MILITARY CAMPAIGNS OF THE
TEXAS REVOLUTION

THESIS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF MAPS ......................................................... Page v
PREFACE ................................................................. vi

Chapter

I. EVENTS THAT LED TO THE REVOLUTION ................. 1
   Mexico Afraid of Losing Texas
   First Outbreak Against Mexican Rule
   A Law the Texans Did Not Like
   Conventions and Petitions
   Important Incident at Gonzales

II. THE SAN ANTONIO CAMPAIGN .............................. 23
   On to San Antonio
   Operations Around Bexar
   Texans Capture San Antonio

III. THE MATAMORAS EXPEDITION ......................... 43
   Dissension in the Government
   Confusion in the Army
   Fate of Johnson and Grant's Forces

IV. THE ALAMO ..................................................... 58
   Santa Anna Leads the Way
   Texans Prepare to Defend the Alamo
   Texans Within the Alamo
   Assault and Fall of the Alamo

V. THE GOLIAD CAMPAIGN ....................................... 78
   Ward and King
   Battle of Coleto Creek
   Massacre at Goliad
VI. THE SAN JACINTO CAMPAIGN

From Gonzales to Groce's Crossing
Santa Anna Advances to the Brazos
The Armies Converge on San Jacinto
The Battle of San Jacinto

VII. SUMMARY

BIBLIOGRAPHY
## LIST OF MAPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. San Antonio and Vicinity</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Alamo</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The San Jacinto Battleground</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PREFACE

I have always been interested in Texas History, and appreciated very much the opportunity of making a study of a phase of the history of our state that holds a special fascination to most Texans.

My subject, Military Campaigns of the Texas Revolution, is divided into the following chapters: Chapter I, Events That Led to the Revolution; Chapter II, The San Antonio Campaign; Chapter III, The Matamoras Expedition; Chapter IV, The Alamo; Chapter V, The Goliad Campaign; Chapter VI, The San Jacinto Campaign; and Chapter VII, Summary.

There are many interesting stories that I have been obliged to leave out because they have no particular bearing on the subject. It is hoped that those who read this study may find it useful.
CHAPTER I

EVENTS THAT LED TO THE REVOLUTION

Mexico Afraid of Losing Texas

Inspired by the philosophy of the French liberals and the desire to make the material progress that the United States had shown, the revolutionary leaders of Mexico adopted a federal republican form of government and threw the doors of their country open to the peoples of other countries. Serious consideration of the expansion of the United States soon aroused the Mexicans to the fear of losing Texas. This fear is responsible for the measures passed to check the infiltration of people into the lands below the Louisiana Purchase.¹

Through the negotiations of John Quincy Adams and Onis the Treaty of 1819 was drawn up which fixed the boundary between the United States and Spain. It was a ziz-zag affair extending from the Gulf of Mexico north and west up to the forty-second parallel.²

A howl of protest was voiced in the United States once the terms of the treaty became known. Even Adams strongly

¹E. C. Barker, Mexico and Texas, 1821-1835, p. 32.
²Ibid., p. 33.
believed that Texas was a part of the Louisiana Purchase. At a public meeting held in Natchez, volunteers were raised to invade Texas and save her from Mexico. This led to what has become known in history as Long's filibustering expedition.  

Spain kept delaying the ratification of the treaty until finally it became effective in 1821. Shortly thereafter, Mexico won her independence from Spain and assumed the responsibility of obtaining a definite settlement. Mexico was aware and suspicious of the territorial ambitions of the United States.  

Mexico sent her first envoy to the United States in December, 1822. He had instructions to accept the boundary markings as they existed in the Florida Treaty. President Monroe was not willing to negotiate. The Mexican representative reported to his government the Washington officials were arrogant, and that they seemed to believe they were destined to rule over all the Americas.  

John Quincy Adams was elected president in 1824, and three weeks after his inauguration machinery was set in motion for a readjustment of the boundary. Henry Clay instructed Joel R. Poinsett, our first diplomat to Mexico, to

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4Barker, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
5Ibid.
notify the Mexican government the Sabine boundary was not entirely satisfactory. He suggested that perhaps Mexico might be induced to accept the Brazos, the Colorado, or even the Rio Grande.6

Poinsett approached the foreign office of Mexico with the proposal. Clay, the secretary of state under Adams, had instructed Poinsett to offer Mexico a million dollars if she would accept the Rio Grande as a boundary. If this was refused, a half million would be given for the establishment of the line on the Colorado. The Mexican government refused to give in and on January 12, 1828, Clay signed a treaty marking the boundary as it existed in the Treaty of 1819.7

The Treaty of January 12, 1828, was ratified by both the United States and Mexico, but a delay in the exchange of the ratifications within the time limit brought on another round of negotiations. These were carried over into the Jackson administration, when a discussion of the whole Texas question was renewed.8

Anthony Butler was responsible for Jackson's interest in the boundary question. Jackson instructed Van Buren, secretary of state, to reopen the negotiations. Plans were

7Barker, op. cit., pp. 41-42.
8Ibid., p. 43.
prepared and Butler left for Mexico to deliver them to Poinsett, still charge d'affairs.\(^9\)

Jackson recalled Poinsett before he was able to renew the Texas boundary question and Butler was appointed to fill his place. His efforts were fruitless; the offer of five million dollars for Texas did not interest Mexico. And so in April, 1831, Butler very reluctantly signed a convention for ratifying the treaty that had been negotiated by Poinsett.\(^10\)

From his arrival in December, 1829, until his recall in 1835, Butler did nothing but stir up trouble with Mexico. He insulted Mexican officials, and his correspondence with Andrew Jackson showed that he would stoop to bribery to obtain Texas. There can be no doubt that Butler should have been recalled earlier.\(^11\)

Jackson's efforts to buy Texas ceased with the retirement of Butler. Butler had conducted the negotiations in such a manner as to cast reflections on the administration in Washington. They served to add fuel to the distrust of Mexico and her relations with the United States.\(^12\)


\(^{10}\) Barker, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

\(^{11}\) Rives, *op. cit.*, pp. 244-257.

\(^{12}\) Ibid., p. 261.
First Outbreak Against Mexican Rule

Haden Edwards was one of several applicants who waited in Mexico City through 1823 and 1824 for the passage of a nation-wide colonization law. After one was passed in 1824, his interests were shifted to Saltillo. There, on April 15, 1825, he was awarded a contract to settle eight hundred families within a defined territory. His colony was located in what is now East Texas and included the old settlement of Nacogdoches, which he made the capitol of his colony.13

This selection as a site to plant a colony was an unfortunate one. It had within its bounds a number of settlers, Mexican and American, that recognized no authority. Many of them possessed only a squatter's claim to their land. To them, Haden Edwards and his colonists were looked upon as outsiders and meddlers. They were constantly rebelling against rules that were established. Many of them had fled the country during 1819, but had returned after Mexico had gained her independence from Spain in 1821. There were among these squatter-settlers some very bad men who had fled just punishment in the United States. Local disturbances were to plague the colony from the very beginning.14

14H. Dixon, Romance and Tragedy of Texas History, pp. 85-86.
The two shady characters that were responsible for the outbreak of trouble in Edward's colony were Jose Sepulveda and Luis Procula. They believed that the lands of the colony would be valuable one day, so they proceeded to gather up old land titles, and even manufactured titles when necessary.15

Not long after securing his contract, Haden Edwards left for the United States in search of colonists. His brother, Benjamin W. Edwards, was persuaded to represent him until his return. After his return, Haden Edwards delayed reporting to the political chief, Saucedo, until January, 1826. In his report, he notified the chief that with the exception of the two men, Sepulveda and Procula, good order had been established. This letter offended the political chief. Edwards had portrayed the character of these offenders in their true light, but Sepulveda and Procula were Mexicans, as was Saucedo, the chief.16

Meanwhile, Haden Edwards had a notice posted that was to cause great resentment among the colonists. It read:

To all who shall see the present know that I, Haden Edwards, empresario and military commandant of that portion of the state of Coahuila and Texas which has been conceded to me by the authorities of said state, and in virtue of the powers which have been delegated to me by those authorities,

15 Johnson, op. cit., p. 28.
16 Ibid., pp. 27-28.
have decreed, and by the present do decree and
order, that every individual, or family, resident
within the limits of the specifical territory and
all those who claim to have a right to any part
or parts of the land or lands of said territory
shall immediately present themselves to me and
show me their titles or documents, if any they
possess, so that they may be received or rejected,
according to the laws; and if they do not do this,
the said lands will be sold, without distinction,
to the first person who occupies them. Those who
have valid titles will be obligated to bear the
cost of proving them. And by this notice I order
that no person shall settle within the limits of
my territory without my permission.17

Response to the proclamation issued by Edwards was a
petition sent to the legislature by the old inhabitants.
Other incidents continued to add fire to these differences,
and in a letter to Benjamin Edwards, Victor Blanco, vice-
governor, stated that the contract of Haden Edwards had
been annulled. Blanco asserted that Edwards had lost the
confidence of the government, and was to be expelled from
the country.18

Haden Edwards was very discouraged upon receipt of
this news from Governor Blanco, and he was to resist with
all his power. A new state, Fredonia, was created. They
immediately took possession of the "old Stone House." A
red and white flag was raised and this was followed by an
organization of their government and militia.19

Edwards issued appeals to the Indians and the colo-
nists. The Cherokee Indians thought they were being treated

17Barker, The Life of Stephen F. Austin, Founder of
Texas, 1793-1836, pp. 172, 173.
18Ibid., pp. 175, 179-183, 188. 19Johnson, op. cit., p.36.
very badly by the Mexican government so they readily united with Edwards. Chief agents for the Indians were Richard Fields and John Dunn Hunter. The plan of allegiance was adopted on the 20th of December.\(^{20}\)

The Indian chiefs were not successful in persuading the tribes with which they were affiliated to accept an agreement that had been drawn up without their sanction. Some of them had as little sympathy for the colonists as they had for the Mexicans. Their campaign for raising troops was not a success; some thirty Indians were all that they were able to muster.\(^{21}\)

Meanwhile, Colonel Ahumada, accompanied by Saucedo, set out from San Antonio with a considerable number of troops on the 13th of December to restore order around Nacogdoches. They arrived at San Felipe on the 3rd of January. Their progress was delayed there some three weeks because of bad weather.\(^{22}\)

Austin exerted himself in efforts to patch up the trouble, but it was of no use. Austin issued a stirring address to members of his colony. He told them that it was important they remain loyal to the Mexican Government, and asked that sufficient troops be raised to march to the protection of their property and families.\(^{23}\)

\(^{20}\text{Ibid., p. 35.}\)
\(^{21}\text{Dixon, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 92.}\)
\(^{22}\text{Parker, \textit{The Life of Stephen F. Austin, Founder of Texas, 1793-1836}, p. 192.}\)
\(^{23}\text{Johnson, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 40-41.}\)
When Colonel Ahumada left San Felipe, he was joined by the respectable force that Austin had succeeded in raising, plus others from along the Trinity and San Jacinto. Near Nacogdoches, a messenger rode out bringing the news that Edwards and his band had evacuated the place. Colonel Ahumada and his forces entered the town in triumph.  

Assurances were given by Colonel Ahumada that nothing would happen to the inhabitants of the town of Nacogdoches, and surrounding country. Colonel Ahumada insisted that they return to their homes and proceed with their work as usual.

A Law the Texans Did Not Like

General Manuel Mier y Teran, a man very important in the affairs of Mexico, was chosen to head a scientific commission to locate the proposed boundary between the United States and Mexico. This was essential because a new boundary treaty was under negotiation at this time. Additional instructions were given Teran by Pedraza, Minister of War and Navy. In these lies the real significance of the journey. Teran was instructed to mark all points that should be fortified and manned. He was to state specifically the type of fortification needed and the number of men that would be necessary to defend the frontier line. Teran was to take

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24 Ibid., p. 49.
special note of the existing frontier, and if changes
should be made for the safety of the interior, the govern-
ment should be informed at once. 27

A preliminary report on the boundary was made by Teran
on the 8th of April, 1828. And by the early part of 1829,
all personnel of the boundary commission had withdrawn
from Texas to Matamoras. 28

Teran was busy preparing his lengthy report on the
Texas question during the last months of 1829. He not only
set forth the conditions as they existed, but suggested rem-
edies for bettering the situation. This exhaustive report
was presented to the Government on the 6th of January by
Tarnava, a member of Teran's staff. 29 In brief, the report
contained three features: (1) It advised the military oc-
cupation of Texas; (2) a counter-colonization of Texas to
offset the one-sided ratio found there; (3) the establish-
ment of a coast-wise trade to develop the economic friend-
ship of the United States. 30

Alaman, secretary of foreign affairs, received a copy
of Teran's report. He agreed with the measures suggested
by Teran, but thought that a fourth should be added. To

27 Orland Morton, Teran and Texas, A Chapter in Texas-
Mexican Relations, pp. 52-53.


30 Barker, The Life of Stephen F. Austin, Founder of
Texas, 1793-1836, p. 304.
overcome the great Anglo-American population, the national colonization law in regard to Coahuila and Texas should be repealed, and the colonization of Texas should be placed under the direct supervision of the federal government. This would mean that further immigration to Texas from the United States would be prohibited.  

The Mexican secretary, a statesman well versed on the desires of the United States for Texas, presented Teran's recommendations along with his own ideas in a report to a secret session of Congress on February 8, 1830. He urged that a law be passed without delay if Texas was to be preserved for Mexico. Alaman's proposals were enacted into law on April 6, 1830. There were eighteen articles. Articles ten and eleven may be credited to the influence of Alaman. They read:

Article 10. No change shall be made with respect to the slaves now in the states, but the federal government and the government of each state shall most strictly enforce the colonization laws and prevent the further introduction of slaves.

Article 11. In accordance with the right reserved by the general congress in the seventh article of the Law of August 10, 1824, it is prohibited that immigrants from nations bordering this Republic shall settle in the states of territories adjacent to their own nation. Consequently, all contracts not already completed and not in harmony with this law are suspended.

These decrees advanced by Alaman proved to be the most objectional ones of the law.

31 Ibid., pp. 305-306.
32 Johnson, op. cit., pp. 64-66.
From the Mexican point of view, the Law of April 6, 1830, was not an unreasonable one. The eleventh article was designed to overcome the Anglo-American superiority of numbers in Texas. The reports of Teran showed that from a numerical standpoint the Mexicans were greatly outnumbered. To overcome this situation, immigration was to be limited, if not stopped, from the United States.33

As it turned out, that part of the law the colonies had thought so disagreeable--Article 11--did not prove to be such a stumbling block after all. Both Teran and the Mexican government accepted the interpretation of the law submitted by Austin. This permitted people to continue to come from the United States and settle in Austin's colonies and the colony of De Witt.34 Austin wrote to Alaman:

... The most of the contracts on colonization will expire in April next, my colony and De Witt's are the only ones that have progressed and mine is the only one that can be said to be "established." None of the other colonies are in the situation that mine is for none of them have progressed. De Witt's has been commenced and he has over one hundred settlers. ...35

Thus immigration continued to flow from the United States into Texas, though at a slower pace.

It is sufficient to say that only one of the four projects was carried out--the plan to occupy Texas with troops.

