

Settling Texas and the War for Texan Independence

Lesson 1 – Teacher lecture notes and guiding questions

- I. Stephen Austin (Missouri)
 - A. Given a large land-grant from Spanish government (before Mexican independence).
 - B. Started a colony in Texas in 1821.
 - C. 1824 – 2,000+ settlers in Austin’s colony.
- II. Immigration (GQ1)
 - A. National Colonization Law passed by Mexican government.
 - a. Gives large land grants to ranchers.
 - b. Encourages immigration.
 - c. Mexico wants to create a “buffer zone” in its northern provinces – Texas.
 - B. American settlers are attracted by cheap, fertile land.
 - a. A few cents/acre compared to a few dollars/acre in US.
 - b. Land is fertile and good for cotton.
 - C. By 1830, coastal Texas has about 20,000 white settlers and 1,000 slaves.
 - D. Mexican government begins to get concerned about American immigration. (GQ2)
 - a. Mexico is Roman Catholic, many American immigrants are Protestant.
 - b. Mexico does not believe in slavery, many Americans brought slaves with them to work on the cotton plantations.
 - E. Mexico eventually outlaws future American immigration.
 - a. Americans continue to immigrate illegally into Mexico.
 - b. By 1835 there are 30,000 Americans in Texas (10 times the amount of Mexicans).
- III. Independence
 - A. In 1832 & 1833, Texans call conventions to discuss independence.
 - B. In response, General Santa Anna:
 - a. Ignores request.
 - b. Dissolves national congress
 - c. Gets rid of federal system
 - d. Installs himself as dictator
 - C. Texas calls a convention and adopts a “Declaration of Causes” (GQ3)
 - D. Texas declares its independence on March 2, 1836.
 - E. Santa Anna mobilizes an army to stop them.
- IV. War for Texan Independence
 - A. Mexican Army decides to attack an abandoned mission in San Antonio – The Alamo.
 - a. Texans were led by Colonel William Travis (MS lawyer).

- b. Texans and volunteers from around America fight here and in the war.
 - i. Davy Crockett (TN)
 - ii. Jim Bowie
- B. Santa Anna orders surrender of Alamo on 2/23/1836
 - a. Texans reply with a canon shot.
 - b. Mexican army begins attacking the front of the Alamo. (5,000 Mexican troops v. 189 volunteers at the Alamo)
 - c. Mexicans attack the front of the Alamo for 12 days, they are pushed back every time.
 - d. 3/6/1836 – Alamo volunteers are awakened to “Deguello” being played by a bugle (no mercy to the defenders).
 - e. Santa Anna attacks from all angles and sides.
 - i. Two times the Mexicans are pushed back, they break through the northern wall on the third attack.
 - ii. Hand-to-hand combat
 - iii. Travis is killed, along with Bowie (found dead on his bed, “riddled” with bullets, all ammo in his 2 pistols emptied and his knife bloodied).
 - f. Santa Anna kills the wounded, burns bodies.
 - g. 16 women, children and servants survive. No volunteers who fought at the Alamo survive.
- C. Impact of the Alamo (GQ 4)
 - a. Santa Anna declares it a victory for Mexico.
 - i. Aide to S. Anna – “One more such ‘glorious victory’ and we are finished.” (GQ 5)
 - ii. Many Mexican soldiers lose their lives taking the Alamo.
 - b. Strengthens the cause of Texans. Encourages more American volunteers.
- D. The end of the war
 - a. Sam Houston (commander of Texan army) retreats east, picking up reinforcements along the way.
 - b. Surprise attack on Mexicans at San Jacinto (4/21/1836).
 - c. Overtakes Mexican troops in 15 minutes, Santa Anna is captured.
 - d. Santa Anna is forced to sign treaty: recognizes Texan independence with the Rio Grande River as the border.
 - e. Mexican government refuses to recognize Texan independence or the Rio Grande as the border. (GQ 6)

Guiding Questions

GQ1: Why would Mexico want Americans to immigrate into Texas?

GQ2: Why do you think increased American immigration into Texas began to make the Mexican government nervous by the 1830s?

GQ3: What does the Texan convention for independence remind you of from earlier US history?

GQ4: How could the Alamo be considered a victory for the Texans?

GQ5: Explain Santa Anna's aide's quote/concern.

GQ6: What future problems do you predict will result from Texas winning its independence from Mexico?