

Section

1

The War Begins

Main Ideas

1. The Battle of Gonzales and the capture of Goliad were among the opening conflicts in the Texas Revolution.
2. The Texas army laid siege to San Antonio and fought several small battles against Mexican troops.
3. The Texas army drove the Mexican forces out of San Antonio.

Why It Matters Today

Providing the army with supplies, funds, and soldiers was a difficult task for Texas leaders in 1835. Use current events sources to learn about military funding in the United States today.

Key Terms and People

- Battle of Gonzales
- Juan Seguín
- infantry
- cavalry
- Edward Burleson
- Erastus “Deaf” Smith
- Grass Fight
- Ben Milam



TEKS: 1B, 3B, 3C, 8A, 9A, 21A, 21B, 21C, 22D

myNotebook

Use the annotation tools in your eBook to take notes on the beginning of the Texas Revolution.

The Story Continues

In 1831, *empresario* Green DeWitt wrote to officials in Bexar. He feared American Indian attacks against his colony and wanted a way to defend his people. In answer to his requests, the Mexican government sent him a small bronze cannon. DeWitt installed the cannon at Gonzales, where it could be used to fight off hostile Indians. Years later, when the Texas Revolution began, it would be used against a different foe.



The Capture of Gonzales and Goliad

By 1835, many people in Texas were upset with the Mexican government because of Santa Anna's actions. Fearing trouble, Mexican general Domingo de Ugartechea, the commander in Texas, ordered the people of Gonzales to hand over the cannon DeWitt had received four years earlier. They refused. They buried the cannon in an orchard.

In response to these actions, Ugartechea sent troops to take the cannon by force. The people of Gonzales desperately worked to keep the troops out of their town, making up excuses and stories about why they could not give up the cannon. In the meantime, they sent riders to nearby towns to ask for help in resisting the Mexican demands.

Many people responded to the call for help, and reinforcements arrived in Gonzales. The Texan militia there grew to at least 180. On October 1 the enlarged militia decided to attack the Mexican force, which included about 100 soldiers. The rebels dug up the cannon and mounted it on a wagon. To taunt the Mexican troops, they also made a flag with a picture of a cannon and the challenge *COME AND TAKE IT*.

As the rebels approached the Mexican camp on October 2, 1835, the nervous Mexicans opened fire. The Texans shot back. The fighting in the **Battle of Gonzales** was brief. No Texans were killed, but at least one Mexican soldier died. The Mexican soldiers withdrew to San Antonio.

The Battle of Gonzales is traditionally considered the beginning of the Texas Revolution. However, resistance had begun a month earlier off the mouth of the Brazos River. There, a Texas steamboat and merchant ship had attacked the Mexican coast guard vessel *Correo de México*, which had been patrolling the Texas coast looking for smugglers.

Soon after the Battle of Gonzales, a large volunteer force from towns along the coast captured the presidio at Goliad. The presidio had been left largely unguarded, because General Martín Perfecto de Cos had taken most of its soldiers to San Antonio. The rebels seized both the presidio and the town of Goliad on October 10. These attacks left no doubt that Texans were in revolt against Santa Anna's centralist government.

Reading Check Sequencing List in order the events that led to the Battle of Gonzales.



Early Conflicts of the Texas Revolution, 1835

Interpreting Map Early conflicts erupted off the coast of Brazoria and at Gonzales and Goliad. Texas soldiers then marched to San Antonio and laid siege to the city

- 1. Locate** Where did the first conflicts of the Texas Revolution occur?
- 2. Analyzing information** Based on this map, what conflict led to General Cos's withdrawing from Texas in late 1835?



The March on San Antonio

Motivated by their victory at Gonzales, the volunteers there planned their next step. They also began to organize themselves into a formal army. They elected officers, choosing Stephen F. Austin as their general. With their leadership in place, the army decided it would drive Cos out of San Antonio. The long, difficult march to the city began on October 12. Gunsmith Noah Smithwick described efforts to move a single cannon.

Analyzing Primary Sources

Identifying Points of View Which phrase of Smithwick's reveals his opinion of the Texas army's condition?