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33 Martón, op. cit., pp. 116-117.
34 Barker, Mexico and Texas, 1821-1835, pp. 59-60.
Bustamante, the President of Mexico and thoroughly in accord with the decree, appointed Teran federal commissioner of coloniza-
tion. Teran strengthened the existing garrisons and estab-
lished some new posts in Texas, among them being those at Anahuac and Velasco. These Mexican troops were so situated that they formed a guard around the settlements.36

Conventions and Petitions

It was inevitable that trouble would break out between some of these Mexican troops and the Texans. Bradburn, a Mex-
ican official at Anahuac, usurped power and forced harsh meas-
ures on some of the colonies. He placed Travis and Jack, along with others, in prison. This resulted in an engagement at Velasco. General Jose Antonio Mexia was dispatched to re-
port on conditions in Texas. Mexia was received by the Tex-
ans and every effort made to show him that Texas was loyal to Mexico. Things looked bright for Texas. But the wise men of Texas realized that a meeting of all Texans should be held.37

There were several reasons for calling the convention of 1832. The disturbances at Anahuac and Velasco had just taken place. Santa Anna had received favorable reports on Texas written by Mexia, and the colonists wanted to press their advantage. The only way the colonies could inform

36Barker, Mexico and Texas, 1821-1835, p. 59.

the Mexican government of their desires was through conventions which were representative of all the people.38

The official call was sent out from San Felipe on August 22, 1832. The date set for the meeting was October 1. It was announced that they were to proclaim their loyalty to Mexico and the liberal reform movement headed by Santa Anna. Each of the settlements was requested to send five representatives.39 Brown says that this action taken by the colonies was the most important one taken up to that date. He writes:

This brings us face to face, with the most important and momentous step yet taken by the colonists of Texas--in one sense the most important ever taken, because it was to be the first assemblage of the people in an elective deliberative council.40

Though little time had been given the people of Texas, sixteen districts, all Anglo-American, had sent fifty-eight delegates. Stephen F. Austin was chosen president and F.W. Johnson won over his opponent for secretary.41 Committees were appointed to draft resolutions on the subjects that had been presented to them by John Austin. They were: (1) Committee to prepare a request for a repeal of Article 11 of the Law of April 6, 1830; (2) Committee to draft request for a reduction of duties on articles imported; (3) Committee to consider land business east of Austin's colony; (4) Committee

38 Dixon, op. cit., p. 105.
to investigate Indian affairs; (5) Committee to report on advisability of establishing a state government in Texas that would be independent of Coahuila. \(^2\) The memorials of the various committees were heard and adopted. They selected William Wharton, the person who reported for the committee concerning the Law of April 6, 1830, to carry the memorials to Mexico to be presented to the proper authorities. A "Central Committee" was appointed and given the power to call another meeting when deemed necessary. The convention of 1832 then adjourned on October 6. \(^3\)

According to Wortham, the principal objection voiced by Mexico was to the convention itself, and not the actions it had taken. He writes:

> It was the "form" of the action that was regarded as illegal. The regular procedure would have been to have the ayuntamientos of the state, as such, to petition the governor praying that he take up with the legislature the matters complained of, and the latter body would be the proper one to petition the general government. \(^4\)

Dissatisfaction was also found among the Texans over the convention. Though Austin had been president of the convention, he doubted that Texas was wise in asking for a separation from Coahuila. He was still the conservative.

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\(^3\) Johnson, op. cit., p. 96.

He could only see that such a move would be adding fuel to the flames of suspicion that Texas was headed toward secession. Numbers of the settlers complained that they did not have sufficient time to elect representatives to the convention, hence the activities of the convention did not truly represent the public. In this discouraging atmosphere, Wharton did not leave for Mexico.  

These conditions that existed in Texas, added to the fact that Santa Anna had been elected President during the winter of 1832-1833, were responsible for the Central Committee calling another convention. This second convention was to meet at San Felipe on the 1st of April, 1833. This call was sent out in January so ample time would be had to elect delegates in all the various districts.  

The second convention met on April 1, 1833. The same sixteen districts were represented in this assembly and a number of the same representatives were back. However, there was a distinguished addition in the person of Sam Houston. William H. Wharton was elected president, and Thomas Hastings became the new secretary. A journal of this second convention has not survived, but from scattered documents that are available its work can be pretty well constructed. It consisted in "the adoption of petitions  

45 Barker, Mexico and Texas, 1821-1835, pp. 119-120.  
46 Johnson, op. cit., p. 102.  
47 Ibid.
for state government in Texas, for the repeal of the anti-immigration article of the Law of April 6, 1830, for tariff exemption, and for improvement of the mail service."\(^{48}\) The restlessness of the members was shown when they proceeded to draw up a constitution even before Mexico had passed on their being independent of Coahuila. Sam Houston was chairman of this committee. The constitution was ultra-American—a distinctively American feature was the bill of rights, or the general provisions, that proceeded the main body of the constitution.\(^{49}\) The delegates chosen to present these documents to the government of Mexico, were Austin, Erasmo Seguin, and Dr. James B. Miller. The convention chose Seguin to influence the Mexican population. But both Seguin and Dr. Miller were unable to make the trip. A week after adjournment of the convention on the 13th of April, Austin left on a journey that was to keep him more than two years in Mexico.\(^{50}\)

In a letter to Captain Henry Austin written just before his departure, Stephen F. Austin said:

"I leave tomorrow for Mexico on the state Government mission. I go with considerable—I may say—strong hopes of success. The course taken by the convention, is a true one I think. The memorial for admission as a state is respectfull and dignified. . . I can see no just reason why any offense should be taken to it by the Government, nor why it should be"

\(^{48}\) Barker, Mexico and Texas, 1821-1835, pp. 121-122.

\(^{49}\) Johnson, op. cit., p. 102-103.

\(^{50}\) Barker, The Life of Stephen F. Austin, Founder of Texas, 1793-1836, p. 421.
refused... But every care and prudent step should be adopted to avoid any collision, and the first aggression must not be on the part of the people...

Important Incident at Gonzales

By August of 1835, it was pretty well understood that the federal government of Mexico would be surplanted by a centralized one. The supreme authority was to rest with Santa Anna. Ever since 1832 the policy of Mexico towards Texas had been hostile. It had been arranged that troops would be in Texas by October the time this change in government was to take place. New custom-houses were to be set up and defended by troops. All immigrants from the United States were to be chased from the country, and a long list of people were to be arrested. Future immigrants to Texas were to be supplied by Mexico.

During the early days of September, 1835, there were very few people in Texas that doubted the inevitability of war. Even Austin had joined the so-called "war-party." Intelligence was received that Cos, with extra men, was on his way to San Antonio with instructions to disarm and overrun the country. Stephen F. Austin, chairman of the committee of safety at San Felipe, warned the people of Texas that "war was the only resource," and that men should volunteer and companies be formed.

51 Stephen F. Austin to Henry Austin, April 19, 1833, The Austin Papers, pp. 953-954.
Ugartechoa, stationed at San Antonio, became bold with the knowledge that General Cos was on his way with help. An order was dispatched by him to the alcalde of Gonzales to the effect that they were to surrender the cannon they had in their possession. This cannon had been given them some years before to be used in their defense against the Indians. It was an unmounted, brass six-pounder.  

A meeting of the citizens of Gonzales was held and they promised Andrew Ponton their hearty support if he refused to obey the order. In reply to the request, Ponton stated that he would be unable to surrender the cannon unless ordered to do so by his superior, the political boss of the Brazos. The Mexican officer received the communication and, after stationing his companions on the opposite side of the river from Gonzales, set out for San Antonio. Ponton, sensing the danger of the incident, dispatched couriers to Bastrop and settlements along the Colorado. Meanwhile, plans for defense were being made within the town. There were only eighteen men in Gonzales that could bear arms, but they were determined not to give up the cannon. It was buried in an orchard. The ferry was hidden in a bayou above town, and all small boats brought to their side of the river. A breastwork was thrown up below the crossing as an added

54 Wortham, op. cit., p. 333.
measure of protection. The men in Gonzales knew their activities were being closely watched by the Mexicans across the river. And to keep this information from being conveyed to the reinforcements that were almost sure to arrive, three men were sent out to capture them. One of the Mexicans escaped and hurriedly rode away in the direction of Texas. The other cavalrymen that had been captured were brought into Gonzales and detained as prisoners of war.56

Spies sent out by the Texans warned them that about one hundred and eighty or two hundred men were on their way to Gonzales. Pretty soon the first of the Mexican troops arrived opposite the town and demanded transportation across the river. They were informed that one of their number could swim across the river if there were dispatches to be delivered. A courier swam the river. The message was read by one of the company of Texans and was found to contain an order to surrender the cannon, and, if this was not done, it was to be taken by force. The answer of the men of Gonzales was "come and take it." Lieutenant Castaneda denied having orders to fight when he received the reply of the Texans. Several fake attempts were made to cross the river, then Castaneda withdrew his troops to the Williams' farm some seven miles above Gonzales.57

57Johnson, op. cit., pp. 269-270.
In the meantime, sufficient troops had arrived at Gonzales to warrant an organization. They elected John H. Moore to command the men; his rank was to be that of colonel. J. W. E. Wallace was chosen lieutenant-colonel. Action was begun immediately for an attack on the enemy the following morning. The old cannon was dug up and mounted on wheels. Cannon balls were improvised from pieces of chain and scrap iron. That night they crossed the river and at about four o'clock on the morning of the 2nd of October marched to contact the enemy.\(^58\)

The Mexicans had discovered the advance of the Texans and, taking advantage of a heavy fog, retired to a better position. There they regrouped their men and waited for the Texans. Castaneda proposed a parley after an exchange of shots. The fog had cleared away by this time, and Colonels Moore and Wallace met Castaneda in full view of the two armies. The talk proved unsatisfactory, and when Castaneda refused either to surrender his troops or join the Texans, they retired to their respective forces. The cannon was fired and the Texans charged the enemy. The Mexicans turned and fled towards San Antonio. By two o'clock the Texans were back in Gonzales. They were pleased with the results of their first encounter. They had not lost a single man in the melee.\(^59\) The patriotic ladies of Gonzales had

\(^{58}\) Wortham, *op. cit.*, p. 335.

aided in the operations against the Mexicans by supplying a flag for Captain Martin and his company of Gonzales men. It consisted of a black cannon with a white background, and the words "Come and take it!" appeared both above and below the cannon. 60

The Reverend C. Newell, in commenting on the importance of the engagement between the Texans and the Mexicans at Gonzales in his book, History of the Revolution in Texas, said:

Thus the Rubicon was passed; the war was begun. The people of Western Texas now resolved to carry that war upon the frontier, and drive every Mexican beyond the Rio Grande. They devotedly believed that the time had arrived when every good citizen should shoulder his rifle and fight for his country. 61

60Johnson, op. cit., p. 271.

CHAPTER II

THE SAN ANTONIO CAMPAIGN

On to San Antonio

The battle of Gonzales was the spark that set off the Texas Revolution. By the time this incident happened, the Texans were beginning to realize that Mexico was not in sympathy with their plight. After the battle, Texans everywhere saw that they were to be ground under the heel by the Mexican government. Rather than to sit passively by and wait for this move, Texans decided to move first. Their goal would, of course, be the citadel of Mexican power in Texas—San Antonio. And what better place was there to start from than Gonzales!

An appeal for help went out from all men of influence. The following letter, written by Sam Houston to Isaac Parker, is a typical example. He wrote:

San Augustine, Texas, 5th Oct., 1835

Dear Sir:

At your request I hand you a memorandum, that you may be informed of our situation. War in defence of our rights, our oaths, and our constitutions is inevitable in Texas!

If volunteers from the United States will join their brethren in this Section, they will receive liberal bounties of land. We have millions of acres of our best lands unchosen and unappropriated.

Let each man come with a good rifle, and one hundred rounds of ammunition, and to come soon.
Our war-cry is "Liberty or Death."
Our principles are to support the constitution, and down with the Usurper!!!

Your Friend,
Sam Houston

To Isaac Parker, Esq. present.
(P.S.) We have no time to make any comments. The people of the United States will respond to the call of their brethren in Texas!1

Captain George Collinsworth, on learning that Cos had departed from Goliad leaving some military supplies there and with only small protection, decided to attack the place. About forty or fifty men were collected, and on the night of October 9, they reached the San Antonio River near Goliad. Scouts were sent ahead and they reported that all was quiet and that the Mexicans were not aware of their approach. A deputation was sent into town, and they returned with the news that they would have to fight. About eleven o'clock that night an assault was made on the main doors of the mission. This was where Colonel Sandoval and his garrison of about twenty men were located. Axes were used in forcing their way into the building, and within minutes the Mexicans had surrendered.2

The capture of Goliad by Collinsworth was important for several reasons. Military stores to the value of ten

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thousand dollars were taken. Included in the seizure were some pieces of artillery and three hundred stand of arms. A point not to be overlooked was that the capture of Goliad interrupted the Mexican communications between Bexar and the gulf.3

Spurred on by news that Ugartechea and probably General Cos were on their way, the volunteers at Gonzales realized the necessity of a permanent organization of their forces. First, a commander-in-chief had to be elected. The Board of War met the morning of October 11 and declared that the election should be held by companies at four that afternoon. This announcement was received with the greatest of excitement. These volunteers were mostly strangers and those of each section wanted their candidate to win. Because of the stubbornness displayed, many threatened to return to their homes.4

Just at this crucial moment, Stephen F. Austin arrived from San Felipe. Like magic the bickering ceased. Austin was the general favorite—the one man capable of meeting the emergency. He was the unanimous choice of the men to become commander-in-chief of the army of Texas. Austin realized his deficiencies as a military leader, and he was also in feeble health. Nevertheless, he accepted the position

and assumed immediate command.\textsuperscript{5} Stephen Fuller Austin was born in 1793 in the lead mining country on the frontier of Virginia. His father possessed a roving disposition, and soon the family moved to Missouri. The training that Austin received was ideal for the career he chose to follow. His schooling in Connecticut and Kentucky, the practical business experiences he encountered back in Missouri, and his legal and journalism training, qualified him to combat intelligently the many difficulties he later encountered in Texas. Moses Austin became interested in Texas, and succeeded in passing on to Stephen F. Austin the venture he had begun in Texas.\textsuperscript{6} For years Austin had been one of the most influential men in Texas.

Organization of the forces was begun immediately after Austin took charge. Within two days, Austin had completed the appointment of his staff officers. Warren D. C. Hall was chosen adjutant and inspector-general, and Peter W. Grayson was to become his aid-de-camp. Others on the staff included William P. Smith, Patrick C. Jack, Valentine Baker, and William T. Austin. A vote of the soldiers resulted in J. H. Moore being elected as colonel, Edward Burleson, lieutenant-colonel, and Alexander Somerville as major. On October 12, the army crossed the Guadalupe, and the following

\textsuperscript{5} Ibid.

day they took up their march toward Bexar. Austin's force did not exceed three hundred men. 7

Years after the Texas Revolution, Noah Smithwick, a former private in the army that began to march west vividly described its members:

Buckskin breeches were the nearest approach to uniform, and there was wide diversity even there, some being new and soft and yellow, while others, from long familiarity with rain and grease and dirt, had become hard and black and shiny. Boots being an unknown quantity; some wore shoes and some moccasins. Here a broad-brimmed sombrero overshadowed the military cap at its side; there a tall "beegum" rode familiarly beside a coonskin cap, with the tail hanging down behind, as well regulated tails should do. Here a big American horse loomed up above the nimble Spanish pony ranged beside him. Here a bulky roll of bed quilts jostled a pair of "store" blankets. In lieu of a canteen, each man carried a Spanish gourd. A fantastic military array to a casual observer, but the one great purpose animating every heart clothed us in a uniform more perfect in our eyes than was ever donned by regularly on dress parade. 8

While on the way to Bexar, the organization of the army continued extremely loose. The companies of this volunteer army varied in size from thirteen up to seventy men. Some of the companies had a captain and three lieutenants, while others were commanded by a sergeant. These men, as a whole, did not understand the meaning of discipline. Austin was forced to issue order after order restricting the use of

7 Wortham, op. cit., pp. 359-361.
their arms, both in and out of ranks. A scarcity of food required a strict observance of conservation. As this was a volunteer army, and no oath had to be taken, the men felt free to withdraw; this they often did, sometimes leaving in groups.

Austin, on October 16, ordered a halt at the Cibolo, about eight miles out of San Antonio. This delay was made to allow Captain Ben F. Smith and his men to catch up with them. It was here at the Cibolo that an attempt was made by Austin to open negotiations with Cos. General Cos rejected the offer; he said he could not converse with rebels. While on the Cibolo, the first encounter with the army was made. Lieutenant Bull and his scouts succeeded in routing the enemy. On the 19th Smith arrived, and the march was resumed immediately toward the Salado.

Sam Houston came riding into the Texan camp. He was mounted on a small Spanish stallion, and according to Noah Smithwick, "old Sam's long legs, cased in conventional buckskin, almost touched the ground." Immediately, Austin began urging Houston to take command of all the men. But Houston was firm in his refusal. There is a possibility

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11Smithwick, op. cit., p. 111.
that Houston, a newcomer to Texas, had not yet learned to appreciate the fighting ability of the Texas volunteers.\(^\text{12}\)

A general parade was ordered by Austin while they were there on the Salado. The delegates to the consultation were fixin to leave for San Felipe. Several important personages spoke. Houston was among those that talked to the soldiers. His sympathy was not with the campaign as things stood, and his suggestion was that the army retreat to the left bank of the Guadalupe until they could be reinforced, disciplined, and further strengthened by the addition of artillery.\(^\text{13}\)

While posted on Salado creek, Austin issued orders to Colonel James Bowie and Captain J. W. Fannin. They, with a detachment of some ninety men, were to reconnoitre the old missions above Espada, and to select a favorable camp site nearer the enemy in Bexar. The mission was carried out during the day of the 27th, but instead of returning as they were instructed, they spent the night at a choice spot in the bend of the San Antonio, only about five hundred yards from the mission La Purissima Concepcion, and within a mile and a half of San Antonio de Bexar.\(^\text{14}\)

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\(^{13}\)Wortham, *op. cit.*, pp. 375-377.

