

**EXAMPLE: "Reading Passages" from: EDU108 - "Alamo Chocolate Pot"**

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# **Texas Revolution**

## **(1835 – 1836)**

### **The Settlement of Spanish Texas**

In 1803, the United States bought the Louisiana Territory from France. However, the United States and Spain could not agree on who owned Texas. Americans thought it was part of the United States. Spain thought it was part of Mexico. In 1819, the two countries signed a treaty. The treaty made Florida part of the United States. It also set the boundary between the United States and Mexico. They also agreed that Texas was owned by Spain.

By 1821, the Spanish government needed to make more money, or revenue. They decided to offer land grants to settlers. This would get more people to move to Texas. Land grants were large pieces of land given to empresarios by Mexico. Families received grants as large as 1,000 acres. They were also given more acres for each child in the family. The land grants were very important to settlers. Most settlers did not have to pay taxes on the land for several years. In exchange for the land, settlers had to become Mexican citizens. They also had to learn Spanish and become members of the Catholic Church. The Mexican government wanted people to move to Texas from many areas. Most of the people who moved to Texas were from the United States.

Moses Austin was a businessman from Missouri. He applied for, and was given, a land grant in Texas. Austin died before he could move to the land he was given. His son, Stephen F. Austin, led a group of settlers along the Brazos River. They settled in Texas. The 300 families he brought became known as the Old Three Hundred. Stephen F. Austin became known as the Father of Texas. He is the most famous empresario.

### **Mexico Takes Control**

The numbers of Americans living in Texas slowly grew. By 1830, more Americans lived in Texas than Mexicans. The Mexican government wanted to stop Americans from moving to Texas. They passed a law that stopped legal immigration from the United States. They also began giving large land grants to people from Europe. Laws were also passed that taxed trade between the United States and Texas. One key issue was slavery. The Mexican government planned to end slavery. Early settlers used slaves to work the land. The Americans in Texas did not like these new laws. Many began talking about Texas becoming a Mexican state. Then they could make their own laws.

In 1833, General Antonio López de Santa Anna became the president of Mexico. He decided to make peace with the settlers in Texas. In 1833, Stephen Austin traveled to Mexico City to negotiate with Santa Anna. Austin asked that more American settlers be allowed to move to Texas. He also asked that Texas become a Mexican state. Santa Anna agreed to allow more Americans into Texas. However, he refused to make Texas a Mexican state. Austin was not happy about this decision. He sent a letter back to Texas. In his letter, Austin told the settlers to plan to become independent from Mexico. Austin was arrested by the Mexican government when his letter was seized by the Mexican government. Mexico now knew of his plan. After Austin's arrest Santa Anna and his supporters replaced Mexico's federal republic with a centralized form of government. This made the people of Texas panic.

### **Independence for Texas**

By 1835, Texans were becoming more upset with the policies of the Mexican government. They began to revolt in several regions, including Texas. This led Santa Anna to send Mexican troops to stop the uprisings. In October 1835, Mexican troops fought with Americans at the town of Gonzales after the Mexican army tried to take a cannon on loan to the Texans. The settlers were able to keep control of the cannon. They also pushed the Mexican army out of the area. Although this was a small fight, it turned out to be the first battle for independence. Because of the victory, many Americans volunteered to help fight Santa Anna. Volunteers would be given free land in exchange for fighting for Texan independence. Among those who answered the call were David "Davy" Crockett and James Bowie.

### **Davy Crockett & James Bowie**

Davy Crockett was born on August 17, 1786 in a cabin along the Nolichucky River in Tennessee. He was the fifth of nine children. His parents were John and Rebecca Hawkins Crockett. Crockett ran away from home at a young age. He returned home around the age of 15 and helped with the family tavern. In 1806, he married Mary Polly Finlay. In 1813, Crockett joined the Tennessee Militia, and served until the following spring. After Mary's death in 1815, he married Elizabeth Patton.

