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Most Desperate People: The Genesis of Texas Exceptionalism

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MOST DESPERATE PEOPLE

THE GENESIS OF TEXAS EXCEPTIONALISM

by

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Under the direction of Wendy H. Venet

ABSTRACT

Six different nations have claimed sovereignty over some or all of the current state of Texas. In the early nineteenth century, Spain ruled Texas. Then Mexico rebelled against Spain, and from 1821 to 1836 Texas was a Mexican province. In 1836, Texas Anglo settlers rebelled against Mexican rule and established a separate republic. The early Anglo settlers brought their form of civilization to a region that the Spanish had not been able to subdue for three centuries. They defeated a professional army and eventually overwhelmed Native American tribes who wished to maintain their way of life without inference from intruding Anglo settlers.

This history fostered a people who consider themselves capable of doing anything—an exceptional population imbued with a fierce sense of nationalistic and local rooted in the mythic memoirs of the first Anglo settlers. The purpose of this study is to explore the origin and development of Texan exceptionalist beliefs. The "taming of the Texas wilderness," the Alamo, the defeat of Santa Anna at San Jacinto, the formation of a republic that earned recognition by major foreign powers, Stephen F. Austin, Davy Crockett, William Travis, are all elements in the great Texas myth.

From the letters and documents of the early settlers, the extensive papers of Stephen F. Austin, the war papers of the Texas Revolution, newspapers of the era, and other sources, it is apparent that the early Texas settler did not come to Texas for any altruistic purpose. Texas

provided a second chance for many who had been previously unsuccessful and an opportunity to gain riches from the extensive land bounty granted by the Mexican government.

This research provides additional depth to a neglected part of Texas history. Removing the mystique of the Texas legend reveals a far more colorful and complex period. These early Texans were a complex, divided, greedy, racist people who changed the course of the United States and established a legend that has withstood the test of time.

INDEX WORDS: Empresario, Spanish colonies, Texas, Mexico, Alamo, San Jacinto, Goliad, Texas Revolution, Sam Houston, Davy Crockett, William B. Travis, James Bowie, Santa Anna, James Fannin, Stephen F. Austin, Eugene Barker, Texas Indians, Texas settlers, Andrew Jackson

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PREFACE

Since the founding of the Texas Republic in 1836, the first Anglo settlers to the then Mexican province have enjoyed an almost mythical status. This attitude has carried over to the present day. In a recent discussion concerning the deployment of the Texas National Guard to Iraq, an eight-year-old exclaimed, "We are Texans—we never give up." This exceptionalist mind-set pervades modern-day Texas society and culture.

Historians appear reluctant to submit the Texas myth to close examination. Presently there is little extensive research into the character, motivations, and actions of the early Anglo Texans. Eugene C. Barker, the dean of Texas historians and the author of numerous books and journal articles on early Texas, had already classified these people as exceptional in the early twentieth century, and numerous historical societies throughout the state steadfastly adhere to and promote the Texas legend as historically accurate. Modern historians have found borderlands and Tejano studies less controversial and more relevant in the period of New West history than the research of early Anglo settlers. Thus, the settlers who moved to Texas during the empresario years have remained perched upon their exceptionalist pedestal.

The roots of Texas exceptionalism began in 1821 and matured during the empresario and revolutionary period. This was the era of the "Old Three Hundred," the Alamo, and San Jacinto, as well as larger-than-life figures such as Stephen F. Austin, Sam Houston, Davy Crockett, and William B. Travis. The period between 1821 and 1836 was complex and dynamic. While research indicates that the first Anglos in Texas did not vary appreciably from other pioneers moving west—they moved to settle new lands, take advantage of increased opportunities, and seize the chance for a "new beginning"—several factors set them apart. To the Anglos, Texas

was a foreign country whose small population lived according to different customs and habits than the American frontiersman.

The purpose of this study is to advance the knowledge of early Anglo settlement of Texas, to provide a foundation for further inquiry into the individuals who settled Texas in the Mexican era, to add to the body of early Texas history, and to question the validity of Texas exceptionalism. The research includes settler diaries, letters, and journals as well as the papers of empresario Stephen F. Austin and the documents and letters collected during the Texas Revolution. The writings of early and modern Texas historians firmly established the formulation of the Texas legend and enumerate its sustaining power.

Further, this study is concerned with the relationship of the Anglos with the Tejanos, the Mexicans, and the Native Americans who also lived in Texas and offered serious opposition to the encroachment of Anglo Americans into the region. Native American resistance to the settlers was, on one hand, part of a larger conflict found on almost all the frontiers throughout the United States, but, on the other hand, many of the Texas Indians had battled the Spanish for possession of the region for centuries. The study of this conflict and the problems between the two competing cultures embrace a period much longer than the fifteen years of this study and a set of issues that require extensive research beyond the scope of this analysis.

However, if no Indians had lived in Texas, Anglo colonization probably would not have occurred. Spanish and Mexican colonization was unsuccessful due to the Native Americans who controlled most of Texas at the time. The Spanish introduced Anglos to the region to serve as a buffer against the Indians who had successfully thwarted the Spanish for three centuries. Mexico separated from Spain before the Mexican government had a viable frontier policy; however, Mexican leaders knew that if they did not colonize Texas, the United States would eventually

absorb the region. Faced with this dilemma, Mexico opened Texas to colonization under the sponsorship of empresarios. Logic might have it that only those on the fringes of Anglo society or the desperate would venture into an alien world controlled by Native Americans under a government that demanded adherence to a religion many despised and to a faulty legal system. However, these negatives barely dented the Anglo dreams of limitless wealth in fertile land that the Mexicans gave to those who were brave and hardy enough to start a new life. Thus, Texas attracted criminals, families, single men and women, widows with children, European migrants, and the despondent and depressed, all wishing for the "second chance."

This dissertation presents in general chronological order the foundation of Texas exceptionalism and presents a complicated and critical analysis of the Texas myth. Chapter I enumerates the historiography of the early Texas period, defines exceptionalism, and attempts to fit this research into modern western history. It describes how the first Texas historians initiated the myth and embellished the accomplishments of the Anglo settlers. Chapter II analyzes the Spanish colonial period and the first unsuccessful attempts to colonize Texas. Chapter III examines the period from 1821 until 1830 as Anglo migration steadily increased and the Texan "idea" attracted immigrants from a cross-section of American society. Chapter IV analyzes the events leading to the Texas Revolution, ending with the Anglo defeats at Goliad and the Alamo. This period of Anglo division and indecision nearly resulted in defeat. The final days of the Texas Revolution as well as the endurance of the exceptionalist myth are discussed in Chapter V.

In the end, this study demystifies the persona of the early Anglo settler in Texas. The Anglos were not as portrayed in legend, and only by extraordinarily good luck did their revolution succeed. They were arrogant, greedy, and racist, but they were also rugged individuals and risk takers. The Anglo settler experience in Texas was mirrored throughout the

west as pioneers settled western lands but Texans successfully constructed their history to portray themselves as different and exceptional.

CHAPTER I

MIGRANTS TO TEXAS: A SPECIAL PEOPLE

> "Texas, our Texas! All hail the mighty state!
> Texas, our Texas! So wonderful, so great!
> Boldest and grandest, withstanding every test;
> O empire wide and glorious, you stand supremely blest.
>
> God bless you, Texas! And keep you brave and strong.
> That you may grow in power and worth, throughout the ages long."[1]

The Texas State anthem, sung in every Texas school room and at all football games, embodies the spirit of Texas exceptionalism. Its words immortalize the original Texas pioneers as they tamed a wilderness, fought a foreign power, established a Republic that lasted ten years, and battled Indians decimating whole tribes. Texas exceptionalism refers to the perception that Texas differs from other states because of its unique origins, historical evolution, and distinctive, rugged, individualistic people. Exceptionalism refers to the belief that something is unusually excellent or superior.[2] A modern day manifestation of Texas exceptionalism occurs on the football field every fall. Texans feel that football represents their supremacy over the rest of the country. Texas college teams rank high every season, and every successful college team in the country covets Texas high school football players. Even today, Texans believe they are bigger, braver, and smarter than anybody else.

This dissertation examines the foundation of the Texas exceptional myth, the first Anglo settlers. Few have actually understood the nature, character, and motivations of the settlers who ventured forth from the comfort and sanctuary of their Eastern homes to carve out a new life in a Mexican colony. Texans believe that these were unique people, with extraordinary powers, destined to establish an original and special country. History has immortalized these early Texas

pioneers, but aside from myth and folktales there has been little research on their background, motivations, and actions. These settlers were not different from other pioneers who ventured to the American West. They were greedy, racist, and bigoted, but they were also brave, hardy, and ambitious. The question is why and how these people became venerated in Texas history. C. Vann Woodward estimated the shelf life of history—that is, the period between generational revisions—to be about twenty years.[3] The shelf life of the first Anglo settlers is approaching two hundred years.

This study analyzes the period between 1821 through 1836, the era of empresarios in Texas. Empresarios were granted the right to settle on Mexican land in Texas in exchange for recruiting and taking responsibility for new settlers. Spain, and later Mexico, failed in numerous attempts to colonize Texas, and finally the Mexican government made the distasteful decision to open the province to Anglo settlers.

The purpose of this analysis is to add to the body of research on early Texas history; examine the validity of Texas exceptionalism during the period of the first Anglo settlements; study the political situation pertaining to the United States, Spain and Mexico; and compare the early Texas settlers with those of Kansas and Oklahoma. The first Texas settlers arrived after 1820, the Kansas pioneers began to arrive in large numbers in the 1840s, and the Oklahoma Land Rush occurred in the later nineteenth century. The migrants to Oklahoma and Kansas, while revered by some in their respective states, do not enjoy the same mythic status given Texas settlers.

These myths portray Texas as the Promised Land and the New Eden. The Texas creation narrative identifies a great nation "born in blood" centering on the Alamo and its defenders and the victory over the Mexicans at San Jacinto. It glorifies the Davy Crockett-type hero, a rugged

individualist, who is solitary, wears homespun, understands the wilderness and firearms, spins tall tales, and triumphs without the benefit of formal education. Related are a whole cluster of other myths, including manifest destiny and the racial superiority of the Anglo-American settlers, and the understanding that the Texas Revolution and the Indian wars represented the apolitical battle between good and evil. These myths supported the concept that Protestantism was right and qualified to dictate values to all society—thereby justifying materialism, Darwinism, and political, racial, and religious bigotry.

Manifest destiny is defined as "a dogma of supreme self-assurance and ambition—that America's incorporation of all adjacent lands was the virtual inevitable fulfillment of a moral mission delegated to the nation by Providence itself." Proponents of Manifest Destiny believed that American territorial expansion was not only prudent but also apparent (manifest) and inevitable (destiny).[4] The term was used synonymously with other ideas of the nineteenth century such as American exceptionalism, nationalism, and the belief in the racial superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race.

Texans have reviled the two groups that share their regional history, Tejanos and Native Americans. In fact Texans have tended to define themselves as against non-Texans generally. Here lies the most pervasive and ironic of all Texas history myths: the idea that Texas is unique, "a whole other country" or "state of mind," an exception to the mistakes and woes of the rest of the world.[5]

The legend surrounding the early Texas settlers to date obfuscates the facts of what actually occurred during the period of 1821 to 1836. The story of the original Texas pioneers has been embellished over many decades through story and song, resulting in a mystical Texas and a romantic legend. The basis of the myth is a resilient and brave people enduring the hazards of

the frontier, fighting for liberty against a cruel and inhumane system of government. In fact, the history of early Texas settlement is far more complex and far more interesting than the traditional legend.

Texas has undergone many political and social changes; its recorded history spans more than five centuries, beginning with the early explorations of the Spanish. It passed through numerous stages: a Spanish province, a Mexican state, an independent Republic, a State of the United States, a Southern Confederate State, and finally, again, part of the Union. The first Anglo settlers did not encounter an untouched wilderness. Native Americans entered Texas approximately seven thousand years ago.[6] Tejanos established flourishing ranches throughout the Rio Grande Valley a century before the arrival of Anglo Americans. Cattle from these ranches fed American Revolutionary War soldiers fighting in the southern United States.[7]

Many early Texas historians preached the gospel of exceptionalism. George Garrison argued that competition on the frontier produced the superior Texas character that civilized the state and vanquished the Native American and Spanish cultures.[8] Eugene C. Barker used the "manifest destiny" maxim to describe the expansion of Anglo Texas. According to him, the Texas revolution was a clash of Anglo and Hispanic cultures that became inevitable once the Anglos entered Texas.[9] Barker stated that Texans "believed themselves morally, intellectually and politically superior" to Mexicans, declaring that this racial feeling has affected American relations with Mexico since 1821.[10]

Frederick Jackson Turner developed the thesis that the frontier experience made America exceptional. He described the 1820s, marked by the beginning of mass emigration west of the Mississippi, as the most important period in American history. Turner's central contention was that "the existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American

settlement westward explain America's development." Turner's thesis argued that the existence of a frontier and the constant westward movement forced Americans to discard the habits and attitudes of their European ancestors and develop unique American traits such as strength, energy, practicality, and self-reliance.[11]

The vast majority of the people who moved West in the nineteenth century shared several common traits. According to Turner, the hero of the frontier was democratic and egalitarian in his approach to social and political issues. He was an opportunist, individualistic and competitive. While nationalistic in outlook and expansive in attitude, he simultaneously cherished sectional loyalties. He was a militant who hated Indians, destroyed forests, and was apathetic to capitalists who might stop him. He was inventive when facing problems, quick to judge and act, and a born explorer. His western personality included behavioral qualities such as materialism, optimism, energy, coarseness, strength, intensity, and wastefulness. Finally, the pioneer was mobile, moving from frontier to frontier. These qualities are general in nature but still applicable to every frontier settlement.[12]

Turner declared that the opening of the western frontier attracted the poor, the discontented, and the oppressed that, due to circumstances, had to develop inventiveness and resourcefulness. The isolation encountered on the frontier both prompted the erosion of the traditional societal customs and promoted the growth of distinctly American practices and ideas. Turner contended that the frontier was a safety valve or an avenue of escape for society's misfits and malcontents and served as a laboratory for American democracy.[13]

One of the most enduring traits of Turner's thesis was its democratic spirit. Turner presented American history as a creative act in which all participated regardless of wealth.

Every American boy could envision himself as some sort of pioneer. Americans had separated themselves from the Old World and could claim a new and greater history.[14]

Turner wanted Americans to reconsider the frontier experience. He changed the direction of the study of the West, and his analysis is still debated today. He also produced a radical proposal for historians and advocated a premise of secular, democratic, American exceptionalism. He also asserted that Americans were a unique people with distinctive cultural traits based on their own experience and not inherited. Finally, he claimed that the essence of American identity was to be found among the people on the moving frontier. There is no mention of race, class, or gender in Turner's essay.[15]

Turner's frontier thesis appealed to the American people. It provided an amenable history for a nation becoming aware of its rising role in world leadership. The American frontier experience exhibited a past as grand as that of any power, a landscape as beautiful as any in the world, and heroes and myths equal to any in Europe. In fact, these were the same myths transposed and transported across the Atlantic Ocean. The frontier theory was a rationale for national distinctiveness. It provided a basis for American exceptionalism; the frontier distinguished America and Americans—despite the multiple origins of immigrants—from Europe and Europeans.[16] The new continent offered the common man an opportunity to be freed from the authoritative and oppressive institutions of the old world. He was a new man, an American, representing a new set of values—individuality, equality, and democracy.

Turner publicized his thesis across the country writing for *Atlantic Monthly* and other publications.[17] He also gave numerous public lectures and became a featured speaker at commencement exercises. However, the primary reason for the success of the frontier thesis was that it made sense to the average citizen and that it elevated the achievement of ordinary settlers.

Turner's rhetoric entered into all aspects of American life. Presidents Franklin Roosevelt, John Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, and George Bush repeatedly used the frontier as an example. No other nation in the world defines the frontier as Americans do. The most prevalent foreign meaning is a border between nations. No other piece of American historical writing has so impacted American historical imagination, celebrated American exceptionalism, stimulated additional western research so thoroughly, initiated a dispute over such a long period of time, or embedded itself so deeply within the American psyche.

The timing of the migratory tidal waves to Texas appears to offer supporting evidence of Turner's safety-valve thesis, as the greatest surge occurred in the wake of the American financial troubles of 1819 and 1837. This concept, that the free lands in the West offered a convenient outlet to the economically depressed of the East, suggests that economic forces pushed pioneers into Texas. However, many historians disagree with Turner's analysis. They suggest that "prosperity stimulated migration; depressions halted the westward-flowing stream." The high cost of transportation, along with the initial expenses of starting a home hindered the movement of those in financial difficulties.[18]

The myth that the early Texans were an exceptional people is a regional variation of the national myth of American exceptionalism. American exceptionalism refers to the controversial theory that the United States holds an extraordinary position amongst the nations of the world due to its national beliefs, historical evolution, political and religious institutions, and unique origins. The core of this belief is that the United States is not just the richest and most powerful nation in the world but that it also is morally and politically exceptional. Ostensibly, Alexis de Tocqueville popularized this term when he noted that the then-fifty-year-old United States was special because it was a country of immigrants and the first modern democracy.[19]

Exceptionalism suggested that America had set out on a unique historical path that avoided the European terrors of authoritarian regimes, class conflict, and mass poverty. Not all historians subscribed to the virtues of exceptionalism, and many were its fiercest critics, but the exceptionalist paradigm did at least frame much historical debate.

John Winthrop was the first to proclaim American exceptionalism in his sermon 'A Modell of Christian Charity' given in 1630 when he claimed "wee shall be as a City upon a Hill."[20] A decade later Peter Bukeley set out Winthrop's plans for the colony in more explicit terms using the vocabulary of exceptionalism:

> "We should in a special manner labor to shine forth in holiness above other people; we have that plenty and abundances of ordinances and means of grace as few people enjoy the like. We are as a city set upon a hill, in the open view of the earth; the eyes of the world are upon us because we profess ourselves to be a people in covenant with God."[21]

Benjamin Franklin also used the language of exceptionalism to describe the infant American republic. Franklin described the characteristics of the model American as industrious, imbued with community spirit, practical and possessing common sense. The *Autobiography* represents Franklin's life as enacting the newly formed myth of individual self-realization in a land of opportunity. Franklin redefined the mythology of exceptionalism, away from religious origins and centering on the creation of a secular state that is purified by the corruption of European politics and a social structure based on inherited title. According to Franklin, it is the secular America that will be the model of democratic government and the envy of the earth.[22]

Abraham Lincoln discussed American exceptionalism in his first major public address in 1838: "All the armies of Europe, Asia, and Africa combined, with all the treasure of the earth (our own excepted) in their military chest; with a Buonaparte for a commander, could not by force, drink from the Ohio, or make a track on the Blue Ridge, in a trial of a thousand years."[23]

Lincoln's point was that no foreign power could seriously threaten the United States as long as the Union stayed intact.