The Mexicans discovered their camp in the so-called "Horseshoe," and preparations were made for an assault. Colonel Bowie detected the approach of the enemy, and precautionary measures were taken by placing men at advantageous positions around the parapet that marked the entrance to their grounds. The advance of the enemy was sounded when Henry Karnes, a sentinel for the volunteers, fired upon the Mexicans and then retreated to camp. A heavy mist, during the early morning of the 28th, rendered the volleys of the Mexicans harmless. This was not true with the shots of the Texans; they fired with deadly aim. The Mexicans brought into use a four-pounder, once the battle began. The attention of the Texans was centered upon this cannon and the repeated charges of the Mexican cavalry. There was little doubt as to the outcome. The men of Bowie and Fannin worked with precision and assurance. After a third attempt to storm the defences, the Mexican troops withdrew to the prairie, reformed, and were marched off to San Antonio. Out of some four hundred troops, the Mexican loss was sixty-seven killed and forty wounded. Around the cannon alone, there were some sixteen of the enemy found dead—a sample of the potency of the Texan fire. The Texans had only one man killed, and there were none wounded. Richard Andrews, a friend of Noah Smithwick, was the unfortunate Texan in this encounter.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{15}Williams, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 104-105.
Austin, on the 21st of November, issued an order for an assault on San Antonio, but the commanders of the principal divisions of his army, Edward Burleson and Colonel Philip Sublett, informed Austin that their officers were not willing to attack at the time. Austin had no choice but to withdraw the order.\textsuperscript{16}

The New Orleans Grays, sixty-four men strong, reported for duty on the 22nd of November. They were the very first troops to join the Texans from the United States. They had left New Orleans in October and landed in Brazoria. From the Brazos, they had marched 250 miles to join the Texans before San Antonio. They rated high among all those groups that came to Texas.\textsuperscript{17}

Stephen F. Austin decided to leave the army after it was seen that an immediate assault on San Antonio would not be made. His appointment by the consultation had been received. The consultation, which was then in session, had appointed Austin, along with Branch T. Archer and William H. Wharton, commissioners to the United States. On November 25, 1835, Austin turned over his command to Edward Burleson, and left for San Felipe to undertake his new duties.\textsuperscript{18}


\textsuperscript{17}J. H. Brown, \textit{History of Texas, From 1685 to 1892}, Vol. I, pp. 403-404.

James Bowie and Erastus Smith joined the Texan forces while on their way to San Antonio. Both were citizens of San Antonio and both were to render invaluable services to the cause of Texas.

Bowie was originally from Georgia. His bold and fearless disposition was shown early in life. In 1827 he took part in a bloody fight in Mississippi, where he was wounded and several men were killed. After he came to Texas in 1828, he had many exciting adventures, among them being his great Indian fight.19

Erastus, or "Deaf" Smith as he was called, was destined to become the most important scout of the Texas Revolution. The nickname given him is easily understood for he was hard of hearing. With his intimate knowledge of Mexicans and of the country, he was able to render priceless aid to the Texans in their campaigns against the enemy.20

A scouting party had been down on the Medina River, and when they returned to camp Deaf Smith was left behind. Ugartachea was expected to join Cos and Smith was on the lookout for him. It so happened on that very morning, the 26th of November, General Cos had sent a party of over a hundred men foraging for grass. They had secured an ample supply and were on their way back when Deaf Smith spotted

19 Ibid., p. 269.
20 Ibid., p. 218.
them. He reported Ugartachea was about five miles from town and that he was bringing money with which to pay the Mexican army. Colonel James Bowie, with about a hundred mounted men, was the first to contact the enemy. They were about a mile from town at the time Bowie's men fired upon them. Cos saw Ugartachea's plight and aid was sent immediately. For a while the fighting was brisk, but once the Mexicans started retreat they did not stop until they reached the sanctuary of the town. The packs were examined by the Texans and found to contain grass instead of gold and silver. The Mexicans had about fifty killed and several wounded. The Texans did not have any killed and there were only two injured. Thus ended what has become known as the 'Grass Fight.'

There were a number of reasons for the colonists becoming impatient during the siege of Bexar. They were volunteers and unaccustomed to camp life. They had thought the attack of San Antonio would be an immediate one, and as the days ran into weeks, their spirits were dampened. There were family men among them, and this added to their discontent. It was in December; northerns and bad weather could be expected. These last thoughts, coupled with the knowledge that they had no winter clothing and insufficient food, made their task look dark.22

22 Kennedy, op. cit., p. 507.
A council of war was called by General Burleson because so much dissatisfaction was voiced. The council met on the evening of the 3rd of December. Officers of Burleson's staff and all field officers attended the meeting. It was soon evident that Frank W. Johnson, adjutant and inspector-general of the staff, was the only one favoring action. The others were for abandoning the siege of Bexar and going into winter quarters. Johnson's plea was eloquent, but the majority favored a raise of the siege and retirement of the whole force to Gonzales for the winter.23 Accordingly, at two o'clock in the afternoon of December 4, an order was issued to lift the siege. The men were to busy themselves with preparations for the retreat. They were to leave that very evening at seven o'clock.24

Texans Capture San Antonio

On the eve of their departure, an incident occurred that was to change the whole picture. A Mexican deserter, Lieutenant Vuavis, appeared in the Texan camp and was immediately taken before the commander. He told General Burleson that the morale of the soldiers in Bexar was low and that the defenses of the town were weak. The Mexican declared that San Antonio could be easily taken.25

Colonel Frank Johnson, sensing the feeling that ran through the army after the Mexican had reported, suggested to Milam that "now is the time." Milam liked the suggestion and called out in a loud, clear voice, "Who will go with old Ben Milam into San Antonio?" There were over two hundred that stepped forward. They were requested to assemble at the Old Mill after dark to organize. When Burleson saw what was happening, he told Johnson that he would hold those that had not volunteered in reserve outside the town. He promised that he would give all possible aid to the attacking force.

Milam had joined the march on San Antonio after having been rescued by Collinsworth. It was on the night of the 9th of October that Benjamin R. Milam joined Collinsworth. As some of Collinsworth's men were making their way through a thicket of mesquite, one of their horses was suddenly frightened. Guns were drawn and, as it was too dark to discern anything, a rider shouted, "Who goes there?" The answer was clear and strong and in good Spanish, "A friend." The man in the mesquite replied to another inquiry with, "I am Milam." He joined the group and was brought up to date on the happenings, as he had just made his escape from prison down in Monterrey, Mexico.

After dark the volunteers met at the Old Mill and the attacking party was planned. There were to be two forces. The first would be under the command of Colonel Milam, assisted by Colonel Franks of the artillery and Major Morris of the Grays. Maverick, Cooke, and Arnold were to serve as guides. The second force would be commanded by Colonel Frank W. Johnson, assisted by Colonel Grant and Colonel William T. Austin. Deaf Smith and John W. Smith were to serve as guides for this second group. 29

San Antonio was located on the San Antonio River. The east side of the town was inclosed in a decided bend in the river; there were about twenty-five acres included in the area. On the east bank of the river, and opposite this bend, was the Alamo. The ground around the town was generally level. The river was about sixty feet wide and was fordable in most places. The two plazas, Main and Military, were separated by a church and other buildings. The main street of the city stretched across the river by way of a bridge, the only one on the river. 30

Meanwhile, the defenders of the town had not been idle. The sufficient time given them by Austin and Burleson had allowed Cos to make adequate preparations for defense. Dr. Joseph E. Field has described the fortifications as follows:

30 Ibid., pp. 15-16.
EXPLANATIONS

A Old Mill  E Military Plaza
B House of Veramendi  F Redoubt
C House of de la Llana  G Priest House
D Main Plaza  H House of Antonio Navarro

Map 1—San Antonio and vicinity, adapted from Yoakum, History of Texas, Vol. II, p. 27.
The center of Military operations is a square enclosed on all sides by stone houses, with streets running from all the corners parallel and at right angles with the sides of the square. At the entrance of every street, with the exception of that leading to the Alamo, a ditch was dug, ten feet wide and five feet deep, raised on the inner side so as to make an elevation of ten feet. Over this was erected a breastwork of perpendicular posts, with port-holes for muskets and one in the center for cannon. 31

As had been planned the night before, Colonel J. C. Neill crossed the San Antonio in the early morning hours of the 5th and, with a piece of artillery, began an assault on the Alamo. This was a feint, intended to draw the Mexicans' attention, while Milam and Johnson were marching into the town from the north on the right bank. Fire upon the Alamo was kept up until Colonel Neill heard the report of guns across the river. Neill then withdrew from his position and returned to the Texan camp. 32

The division under Milam entered the town by way of Acequia street and proceeded toward the heart of the fortifications set up by General Cos. The Mexicans opened fire and Milam was forced to take refuge in the house of De la Garza. Johnson took possession of a house; this one belonged to Venamendi. These two houses occupied by the Texans were fairly close to each other and were about a hundred yards from the main square. The Mexican fire was so

31 Boyce House, City of Flaming Adventure, p. 51.
sharp, Milam and Johnson were never able to use to an advantage the two pieces of artillery brought along. During the day, safe communication between the two forces of Milam and Johnson became impossible. However, on the night of the 5th, their positions were strengthened, and a communication line was established by opening a trench between the two divisions.33

When the attack was resumed on the morning of the 6th, it was discovered that the enemy had occupied the tops of houses between the Texans and the square and had cut loopholes in the parapets atop each building. A brisk fire of small arms from these positions of vantage was maintained during the second day. This did not stop the Texans from advance. Lieutenant McDonald led a detachment in an assault and capture of a house closer in than the Garza house. This mission, successfully accomplished, extended the Texan line toward the main objective—the military plaza. The night of the 6th found the enemy opening a trench between the river and the Alamo and strengthening their defenses between the plaza and the river. The Texans, like the Mexicans, were busily engaged in building up their lines.34

Colonel Johnson, in his official report of the battle to General Burleson, states that at about mid-day of the 7th, Henry Karnes advanced and, with a crowbar, forced an

entrance into the house just in front of the first division. This advantage was made secure by Captain York's men. It was in the afternoon, Johnson laments, that Colonel Milam received his fatal wound. Johnson said that Milam was on his way into his (Johnson's) position, when he was killed by a rifle shot in the head and fell near the entrance to the Veramendi house. That evening the Texans forced their way into the house of Antonio Navarro.\textsuperscript{35}

A principal event of the 8th surrounded the assault and occupation of a row of buildings to the north of the Navarro house known as the "Zambrano Row." The same men who had taken the Navarro house, with the able assistance of the Grays, made the capture. The Texans bashed through the walls and advanced from room to room. Though stubbornly resisted, the volunteers were not to be denied. The enemy was forced to retire after suffering a heavy loss of officers and men. While this attack on Zambrano Row was under way, the Mexicans had made a diversionary attack on the camp of General Burleson, but they were quickly driven back.\textsuperscript{36}

Stirred by the arrival of reinforcements in their own camp, as well as that of the enemy, the Texans, on the night of the 8th, stormed and occupied a strong building commonly called the "Priests' House." It commanded a position of

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\textsuperscript{35}Kennedy, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 512-513.

Importance on the plaza, so its seizure was considered a
crowning achievement. Once the house was in their possession,
the Texans busied themselves with securing the doors and win-
dows and cutting openings for small arms fire. The enemy
kept up a general fire with small arms and artillery until
nearly daybreak. The Mexicans did not relish the Texans so
near them, and before dawn they had retreated to the Alamo.37

Soon after daylight, it was noted that the enemy had
hauled down their flag and that a white flag was flying in
its stead. Pretty soon a Mexican, bearing a flag of truce,
was ushered into the presence of Colonel Johnson. The man
declared that General Cos desired to capitulate. Both com-
mmanders immediately appointed commissioners. In the mean-
time Johnson dispatched the information to General Burleson
and requested his presence immediately.38 San Antonio had
been won at an astonishingly light cost. There were only
two men killed and twenty-six wounded. The Mexican loss was
not reported, but it was estimated at from one hundred to
three hundred.39

The articles of capitulation which were drawn up and
signed on the 11th of December by the respective Commanders-
in-Chief, Burleson and Cos, contained eighteen stipulations.40

37Ibid. 38Johnson, op. cit., p. 357.
39Williams, op. cit., p. 114.
40Johnson, op. cit., pp. 359-360.
In the report forwarded by General Burleson to Henry Smith, the Provisional Governor of Texas, Burleson had this to say concerning the terms of surrender:

... By two o'clock a.m. of the 10th, a treaty was finally concluded by the commissioners appointed, to which I acceded immediately, deeming the terms highly favorable, considering the strong position and large force of the enemy, which could not be less than thirteen hundred men. ...  

In General Burleson's report to Smith, Burleson notified him that he was turning his command over to Colonel Johnson. He stated that sufficient troops were being left to defend the town and that the rest of the army was to be sent to their respective homes. In compliance with the treaty, Cos moved from the Alamo on the 14th to Mission San Jose, and on the 15th started his march to the Rio Grande.

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42 Ibid., pp. 358-359.
CHAPTER III

THE MATAMORAS EXPEDITION

Dissension in the Government

Dr. James Grant was the one to originate the expedition to Matamoras. His home was in Coahuila, where he had considerable lands. Dr. Grant had never lived in Texas; certainly he could not call Texas his home. There was a personal motive behind his plans. Grant hoped that if the expedition against Matamoras materialized, he might be able to retain his princely holdings south of the Rio Grande.¹

In carrying out this proposed Matamoras Expedition, the government, under Henry Smith, wanted to follow the laws as set up by the consultation. The council, on the other hand, did not feel as obligated. Membership on the council changed daily and their responsibility was not as deep-seated as that of Smith. These differences grew until there was a lack of cooperation that almost proved fatal to Texas.²

The council, on December 11, created the office of judge-advocate-general and elected D. C. Barrett, one of their own members, to fill it. They also elected Edward

¹W. K. Yoakum, History of Texas, Vol. II, p. 44.
²Ibid.
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of Copano. This action by
the council brought forth a refusal to ratify the appoint-
ments by Governor Smith. In a communication to the council
on the 17th of December, 1836, he declared:

... I beg the favor of your honorable body to
reconsider two of the appointments contained in
your list, and strike out the names of Edward
Gritten and D. C. Barrett, and let others be sub-
mitted in their stead. I can never extend to
them commissions, unless compelled by a constitu-
tional majority of your body. .

But the council insisted on having their way, and Governor
Smith was required to issue these two their commissions.
The contest had become a personal one.

By the latter part of December, 1835, it had become
quite evident that the council was determined to have its
way, regardless of whether their acts conformed with the
organic law of the 13th of November. On the 7th of January,
the council appointed J. W. Fanning an agent to collect vol-
unteers who would be willing to go on the expedition to
Matamorcas. He was given the power to borrow money up to a
certain amount and could ask for provisions from any public
agent. Fanning was impowered with the right to lead the ex-
pedition against Matamorcas, or any other place, if he so
desired.5

3Ibid.


5Yoakum, op. cit., p. 52.
An account by Colonel Neill of the conditions in San Antonio after Grant and his men left, was directly responsible for Governor Smith's outburst against the council. This message to the council was communicated in a secret session on January 9, 1836. With words that left no doubt, he told the council exactly what he thought of them. He said:

... Instead of acting as becomes the councilors and guardians of a free people, you resolve yourselves into intriguing, caucussing parties: pass resolutions, without a quorum, predicated on false premises; and endeavor to ruin the country. ... You have acted in bad faith, and seem determined by your acts to destroy the very institutions which you are pledged and sworn to support. ... Mr. President, I speak collectively, as you all form one whole, though, at the same time, I do not mean all. ... I now tell you that the course here pointed out shall be rigidly and strictly pursued, and that unless your body will make the necessary acknowledgment to the world of your error. ... that after twelve o'clock on tomorrow all communications between the two departments shall cease; and your body will stand adjourned until the first of March next. ... that your services are no longer needed, and until the convention meets, I will continue to discharge my duties as commander-in-chief of the army and navy, and see that the laws are executed.6

The council retaliated on the 11th of January with the adoption of a resolution that the governor be relieved of his duties. The council advanced charges against him. He was given the preference of being tried by the council or by members of the convention which was to convene on March 1. Governor Smith chose to be tried by the new convention.7

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6Brown, op. cit., pp. 481-484.
7Ibid., pp. 485-488.
In trying to place before the people his side of the argument with the council, Governor Smith issued a handbill on the 22nd of January, 1836, which in part states:

... Circumstances have recently rendered it necessary for me to take a bold and decisive course with the Council; some of whom I considered had amalgamated and united themselves with the speculators and swindlers, whose aim has ever been to trammel and ruin the true interests of the country. .. These and similar reasons, impelled me to the course I have pursued. ..

