

Section

3

The Last Years of the Republic

Main Ideas

1. Anson Jones was elected president of the Republic of Texas in 1844.
2. During Jones's presidency, Texans increased their calls for annexation with the United States.

Why It Matters Today

Annexation to the United States was a major issue for Texas. Use current events sources to find information about major political issues facing Texas or the United States today.

Key Person

- Anson Jones

The Story Continues

In December 1844 Sam Houston stood before the Texas Congress to give his final speech as the Republic's president. He was pleased. Under his leadership, he reminded Congress, Texas had avoided war with Mexico. The Mexicans had not invaded Texas since 1842, and all Texas prisoners but one had returned home. The economy was improving. Houston wanted the next president to continue his policies.



TEKS: 4A, 4B, 21B, 22D

myNotebook

Use the annotation tools in your eBook to take notes on the issues of the Jones presidency.



President Anson Jones

The question of who that next president would be was fiercely debated. In the election of 1844, the Republic was divided. Newspapers printed harsh criticisms of both candidates, Vice President Edward Burleson and **Anson Jones**. Jones was a doctor from Brazoria and a veteran of the Battle of San Jacinto. He had served in the Texas Congress and as secretary of state under Houston.

Jones and Houston shared similar views on most issues. As a result, Jones received Houston's support in the election. Burleson, on the other hand, had disagreed with Houston over many issues, including whether to attack Mexico. Because Burleson was at odds with Houston, he gained the support of Houston's opponents, including Mirabeau B. Lamar and his followers. As the election approached, the campaign reached a fever pitch. Voters either supported or opposed Sam Houston—there was no middle ground.

That's Interesting!

Counting the Votes

During the Texas election of 1844, presidential candidate Anson Jones was serving as secretary of state. Part of his official duties in this role included counting the votes in the presidential election in which he was the victor.

Jones easily won the election. Many Texans blamed the Republic's problems on Lamar, so his support had hurt Burleson. Kenneth Anderson was chosen as vice president. Some citizens, however, claimed that Jones would not have won on his own merits. After the election, one Texan wrote a letter about the subject.

TEXAS VOICES

"Dr. Anson Jones is certainly elected to the Presidency—there is no doubt of it—though all the returns are not in yet—He had no popularity of his own—rode in on Old Sam's Shadow! . . . But Old Sam can beat the Devil himself when he tries and make anyone president."

—James Morgan, letter to Samuel Swartwout, September 28, 1844

As president, Jones inherited the Republic's economic problems. From its beginning, the Republic of Texas had been in debt. The debt had grown during Lamar's presidency. When Sam Houston started his second term of office, the Republic's treasury was empty. Houston had tried to limit government spending, but a partial failure of the Texas cotton crop in 1842 and 1843 prevented the economy from recovering.

Jones continued Houston's policy of limited government spending. In addition, the new president continued to work for peace with Texas Indians, a policy that was also aimed at reducing spending. As annexation to the United States became more likely, the value of Texas currency slowly began to climb. By 1845 the value of Texas currency in many parts of the Republic had become equal to that of U.S. currency. Good crop years and increased trade were also helping to improve the Texas economy.

Reading Check Drawing Inferences and Conclusions What signs gave Texans hope that the Republic's economy was improving?

Salaries of Texas Officials

Position	1845 Salary in 2012 Dollars	2012
President/Governor	\$116,197	\$150,000
Secretary of State	\$34,859	\$125,880
Chief Justice	\$40,669	\$152,500
Attorney General	\$23,239	\$150,000
Land Commissioner	\$34,859	\$145,200

Source: *Texas Almanac and Laws of the Ninth Congress*

Interpreting Tables As part of his plan to cut spending, Sam Houston cut the salaries of government officials. Even after adjusting for inflation, officials in the Republic made far less than officials do today. In 2012 dollars, how much more does the governor make than the president did?

★ Texans Debate Annexation

Although economic problems were a major concern for many Texans, President Jones was more worried about the prospects of annexation. As you have read, Texans had voted in favor of annexation in 1836. However, the U.S. government had not been willing to annex the Republic. Houston's administration had supported annexation, while Lamar's administration had opposed it.

As secretary of state, Jones had worked directly with Houston to map out foreign relations for Texas. Their ideas had included plans for the Republic's possible annexation to the United States. In 1843 a newspaper had noted that "as great a proportion [percentage] of the people [are] in favor of annexation" as had been in 1836.

During his first months in office, Jones kept silent on the issue of annexation. Many Texans wanted decisive action, and so they became frustrated with Jones. More and more, Texans called for annexation. Jones, however, wanted Texans to have the option of becoming part of their neighbor to the north or of maintaining independence. The latter option depended on peaceful relations with Mexico, so he worked to obtain Mexico's recognition.

Few Texans were interested in negotiating with Mexico, as a newspaper expressed in 1845. "The object of the Mexican government is to lie and deceive us. . . . They may dupe [trick] some of our statesmen; but they will not dupe the people of Texas." As the demand for a convention to decide the issue of annexation grew stronger, word arrived that Mexico might soon recognize the Republic. Texans debated whether their country should stay independent or continue to seek annexation.

Reading Check Identifying Points of View Why did President Jones want to wait on the question of annexation?



BIOGRAPHY

Anson Jones

(1798–1858) Anson Jones was born in Massachusetts. He studied medicine as a young man and began practicing in 1820. He moved to Texas in 1833. After serving in the revolution, Jones returned to his medical practice. He became interested in politics and served in a number of offices. Jones supported Houston's efforts to keep peace with Texas Indians. After serving as the last president of the Republic of Texas, Jones retired to his farm near Washington-on-the-Brazos. **What contributions did Jones make to Texas?**



Section 3 Review



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ONLINE QUIZ

1. Identify and explain

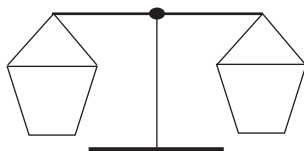
the significance of the following in Texas history:

- Anson Jones

2. Analyzing Information

Copy the graphic organizer below. Use it to explain the choice President Jones wanted Texans to make regarding the future of the Republic.

The Future of the Republic



3. Finding the Main Idea

- Who won the Texas presidential election of 1844, and how did Lamar and Houston influence this outcome?
- In what ways had the Texas economy changed by 1844?

4. Writing and Critical Thinking

myWriteSmart

Making Generalizations and Predictions

Write a paragraph explaining why you think Texans will or will not continue to support annexation.

Consider the following:

- the reasons for annexation
- the improved economy and the possibility of recognition from Mexico