TEXAS VOICES



"We prodded up the oxen with our lances . . . until they broke into a trot. . . . But rapid locomotion [movement] was not congenial to them. . . . The old cannon was abandoned in disgrace at Sandy Creek before we got halfway to San Antonio."

—Noah Smithwick, *The Evolution of a State, or Recollections of Old Texas Days*

Austin set up camp on the outskirts of San Antonio in late October. There, the army found support from the city's Tejanos, many of whom had suffered after the arrival of General Cos. Leading Tejano citizens such as Erasmo Seguín had been forced to sweep the city streets. Tejano women had to bake tortillas for the Mexican troops, who also took supplies and destroyed some citizens' homes. Already opposed to Santa Anna's government, many Tejanos were further outraged by the actions of Cos and his troops. More than 100 of them—including **Juan Seguín**, the son of Erasmo Seguín—joined the Texas army.

That army, however, was ill trained and ill equipped. Although it had grown to some 600 soldiers, most were **infantry**, or foot soldiers. They would have a hard time fighting the Mexican **cavalry**—soldiers who fought on horseback. So part of Austin's military strategy, or plan, was to increase his cavalry. Juan Seguín and other Tejanos in San Antonio who supported the rebellion volunteered for the cavalry.



HISTORIC DOCUMENT

Letter from the Grass Fight

William Jack was one of the leaders at the Grass Fight. After the fight, he wrote to General Burleson to report the results and the actions of the men under his command.

"It would be unjust to particularize as to the conduct of the officers and men under my command on this occasion. Suffice it to say that each man so far as my observation extended did what Texas expected of him. The only cause of complaint arose from their impetuosity [impulsive behavior].

My feelings however will not permit me to close without noticing the gallant conduct of the aged veteran Captain Jas. Burleson [father of Edward Burleson]. He flew from one end of the field to the other constantly urging us on to the conflict and contributed in a most eminent manner to the successful result which followed."

Analyzing Primary Sources

1. **Finding the Main Idea** What does Jack say was the outcome of the battle?
2. **Making Generalizations and Predictions** What do you think Jack means when he says the soldiers "did what Texas expected" of them?

Austin was not satisfied with his camp's location. He wanted to find a location nearer the city, from which he could keep a close eye on Cos. To find a such a location, he sent a search party led by James "Jim" Bowie, a frontiersman from Louisiana. Cos had been watching, and on October 28 he sent some 400 Mexican soldiers to ambush the party near the Mission Concepción. Despite the Mexicans' larger numbers, though, the Texans won the resulting battle. Bowie's party had camped in a good defensive position behind a riverbank. Their rifles were much more accurate than the soldiers' weapons, too. The Mexican troops retreated.

Like the capture of Goliad, this victory boosted the confidence of the Texas army. Austin wanted to attack General Cos in San Antonio immediately. However, cooler heads prevailed. Other leaders reminded him about the number of soldiers and artillery in San Antonio. In addition, the Texans did not yet have a way to get through the city's walls.

Reading Check Summarizing How were the Texans able to drive off the Mexican attack outside of San Antonio?



The Grass Fight

After the fight at Concepción, Stephen F. Austin moved his headquarters to the Old Mill just north of San Antonio. In this position, the Texas army could lay siege to San Antonio. The Mexican army in the city, however, was well supplied, and the siege seemed to have little effect. Many troops became impatient, and some decided to return home. Others fell ill as the weather grew colder. The army's leaders became discouraged.

During the siege, the Texas army underwent a change in leadership. Realizing that he was a better diplomat than a general, Austin accepted a position as a commissioner to the United States. The soldiers elected **Edward Burleson**, an experienced officer, to take command of the army.

On November 26 **Erastus "Deaf" Smith**, one of Burleson's scouts, rode into camp. He reported that more than 100 Mexican soldiers with pack animals were headed to San Antonio. A rumor quickly spread through the camp that these soldiers were carrying silver to pay the Mexican troops. Burleson sent a squad of troops led by Bowie to ambush the Mexicans and seize the silver.