American exceptionalism also has a negative image. It signifies violence, racism, and bigotry. A realistic understanding of American exceptionalism demands a balanced, rational approach. From an objective viewpoint the boasts of American exceptionalism are highly exaggerated as are the negative aspects so often mentioned as American evils. Unfortunately, the zealots dominate and divide the debate, making it difficult to define the complex issue of exceptionalism.

The exceptionalism debate brought about several new trends in historical writing. First was transnational history which looks at the movement of people, ideas, culture, and technologies across national borders. Second is new western history which directly attacks American exceptionalism.

Exceptional can have different meanings and can be subject to linguistic confusion. Exceptional can mean unusually good or being immune to the general laws of history. The common meaning of exceptional is simply "unusual." The United States is noteworthy among major world countries. No matter private attitudes about wars like Vietnam and Iraq, what other country in the world would send its best young people to secure freedom for others? The concept of the United States being an exceptional country is the motivating factor that propels these young male and female warfighters. All societies are exceptional in some fashion—not better or worse, but distinct in their own ways.[24]

Ann Richards, the late Governor of Texas, challenged the notion of western American exceptionalism in the PBS series *The West*. According to Richards, "If you stop and think about the kind of prejudice a lot of people suffered, a lot of destruction that took place as a result of

war and conquering," then Western history "is not such a pretty place." Richards goes on to say that the conquering, the sacrifice, the loss, "the taking away of things that really belong to someone else" are not unique to the West. They make up the history of any place, the world over.[25]

Richards further states that even if we acknowledge conquest and its unpleasant legacies and results, we cannot "take away the spirit and the idealism and the excitement that the people felt that actually did it."[26] Thus, Richards acknowledges the exceptionalism of the western pioneer while at the same time condemning their actions. That is the dichotomy facing "Western" historians. Western history has to reconcile the differences between the new and old ideas.

Most historians now consider the concept of Manifest Destiny to be archaic and racist. Geoffrey Hogsdon in a professional and non-threatening manner debunks most of the myths of exceptionalism and Manifest Destiny, providing many examples. The success of the American Revolution was dubious before events in Europe persuaded the French to enter the war on the side of the American Revolutionaries. Many of the ideas expressed in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are based on those of European intellectuals. The purchase of Louisiana could not have been possible without European strife and politics. In Texas the British played a role in the independence movement when they promised support to the Anglo rebels if they abolished slavery. History is a complex set of intertwined relationships.[27]

Historian Amy Greenburg writes of a feminized Manifest Destiny justifying the right to expel Native American and Hispanic owners from their land.[28] The principle of the racial superiority of the Anglos and the so-called inferiority of mixed races of Latin America evolved into a gendered vision of Mexican expansionism in Texas and Mexico. As historian Frederick Pike states, "Latin Americans, regardless of gender, were stereotyped as feminine and destined

by nature to satisfy Yankee lust."[29] Men were dominant in nineteenth-century Texas, and women had little say in the home or in politics.

Other words have also shaped the debate on Western history. Not many terms in the English language are more expressive and obscure than "frontier." Few can agree on what it was, yet few deny that it existed and that the frontier changed and shaped American history. Some have proposed that frontier means a region of multiple cultural contacts, thus multiple frontiers. This multi-inclusive concept includes gender, race, and a host of other factors. Other historians define frontier as a boundary or point of contact between two or more distinct cultures, rather than a border between civilization and savagery. Some, like Richard Slotkin, a cultural critic and historian who wrote an award-winning trilogy on the myth of the American frontier, have simply reclassified the frontier from fictional history to historiographical myth. Ray Alan Billington, one of the most accomplished and prolific historians of the American West and a major defender of Turner's "Frontier Thesis," describes the frontier as a place and process. His concept of place is a "geographic region" that is unsettled with abundant natural resources and provides exceptional opportunity "for the social and economic betterment to the small-propertied individual." Billington characterizes the frontier process as the "socio-economic-political experiences" of individuals that were "altered by the environment where a small man-land ratio and the presence of untapped natural resources provided an unusual opportunity for individual self-advancement."[30] Still others, seeking to evade the problematic nature of the term, avoid using the word altogether.

Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron have proposed that the term "borderland" supplement frontier histories. They identify a frontier as a meeting place of peoples (in which no single political authority has established hegemony and fixed control over clearly demarcated borders).

They reserve the designation of borderland for the contested boundaries between colonial domains.[31] Equally significant to the history of borderlands and frontiers are the ways in which Native Americans exploited these differences and compelled these shifts. In Adelman and Aron language, then, meetings of peoples created frontiers, meetings of empires created borderlands. Hence, there is Richard White's formulation of the "Middle Ground," defined as the space in which negotiations between parties was characterized by "the willingness of those who created it to justify their own action in terms of what they perceived to be their partner's cultural premises."[32]

Aron introduces the term "confluence" to frontier history. He defines frontier as a "coming together of two or more streams of people." Frontiers within the confluence region generated creative adaptations and constructive accommodations that allowed people to mix and meld more peacefully. At the American confluence, the coming together of rivers and peoples involved both collisions and collusions. The result, in Colin Calloway's phrase, was the emergence of "new worlds for all." Subtler, and sometimes more ephemeral, were the blending of ways and blurring of distinctions that were also the by-product of frontier cohabitation. Such "cultural fusion between native and settler cultures," suggest John Mack Faragher and Robert Hine, was "one of the most notable—and least understood—developments of early American history."[33]

Adelman and Aron state that "frontier may be a word with a past that has become tainted over the years, but it did encompass change over time and space and was inclusive." This was a site where several governmental bodies "converged and competed, and where distinct cultures collided and occasionally coincided." A greater West also functioned for Stephen Aron for whom the mingling of natives and newcomers in cultural and economic exchanges in the trans-

Appalachian West was also part of the "colonization, and capitalist consolidation of the continent which under the republic moved basically from east to west."[34]

Most simply, a "frontier" is a meeting point. Such a vague designation can be applied to almost any place at any time. As such, or as "an intergroup contact situation," a "cultural crossroads," or a zone of interpenetration, frontiers have no spatial or temporal boundaries. These definitions do not define the territorial or chronological reach of particular meeting points. Howard Lamar and Leonard Thompson envision a frontier as a meeting point between peoples of differing ways and from distinct political structures. A frontier opens "when the first representatives of an intrusive society arrive" and enter into sustained contact with the indigenous people; it closes "when a single political authority has established hegemony over the zone."[35]

This simple definition presumes an order and simplicity that the Texas frontier lacked. Lamar and Thompson call Texas a "stalemated" frontier where neither side gained hegemony over the other.[36]

Other models include Elliott West and Alexandra Harmon. West and Harmon both talk about accommodation, acculturation, and the environment where both Anglos and Indians lived together in an ambiguous arrangement. This détente lasted until the arrival of increasingly large numbers of Anglos, destroying many of the earlier links and agreements established between the two groups. These authors do not disparage or fault either group. West and Harmon characterize both Indians and Anglos as people who made choices and paid the consequences. In Texas, the Indians and Anglos did not find accommodation until sixty years of war reduced the Native Americans to old men, women, and children.[37]

In making sense of Texas, it is best to confront the concept of frontier on several levels. The Turner thesis, which has characterized most of the written Texas history, states that the Anglos, who came to the territory in the 1820s (as well as their Mexican hosts and the Germans who began arriving in the 1840s), regarded the region as a wilderness. Every new Anglo settler, every new farm signified the advance of civilization. Even later, once Anglo plantation culture became the Texas norm, the myth of the frontier continued, becoming apparent in almost all the autobiographical sources. In one of his most eloquent expressions, Stephen F. Austin declared, "My object, the sole and only desire of my ambitions since I first saw Texas, was to redeem it from the wilderness—to settle it with an intelligent and interprising people. To make a fortune, a great pecuniary speculation for myself, was and always has been and now, is a secondary consideration for me."[38]

The concept of frontier has also undergone scrutiny and redefinition. It is best understood as a social environment and not a physical or geographical location. As people migrate so do frontiers, regardless of physical surroundings. The frontier represents an interaction between men in areas of low population density where two cultures meet.[39]

A more realistic thesis is that multiple, cultural frontiers defined Texas life. Frontiers, in this context, meant that the many points of contact between cultures marked the boundaries between self and others. The multiple ways of being and doing furnished the tools to forge competing identities through cultural borrowing and improvisation. As an example, many early Texans were completely dependent on Mexicans for food and shelter. Several of the more prominent early Texas frontiersmen married Native Americans and were accepted into the tribal community. Scholars have not yet scrutinized this mosaic of relationships and accommodation.[40]

The lack of agreement on the nomenclature used to describe the history of the American West is insignificant compared to the clash between so-called New West historians and Old West historians. In recent years, the American West has undergone a scholarly reassessment, prompting historians to rethink the concept of both the meaning of the West and what constitutes the frontier. The West has confounded historians for decades. Historians have attached such an abstract meaning to the word that it has become incomprehensible. The West is a movement, a process, a geographic entity—all of these or none of these. The best definition of the West comes from historian Donald Worster, the author of many articles on Western history, who describes the West as the story of men and women, regardless of race or ethnicity, "trying to wrestle a living from a condition of severe natural scarcity and, paradoxically, of trying to survive in the midst of entrenched wealth."[41]

New West historian Clyde Milner states, "No one monument and no single theory can either eradicate or explain the history of the West." The "West" is an amorphous term that is undergoing change, attack, and redefinition by western scholars. The American West, its context and connection, remains not only exciting but also perplexing and challenging to interpret. The many American "Wests" have caused generations of scholars to argue about what and where the "West" is. The Texas West is different from the Kentucky or Colorado West. Texas was a Mexican province already populated by a sizable number of Spanish-speaking people. It also served as a refuge for many Native American tribes, some of whom lived in the region for centuries and others forced from their ancestral homes by U.S. government policies. The Texas "West" included the empresario system, Mexican rulers, the war with Mexico, the Alamo, the founding of a new republic, and the Native American tribes like the Apaches and Comanches.

What made the Texas West distinctive was a series of relationships established within that region which inevitably changed over time.[42]

Many saw the development of Texas as "a chapter in the Westward Movement of the Anglo-American people."[43] As more Americans moved into Mexican Texas, they became, according to Walter Prescott Webb, a twentieth-century American historian and author noted for his groundbreaking historical work on the American West, "the outriders of the American frontier . . . the center of three conflicting civilizations—that of the Mexicans, that of the Texans, and that of the Plains Indians. The potential conflict soon became a real one."[44]

Not all old West historians fell into step behind Turner's thesis. Francis S. Philbrick, the author of *The Rise of the West, 1754-1830,* envisioned the Western frontier as a region of perpetual optimism and individualism where the lenient forms of social control allowed for easier movement up the socio-economic ladder. He questioned the implication that American democracy came out of the forest and gained new strength with each new frontier. In place of Turner's romantic simplicity, Philbrick substitutes a life of hard and dreary work, great isolation, and limited resources. To Philbrick, the formation of the American character took place on the Atlantic coast, not west of the Appalachians, as a result of events surrounding the American Revolution.[45]

In the 1980s a new generation of Western historians began to advocate a "New Western History," questioning nearly every aspect of the Turner thesis. The four pioneers in the field—Patricia Limerick, William Cronon, Donald Worster, and Richard White—explicitly linked the new history to present-day concerns. What Turner viewed as settlement, New West Historians saw as conquest. Instead of a vast howling wilderness, they saw a land occupied by indigenous peoples with distinctive cultures and societies. Where Turner saw determined, self-reliant

pioneers, they saw profit-driven entrepreneurs closely connected to capitalism and energized to become rich regardless of the consequences. Turner described a disdain for big government; they saw a close relationship between government and business. Instead of viewing western history as a march of civilization and a string of successes, New West historians saw the genocide of Native Americans, the theft of Mexican territory, the defilement of the environment, all perpetuated by racist, sexist white men.[46]

New West Historians, enjoying their interpretive peak in the 1990s, indulged in self-congratulation for rising above the concept of successive frontiers to embrace the interpretive study of a definable region. However, they left unexplained what they actually meant. They viewed the West as a distinctive place, rather than a set of distinct places held together by a number of shared characteristics. This uncertainty by New West historians made it convenient to leave out any area that did not fit their interests or expertise.[47] The reassessment of the West, with notable recent exceptions, has mostly ignored Texas because it did not easily fall within their guidelines. Due to its advocacy of slavery and participation in the Confederacy, these historians dismissed Texas as part of the South rather than an integral element of Western history, ignoring Anglo migration, Indian fighting, cattle drives, pioneer women, Tejano influences, etc.[48]

Recent Western historians appear to be neither apologists for the Turner frontier history nor proponents of the New Western history. Some western historians, such as Richard Etulain, emphasize the complexity of the American West.[49] Others, like Stephen Aron, have developed new models of Western history that include Native Americans, Mexicans, and Anglos that neither demean nor exhort the actions of any group.[50]

Western history is undergoing a renaissance. After the wholesale disparaging of Turner, New West historians are finding themselves under assault. Out of this debate is emerging a modified new western history that includes elements of both the Turner thesis and the New West model. Historians such as Stephen Aron, Elliot West, and Juliana Barr are setting the foundation for a new western historiography that includes race relations, cultural identity, gender roles, exceptionalism, nationalism, environmental changes, the impact of social, political, and economic forces, and the transformation of a frontier society to a bordered nation.

The emergence of New Western History has served to refashion and redefine debate about the region and its links to peoples and cultures. Discussions of western history framed in a multicultural society have offered a much more negative outlook than earlier interpretations.[51] The process of conquest, colonization, and consolidation overlapped; they did not unfold in an orderly parade. Nor was the ejection of Indian peoples, the resettlement of expropriated land, and the construction of a new political and economic order a cause for uncritical celebration. In recent years historians have recast Turner's progressive procession as a gloomy litany of peoples dislodged, cultures eradicated, lands despoiled, and dreams destroyed.

The study of borderlands has emerged as a major area of interest by historians who are finding that the interactions in the borderlands are an essential element in understanding western history. In Texas the Spanish Borderland did not conform to the old Turner idea of the frontier as a "meeting point between savagery and civilization."[52] The frontier was neither a line nor a barrier, nor some sort of dualistic barrier between Europeans and Indians or between the forces of darkness and light. The Spanish Borderland frontier was a complex zone of cultural, social, economic, genetic, military, political, religious, and linguistic interdependence among Anglos, Spanish, Mexicans, and Native Americans. "Marginals," those who did not fit well into any

formal societal classification, populated this zone of acculturation, resulting in constant friction in the Texas borderlands.[53]

The boundaries that divided Indians, Tejanos, and Anglos in early Texas were porous; the frontier operated as a sponge as often as a fence, soaking up rather than separating people and influences. Some Indians and Tejanos crossed over to live in each other's world, and some became bona fide members of the other's society. Jim Bowie, the noted knife fighter and notorious land speculator who died at the Alamo, became disillusioned with the Anglo world and married a Spanish woman, finding peace in the Spanish community in San Antonio rather than in his native Anglo heritage. These people ventured across cultural boundaries and made new lives for themselves; others were coerced and revolted against it, adjusting after a period of time; and still others returned with changed outlooks, new skills, and human contacts which made them valuable intermediaries between Anglo, Indian, and Tejano societies. Interaction in frontier zones served to connect and unite people as well as to divide and alienate them. Andrés Reséndez argues that between 1800 and 1850, these exchanges provided economic, social, spiritual, and sexual opportunities that created new networks of kinship, affection, and financial and other interests.[54]

Reséndez provides a narrative of the complexity of Anglo-Mexican relations. Disdaining the reliance on Manifest Destiny to explain United States expansion to the West and the eventual annexation of Mexico's Far Northern provinces, he sees the American market economy as the catalyst to revolution: "Rather than a simple story of Anglo-American pioneers bent on aggrandizement and backed by their scheming government, I hope to contribute to the telling of a subtler tale in which all frontier inhabitants participated actively and deeply in human ways that did not necessarily conform to implacable national or ethnic lines." He argues that state and

market forces did not act in concert, resulting in the disagreement which led to the Texas Revolution.[55]

Reséndez is averse to portraying American expansion as simply Manifest Destiny manipulated by politicians or even the pioneers themselves. The American market became the dominant factor as people throughout the Far Northern Mexican provinces became more dependent on the United States. The people living on the frontier were far more interested in their personal interests than in any grand nationalistic design.

This interaction in Texas occurred over a full century. The early Anglos generally treated the Tejanos with disdain, even forcing many to leave the land of their birth after the Texas Revolution and attempting to exterminate the Native American population. Anglos, Indians, and Tejanos collided in open and fierce competition, but they eventually forged new avenues of cooperation and an unsettled coexistence that cut across ethnic boundaries. In Texas, this new social order did not begin to emerge until late in the nineteenth century.[56]

This study argues that Anglos had multiple or shifting identities. They often referred to their Anglo-Saxon origins and brought with them their unique ideas of self-government and republicanism. They were living in a Mexican province and thus had to abide by Mexican rules and regulations, but their overriding, guiding principle was neither Mexican nor American but their personal interests, welfare, and fortune.

Much of the Spanish borderland history has failed to incorporate the region's history into that of the United States. Borderland historians have focused on themes that make integration difficult. As an example, their emphasis on the Spanish Empire and its political concerns has resulted in neglect of the socioeconomic development of regions and communities. Thus, the factors behind migration and the daily lives of settlers and their emerging communities escaped

the historian's research. Borderland historians have generally not presented an inclusive picture of life and culture and how each group mingled, borrowed, and accommodated, and the society that grew from this interaction. That unintended result explains the dearth of research on colonial Texas and post-colonial northern Mexico.[57]

Texas borderland historians generally emphasized the early settlers as "heroic" and emphasized the weakness of Texas Spanish institutions. Odie Faulk, who wrote extensively of the Spanish era, condemned Spain's attempt to colonize Texas. He concluded, "Nor did the civil settlements work as planned, since only a few scattered towns" appeared on the frontier. Faulk felt that the marginal control of Texas by Spain and Mexico legitimized the Texas Revolution.[58]

In the past, Texas borderland historians did effectively challenge the fundamental assumption that Spain did not establish viable and enduring communities whose contributions outlasted the colonial and Mexican period. Most of their research supported the long-standing concept that Spain's impact was insignificant because its institutions could not stand against the westward movement of the United States.

