by D. Francisco García, Gaona's aide-de-camp. A quantity of useless goods not wanted by Gaona and Infanzon was proffered to the officers of the brigade, but they were disgusted with the furtive manner in which the more valuable goods had been appropriated and declined the inutile effects.7 For the first time since they left Monclova, the

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7The articles which these soldiers considered worthless were books written in English, crockery, starch, mirrors, two large clocks and a few disreputable-looking trunks. Filisola, Memorias..., II, 434, citing an account by an unknown diarist. [The details of Gaona's march are the least known of all. Most of this information has been obtained from the edited Filisola, Memorias..., and from Documentos Para La Historia De La Guerra de Texas.]
soldiers had more than enough to eat. The overabundance of beeves, hogs, cured hams, beans and corn led many of the half-starved soldiers to become ill from overeating.

The artillery, munitions, supply wagons and a large body of troops were still stranded on the west side of the Colorado. The engineer assigned to build a raft appropriated the irreplacable water barrels for this project. He also obtained all the ropes carried by the scouts in order to braid a stream cable strong enough to act as a pulley for the raft. Two unsuccessful attempts to bridge the rising currents of the river resulted in the loss of two rafts and a like number of cables. This fiasco left Gaona's section without water barrels or ropes. The rest of the division was eventually ferried across in a patched-up boat, which some colonists had left half-finished when they fled from Bastrop. After all the troops were in Bastrop, Gaona sent his report to Santa-Anna by special courier, who as previously mentioned, delivered the missive to the commander-in-chief on the sixth.  

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8Filisola, Memorias..., II, 431-435. Various military men issued a statement on August 12, 1836, which was printed in the Mercurio de Matamoros. In part it read: "...Having arrived at Wastrod [Bastrop] where they met no resistance, they seized the stores and property of the inhabitants, and in order to transport his [Gaona's] booty, he delayed the march of his division for more than eight days...." Documentos Para La Historia De La Guerra De Tejas, Section 7.
On the same day that Gaona's messenger arrived Santa-Anna ordered him to return to Bastrop with an important communication instructing Gaona to hasten his division's march to San Felipe to join the other two divisions scheduled to rendezvous at that point. Woll was left at the Colorado with a detachment assigned to construct rafts to be used later by Filisola and the division under his command. Santa-Anna proceeded toward San Felipe, well ahead of the infantry which sloshed along in the mud. The troops bivouacked that night on the left bank of the San Bernard. The next morning the Presidente left camp at two o'clock with eighty dragoons and two hundred riflemen with which he planned a dawn surprise attack on San Felipe. This maneuver was not realized, as his small force did not reach its objective until after daybreak. Had he arrived before then the maneuver would still have been a failure since San Felipe had been abandoned and burned.9

9Filisola, Memorias..., II, 455, quoting Santa-Anna; "Almonte's Journal," SWHQ, pp. 30-31; Riva-Palacio, México a Través de los Siglos, IV, 370.

The burning of San Felipe was blamed on Sam Houston who always denied that he ordered such an action. Mosley Baker, who commanded the force left to oppose the Mexican troops after Houston retreated to the Brazos, claimed Houston gave him the order to burn the town. Eugene C. Barker, "The San Jacinto Campaign," The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, IV (April, 1901), p. 270. Sion R. Bostick, who was one of those who captured Santa-Anna after the battle at San Jacinto, was with Baker's command when San Felipe was burned. He reported the action in this manner: "...After the Mexicans crossed the Colorado river, General Houston ordered us to cross over the river and burn San Felipe. The people had already abandoned the place, leaving everything they had in the houses and stores. We obeyed our orders, but remained in camp on the east side of the Brazos opposite San Felipe, and placed a picket guard on the west side to give notice of the approach of the Mexicans...." "Reminiscences of Sion R. Bostick," The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, V (October, 1901), 91.
A captured American, who claimed to belong to a one hundred and fifty-man force which had been stationed in a defensive position on the east bank of the Brazos, stated that Sam Houston had ordered Gonzales and San Felipe burned to prevent the Mexican army from obtaining any aid or supplies. Houston was said to be in a wooded area near Groce's Crossing about thirty-nine miles up the river with a force of about eight hundred men with whom he would retreat toward the Trinity River whenever the Mexican army crossed the Brazos.10

The rebels to which the prisoner belonged had felled trees and dug trenches to provide protection in their defense of the crossing. The Mexicans situated two six-pounders at advantageous positions on the west bank and rained grapeshot on the rebel position; the sharpshooters coordinated their fire with that of their cannon, but the small force of Americans managed to hold the crossing confining the Mexican force in San Felipe. The damage inflicted on this, and other Mexican forces, by smaller groups of rebels usually was credited to the bravery and skill of the Americans operating

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10Filisola, Memorias...II, 455, quoting Santa-Anna. Houston would have been surprised to know that Santa-Anna possessed such exact information concerning Mosley Baker's force which had been left at San Felipe. In a letter of April 9 to David Thomas, acting Secretary of War, Houston said, "The enemy are firing at San Felipe today. I reinforced the post by forty-five men. They will now have at least one hundred and fifty men...The enemy have no idea of our force there, and can not suppose it to exceed, at that point, fifty men..." Yoakum, II, 493-494.
against inept and near-savage peons.11 While bravery was a characteristic of a majority of the Americans, they also were aided in their battles by the fact that Mexican gunpowder was little better than pounded charcoal of extra poor quality. A volunteer maintained that this powder "...burnt so badly that we could clearly account for the inefficacy of the enemy's fire." The double Dupont powder used by the Americans was vastly superior and effective.12 Unable to effect a crossing of the Brazos at San Felipe, Santa-Anna determined to locate a ford further down the river.

On April 8 he dispatched a courier to Filisola informing him that he was leaving the following day to locate a crossing below San Felipe. Urrea was supposed to be operating in the Brazoria and Columbia and thus Santa-Anna's right flank would be protected when he crossed the river. Ramírez y Sesma was to remain at San Felipe with a detachment and await Filisola's arrival. If Filisola arrived before Gaona, a rider was to be dispatched to Gaona with orders to hasten to San Felipe. While awaiting Gaona's arrival Filisola was to reconnoiter the river along each bank, up to a distance of thirteen miles,


to find at least one place at which a canoe and scow could be launched to transport the troops across the Brazos. Five hundred infantrymen were to cross and destroy the enemy forces holding the San Felipe crossing. The way would then be cleared for the remaining troops, artillery and supplies to be ferried across. After this Gaona was to be sent to Harrisburg, where Santa-Anna would join him.¹³

On April 9 Santa-Anna, at the head of five hundred grenadiers and fifty dragoons, started down the river. The flooding river, the severity of the forced marches and the incessant rain and cold had resulted in much dissatisfaction in the ranks, but the Presidente determinedly continued the march, bivouacking that night at a farm on the left bank of the San Bernard. Dissatisfaction eased slightly when a

¹³Filizola thesis, pp. 34-86, Santa-Anna to Filisola, dated April 8 at San Felipe; Filisola, Evacuation of Texas, p. 11.