Governor Smith was firmly convinced that his actions would be upheld by the convention to be held in March. He continued to discharge his duties as head of the then existing government. When the convention met at Washington-on-the-Brazos, his services received due recognition.9

Confusion in the Army

Philip Dimitt gives an account of some of the difficulties that had to be surmounted in reducing Matamoras in a letter addressed to Governor Smith. Dimitt was in charge of Goliad during the early days of the contemplated attack on Matamoras. On the 2nd of December, 1835, he wrote Governor Smith:

... Our stock is nearly consumed, both of ammunition and subsistence, and our Volunteers are suffering for winter clothing. On the 9th ulto I dispatched Maj. Geo. M. Collinsworth to the east, for a


9Brown, op. cit., p. 490.
supply of clothing and for ammunition, with letters to the Committees of safety at Matagorda, Columbia, Brazoria, and Quintana. But no return, no answer, or other information from this gentleman... has yet been received. 

On the very same day that Smith directed Sam Houston, the newly appointed commander-in-chief by the Consultation, to move on Matamoros, Houston issued an order to Bowie at Goliad:

... I have the honor to direct that, in the event you can obtain the services of a sufficient number of men for the purpose you will forthwith proceed on the route to Matamoros, and, if possible reduce the place and retain possession until further orders... You will conduct the campaign. Much is referred to your discretion. Should you commence the campaign, you will, from time to time, keep the government advised of your operations through the commander-in-chief of the army...

On December 25, headquarters of the commander-in-chief were moved to Washington. While Houston was at Washington-on-the-Brazos, he issued a call to the United States for volunteers to help in the campaign that was to be staged against Mexico. The call read:

I now recommend to come by sea, and to land at Copano, Coxes Point, or Matagorda. The time employed will be less than one fourth that which would be needful to pass by land. By the first of March the campaign will open.


12Sam Houston to United States Volunteers, December 27, 1835, ibid., p. 326.
A call for volunteers issued by Fannin on the 8th of January, 1836, definitely shows an usurpation of power that belonged to Houston. Fannin issued the following notice:

An expedition to the west has been ordered by the General Council, and the volunteers from Bexar, Goliad, Velasco, and elsewhere, are ordered to rendezvous at San Patricio, between the 24th and 27th instant, and report to the officer in command. The fleet convoy will sail from Velasco, under my charge, on or about the 18th, and all who feel disposed to join it, and aid in keeping the war out of Texas, and at the same time cripple the enemy in their resources at home are invited to enter the ranks forthwith. 13

Colonel Fannin ignored the real Governor of Texas in executing the authority given him by the council. This is shown in a letter written by him to James W. Robinson on January 28. The heading of this letter shows that Fannin recognized Robinson, the person chosen by the council to relieve Smith, as the leader by addressing him as "His Excellency." 14

The Texas soldiers found themselves with time on their hands after they had captured San Antonio. This inaction was favorable to Grant's plans. Dr. James Grant, a Scotchman, had become a naturalized citizen of Mexico. The disfavor of the authorities there had descended on Grant and he had been chased from the country. It was with a selfish

interest in mind that he persuaded the unorganized forces at San Antonio to back his plan of capturing Matamoras. They took their munitions and supplies from Colonel Neill, leaving him without adequate men or equipment to defend the city. Grant moved out of the city on the 30th of December and headed toward Goliad. Francis W. Johnson, who planned to be with Grant on the expedition, went by San Felipe to secure the government's backing. 15

The council, on the 3rd of January, received the request of Frank (Francis) Johnson to legalize the Matamoras expedition. Johnson turned down the offer of the council that he go in with Fannin. Perhaps he did this because he wanted more freedom of command. However, on the 14th of January, the council gave him a carte blanche. Johnson left San Felipe to join Dr. Grant. 16

It is quite evident that the plan to invade Mexico had been recognized by the General Council of Texas. On the 10th of January, Colonel Johnson issued a call from San Antonio. It began with the following terms:

The Federal Volunteer Army of Texas, the victors of San Antonio, then and now under the command of Francis W. Johnson, through him, address themselves to the friends of Texas and of liberty. Under sanction of the General Council of Texas, they have taken up the line of march for the country West of the Rio Grande. 17

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17 Poole, op. cit., p. 185.
The confusion caused in the army by the council's insistence on having its way is pretty well stated by Brown who says, "Thus, by its own action, the council first virtually made Fannin, as an agent, a commander independent of the commander-in-chief, and next recognized Johnson and Grant as the leaders of a separate band." 18

In a letter to Governor Smith, Houston strongly condemned the actions of James Grant and Francis Johnson. He wrote:

... If the government now yields to the unholy dictate of speculators and marauders upon human rights, it were better that we yielded to the despotism of a single man, whose ambition might have been satisfied by our (sic.) unconditional submission to his authority, and a pronouncement, for which we were asked, in favor of his power. ... 19

On January 8, 1836, at ten o'clock in the morning, Houston notified Governor Smith in a private letter that he was leaving, in less than an hour, for the army. He told Smith that he would do everything he could concerning the problem of Johnson and Fannin. He said:

... I am told that Frank Johnson and Fannin have obtained from the Military Committee orders to Proceed and reduce Matamoras. It may be so. There was no Qurum, and the Council could not give power. I will proceed with great haste to the Army and there I can know all. ... 20

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18Brown, op. cit., p. 500.
19Sam Houston to Governor Henry Smith, January 6, 1836, Williams and Barker, op. cit., p. 332.
20Ibid., p. 334.
Houston arrived at Goliad on the 14th of January. On the 17th he dispatched a letter to Governor Smith notifying him that he had sent Colonel Bowie with from thirty to fifty men for the relief of Neill at San Antonio. He told Smith that he had ordered Neill to destroy the fortifications there, and to remove the munitions to Gonzales.21

Sam Houston left Goliad and arrived at Refugio. On the 21st of January, he issued orders for the organization of the troops that were arriving. Meanwhile, F. W. Johnson had arrived on the evening of the 20th. Colonel Johnson called on Houston and presented the powers granted him by the council on January 14. Houston was also made acquainted with the powers given Fannin. Houston realized the management of the Matamoras expedition had been taken from him by the council, and he did the only thing open for him to do—retire to Washington-on-the-Brazos, and report to Governor Smith.22

The authority exercised by Governor Smith was the only authority that Sam Houston had recognized. And so it was to Smith that Houston reported after his return from Refugio by way of Goliad. His letter of January 30, 1836, was a very lengthy one. The story he told shows how the conflict in the government overflowed to cause confusion and disunity among the armed forces of Texas. He said:

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21 Houston to Smith, January 17, 1836, ibid., pp. 339-340.
22 Yoakum, op. cit., p. 61-62.
... On the evening of the 20th, F. W. Johnson, Esq., arrived at Refugio, and it was understood that he was empowered, by the general council of Texas, to interfere in my command. On the 21st, and previous to receiving notice of his arrival, I issued an order to organize the troops so soon as they might arrive at that place, agreeably to the "ordinance for raising an auxiliary corps" to the army. ... Mr. Johnson then called on me previous to the circulation of the order, and showed me the resolutions of the general council, dated 14th of January, a copy of which I forward to the perusal of your excellency.

So soon as I was made acquainted with the nature of his mission, and the powers granted to J. W. Fannin, jr., I could not remain mistaken as to the object of the council. ...

It was my wish, if it had been possible, to avoid for the present the expression of any opinion which might be suppressed in the present crisis. But since I reported to your excellency, having had leisure to peruse all the documents of a controversial nature growing out of the relative duties of yourself and the general council to the people of Texas, a resolution of the council, requiring of me an act of insubordination and disobedience to your orders, demands of me that I should inquire into the nature of that authority which would stimulate me to an act of treason, or an attempt to subvert the government which I have sworn to support. The only constitution which Texas has is the "organic law." Then any violation of that law, which would destroy the basis of government, must be treason. Has treason been committed? If so, by whom, and for what purpose? The history of the last few weeks will be the best answer that can be rendered.

The organic law declares, in article three, that "the governor and general council have power to organize, reduce, or increase, the regular forces"; but it delegates no power to create army agents, to supersede the commander-in-chief. ... Consequently, the council could not create an agency that could assume any command of troops, so as to supersede my powers, without a plain and palpable violation of their oaths. ... I regard the expedition, as now ordered, an individual, and not a national measure. ... If there ever was a time when Matamorcas could have been taken by a few men, that time could have passed by. ... The evil is now done, and I trust sincerely, that the first of March may establish a government on some permanent foundation, where honest functionaries will regard and execute the known and established laws of the country, agreeably to their oaths. ...
I do not consider the council as a constitutional body, nor their acts lawful. They have no quorum agreeably to the organic law... The lieutenant-governor and several members of the council, I believe to be patriotic and just men. 23

Governor Smith granted Houston a furlough; it was to last until March 1. This was, in a way, allowing an order that had been issued by the council on the 26th of December to be carried out. The council had appointed three men to serve as commissioners among the Cherokee Indians; they were Sam Houston, John Forbes, and John Cameron. These three men proceeded to contact the Indians and, at Bowle’s village, drew up a treaty with them on February 23, 1836.24

Fate of Johnson and Grant’s Forces

General Jose Urrea, a former governor of the Mexican state of Durango, had joined Santa Anna at Saltillo, and was ordered to Matamoras. He reached Matamoras on the 1st of February. There he organized his forces. Urrea received information that Johnson and Grant were at San Patricio with a respectable force, and he left Matamoras with some seven hundred troops on the 18th of February to contact them.25

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23 Sam Houston to Governor Henry Smith, January 30, 1836, Williams and Barker, op. cit., pp. 344-355.

24 Yoakum, op. cit., pp. 50-51, 63.

Meanwhile, Johnson and Grant had set up their headquarters in the frontier settlement of San Patricio—the nearest point to Matamoras. Their force was said to vary in numbers from seventy-five to one hundred and fifty men. One of the scouting parties, sent out by this command to search the country between San Patricio and the Rio Grande, succeeded in capturing a small party of Mexicans under Captain Rodriguez. These men were released by the Texans.

A distance of about one hundred and fifty miles separated the Texan settlements and the Rio Grande. This intervening prairie was almost lacking in timber, and the only water supply came from the Nueces and Frio rivers. The Mexican town of Matamoras was located on the right bank and just above the mouth of the Rio Grande.

After receiving information that Colonel Fannin was in need of horses to mount his men, Johnson and Grant determined to supply Fannin with the necessary horses. These horses were obtained by taking them from Mexicans that lived between San Patricio and the Rio Grande. Johnson decided to return to San Patricio after about a hundred horses had been rounded up. Grant and Morris continued the search for more horses.


27 Yoakum, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

Johnson and his men returned to San Patricio with the horses they had collected. Grant was to rejoin him there. The two would then join Fannin and his troops at Goliad. It was while waiting there at San Patricio that Johnson's forces were attacked on February 27, and practically annihilated. Johnson, one of the four to escape, had this to say about the encounter:

... On the night of the second day after our arrival at San Patricio, we were surprised and attacked by Urrea's advance. After a short struggle, all were put to the sword, except Colonel Johnson, David J. Toler, John H. Love, and Miller, of South Carolina. At the time we were rooming together... The house was soon surrounded, and an order given to open the door; there being no light in the house, the officer ordered a light to be made. Toler, who spoke the Castilian well, kept the officer in conversation while he pretended to be complying with the order. While thus engaged, fortunately for the inmates of the house, a fire was opened on the street in front. This drew those in the rear of the house to the front. Apprised of this, Colonel Johnson gave the order to open the rear door, and to pass out, and escape if we could. The order was promptly obeyed; and the party escaped safely to Goliad after some suffering and fatigue.29

Soon after this affair, Grant and his men were attacked while on their way back to San Patricio. They had taken a considerable number of horses during their foray, and were only about twenty miles west of San Patricio. The fight was brief and savage. All of Grant's men but three were put to the sword. The men escaped during the fight and Brown was taken prisoner. Reuben A. Brown years later, in 1853,

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wrote an account of the Johnson and Grant expedition for the Editors of the Texas Almanac. Brown gave this story of Grant and the Agua Dulce fight:

... We had reached the Agua Dulce, within some twenty miles of San Patricio, and, in high spirits, we made an early start from that place, Col. Grant, Placido Benavides and myself being about a half mile ahead to lead the horses, and the rest of the company following. We were passing between two large motts, when suddenly there came out from each of those motts several hundred Mexican dragoons, who quickly closed in, surrounding both the horses and our party. Grant, Placido and myself might then have made our escape, as we were well mounted, and some distance in advance; but our first impulse being to relieve our party, we returned without reflecting on the impossibility of doing any good against so large a number. ... We then at once understood that Urrea had come in on the main road some distance below... that he had been to San Patricio, and had probably slaughtered Johnson and his party. ... As Grant and myself approached to join our party, the dragoons opened their line and we passed in. We at once saw that some of our party had already been killed, and we decided to sell our lives as dearly as possible. ... Just at that moment the horses took a stampede, and broke the line of dragoons, and Grant and myself finding ourselves the only survivors of our party, followed in the wake of the horses. ... and after we had run six or seven miles, they surrounded us, when, seeing no further chance of escape, we dismounted, determined to make them pay dearly for our lives. As I reached the ground a Mexican lanced me in the arm, but Grant immediately shot him dead, when I seized the lance to defend myself. Just as he shot the Mexican I saw Grant fall, pierced by several lances, and a moment later I found myself fast in a lasso... 30

On the 8th of March, Johnson reported, from Lacey's Colorado, to the Convention which was then underway at Washington-on-the-Brazos. In his letter he wrote:

30 Ibid., pp. 420-426.
Grant's party of twenty-six men were attacked but two of Grant's party escaped. of my party which consisted of only 25 men four escaped. I have from Flacido that the enemy's strength is from 1000 men about 200 of whom had advanced as far as Refugio on the 1st. I left Goliad on the 3rd. and arrived in Victoria on the 4th. where I found but fifteen Volunteers. . . . the people are much alarmed and unless some efficient measures are taken the whole of the settlements west of Colorado will be broken up. . . . 31

Johnson, and those men that had escaped, proceeded to Goliad by way of Refugio. Then Johnson, Toler, and Love left there for San Felipe on the Brazos. Johnson, so far as the records show, did not again serve the state of Texas in any public capacity.32

31 F. W. Johnson to the Convention, March 8, 1836, Binkley, ibid., pp. 486-487.

32 Brown, op. cit., p. 544.
CHAPTER IV

THE ALAMO

Santa Anna Leads the Way

Even before San Antonio had been captured by the Texans, the town was looked upon as a "key" to Texas. This idea was expressed in the Telegraph of San Felipe. The article read:

Let Bexar fall and Santa Anna's power in Texas falls with it. Dislodge the enemy from that stronghold and all attempts to invade us from that quarter will be ineffectual. But should the expedition fail, our enemy will take courage, and "the theater of war may be in the heart of our country"; instead of our troops being fed at the expense of our enemy, the whole burden of supporting our own forces and those of the enemy will fall upon our citizens. But, by meeting the enemy on their own ground, in their own stronghold, we avoid the devastating effects of the war, we preserve our dwelling houses from the flames, and our families from the unrelenting cruelties of an unprincipled and infuriated soldiery.

The Mexicans were of the same opinion as the Texans. They recognized San Antonio as the main point of entry. With this thought in mind, Santa Anna began building up a concentration of troops below the Rio Grande. A consolidation of forces brought the number under his command to between six and seven thousand men.

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A circular was issued on December 30, 1835, by the Mexican Secretary of War. It was designed to curb the landing of supplies and men in Texas from the United States. It asserted that all armed foreigners caught within the Republic of Mexico would be considered as pirates and put to death. In like manner, it directed that those persons who imported ammunition and arms, destined for use against the government, should be punished. There is no doubt that Santa Anna was responsible for this blood-thirsty circular.3

Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna was born at Jalapa, located in the state of Vera Cruz, Mexico, in 1795. He did not rank very high intellectually, but he had a wonderful unmatched ambition. He understood his fellow-countrymen and was ever ready to take advantage of them when opportunities were presented.4 Santa Anna was of slight build, a dark person, and was small of stature. He was careful of his appearance and was very Mexican in his tastes and manners. Santa Anna was vain; "Napoleon of the West" was his self-styled name.5

In planning the campaign against Texas, Santa Anna chose San Antonio as his personal target. A choice division


5G. S. Bryan, Sam Houston, p. 55.
was selected to march on the Alamo city. There were special grievances he bore against San Antonio, for it was in that town his favorite officer and kinsman was defeated and forced to capitulate. General Perfecto de Cos had signed the terms of surrender there on December 11, 1835.  

The first troops to cross the Rio Grande were those of Sesma. They arrived on the 12th of February and on the same day crossed to the Texas side opposite San Juan Bautista. Then began the toilsome journey from the Rio Grande to San Antonio. The country they had to cross was semi-desert. The shortage of water and food was ever present. And, as if these were not enough, winter with its fury hit them. Cold northers, rain, and sleet added to some scorching hot days, combined to make the march a very disagreeable one.