New work examining the growth of communities, their social structure, their development, and their economies indicates that the Spanish crown exerted limited authority in pre-Anglo Texas. Armando C. Alonzo chronicled communities of Tejano ranchers and settlers in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, describing how they devised individual strategies for survival and security based on local considerations and did not depend upon external assistance.[59]

The commercial relationship between Texas and Louisiana is currently under closer scrutiny. The Spanish trade policies limited the market ports of entry, thus making contraband an essential part of everyday life. European goods were allowed entry only into Vera Cruz, Mexico City, and Saltillo, resulting in extensive trading with French and European smugglers.

Although the extent of commercial interaction between Texas and Louisiana is not yet clear, its existence is irrefutable.[60]

An unexplored but significant topic in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century colonial Texas is agricultural development. Some studies have implied that agriculture did not prosper because the Tejanos were lazy or because the lack of capital prevented any investment in farming. These explanations are ridiculous because they do not consider regional dynamics. The civilian population lacked markets or had to compete with the missions or presidios to sell produce to the only available market, the army. The scarcity of labor and Indian attacks also prevented large produce production. The significant cost of irrigation systems and little farming technology in an arid environment also impeded agricultural growth. These are some of the reasons that the Texas population numbered only about four thousand at the end of the eighteenth century.[61]

Adelman and Aron describe a frustrated Spain implementing one borderland policy after another to maintain Texas as a province. First, it established missions and presidios in an attempt to pacify the Native Americans. Later its policy became comparable to the French and English tactics of signing treaties. This eventually proved unsuccessful because the basis of these alliances depended upon the exchange of goods, and the Spanish were never successful in building commerce in the province. Indians displaced from their territorial homelands complemented competition from the French and British. Events in Europe increased Spain's problems in Texas, forcing them to completely abandon all pretense of pacification and depend entirely on borderland accommodation. Faced with Indians who were determined to defend what little dignity and independence they still had and an expansionist United States, the Spanish (and Mexicans) had little choice but to open their northern province to Anglo settlers.[62]

When Spain allowed Anglos to settle in their northern province, the Texas exceptionalist myth sprouted. This dissertation argues that the first Anglo settlers to Texas actually were little different than other settlers who moved to the West throughout the nineteenth century. They were ambitions, aggressive, and determined, and their primary motivation was the opportunity for land ownership, as well as the prospect of beginning a new life in an unstructured environment. However, the fantastic good fortune of the Texas Independence movement, the richness of the land, the geography, the eccentric leaders, and the Texas Republic birthed a highly nationalistic people cloaked in legend and myth. The Texas fable remains central to the Texas psyche.

A history of early Texas with all its defects and triumphs is vitally important in today's multicultural society. A Texas that continues to omit and obfuscate the facts of its beginnings diminishes the role of the first Anglo settlers and characterizes the Hispanic Texan as a member of a blemished and defeated people. As a young generation of Texans searches for its cultural and historical roots, it is vitally important to cast aside myths and recognize the early settlers for their accomplishments as well as their failures.

Texas does not fit easily into Western historiography. Prior to the influx of settlers, the Indians reigned supreme. The Spanish mission effort of acculturation and assimilation yielded few results. The Spanish in Texas may have claimed the land, but the Indians dominated it. There was no invasion or conquest. Richard White's "Middle Ground" evolved differently in Texas. The western model that puts Indians on the defensive and Europeans on the offense was not true until the middle to late nineteenth century when the Americans made a determined effort to exterminate the Native Americans.

To date, much of Texas historiography extols the virtues of the early Texas settler. There is not an all-encompassing Texas history monograph. Although much has been written, historians find it difficult to get past the Texas legend. Published Texas history is vague, ethnocentric, and inaccurate. A realistic account of the early Texans has eluded historians. Recent historians have moved beyond the Texas myth, but much of their work is narrowly focused. Historian Gary Clayton Anderson states that the contemporary work on Texas history has focused on ethnic groups that are peripheral to the central story.[63]

There is a basic problem in all early Texas history. Identifying the first Anglos is a question that still leaves historians somewhat confused. Historian Mark E. Nackman contends that during the Mexican period the Anglo-Americans who lived in Texas were neither Mexicans nor Americans.[64] James E. Crisp argues in his dissertation that they were both Americans and Mexicans.[65] Carol Lea Clark states it very differently: "Anglo-American Texans had a different rhetorical identity, they were ex-Americans but they were also something else. They were not sure what, but they could define what it was not—Mexican, Indian, or even 'ordinary' Americans."[66]

Although much has been written on Texas history, no historian has completed a comprehensive study of the special character and development of Texas historiography. The historiography is much like the state, with little direction or agreement. Some of the themes that complicate Texas historiography include the failure of Spain to make any progress in developing Texas, the Native Americans, the competition among European empires, the suspicion by Spain of France and the United States, the democratic and aggressive nature of the early Anglo-American settlers, the tyranny and instability of the Mexican government, the role of Stephen F.

Austin, and the transformation of Texas from a "wilderness" to an independent republic. The role of land and land speculation remained superficial to Texas historiography.

Many of the primary early Texas sources come from three groups. First are the reports of official or semi-official governmental representatives—soldiers, Spanish diplomats, and Catholic priests. The Spanish were prolific record keepers and portray a picture of desperation in their efforts to colonize Texas in the face of an ambivalent government. These writings are often reliable even though they are bureaucratic and official in nature. The second group, containing the free-spiritedness lacking in the official chronicles, include the private journals, letters, and diaries, usually intensely personal but incomplete and primarily written by women. The mass of Texas literature falls into the final category—material written for publication by an author to draw settlers to Texas or to warn prospective immigrants of the dangers inherent in the Texas wilderness. Each account reflects the viewpoints and special interests of the author.

Promotion rather than history accurately describes the first Texas histories. Patriotic emphasis and provincial orientation characterized such histories. A typical example was a history textbook prepared by a fifth-grade teacher, Anna J. Pennybacker, in 1899. In the preface she asserted that "there is no other state in the Union whose history presents such varied and romantic scenes as does that of Texas. Every school in the state should give Texas History a place in the course of study. No occasion should be lost to cultivate true patriotism."[67]

The first Texas historians wrote for a variety of reasons, but practically all had a personal motive. Mary Austin Holley wrote to assist her cousin Stephen F. Austin and had a financial stake in the increasing value of land in the colony. Other early Texas historians such as David B. Edwards and N. Doran Maillard were blatantly anti-Texan because they had connections with the Mexican interests in the province.[68]

Authors liberally mixed travel narrative and advertising with history to create a commercial in historical disguise. However, they answered the demand for information on Texas that likely immigrants were asking. These early histories were simply descriptions of trade, agriculture, wild animals, climate, soil, minerals, and employment opportunities, offering advice to immigrants about what to expect upon reaching Texas. Travelers through Texas such as Amos Parker often published accounts of their journeys. Agents for empresarios or individuals possessing an economic stake in continued immigration into Texas, like Mary Austin Holley, described the climate, flora, fauna, economic opportunities, and necessary items required to start a household and farm. Parker advised bringing enough bread to last six months due to the unavailability of wheat although meat was readily accessible; he also noted that cattle and horses from the northern climates did not transition well to the searing heat of Texas. Holley counseled prospective settlers to ensure they had the necessary agricultural tools such as plows, hoes, axes, scythes, saws, and augurs as well as strong cartwheels due to the limited manufacturing capability in Texas. She encouraged the introduction of seeds of all kinds, especially fruit and grasses, because of the scarcity of wheat, rye, barley, and buckwheat. The authors warned that life was difficult and tough and that the lazy would be disappointed, but their wondrous descriptions of Texas overshadowed any warnings. T. William Kennedy wrote of "the rich and magnificent prairie . . . clear atmosphere, invigorating breezes" and "sparkling waters."[69] The impression is of a fertile and prosperous land favorable to immigrants. Anglo pioneer memory is selective in its interpretation of facts and history. A variation of the Anglo myth ascribed in the Texas legend is the depiction of Texas as unoccupied or vacant or a "no-man's land" before the arrival of the Anglos who built a civilization where none existed before. Many Texas historians have built the theme of Anglo success or superiority as a logical

progression of the myth of the "no-man's land." Grounded in their ideas of settlement, progress, and race, the Anglo interpretation of history minimizes the contributions of Tejanos and Mexicans in the development of the state.

All of the diarists, speculators, and amateur historians writing about Texas in the early years of the nineteenth century had a practical motivation for writing about Texas. They took advantage of the keen public interest in Texas to generate income for themselves or to promote a political agenda. Few were concerned with the truth; their works were a combination of passion and rationale. Interestingly, some made heroes of Houston and the Alamo defenders while others vilified Texans in general and the revolutionists in particular. They perpetuated one myth, however. The untamed wilderness represented humanity's opportunity for a second Eden.[70]

In the 1840s, the first Texas historians formalized the Texas legend. The myth became a reality to the first chroniclers of Texas history. Andrew Jackson Houston, one of the first serious Texas historians, described the early Anglo settlers in glowing terms: "The North Americans are the only people who, in defiance of all obstacles, have struck the roots of civilization deep into the soil of Texas . . . they are indeed organizers conquerors of the wild."[71]

Mirabeau B. Lamar, the president of Texas from 1838 to 1841, was a proponent of writing a history of Texas and amassed a wealth of primary documentation.[72] Due to time constraints, he could not write the history himself. His goal was to portray Texas in positive terms that would enhance the efforts to obtain diplomatic relations for the republic. His search identified two likely prospects to complete the project: T. William Kennedy, an English diplomat, and Henry Stuart Foote, a Mississippi writer and politician.[73]

Kennedy's interest in Texas focused on how such a small number of untrained volunteers were able to defeat a professional army. Texas was not the first time ill-trained Americans

defeated professional armies. The English army, considered the best in the world, suffered defeat to the Americans twice in the previous fifty years. Kennedy wrote, "I clearly do not understand how the settlers in Texas were enabled to repel the armies of Mexico and to found a Republic of their own."[74]

In a period of time when books influenced much of the nation's thinking, Kennedy wrote the most thorough account of Texas history up to that time. Its influence was profound and was a major factor in England's decision to recognize Texas' independence in 1841. He wrote that the Americans who participated in the Gutiérrez-Magee expedition were "in the season of youthful daring," motivated by adventure, not ideology. Kennedy further suggests that Crockett, Travis, Bowie, and the other Alamo defenders were so enamored of the romantic idea of dying for a cause that they participated in a forlorn battle and actually died for fame, leaving them no other recourse.[75]

At the same time that he was communicating with Kennedy, Lamar contacted Henry Stuart Foote, a member of the Mississippi House of Representatives. Foote viewed Texas history as a morality tale, the revolution caused not by cultural differences but by moral ones. Foote played quite free with the facts, describing all Texans as flawless heroes and all Mexicans as "vulgar tyrants" and "demonical" advocates. He considered the Texans at the Alamo and Goliad heroes. He portrayed Travis, Branch T. Archer, President of the 1835 Consultation and later official envoy to the United States, and Ben Milam, killed by Mexicans at Béxar in December 1835, as great men. He reserved his criticism for Sam Houston who ridiculed Foote's book. Houston referred to Foote's book, first published in 1841, as "the Foot history" because it would be "more footed than eyed."[76]

A third history of Texas appeared in 1841, written by A. B. Lawrence, a Presbyterian minister. Lawrence viewed Texas history as a moral lesson: the triumph of good over evil. He proclaimed, "High principles of religious and political freedom, ardent patriotism, generous devotedness to the cause of regulated liberty and lofty heroism marked the leaders in the great struggle for Texian independence." He further compared the war in Texas to the Protestant Reformation, freeing the world from the tyranny of the Catholic Church: "Mexico herself will in the event appear to be but a suburb of the extended territory to be pervaded by the conquering power of the gospel of Jesus . . . the beginning of the downfall of the Antichrist."[77]

Early Anglo historians purposefully wanted to depict Spain as contributing little to the state's enduring history. In one popular history of the State, *Lone Star*, T. R. Fehrenbach states, "The first successful Hispanic colonization of Texas was not to come until much later, the twentieth century."[78] Historians dismissed Spain's centuries in the state as unworthy and inconsequential of study except, as Henderson P. Yoakum noted, to demonstrate how the Anglo-Americans rescued the area from the "ignorance and despotism" that "hung like a cloud over her noble and luxuriant borders." All of this contributed to the popular conviction that the Spanish colonial system was backward, illogical, and substandard to the advanced Anglo-American model.[79]

Denunciation of the Mexicans filled early Texas histories. Foote remarked that "the rapid progress of moral degeneracy among them: their vulgar and low-minded admiration of profligate and illiterate military chieftains, the disposition already evinced by most of the leading men of Mexico to break down state authority and limit freedom—all these were symptoms of a boding tempest."[80] Others thought that Spanish rule ruined any chance for the Mexican state to govern

itself. Kennedy wrote, "It was equally futile to expect the practical development of an enlightened polity from a long-oppressed, demoralized, and uninstructed people."[81]

In the late 1840s, General Vicente Filisola, Santa Anna's second-in-command, published an account of the Mexican campaign in Texas. His book reflected not only personal observation but also references to earlier histories and original documents published in Texas. Filisola claimed that the United States schemed to obtain Texas from 1803 onward and that greed motivated many North Americans who came to Texas. The Spanish abandonment of the mission/presidio system opened Texas to foreign adventurers. Filisola was highly complementary of Stephen F. Austin for his ability to maintain and grow his colony against nature and the raids of hostile Indians.[82]

Filisola expressed amazement that Austin cast his fortunes with the Texas revolutionaries, noting that Austin's dreams were "snatched from him later by the new wave of adventurers and criminals who came in . . . and these people took over his lands." The General could not understand why the Anglo Texas citizens could not just obey the law. As a soldier, Filisola put duty and obedience over liberty.[83]

Ultimately, Filisola concluded that, regardless of the immorality or fault of the North Americans, the loss of Texas was due to Mexico's mistakes: "Our blindness has been such that we have given away the lands of a paradise, we have granted them without stipend or any sort of advantage to our enemies . . . right now we are receiving punishment that our lack of foresight has deserved."[84]

Stephen F. Austin was a prolific writer and his papers provide a clear picture of early Texas history. Eugene Barker edited the Austin letters into a four-volume set in the 1920s. Composed primarily of the collected personal and official records of Moses Austin and Stephen

F. Austin, *The Austin Papers* document the empresario period in Texas history, the increased Anglo colonization, the strained relations with the Mexican government, the Texas Revolution, and eventually the founding of the Republic of Texas. The compilation includes letters and official documents from Austin, Mexican government officials, and other colonists and empresarios. *The Austin Papers* comprise the most significant contribution yet made concerning the social, political, and economic history of the early Texas settlers.

John Holmes Jenkins edited the ten-volume *Papers of the Texas Revolution*, a massive collection of primary source letters and documents enumerating the events surrounding the Texas Revolution for the period between January 1, 1835, and Sam Houston's inauguration as president of the Republic of Texas on October 22, 1836. This source is invaluable to any scholar studying the Independence movement.

An excellent addition to the study of the empresario period is Malcolm McLean's eighteen-volume set, *Papers Concerning Robertson's Colony in Texas*. McLean was a University of Texas professor and served as director of the Robertson Colony Collection, archived at The University of Texas at Arlington Library. The publication focused on the struggle to colonize the upper part of the Brazos River, home to some of the fiercest Indians in Texas, and an equally debilitating rivalry between several empresarios including Austin and Sterling C. Robertson. The problem with the *Papers* is that so many documents of varying degrees of importance were included that the work is excessively lengthy.[85]

Historians found the Texas martial spirit within true Anglo-Saxon tradition. Andrew Jackson Houston, the son of Sam Houston, noted that the true revolutionary spirit could overcome all hardships and "teach the Tyrant of Mexico . . . that the sons of the Brave Patriots of 76 are invincible in the cause of freedom and the rights of man."[86] The comparison of the

American Revolution and the Texas Revolution was a recurring theme, both before and after the Revolution. The *Telegraph and Times Register* claimed that "the history of the United States furnished abundant lessons" that pertained to the Texas crisis. Interim President David G. Burnet at his inauguration implied that the success of the Texas revolution was due to "the rectitude of our cause and [the] indestructible inheritance of gallantry which we derive from the illustrious conquerors of 1776."[87]

The genre for romantic Texas history reached a more sophisticated form in the person of Texas's first major native historian, Henderson K. Yoakum. In 1855, he published a *History of Texas* which was, for fifty years, the definitive Texas history. He used primary sources, and his work was scholarly in nature. However, he continued the characterization of the Spanish as "despotic, fanatic, and ignorant." Yoakum described the Anglo filibusters as republicans and the victory at San Jacinto as guided by Providence. He was no more able than his predecessors to resist playing on the myth of Texas history.[88]

Yoakum brought his democratic ideology to the writing of his book. He not only wished to be meticulous, accurate, and inclusive but also desired to instruct his readers in the principles of virtue, patriotism, and morality. Like other writers of his time, he regarded the period before the Anglo advance into Texas as the dark ages of Texas history, when "Ignorance and despotism . . . hung like a dark cloud over [Texas'] noble forests and luxuriant pastures." He argued that the spirit of liberty set free by the American Revolution expelled the dark cloud of Mexican oppression. According to Yoakum, the struggle between the forces of freedom and despotism—Texas and Mexico—resulted in the overwhelming victory at San Jacinto that was "physically and morally complete," for "Providence seemed in every way to favor the result."[89]

In the late 1880s, Hubert Howe Bancroft published his *History of the North Mexican States and Texas*. Bancroft's concept of history was to write about facts clearly and succinctly and let the reader draw their own conclusion. Bancroft attempted for the first time to bring order and coherence to the Texas past. However, he continued the tradition of chronicling Anglo-Saxon progress.[90]

Frederick L. Paxson, one of the first prominent frontier historians and winner of the 1925 Pulitzer Prize, remarked in 1924 that Hubert Eugene Bolton and Eugene Campbell Barker created a distinctive school of Southwestern historians. Bolton was a graduate student under Frederick Jackson Turner. He taught at The University of Texas, concentrating on Southwest history. Bolton created the historiographical concept of the Southwest Borderlands. He viewed this process as the convergence of Anglo-Americans and Spanish Americans in what are now Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and southern California.[91] Anthony M. Stevens–Arroyo highly complimented Bolton, stating that he developed a concept of borderlands that refuted much of Turner's frontier thesis. Bolton did not consider the borderlands to be the scene of Anglo triumph but as a "stewpot" where each element flavored the other.[92]

Texas history has been greatly influenced by Eugene C. Barker who wrote a masterpiece on the life of Stephen F. Austin and edited *The Austin Papers* and the eight-volume set, *The Writings of Sam Houston*. *The Life of Stephen F. Austin* was first published in 1925 and is still considered the finest scholarship on any Texas history subject. Barker was a follower of Frederick Jackson Turner, and his study of Austin follows the Frontier Thesis. Austin and his colonists exemplified the "democracy loving individualists who tamed the frontier and brought American values and institutions to it." Barker is the historian responsible for the Texas legend. His writings came soon after the presentation of Turner's Frontier Thesis. Barker wrote that the

history of Texas was primarily the story of pioneer farmers who followed the fur traders into the trans-Mississippi West. He believed that the emblematic frontiersman—self-reliant, democratic, and restless—accomplished the progressive development of Texas.[93]

In the last eighty years, scholars of the Texas empresario period have performed their research and formulated their historical analysis in the shadow of Barker, one of the giants of southwestern historiography. His research and writings centered on the most significant individual of the era, Stephen F. Austin, in a biography that remains the major work of the so-called "Father of Texas." Barker's effort changed interpretations of the era, placing Austin, who was in the process of being forgotten, back into the center. Austin became the rational statesman in a heroic era, and the history of Texas became the story of his colony. Barker's two principal contributions—gathering and editing the vast majority of Austin's papers and writing a readable, accurate narrative of the central figure in Texas history—are vital to the study of Texas history.[94]

Barker's dominance of Texas history had a negative effect also. His productivity and influence was so pervasive that many felt there was no need to continue the study of Texas history. The common assumption that the history of Texas was essentially Austin's history appears to have contributed to the neglect of the study of Tejanos, women, and the colonists themselves. Barker's success effectively discouraged other scholarship.