Santa-Anna's order to Gaona, which he received on April 9, was to proceed immediately to San Felipe to effect a junction with the main body of the Mexican army. Gaona did not leave Bastrop until April 11, later explaining his delay by saying the troops were employed braiding ropes to replace the ones lost during the attempted crossings of the Colorado. His slow march was explained by the fact that he had an over-loaded supply train and many sick soldiers who needed transportation; officers even had to walk and allow the sick to ride their mounts. Since the area was unknown to them and no guides were available, the division became lost in the area between Bastrop and San Felipe. Filisola, Memorias..., II, 449.

Another version of the delay was published in the Mercurio de Matamoros on August 12, 1836, and claimed that Gaona had accumulated so much loot that he was delayed while obtaining means of transportation. He finally resorted to the confiscation of the supply mules and the hospital carts, having to abandon many of the sick to obtain the latter conveyances. Documentos Para La Historia De La Guerra de Tejas, Section 7.
large supply of corn and twenty barrels of sugar were found and distributed to the troops. The army remained at "Coll's farm" until the next afternoon, when a scout returned with a reconnaissance report concerning the position of the enemy at the nearest crossing. The march was resumed and by two o'clock the following morning they were at the banks of the Brazos, less than a mile from Thompson's Crossing below present-day Richmond.\(^\text{14}\)

Santa-Anna secreted a small force of riflemen in the woods above the river and instructed them to maintain a concentrated fire on the rebel group defending Thompson's. The sharpshooters did a good job of keeping the enemy occupied in its defense so that its attention was diverted from the lower ford where a Mexican officer crossed a much larger detachment of riflemen, ascended the river and began a movement toward the rear of the rebel defenses. This impending attack from the rear dispersed the enemy and left the Mexican army in possession of Thompson's Crossing, the undamaged ferry, a canoe and a large flatboat. Mexican dragoons had occupied Marion about the same time that the rebels were abandoning the Brazos.\(^\text{15}\) That same day a courier departed with instructions

\(^{14}\) Major Wylie Martin and a force of about forty-six men were defending Thompson's Crossing. Yoakum, II, 121.

\(^{15}\) "Almonte's Journal," SWHQ, pp. 31-32; Yoakum, II, 120-121; Jones, pp. 22-23; Caro, *Verdadera Idea...*, p. 83.
for Ramírez y Sesma to lead his entire division to Thompson's, which was accomplished by the thirteenth. At this time Gaona was somewhere between Bastrop and San Felipe, Filisola was crossing the Colorado at the Atascosito and Urrea was in possession of Matagorda.\textsuperscript{16}

From one of his civilian prisoners\textsuperscript{17} Santa-Anna learned that David G. Burnett and Lorenzo de Zavala, president and vice-president of the rebel government, along with other revolutionary leaders, were at Harrisburg, about thirty-one miles away. The Presidente decided to move quickly to Harrisburg and capture the heads of government, which would result in the collapse of the revolutionary movement. He ordered Ramírez y Sesma to remain at Thompson's with his division and await the arrival of Filisola and Gaona. Cós was advised that when Filisola arrived at Thompson's, he would transfer to Cós a contingent of five hundred men and three artillery pieces, with which he was to occupy Velasco.

\textsuperscript{16} "Almonte's Journal," SWHQ, p. 32; Filisola, The Evacuation of Texas, p. 12; Urrea, Diario..., pp. 24-25. Between April 1 and April 13, only routine maneuvers occupied Urrea's forces, as the American colonists had fled and no rebel bands opposed his march from Santa-Anna to the left bank of the Navidad River and on to Cayce's Crossing on the Colorado. Traversing this stream caused him as much trouble as it had the other sections of the army; he spent five days effecting the crossing, then proceeded to Matagorda, which he occupied on the morning of the thirteenth.

\textsuperscript{17} The civilian prisoners were taken at the lower crossing, a place known as Morton's. Yoakum, II, 121.
Cós and his command were to "live off the land" as best they could because "...since the Commissary does not have the food supply, it is necessary to acquire it from the enemy."\textsuperscript{18}

In a sealed communication left with Ramírez y Sesma and handed to Filisola when he arrived on the sixteenth, Santa-Anna told of his decision to march to Harrisburg toward which Houston also was moving with his army. Filisola was ordered to remain at Thompson's until Santa-Anna's return, meanwhile supervising the outfitting and supplying of the division Cós had been ordered to lead toward Velasco. Filisola was also to select a good cavalry officer to command a unit of fifty dragoons who were to be sent in search of Gaona. In addition, Filisola was to appropriate all foodstuffs abandoned by the retreating Americans. A small detachment with an artillery piece was to be stationed at the river crossing, and if the opportunity arose, an attempt was to be made to capture or destroy the steamboat which was then at Groce's Landing.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{18}Filizola thesis, pp. 78-79, copy of Cós orders relayed to Filisola.

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., pp. 80-82, Santa-Anna to Filisola, dated April 13 at Thompson's Crossing. Filisola, \textit{Evacuation of Texas}, p. 12, details Filisola's progress from Gonzales to Thompson's.

On April 11, Houston and Rusk (who had joined him on the fourth) decided to retreat further into the interior, using the steamboat at Groce's Landing to transport the troops and supplies and on the fourteenth the retreat continued as far as Donoho's Plantation, about four miles southeast of present-day Hempstead, to attempt a concentration of all available American forces. At this time the six-pound cannon arrived as a gift of Cincinnati. On the sixteenth, the main body of the army set off for Harrisburg, traveling slowly over the boggy and almost impassable roads. They reached Harrisburg on the eighteenth. Yoakum, II, 496-497.
In a separate communication of the same date, Urrea was instructed to secure Brazoria and establish his general headquarters there, keeping both Santa-Anna and Filisola advised of any rebel activity in the area. The commander-in-chief ordered the construction of redoubts at Matagorda and the placement of a twelve-pound artillery piece to secure the bay area. He informed Urrea of the impending march to Velasco by Cos and his division and of his own departure to Harrisburg, which would begin that day. He clearly stated the strength of the force he was taking with him to Harrisburg, and with which he continued up to the banks of the San Jacinto. He wrote:

I leave today for Harrisburg with five hundred men and one piece of artillery; I will arrive there day after tomorrow, and hope to find the principal leaders of the revolution at that place...employing my ability to effortlessly defeat the so-called General Houston who is supposed to be on the march to that place with about six or eight hundred men. He is the only hope left for the traitors....

Santa-Anna also took along his staff and fifty-man escort of dragoons, which brought the total of this force to about six hundred. This is less than the usually cited figure of

\[20\] Urrea, Diario..., pp. 63-64 [the underlining was done by the writer, and was not in the original]. Santa-Anna left for Harrisburg with the same force.

\[21\] Linn, pp. 225-246 reprinted the account of the battle of San Jacinto as written by Colonel Pedro Delgado, a member of Santa-Anna's staff. The Texas Almanac, 1871 (Galveston, 1870), pp. 41-53, also reprinted the account. Delgado stated in it that the total number of men in the group that left Thompson's totaled about 600.
seven hundred and fifty, which was first given by Filisola in November, 1836, when he penned his exposition of defense to the government who had received complaints against Filisola and his handling of the withdrawal after San Jacinto. Subsequent writers used the same figure and gave Filisola as the source, despite the fact that Filisola was not at Thompson's Crossing when Santa-Anna departed for Harrisburg.