The following generals were ordered by Santa Anna to assemble their forces before San Antonio: Filisola, Sesma, Gaona, Andrade, Tolsa, Cos, and Woll. On the 23rd of February the first of the troops arrived at the heights of Alazan overlooking the city of Bexar.

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Texans Prepare to Defend the Alamo

An idea of the deplorable condition of the troops and supplies that were left to defend the city of Bexar may be obtained from a paragraph of a letter written by Lieutenant Colonel Neill to the Governor and Council on January 6, 1836. It read:

... We have 104 men and two distinct fortresses to garrison, and about twenty-four pieces of artillery. You, doubtless, have learned that we have no provisions or clothing since Johnson and Grant left. If there has ever been a dollar here, I have no knowledge of it. The clothing sent here by the aid and patriotic exertions of the honorable council was taken from us by the arbitrary measures of Johnson and Grant, taken from men who endured all the hardships of winter and who were not even sufficiently clad for summer, many of them having but one blanket and one shirt, and what was intended for them given away to men, some of whom had not been in the army more than four days, and many not exceeding two weeks. If a divide had been made of them, the most needy of my men could have been made comfortable by the stocks of clothing and provisions taken from here. . . .

Houston notified Governor Smith of the attention he was giving Lieutenant Colonel Neill, and of the situation at Bexar. This is revealed in a letter dated January 17, 1836. He wrote:

... Colonel Bowie will leave here in a few hours for Bexar with a detachment of from thirty to fifty men. . . . I have ordered the fortifications in the town of Bexar to be demolished. . . . I will remove all the cannon and other munitions of war to Gonzales. . . . blow up the Alamo and abandon the place, as it will

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be impossible to keep up the Station with volunteers. . .10

Bowie and his men arrived in San Antonio on the evening of the 19th. And in a letter to Governor Smith on the 2nd of February, Bowie stated that the city of San Antonio should not be evacuated. He believed the city should be defended and declared that they were ready to give their all rather than surrender the post to the Mexicans.11

Governor Smith was stirred by the letters of Neill, and he ordered Lieutenant-Colonel Travis to find recruits and march to the relief of Neill. The enthusiasm of the Texans had hit a new low. Energy was exerted by Travis in his efforts to enlist men, but to no avail. After a decision that further delay was useless, Travis wrote a letter to Governor Smith stating his plight and giving some reasons for it.

He said:

In obedience to my orders I have done everything in my power to get ready to march to the relief of Bexar, but owing to the difficulty of getting horses and provisions, and owing to desertions, etc., I shall march today with only about thirty men all regulars except four. . . . The people are indifferent. They are worn down and exhausted with war, and in consequence of dissensions between contending and rival chieftans, they have lost all confidence in their government and officers. You have no idea of the exhausted state of the country. . . .12


Travis did not set out immediately. The night was spent at Burman's on the Colorado. He became discouraged overnight and on the 29th of January, Travis wrote another letter to Governor Smith. He stated that he would like to be relieved of the San Antonio mission. Travis, momentarily, seemed to be unwilling to jeopardize his personal ambitions. He wrote:

... I beg that your Excellency will recall the order for me to go to Bexar. ... Sir, I am unwilling to risk my reputation (which is very dear to a soldier) by going off into the enemy's country with such little means, so few men, and them so badly equipped.13

Discord was not only found within the government, but among the leaders of San Antonio. Governor Smith made no reply to Travis' request that he be relieved, and, like a good fellow, he marched his men to Bexar. He entered San Antonio on the 3rd of February. On the 11th of the month, Neill was forced to leave. This was revealed by Travis who said, "In consequence of sickness of his family Lt. Col. Neill has left this Post, to visit home for a short time and has requested me to take command of the Post."14 It was at this point that misunderstandings between Travis and Bowie broke out over the command of the troops. Their differences were sufficiently patched up by the 14th, to allow

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13Travis to Governor Smith, January 29, 1836, ibid., p. 274.
14Ibid., pp. 280-281.
them to write a letter to Governor Smith. They said that Colonel Bowie was to command the volunteers and Colonel Travis would be in charge of the regulars.\(^{15}\)

One of the most colorful men to enter the conflict was David Crockett. This backer of Texas freedom had had many careers. He was a backwoodsman and a bear hunter of note. He had served as a judge and was a former member of the Tennessee legislature. Crockett had represented his people in Congress, though at the time of his marriage he scarcely knew one letter of the alphabet. A political defeat hurt him deeply, and it was at this time that he said, "I told my constituents they might all go to hell, and I would go to Texas."\(^{16}\) David Crockett arrived in Nacogdoches during the early part of January, 1836. The oath of allegiance was administered to a small group on January 14. Shortly thereafter, some sixteen or seventeen of these men formed a company of "mounted volunteers." Under the leadership of Colonel Crockett, they started for San Antonio. Crockett and his party of twelve "Tennessee Boys" arrived in San Antonio on the 7th or 8th of February. They were warmly received by Travis.\(^{17}\)

15Ibid., p. 284.
Captain Juan N. Seguin, a young Mexican whose father was the alcalde of San Antonio, was in sympathy with the Texans. Young Seguin dispatched his own nephew, Blaz Herrera, to the banks of the Rio Grande to spy on the movements of the enemy. Somewhere near the middle of February, Herrera hurriedly returned to San Antonio and reported that a Mexican force had crossed the river and were on their way into Texas. Seguin turned this information over to Travis. Few Texans believed the news and it was branded as "more false lies." Despite the advance notice that had been given, the Texans were taken by "surprise." Sentinels stationed atop one of the churches signaled the approach of the Mexican army. After checking and seeing no sign of the enemy, two horsemen, Sutherland and Smith, were sent to reconnoitre. They came upon the Mexicans at Prospect Hill. The two promptly reported that they had seen the enemy, and that their number were from twelve to fifteen hundred Mexican cavalry. Travis realized that the long expected arrival of the enemy had at last become a reality. The Texan troops that had gathered in the Main Plaza of San Antonio were ordered by Travis, now in command, to retire across the San Antonio river and take up their defense within the Alamo. Santa Anna first occupied

19 A.M. Williams, Sam Houston and the War of Independence in Texas, p. 139.
the town part of San Antonio. He then demanded that the men in the Alamo surrender. They refused his order.21

Not very much is known of Travis before he came to Texas. He was a boyhood friend of Bonham. He had taught school and studied some law. Travis married one of his pupils back in Alabama and they had two children, a boy and a girl. He practiced law in San Felipe after he moved to Texas. He was a tall man and possessed a well proportioned figure. At the time of his death, Travis was said to have been about twenty-seven years old.22

The Alamo was the only Texas mission whose name was not associated with sacred things or persons. The name, Alamo, was not the official name of the mission. To the friars and the church it was Mission San Antonio de Valero. The Alamo was, of course, a popular name which seems to have won favor until San Antonio de Valero was practically forgotten. It was a common report that the ground around the mission had once been covered with a growth of cottonwoods. The Spanish for cottonwoods is "Alamos." Thus the name arose from this circumstance.23

21George Creel, Sam Houston, Colossus in Buckskin, p. 122.
Map 2—The Alamo, adapted from Corner, San Antonio de Bexar, A Guide and History, p. 16.
To fully describe the siege and fall of the Alamo, it is necessary to give a brief description of the chapel and the several buildings that were included in the defensive setup. One must keep in mind that these old buildings had been originally constructed for a mission, not a fortress. The chapel faced west toward the city, only a half mile away. (This is the building we now refer to as the Alamo.) The walls of this building were four feet thick and twenty-two feet high. Then, there was the main building, or "long barracks." During the siege, this two-story structure was used for a hospital, an armory, and for soldier's quarters. A one-story building called the "low barracks" served as a prison and soldier's quarters. The main area, or "inner court," was some fifty-four yards square. These buildings covered a space of more than two acres. It would have taken a force of more than a thousand men to adequately defend the fortifications. 24

Efforts had been made by Travis and his chief engineer, G. B. Jameson, to place the fourteen pieces of artillery where they would do the most good. Four of the cannon were located to defend the main entrance to the convent yard. Two were used to strengthen the defense near the entrance.

to the plaza. Two cannon were mounted to defend a stockade that had been constructed. And the others were placed at strategic points on the walls of the fortification.25

Mamie Wynne Cox, in her book, *The Romantic Flags of Texas*, states that most of the writers on the Alamo are pretty well convinced that the flag used by the Texans was the "Constitution of 1824." It was the red, white, and green flag of Mexico with the date, 1824, stamped on the white stripe. She asserts that Amelia Williams, Yoakum, Potter, and others are of the opinion this federal flag was recognized by the Texans at the beginning of their revolution.26

**Texans Within the Alamo**

First news of the siege of the Alamo was received by the people of Gonzales. At three o'clock in the afternoon of the 23rd, a note was written by Travis and dispatched with all haste to the alcalde of Gonzales, Andrew Ponton. Travis hurriedly reviewed their case saying, "The enemy in large force is in sight. We have 150 men and are determined to defend the Alamo to the last. Give us assistance."27

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On the 24th, the day after the arrival of the Mexican troops, Travis wrote what has been called "the most heroic document in American history." He wrote:

Commandancy of the Alamo, Bexar, Feb'y. 24th, 1836.
To the People of Texas and All Americans in the World--
Fellow Citizens and Compatriots: I am besieged by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna. I have sustained a continued Bombardment and cannonade for 2½ hours and have not lost a man. The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise, the garrison are to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken. I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, and our flag still waves proudly from the walls. I shall never surrender or retreat. Then, I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism and everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid with all dispatch. The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily and will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor and that of his country. Victory or Death.

William Barrett Travis,
Lt. Col. Comdt.

P.S. The Lord is on our side. When the enemy appeared in sight we had not three bushels of corn. We have since found in deserted houses 80 to 90 bushels and got into the walls 20 to 30 head of Beves.28

Captain Albert Martin was chosen to carry this letter to the interior. It was a dramatic moment when the doors of the fortress were thrown open and he dashed off on his "Paul Revere" ride. Nearly two miles from town he drew rein. And, after reading the missive again, he resolved that after reaching Gonzales he would go to still other communities to stir the people from their lethargy.29

28Ibid.

In response to the call sent to Gonzales, thirty-two gallant men were guided safely through the enemy lines by Captain John W. Smith. This brought the number of troops under Travis to one hundred and eighty-eight men. A number of calls were issued for assistance, but those that came from Gonzales were the only men that answered Travis’ pleas. 30

While reinforcements were arriving daily in the camp of the Mexicans, there was very little for those Texans to be thankful for cooped within the walls of the Alamo. All sorts of tricks were used to destroy the morale of the small garrison. Many feigned attacks were staged interspersed with real ones. These, added to the necessity of procuring wood and water from outside the fort, wore down the physical energies of Travis and his men. But their spirit remained undaunted. 31

Travis’ last message was carried through the enemy lines by John W. Smith. The message bore the date March 3 and it was addressed to the president of the convention. The letter was read to the assembly on the morning of the 6th. It was saturated with despair, but Travis declared that he would defend the Alamo until help could be sent. Travis wrote:

30Yosakum, op. cit., p. 78.
... From the twenty-fifth to the present date the enemy have kept up a bombardment. ... The spirits of my men are still high, although they have much to depress them. We have contended for ten days against an enemy whose numbers are variously estimated at from fifteen hundred to six thousand men. ... A blood red banner waves from the church of Bexar, and in the camp above us, in token that the war is one of vengeance against rebels: They have declared us as such; demanding that we should surrender at discretion, or that this garrison be put to sword. Their threats have had no influence on me or my men, but to make all fight with desperation, and that high souled courage which characterizes the patriot, who is willing to die in defense of his country's liberty and his own honor. ... 32

W. P. Zuber, in his article "The Escape of Rose From the Alamo," gives his account of the escape of Moses Rose from the Alamo on the 3rd of March. It was Rose that, according to Zuber, brought from the Alamo the story of Travis' speech to his men and its acceptance by all the men (even the bed-ridden Bowie) except one. Shortly after the declination by Moses Rose, Zuber asserts that he dropped over the walls and made his way through the enemy lines. 33

Colonel James B. Bonham was the last man to enter the Alamo. Twice he had been sent with messages asking for assistance. After the last one had been delivered, his friends insisted that he not return to San Antonio. They told him that he had performed his duty and that his return would mean certain

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32 Travis to President of Convention, March 3, 1836, Johnson, op. cit., pp. 403-404.

death. But the urge to return was too great. Bonham brushed aside all entreaties and, running the gauntlet of Mexicans, joined the doomed men on the morning of the 3rd of March.\footnote{Wortham, op. cit., p. 195.} According to Milledge L. Bonham, Jr., the only description of James B. Bonham is to be found in a letter written by Milledge Lipscomb Bonham to A. N. McCallum, June 22, 1896. M. L. Bonham, Jr. said that James B. Bonham was a very tall man, standing six feet, two inches in height, and that he possessed black eyes and hair, and a very engaging personality.\footnote{M. L. Bonham, Jr., "James Butler Bonham: A Consistent Rebel," \textit{The Southwestern Historical Quarterly}, Vol. XXXV, p. 136.}

Assault and Fall of the Alamo

By noon of the 5th, Santa Anna had decided to make the assault of the Alamo. He divided his force into four columns. These columns were commanded by Generals Cos, Romero, Morales, and Duque. The men were assembled at twelve o'clock that night.\footnote{"The Private Journal of Juan Nepomuceno Almonte," \textit{The Southwestern Historical Quarterly}, Vol. XLVIII, pp. 22-23.} Shortly after midnight, the entire army was placed about the Alamo. The foot soldiers were given ladders to use in scaling the walls. The Mexican Cavalry was placed on the outside of the circle to see that the infantry obeyed the orders given them.\footnote{Yoakum, op. cit., p. 80.}
Every account, that is of any value, states that the signal for the final attack was given by "a long clear blast from a bugle, followed by the notes of the dreadful deguello," the martial air. This bugle call had, for many years, meant ruthless destruction of property and death without mercy. The word "deguello" is Spanish, and it signifies beheading or the cutting of the throat.\footnote{Amelia Williams, "A Critical Study of the Siege of the Alamo, And of the Personnel of its Defenders," The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Vol. XXVII, p. 181.}

At five o'clock the advance was begun under the heavy and accurate fire of the Texans. Twice, efforts were made to reach the top of the walls, but the assailants were repulsed. Threats and promises had to be made before the Mexicans would make a third attack. This third assault was the one that was successful.\footnote{Yoakum, op. cit., p. 80.} Only a few effective shots could be fired by the cannons that manned the defense before the enemy had protection under them near the base of the walls. The outer walls could not be protected with so few men, and they were soon lost to the enemy. The main struggle began when the garrison became more concentrated. However, there was no retreating to a central point. Each small band of defenders fought to the last in, or near, their original stations. A heavy and accurate fire of the Texans poured
from loop-holes, windows, and doors within the area. The Mexicans were killed in great numbers but their places were quickly filled. Travis fell, with a bullet in his forehead, near the western wall. Crockett dispatched numbers of the enemy before he was killed in a corner near the chapel. Major Evans was shot as he attempted to fire the powderhouse. And Colonel Bowie was butchered as he lay in bed. The very last of the Texans died as they defended the church. It was still early in the morning, and "The Alamo Had Fallen."

Most of the contemporaries place the number of Texans lost during the assault of the Alamo at from 182 to 188. There is much disagreement among historians over the numbers of Mexican troops that were killed during the eleven day siege and assault of the Alamo. Amelia Williams, an authority on the subject, places the number at about 154.43

While the assault was under way, Mrs. Dickinson, Mrs. Alsbury, and their children were in the north rooms of the church. After the battle was over, Mrs. Dickinson and her child were sent on horseback to the Texans at Gonzales.

41Yoakum, op. cit., p. 81.
42Baker, op. cit., p. 111.
They were joined by the Negro servant of Travis who had successfully escaped his guard. The other women of the Alamo were cared for by relatives that lived in and around San Antonio.44

The bodies of the Texans were stripped of their clothing, mutilated, and burned. They were thrown in three piles—a layer of bodies and a layer of wood. Oil and grease were poured over the corpses and they were set afire. It took two days for these funeral pyres to be consumed. This kind of a death was one of the greatest dishonors that could be bestowed on an enemy.45

After the Alamo had been conquered, Francisco Ruiz, the alcalde of Bexar, was commissioned to bury the Mexican dead. Ruiz proceeded to execute the order. A scarcity of space in the cemetery and the immensity of the task, caused Ruiz to throw many of the dead Mexicans in the San Antonio river. Numbers of the bodies were not carried away by the current. Sickness broke out. Santa Anna was one of the victims of the unsanitary conditions found within the city of San Antonio.46

Edward Burleson, in addressing an assembly at Gonzales,

44Adina De Zavala, History and Legends of the Alamo and Other Missions, p. 34.