Bowie's squad quickly defeated the soldiers and took their cargo. The Texans eagerly opened the bags that supposedly held silver, only to find grass for feeding horses instead. This incident became known as the **Grass Fight**. Although the Texas troops were disappointed, some of them realized that the siege was working because the Mexican forces needed feed for their starving animals.

Reading Check Identifying Cause and Effect Why did the Grass Fight take place, and what was the result?



BIOGRAPHY

Juan Seguín

(1806–1890) One of the great Tejano heroes of the Texas Revolution, Juan Seguín fought for both Texas and Mexico during his lifetime. He was present at the Alamo, but was away from the mission at the time of the final attack. He led a unit at the Battle of San Jacinto and accepted Mexico's surrender of San Antonio on June 4, 1836. He later served as a Texas senator and as mayor of San Antonio. After conflicts with U.S. settlers, though, Seguín resigned as mayor and moved to Mexico with his family in 1842. He fought against the United States in the Mexican War, but later returned to Texas, settling in Wilson County. He retired in Nuevo Laredo in the 1860s and died there in 1890. His body was moved to Seguin, Texas, on July 4, 1976. **How did Seguín contribute to Texas history?**

Daily Life

The Home Front

The revolution disrupted the daily lives of many Texans. This was certainly true for Tejanos during the siege and capture of San Antonio. Both the Mexican and Texas armies took food, livestock, and other supplies from townspeople. During the battle, Texas troops broke down the doors of homes, tore holes in the walls and ceilings, and used the residents' furniture for cover. Many homes were left in ruins. **What types of hardships did some Tejanos suffer during the revolution?**



The Capture of San Antonio

After the Grass Fight, Colonel Burleson wanted to attack San Antonio, but his officers refused. Instead, he ordered a withdrawal from San Antonio to Goliad. On December 4, the day Burleson ordered the pull-back, a captured Mexican officer was brought to camp. He reported that General Cos's troops were weak and disorganized. The siege and lack of supplies had worn down the Mexican soldiers. After hearing the report, Colonel **Ben Milam** shouted to the troops, "Who will go with old Ben Milam into San Antonio?" About 300 Texans answered Milam's call. They gathered that night at the Old Mill. Ben Milam and Francis W. Johnson each took command of a group for the attack on San Antonio.

The Texans attacked in the early morning hours on December 5, 1835. Fighting spread from house to house and then on to the rooftops. One Texan described the frightened citizens' reaction. "Men, women and children began to run out, in their night clothes and unarmed." On the third day of fighting, Milam was killed. Yet the battle was turning in the Texans' favor. They were forcing the Mexican troops to retreat. By December 9 the Mexican forces had been pushed out of the center of San Antonio. On December 10 Cos surrendered and agreed to lead his troops out of Texas.

The victory in San Antonio led many Texans to believe that the conflict was over. They thought that they could separate from Coahuila and form a separate state within Mexico. That would give them a greater say in their own government and a chance to live as they wished. Santa Anna had different plans for Texas, however.

Reading Check Finding the Main Idea What was the outcome of the siege of San Antonio?



Section 1 Review



hmhsocialstudies.com

ONLINE QUIZ

1. Define and explain:

- infantry
- cavalry

2. Identify and explain the significance of:

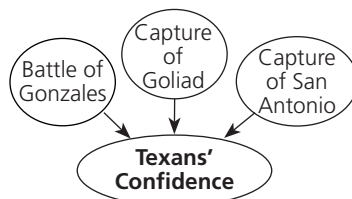
- Battle of Gonzales
- Juan Seguín
- Edward Burleson
- Erastus "Deaf" Smith
- Grass Fight
- Ben Milam

3. Locate on a map:

- Gonzales

4. Summarizing

Copy the web diagram below. Use it to show how early victories gave confidence to the Texas troops during the Texas Revolution.



5. Finding the Main Idea

- Describe the effects of the Battle of Gonzales on Texas-Mexico relations.
- Look at the map in this section. Organize the battles on it in absolute chronological order.

6. Writing and Critical Thinking

myWriteSmart

Drawing Inferences and Conclusions Imagine that you are a reporter covering the siege of San Antonio. Write a report that describes the events.

Consider the following:

- decisions that army officials made
- effects of geographic factors such as landforms on the battle