American estimates of the force at San Jacinto have varied, but most use Filisola's estimate as the basic strength which the Presidente took to Harrisburg. However, there are a few Americans whose testimony support the figure quoted in the letter to Urrea. George Bernard Erath, a soldier in the rebel army and definitely anti-Santa-Anna, wrote:

> With an actual force of hardly six hundred men Santa-Anna left his army. In all he had perhaps a thousand with him, but the rest were only cargadores or muleteers with some four or five hundred pack mules to be loaded.\textsuperscript{22}

Mosely Baker, in a letter to Sam Houston reminded him that when Erastus "Deaf" Smith intercepted one of Santa-Anna's couriers, the

> ...captured mail gave you information of Santa-Anna's position, and that he had with him only five hundred men...\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{22}Erath, p. 29.

\textsuperscript{23}Barker, "The San Jacinto Campaign," The Quarterly, p. 283, quoting from a letter to Houston, dated about 1844 at Evergreen Plantation at Galveston Bay.
William C. Swearengen wrote a letter to his brother from the battlefield the day after the encounter, claiming that Santa-Anna "...took 500 of his veterans and one heavy brass nine pounder and pushed on to Harrisburg...."  

The troops crossed the Brazos on the thirteenth while Santa-Anna and his staff crossed the following day. The troops ate well at noon on the fifteenth when they stopped at a plantation abundantly stocked with vegetables, meal, sheep and hogs. The house and gin were burned as the army departed, well after Santa-Anna had hurried ahead with his staff and escort. Castrillón supervised the march to Harrisburg, which was reached that night about eleven. Santa-Anna was chagrined to find the town abandoned except for three printers in the office of the Telegraph and Texas Register. These men informed him that the government officials had left the previous morning by steamboat and probably headed for New Washington. They further claimed that Houston and about eight hundred men were fifty miles northwest of Harrisburg and intent on retreating to the Trinity, twenty miles east of Lynchburg.

24 Sam Houston Dixon and Louis Wiltz Kemp, The Heroes of San Jacinto (Houston, 1932), pp. 118-119.

25 "...few or no incendiary ravages would have been committed by the enemy, had they not been commenced by the Texans themselves...." Ruben Marmaduke Potter, "The Battle of San Jacinto," The Magazine of American History, IV (May, 1880), 346.

Santa-Anna remained in Harrisburg until about three o’clock in the afternoon on the seventeenth. During that time he and his staff dined well on the preserves, chocolate, and other delicacies abandoned by the colonists. They also confiscated a quantity of clothing and furniture. Before he left Harrisburg Santa-Anna dispatched a communication to Filisola in which he said:

Through the reports that I have received here I have no doubts whatsoever that the so-called General Houston, who has been at Groce’s ford with a force of from five to six hundred men, has gone to Nacogdoches...since he is escorting families and supplies in wagons pulled by oxen, his march is slow, and besides, the Trinity River should hold him up many days.

This opinion was reinforced by an order that Gaona’s forces be increased to a strength of one thousand as soon as he arrived at Thompson’s, and then sent on to join the Presidente’s smaller command.27

Harrisburg was burned after Santa-Anna departed for New Washington. The dispute over the order to put the town to the torch is equivalent to the American dispute over the burning of San Felipe. In both instances, the subordinates who supposedly set the blaze have sworn that they were given orders to do so by their commanders-in-chief.28

27 Filizola thesis, p. 87, Santa-Anna to Filisola, dated either the fifteenth or sixteenth, at which time he was in Harrisburg.

28 Linn, p. 277; Barker, "The San Jacinto Campaign," The Quarterly..., p. 270. Santa-Anna personally claimed that the town was already burning when his troops arrived, and that the printers told him that the fire had started accidentally, Filisola, Memorias..., II, 458.
Almonte had been sent ahead to New Washington with about fifty dragoons to reconnoiter the Lynchburg Crossing and New Washington. His report, which reached Santa-Anna late in the afternoon, advised that colonists in New Washington reported Houston was definitely on the march to the Trinity and had to cross the San Jacinto River at Lynchburg. Colonel D. José María Castillo de Iberri was sent to Filisola with an order to send Cos toward the San Jacinto instead of toward Velasco.\(^{29}\) The march then was resumed during which the single piece of artillery bogged down repeatedly, while the ranks straggled along in the wet darkness. When the troops reached the bridge spanning Vince's Bayou, the mules pulling the artillery piece refused to cross; so Santa-Ana ordered Castrillón to "...head the bayou with the cannon three leagues above..." and to take with him an escort of one company.\(^{30}\) The rest of the troops continued by the direct route over Vince's Bridge.

\(^{29}\) This was the third set of orders for the Presidente's hapless in-law. On April 17, Filisola was advised to "...despatch\[^{sic}\] general Cos with 500 men and two pieces of artillery against the fort at Velasco. On the 17th I received an order from his Excellency, that the force which was to go with Mr. Cos should only consist of 200 men\[^{sic}\] and on the 18th another order, in which he advises me that Mr. Cos should be sent to join him with 500 infantry and fifty boxes musket cartridges; which was done that day..." Filisola, Evacuation of Texas, p. 39.

\(^{30}\) The story is told that this assignment was a means of punishing Castrillón for refusing to share the services of his cook with Santa-Ana, who had chronic digestive trouble. In "heading the bayou" Castrillón had to cover about nine miles of miry, high-grassed prairie. Tolbert, p. 75.
The Mexican army reached New Washington about noon on the eighteenth. Flour, soap, tobacco and other items were appropriated and issued to the troops, and a foraging detail returned with over one hundred beeves. On the nineteenth Santa-Anna dispatched Captain Marcos D. Barragan with a contingent of dragoons to Lynchburg under orders to carefully search the crossing for signs of Houston. The reconnaissance group reported back the following day that Houston was close to the rear of the Mexican advance and had even captured some of the stragglers. When they rode in with their news, the troops were in formation to leave, having previously set the town on fire. Colonel Delgado described Santa-Anna's reaction to the news in the following words:

We were then in a dense wood through which ran a lane very narrow and about a league in length. The lane allowed passage for pack mules in single file only and to mounted men in double file. The lane was filled with hundreds of men and hundreds of pack mules. On hearing Barragan's report, His Excellency got on his horse and galloped off at full speed through this lane crowded with men and mules. He knocked over two men and shouted: "The enemy is coming! The enemy is coming!" The excitement of the general-in-chief had such a terrifying effect that order could no longer be preserved. Every man thought of flight, or of finding a hiding place, and gave up all idea of fighting.