In the past forty years, Texas history has undergone a renaissance, but much of the work is limited to specific topics such as borderlands, Tejanos, Native Americans, the Alamo, and culture. These works hint that the Texas myth lacks credibility but never actually address the central issue, the early settlers.

In *The Conquest of Texas*, Gary Clayton Anderson provides a different scenario of Texas Indians than is commonly portrayed. His research describes an Indian population that Stephen F.

Austin and his settlers eradicated in order to gain Native American lands. Anderson claims that the settlers' desire for additional land launched a savage war between the Anglos and Indians that lasted until the late 1870s. Anderson's book to some degree is problematic because it does not address both sides of the issue.[95]

Several modern historians have delved into specific themes in early Texas. Paul D. Lack, author of *The Texas Revolutionary Experience: A Political and Social History, 1835-1836*, advanced the concept that the proper methodology for studying the Texas Revolution is as a political and social history. He believed that the Texans entered the revolution as a divided people, lacking a clear consensus over the Mexican political changes. The war stimulated other divisions: slavery, the volunteer army versus those who avoided military service, the dislocation of the Runaway Scrape, and the grief of those who lost loved ones in battle. This cauldron defined the future Texas identity.[96]

Mark Nackman attempts to explain Texas nationalism in *A Nation within a Nation*. His thesis is that Texans living on the frontier experienced conflicts with Mexicans that gave them a sense of independence different from the rest of the country. The new republic attracted a class of adventurers, outlaws, and rogues which gave it a reason for social instability. Nackman further maintains that pride in Texas nationhood became a powerful force despite the fact that the new nation was practically a failure in every endeavor—financially, politically, and militarily. The intense desire of most Texians to become a state stands in contrast to Nackman's analysis. His primary focus is the Texas Republic and not the empresario era.

Probably the best social history of Texas is William Hogan's *The Texas Republic: A Social and Economic History.* Hogan's thesis is that Texas independence set it apart from other areas and that Texans' individualism created a new republic. Hogan agrees that individualism

was a characteristic of most settlers who migrated west, but it flourished in Texas in a mutant fashion and marked Texans as unique people. Hogan makes no comparison with other settlers throughout the West; thus, it is difficult to view early Texans as unusual.

Samuel Lowrie's *Culture Conflict in Texas* gained a degree of notoriety, but it contributed little to the work already performed by Barker. The title is deceptive because Lowrie concluded that the "opposing habits and tradition" of Anglos and Mexicans caused the Texas Revolution. He then explains that the two groups had little social contact, but their leaders frequently cooperated on items of mutual benefit. The book does not resolve the question as to whether or not there was a culture conflict in Texas. Lowrie proposes that alleged religious bigotry by Mexico contributed to the rebellion but also states that there was a shortage of priests and that Mexico barely enforced its anti-Protestant laws. His work emphasizes the point that Anglo-Tejano relations during the empresario period needs further study.[97]

The continual retelling of the Alamo, whether by historians or other expressions of popular culture, has attracted more attention than the rest of the Revolution combined. Don Graham in the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* observed that "in the final analysis the story of the Revolution is the story of the Alamo."[98] The Alamo story has been repeated so often that it has become a symbol of popular culture. The most widely read Alamo book is Walter Lord's *A Time to Stand*. The book is based on the pioneering work of Amelia Williams who wrote his dissertation on the Alamo defenders.[99] Numerous historians in the 1980s, after the publication of John Jenkins' *The Papers of the Texas Revolution*, attempted to portray a revisionist version of the Alamo. Several succeeded in some original scholarship, but the Texas Revolution was still portrayed as a battle between good and evil.

There is no lack of books on the Battle of the Alamo. The latest published in April 2010 (*Exodus from the Alamo*) vehemently attacks the last-stand myth. In it, Phillip Thomas Tucker contends that the entire Texas fight for independence was really a fight to continue slavery. His version of the actual Alamo battle has the vast majority of the Alamo defenders dying while attempting to escape the mission in the heat of battle. Throughout the book he exalts the courage and fortitude of the Mexican soldiers while giving faint praise to the Anglos. Tucker claims a number of new Mexican sources, but a review of the bibliography does not substantiate his boast. Tucker's analysis does little to undercut the foundation of the last-stand myth.[100]

Modern Alamo histories provide entertaining reading but little fresh insight into the battle, and many use the same sources. Jeff Long in *Duel of Eagles* describes the Anglo Texans as rebels, traitors, drunkards, and egomaniacal mercenaries. This description summarizes the entire book as he used only sources critical of the Texans. It is not a balanced work on the Revolution or its participants. Stephen Hardin's *Texian Iliad: A Military History of the Texas Revolution* is a much more evenhanded narrative of the Texas Revolution and has become a standard reference for the military aspects on the insurrection. The book, however, does little to mitigate the legacy of the great myth. The best Alamo resource is the *Alamo Reader*, edited by Todd Hansen, which contains over 300 original documents, from letters written during the days leading up to the siege to reminiscences written decades later. Hansen's commentaries display an incredible amount of research. Hansen supplies the raw material entirely footnoted so that historians can reach their own conclusions about many controversial issues.[101]

San Jacinto and Goliad receive scant attention from historians. James Pohl wrote *The Battle of San Jacinto*, but it is simply a military account of the battle. Frank Stout authored

Slaughter at Goliad. Both works offer no new perspectives and are based to a large degree on secondary sources.

Emerging interest in the Mexican Texans (Tejanos) became serious in the 1970s, but it emphasized the differences in culture rather than offering any new approach to the Texas Revolution. Arnold De León and David Weber emphasized Anglo racism as the principal factor leading to the Revolution. A major challenge to the "clash of cultures" theory came in the unpublished dissertation of James Crisp. Crisp asserted that Anglos expressed sympathy for Mexicans who were subjected to Spanish tyranny. The similarities between English-American and Spanish-American independence movements mitigated ethnic animosity. He contended that it was only during and after the revolution that racism became prevalent.[102]

Mexican scholars have not as yet produced a full-scale analysis of the Texas issue, but several new perspectives and sources have emerged from Mexico in recent years. Ohland Morton's *Terán and Texas* remains the best researched and most balanced study of Mexican policy toward Texas in the years leading up to the Texas Revolution. Morton shows how a liberal, humane, and competent Mexican official sought to devise and implement reforms particularly to control Anglo immigration and to promote settlement from Europe and Mexico. Morton describes how well-intentioned policies came apart as a result of political instability and inadequate resources.

A number of excellent scholarly works on Tejano history have informed, challenged, and complicated the history of early Texas. Andréas Tijerina, Armando Alonzo, and David Montejano focus on Tejano culture and community, the competing pressures Tejanos faced while Texas was a Mexican province, and the effect of Anglo migration. Timothy Matovina researched Tejano accounts of the battle at the Alamo and the stress placed upon them by both

the Mexican Army and the Texas revolutionaries. Gerald Poyo traces the growth of Tejano communities from the late eighteenth century until 1850.[103] This increased attention requires a different understanding and interpretation of the role of Anglo immigrants and their relationship to other cultures, peoples, and societies in Texas.[104]

The years 1835-36 have received little attention from the perspective of the Mexicans. The most significant publications are based upon primary sources such as Carlos E. Casteñeda's translation of the memoirs of several leading Mexican figures in *The Mexican Side of the Texas Revolution* and Carmen Perry's edition of the startling diary of José Enrique de la Peña.

The Mexican Side of the Texas Revolution reveals, according to Casteñeda, "that the traditional sins of Mexico, dissension and personal envy, were more deadly to the Mexican army than the Texan bullets."[105] These documents identify Mexico's fear of the expansionist United States, especially after the acquisition of Louisiana and Florida. The Mexicans felt they had no choice but to confront the Anglo Texans to halt further American growth.

José Enrique de la Peña was a Lieutenant Colonel in Santa Anna's army in the 1836 Texas campaign. A perceptive observer of events, he kept a running journal of the campaign and, in appendices to his journal (*With Santa Anna in Texas*), passed judgment on the operation and his fellow officers. Carmen Perry's translation of the journal reveals a story that is inconsistent with the traditional accounts of the Alamo battle. Peña's journal also contradicts other Mexican eyewitnesses to the battle. The mystery as to what actually happened at the Alamo remains shrouded in legend.[106]

The growth and popularity of borderland history contributed to understanding the cultural tensions in early Texas. Despite contributions from recent scholars, Eugene Barker's *Mexico and Texas, 1821-1835* remains one of the most important interpretations on the background of

the Texas Revolution. Barker believed the Revolution resulted from the racial inheritances of two peoples who joined in an awkward political union. The emphasis on race, described more gently as a culture conflict by other scholars, became the single most important factor in explaining the tensions between Texas and Mexico. Although Barker attempted to mute his criticism of Mexican character with selected praise for some officials, he generally felt that Mexico was unfit for self-government.[107]

Andrés Reséndez and Juliana Barr have recently made significant additions to Spanish borderland history. Reséndez identifies the economic forces that linked the Mexican borderland to the United States and threatened the sovereignty of Mexico. Barr studied the complex history of Spanish-Indian relations in Texas. She writes that the Spanish, not the Indians, "had to accommodate, resist and persevere." In contrast to the Spanish male code, the presence of Native American women and children indicated that the peaceful objective of the Indians and women were central to the forging of alliances between ethnic groups.[108]

Southwest historian David J. Weber's *The Mexican Frontier, 1821-1846: The American Southwest under Mexico* placed Texas in the context of Mexico in general and its northern provinces in particular. Weber emphasized several key points. The drawn out Mexican movement for independence caused economic devastation. Loss of population, military weaknesses, and political unrest hampered Mexico's ability to handle serious problems in the distant provinces. The political dissension in the interior also undermined any chance to apply clear and forceful policies in the northern states. Finally, the movement toward centralization of the government in the 1830s brought out separatist movements and revolt throughout the frontier. Weber's most significant contribution showed that the study of Texas is complex, thus stimulating renewed scholarship.

Another source that provided invaluable information concerning the tenor of the time was early newspapers, especially the *Telegraph and Texas Register*. The first newspapers in Texas appeared with the first settlers. Their content was similar to that of newspapers in other states: foreign news, reprints from other papers, literary features, official notices, and a little local news. Editorials were political, civic, or personal in nature. The primary purpose of these newspapers was to promote the merits of their country in order to attract settlers.

The *Register* began publishing in October 1835 and continued until the eve of the Civil War. Through perseverance and the blessing of Stephen F. Austin, the Borden brothers, who were its owners and publishers, had sole access to the Texas government immediately prior to the start of the revolution. The paper tried to avoid editorial comments and published official correspondence and letters.[109] It was the second permanent newspaper in Texas and mirrored the events, thoughts, and attitudes of the Anglo Texans. The editors of the *Register* brought no practical newspaper experience to the enterprise. The newspaper survived through hazardous times due to the perseverance and dedication of its publishers.[110]

Newspaper writers throughout the United States paid little attention to Texas prior to the Revolution, considering the region a refuge for outlaws unfit for civilized beings. The Alamo massacre changed everything. Articles and editorials, noting with horror the slaughter of Anglo-Americans by Mexicans, called for retribution and revenge. These publications became the primary advertisement for recruits to the Texas army, promising not only vengeance for the Alamo and Goliad victims but also fertile land for all eligible recruits. These sources quoted eyewitnesses to the massacre who had never set eyes on Texas. The first seeds of Texas exceptionalism began to sprout as newspapers reported the courage of the Alamo defenders even

though no Anglo defenders survived and the Mexican soldiers were still actively campaigning to defeat the remnants of the Texas Army.

A number of historians—notably H. Brands, T. R. Fehrenbach, and James Haley—have authored popular histories of Texas, but these continue to pay homage to Texas exceptionalism. These works appeal to a wide audience, and little of their material addresses the early settlers with the exception of the Texas Revolution.

Historian and member of the Texas State Senate, Steven Stagner, noted that modern Texas history is still held in the death grip of the early historians: "Their assumptions are still recognizable" and modern history has not gone far beyond them. Much of today's Texas history maintains the image of the "sure shooting morally upright frontiersman" against "bloodthirsty and tyrannous Mexicans." The fact that this image still prevails indicates the degree of maturity of Texas historiography. [111]

This small sample of the bibliography defines the extent of the issue. The Texas exceptional myth is largely based on the work of Eugene Barker. New works have attempted to erode the legend, but very few, and none in modern day, have actually centered on the actions of the first Anglo settlers.

This dissertation started from the premise that the settlers were exceptional. A cursory look at any of the major Texas histories states the same thing. However, it soon became evident that dependence on secondary sources was inadequate. The conspicuous difference between this dissertation and other books is an almost complete reliance on primary sources.

The Anglo Texas settlers left behind a treasure trove of letters and diaries attesting to their high level of education, especially the women settlers. There are a number of archives and private libraries throughout Texas. These sources explained why many came to Texas, the

divisiveness of the decision, and the stark existence many of them encountered once arriving in the region. Diary entries reveal a people hoping for a better future, most of whom had misfortune in their past.

The methodology required eliminating previous suppositions since the evidence revealed a complexity that other historians failed to notice. There is not a simple explanation that encompasses all the early settlers. Their individualism did not leave once they crossed the Texas boundary. Exceptionalism was not in their vocabulary; wealth was the primary motivation. Slavery, centralized government, racism, Indian issues, and Tejanos were all important but secondary issues.

However, any of these subjects could be a monograph or dissertation itself. The central question of the source of Texas exceptionalism remained. Early Texans cared little about monuments or their legacy. Their interest lay squarely in becoming prosperous. This was not the answer the author of this dissertation expected at the start.

Thus, the methodology used to develop this analysis was not clear and succinct. Ideas and theories were developed and discarded as the full extent of the difficulty in attaching a catch-all phrase to the Anglo settlers became apparent. It was the methodical studying of primary sources that led to the conclusion that the Anglos were not exceptional, as compared to others who settled the west, but they were unique. Their stubborn attitude and self-serving approach to life was richly rewarded at the expense of every other culture inhabiting Texas.

CHAPTER II

SETTING THE STAGE

For three centuries Spain attempted to colonize Texas. Spanish rule began with the early explorers and ended when Mexico successfully revolted against the Spanish crown. The intervening period included expeditions looking for gold and silver, attempts by other European powers to wrest Texas from Spain, implementation of the missionary system to pacify and change the culture of the original Native American inhabitants, and incursions by illegal Anglo Americans seeking to settle in Spain's northernmost province. Spain desperately desired to keep Texas as a buffer between their gold and silver mines in northern Mexico and the expansionist tendencies of the United States.

As a result of the Spanish failure to successfully colonize Texas, the region was open to Anglo-American settlers who agreed to Spanish rule under the empresario system. Spain and later Mexico chose this option only as a last resort. Beset by an aggressive, expanding United States, an increasingly antagonistic Native American population, events in Europe, and the inability to attract Hispanic settlers, Mexico City had limited options if Texas was to remain under Mexican rule.[1]

Texas history begins with the geologic record which accounts for the fertile soils and petroleum resources that drew the early Anglo migrants as well as present-day job seekers. Over a billion years ago, before people and animals, an immense land mass rose from the boiling sea known as the Gulf of Mexico. It encompassed thousands of square miles of prairies, forests, deserts, and huge mountains. Rock formations indicate that Texas has undergone a history of igneous activity, structural deformation, and sedimentary processes.

Geology and climate helped to shape this land as if it were created for human settlement. Spared from the massive uplifts that created the Rocky Mountains, the land rose from the sea in a slow, steady manner. In spite of the occasional volcanic activity, the emergence of Texas was a gentle sloping of the seafloor, with the northwest region rising more than the southeast.[2]

This process left Texas with two important features. First, it did not have a single river, like the Mississippi or Delaware. Instead, several relatively small rivers run along the northwest to southeast gradient. Because rivers provided explorers with natural pathways, the interior of Texas remained an isolated area.