46Ibid., p. 178.
soon after the news of the Alamo had reached them, concluded with these words that have since become immortal, "Thermopyle had her messenger of defeat; the Alamo had none."47

CHAPTER V

THE GOLIAD CAMPAIGN

Ward and King

As early as February 7, 1836, Fannin had decided against the move on Matamoras. This decision was probably encouraged by news he had received concerning the movement of Mexican troops on the Rio Grande. In a letter to J.W. Robinson, Fannin suggested that defensive operations, not offensive ones, should be used against the enemy. He wrote:

... We are now undeceived, and unless a turn out in mass be made, and that speedily, the force now in the field cannot keep the invaders in check, long enough to prevent the fury of the war's being waged in the heart of the country, if ever Santa Anna crossed the Guadalupe with 5,000 men, we have to fight east of the Brazos, if not the Trinity! ... 1

Fannin was discouraged with the way Texans responded to his plea for provisions to supply his men. There were reasons for this disinterest on the part of the people. The "Old Texans" were firmly convinced that Cos' surrender at San Antonio had meant the war was over. They were of the opinion that once the Mexican troops were expelled from the country they would not return. There had been rumors of invasion from the south during January, but they had had no

basis of truth. Their principal job, as the "old settlers" saw it, was the planting and growing of corn. And this they proceeded to do.²

Fannin began the organization of his forces in Refugio. The operation was completed after they had taken up their station in Goliad. There was to be a regiment made up of two battalions. Fannin was elected to head the regiment with the rank of colonel. The two bodies were named the Lafayette and the Georgia battalions. Other ranking officers were William Ward, Benjamin Wallace, and Warren Mitchell. Drs. James H. Field and Joseph Barnard were the surgeons of Fannin's men.³ The fort there at Goliad was called "Defiance" by Fannin. Improvements were made for the protection of Ft. Defiance under the direction of Lieutenant Chadwick. Block-houses were built, and picketing and ditching were done. Pieces of artillery were mounted at strategic points.⁴

It was while here at Goliad, that Colonel Fannin received an urgent request for help. Lewis Ayres of Refugio presented himself to Fannin, and asked that a sufficient guard be sent to enable families to be removed from that

area to a place of safety. Hearing of the danger the residents in and around Refugio were in, as a result of the advance of Urrea's troops, Fannin dispatched Captain King with a force of twenty-eight men. Captain King reached Refugio on the 12th of March, but, for some unknown reason, his departure was delayed until units of advance Mexican cavalry came up. King took refuge in the Refugio mission, and sent a call to Colonel Fannin for reinforcements. In response to this message, which reached him about midnight of the 12th of March, Fannin sent Colonel Ward with one hundred men. Ward and his men arrived at Refugio on the evening of the 13th. Meanwhile, Urrea had received news of the stiff resistance being offered by King, and he had ordered Captain Pretalia and his company of cavalry to keep King engaged until the main body of the Mexican troops could advance to the attack.

Early in the morning of the 14th, Colonel Ward ordered a retreat of the forces at Refugio so they might join Fannin at Goliad. King, with a small force of eighteen men, was sent out to see if the Mexicans were in the area in large numbers. A little while after they had left, shots were heard. Colonel Ward and his men marched rapidly to King's

6 Yoakum, op. cit., pp. 86-87.
aid, until they were suddenly confronted by some six or eight hundred of the enemy. Ward and his command then retreated to the mission and prepared to defend the place. The church was old and in ruins, but it was still pretty strong. All of Ward's men, with the exception of Captain Bullock and his company of thirty-five, barricaded themselves in the church and awaited the assault. General Urrea wasted no time in ordering an attack. Even a four-pounder was drawn up to batter down the mission door. Severe losses were suffered by the Mexicans in this fighting which lasted nearly all day. Total casualties for the Mexicans were about two hundred, while the Texans had only three severely wounded.  

Captain King was cut off from any possible chance of reaching Ward in Refugio, so he decided to march to Goliad. He lost his way and, after wandering about for two whole days, found that he was back near Refugio. King and his men were surrounded and forced to surrender when they found that their ammunition was wet and unfit for use. Within six hours of their surrender on March 16, Captain King and his men were shot and "left a prey to wild beasts."  

Colonel Ward and his men decided to retreat from the mission after they found that their supply of ammunition was

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7Ibid., pp. 87-89.

practically exhausted. They were not able to carry their wounded with them, but they were determined to leave them a plentiful supply of water. This they accomplished by capturing a spring about four hundred yards from the mission. The Texans then filled the gourds of their injured comrades, and bade them good-by. General Urrea took charge of the mission at Refugio on the 15th. The wounded Texans he found there were quickly dispatched to make room for his own wounded. Colonel Vara, and a small group of men, were left in charge of Refugio. General Urrea, with every available man, set off after Colonel Ward on the 16th of March. 9

In retreating from Refugio in the direction of Victoria, Ward took to the swamps and woods in order to avoid the Mexican cavalry. Some of his men went in search of water, on the second day out of Refugio, and did not return. On the 19th of March, the Texans crossed the San Antonio and continued their march toward Victoria. That evening an attempt was made to join Fannin but darkness prevented them from accomplishing their mission. They spent the night in the Guadalupe swamp. The following morning they were attacked, as they came out of the swamp, by some five hundred of the mounted enemy troops. After firing about three rounds, the Texans were forced to retreat to the safety of the swamp for they had exhausted their supply of powder. The next day,

9Ibid., pp. 428-429.
the 21st of March, Colonel Ward marched his men to Victoria and there surrendered as prisoners-of-war.\(^{10}\)

**Battle of Coleto Creek**

James Walker Fannin was born in Georgia in 1804. He was a very handsome boy and also a very sensitive one. In 1819 he was admitted to West Point, but his sojourn there was an unpleasant one. He ran away from the school after engaging a fellow student in a quarrel. Fannin returned to Georgia and was married to Minerva Fort. In 1834, he moved his family to Velasco, Texas. Here in Texas Fannin seems to have become interested in slave-trade with the island of Cuba. However, he was respected by his neighbors. When war seemed almost inevitable during the summer of 1835, he had taken an active part in the revolutionary committees.\(^{11}\)

Houston, soon after his arrival at Gonzales after having been chosen commander-in-chief by the convention, dispatched Captain Desauque with an order for Fannin to retreat. He asserted:

> You will, as soon as practicable after the receipt of this order, fall back upon Guadalupe Victoria, with your command, and such artillery as can be brought with expedition. The remainder will be sunk in the river. . . . Previous to abandoning Goliad, you will take the necessary measures to blow up that fortress;

\(^{10}\)Yoakum, op. cit., p. 89.

and do so before leaving its vicinity. The immediate advance of the enemy may be confidently expected...12

After receiving Houston's order to retreat, Colonel Fannin dispatched a messenger to Ward at Refugio informing him of the contents of Houston's letter. Fannin asked Ward to return to Goliad as soon as possible. In the meantime, preparations were begun for the evacuation of Goliad. Parties were sent out in search of oxen and carts. On the very same day, the 14th, a note was sent to Colonel A.C. Horton, stationed at Matagorda, asking him to join them. This note was not received. However, Horton with twenty-seven men joined Fannin on the 16th of March.13 The messengers Fannin sent to Ward were not getting through. Colonel Fannin was determined to wait for some news from Ward and King before starting his retreat to Victoria. Captain Frazier, a former resident of Refugio and a man familiar with the country, volunteered on the 16th to go after the news sought by Fannin. By the middle of the afternoon of the following day, Captain Frazier had returned bringing a full account of King's disaster and of Ward's escape from Refugio and his retreat in the direction of Victoria.14


13 Yoakum, op. cit., p. 87.

Even after Fannin had received the disheartening news of Captain Frazier, the retreat from Goliad was not begun until the 19th of March. The 18th was spent in skirmishing with the enemy. Though these brushes with the Mexicans served to whet the Texans’ spirits, one whole day was lost. The activity served to tire their horses, and the oxen that had been rounded up to pull the carts went unattended during the delay. There was also a plan presented to abandon Goliad the night of the 18th but it was discarded—Fannin’s men were not frontiersmen.15 Ruby Cumby Smith in her article, "James W. Fannin, Jr. In the Texas Revolution," says that the main criticism of Fannin was the slowness with which he carried out Houston’s order to retreat. She wrote of Fannin:

Yet we cannot blame Fannin either for wishing to furnish protection to exposed families, or to help his men in distress; and if the rest of his retreat could have been accomplished with haste, even after he had learned of the disaster to Ward, he might have still escaped to Victoria, if he had managed skillfully. The thing which we can blame Fannin, as well as Ward and King, for was their slowness to execute any movement they undertook.16

Early on the 19th, Fannin sent Colonel Horton and twenty-eight horsemen on a reconnoitering trip in the direction of Victoria. They returned and reported that the road was clear. Fannin then prepared to leave Goliad; the fort was dismantled, and buildings in the immediate vicinity were


burned. Then, with about three hundred men, the long awaited retreat was begun. Their march was delayed when they crossed the San Antonio river. The artillery was heavy and cumbersome, and much difficulty was encountered in getting it up the banks. But by ten o'clock they were under way again. The retreat was made as fast as the slow ex-teams would permit.17

There was a lack of respect for the Mexican soldier found among these men in their retreat. Their contempt, plus a "false sense of security," was very clearly shown as the Texans followed the road to Victoria. About seven miles out of Goliad, and a mile beyond the Manahuila creek, a halt was called by Fannin. After an hour's rest, the journey was resumed.18 Two of Fannin's most capable officers, Captains Duval and Shackelford, strongly protested this halt. Their objections were that they were without water, and their position, from a military viewpoint, was not a favorable one. In spite of the earnest appeals made by Shackelford and Duval, their warnings had been taken very lightly.19

Urrea did not think the Texans would retreat, and had made preparations to siege the fort. After he received word that Fannin and his men had abandoned Goliad, he ordered

17Johnson, op. cit., p. 430.
18Smith, op. cit., p. 278.
19Davenport, op. cit., pp. 24-25.
Garay to take charge of the fort. At eleven o'clock on the 19th, General Urrea, with three hundred and seventy infantrymen and eighty cavalrymen, hurried to overtake the Texans. By early afternoon they had sighted Fannin's men.20

The Texans soon found themselves completely surrounded. Mexican cavalry had moved up to cut off their advance to Coleto Creek, while infantry units sealed other avenues of retreat. Colonel Fannin very calmly prepared for battle. His men were arranged in a hollow square three lines deep. The wagons, equipment, horses, and oxen were placed in the center. Pieces of artillery were mounted at the corners of the square.21 The battle was begun at three in the afternoon of the 19th and lasted until dark. Urrea had no artillery but this did not discourage him; he ordered immediate contact with the enemy. The Mexicans advanced rapidly, but accurate fire from Fannin and his men drove them away. Next, a bayonet charge was made by the Mexicans. Again they were forced to retreat. A cavalry charge, led personally by Urrea, was just as unsuccessful. After these three attempts had been made to break the square, Urrea withdrew his troops to await the arrival of his artillery.22 There were seven Texans killed and sixty wounded in the battle that has become

20Smith, op. cit., p. 278.
22Smith, op. cit., pp. 278-279.
known as "Coleto." The Mexicans lost between two and three hundred of their fifteen hundred troops during the fighting.  

Horton, and his company of cavalry, escaped the battle of Coleto Creek. They had been sent on ahead to check the ford across the Coleto. When the firing had started, they surveyed the situation, and, to Horton's Lieutenant Moore, it seemed impossible to go to Fannin's aid. Horton expressed a desire to enter the battle, but, after Moore had ridden away with most of his men, Horton and the few who remained rode on towards Victoria.  

Late in the afternoon, the Mexicans sent a hundred Campeachy Indians to harass the Texans. They crawled through the tall grass until they were near the square. Their murderous fire was stopped after it had become dark enough for Fannin's men to detect the flashes from their rifles. The night was one of despair and gloom for the Texans. Their situation was a critical one. They were without water, and, as if this were not enough, they discovered that some of their provisions had not been brought along from Goliad. Furthermore, adequate care could not be given their sixty injured. A proposal to retreat was turned down because they did not want to leave their wounded behind. Fake attacks, staged by Urrea's sentinels, added to the horrors of the night.

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The belated reinforcements that Urrea looked for arrived at six-thirty on the morning of the 20th. There were three pieces of artillery brought along by the five hundred Mexican troops from Bexar. Urrea wasted no time. His troops were displayed before the Texans, along with the pieces of artillery. Some shots were fired by the Mexican artillery, but they had no effect as they were kept at a respectable distance by Fannin's sharpshooters. 26

Escape for Fannin and his men was clearly impossible. The Texans, seeing that further resistance was useless, hoisted a white flag. This action was promptly answered by the enemy raising one. General Urrea refused to confer with Major Wallace and Captain Chadwick, so Colonel Fannin, though injured in the fighting the previous afternoon, limped out to treat with the Mexican officer. Fannin assured his men that he would agree only to an honorable capitulation. 27 The Texans were aware of the treachery shown King's men, but they were of the opinion that if the terms of surrender were written, the Mexicans would respect the paper. There was a written capitulation, for all those that survived the massacre said that they saw officers writing it up. 28 Fannin notified his men of the terms he had been able to make with

26Johnson, op. cit., p. 432.
27Yoakum, op. cit., p. 96.
28Smith, op. cit., p. 280.
General Urrea. Briefly, they were as follows: (1) They were to surrender their arms. As prisoners-of-war, they were to be treated according to the accepted rules of the civilized nations; (2) Private property of the men was to be respected; (3) Both men and officers were to be sent back to the United States by way of Copano as soon as arrangements could be made.

Despite the assertion of the Texans that they had surrendered as prisoners-of-war, Ruby Cumby Smith, in her article "James W. Fannin, Jr., In the Texas Revolution," says that the exact terms of the document were not known until Professor Barker found a Spanish copy of the capitulation in the archives of the Mexican war department. It seems to show that the Texans had surrendered as "prisoners-of-war and placed at the disposal of the supreme government."  

Massacre at Goliad

On the same afternoon of their surrender, the Texans (all except the wounded) left the battlefield and were marched back to Goliad. They arrived there shortly after dark and were assigned to the old church, a part of the fort. Though the Mexicans had taken charge of Goliad the preceding morning, they had not entered the old quarters of the Texans.

29 Yoakum, op. cit., pp. 96-97.

30 Smith, op. cit., p. 280.
Fannin's men were herded into these old buildings that they had abandoned some thirty-six hours before. Doctors Barnard, Shackelford, and Ferguson were ordered by the Mexicans to take care, not only of their own wounded, but to attend to some one hundred Mexican troops that were seriously injured. The wounded were left on the battleground until carts were obtained to haul them back to Goliad. They began to arrive in Goliad on the 21st and, by the following day, they were all back from the battlefield. During the week that followed, Fannin's men were treated very badly. Only very small amounts of beef, without salt or bread, were given them to eat. When Colonel Fannin heard of this, he wrote General Urrea at Victoria and reminded him of the capitulation terms.

Major William P. Miller, with his eighty men from the United States, were marched into Goliad as prisoners on the 21st of March. They had arrived at Copano several days before, but they were grounded in anchoring the ship. This placed them at the mercy of the Mexicans. To evade the predicament they were in, their arms and ammunition were thrown overboard. And they told the Mexicans they were "peaceful


32 Brown, op. cit., p. 607.

33 Yoakum, op. cit., p. 97.
immigrants." Ward's men were marched out of Victoria on the 25th. They arrived in Goliad late the following day to join their fellow prisoners. Jack Shackelford, in "Some Few Notes Upon a Part of the Texan War," says that on the night of the 26th (Saturday night), Fannin was in good spirits and that he talked about their return to the states. Shackelford asserts that there were among them some who loved music, and they sang "Home Sweet Home."

In General Urrea's "Diary of the Military Operations," it is revealed that the actual order of execution was sent by Santa Anna to Colonel Portilla, acting commandant out of Goliad and the one in charge of the prisoners. The order was received at seven o'clock on the evening of the 26th of March. The instructions from Santa Anna were that all prisoners were to be shot in compliance with the Mexican law.

Portilla spent a restless night, but at dawn on the 27th of March, he prepared to execute the order of Santa Anna.

