

The events leading up to the **Texas Revolution** involved the development of social and political differences between Mexican government and American settlers in Texas. Military incidents occurred in 1826, 1832, and 1835 preceding the decisive movements in the fall of 1835. The Texas Revolution began with the **Battle of Gonzales** in October 1835 and ended with the **Battle of San Jacinto** on April 21, 1836.

**General Martín Perfecto de Cos** moved on San Antonio at the head of 500 men. The day after Cos arrived in San Antonio on October 9, Texans seized the town of **Goliad**. There, at the **Battle of Gonzales**, what is regarded as the first shot in the Texas Revolution was fired. Because of growing unrest, **Colonel Domingo de Ugartechea** demanded that the citizens of Gonzales return the cannon that had been presented to them in 1831 for defense against Indians. *Alcade* **Andrew Ponton** not only refused the demand, but called to other Texans for help. Annoyed by Ponton's refusal, Ugartechea sent about 100 dragoons under the command of **Lieutenant Francisco Castañeda** to seize the cannon, forcibly if necessary. Originally, only eighteen men constituted the Gonzales defense, but by October 2 the ranks had increased to about 160 volunteers. The Gonzales Texans stood their ground, and the dragoons returned empty-handed to San Antonio.

**Stephen F. Austin**, in command of the newly formed Texas 'army' and in the Gonzales vicinity, realized that Texas had reached a point of no return. In early October, he led his command toward San Antonio. On the night of October 27, **James Bowie**, in general command, staked out a solid defensive position on the San Antonio River not far from Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña Mission. On the following morning, in the **Battle of Concepción**, the Texans defeated a combined force of Mexican foot and horse supported by artillery, with the Mexicans losing sixty men to the Texans' one. On November 26, the Texans again faced the Mexicans at the **Grass Fight**. Once again, Bowie was in command, but this time with **Edward Burleson**. The Texans forced the Mexicans to retreat, killing fifty of them in the process, while losing two men with another unaccounted for. The climax of the **Siege of Bexar** came on December 5, when, learning that Burleson was considering withdrawal to Goliad, **Benjamin R. Milam** raised the defiant cry, "Who will go to San Antonio with old Ben Milam?" and he and **Frank Johnson** led 300 volunteers into the heart of the city. After three days of house-to-house fighting, Milam was dead and San Antonio was the prize of the Texans. Ironically, Cos's final stand was at the Alamo. Forced to surrender, the Mexican commander was compelled to take his troops beyond the Rio Grande.

Taking advantage of the fact that the Texan army was disintegrating after its victories in 1835, General **Santa Anna** crossed the Rio Grande shortly after the new year. His plan was simple and direct: he would crush insurgency in Texas with the force of a hammer, treating all in arms against his government as mere pirates. The quelling of piracy required no mercy. At the beginning of his campaign, it seemed apparent that he would do just that, for Texan fortunes took a decided turn for the worse in early 1836. By March 2, the **Convention of 1836**, meeting at Washington-on-the-Brazos, formally voted for independence. The convention appointed **Sam Houston** major general of the Texas army and commander of the forces at Gonzales. After crossing the Rio Grande with 6,000 troops, Santa Anna's command eventually grew to more than 8,000. It soon became apparent that his target was San Antonio and the Texans stationed there.

Unfortunately for Santa Anna's army, his logistical support was sparse. He apparently had hoped to supplement his supplies by living off the land, but the area south of San Antonio could not sustain him. Furthermore, the weather that spring was unusually cold and wet. Some of Santa Anna's troops, recruited from the Yucatan, died of hypothermia. Meanwhile, in San Antonio, the few Texans were drawn into the confines of San Antonio de Valero Mission, in time known simply as the **Alamo**. The Alamo was under the divided command of Bowie and **William B. Travis** with only 150 men, to which only some thirty more were soon added. On February 23, Santa Anna's advance force arrived in San Antonio. For thirteen days, the Texans held their position behind the inadequate defenses of the mission, while waiting for reinforcements that never came. It soon became apparent that Santa Anna not only wanted San Antonio as a base for operations, but also desired the utter destruction of the Texan defenders, whom he wanted to make an example. He chose to force the issue with a bloody assault, whereas in fact, his trenches and siege train could have handled the matter effectively. In the **Battle of the Alamo** (March 6, 1836), the Texans were overwhelmed by sheer force of numbers. In bitter fighting, all of the soldiers were killed, while some thirty Alamo non-combatants, women, children, and African-Americans, were spared. Santa Anna lost some 600 of his men, or roughly a third of his assault force. Furthermore, though the Alamo story initially struck fear in the hearts of the Texans, it subsequently led to a relentless thirst for vengeance.