Second, the gentle tilt and slow meandering nature of the rivers meant that, unlike large and fast moving rivers like the Missouri, Texas rivers deposited their silt along the riverbanks, creating intensely fertile bottomlands. This fertility was in stark contrast to the lands that many of the early colonists left behind. The rich soil on the bottomlands of the Brazos, Colorado, and Guadalupe Rivers issued a siren call to many desperate farmers and others seeking a new life.[3]

The landscape in West Texas is comparably flat but strikingly beautiful. One can see for hundreds of miles, without any hills or mountains obscuring the view. However, deep beneath this flat surface is a buried "mountainous" terrain that helps create great accumulations of oil and gas. One-fourth of all oil produced in the United States comes from the Permian Basin. That sedimentary layer has been broken and displaced into huge mountains and basins that are now covered by younger rocks. Precambrian rocks more than 570 million years old underlie much of Central and West Texas. These complexly deformed volcanic, intrusive, igneous, and metamorphic rocks occur at the surface in the Llano Uplift of Central Texas and in more isolated outcrops in the mountainous region west of the Pecos River. About 1.2 billion years ago, the metamorphism, igneous activity, and uplift that occurred during the Llano tectonic cycle affected

a wide area from the Trans-Pecos to the Llano Uplift. Besides Native Americans, traders on the Santa Fe, and occasional Army expeditions, this region remained free of Anglo settlement until after the American Civil War.[4]

The first Texans may have entered North America eighteen to twenty thousand years ago after crossing a land bridge between Siberia and Alaska. They migrated southward searching for ice-free zones and taking advantage of the excellent hunting. Texas temperatures then were far more comfortable for human habitation with cooler summers, warmer winters, and rainfall approximately twice present-day averages. These earliest inhabitants of Texans proved remarkably adaptive to the climate changes that altered plant and animal life in the region, especially as slowly increasing temperatures and decreasing rainfall presented tremendous challenges to survival.

Although the Spanish considered themselves the first significant inhabitants of Texas when they seriously attempted colonization in the early eighteenth century, the Paleo-Indian who followed and hunted large herds throughout Texas had lived in the region for centuries. In about 700 A.D., corn and beans became staples of Indian diets, fueling an agricultural revolution in Texas. At the same time, women began to play more important roles in the religious lives of most Texas indigenous societies.[5]

By 1500 a number of distinct Indian cultures had developed in Texas. In East Texas resided the Caddos, the first farmers in Texas. The state's name actually derives from a word in the Caddo language. The Spanish changed the Caddo word *techas* (friend) into "Tejas" and pronounced the word "Texas" because *x* and *j* have the same pronunciation in Spanish. Originally hunter-gathers, the Caddos began to cultivate corn to supplement hunting. Their successful agricultural ventures flourished between 800 and 1350, resulting in a prosperous and

relatively rich culture. The Caddo culture developed a complex social order with a political and religious elite. Warfare was virtually non-existent. The Indian societies all possessed complex political, religious, and societal frameworks that regulated behavior and tried to ensure the survival and advancement of the community.[6]

The Caddo culture began a steady decline beginning about 1350 when reduced rainfalls severely affected their agricultural endeavors. Tragically, the introduction of European diseases by the Spanish accelerated their decline. During the first two centuries of contact with the Europeans, Caddo population declined by 90%.[7]

The great Indian empires and nations of fifteenth-century Central and South America seemed to have no impact on Texas. The coast of Texas served as a highway to points in the southeastern United States, but the hostile interior Texas environment thwarted any efforts to establish satellites to the massive empire states south of the Rio Grande River.[8]

In the twelfth century, another Native American group migrated from northern Canada, this group destined to be far more important to early Texas history. Apaches fought other tribes on their way south. They are credited with the abandonment of several Pueblo villages several centuries before the Spanish came to the Southwest. The Apache feared nothing and banded together in large groups only to hunt and make war. The Apache invasion caused repercussions that lingered far into the nineteenth century, preventing Spanish colonization in most of Texas.[9]

Although the Apaches were fearsome, the most powerful Native American empire in the Southwest was the dreaded Comanche. They destroyed the dream of a Spanish empire in North America, decimated the Tejanos, halted the advance of the French into Texas, and slowed the Anglo-American conquest of Texas for sixty years. By the mid-seventeenth century the Plains Indians (including Apaches and Comanches) were thoroughly familiar with the advantages of

horses and became skilled horsemen. The Comanches boasted that they allowed Spanish settlements on the fringe of their territory only to obtain horses and women and children for slaves.[10]

The Comanche ruled a military and trade empire that covered approximately 240,000 square miles. Their land encompassed large areas of five present-day states—Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, and Oklahoma. They ruled over twenty different tribes who had been conquered, driven off, or reduced to vassal states.[11]

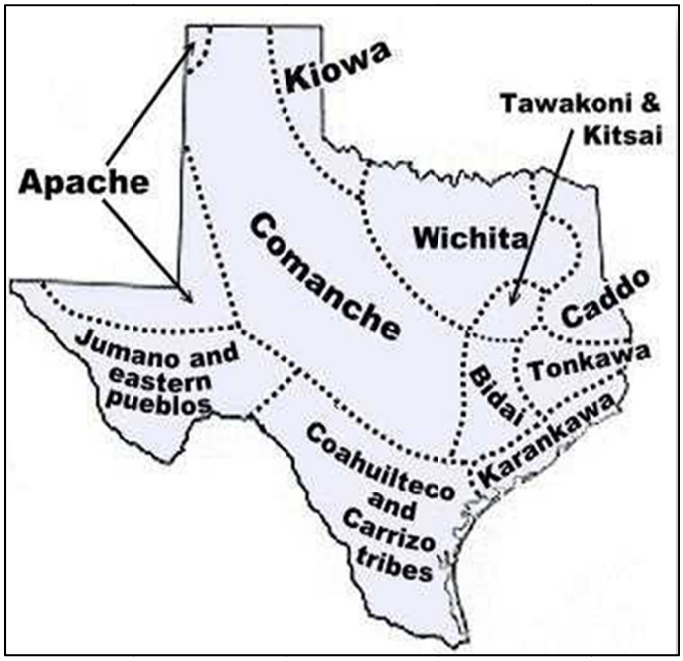

Figure 1. Native American groups in early Texas *(used with permission of native-languages.org)*

The sixteenth century brought the Texas Indians into their first contact with a dynamic and expanding European culture. Unfortunately, they were initially unprepared for the European world, and certain deficiencies in Indian societies played into the hands of the Europeans. The Indians were no match for superior European weapons, carts, forges, ocean-going vessels, and a number of other technologies. The Indians possessed nothing metal or mechanical. Another serious issue was the lack of literary or mathematical skills.[12]

Texas Indians faced a number of perplexing problems in their dealings with the Spanish. To them, the Spaniards were a strange and confusing people. Although the Spanish gave gifts, they had no concept of Indian culture such as the importance of relationships or of reciprocity. The Indians knew what they wanted from the Spanish: manufactured goods and military alliances; they were not sure what the Spanish wanted from them. Some Spaniards wanted food, others hoped that they would serve as allies in Spanish wars, and Spanish missionaries wanted them to give up their religious practices and relocate to missions. Few Spaniards saw the Indians as equals or representatives of a culture worth saving.[13]

In spite of Native American resistance and the inability of the Spanish to obtain an entente with the Indians, the Spanish significantly impacted Texas. One only has to look at a map of Texas to see the Spanish influence. Cities such as San Antonio and El Paso, rivers like Guadalupe and Brazos, mountains such as Llano Blanco and even the name, Texas, reflect the state's rich and abundant Spanish heritage. The name of every major river, except the Red, is based upon a word derived from Spanish, and 42 of Texas' 254 counties have Hispanic names. The U.S. military still uses military tactics developed by the Spanish to combat the Apaches. One extremely important Spanish legacy is the law. Unlike English common law, Spanish civil law gave separate and community property rights to women. Also, Spanish law is the basis for the homestead law that gave debtors strong protection for their principal residences.[14]

Many modern Texans have only recently recognized Spanish impact on Texas. Spain's contributions have been especially significant to farming and ranching. The Spanish brought livestock, alfalfa, and fruits such as grapes. Although raising livestock was limited on the fringes of the southern English colonies, the vast cattle industry in Texas owes its existence primarily to its Spanish origins in the Southwest where millions of Texas Longhorns roamed open prairies.[15]

The great European empires shaped early Texas history. The frontier that Turner identified as "isolated" played an important role in the expansion of European economies and nation-states in the Americas. The Age of Exploration started in the late fifteenth century, as European nations began to understand the potential of the New World. The massive territories and perceived abundant riches meant that a claim in the Americas could add immeasurably to a nation's wealth, status, and reputation. The European powers divided the New World amongst themselves in their search for supremacy, prominence, resources, dominance, and security. According to the Spanish, God chose them to bring Catholicism to the native people.[16]

Spain faced difficult and dangerous obstacles in the colonization of its North American territory. While never doubting that they were doing God's work, the Spanish ultimately failed to colonize the area. Contributing to this failure were the vastness of the land, the lack of mineral wealth, the paucity of vegetation and water, the inability to pacify the Native Americans—especially the Apaches and Comanches—the encroachment of foreign powers, the disappointment of the missionary effort, and weak Spanish administrators who were sent to govern the Province. Other factors included Spain's issues in Europe, the inability to entice Spanish settlers to colonize Northern Mexico, and the depletion of the Spanish treasury. Finally and most importantly, the Spanish lacked the means to control the Anglo frontiersmen, who came armed with their unique version of independence and self-sufficiency.

Figure 2. Map of Spanish Texas *(J. H. Colton & Co., Prints and Photographs Collection, Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission)*

Historians dispute the date that the first European entered Texas. According to some, the first Europeans in Texas were part of the expedition of Alonso Alvarez de Pineda which in 1519 mapped the coast of Texas and entered the Rio Grande. The "Pineda Stone" ostensibly spells the leader's name and is the basis for this assumption. Although subsequent studies have shown this interpretation to stem from a semantic error, it serves as an example of the nature of "Texas Nationalism," the tendency to exaggerate every aspect of the state's past.[17]

The Panfilo de Narváez expedition from Florida to Mexico in 1528 unexpectedly initiated interest in Texas. Due to a series of misfortunes and bad decisions, Cabeza de Naváez decided to

abandon Florida and return to Mexico on hastily built boats. De Vaca's expedition separated in a storm and beached near Galveston Island in November, 1528. As the first geographer, historian, and ethnologist in Texas and the first European to live among the coastal Indians of Texas and write about them, de Vaca described great wealth in the interior of Texas, spurring further exploration of the region.[18]

De Vaca mentions gold three times in his narrative. First, during a severe drought the Indians' search for food took them to the north-central portion of present-day Florida. The Indians told their Spanish captives that food and gold were plentiful in the area. Second, in the desert mountains of north Sonora, de Vaca states that "he saw great evidence of gold antimony, iron, copper, and other metals." Finally, he mentions "indications and signs of gold and silver" in northern Mexico.[19]

Cabeza de Vaca and his fellow castaways found a motivated listener to their adventure story—Antonio de Mendoza, Viceroy of New Spain. De Vaca enthralled Mendoza with his claim of golden cities in northwestern Mexico. These cities revived a belief in the Seven Cities of Cibola ostensibly settled by Portuguese bishops fleeing Muslim invaders in the eighth century. The prospect of finding the Seven Cities and the gold and silver riches ignited the desire to explore the borderlands of New Spain.[20]

In 1540, Viceroy Mendoza, desiring to conquer Cibola before some other explorer-adventurer, organized an army of 370 Spaniards and over 1,000 Indians headed by Francisco Vázquez de Coronado at a cost of over several million dollars. This expedition did not find the riches of Cibola. However, it did provide valuable information on the land, resources, and inhabitants of Texas. Cibola itself turned out to be a sun-bleached rock pueblo of approximately 200 dwellings. In 1540, Coronado set out on a mission to conquer the northern region of New

Spain (Texas, Kansas, and New Mexico). Passing through the Texas Panhandle in 1541, he eventually traveled into the interior of present-day Kansas. Because Coronado found no precious metals in the regions he explored, many contemporaries regarded his expedition as pointless. At the conclusion of the journey, Spanish officials virtually ignored Coronado. He lived for another dozen years in Mexico City and never led another expedition. He was not a swashbuckler but a quiet disciplinarian who, despite his accomplishments, was considered a failure.[21]

However, Coronado made one of the most significant European expeditions into the New World. Exploration was a necessary antecedent to the colonization, exploitation, and social development of New Spain. Coronado traveled and mapped an old trail through New Mexico and Arizona. The Santa Fe became a well-known road that is still in use and in its time and place was just as significant as the Wilderness Road over the mountains of Kentucky. He charted the interior of North America from California to Nebraska, and his geographical measurements established, relatively accurately, the width of North America.[22]

While Coronado entered Texas from the west, another Spanish expedition under the command of Hernando De Soto approached Texas from the east. De Soto started in present-day Florida and spent three years moving to Louisiana. While camped on the Mississippi River in Louisiana, De Soto died, and Luis de Moscoso Alvarado took command. Alvarado explored East Texas, and made the first recorded contact with the Caddo Indians but, like Cabeza de Vaca and Coronado, found no Seven Cities of gold. These adventurers and their compatriots wrote reports of the lands they visited and the peoples they encountered, and all concluded that Texas was a vast land populated by generally hostile natives who had no gold or silver. As a result, for the next fifty years the Spanish paid no attention to Texas.[23]

Texas had its share of legend, romance, and fable that characterized the Spanish conquest in North America. Gold and silver were the attraction for Spanish explorers. By 1676, the Spanish had advanced into Texas from all directions. Sixteenth-century explorers coming by way of the Gulf, Florida, and New Mexico traveled the Texas coast and traversed its southern, northern, and western borders. In the seventeenth century the prospect of finding Gran Quivira (the city with plates and drinking glasses made of gold) led to further explorations in the west and north and the beginnings of the missionary effort. From the south, the frontier was slowly extended across the Rio Grande. However, Indian raids thwarted the search for the Cerro de la Plata (Silver Mountains) mentioned in de Vaca's narratives.[24]

The three centuries of Spanish rule in Texas differed little from Spain's other North American colonies. Once Spain's conquistadores ascertained that Texas had no real material wealth, the Spanish considered Texas a barrier against alien intruders. The Spanish colonial system that emphasized immigrants in conjunction with the efforts of the Church amounted to little more than complete failure. Still, the Spanish needed Texas as a wall to protect its interests in the mineral wealth of northern Mexico.

The Spanish years in California were quite similar to those in Texas. The early Spanish conquistadores looked seriously at California as a possible source of treasure. Once the Spanish ascertained that California had no natural wealth, Spain's attention quickly shifted elsewhere. California remained undisturbed by European settlement for another two centuries.[25]

The world balance of power shifted in the late eighteenth century, and several European powers threatened New Spain. The Spanish King decided that Spain would have to physically occupy California or risk losing it. In 1769, Junipero Serra led an expedition that established missions and presidios in San Diego and Monterey and discovered San Francisco Bay.[26]

Still, the Spanish crown did not see California as a source of revenue. California had political and military importance, similar to Texas, in protecting New Spain's northwestern position in the Americas. Spain never was able to strengthen its military position in California; instead, it relied on Spanish presence to thwart any hostile action. War in California would result in war with Spain. Spanish political and military leaders in California were constantly frustrated and angered by what they perceived as inadequate attention and support by their superiors in Mexico City while Spanish officials in Mexico City saw California as an economic drain on resources.[27]

Spanish colonization of New Mexico differed from California and Texas. The first European settlements in what is now the United States were established in New Mexico and Florida. However, in 1680, in response to Spanish oppression, the Pueblo Indians revolted against the Spanish and literally threw them out of the New Mexico Province, killing over 400 of the 2,500 Spaniards who had settled there.[28] The refugees clustered on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande. The unsuccessful efforts over the next several years to reconquer New Mexico convinced the Spanish that any effort to regain control would take considerably longer than expected. Because a number of Indians had fled New Mexico with the Spanish, they established a small settlement for the displaced Native Americans a few miles east of El Paso which became the first permanent European community in Texas.[29]

In 1692, the Spanish, taking advantage of Indian unrest, regained control of New Mexico. Spain embarked on an ambitious plan to tame the Indians using the Church and missions. As in Texas, this endeavor resulted in failure.[30]

By the eighteenth century, Spain considered all of its northernmost colonies as essentially defensive. Lacking precious minerals and, except for Texas, having a sizeable population of

passive Indians, the Spanish colonies from California to Florida served primarily to protect contiguous areas—the sea lanes of the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean and the mines of northern Mexico.[31]

Due to its immense physical size, Texas represented a formidable challenge to Spanish colonization. It was a land of incredible contrasts in soil, animals, plants, climate, and human inhabitants. The first Spanish settlers realized they had entered a region with great agricultural potential, especially when compared to the arid northern regions of Mexico. In areas of Texas with adequate annual rainfall, primarily along the Gulf Coast, farming developed to its fullest potential, except in East Texas where the rainfall was substantial but the lack of roads and the absence of sustainable trade kept agriculture at subsistence levels.[32]

Soil conditions, climate, and an array of wildlife and fauna mattered less to Spanish colonists than they would to the Anglos due to the bureaucratic nature of Spanish settlement. Perceptions of terrain, climate, and the prospects of making a satisfactory living off the land played an important role in the settlement patterns of Anglo-Americans who were virtually free to settle where they wished. In Spanish settlements in Texas, the King and his agents did the planning with the intent of achieving military, political, or spiritual goals. Therefore, Spanish officials decided the location of settlements. Spanish royal license determined access into Texas. From thousands of miles away, the Spanish crown directed the first official civil government in San Antonio.[33]

Most early travelers spoke quite favorably of the East Texas landscape. In diaries and letters, Spanish travelers commented on the dense and varied vegetation. In 1690, Alonso de León, a Spanish explorer who led several expeditions into the area that is now northeastern Mexico and southern Texas, wrote of the lush greenery that he encountered. He noted an

abundance of buffalo and other game and observed cultivated Indian fields containing beans, corns, squash, and watermelons.[34]

In spite of the apparently favorable conditions in Texas, Spain concentrated its colonizing efforts in New Mexico and the region south of the Rio Grande River around Monterey and Saltillo. In the 1650s the Spanish established a small settlement near El Paso on a key trade route into New Mexico. Several expeditions in the 1660s and 1670s entered Texas, primarily in pursuit of raiding Indians, but no permanent colonies were established. Texas remained a largely unexplored land for much of the seventeenth century due to the lack of success of the missions, the high cost of establishing settlements, and the Native American presence. However, even without the establishment of lasting settlements in Texas, Spanish influence permeated Texas. European cloth and metal filtered from New Mexico, but the most important Spanish contribution was the introduction of the horse, which completely changed the lives of the Indians.[35]

Developments in the late seventeenth century suggest that eventually the Spanish would have settled into Texas by a gradual movement from the west and southwest. A coherent progression would have built a transportation network, a defense system, and an economic base that would support rational colonization. At this time, Texas did not have the riches necessary to hold the interest of Spanish officials and religious leaders in Mexico. However, Robert Cavalier de La Salle, a Frenchman, abruptly altered any Spanish plans for eventual colonization and dramatically changed the course of Texas history.[36]

In 1682, La Salle traveled down the frozen Illinois River by sled and then canoed down the Mississippi to the eastern gulf. He claimed for France all the lands drained by the Mississippi, one-half the continental United States, naming the region Louisiana in honor of

Louis XIV. Shortly after this exploration, France decided to colonize the area. A French colony would increase their influence over the region's Native Americans and the rich trade opportunities as well as bring them closer to the Spanish silver mines in Mexico. LaSalle persuaded the French king to establish a colony on the Mississippi River.