31 On April 18, a Mexican courier was intercepted and Houston learned that "...General Santa Anna, with one division of his choice troops, had marched in the direction of Lynch's ferry, on the San Jacinto--burning Harrisburg as he passed down." Sam Houston to David G. Burnet, April 25, reprinted in Yoakum, II, 498-499. Houston proceeded to cross his main body of rebels over Buffalo Bayou, at a point below Harrisburg--on the morning of April 19. The sick, baggage and a good-sized campguard were left at a camp near Harrisburg. The rebels first sighted Santa-Anna's main force from a wooded area about half a mile from the ferry.
Figure 5 - Santa-Anna's Route to San Jacinto
In his frenzy Santa-Anna ordered battle formations for all ranks, placed Delgado at the head of the artillery and ordnance, then proceeded on the offensive to seek out the enemy. In order to facilitate their movements, the soldiers were ordered to discard their knapsacks, leaving them, as Delgado said, "...in the keeping of Providence or fortune..."32

They continued the advance and finally ascertained the location of Houston's troops about two o'clock in the afternoon on April 20. The area where Houston finally took a stand was a prairie area on Mrs. Peggy McCormick's ranch near the San Jacinto River. The map which follows details the positions of the opposing armies. Santa-Anna was pleased with the campsite he selected

...on a hill that gave me an advantageous position, with water at the rear, heavy weeds to our right as far as the banks of the San Jacinto, open plains to the left and unobstructed terrain at the front.33

Colonel Delgado, who had spent the greater part of the afternoon guarding his ordnance chests amid the skirmishing going on around him, was abrupt in his appraisal of the campsite and snorted that "Any youngster could have chosen

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32Linn, pp. 227-229; Filisola, Memorias..., II, 459-460; Fuentes-Mares, pp. 157-158.

33Filisola, Memorias..., II, 460-461, quoting part of Santa-Anna's Manifesto.
Figure 6 - The San Jacinto Battlefield

MAP OF THE BATTLEFIELD OF SAN JACINTO

A. Headquarters of General Houston, on Buffalo Bayou
B. Headquarters of General Santa Anna, in Cedar Grove
C. Position of Texan Artillery, April 20th
D. Position of Mexican Artillery, on April 20th
E. Cavalry combat, on 20th
F. "Island of timber" used as screen by Houston, April 21st
G. Swale 20 feet deep, crossed by Texan line of battle, on 21st
H. Deep and narrow bayou crossed by fleeing Mexican's on 21st
I. Grove where Almonte and many others were captured on 21st

*This map contains the positions of the Texan and of the Mexican Armies, at the commencement of the Battle of San Jacinto, at half past three o'clock in the afternoon of Thursday, April 21, 1836.*
better." It was obvious to him, as well as to Castrillón, that the colonists were situated to the right in a wooded area at what Delgado called "long musket range." Although the enemy could retreat either to the rear or to the right of his camp, the Mexican troops were hemmed in by what Santa-Anna considered "advantages." Castrillón listened to the many complaints regarding the campsite, but could only answer Delgado with the quizzical statement:

> What can I do, my friend?...You know that nothing avails here against the caprice, arbitrary will, and ignorance of that man!

"That man" assigned the chosen companies of First Mexico activos, Guerrero permanentes and Toluca activos to defend the right side of the camp, placed the Matamoros Battalion...

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After locating the enemy on the afternoon of the twentieth, the commander-in-chief had deployed the Toluca Battalion in the woods and set up his cannon on a hill, then ordered Delgado to unload the ordnance stores and turn over the 20 pack mules to Captain Barragan so he could proceed to retrieve the knapsacks discarded previously. Delgado only turned over 18 mules, keeping 2 for any emergency. After a while, Santa-Anna ordered Delgado to hasten to the camp with the ordnance chests as the Toluca Battalion was to retire from the woods. This maneuver would leave the ordnance stores unprotected and easy prey for the rebels, who began firing upon the luckless man and his supply chests when they noticed he had been left unprotected. When he complained to Colonel Bringas, he was told to do the best that he could as everyone knew"...that no observations could be made to his excellency, and that he [Bringas] had no desire to argue with him in the raving state of mind in which he was..." Delgado finally finished his job, barely escaping from the enemy. He claimed to have spent two hours transporting the forty or more boxes of ammunition on the two mules he had kept. Linn, pp. 230-231.
of *permanentes* at the center position and the cannon to the left, guarded by the cavalry and a reserve column of pickets commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Santiago Luelmo. Early on the twenty-first the commander-in-chief ordered a breastwork constructed for the cannon, using pack saddles, bags of hardtack and other equipment. Cós arrived about nine o'clock that morning with four hundred men, the majority of whom were raw recruits conscripted in San Luis and Saltillo. The entire force was exhausted from the forced march and weakened with hunger since they had not eaten in twenty-four hours. Colonel Mariano García had been left to bring up the rear with the baggage train and one hundred more men.

Although Santa-Anna expressed a desire to attack the enemy at that moment, since the troops seemed to be enthused and eager by Cós' arrival, the Presidente's brother-in-law explained that the condition of his troops was so poor that they could not successfully engage in a battle at that time. He requested permission for them to eat, rest and sleep before further maneuvers were undertaken.\(^35\) Permission was granted and the reinforcements retired to various parts of the camp to rest, visit with their *soldaderas* and eat. Santa-Anna and many of his officers were taking siestas. The scene in the Mexican camp at the time Houston's men launched their

attack was pictured by Colonel Delgado, the ordnance officer, one of the few officers on duty when the bugler on the right side of the encampment signaled the advance of the enemy on that side:

...Our line was composed of musket stacks. Our cavalry were riding, bareback, to and from water... Their formation was a mere line in one rank, and very extended. In their center was the Texas flag; on both wings, they had two light cannons, well manned. Their cavalry was opposite our front, overlapping our left.

In this disposition, yelling furiously, with a brisk fire of grape, muskets, and rifles, they advanced resolutely upon our camp. There the utmost confusion prevailed... 36

The Presidente awakened abruptly from the costliest siesta in history to see his camp a scene of wild disorder. The camp-followers and their children shrieked and ran about in search of fathers and husbands, while the recruits panicked and almost prevented the seasoned veterans from defending themselves. The best sharpshooters found it difficult to shoot down hill at the swiftly-moving targets and the poor quality of the gunpowder kept the few cannon charges from being effective. 37

One of Houston's men wrote:

It will not do to say that the Mexicans were cowardly and would not fight. They fought long and well. They commenced firing upon us at the distance of four hundred yards and kept it up incessantly until we had

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36 Linn, pp. 233-234, citing Delgado's account.

scaled their breastworks. Many of them stood and battled until their brains were dashed out with clubbed guns. Their bodies lay thick around their artillery, the man with the fuse was shot in the act of applying it, and the cannon was captured loaded....38

The pursuer had become the pursued and lost not only the battle but the northernmost province as well.

38 Swisher, pp. 45-46.
CHAPTER VII

THE WITHDRAWAL

The presidial soldier who rode into the Mexican camp near Thompson's Crossing on the afternoon of April 22 found Filisola at the ford supervising the Brazos crossing of Gaona's division.¹ He delivered a brief communication from Colonel D. Mariano García reporting the catastrophe of the previous day. Shortly after the messenger's arrival survivors of the battle began straggling into camp. One of these, Captain D. Miguel Aguirre of the Tampico cavalry regiment, reported that their rout had been complete and Santa-Anna probably had been killed.