Ruby Cumby Smith wrote of Portilla:

His account of how he did this is brutal in its conciseness: he gave orders to awaken the prisoners;

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34 Brown, op. cit., pp. 608-609.
35 Samuel T. Brown to brother of Colonel Ward, November 1, 1837, Johnson, op. cit., p. 435.
had Colonel Miller's company separated from the rest; placed the prisoners in three divisions under Alcerrica, Balderas, and Ramirez, who had orders to shoot them. 38

There is a very vivid account of the things that happened on the morning of the massacre in John C. Duval's *Early Times in Texas*. Duval, one of the few that lived through the ordeal, said:

One of our divisions was taken down the road leading to the lower ford of the river, one upon the road to San Patricio, and the division to which my company was attached, along the road leading to San Antonio. A strong guard accompanied us, marching in double files on both sides of our column. It occurred to me that this division of our men into three squads, and marching us off in three directions, was rather a singular maneuver, but still I had no suspicion of the foul play intended us. When about half a mile above town, a halt was made and the guard on the side next the river filed around to the opposite side. Hardly had this maneuver been executed, when I heard a heavy firing of musketry in the directions taken by the other two divisions. Some one near me exclaimed "Boys! They are going to shoot us!" and at the same instant I heard the clicking of musket locks all along the Mexican line. I turned to look, and as I did so, the Mexicans fired upon us, killing probably one hundred out of the one hundred and fifty men in the division. 39

About an hour after the horrible slaughter, the wounded Texans in the hospital back in Goliad were murdered in cold blood. 40 Fannin was the last to die. He took the word very calmly when they told him that he was to be shot. The two requests that he made were denied. He asked that he be shot

38 Smith, op. cit., p. 282.
40 Foote, op. cit., p. 242.
in the heart and that he might be given a decent burial. After being shot in the head, his body was thrown among the others.\textsuperscript{41}

The Texan dead were stripped of their clothes and placed in piles on the ground. Some brush was thrown over these heaps and then they were set on fire. The fire did not destroy all the bodies, for Davis in her book, Under Six Plaza, The Story of Texas, said, "The half-consumed flesh was torn from the bones by vultures."\textsuperscript{42}

Texas suffered her greatest loss of the Revolution at Goliad. According to statistics compiled by Harbert Davenport, there were three hundred and fifty-two men killed by the assassins during the massacre. There were twenty-eight men that succeeded in escaping Portilla's executioners. Of note among these were Samuel T. Brown, Herman Ehrenberg, John Crittenden Duval, and Benjamin H. Brown. Six of the twenty-eight were recaptured, including Brown and Ehrenberg, but they either escaped or were later released. It has already been mentioned that Miller's men were saved. Outside of these, there were only sixteen spared; they were doctors and men that had been working for the Mexicans.\textsuperscript{43}

Urrea later insisted that Fannin and his men had surrendered at discretion, but that he sympathized with them to the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[41]Smith, \emph{op. cit.}, p. 282.
\item[42]M.E.M. Davis, \emph{Under Six Plaza, The Story of Texas}, p.98.
\item[43]Davenport, \emph{op. cit.}, pp. 33-37.
\end{footnotes}
extent of bringing down on his head the wrath of Santa Anna. Urrea in his "Diary of the Military Operations" said:

I wished to elude these orders as far as possible without compromising my personal responsibility; and, with this object in view, I issued several orders to Lieut. Col. Portilla, instructing him to use the prisoners for the rebuilding of Goliad. From this time on, I decided to increase the number of prisoners there in the hope that their very number would save them, for I never thought that the horrible spectacle of that massacre could take place in cold blood and without immediate urgency, a deed proscribed by the laws of war and condemned by the civilization of our country. It was painful to me, also, that so many brave men should thus be sacrificed, particularly the much esteemed and fearless Fannin. They doubtless surrendered confident that Mexican generosity would not make their surrender useless, for under any other circumstances they would have sold their lives dearly, fighting to the last. I had due regard for the motives that induced them to surrender, and for this reason I used my influence with the general-in-chief to save them, if possible, from being butchered, particularly Fannin.  

Ramon Martinez Caro, in "A True Account of the First Texas Campaign," says that Santa Anna strongly reprimanded Urrea, expressed his displeasure, and ordered Urrea "not to soil his triumphs with a mistaken display of generosity."  

Santa Anna in his "Manifesto," attempted to justify the course he had taken by calling the colonists "pirates and outlaws"—the colonists, as such, were rebels and subject to the fate of the government. Here are some of the excuses Santa Anna offered in his "Manifesto":

The prisoners of Goliad were condemned by law, by a universal law, that of personal defense, enjoyed

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44 Castaneda, op. cit., p. 235.
by all nations and all individuals. They surrendered unconditionally, as the communication of General Urrea shows. How could I divert the sword of justice from their heads without making it fall on my own? Let it be said, if you want,--I confess that it is not my opinion--that the law was unjust, but can there be a greater blindness than to impute the crime to the dagger and not to the hand that wields it?45

The guilt of this atrocious butchery lay solely upon Santa Anna. Callcott, in his book, Santa Anna, has this to say concerning Santa Anna and the massacre:

The responsibility for this ghastly deed must rest squarely upon Santa Anna. This was no man trained in so-called civilized warfare where deviltry at least masqueraded behind a code, and such conduct was a definite part of the military art as he knew it. Had he later marched back to Mexico in triumph, beyond doubt he would have been hailed as a great conqueror who promptly punished traitors.47

Newton and Gambrell, in their book, Texas, Yesterday and Today, very fittingly close their story on the Goliad Massacre with these words: "This horrible massacre on Palm Sunday came exactly three weeks after the fall of the Alamo. Nothing more was needed to arouse the Texans. 'Remember the Alamo; remember Goliad!' was to be the battle cry at San Jacinto."48

46 Ibid., p. 18.
48 L. W. Newton and H. P. Gambrell, Texas, Yesterday and Today, pp. 138-139.
CHAPTER VI

THE SAN JACINTO CAMPAIGN

From Gonzales to Groce's Crossing

The heartless policy of "no quarter" was being applied by Santa Anna with telling effect. Only a month had elapsed between the massacre of Johnson's men and the ruthless slaughter at Goliad. Within this short period of thirty days, more than seven hundred Texans had lost their lives--victims of this vicious Mexican policy. It looked as if Santa Anna would realize his threat to destroy the Anglo-Americans, or drive them out of the country. The salvation of Texas rested upon the shoulders of Sam Houston and his men.1

The San Jacinto Campaign covered a period of one month and ten days. It began when Houston assumed command of the troops at Gonzales on the 11th of March, and ended with the battle of San Jacinto. The first month and a week of the campaign consisted of a retreat by the Texas army. The last five days the Texans took the offensive, and at San Jacinto almost annihilated the Mexican forces.2


On the 4th of March, the Convention, at Washington-on-the-Brazos, elected Houston commander-in-chief of the army of the newly declared Republic. To eliminate the confusion they had had under the provisional government, there was to be just one supreme leader. Houston was to have the same powers as the head of the army of the United States.3

Sam Houston was born in Virginia in 1793. He was of Scottish descent. Houston's father was militarily minded, while his mother was a very distinguished person, both in mind and manners. Sam Houston's first efforts in education were not a success, and he ran away and lived with the Cherokee Indians. Houston joined the United States Army in 1813, and became a hero during the battle of Horseshoe Bend. After recovering from serious wounds received during the engagement, Houston studied law and passed the prescribed work in one-third of the allotted time. His fame spread rapidly and, when only thirty years of age, was elected a member of the House of Representatives. In 1827 this popular man was elected Governor of Tennessee. The big mystery in Houston's life occurred shortly after his marriage to a young lady worthy of esteem. Three months after their marriage they were separated. Neither one talked of their misunderstanding and the details remain unknown to this very day. Houston gave up his Governorship and sought refuge among his old friends, the Cherokees,

then located in Arkansas. Chief Oolooteka received him with open arms; he was the same Indian, who, years before, had adopted and christened Houston "The Raven." A few years later, Houston chose to throw in with the Texans and their struggle for freedom.

Houston originally planned to go to the relief of Travis at the Alamo. A plan to that effect was formed as he went to Gonzales. Houston had ordered Fannin and his men to the Cibolo. There, Houston planned to join him, bringing along the troops from Gonzales. With their combined forces they would march to the rescue of Travis. However, a rumor reached Gonzales the very day Houston arrived, that the Mexicans had captured the Alamo. This rumor, which Houston believed to be true, was responsible for a countermanding of his previous order to Fannin. Fannin was ordered to retreat to Victoria.

Houston, in a letter written on March 13th to James Collinsworth, commented on the soldiers he found upon his arrival at Gonzales. He said:

I have the honor to report to you my arrival at this place on the 11th inst., at about four o'clock, P.M. I found upward of three hundred men in camp,

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4 W.C. Crane, Life and Select Literary Remains of Sam Houston, pp. 17-19, 24-28, 32, 34, 36, 40.

5 Marquis James, The Raven, A Biography of Sam Houston, pp. 20, 92.

without organization, and who had rallied on the first impulse. Since then the force has increased to more than four hundred. I have ordered their organization at ten o'clock this morning.

Some of the men Houston found at Gonzales had served under Austin during the San Antonio Campaign, but most of them were recent recruits. Outstanding among the newcomers were the members of a company from Newport, Kentucky. These men had been organized and equipped at Sidney Sherman's own expense. The men elected Edward Burleson colonel, Sherman lieutenant-colonel, and Alexander Somerville was chosen a major.

Deaf Smith, R. E. Handy, and Henry Karnes were sent in the direction of San Antonio on the morning of the 13th to seek definite information concerning the Alamo. About twenty miles out of Gonzales they met Mrs. Dickinson. She confirmed the fate of the Alamo, and told them that General Sesma was already on the march east out of San Antonio. The party returned to Gonzales about dusk, and the report Mrs. Dickinson gave threw the people of the town and the army into great excitement. Thirty-two of the men that had been killed at the Alamo were from Gonzales. Their families were overwhelmed with grief.

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8 Wortham, op. cit., p. 235.
chance the colonists had was to retreat for the present. On the night of the 13th, the Texans set fire to the town of Gonzales and beat a hasty retreat toward the Colorado. 10

Houston's retreat, as well as the whole campaign, took place during the rainy season. Wooten, in his book *A Complete History of Texas*, said, "the weather was wretched; the rain poured in torrents, the roads were quagmires, the prairies were trackless seas of water, the streams were swollen and swift, and the dull and lowering skies covered everything like a pall of gloom and despair." 11 Numbers of the rivers in Texas run from northwest to southeast. Houston was determined to use these rivers to his advantage in his retreat across Texas--they were to serve as barriers to the advancing Mexican army. 12

By the afternoon of March 17, the Texans had reached Burnam's Crossing on the Colorado. Houston's army had gained in strength; it numbered six hundred men. And more volunteers were added daily. After a two-day stay at Burnam's Crossing, Houston's army crossed to the left bank of the Colorado and moved down the river to Beason's ferry. Houston remained at Beason's for nearly a week. During this time volunteers continued to pour into camp. Within a few days

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Houston's forces numbered from twelve to fourteen hundred men. Houston planned to attack the enemy on the night of the 27th of March, but news about Fannin was responsible for his change of plans. Peter Kerr, a Coleto refugee, came dashing into camp on the evening of the 25th. And, before Houston could stop him, Kerr shouted out the story of Fannin's stand at Coleto Creek and the final capture. Houston branded his story a lie, but he really thought it to be true. That night, Houston slipped into the prisoners' tent and demanded the full story. This circumstance, plus the fact that Houston did not want to jeopardize the few remaining Texan troops under his command, led Houston to order a retreat to the Brazos. The army was stunned. This decision provoked howls of criticism and there was some insubordination among the Texans. There were a number of men, and some officers, who believed Houston was a coward—afraid to fight. Captains Mosely Baker and Wylie Martin were leaders in airing these protests about their commander-in-chief.

The people that lived in the area of Gonzales began their retreat when news of the Alamo had been confirmed by Mrs. Dickinson. Their anxiety was increased after hearing of Houston's order to fall back to the Colorado. A climax

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15George Creel, Sam Houston, Colossus in Buckskin, p. 144.
16Wooten, op. cit., p. 226.
was reached when Houston ordered his army from the Colorado to San Felipe on the Brazos. This order threw the most thickly populated area of Texas open to the ravages of an invading Mexican army. The people fled for their lives. Homes were abandoned and the roads to the east were clogged with these panic-stricken Texans. Some of these refugees did not stop until they were safely across the Sabine river. The old settlers of Texas were responsible for naming this incident the "runaway scrape."\(^{17}\)

The Texan army reached San Felipe on the Brazos the 20th of March, after two days of hard marching. The following morning, General Houston issued an order for the army to march up the west bank of the Brazos to Jared Groce's plantation. Baker and Martin refused to leave San Felipe, and so Houston ordered that Baker defend San Felipe, and Martin to protect the crossing at Fort Bend. It rained continuously. Three days were required to make just eighteen miles. Houston arrived with three hundred troops at Groce's on the 31st of March and pitched camp in a "bottom" near the river.\(^{18}\) Houston, in explaining to Rusk the position he took in ordering a retreat up the Brazos, said, "I consulted none--I held no councils of war. If I err, the blame is mine."\(^{19}\)


\(^{18}\)James, *op. cit.*, pp. 236-239.

The long delay of Houston in the Brazos bottom was used to effect a better organization of the Texan Army. Sidney Sherman was placed in charge of a new regiment that was created. A number of promotions took place as a result of this newly formed segment of the army. Houston also organized the doctors, and special duties were assigned to each of them.\(^\text{20}\)

Once again dissatisfaction was begun to be voiced concerning the inactivity of Houston. Curses were thrown, not only Houston's way but, at the government for allowing such action to take place. Thomas J. Rusk, the secretary of war, was sent by the government to persuade Houston to retreat no further.\(^\text{21}\) Rusk arrived at the Texan camp on April 1. After consultations with Houston, Rusk seemed to approve the moves that had been taken by the commander-in-chief. A letter to Burnett was written by Rusk in which he said:

> I have been now three days here, I find the Army in fine spirits, ready and anxious to measure arms with the enemy; the Army are about fifteen hundred strong, though not all at this point. Some are at San Felipe, and I doubt not you have, before this, heard of Capt. Wiley Martin being stationed with a small force at Port Bend. . . .\(^\text{22}\)


\(^{21}\)Wortham, *op. cit.*, p. 283.

All thoughts of his personal appearance had vanished when Houston took charge of his troops at Gonzales. It was said that he wore an old white hat, an equally old black coat, and a very shabby pair of boots. The only emblem of authority that Houston possessed was a sword tied to his belt by buckskins. During the retreat, it was Houston that labored night and day. No one saw Houston sleep. The skill of Houston in leading his men during those uncertain and trying days of the retreat clearly demonstrated his ability as a leader.

Santa Anna Advances to the Brazos

After Santa Anna received the news of the capture of Fannin and his men, he was confident that the contest was over. He decided to leave mopping up operations to his generals and return to Mexico City. With this in mind, Santa Anna ordered General Gaona to Nacogdoches and General Urrea was to cover the country between Victoria and Galveston. General Sesma was to march through the central part of Texas. General Filisola was appointed by Santa Anna to command these Mexican troops in Texas. All resistance was to be dealt with harshly--strict orders were issued to shoot all prisoners taken. Santa Anna thought his army unnecessarily large for

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23Bryan, op. cit., p. 131.
24Creel, op. cit., p. 159.
25Yoakum, op. cit., p. 102.
the work that was to be done in Texas, so he ordered that Colonel Juan Jose Andrade's cavalry brigade be prepared to leave for San Luis Potosi on the first of April.\textsuperscript{26} Santa Anna's personal plans were to leave Texas as soon as possible. He was to leave either Copano or Matagorda for Tampico. From Tampico, Santa Anna was to proceed overland to San Luis Potosi.\textsuperscript{27}

The hopes of Santa Anna for an early return to Mexico were short lived. Filisola, through Colonel Almonte, a person very much respected by Santa Anna, soon convinced the dictator that there was still serious danger of resistance in Texas. This decision having been reached, some previous orders were countermanded. General Gaona was ordered from Bastrop to San Felipe. Urrea was instructed to march on Brazoria. Santa Anna canceled the order of those that were to leave for Mexico. And two battalions were sent to reinforce Sesma's formation. The situation was considered serious enough to warrant his leading the operation in person, and on the 31st of March, Santa Anna set out with Filisola to join Sesma.\textsuperscript{28}

Meanwhile, Sesma and Wol had advanced from Gonzales toward the Colorado. They arrived there the same day the

\textsuperscript{26}J. H. Brown, \textit{History of Texas, From 1685 to 1892}, Vol. II, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{27}Yoakum, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 102-103.

Texans left Burnams. The Mexicans pitched camp some two miles above Beason's and on the west side of the river. For five days the armies faced one another in the expectation of battle.  

After Houston retreated to Groce's Crossing, Santa Anna went ahead with his plans for consolidating his troops. Soon after Houston's retreat from Beason's, Sesma had started to move his troops across the Colorado. At about this same time, Urrea from Victoria and Gaona from Bastrop, started their armies toward San Felipe. Santa Anna caught up with Sesma at the Colorado on the 5th of April. Without waiting for the entire army to cross the Colorado, Santa Anna took charge of a brigade and hurried on to San Felipe.  