Simultaneously with Santa Anna's progress, cutting across the Rio Grande at Matamoros was a smaller force under **General José de Urrea**, a canny fighter and inspiring leader. Urrea captured **San Patricio** by a swift thrust that caught the Texans by surprise. This success was followed by another at the **Battle of Agua Dulce Creek**, in which **Dr. James Grant** was defeated and killed. In short order, Urrea also descended upon **Lt. Col. William Ward's** party. But these actions were incidental matters to Urrea, who was bound for Goliad. **James W. Fannin, Jr.**, the Texan commander at Goliad, had gathered approximately 500 men to attack Matamoros, despite Houston's opposition. When he heard that Urrea already had consolidated that position, he changed his mind and fell back to Goliad. Houston ordered him to relieve the men at the Alamo, but by March 14 rescinded that order and issued a new one. Fannin was to proceed with his entire command to Victoria, where a linking of forces would occur. However, learning that Ward and Aaron King and all their men had been defeated by Urrea, Fannin vacillated between defending Goliad and retreating to Victoria. Finally, on March 19, he decided too late to leave Goliad and move toward Houston. Urrea immediately set out in pursuit. Fannin, fearing the exhaustion of his men and animals, halted after only six miles. The Texans were not far from Coletto Creek with its water and protective treeline when Urrea's cavalry appeared, blocked Fannin's path, and seized with creek. When Urrea's main body arrived, Fannin could only form a square and wait. The next morning, Urrea received reinforcements, including artillery. As Mexican cannons leveled their guns on the Texans, and as Mexican infantry formed attack columns, Fannin accepted the inevitable and asked for terms. He received what he regarded as an assurance that his army would be treated honorably as prisoners of war. The Texans were marched back to Goliad, imprisoned, and assured of their release. Upon hearing the terms of surrender, Santa Anna countermanded them and ordered the execution of the Texans, an order that was carried out on March 27. This became known as the **Goliad Massacre**.

About the same time, Houston arrived on Gonzales and assumed command of an army of fewer than 400 men. Upon hearing of the fall of the Alamo from **Susanna Dickinson**, Houston also learned that the Mexican army was pressing on to Gonzales. Aware of his precarious position, he decided to withdraw. Because of lack of transport, he was forced to sink his cannon in the Guadalupe River. He burned the town to render it useless to Santa Anna and fell back to the northeast toward the Colorado River. The town's inhabitants contributed to the number of refugees already pouring northward and eastward from San Patricio, Refugio, and points in between. In time, they were joined by throngs from all over east Texas in what became known as the **Runaway Scrape**.

Upon the fall of the Alamo, Santa Anna planned a three-pronged offensive through east Texas. **General Antonio Gaona** was to proceed from Bastrop toward San Felipe. **General Joaquín Ramírez y Sesma** was also ordered to San Felipe, whence he would strike in an easterly direction with the probably destination of Anahuac. **Ramírez y Sesma's** troops were to act as the spearhead of the thrust. Finally, Urrea was to secure the right flank of these movements while maintaining a northerly route in the hope of joining the main forces should a mass formation be necessary. Houston was thus to be snared, his army crushed or captured, and the rebellion finished. On March 20, Ramírez y Sesma, at the head of only 800 men, reached the Colorado River. Houston's army at this time probably outnumbered the Mexicans, but the Texas general refused to fight, for several reasons. He realized that although his army was poorly trained. Furthermore, his enemy had artillery, and he did not. Finally, Santa Anna's plan allowed for rapid communication and consequent quick reinforcement. Houston thought that he could not risk it, for if he lost, there would be nothing to stop Santa Anna from marching unimpeded across Texas. This last consideration became all the more important after March 2, the date on which the convention approved the **Texas Declaration of Independence**. In Houston's mind, nothing less was at stake than independent nationhood. Nevertheless, disappointed that he did not attack, a number of his troops began to question his leadership.