While attempting to weigh the impact of the news, Filisola dispatched two express riders to Urrea in Brazoria and Colonel Salas at Columbia. The official notes were brief and did not mention the battle which had taken place. Instead, Filisola wrote:

It is absolutely necessary that immediately upon receipt of this communication, you and

¹Gaona and his men had finally arrived at Thompson's on about the eighteenth, weighed down by the excessive booty which was being transported in the supply train. Filisola, Memorias..., II, 449-450.
all the troops under your command march to this place without any delay. This is in the best interests of the nation.²

That the news had unnerved Filisola was evident by the fact that he misdated the note to Urrea.³

Shortly after the messages had been sent Colonel D. Mariano García arrived at Thompson's with the one hundred men that had been assigned to guard the supply train left behind when Cós hastened to join Santa-Anna on the twenty-first. Colonel García's additional information concerning the defeat of the Presidente's forces strengthened Captain Aguirre's assertion of the death of Santa-Anna. From stories told by the few survivors, little hope remained that he had survived the carnage.

In an attempt to obtain more information, Filisola dispatched a cavalry unit to reconnoiter the area toward the

²After occupying Matagorda and sacking it on April 13, Urrea left Colonel Agustin Alcerrica there as commandant with the Tres Villas Battalion. Urrea returned to Cayce's Crossing on the Colorado (near the present site of Wharton) and from there marched toward Columbia, camping enroute on the banks of the San Bernardo and at Mrs. Powell's farm. While at Mrs. Powell's he received a communication from Filisola congratulating him on his victories. On the twenty-first his troops occupied Columbia and Colonel Mariano Salas was left as commandant there with a division of men. Urrea proceeded to Brazoria which he occupied on the twenty-second. Urrea, Diario..., pp. 25-26, 64.

³Ibid., pp. 25-28. When Urrea received the message he was preparing to leave for Velasco. His campaign had been a successful one, since the only large force he had battled had been in the Refugio-Goliad area. After that, it was mostly a matter of occupying abandoned and semi-abandoned towns and appropriating all goods found in them. The better quality "spoils" were put in his supply trains, while the regular foodstuffs, cloth and utensils were distributed to the troops and their women.
San Jacinto River. The scouts were to determine if Santa-Anna was still alive and, if possible, to return with any other escapees. This mission failed to get past Vince's Bayou because the bridge had been burned by the enemy the day before. The general dismay and alarm which gripped the troops when the scouting party returned can well be imagined. The rumor that Santa-Anna and the others were captured and executed by Houston's men in retaliation for the Alamo and Goliad only added to the emotional confusion that swept the troops.

The physical condition of the equipment and troops prevented any immediate counterattack on the enemy. Many of the soldiers were debilitated by the forced marches, inclement weather and scarcity of foodstuffs. The majority of them wore tatters, were barefooted and had not eaten anything substantial for several days. The poor condition of the women and children augmented the problem. Most of the Mexican armament needed repair, but no gunsmith was available. To further complicate the situation, the gunpowder had been reduced to a sodden and useless mass by the recent rains. Even if a countermarch were attempted there was no guarantee that the enemy had remained at San Jacinto, because as Filisola noted:

...He [the enemy] was in his own country. He was in possession of three steamboats and several small schooners, with which he could make raids with impunity, from Galveston or Culebra Island in Matagorda Bay, up the rivers on our right flank
or rear and could also put in peril our detachments at Cópano, Goliad and Matagorda.⁴

Filisola decided to move his camp near Thompson's Crossing because the location was weak defensively.⁵ He moved his troops to Mrs. Powell's farm, about thirteen miles from Thompson's, on the twenty-third. Another communication was dispatched to Urrea urging him to hurry, stating that the colonel's story of the battle at San Jacinto was worse than he had imagined. In the same communication, Ramírez y Sesma added an interesting postscript:

It was useless to lecture or to plead, and at last what he was constantly warned against has happened; it is regrettable, but there is nothing to do now except guard the interests of the nation and those who remain.

From the tone of this communication, and Urrea's answer written on the same day questioning the advisability of

⁴Filisola, Memorias..., II, 472-473; Filisola, Evacuation of Texas, pp. 39-40, from a letter of Filisola to Secretary of War Torrel, dated May 14, 1836.

⁵Filisola described his camp at Thompson's in these words: "...the camp was situated on an angle jutting out towards the left bank of the river; the landing on that side is surrounded by a thick wood of live oaks, from whence the enemy could fire without being[sic] seen, and the bank of the river is higher on the left side than the right, from where it was necessary to sustain those who would be attacked from the other side; on the other hand, the river can be passed in various places at a little distance farther up or down, and in this case, the forces that were there would have found themselves caught in a trap..." Filisola, Evacuation of Texas, p. 40.
abandoning Thompson's Crossing, the officers were undoubtedly convinced that Santa-Anna had been killed in action.\textsuperscript{6}

Colonel Salas left Columbia as soon as he received Filisola's note of the twenty-second and arrived at Mrs. Powell's in mid-afternoon of the following day. Urrea arrived that night, chagrined that Salas had not waited for his arrival before departing for the rendezvous. A proclamation issued by Filisola promising vengeance for the Mexican defeat at San Jacinto lifted his anger somewhat. The soldiers were assured that all future combat would culminate in victory since they would be defending their nation's honor against outlaws who had attempted to steal territory belonging to Mexico.\textsuperscript{7}

On the twenty-fifth a council of generals was called to decide a course of action. Gaona, Tolsa, Ampudia, Ramírez y Sesma and Urrea attended, and Filisola presided. The Italian-born officer offered at this time to step down and allow a native Mexican to take command, assuring the council that he would be most willing to follow whomever the council

\textsuperscript{6}Urrea, Diario..., pp. 72-73, 28. Urrea claimed in his diary that on April 23 he received the official communication previously cited, plus an additional note which read: "The presidente has suffered a defeat according to information sent to me by a colonel who will arrive at this place tomorrow night, so it is necessary for you to make every effort to reach this place with your entire command as soon as possible."

\textsuperscript{7}Ibid., pp. 71-72.
chose. A vote of confidence was given Filisola, and he remained at the head of the army. After much deliberation the generals decided to recross the Colorado, establish communications with the government at Mexico City and wait for further orders and aid from that quarter. At this time there was still no news about, or from, Santa-Anna.

Filisola sent a courier with a report to the Secretary of War in Mexico City, informing him of the defeat the Mexican forces had suffered at San Jacinto and detailing the reasons the council of generals had decided to retreat temporarily. The Secretary of War was asked to transmit the news of the chaos at San Jacinto to the president ad interim, and forward any orders of the president and the congress.

The retreat directly concerned the 2,573 men who had held the line of the Brazos at the time of the defeat at

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8Filisola, Evacuation of Texas, p. 21. In speaking of this council, Filisola said, "...all replied unanimously in the negative [when told he would relinquish his command], expressing an entire confidence in my honesty and patriotism, and each one gave it as his opinion...that it was absolutely necessary to re-pass the Colorado, re-organize the army, establish a plan of operations, hospitals, deposits; for provisions, line of communications, workshops for repairing the arms, etc., etc."

Urrea assailed the fact that only the generals were allowed a vote in the council of war. He claimed that the ranking officers of the various units knew the feelings of their men better than the generals, and should therefore have made the decision. He was vehement in his opposition to the retreat, and said that not one man in his division favored the retreat. Urrea, Diario..., p. 31.

9Filisola, II, p. 479.
San Jacinto. The following table \(^{10}\) details the distribution of the forces prior to the gathering at Mrs. Powell’s farm.