Although Davy Crockett is mostly known for being a hunter and woodsman, Crockett served in the Tennessee legislature. He was then elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. Crockett disagreed with President Andrew Jackson on important issues. He lost the 1835 election. That loss led him to explore Texas. When he found out about the issues in Texas, he volunteered to fight for Texas independence. Crockett arrived in San Antonio on February 8, 1836. He joined the garrison of an old mission called the Alamo.

James Bowie was born on April 10, 1796, in Kentucky. By 1802, his family moved to Spanish Louisiana. In 1814, James Bowie and his brother Rezin joined the army. They wanted to fight in the War of 1812. Before they could fight, however, a treaty was signed and the war ended.

In 1827, Bowie watched a duel between Samuel Levi Wells III and Thomas Harris Maddox. No one was hurt in the duel. The two men involved actually shook hands. However, many of the people who watched began to fight. Bowie got into a fight with Norris Wright. After being shot and stabbed, Bowie used his knife to kill Wright. The fight was reported in the newspapers. Bowie became famous for the fight and his “Bowie Knife.”

James Bowie was a land speculator. In 1830, he moved to Texas. He became a valued leader. He fought for Texas in several battles. On January 19, 1836, Bowie and a small group of men arrived at the Alamo. Their goal was to help defend the mission from Santa Anna.

### **“Remember the Alamo!” (February 23 – March 6, 1836)**

In early December 1836, the Texans had won another victory. They had pushed the Mexican army out of San Antonio. After this, there was confusion about what to do next. The Texans did not prepare for the larger Mexican army. Instead, they split apart. By the time Santa Anna reached San Antonio, in February 1836, there were roughly 180 Texans remaining at a small mission known as the Alamo. The Texans didn’t have any gun powder. The small group of Texans stood no chance against the thousands of Mexican troops.

The Texans at the Alamo were outnumbered. However, they were able to hold the Alamo for 12 days. The commander of the Texas troops was William B. Travis. He was only 26 years-old. During the attack, the 150 Texans were joined by 32 additional volunteers from Gonzales. They were able to sneak through the Mexican army and join the fight.

On March 6, 1836, Santa Anna decided to end the 12-day standoff. The Mexican general launched a surprise attack on the Alamo just before sunrise. Cannons blasted the walls of the Alamo. Many of the Mexican troops were killed. Almost all of the Alamo defenders died, including Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie. Only a few women and children lived to tell the story of the battle from the side of the Texans.

### **Texas Declares Independence**

Many people died at the Alamo. However, the fighting gave Texans time to plan. On March 2, 1836, a group of American and Tejano settlers declared independence. The Texas Declaration of Independence was modeled after the United States document. It stated that Texans were not allowed freedom of religion, the right to a jury trial, and the right to petition. It also stated that the Mexican government had violated the rights given to its citizens by the Mexican constitution.

Texas elected David G. Burnet as president. Lorenzo de Zavala was elected vice president. Sam Houston became the commander-in-chief of Texan army. Houston put together a small army. On April 21, 1836, the Texans at San Jacinto attacked the Mexican army. They shouted “Remember the Alamo!” More than 600 Mexican troops were killed, and 700 were taken captive. Santa Anna was captured on April 22. He agreed to sign a treaty if he would be set free. On May 14, 1836, Santa Anna signed the Treaty of Velasco. The treaty created an independent Texas.

### **The Lone Star Republic**

As a new nation, the Republic of Texas gained the nickname “The Lone Star Republic” because there was only one star on its flag. Sam Houston was elected president in September 1836. Texans also voted on whether or not they should ask to join the United States. By a vote of 3,277 to 91, they agreed to request annexation. President Andrew Jackson refused, primarily because the addition of Texas as a slave state would change the balance of power in Congress. For the next 9 years Texas remained an independent country.

By 1844 the idea of Manifest Destiny had grown popular. Manifest destiny is the belief that Americans had that God meant for the United States to expand from coast to coast. This included adding Texas and the Oregon country to the United States. James K. Polk became president of the United States in 1844. He asked Congress to annex Texas. On December 29, 1845, Texas became the 28<sup>th</sup> state in the Union.