On July 24, 1684, La Salle sailed again from France and returned to America with a large expedition designed to establish a French colony on the Gulf of Mexico, at the mouth of the Mississippi River. They left France in 1684 with four ships and 300 colonists. Pirates, hostile Indians, and poor navigation plagued the expedition. One ship was lost to pirates in the West Indies; a second sank at Matagorda Bay where a third ran aground. The expedition built Ft. Saint Louis near present-day Victoria, Texas. La Salle led a group eastward on foot on three occasions to try to locate Alabama. During another search for the Mississippi River, his remaining 36 followers mutinied, near the site of present-day Navasota, Texas. On March 19, 1687, Pierre Duhaut, who detested La Salle's leadership and choice of commanders, killed La Salle. The colony lasted only until 1688, when Karankawa Indians massacred the 20 remaining adults and took five children as captives.[37] The Indians killed a three-month-old-infant, the first European child born in Texas, and adopted the other children into the tribe.[38]

Although La Salle's expedition ended in failure, his explorations were notable. He was responsible for opening the Mississippi valley, and his entry into the Gulf of Mexico sparked a revival of Spanish exploration in the region. His unsuccessful colony gave the French a claim to Texas, causing the Spanish to occupy Eastern Texas. Due to La Salle, the United States later was able to register a claim to Texas as part of the Louisiana Purchase, causing the boundary question between the United States and Spain which remained unresolved until the Adams-Onís

Treaty of 1819. However, history has judged La Salle an incompetent leader—of his 200 Texas colonists, fewer than fifteen remained five years later.[39]

Spain reacted to La Salle's colony by immediately launching a search for the French settlement in order to destroy it. From 1686 to 1689, the Spanish launched five sea and six land expeditions to hunt for the French. These explorations led to the creation of Spanish settlements in East Texas long before they would have otherwise been established.[40]

An expedition led by Alonso de León found the remains of the dead colonists. The fate of the French, according to the Spanish, was brought about by God's divine aid and His favor toward Spain. The missionaries interpreted these events as a desire by God that they perform religious work among the Indians. The result was a new approach by the Spanish for settling Texas, one that jumped from northern Mexico to the eastern woodlands of Texas with no regard for the vast expanse in between.[41]

As a result of his search for La Salle's colony, De León submitted a proposal to build five presidio missions across Texas to discourage anymore French incursions. However, he received permission to construct only one, Mission San Francisco de los Tejas, along the Neches River near the Louisiana border. Spanish officials in Mexico City insisted that the missionaries preaching the gospel convert the "heathens" and not armed soldiers. The enterprise would be religious rather than military. The mission lasted only for eighteen months before crop failure and disease broke out among the Indians who blamed their ill fortune on the Spanish.[42]

Spain virtually ignored Texas for the twenty years following the closing of Mission San Francisco de los Tejas. However, the Spanish continued to settle northern Mexico. A presidio constructed in 1703 on the south side of the Rio Grande would become the gateway to Spanish

Texas in the eighteenth century. The construction of the San Saba Mission signaled that the Spanish were finally serious about the security of Texas.[43]

La Salle was dead, but France's claim to Texas was not. The French would make every effort to reclaim the land and oust the Spaniards. In 1714, France again became interested in New Spain and Louis de St. Denis entered this showdown. The French established a trading post, Natchitoches, on the Red River, and St. Denis, their adroit Indian trader, traveled to San Juan Bautista on the Rio Grande to negotiate a trading agreement between Louisiana and Mexico.[44]

Because the Spanish wished to maintain a monopoly on trading, they arrested St. Denis. However, when officials in Mexico City decided to inaugurate another serious effort to explore and establish settlements in Texas in order to begin permanent occupation of Texas, they appointed St. Denis commissary officer and guide for the expedition. He gained this prestigious and profitable position when he announced his intention to marry a prominent young Spanish lady and go into business in the Texas frontier as a Spanish subject.[45]

St. Denis's motives for assisting the Spanish reoccupation of Texas have been the subject of much speculation. It is not clear whether he favored Spanish or French interests in East Texas. It is apparent that he was determined to bring Spanish settlement close to Louisiana to facilitate his trading and mercantile interests. However, he is remembered for the establishment of Spanish missions in East Texas.

St. Denis and Domingo Ramón set out for East Texas on February 17, 1716, with a group that included women married to Spanish soldiers and voluntary colonists who came to settle the new land. These wives constituted the first recorded European female settlers in Spanish Texas.[46]

The Spanish chose East Texas as the site of their first real attempt to establish a self-sufficient, permanent colony in Texas. They felt that the Indians in the area were the strongest, best organized, and most influential tribal group between the Red River and the Rio Grande. By gaining control and extending Spanish influence through the work of missionaries, the authority of Spain could be better established, the suspicious activities of the French could be checked, and the weaker tribes that roamed the rest of Texas converted to Christianity.[47]

As a result of St. Denis's activities, Texas became a buffer province, a borderland guarding the colonies of the Spanish Bourbons in North America against the French, British, and the ambitious United States. Texas continued to play this role, except for a short period after France had ceded Louisiana to Spain, until it declared independence in 1836.[48]

France and Spain continued an unfriendly competition for lands bordering the Gulf of Mexico. The St. Denis expedition succeeded in establishing six missions in eastern Texas in close proximity to Louisiana. Although better supported than previous missions, they still were four hundred miles from the Rio Grande, and the Indians showed no inclination to embrace the Catholic faith. In 1717 the Spanish built a mission to serve as a halfway stop between East Texas and Mexico. Mission San Antonio de Valero opened May 1, 1718, gaining fame more than a century later as the Alamo. By building these missions, the Spaniards sent a strong message: they had an incontrovertible claim to the possession of Texas, that of occupation.[49]

The French continued their campaign in Texas. While the Spanish attempted to convert the Indians, the French engaged in a thriving trade policy with the Indians. The Spanish did not allow any weapons to be given to the Indians while the French traded weapons for furs, horses, and slaves. Firearms were just as influential as the horse, giving Indians an essential tool for fighting and hunting.[50]

By the early 1760s San Antonio had become a viable city, capable of defending and supporting itself with a population of approximately one thousand, including a contingent of colonists from the Canary Islands. However, the East Texas Spanish settlements together had a total population of less than five hundred, and no progress had been made in converting the Indians. All efforts to extend Spanish rule into the interior of Texas were unsuccessful. Spanish Texas remained a sparsely settled colony regarded primarily as a buffer against France and a region for missionary work. An influential Saltillo statesman, Miguel Ramos Arizpe, pointed out the rationale for the Spanish Province of Texas' position as a defensive province. He warned that Mexico should secure its hold on Texas, "particularly in the vicinity of the United States."[51] In 1762 at the conclusion of the French and Indian War, France transferred Louisiana to Spain.[52]

At the Treaty of Paris in 1763 (known also as the Peace of Paris, or the Treaty of 1763), Spain gained Louisiana as a result of being a French ally. Spain acquired a vast territory west of the Mississippi River but viewed the acquisition with mixed reactions. The Spanish were aware that France had spent a fortune in Louisiana which, to date, had been a useless and expensive endeavor. However, they did not want the English along the Texas border in close proximity to the profitable gold and silver mines in interior Mexico.[53]

Since Texas was no longer the first line of defense against foreign ventures into Mexico, Spain revised its frontier policy primarily to save money. Spain sent an inspector, the Marqués de Rubí, to examine and report on the conditions in Texas. Rubí's completed report in 1769 stated that the majority of presidio and mission activities in Texas were a complete waste of money. He suggested closing a number of missions, including all the Spanish settlements in East Texas, and urged Spain to wage a war of extermination against the Apaches. Spain made a half-hearted effort to implement Rubí's recommendations and issued the New Regulation of 1772,

calling for the abandonment of all missions and presidios in Texas except those at San Antonio and La Bahia and moving all soldiers and settlers out of East Texas. However, basically nothing changed.[54]

The problem for Spain was holding on to their newly acquired territory. The Spanish population was small in areas that they colonized. As early as 1780, the Spanish were concerned with the rapid increase of Anglo-American settlements just to the east. The American government policies did not overly upset Spain; it was the "turbulence, the lawlessness, and the land speculators, that caused the most concern to the Spanish."[55]

For forty years, Texas had been relegated to the position of an interior province of New Spain and mission-oriented colonization had failed. With the exception of a mine at San Saba, the area had little economic activity. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the majority of the population occupied only three small enclaves. Located on the fertile banks of the San Antonio River was the capital of the province, Villa de San Antonio de Béxar, an adobe town in which twenty-five hundred soldiers and residents lived a somewhat quiet existence and were rarely harassed by raiding Indians. Approximately one hundred and twenty miles down the San Antonio River from San Antonio was the coastal presidio of La Bahía (Goliad, Texas). A stone fort a hundred yards square with bastions, a building for official quarters, and a barracks dominated the town. Other buildings surrounding the fort were centered on a well-watered prairie and open brush country, adaptable to traditional Spanish ranching. The population consisted of forty colonists from the Canary Islands and Central Mexico.

The third settlement at Nacogdoches, situated far to the northeast in a forested area, consisted of a small pueblo approximately sixty miles from the undocumented border, the Sabine River. It lay in the timbered area of East Texas, approximately one hundred miles from the

prairie. Nacogdoches failed to attract Spanish settlers because the dense forest and lack of open prairie prevented building traditional large Spanish ranches with sufficient open land. In addition, the climate and terrain were not attractive to those accustomed to the high dry plateaus of Mexico. The pueblo contained a stone fortress, encompassing a village of log houses. Nacogdoches never was a colonial center, but it was a magnet for adventurers, refugees, drifters, outlaws, Indian traders, and squatters. Most of the six hundred inhabitants were indifferent soldiers and traders of doubtful loyalty who flouted Spanish law and traded stock, hides, and wool in Louisiana.[56]

These three centers of Spanish imperialism were connected by a trail that bore the impressive name of Camino Real or King's Highway. The road served as the line of Spanish civilization with the three population centers located along or near it. The Spanish considered the area north of the road to be stark wilderness, the habitat of numerous Indians who engaged in tribal warfare, raided Béxar, plundered travelers along the road, and would not tolerate missionaries among them. South of the Camino Real, the Indian dwellers were approachable because many had been exposed to traders and Spanish missions. On the forested eastern portion of the region, Indians posed a minimal hazard as many of them were pacified and dealt extensively with traders.

The Spanish government in Texas was a military dictatorship. The governor appointed military commanders for each settlement except Béxar where the governor resided. A remote ruler in Chihuahua, Mexico, overshadowed the governor's authority. This official was the representative of the Spanish throne, which had bestowed upon him supreme authority over an area extending from the Sabine River to the Pacific Ocean.[57]

The Spanish prohibited the entrance of any British, French, or American foreigner into Texas. However, as with many Spanish regulations, provincial authorities did not rigidly enforce the restriction upon illegal immigration. In August 1800, Nemesio Salcedo became the Commandant-General of the Interior Provinces; he was determined to carry out the restriction on illegal entrance, even ordering out two Americans who had been in Nacogdoches for a number of years.[58]

The Treaty of Paris of 1783 between the United States and Great Britain established the east bank of the Mississippi River as America's western boundary, juxtaposing the new Republic and the Spanish Empire. Despite the treaty, Spain retained ownership of Louisiana and New Orleans which Great Britain had lost in the Seven Years War. The northern boundary of Florida with the United States remained an object of contention until October 27, 1795, when the United States and Spain signed the Treaty of San Lorenzo (also known as Pinckney's Treaty) establishing 31° North Latitude as the permanent United States-Florida boundary.[59]

The Treaty did little to lessen the suspicion of American intervention on Spanish soil. In 1796 the Commandant General of northern Mexico, Pedro de Nava, issued a decree stating that Anglo-Americans were suspicious aliens. He was apprehensive that foreign immigrants would upset the delicate balance between Spanish citizens and the Indians in Texas.[60]

In 1783 a French Indian Agent, Juan Gasiot, sent a remarkably prescient warning to Teodors de Croix, Captain General of the Interior Provinces of New Spain. Gasiot warned that the attainment of independence by Britain's North American colonies spelled imminent danger for Spanish interests. He characterized the citizens of the new American nation as "active, industrious, and aggressive." Gasiot continued, "Those same Anglo-Americans will constantly

menace the dominion of Spain in America and it would be an unpardonable error not to take all necessary steps to check their territorial advance."[61]

The French agent further cautioned that Anglo-Americans with their innovative freedom represented a grave new dimension in international relations. He wrote, "Their republican government has great influence over the individual. The voice of public interest binds them and moves them as one . . . Such a people may be exposed to suffer more internal disturbances than any other, but they are likewise capable of undertaking and accomplishing greater things than any other."[62]

Gasiot's warning of American economic and territorial expansion at the expense of Spain was evident to British and French observers. Americans openly boasted that Providence had destined them to occupy the entire continent.[63] The large numbers of Americans who crossed the Appalachians, seeking land and trade in the Mississippi Valley, presented a clear and dangerous dilemma for Spain. In less than ten years, 1783 to 1790, Kentucky's population increased from approximately 12,000 to over 73, 000, reaching 221,000 by 1800. One Louisiana Spanish official stated, "The Americans are advancing and multiplying . . . with prodigious rapidity."[64]

The Spanish Ambassador to France during the American Revolution voiced similar concerns. He wrote that the United States "will draw thither farmers and artisans from all nations. In a few years we will watch with grief the tyrannical existence of this same colossus."[65]

Yet unable to attract colonists from Spain or its other American colonies, the Spanish in the 1780s allowed immigrants from the United States to settle in Louisiana. The Royal Decree of December 1, 1788, provided for the granting of land, equal commercial privileges, and religious tolerance. Immigrants had to take an oath of allegiance to the Spanish Crown and

actually settle the land. The principal objectives were to placate the westward movement elements and to obtain a respectable population for the Louisiana province.[66]

These immigrants were allowed to settle anywhere in Texas but Nacogdoches. The proximity of the Anglos and the probability of illegal and contraband trade concerned Salcedo. He wished to move the immigrants nearer to San Antonio in the Texas interior. He suggested that any American deserters who sought refuge in Spanish territory be brought to San Antonio and given land.[67]

The Spanish quickly understood that the Anglos were likely to continue their westward migration. However, Spain did not view this as a direct threat but as a useful element if the immigration occurred under Spanish control. Thus, the Spanish encouraged immigration as long as the migrants became Spanish citizens and renounced their U.S. citizenship. They viewed the Anglos as a product of their environment. Americans were unruly due to their great distance from any formal government, their general dislike for restrictive government, and their economically deprived situation. The Spanish thought they could control these aggressive tendencies if the Anglos were under direct Spanish rule. However, the Spanish made no plans to maintain a sizeable number of Mexican government officials in Texas.[68]

Spanish officials did not unanimously support this new immigration policy. However, Spain literally had run out of options. They did not have the funds to transport Spaniards or loyal Europeans to Louisiana. The only settlers available came from the United States at no cost. The Baron de Carondélet, the governor-general of Louisiana, severely doubted the loyalty of the American expatriates, fearing that their presence would allow the United States to seize Louisiana "without unsheathing the sword."[69] Thomas Jefferson shared the Baron's belief. In a

letter to George Washington, Jefferson praised the Spanish immigration policy as "the means of delivering to us peaceably, what may otherwise cost us a war."[70]

The indifference and seeming disloyalty of many American frontiersmen to their government encouraged Spanish officials to believe that their immigration policy could be successful. During the 1780s some Americans, including Brigadier General James Wilkinson, desired to create an independent country west of the Appalachians and to seek diplomatic assistance from the Spanish. Spain provided moral support but not any direct assistance that might bring it into conflict with the United States.[71]

The effort to increase the population of Louisiana turned out to be an unfortunate disappointment for Spain. The policy failed because the Anglo-Americans already enjoyed the religious and political inducements offered by Spain with the added advantage of relative security. Also, the Anglos believed that Spain at any time could revoke these privileges and compel the settlers to accept the Spanish monarchial form of government and the Roman Catholic faith, or suffer the consequences of confiscation of property and expulsion. When Spain garrisoned troops in an area where the settlers had already established themselves, immigration declined.[72]

Spain tried to hold back the tide of Anglo-American expansion, but events in Europe made it virtually impossible for the Spanish to concentrate on their New World possessions. Spain lost any claim to the Pacific Northwest coast in 1790 in an attempt to avert a war with Great Britain. In 1795, the Americans gained major concessions due to Pinckney's Treaty that defined the northern border of Florida. The result was that Spain lost any claim to the Ohio Valley and the Mississippi Yahoo River District, and the Americans were granted the right to navigate the Mississippi River without paying any tariffs.[73]

Prior to the Louisiana Purchase in1803, the United States offered no real threat to Texas, even though Spanish officials believed otherwise. The few American trappers and traders who traveled to Texas before the Purchase presented no hazard, yet Spain deeply feared America's influence. With rumors circulating that Major-General James Wilkinson and Vice President Aaron Burr were involved in a secret plot to separate Mexico from Spain, Spanish fear mounted. However, Wilkinson, a greedy and nefarious individual who was on the Spanish payroll for most of his U.S. Army career, turned on Burr and served as the chief witness for the prosecution at Burr's trial in 1807. The trial exonerated Burr, but the hint of Wilkinson's involvement tarnished his reputation for the rest of his life.[74]

In a secret treaty in 1800, Spain ceded Louisiana to France and Napoleon. Spain and France attempted to conduct the negotiations covertly, since both felt that if the United States learned of the transfer, the Americans would invade Louisiana to prevent the transfer. As a New York reporter stated in 1796, the United States had little to fear from the "plodding Spaniards." But the United States had to "prevent any powerful nation from making establishments in our neighborhood."[75]

President Thomas Jefferson did not hear about the agreement until the middle of 1801 and did not know for certain until 1802. Jefferson feared that Napoleon would send an army to occupy the area and block further U.S. expansion. Napoleon did send troops to Louisiana, but first these soldiers were dispatched to Haiti to quell the slave revolt. The French soldiers were soundly defeated and died on that island, and the Haitians established an independent black republic in 1804.[76]