### TABLE VI

**MEXICAN FORCES AT OLD FORT ON APRIL 24**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Corps:</th>
<th>Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artillery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zapadores</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Morelos</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infantry</td>
<td>First Reserve Militia, Mexico</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guadalajara</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guanajuato</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dolores</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavalry</td>
<td>Tampico</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presidiales</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,408</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At Columbia and Brazoria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artillery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ximenes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infantry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Luis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Querétaro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuautla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavalry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auxiliaries of Guanajuato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

| Total at Old Fort          | 1,408    |
| Total at Columbia-Brazoria | 1,165    |
| **Total**                  | **2,573**|

Detachments at other points in Texas were to join the general retreat later. One thousand men were at Béxar under the command of Andrade, and about five hundred and forty-nine were scattered at posts in Goliad, Cópano, Refugio,

\(^{10}\)Filisola, II, pp. 474-475.
Matagorda and Victoria.\textsuperscript{11} The entire command which had become Filisola's responsibility totaled 4,078 men, about 1,921 less than had begun the campaign.\textsuperscript{12}

In the reorganization Ramírez y Sesma was named second-in-command, while Woll became Chief-of-Staff. The troops were divided into three sections: the First Infantry Brigade under Gaona; the Second Infantry Brigade of Tolsa; and Urrea's Reserve Brigade. The generals decided to ford the Colorado at Cayce's Crossing, and Colonel Garay was sent ahead to make preparations for ferrying the troops and equipment across.\textsuperscript{13}

The first phase of the withdrawal on the morning of the twenty-sixth was hampered by heavy rainfall which began as the army was attempting to cross the San Bernardo and continued incessantly through the night. Sleep was impossible since the small farm at which they stopped had no shelter of any consequence. The soldiers spent the night in a squatting position, pelted by the downpour that finally abated about daybreak.

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid. The distribution of men at these posts, according to the official tabulations was: At Bejar----1,001
At Copano-------60
Refugio---------5
Goliad---------174
Matagorda-------189
Victoria--------40

Durango Militia and Presidials------35
Total \hspace{1em} 1,550

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., pp. 333-337. In official tabulations, the size of the invading army is set at 6,019 men.

\textsuperscript{13}Filisola, \textit{Evacuation of Texas}, p. 41.
THE WITHDRAWAL
Route Followed By Mexican Army During April 26-June 1, 1836.

Figure 7 - Route of the Mexican Withdrawal
The soldiers marched in water up to their knees for about seven miles but were forced to halt at another rain-swollen creek that branched off from the San Bernardo. A crossing at this point was unpractical because the banks were extremely muddy and lined with many oak trees, which made it impossible to get the carts and artillery pieces through. The troops made camp on the left side in what appeared to be the least mud-logged area, and waited while Woll scouted the creek to locate the best place for a crossing. Urrea had taken his best cavalrymen to reconnoiter the roads in the direction of the Brazos, by which Houston's army would have marched upon the retreating Mexican force.

The troops were still encamped on the creek bank late on the twenty-seventh when a presidial soldier arrived with a message from Santa-Anna. The defeat at San Jacinto, a momentous one to Texans, sounded like a skirmish in Santa-Anna's letter to Filisola.

The small division under my immediate command having had yesterday evening an unfortunate encounter, it has resulted in my being a prisoner of war in the enemy's hands, but all possible considerations have been shown me....

The ex-commander-in-chief instructed Gaona and Filisola to countermarch to Bexar and await orders at that point. Urrea

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14 Filisola, II, pp. 479-481.
was to go to Victoria with his group. Santa-Anna also relinquished command to Filisola and commissioned him to use, as needed, the provisions and money at Matamoros which had been designated for the army. He was also to dispose of the 20,000 pesos in the money box, as well as utilize the provisions stored at Victoria. The news regarding the armistice agreement was strangely worded:

...an armistice has been agreed upon with General Houston, until some negociations[sic] are arranged, by which the war is to cease forever....15

In a personal letter, also contained in the dispatches that arrived on the twenty-seventh, Santa-Anna requested that the new commander see to it that no damage was done to the property of the colonists.16 Another short message requested that the prisoners taken at El Cópano be released.17 A fourth communication asked that the personal effects of Santa-Anna, Colonels Almonte and Nuñez, Castrillón and Santa-Anna's secretary be sent to San Jacinto under a safe-conduct pass in the care of a dependable messenger.18

15Texas Telegraph and Register, September 6, 1836, p. 1, Santa-Anna to Filisola--written at San Jacinto, April 22, 1836. Original is in Lorenzo de Zavala Papers in the Adina de Zavala Collection, University of Texas Archives, Austin, Texas.

16Ibid., p. 3; written on the same day.

17Ibid., p. 1.

18Filisola, II, p. 482.
At this point Filisola was well aware that Santa-Anna as a prisoner was no longer head of the army, and that his orders should not be obeyed; nevertheless, he also realized that any action contrary to the illustrious prisoner's orders might have fatal results. A council of generals again was called to consider the Presidente's instructions. Worn-out troops bogged down in mud, sodden armaments, and the danger facing Santa-Anna and the other prisoners played a big factor in the council's decision. The group unanimously sanctioned an answer to Santa-Anna that would give the impression his orders were being followed. As Houston was bound to read the letter, Filisola was determined he should not know the real reason for the withdrawal.

Filisola's carefully worded answer told of the concentration of forces immediately after receipt of the news of San Jacinto. He pictured the withdrawal from the Brazos as the beginning of preparations for a move against the enemy. Considering Santa-Anna's letter, and the circumstances detailed in it, Filisola's desire was to show his affection and concern for the commander-in-chief and the other prisoners by crossing the Colorado and ceasing hostilities, as long as the enemy did not initiate any. Filisola emphasized that Santa-Anna should realize the large command that he, Filisola, had inherited, and the possibilities of the forces he could unleash against the enemy. He stressed, however, that he would not consider
this action because of the danger to Santa-Anna's person and to the peace of the nation. He consented to the cessation of hostilities but wanted the enemy's assurance that all Mexicans held prisoners would be treated with respect. He further added that all prisoners he held were being well-treated. Since no specific terms were mentioned concerning the supposed armistice, Woll departed the next day for San Jacinto to try to get more information.\textsuperscript{19}

The following day Filisola dispatched a courier to Andrade at Béxar. In his message he stated that

The overconfidence of our esteemed President caused his troops to encounter disaster on the 21st, which left his Excellency a prisoner of our enemies;...I charge you to remain at Béjar, vigilant as usual and ready to discharge my orders and move your troops when I send you word....\textsuperscript{20}

The same day Filisola also wrote the Secretary of War Tornel, stating the maneuvers executed in his withdrawal, and enclosing for study the communications Santa-Anna had sent from San Jacinto on the twenty-second.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{19}Filisola, II, pp. 482-486; Riva-Palacio, México a Través De Los Siglos, IV, 372. Woll was chosen because he spoke English.

\textsuperscript{20}Andrade, Documentos, Section 1, p. 8, reprints the letter written to Andrade by Filisola on April 28, 1836.