When Houston learned of Fannin's destruction, his withdrawal became a retreat, and he turned toward the Brazos River and Jared Groce's plantation. He went by way of San Felipe de Austin, which he torched. By now, Houston's disgruntled force had shrunk to no more than 800 men. Some allege that he wanted to retreat as far as the Trinity River, others that he merely intended to teach his little army the fundamentals of the drill while waiting for reinforcement. In either event, captains **Wyly Martin** and **Moseley Baker** balked, claiming that they would fight the enemy on their own. Houston solved the problem by ordering these men and their followers to establish a rear guard to hold up a Mexican advance. But discontent came not only from the ranks but from the government. Houston was strongly criticized by **President David G. Burnet** as well. In the meantime, Burnet and the cabinet fled New Washington, the most recent capital of the new government, for Harrisburg. At Groce's plantation, the troops received the rudiments of battlefield drill and formation. Houston's command was buttressed by two loyal supporters, **Colonel Thomas J. Rusk**, and Colonel Edward Burleson.

Upon hearing of Burnet's flight, Santa Anna decided to move on Harrisburg. Because of this error, he lost sight of his objective, Houston's army. In addition, this pursuit meant that he would be required to divide his force further. When he arrived in Harrisburg, he discovered that the Texas government had fled again, so he ordered **Colonel Juan N. Almonte** ahead. Almonte

nearly succeeded in capturing the escaping officials. By now, Houston was on the move again, this time to the east. At the fork between the road to Nacogdoches and that to Harrisburg, the army swung toward the latter, and the character of the campaign changed. Houston, who had been slow and deliberate in his manner, now became swift and animated, and his strike toward Harrisburg resembled a forced march. On the way, he intercepted Mexican couriers, from whom he learned the location and size of Santa Anna's force. Gathering his men around him, Houston eloquently addressed them and called upon them to remember the Alamo and Goliad.

By now, both Houston and Santa Anna were headed for **Lynch's Ferry** on the San Jacinto River. Still concerned about Mexican reinforcements, Houston crossed and then destroyed **Vince's Bridge**. The Texans reached Lynch's Ferry, at the confluence of the San Jacinto River and Buffalo Bayou, first. In the tree line beside Buffalo Bayou, Houston aligned his force on April 20. Later on the same day, Santa Anna's force also arrived. In the late afternoon, there was a brief but sharp clash between the elements of the two armies, but nothing serious developed. Apparently, Santa Anna decided to await reinforcements, which arrived the following morning in the form of Cos's command.

Meanwhile, Houston held his first council of war, wherein the merits of an offensive or a defensive battle were debated. On the afternoon of April 21, Houston ordered his small force of perhaps 900 men forward. Santa Anna had concluded that the Texans were on the defensive, and he had decided to attack them the next day. Because of this costly miscalculation, Houston surprised and completely overran the enemy; the battle only took eighteen minutes. Shouts of "Remember the Alamo!" and "Remember Goliad!" filled the air, and in this charged atmosphere the killing continued for an hour after the issue was resolved. Virtually the entire Mexican army was killed, scattered, or captured, including Santa Anna, who managed to escape but was captured the following day. In effect, the Mexicans lost everything, and the Texans, by comparison, lost nine men. On Houston's command, Santa Anna ordered his second-in-command, **General Vicente Filisola**, to withdraw all his troops from Texas, and the order was obeyed. If the Mexican army had remained in Texas, it is probable that the war would have continued. Many Texans wanted Santa Anna's life, but Houston, aware of the Mexican general's value alive, spared him.

The war was concluded by the **two treaties of Velasco**, one public, the other secret. The first was published as soon as possible, and its contents held conditions very favorable to Texas. By its terms, Texas independence was recognized, hostilities were ended, the Mexican army was retired beyond the Rio Grande, confiscated property would be restored, and prisoners would be exchanged. The secret treaty agreed to Santa Anna's release in exchange for his promise that he would do all he could to secure within the Mexican government all the provisions of the public treaty without exception, as well as the enforcement of them. Santa Anna agreed, as was his perceived prerogative, since by destroying the Constitution of 1824, he had assumed authority over Mexican foreign policy. The remaining Mexican government refused to accept these terms, however. Nevertheless, Texas became not only a *de facto* state, but also a *de jure* state in the eyes of many nations.