Without the island of Haiti, Bonaparte had little use for Louisiana. Facing renewed war with Great Britain, he could not spare troops to defend the territory; he needed funds, moreover,

to support his military ventures in Europe. Accordingly, in April 1803, he offered to sell Louisiana to the United States. Concerned about French intentions, President Thomas Jefferson had already sent James Monroe and Robert R. Livingston to Paris to negotiate the purchase of a tract of land on the lower Mississippi or at least a guarantee of free navigation on the river. Surprised and delighted by the French offer of the whole territory, Monroe and Livingston immediately negotiated the treaty.[77]

The United States purchased the Louisiana Territory from France on April 30, 1803. This massive area encompassed more than 800,000 square miles extending from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains. The price at that time was about $15 million.[78]

Jefferson was jubilant. With the stroke of a pen, the United States doubled its size, gained an enormous tract of land opened to settlement, and was assured free navigation of the Mississippi. Although the Constitution did not specifically empower the federal government to acquire new territory by treaty, Jefferson concluded that the practical benefits to the nation far outweighed the possible violation of the Constitution. The Senate concurred with this decision and voted to ratify the purchase on October 20, 1803.[79]

The Louisiana Purchase exacerbated the dangerous atmosphere on the border of Spanish Texas. Large numbers of Americans concentrated on the border and many thought that the Louisiana Purchase included Texas since the boundary between Texas and Louisiana was ill-defined. Texas again stood as Spain's barrier with the United States, an aggressive young country that had just doubled its size.[80]

Spanish anxiety increased when Thomas Jefferson secured appropriations for the Lewis and Clark Expedition to conduct a military reconnaissance of lands west of the Mississippi. The primary purpose of the expedition, besides evaluating commercial viability and Native American

strength, was determining the suitability of the region for future American expansion. This incursion was one of several into Louisiana and Spanish territory under the guise of exploration.[81]

Jefferson argued for a broad reading of the limits of the territory in his 1804 paper called "The Limits and Bounds of Louisiana." In this paper, Jefferson put forward evidence supporting his claim that Louisiana included parts of present-day Texas and Florida. He based this evidence upon early French and Spanish claims and maps. Jefferson was sure that earlier French claims established that the Louisiana Purchase extended to the mouth of the Rio Grande River.[82] Samuel L. Mitchell, a member of the House of Representatives, agreed with this concept and wrote, "This is believed, besides the tracts on the east of the Mississippi, to include all country which lies to the westward between that river and the great chain of mountains that stretch from north to south . . . and beyond the chain between the territories claimed by Great Britain on one side and Spain on the other."[83] United States' claims prompted a royal directive from Charles IV, dated May 20, 1805, which called for the compilation of data and maps pertinent to the true boundary between Texas and Louisiana.[84]

Without waiting for the results, Jefferson actively pursued U.S. claims to Texas. As a scientist he was interested in plants and animals within the unexplored regions, and he hoped to requisition the enormous riches of the west before they fell into the hands of a European power. In addition to the Lewis and Clark expedition, Jefferson planned other explorations. In 1804, William Dunbar and John Hunter set out to follow the Red River to its origins and explore the headwaters of the Arkansas. The expedition was barely underway when its leaders heard Spain would resist the undertaking. The Spanish viewed the expedition as a threat to Texas. Unwilling to risk a confrontation, the expedition did not leave the confines of Louisiana.[85]

In 1806, a second expedition led by Thomas Freeman and Peter Custis again traveled up the Red River in flat-bottomed boats. After traveling over six hundred miles, several hundred Spanish soldiers from Texas confronted the thirty-seven–man party and forced them to turn back.[86] Americans on the east side of the Sabine were extremely upset with the military action of the Spanish. Both sides prepared for an armed clash. General Nemesio de Salcedo positioned troops on the east side of the Sabine and began moving soldiers from the interior to Louisiana until most of the Spanish soldiers in Texas were positioned along the border.[87] Even though the number of soldiers did not exceed a thousand, de Salcedo was exercising all possible options to strengthen his position, especially considering the threat to the Spanish homeland and the war in Europe.[88]

The increase in Spanish forces resulted in more patrols crossing the border at the Sabine River. These actions precipitated corresponding movement by American forces. A war appeared imminent in June 1806 when Lieutenant Colonel Simón de Herrera confronted American General James Wilkinson near the river. Although there were many bellicose leaders in the United States, it is highly unlikely that either side sought a military action. Even the Spanish King desired the confrontation to end peacefully, but he authorized no territorial concessions. The two nations ultimately avoided hostilities when Wilkinson informed the Spanish on October 29, 1806, that he would withdraw to a tributary on the Red River if the Spanish would withdraw to west of the Sabine. The territory between the two rivers was declared a neutral ground until diplomats settled the boundary.[89]

The resulting Neutral Ground Agreement preserved peace but created a corridor, soon filled with an assortment of thieves, outlaws, fugitives, runaway slaves, and smugglers.

Historian Odie Faulk called this assortment of characters "the refuse of both Texas and Louisiana that preyed on both provinces."[90]

An increasingly serious problem along the Texas-Louisiana border concerned the number of Louisianans of French and Spanish descent who wanted to migrate to Texas rather than become citizens of the United States. Spanish officials expressed different opinions on whether these foreigners should be allowed to migrate into the area. Governor Juan Bautista de Elguezabal preferred to admit all of these foreigners, settling them in Texas. They would serve as a buffer to expansionist Americans, providing the best possible method of defending the province. Commandant-General Nemesio de Salcedo disagreed, believing that these new American and French immigrants would not remain loyal to Spanish interests. In fact, he was convinced that many were spies for the United States, Napoleon, or the Bonapartist government in Spain. "If permitted to enter Texas at all," he argued, "they should be settled well into the interior, as far as possible from the border." De Salcedo stated that, "As colonists they should not deface Texas, not even the shadow of their tracks should darken it."[91]

Nemesio de Salcedo's distrust prevented Governor Elguezabal from implementing his plan to settle a thousand families from Louisiana in a new colony at the mouth of the Trinity River. If this plan had been executed, American expansion into the region might have been permanently thwarted. Besides halting all immigration, de Salcedo forbade all communication across the Sabine River. Any violation of this order resulted in the death penalty.[92] He saw no reason to allow Americans to trade or settle anywhere in the interior provinces. He warned that the Anglos "are not and will not be anything but crows to pick out our eyes."[93]

After failing twice to explore the southern region of the Louisiana Purchase, the second of which nearly brought war with Spain, Jefferson devised another approach. In July 1806,

Lieutenant Zebulon Pike left St. Louis to survey lands between the Arkansas and Red Rivers in the hope of finding the source of the Mississippi. Pike was also to seek accords with the Indians and drive out unlicensed traders. In the spring of 1807, after exploring Colorado and camped on the upper Rio Grande, he was captured by the Spanish. The Spanish Governor treated him cordially. Later the Spanish released him in Natchitoches.[94] However, Pike's impressions of Texas—fertile soil, grasslands teeming with game, and herds of wild horses—were not lost on a land-hungry America.[95]

In 1809, de Salcedo appointed a special guardian for Texas, Bernardo Bonavia, to plan the defense of northern New Spain. Bonavia's report enumerated that the "defense of Texas was the welfare of New Spain and it alone held the security of the Dominions of the King in North America." He further noted that trading and mercantile activities must be initiated to halt the spread of trade with the Americans and that immediate and extensive colonization must begin along the line from the Sabine River (Louisiana Border) to San Antonio. He described Texas as a "prodigious and beautiful land . . . capable of producing everything sown." He added that the inhabitants of Texas "were unfaithful Indians and extremely poor peasants."[96]

Philip Nolan, an Irish adventurer and friend to the shady General Wilkinson, was primarily a horse trader who had operated with his men in Texas for several years. He might have been an agent working for Wilkinson, but his small party represented no real threat to Spanish Texas. Nolan was known by many important Americans, including Thomas Jefferson, who wrote inquiring about wild horses on the plains of New Mexico. The correspondence of Nolan and others reveals that Americans did want information about Texas, and Nolan responded by mapping and exploring the territory. Nolan apparently entered Texas for the first time in 1791. In the space of ten years he made four forays into Texas, most of which were legal

because he bore a passport and a letter of recommendation from the Spanish governor of Louisiana. However, the Spanish were becoming increasingly concerned about Nolan's relationship with the American government and especially his close ties to Wilkinson.[97]

On Nolan's fourth trip in 1800, the Spanish government ordered his arrest and interrogation. He ignored the Spanish threats and entered Texas in October 1800 with a party of eighteen men. Spanish Commandant-General Pedro de Nave dispatched a force of 150 soldiers to capture Nolan's party. Nolan spent the winter catching horses, but in March 1802 the Spanish finally caught up with him. The Spanish killed Nolan, and the remainder of his party surrendered after promising never to return to Texas. Instead, the Spanish executed one of the prisoners and imprisoned the rest.[98] Nave overreacted, probably because he believed that the Americans intended to form an alliance with the Indians. This idea, never proven, exemplified Spain's fear of the United States.[99]

In November 1808, Manuel de Salcedo assumed the governorship of Texas. One of his major problems was how to deal with fugitive slaves and Army deserters from the United States. The Spanish, not wishing to further inflame the border with the United States, had never resolved the issue of allowing slave owners to enter Texas and recover their property. Ultimately, the problem resolved itself when potential slave refugees realized they could not find asylum in Hispanic Texas and stayed out of the province.[100] Spanish authorities kept the deserters in confinement and eventually brought them to San Antonio for further interrogation. The government ordered the border closed to any further immigration over the objections of Governor Salcedo who understood the impracticality of sealing a long porous border and the prospect of American deserters not allowed to immigrate and then joining the outlaws inhabiting the neutral zone.[101]

Salcedo prepared a detailed report on Texas for submission to Spain. He enumerated all the wonderful qualities of Texas but lamented the poor condition of the population and the lack of funding to administer the province successfully. He also issued a warning against the Americans: "They should not be underestimated as enemies." He continued, "The Anglo-Americans are naturally industrious. They have traits of robustness, agility, sobriety, and valor."[102]

Between 1811 and 1813 the tensions and conflicts associated with America's westward movement and the Mexican War of Independence erupted in warfare. As Spain succumbed to Napoleonic France, Spanish colonial officials attempted to hold the empire together. Discontented colonials worked with French agents to destabilize the colonies. Despite, or because of, its remote location, Texas had something to offer agents of change, a channel through which propaganda, money, arms, and eventually men could be introduced into New Spain from the United States.[103]

In September 1810, Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, a Mexican parish priest, initiated a revolt against the Spanish rulers of Mexico. The priest's nationalist message enticed a wide audience, and within a short time he was leading an army of disgruntled peasants and Indians. Texas Governor Don Manuel Salcedo realized that Hidalgo's revolution moved beyond arousing the passions of Mexicans and Indians. He also believed that Americans and other foreign elements might use the Hidalgo movement as a reason to move into Texas. On November 16, 1810, Salcedo closed the border of Texas to all foreigners. Salcedo's uncle (Don Nemesio Salcedo) countermanded the order out of fear of retaliation by the Americans.[104]

Texas renounced Spanish rule and actively supported the Mexican revolution. U.S. newspapers echoed the changing attitude of Texans. U.S. citizens read that the revolution in

Mexico and Texas "may change men and things." Many thought that Texas would be free to establish a government with the result that opportunities for business and commerce would flourish in the region.[105]

Secretary of State James Monroe and other American leaders were interested in the Mexican Revolution for several reasons. They wanted to settle the U.S. western boundary and obtain an unconditional claim to Texas, but these were not the only American pursuits. An independent Mexico would further weaken Spain, making future expansion much easier for the new republic, and would also hasten the collapse of the Spanish empire. Also, and probably most important, it would follow an already established American policy of ridding the Western Hemisphere of European powers.[106]

In the fall of 1811, royalists had regained control of Texas. Rebel sympathizers, however, remained in Texas, especially José Bernardo Maximiliano Gutiérrez de Lara, a Lieutenant Colonel in the revolutionary army and Hidalgo's emissary to the United States. In December 1811 Gutiérrez traveled to Washington, DC where he was welcomed at the State Department and met with Secretary Monroe.[107]

Monroe exhibited great interest in Gutiérrez, broaching the subject of American support for the Mexican Revolution in exchange for an agreement to settle the border claims in Texas. At the request of the Mexican government, the United States would deploy an army to the Rio Grande and supply arms and money for the struggle against Spain. Monroe also suggested the possibility of extensive trade with an independent Mexico. According to Gutiérrez, the Secretary of State offered to furnish ten thousand rifles and accept Mexican revolutionary scrip in payment.[108]

Although convinced that Monroe's proposal was the only way that the United States could aid Mexico and at the same time keep peace with Spain, Gutiérrez refused Monroe's offer because the Secretary of State would not accept Gutiérrez being in command of the venture.[109]

It became clear that the Mexican revolutionary government would not consider relinquishing control of Texas to the United States. Gutiérrez stated that he did not have the authority to make a commitment without further discussions with his government. An angered Monroe suggested that Gutiérrez return to Texas to obtain support from the other revolutionary leaders. He also told Gutiérrez that in the future, he must obtain proper credentials from his government if he wished to do business or raise funds for his activities in the United States.[110]

Before Gutiérrez left for Texas, General William Claiborne (Jefferson's Territorial Commissioner of Louisiana) introduced him to Captain William Shaler who was to serve as a special agent for the State Department and accompany Gutiérrez to Texas.[111] Shaler soon became the Mexican's principal advisor and main liaison with the American government. The relationship between the two continued throughout Gutiérrez's revolutionary career. Shaler's mission was both to observe and assist the Mexican revolution in Texas and serve American interests throughout the struggle. In spite of Gutiérrez's role as a revolutionary leader, the real power lay with Shaler.[112]

Shaler's mission became an attempt to persuade the Mexicans to support Monroe's arrangement and gain American assistance for the revolutionary cause in Mexico and Texas. Should Gutiérrez be disinclined to relinquish Texas, he could at least help in breaking the Spanish hold on the area. Louisiana merchants, especially those in Natchitoches, furnished funds, supplies, and numerous volunteers. Agents instigated a propaganda campaign to convince local residents to join the revolution.[113]

Gutiérrez returned to New Orleans to make preparations for the invasion. He soon found assistance from Augustus Magee, who had just resigned from the U.S. Army. They recruited approximately five hundred frontiersmen and gathered them together on the Neutral Ground. This newly formed "Republican Army from the North" was determined to liberate Texas, attack Mexico, and join with the revolutionary armies to assist them in gaining Mexican independence.[114]

The U.S. government supplied the expedition with money and men, and Dr. John Sibley, the American Indian agent in western Louisiana, gave the Texas Indians presents to encourage them to support the revolution. The former Spanish Indian agent, Samuel Davenport, assisted Sibley in enticing the Native Americans to join the revolutionary expedition. Davenport even accompanied the expedition.[115]

Sibley was the U.S. Indian Agent at Natchitoches, the furthest outpost of the United States facing the Spanish. Don Nemesio railed at the appointment of the "revolutionist." To the Spanish, Sibley was a troublemaker who represented all the attributes that caused them to distrust the Americans.[116]

The Gutiérrez-Magee invasion quickly crushed any notable Spanish resistance. Governor Salcedo was aware of the danger but lacked the troops and supplies to repel the invaders. Nacogdoches fell easily, La Bahia surrendered, and by the end of March 1813, San Antonio was in the hands of the rebels. On April 1, 1813, the Green Flag Republic of Texas flew in San Antonio, and delegates wrote a declaration of independence and a constitution. The new document clearly indicated that the revolutionaries planned to become part of the United States. The government granted Anglo-Americans who assisted in the revolution one league of land for each six months of service. The new government also recognized all financial obligations to the

United States. However, Americans composed only two of the seven-member governing junta.[117]

On April 3, Gutiérrez's lieutenants brutally assassinated Governor Salcedo and his followers. This deed sent reverberations throughout Texas and Mexico. This act of vengeance would have terrible ramifications for Texas for the next several years.[118]

The new revolutionary government created more problems than it solved. Americans felt that they had been betrayed when Gutiérrez, as a Mexican national, did not convert Texas into a territory of the United States. Once Gutiérrez became the undisputed leader, he made the decision to join Mexico and reneged on his agreement to join the United States. Although many Americans considered Gutiérrez disloyal, he never agreed to turn over Texas to the United States, nor had he mistreated any Americans who served with him. He may have been politically naïve and did not understand what the United States expected of him.[119]

The killing of Governor Salcedo and the Texas Declaration of Independence motivated the Spanish to act. The crime marked the turning point in the fortunes of the Republican Army of the North. The arrogant, aggressive, but effective Spanish leader Jose Joaquin de Arrendondo y Miono and the bloody Ignacio Elizondo, the betrayer of the Hidalgo revolution, moved to destroy the Mexican Texas Republic with a force of approximately two thousand men. The two leaders were among the most effective Spanish officers in Mexico.[120]

Americans also reacted to the events in Texas. José Álvarez de Toledo y Dubois, a politician and propagandist, was elected a representative from Santo Domingo to the Cortes at Cádiz, but his support of independence for the American colonies led to his exile in 1811. Toledo came to the United States and received funds from Secretary of State Monroe to lead revolutionary activities in Cuba. Under threat of arrest by Spanish officials in Havana, however,

he turned his attention to Texas. He aided Captain Shaler in preparing Gutiérrez to lead the filibustering expedition. The Gutiérrez revolution was already beginning to disintegrate, especially with the illness and subsequent death of Augustus Magee. When American volunteers, who accounted for a third of the revolutionary forces in San Antonio, threatened to evacuate unless Gutiérrez was replaced, the ruling junta acquiesced and invited Toledo to assume power.[121]

Gutiérrez resisted surrendering his power, and the Army continued to slowly disintegrate due to Gutiérrez's failure to command and friction between Toledo and Gutiérrez. The advance of the Spanish Army and the inability to find a satisfactory military commander, combined with scheming among the Americans to displace Gutiérrez, marked the end of the Revolution. The Mexicans supported Gutiérrez and the Americans favored Toledo, effectively separating the Army into factions.[122]

The result was defeat by the Spanish forces, ending the most intensive effort to date undertaken by the United States to annex Texas. The failure to agree on any final objectives doomed the expedition. If Gutiérrez and the Spanish Texans had been willing to join the United States, there is little doubt that the movement would have succeeded. Texas would then have become part of the United States in 1814, assuring Mexican independence at that time. Had Magee lived, it is doubtful that any military force in Mexico could have defeated the rebellion.[123]

The First War of Independence in Texas ended in failure although it had historical consequences. It established a separate government without an opposing force in its environs. By April 1813, every Spanish official had been removed by execution, the Spanish army was defeated by the Republican Army of the North, and the republicans ruled under the green flag (the seventh flag of Texas) floating over Bexar from April 1 until August 18, 1813.