\textsuperscript{21}Ibid., Section 2, p. 9, reprints the letter written to Secretary of War Tornel by Filisola on April 28, 1836.
The retreat was resumed on the twenty-eighth, and the army reached the Colorado on May 2. The following day Ramírez y Sesma went ahead to Matamoros to notify the authorities of the condition of the troops and obtain the badly needed food supplies and medicines.\textsuperscript{22}

An idea of the miseries of the march to the Colorado can be obtained by reading excerpts from a diary kept by Captain D. Enrique de la Peña. On April 29, he wrote:

On this day our misfortunes reached the limit.... several of our sick, who were looked upon with the greatest disregard, died....I traveled on foot, wading through the mud which was knee deep....we barely advanced thirty or forty paces without having to call on the soldiers to help pull the artillery out of the mud, where it sank to the hub....Much equipment was lost, many mules were disabled, and the troops were unable to take their rations because these did not arrive and there was nothing to eat....

On April 30 he lamented that more than fifteen hundred mules were scattered in all directions, bogged down in the mud, and that broken trunks, ruined canister shot and useless cargoes lay gripped in the mud. He then made the blanket statement that April 28, 29, and 30, and May 1, 2, and 3, were the worst days of the march. The muleteers stole what little foodstuffs were left, and what they didn't steal fell in the mud.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{22}Filisola, II, 486-487.

\textsuperscript{23}Sanchez-Garza, p. 186.
The army crossed the Colorado on May 2, and three days later Filisola received new orders from Santa-Anna. His Excellency now ordered Filisola to withdraw to Monterrey and to leave only four hundred men at Béxar as a garrison group. He claimed that the negotiations were also over, and he then would proceed to Veracruz. He peevishly complained of his lack of clothing and restated his desire that his baggage be forwarded to San Jacinto. In the same batch of messages he again ordered that the retreat not be delayed, and that the sick and wounded at Béxar be left in charge of a trustworthy general.2

Between the Colorado and Victoria the army continued its painful march through mud so deep that sometimes only about two miles could be covered in a day. No wood was available for campfires, and Filisola sometimes feared that the desperate men would appropriate trunks, munition boxes or other burnable matter in order to create warmth for themselves and the women and children that followed in their wake. If wood had been available, the only edible thing was a few bags of beans.

The majority of the men not only were weak from hunger but also suffered from dysentery, for which there was no medicine. They were so physically run-down that they left

24 Filisola, II, 487.
countless wagons, cannon, baggage, a forge and many animals abandoned along the line of march.

Conditions improved slightly when the army reached Victoria, where Filisola was able to obtain some meat, a little rice and some beans. On May 14, the day after he and his men arrived there, he wrote to the Secretary of War informing him of the disastrous state of the army. Since Santa-Anna had been sending orders to the new commander-in-chief, the latter deemed it necessary to clarify his own position, for in the same letter, he emphasized that he would only obey orders sent by the Secretary of War.25

After he dispatched the letter to the government, the army moved to Goliad, where he expected to receive supplies via El Cópano. Enough provisions were found at Goliad which could last until the twenty-fourth if properly rationed. While the commander-in-chief strengthened the fortifications and attempted to set up a hospital, he began to worry as to why no orders had been received from the government. On May 18 the general dispatched an order to Colonel Andrade at Bexar instructing him to march to Goliad and bring everything that belonged to the Mexican army. Andrade was cautioned to dispose of, in whatever manner he saw fit, all arms and munitions he

25Urrea, Diario..., pp. 70-71. This is a copy of the letter from Filisola to Tornel, dated May 14, 1836.
was unable to carry. He was to transport the less seriously ill and wounded in carts, but leave at Béxar those who were incapable of traveling.26

On May 19, the army received thirty thousand pesos instead of the one hundred and seventy-three thousand pesos it expected. Goliad had been put to the torch by the colonists after Urrea left, and the only food available other than the previously mentioned provisions were beeves which the army had driven alongside the army. Unsheltered soldiers, women and children slept on the ground, and the sores that developed on their hips and shoulders only aggravated their already weak conditions.

Shortly after this, Filisola received the law by the Mexican Congress with regard to amnesty for some Texan prisoners. As a result of this law, which repealed the strict rule of execution for all rebels taken in battle, the prisoners held by Filisola were sent to Matamoros to be legally freed by the governor of Tamaulipas.27 After this, Filisola intended to continue the withdrawal to the Rio Bravo and maintain his line there, occupying Matamoros, Camargo, Mier and Revilla. He thought this the best place to reorganize the army, gather supplies, and map a new invasion of Texas.

26Andrade, Documentos, Section I, p. 11.
27Filisola, II, pp. 491-494.
Heavy rains again were plaguing the Mexicans on the twenty-fifth when Colonel Benjamin Smith and Captain Henry Teal of the Texan army arrived with messages from Santa-Anna. The following day two emissaries met with Filisola in his tent and delivered the public Treaty of Velasco signed on May 14. Colonel Smith had been fully authorized to ratify the treaty as soon as Filisola would do so.

The documents brought by the Texans were studied by Filisola, and then General Eugenio Tolsa and Colonel Agustin Amat were called into examine and verify them. When the two officers reported their findings to the commander-in-chief, he decided to act in conformity with the treaty as concluded by Santa-Anna. The ten articles in the treaty are too well known to be repeated here; however, Captain de la Peña of the Mexican army was most bitter about the article which called for the return of all property belonging to the colonists and the paying of indemnity for what had been destroyed. He denounced the injustice of this provision because

...As for us, we would not have our property returned that had been lost at San Jacinto, and all the indemnity that our nation would receive was the loss of the territory which we had come to defend.

In a sentence almost close to prophecy he said, "If this one [Filisola] would be weak enough to approve it [the treaty] his ignominy would be more than that of the one who signed it, and his fall would be inevitable...."

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28 Urrea, Diario..., pp. 91-92.
On May 28, while the army was on the march toward the Nueces, a government communication finally arrived. Written on May 15, the document instructed Filisola to secure Santa-Anna's release if possible, to concentrate the army's forces at a point where supplies could be sent by the government, to preserve control of Béxar, and to propose an exchange of prisoners. In the second communication that arrived with the same courier, and also dated May 15, the government acknowledged receipt of Filisola's letter of the twenty-eighth of April and approved his actions in observing the armistice signed by Santa-Anna. They emphasized that since Santa-Anna had signed the armistice when he was a prisoner, he was not acting as a free agent. Filisola was ordered not to pledge the honor of the nation but to proceed in a prudent manner so as not to endanger the life of the ex-commander-in-chief. The letter emphatically stated that under no circumstances was the independence of Texas to be considered by Filisola, as the nation would never agree to it. 29

By the time the two letters sent by the government reached Filisola, he had already ratified the public treaty signed by Santa-Anna, Andrade had already destroyed the fortifications at the Alamo and joined the retreat at Victoria, and the crossing of the Nueces had been completed by the entire force.

Consequently, on May 3, from his camp on the right bank of the Nueces, Filisola wrote the Secretary of War and explained the actions he had taken in what he felt was the best interests of the nation. He requested Tornel to study carefully the reasons that he had decided on a retreat; and to remember that in Mexican history there had probably never been a general who had found himself in such a complex situation.  