Santa Anna arrived at San Felipe on the 7th and immediately attempted a crossing of the Brazos. Stiff resistance offered by Baker forced the Mexican commander-in-chief to retire. The night of the 9th Santa Anna began a search for a new crossing. After spending two days in ambush near Ft. Bend, the Mexicans fired heavily on Martin's men, located on the east bank of the Brazos. And before help arrived for the Texans, the Mexicans had succeeded in sending more than a hundred men across the river. Having obtained control of the ferry, Santa Anna instructed General Sesma to advance to that area. Sesma joined him there on the 13th of April.  

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29 Wooten, op. cit., p. 225.  30 Wortham, op. cit., p. 287.  31 Yoakum, op. cit., pp. 120-121.
The Armies Converge on San Jacinto

While there on the Brazos, Santa Anna received word that the new Texas government that had evacuated San Felipe was located at Harrisburg, some twelve leagues away. Sensing the possibility that he might capture the entire government of Texas, including his arch-enemy, Lorenzo de Zavala, Santa Anna rearranged his plans. He gave up the idea of following Houston, and preparations were made to march on Harrisburg.32

Santa Anna left instructions for Filisola with Sesma, and on the 14th of April pushed on toward Harrisburg with some seven hundred men and a cannon. After forced marches across the rough country of the low lands of the Brazos, Santa Anna arrived at Harrisburg on the 15th. The government had fled the town; the only occupants found there were three printers of the Telegraph and Texas Register office. These men were made prisoners, and from them Santa Anna learned that the Texas government had left Harrisburg that very morning for Galveston Island.33

Santa Anna was disappointed at finding Harrisburg deserted, and, after having set the buildings on fire, hastened on to New Washington. Once again he was too late.


33 A. M. Williams, Sam Houston and the War of Independence in Texas, p. 191.
The fleeing members of the government had made their escape to Galveston. Santa Anna burned the little village and moved northward toward Lynch's Ferry. On the 20th of April, while in route to the ferry, a scout of the Mexican army reported that Houston was in the vicinity with all the forces of his command. 34

Back on the Brazos near Groce's Ferry, Houston's army had waited for days without any word from their leader as to what they were going to do. Then, on April 7, 1836, Houston issued army orders that were good news to the men in the field. There were strong intimations that their inactivity was rapidly drawing to a close. The orders read:

The advance of the enemy is at San Felipe. The moment for which we have waited with anxiety and interest, is fast approaching. The victims of the Alamo, and the names of those who were murdered at Goliad, call for cool deliberate vengeance. Strict discipline, order, and subordination, will insure us the victory. The army will be in readiness for action at a moment's warning. The field officers have the immediate execution of this order in charge for their respective commands. 35

On the 11th of April, John A. Wharton, "the keenest blade at San Jacinto," arrived in the Texan camp with two six-pound cannon. They were gifts from the citizens of Cincinnati, Ohio. These cannon were later to become known


as "The Twin Sisters." Houston and Rusk held a conference the night of the 11th, and decided to cross to the left bank of the Brazos. At the same time, Houston ordered the detachments along the river to meet his army at Donoho's, several miles east of Groce's. The operation of crossing the river was a tedious one. A steam tug, Yellowstone, was detailed by Houston, and by the 13th the crossing had been completed. On the 14th, Houston was on his way to Donoho's.

Houston left Donoho's on the 16th and marched toward the east. The army still did not know what Houston intended doing. The road they were on forked about sixteen miles east of Donoho's, the left branch led to Nacogdoches, the right to Harrisburg. There was a lot of speculation as to which road Houston would take. Insubordination broke out again, and Houston was forced to order Wylie Martin on a special mission to get the trouble-maker out of the way. Houston took the road to Harrisburg, and the entire army was certain that their retreat had now turned into an advance. After overcoming almost insurmountable difficulties presented by bad roads, in addition to the artillery that


had been carried along, the army reached Harrisburg on the 18th of April. They had made the exhaustive fifty-five miles in less than three days.38

Before the army had gotten settled opposite Harrisburg, Deaf Smith swam Buffalo bayou and was off after news of Santa Anna. Late that night he came back with two Mexican couriers. Houston learned from the messengers that Santa Anna had thoughtlessly worked himself into a trap.39 Sam Houston, after hearing that Santa Anna definitely was in the vicinity, decided to press the issue. Orders were given to prepare a boat for crossing the bayou a short distance below Harrisburg, and Colonels Burleson and Sherman were to see that the army was supplied with enough provisions to last three days. The troops were assembled the morning of the 19th, and stirring addresses were given by Houston and Rusk, who was still with the army. The troops were notified that Santa Anna was with the advanced Mexican troops. Houston left behind some two or three hundred men that were not fit for active duty, the non-essential army equipment such as baggage and wagons, and set off down the left bank of the bayou.40

Crossing Buffalo bayou was a dangerous task. At the point where Houston sent his men across, the bayou was some

38James, op. cit., pp. 242-244.
39Creel, op. cit., p. 170.
three hundred and fifty feet wide and fifteen feet deep. There was anxiety among the men. They did not know but what the Mexicans would attack them at any moment, and there was fear that the old boat would not stand the strain. 

Most of the afternoon was required to move the army across Buffalo bayou. However, Houston ordered that the army resume its march. This forced march continued until almost midnight. After two hours rest, the army was on the move again. Soon after daylight, while a halt was being made for breakfast, a detail of Texas scouts reported that the enemy had been sighted. A hasty pack was made and Houston set out for Lynch's Ferry. Contact was made with the ferry, then the Texan army fell back about a half mile to a clump of timber on Buffalo bayou.

The Battle of San Jacinto

In front of the Texan forces, and to Vince's bayou on their right, there was a prairie some two miles in width. The San Jacinto (St. Hyacinth) river was to the left, and there was a marsh that bordered the prairie on the south. Santa Anna's troops were located on the southern edge of the prairie with the marsh to their backs.

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41Creel, op. cit., p. 172.
42Wortham, op. cit., pp. 292-293.
43A. M. Williams, Sam Houston and the War of Independence in Texas, pp. 194-196.
Father early in the afternoon of the 20th of April, Santa Anna brought up his six-pounder, the only piece of artillery with his forces, and fired at the Texans. Shots from the "Twin Sisters" forced the Mexicans to withdraw their cannon. They relocated it in a grove of trees, and continued to fire at the Texans the rest of the afternoon. Colonel Sherman received permission to take a group of volunteer cavalrmen and try to capture it. A brisk encounter followed between the mounted men of both forces. Sherman and his men returned to camp after having only two men seriously wounded. Nothing else of importance happened on the 20th.  

About nine o'clock in the morning of the 21st, Cos, the parole-breaker, arrived with five hundred additional men from General Sesma. They were exhausted, for they had marched with all haste after having received the orders for reinforcements. With Cos' men added to the force he already had, Santa Anna's strength was estimated at from eleven hundred and fifty to twelve hundred men. Houston was at a disadvantage for he had only seven hundred and eighty-three men. The Texan soldiers were afraid Houston might try to avoid Santa Anna.  

45 A.M. Williams, Sam Houston and the War of Independence in Texas, p. 197.  
Houston's men insisted, and so a council of war was held. An hour was devoted to the discussion of whether to attack the Mexicans. Two of the six senior officers were strongly in favor of assault, but the other four were opposed. After they debated the question, Houston dismissed the men without stating his own views. Protests were voiced once the soldiers were informed of the decision to postpone the engagement. A canvas of the army was made by companies and it showed Houston's men wanted to fight immediately. It was almost three o'clock in the afternoon by the time these events had taken place. The Mexicans were enjoying their siesta. Santa Anna said later in his "Manifesto" that he was "sleeping deeply" when awakened by the noise of the conflict.

At three-thirty Houston ordered a parade of troops, and arranged the army in battle formation. They were able to carry out these operations without being detected by the enemy because of the excellent location of their camp. Sherman's regiment was placed on the left; Burleson's regiment occupied the center; Hockley and the artillery were to the right of Burleson; Millard and his infantrymen were

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47 Creel, op. cit., p. 179.
just to the right of the artillery; and the cavalry, under Lamar (whose bravery the preceding day had won him this post) was located on the right wing. 50

The Texan army advanced at four o'clock in the afternoon of the 21st of April. The cavalry, under Lamar, was sent out to draw the attention of the Mexican cavalry away from the movements of the main body of Texan troops. A cluster of trees between the two forces secured the operations of Houston in deploying his men for action. This was completed in a short time and they moved forward at a rapid gait. 51 A kettle-drum and a fife played the love ballad "Will You Come to the Bower?" as the Texans moved forward. 52

At this time, Deaf Smith rode up with the news that he had destroyed Vince's bridge. The "Twin Sisters," only two yards from the Mexican barricade, opened with a brisk fire. Advancing on the run and crying, "Remember the Alamo!"—"Remember Goliad!"—the Texans withheld their fire until they were within a few yards of the enemy line. Their first volley at such close quarters effected a heavy toll. But the Texans did not stop; they pressed their advantage on all fronts. Hockley's artillery ceased to fire after the men of Burleson and Millard were within the enemy lines. 53 Time

50 Yoakum, op. cit., pp. 142-143.
51 Ibid., p. 143.
52 Lenoir Hunt, Bluebonnets and Blood, p. 190.
53 Yoakum, op. cit., pp. 143-144.
Map 3--The San Jacinto battleground, adapted from Pennybacker, *A History of Texas*, p. 151.
after time the Texans shouted their battle-cry, "Remember the Alamo! Remember Goliad!" When the fear-stricken Mexicans realized the significance of the words, they began to cry, "Me no Alamo! Me no Goliad!" But the Texans gave "no quarter."

The Texans did not take time to reload their guns; they were used as clubs on the enemy. Pistols, bowie-knives, and even the enemy's own guns were wielded with deadly accuracy by the revenge-seeking Texans. During the melee, Houston received a very severe ankle wound. The Mexican resistance gave way after the first fifteen minutes of fighting. They fled in all directions with the Texans in hot pursuit. So surprised were they, and so sudden was their defeat, that their personal possessions were left behind; their cannon remained loaded; those that had been preparing meals, left them without being eaten. The chase continued until darkness drove the Texans back to camp. A guard was stationed to watch the prisoners that had been rounded up. Bond fires were lighted, and the Texans gave way to a night of jubilant merrymaking. Nearly all of the Mexican force was either killed by the Texans or captured in their attempt to escape. The Texans had only two killed, and twenty-three wounded. Six of these wounded died later.

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56 Williams, Sam Houston and the War...in Texas, pp. 202-203.
57 Sam Houston to David G. Burnett, April 25, 1836, Williams and Barker, The Writings of Sam Houston, Vol. I, p. 1419.
San Houston, in his Official Report of the Battle of San Jacinto, gives this brief summary of the events that took place:

... The conflict lasted about eighteen minutes from the time of close action until we were in possession of the enemy's encampment, taking one piece of cannon (loaded), four stand of colors, all their camp equipment, stores, and baggage. Our cavalry had charged and routed that of the enemy upon the right, and given pursuit to the fugitives, which did not cease until they arrived at the bridge. ... The conflict in the breastwork lasted but a few moments; many of the troops encountered hand to hand, and, not having the advantage of bayonets on our side, our riflemen used their pieces as war clubs, breaking many of them off at the breech. The rout commenced at half-past four, and the pursuit by the main army continued until twilight. A guard was then left in charge of the enemy's encampment, and our army returned with their killed and wounded. ... 58

Santa Anna was one of the few that had escaped during the battle. He fled on horseback, jumped his horse into Vince's bayou and then swam to the other side. He changed into some old clothes that were found in a deserted house. The next day, as he retreated toward the Brazos, Lieutenant Sylvester and his detail of men came upon him. They returned to the Texan camp still not knowing the identity of their prisoner. It was not definitely known that he was Santa Anna until the captive presented himself to Sam Houston. 59 Santa Anna tried his very best to draw up a peace treaty with Houston, and also to arrange for his own release. But Houston told Santa Anna that he did not have the power to treat for peace; that

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58Ibid.
59Bryan, op. cit., p. 147.
was a duty that must be handled by the government of Texas. Santa Anna then advanced the idea of an armistice. Houston accepted the proposed armistice, and Santa Anna wrote out orders for the Mexican troops to retire toward the Rio Grande.  

Rusk, in his Report to David G. Burnett, President of Texas, expressed his appreciation of the Texan soldiers that took part in the battle of San Jacinto, and predicted a bright future for the new Republic of Texas:

I do justice to all in expressing my high admiration of the bravery and gallant conduct of both officers and men, I hope I may be indulged in the expression of my highest approbation of the chivalrous conduct of Major James Collinsworth in almost every part of the engagement, Colonel Heckley, with his command of artillery, Colonel Sharton, the adjutant-general, Major Cook, and in fact all the staff-officers; Colonel Burleson and Colonel Somerville on the right, Colonel Millard in the centre, and Colonel Sherman, Colonel Bennett, and Major Wells, on the left, and Colonel Lamar on the extreme right with the cavalry—led on the charge and followed in the pursuit with dauntless bravery. All have my highest approbation. With such men, sustained as we shall be by the patriots and lovers of liberty in our mother-country hateful Despotism can not find a resting-place for the sole of her foot on the beautiful plains of Texas! . . .  

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61 Rusk to Burnett, April 22, 1836, *Yoakum* *op. cit.*., pp. 505-506.
CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY

Mexico followed a rather liberal policy in dealing with her Texas colonies the first few years after she gained her independence from Spain. She was too busy straightening out her affairs at home to pay very much attention to the area north of the Rio Grande. But Mexico cast an eye of suspicion on the Fredonian Rebellion. This was the first outbreak of violence against the government, and Mexico was inclined to link it with the expansion program of the United States. To check the move of Anglo-Americans into Texas and, at the same time, tighten her control over Texas, she passed the Law of April 6, 1830. The decree was not radical—almost any nation would have passed like measures. But the Texans did not like the law. They were not going to accept any additional burdens, no matter how light they were. The comparatively free rein Mexico had given the colonies during the preceding years was responsible for this attitude. The passing of the Law of April 6, 1830, marked a definite break in the relations between the Texas colonists and Mexico.

The Conventions of 1832 and 1833 were called for the express purpose of obtaining reforms they thought Mexico might accept. This democratic method that was used for the consolidation of their requests to the government by the Texans was
too much for Mexico. She was determined to defend the province of Texas. This she was in good position to do, for the government at home was stable enough now to allow her attention to be focused elsewhere. General Cos was appointed the new commandant of the Eastern Provinces. Colonel Ugartechea was to be the new military leader of Texas. A movement of Mexican troops into Texas was a sure forecast of trouble ahead. Clashes between the Texans and Mexicans culminated in the encounter at Gonzales. It was inevitable that this break between Texas and Mexico should come, for the political, social, economic, and religious differences between the two were too great to effect a compromise.

The spontaneous enthusiasm that accompanies the beginning of nearly all wars carried the Texans to a comparatively easy victory over Cos at San Antonio in December, 1835. Then there was a lag in spirit. The winter of 1835-1836 was one of inaction for the Texans. Every effort should have been exerted in preparing Texas for the certain invasion of Mexican soldiers during the early part of 1836, but nothing much was done. The big reason for this apathy was the discord between Governor Smith and the council. This lack of harmony among the political leaders proved almost fatal to Texas and her fight for freedom.

The dissension between Governor Smith and the council was indirectly responsible for some of the greatest tragedies
of the Texas Revolution. Had there been unity in the government, there would have been unity among the military. The same orders that were issued Houston were also given by the council to Dr. Grant, Frank W. Johnson, and James W. Fannin. The result was that the forces of Grant and Johnson were almost annihilated. Colonel Fannin was a brave and patriotic man; but the inability to make decisions, or to obey orders promptly once they were received, brought on his defeat at Coleto and the Goliad Massacre.

An event that served to buoy the sagging spirits of the Texans more than anything else was the supreme sacrifice made by Travis and his men at the Alamo. The people of Texas were more determined than ever to make the newly declared Republic become a reality.

Houston has been criticized much for the retreat that he ordered after he took charge of the forces at Gonzales. But his "Fabian" policy paid off in the battle of San Jacinto. It was one of the shortest yet one of the most decisive battles ever fought. It is ranked among the great battles of the world. The results of this battle are far-reaching in their importance. First of all, the Declaration of Independence, announced just seven weeks before was now established, and the Texas Republic became a fact. The freeing of Texas from Mexican rule paved the way for the ultimate consummation of the Manifest Destiny of the United States. After many heart-breaking defeats, in one blow Texas had gained her independence from Mexico, and the admiration and respect of the world.
It is true that there were only a few hundred Texans that took part in the Texas Revolution, but one must remember that the entire population of Texas at that time numbered only a little more than thirty thousand. Let us not forget the sacrifices those colonists made to preserve a way of life. We must be ever grateful to them for this rich heritage we now enjoy.
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