The situation of the army grew worse every day, as more men became ill, and no aid arrived. Filisola believed that the only hope for some was to speed up the march to Matamoros, and he did this whenever possible. On the morning of June 9 a message arrived from Urrea in Matamoros protesting against the retreat, and informing Filisola that he had complained to the government, who had transferred command of the army to him. Soon after this a surprising order arrived for Filisola at his camp at a place called Motas de Doña Clara. The order, dated May 19, instructed Filisola to discontinue the retreat and secure all "sustainable" points. The Secretary of War insisted that Filisola attempt to maintain the control of the Mexican army over that part of Texas that had been defeated. He was promised that supplies would be sent soon.

30 Urrea Diario..., p. 78. This is a copy of the letter written by Filisola to Tornel on May 31, 1836. By this time Urrea, who had been sent ahead to get supplies, was already in Matamoros. He had immediately written to the Secretary of War complaining about Filisola's order for a withdrawal.
Perturbed by the communication, Filisola again turned to his generals for counsel. The deplorable condition of the troops, the lack of food and supplies, and the long distance to be covered in a countermarch were all decisive factors in the general's concurrence to continue the withdrawal. In a letter from the Secretary of War three days later Filisola learned that he was to be relieved by Urrea. He was also informed that he could establish his residence at either Monterrey, Leona Vicario or Matamoros.31

On June 13, at a place called Animas, Filisola turned the command of the army over to Andrade, the ad interim commander-in-chief. The Italian-born general, who had adopted Mexico as his own, left to go to Leona Vicario, still convinced that "necessity, and not cowardice or fear" was the only motive for his retreat.32

On June 13 Andrade reported the change of command to Urrea and detailed the intense poverty and misery to which the army had sunk. He emphasized that any countermarch was absolutely impossible, as

...all five of the battalions were barefooted, semi-naked, and for the most part—all are afoot....even most of the generals and other officers are also without either shoes, or horses....There are no gunsmiths, no forge, and no usable weapons....33

31Filisola, II, pp. 502-509.
32Filisola, Evacuation of Texas, p. 36.
33Urrea, Diario..., pp. 124-125. This is a copy of the letter from General Andrade to General Urrea, dated June 13, 1836.
A few days march from Matamoros, Andrade received an order from Urrea to turn his command over to Gaona and report to Matamoros for a conference to decide on the next movements of the army, which would involve a countermarch. Andrade did not need to mull the contents of this communication; he had only to look at his generals, officers and enlisted men--all beaten to the lowest common denominator of being by the arduous withdrawal they had made--and then disobey the order. The general's only course of action was to continue to Matamoros. This was accomplished on June 18, 1836. For all intents and purposes, the attempt of the Mexican government to quell the rebellion was over--the Texan Revolution had succeeded.
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

General Antonio Lopez de Santa-Anna was only the nominal head of the Mexican army that was sent to quell the Texan revolution. The army which the dictator envisioned as a potent force to destroy the ungrateful colonists in northern Mexico existed only in his mind. The command which followed him, however, was a grim reality—a teeming mass of humanity requiring food, clothing, medicines, chaplains and adequate equipment—things which the Presidente could not supply. Instead, he issued half-rations with one real a day for the common soldiers and regular salaries for his officers without extra campaign allowances. He marched against the enemy with an inadequate apothecary, no medical staff, no spiritual advisers, inferior equipment and no extra clothing for the troops.

The actual heads of this army were the division commanders, Ramírez y Sesma, Urrea, Gaona, Tolsa and Andrade. Santa-Anna spoke about logistics, but these men practiced the art as a means of survival for themselves and their men. The commander-in-chief marched them all in unbelievable fashion over impossible terrain in the worst weather. The rains ruined the majority of the hardtack and corn biscuits; so foraging became
a prerequisite to eating. Of all the commanders who fought to provide food for their troops, Urrea was the most fortunate since his campaign carried him along the coastal area, where supplies for the Texas settlements were landed. Consequently, his men found not only enough food, but other needed articles at the abandoned landings and warehouses. Gaona, who later marched his troops toward Bastrop, did not suffer as much from need as from his greed and stupidity. Ramírez y Sesma's division fared the worst. They marched through the central zone of operations, which offered the least supplies as the colonists burned their homes and fields, leaving few supplies or livestock which the Mexicans could appropriate.

Today's armies have supply depots which fill requisitions from division commanders and have regular kitchen staffs to prepare food for the troops. Santa-Anna's officers had to find what they needed "on the road" and do without when the need arose, which was often during this campaign. What little cooking was done by the soldiers themselves or the soldaderas. When foraging yielded little, the bulk of the meal was usually gruel made from hardtack, and sometimes even this was missing when the rains prevented the making of campfires.

Day after day, from January until June, the troops wore the same clothes with which they began the campaign. A few of the luckier ones managed to appropriate some articles of clothing from the abandoned homesteads, but even these became
ragged with constant use. The single pair of sandals issued to each soldier at the beginning of the campaign also wore out quickly, for the majority were infantrymen. Yet, despite the lack of necessities, the army managed to continue the campaign from place to place. They moved slowly and painfully, but the amazing thing was that they moved, and fought, and suffered. It is impossible to rationalize or explain the reasons which compelled them to continue. Desertion or simply quitting would have been much easier, but the troops kept plodding toward each objective set by Santa-Anna as he ignored every recognized rule regarding troops, supplies, morale and strategy.

The Mexican army that withdrew from Texas in late April of 1836 was not an army that had been beaten by the Texans. Their numerical strength alone could have redeemed the defeat of April 21, but Santa-Anna's incompetence at mastering the art of logistics had reduced his troops to semi-nude, half-starved wretches whose weapons and ammunition had been rendered inutile by the rain. These men were defeated before they started by a commander who envisioned leading them to victory, but who made no material provisions for either victory or defeat.
Office of the secretary to the President of the Mexican Republic, General-in-chief of the Army of Operations, General D. José Urrea.

Béxar, March 24, 1836.--My dear friend; By means of your official report and personal letter, which I now answer, I have been happily informed of your triumphs over the insolent foreigners that threatened to invade even the interior of the Republic; it is well-done, my friend, and continue bringing glory to the nation, who shall know how to reward you accordingly.--I regret that you have made it necessary for me to remind you anew, as I have done in my official communication, of the supreme government's circular regarding the conduct to be observed with the infamous foreigners that, profaning the sacred territory of the republic, have been captured with weapons in hand, spilling the blood of the Mexicans. I am surpassed by no one, my friend, in compassion as I do not know how to hate any man and, in spite of my personal dislikes, I have never thought of revenge; but I do not have the faculties to override a peremptory decision of the supreme government, and pardon any delinquents of the magnitude of these foreigners. Under which flag do they wage war on the entire republic, assassinating traitorously our garrisons, burning our towns, attacking the property of peaceful citizens, and intending to steal a great part of our territory? And you prefer that national indignation should fall upon me, as shall be the case if I protect such outlaws. You can well discern that this is not a civil war, as we have unfortunately fought amongst ourselves before. Neither is it a war of nations, in which the rights of man and war deserve mercy, respect to prisoners until they are exchanged. These foreigners, like bandits, have assaulted the territory of the republic to steal a part of it, destroying everything; and because the supreme government is justified in declaring them pirates and ordering that they be treated and punished as such. There is nothing more to say except that I remain your affectionate friend, Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna.
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