Arrendondo's military action was so devastating that within a few months he practically depopulated Texas, executing over 400 Tejanos in San Antonio in one afternoon, and undid any positive gains made by General Salcedo in securing a sizable population. Confiscation, detention, and execution were the methods he used to restore royalist authority. San Antonio was totally devoid of human population after the Spanish victory.[124]

By October 1814, Arrendondo published his "Proclamation" intending to prevent the entrance of any strangers who desired to inspire revolution. Any progress Texas had made as a Spanish colony quickly dissipated. Once Arrendondo departed, fewer than 460 poorly equipped troops occupied the entire province. The conditions made it possible for the Indian tribes to resume their attacks on the remaining settlers. Many citizens suspected that this was part of Arrendondo's plan to control Texas and prevent the intrusion of Anglos.[125]

The period after 1815 saw a substantial amount of activity in Texas directed against the Spanish but, as in the case of the Gutierrez-McGee Expedition, the American government offered no planning or coordination. Following the defeat of the expedition at the Battle of Medina, several of the movement's former leaders tried to form a new force. Toledo fled to the United States, eventually making his way to Nashville. Once there, he tried to persuade Monroe and others to provide material support for a new expedition. His efforts were unsuccessful as no government official agreed to grant his petition for support. He also asked Andrew Jackson for an Army commission, but the general never acted on the request.[126]

The overall weakness of the province led to its becoming a refuge for notorious people. Bandits, filibusters, and pirates plagued the coastal regions of Texas while the Comanches blocked any interior settlements. In 1817, the Spanish crown approved the appointment of Antonio Martinez as governor. Martinez's correspondence with the Viceroy, Ruiz de Apodaca,

bears witness to the disturbing conditions in Texas. Martinez faced the issues of an inadequate military force to defend East Texas, incessant Indian attacks, and a drastic need to rebuild a shattered economy. He was in desperate need of money, soldiers, gunsmiths, physicians, horses, clothing, paper, seed, arms, ammunition, medicine, and iron, but his greatest necessity was food.[127]

In 1810, the Spanish provisional government sent an envoy, Luis de Onís, to Washington. The Americans did not officially recognize his position until 1815. Onís believed that if a satisfactory agreement could not be met with the United States concerning Texas, the Americans would seize the Spanish province.[128]

Within Monroe's administration after 1817, the United States changed its policy toward expansion. John Quincy Adams served as Monroe's Secretary of State. As Secretary of State under Madison, Monroe often used filibusters and revolution, even finding excuses to employ regular U.S. military forces in his effort to gain new territory. Adams, though at times taking advantage of the activities of filibusters and revolutionaries, much preferred to accomplish these objectives through diplomatic efforts.[129]

While Spanish-American insurgents and American adventurers entered Texas with the approval of the Madison administration, U.S. officials took advantage of Spain's weakened condition to press America's claims to the western border of Louisiana. Negotiations took on a special urgency for Spain in 1818 when General Andrew Jackson seized San Marcos de Apalachee and Pensacola in Florida. Jackson accused Spanish officials of harboring renegade Indians and bandits who raided the United States but, by occupying Spanish territory, he had exceeded his instructions and was soon required to withdraw. Instead of apologizing for Jackson's violations of Spanish sovereignty, Secretary of State Adams blamed Spain for not

keeping better control in Florida. Under this duress, the Spanish government agreed to a treaty.[130]

The Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819 (formally titled the Treaty of Amity, Settlement, and Limits between the United States of America and His Catholic Majesty, and also known as the Transcontinental Treaty of 1819) settled the border disagreement in North America between the United States and Spain. Secretary of State Adams and the Spanish Foreign Minister, Luis de Onís, negotiated the treaty. In addition to granting Florida to the United States, the treaty settled a boundary dispute along the Sabine River in Texas and firmly established the boundary of U.S. territory to the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean in exchange for the United States paying residents' claims against the Spanish government up to a total of $5,000,000 and relinquishing its own claims on parts of Texas west of the Sabine River and other Spanish areas.[131]

Spain had secured a muted diplomatic victory: the Sabine River was now the official boundary, but they had to give up Florida. The Spanish could hold the United States diplomatically accountable for restraining its own restless nationals and deterring them from aggressive intrusions into Texas. In assessing the Treaty, Onís maintained that Florida was of little value to Spain. It was better to cede Florida now and gain something rather than wait and possibly lose the region without any gain. He cited other advantages which accrued to Spain as a result of the treaty: Texas was now officially a Spanish Province, securing territory west and north of the Red River, and a vast area between the boundary line and New Spain.[132]

In another Treaty section, the United States relinquished all claims to Texas. If Congress should ratify the Treaty, the Sabine River would become the Nation's border. Reaction was immediate and vigorous. Senators Henry Clay and Thomas Hart Benson denounced Adams on the floor of the Congress. The western states declared the pact a giveaway, a denial of the

nation's territorial destiny. The press reacted bitterly. A St. Louis newspaper called this an act of "Sham…dismembering the valley of the Mississippi." The *New Orleans Louisiana Advertiser* declared in January 1821, "Territory belonging to the United States is given away to a despot, a country that would give to the cause of liberty, millions of freemen, is transferred to slaves…the province of Texas is worth ten Floridas."[133] The debate continued for two full years as Congress wavered on the brink of uncertainty.[134]

But during the years that the nation's leadership indecisively struggled with the issue, some were ready to act with or without authorization from official Washington. Men and women who hoped to continue the trail west were angry at a government that would deny them access to the vast virgin land beyond the Sabine. The treaty with Spain brought confusion, then anger. U.S. policy coming from Washington made little sense to those who sought southwestern land, and they could not afford to wait. A window of opportunity remained open until Congress should ratify the treaty and close the border. Most of those present believed Spain had little ability to sustain possession of Texas and was too weak to challenge settlement.[135]

By the end of 1819, Spain's immigration and colonization policies had not produced a sizable population for Texas. In 1820 a radical change in policy occurred. Ferdinand VII, under pressure from the Spanish military and other political elements, proclaimed the restoration of the Constitution of 1812. In November 1820, the Spanish Parliament issued a proclamation decentralizing land matters and allowing municipalities and governors leeway to approve settlers and apportion land. That decree gave Mexico the basis for allowing Anglo settlements in Texas.[136]

In the summer of 1819, James Long, a Natchez merchant, organized the last filibustering expedition into Texas. Supported by Louisiana merchants, he raised an army of three hundred

men. After setting up an independent republican government and establishing a generous land policy for each of his followers, Long traveled to Galveston to seek the support of the pirate Jean Lafitte, who wisely decided that Long was too weak to overthrow the Spanish. The Spanish drove Long's army out of Texas in the summer of 1819, but he returned again with approximately fifty men. The Spanish eventually captured Long and his followers, and a guard "accidentally" shot him.[137]

Long's activities had considerable support from western leaders and settlers disturbed by the Adams-Onís Treaty. But he failed to receive the same degree of support supplied to the Magee-Gutiérrez expedition in 1812. The Spanish were considerably weaker in 1819 than they were in 1812, and Long's expedition had the potential to be the strongest force ever to enter Texas. The Spanish Commandant Joaquín Arrendondo faced a number of issues, including revolutionary armies in Mexico, and his small Texas garrisons were always under imminent threat from Indian attacks. Based on the correspondence of Governor Martínez, the Americans would defeat the Spanish with ease if any real effort was applied.[138]

Long's failure can be attributed to the lack of support by the United States government. The U.S. government curtailed any assistance. First, Adams, a man of his word, insisted that the United States comply with the terms of the Adams-Onís Treaty. Second, the issue of slavery in Texas was a great cause for concern in the balance of power in Congress since Texas was considered an additional southern slave state.[139]

The actions of the U.S. government did more for Texas than all the revolutionaries combined. The U.S. Land Act of 1820 was a godsend to Texas. Americans could no longer afford to purchase land in the United States, and Texas was offering thousands of acres of free land. The law lowered the price of land but removed the generous credit provisions of previous

land laws, making it difficult to purchase land without cash. The previous law (1800) authorized land to be sold for $2.00 per acre with a minimum purchase of 320 acres. This law allowed settlers to pay in four annual installments. In the event the settler suffered economic hardship, he had the use of the land for five years before forfeiture. In 1804, the law reduced the required minimum purchase to 160 acres, opening up the prospect of western land to an even greater number of prospective settlers. Finally, Congress, disillusioned by the difficulties stemming from the credit policy, passed the Land Act of 1820 requiring full payment for the land at the time of purchase but reducing the minimum price to $1.25 per acre. The Law also reduced the minimum amount of land which the government would sell to eighty acres.[140]

The timing was fortuitous for Texas and the United States. The curtailing of loans and the restricted issuance of scrip by the Bank of the United States precipitated the Panic of 1819. This caused a sudden contraction of currency, especially in the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys where speculative banks had greatly overextended themselves. A number of these wildcat banks closed, wiping out lifelong savings and further restricting the money supply.[141]

In the summer of 1821, Texas passed from Spanish to Mexican control with scarcely a protest from its inhabitants. The preceding seven years had been terribly destructive. Royalists had successfully repelled all military invasions, but Texas' defenders also became predators. Historian David J. Weber wrote, "By 1821 it must have been difficult to tell whether royalists or rebels had done the most harm." Antonio Martinez, the last Spanish governor of Texas, stated that the Spanish soldiers had "drained the resources of our country, and laid their hands on everything that could sustain human life." The province, according to Martinez, had advanced "at an amazing rate toward ruin and destruction."[142] At the end of the Spanish era, the

population of Texas had dwindled to less than a third of what it had been in 1809, and the town of Nacogdoches was practically non-existent.[143]

Texas could no longer remain an undeveloped colony on the edge of Mexico. The Anglos eyed it greedily, and the Spanish and Mexicans failed to find the right solution to settle the vast region. All of this changed in the 1820s when the colony was opened to Anglo settlement, an event long postponed and feared by many Mexicans.

While the Spanish were seeking a stabilized colonial policy and long before the Americans were scheming to gain Texas, Tejanos, descendants of Spanish and Indian colonists, settled in Texas. The Tejanos were Texas's original immigrants and in spite of the intrigues of European powers and the United States, they made Texas their home. They built thriving ranches, especially in the lower Rio Grande valley, moving north out of Mexico for the same reasons that motivated the Anglos in the 1820s. The occupation of new lands meant greater economic prospects, increased physical security, and freedom from a dictatorial government. Also, disease and famine in central and northern Mexico caused thousands of people to move into Texas in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.[144]

Realizing that Texas was not attractive to Europeans, Spanish officials persuaded the Crown to subsidize colonists. The group most amenable to this project was Hispanicized Indians from Tlaxcala. The marqués de San Miguel de Aguayo recommended the Crown send 200 Tlaxcalans to Texas plus 200 hundred families form the Canary Islands. He wrote, "Without these families the survival of the province will be very difficult if not impossible." Eight years later, fifty-five people from Tenerife, Canary Islands arrived in San Antonio. Together with earlier colonists, the Hispanic population in Texas numbered approximately 500 by 1731. Approximately 300 of the number lived in Béxar.[145]

By 1790, sixty years later, Spain was able to attract only another 2,000 Hispanics to Texas for a total of 2,510. However, the town of Laredo grew due to its rich grazing lands for cattle. In 1789, Laredo had a population of 798. But these low numbers caused Texas to retain the character of a defensive outpost. Texas remained a fringe outpost on the edge of Spanish government control.[146]

Tejanos had a significant and permanent influence on the history of Texas. They gave distinctive reality to the larger historical forces centering on Texas in the early nineteenth century. When international events brought changes to the political status of Texas, Tejanos provided a vital continuum. Their local laws provided the basis for national legislation. Their culture, their lives, their problems, and their solutions contributed to the historical character of Texas.

The pattern of Tejano settlement did not concur with the government plan of strategic military settlements. Instead, the population of Texas increased as military soldiers steadily integrated into the neighboring communities through intermarriage or retirement. This amalgamation not only increased the population but also promoted a racial mixing. Most of the settlers and soldiers came from northern Mexico where racial mixing had already been prevalent. These *mestizos* were a racial mixture of Spanish and native Mexican Indian. The northern Mexico natives were primarily members of the Tlascalan tribe from the former Aztec empire. Thus, the original Tejano communities were a blend of intermarriage between Tlascalan soldiers and Spanish and *mestizo* settlers.[147]

The birth of a new Mexican government coupled with the immigration of Anglos to Texas was difficult for the Tejanos. Their integration into the new Mexican nation was a difficult proposition from the outset. Texas's frontier life and its border with the United States gave the region a special character that was not understood in the provinces to the south. During

the Spanish era, Tejanos established and protected the northern regions against foreign intrusions.[148]

In 1821, at the beginning of approved Anglo migration, approximately 4,000 Tejanos lived in what is now the state of Texas.[149] When the Anglo first arrived in 1821, Tejano settlement consisted of three distinct and separate regions—the Nacogdoches region, the Béxar-Goliad region along the San Antonio River, and the Río Grande ranching frontier between the Nueces River and the Río Grande. Each of these populations was independent of the others, yet all of them shared certain characteristics. The basic factor unifying the Tejano community was the military purpose of the settlements. All Tejanos shared a military background which had developed into a strong sense of mission—to defend Mexico's northern province. José María Rodríguez stated, "My ancestors, both on my father's and mother's side were military men and all of them engaged in the service of their country at some time."[150]

The Spanish generally viewed the Tejano with disdain. However, Tejanos were a proud people who felt that Mexico owed them a debt of gratitude for defending the frontier. They frequently petitioned the Mexican government to acknowledge their sacrifice and loyalty. In one petition the Tejanos requested legislation "for their worthy status as inhabitants of the frontier, who have undergone sacrifices and risks unknown to the people of the interior, and for which the latter are indebted to the former."[151]

But even as conflict between Tejanos and the Centralist government in Mexico increased, tensions with their new Anglo neighbors rose. The Tejanos' supportive attitude toward colonization struggled against a strong cultural bias which made them perceive many Anglos as crude and aloof. Tejanos thus increasingly defined themselves as an entity different from

Mexico and separate from the Anglo. Tejanos were very much aware of the widening cultural gap between them and the rest of Mexico.[152]

Spain and later Mexico faced extensive problems with their large northern province. Americans greedily viewed its vast spaces as a habitat for their expansive population. Mexico City finally succumbed to reality and allowed Anglo settlement but only on its terms. The government naively thought that controlled settlement under the direction of empresarios would solve their Texas problem. However, they underestimated the Americans and overestimated their ability to control the situation. The empresario era would change Texas, Mexico, and the United States forever.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST YEARS

From 1821 to 1830, an estimated ten thousand Anglo-Americans entered Mexico's Texas Province. This chapter examines the Mexican and Anglo political situation as well as the character, motivations, and circumstances that caused these settlers to go to Texas. Their own memoirs, diaries, and letters reveal a people little different from the multitudes that moved westward across America. Many were greedy, indomitable, aggressive, racist, and individualistic, drawn to Texas for the opportunity to start a new life in Texas and become wealthy from the bountiful land grants the Mexicans provided each settler. They demanded slaves to do the hard work, and they wanted the Tejano and Native Americans to leave. They became unappreciative of the grants provided by the Mexican government and demanded self-government. However, in these difficult years, Anglo pioneers carved out their version of civilization. The fact that so few abandoned Texas speaks highly of their determination and resolve.

The Anglos were not the only people migrating to Texas during the 1820s. The United States government and the encroachment westward of Anglo settlers pushed many Native American tribes (Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, and others) into Texas. Forced off their native homelands, these immigrant tribes saw Texas in the same manner as the Anglos, as a land of new opportunity. The new Mexican government was ill-prepared for the Anglo and Indian influx into their northern province. The result was a fierce competition for land and resources.[1]

The American Revolution demonstrated the ideological importance of natural rights, and paramount for Americans was the right of land ownership. Yet with a growing population and

limited territory, those opportunities would be restricted unless the United States continued to expand. Thomas Jefferson's Republican Party supported expansion as a means of continuing the nation's growth and development. Jefferson himself was an aggressive expansionist and worked to increase the limits of American territory throughout his political career. Although the phrase "manifest destiny" was unknown to Jefferson, he worked for and believed in the idea that the future expansion of American territory was guaranteed. Growth also displayed to the world the country's faith in human freedom and republican government.[2]

Jefferson remarked in his first inaugural address that the United States was "a chosen country with room enough for our descendants to the hundredth and thousandth generation."[3] Yet in 1801 the United States was a country confined by the Great Lakes, the Mississippi River, and the 31st parallel north. Foreign powers surrounded the country and threatened its security and survival. The English, allied with Native Americans, threatened from the north, and Spanish control of the Gulf Coast and lands west of the Mississippi stymied the fulfillment of America's natural right. Jefferson and his immediate successors believed that the only way to ensure the nation's continual growth was to remove all threats, whether British, Spanish, or Native American.[4]

As historian Marilyn Sibley states, "To the land-hungry population of America and Europe, Texas represented one of the last places on earth where arable land was plentiful and virtually free."[5] The Anglo-American settlers brought with them the language, customs, and governmental systems common in the United States, but after their arrival, they began to think of themselves as a separate and distinct people.

The availability of cheap, plentiful land cannot be understated in the westward migration epic. During this era, the desire for land was a fanatical force characterized by Tennyson's poem

describing the deathbed of a wealthy farmer whose final words are a constant repetition of "Proputty, proputty, proputty."[6] The ability to own over 4,600 acres in Texas was appealing to a rancher or farmer facing hard times on worn out farms in the East.[7] U.S. Land Acts offered substantially less land at higher prices in the United States. The Harrison Land Act of 1800 granted 320 acres; the Land Act of 1804 and the Homestead Act of 1862 allowed 160 acres. The United States levied a fee for the land, whereas the land in Texas cost the settler only the amount charged to survey it.[8]

The Mexican government offered the head of a family 4,600 acres at a cost of 2 cents (survey fee) per acre to be paid over a period of six years. Undeveloped land in the United States was averaging $1.25 an acre. In addition to the low cost, throughout the 1820s most Texans thought the United States would buy eastern Texas from Mexico. Many assumed that Texas was part of the Louisiana Purchase and that they would not long be aliens in a foreign land subject to Mexican decrees.[9]

The American and Mexican ideas of land ownership were dissimilar and became a point of contention between the two cultures. In the Spanish land tradition, all land ultimately belonged to the king. Mexican law viewed a land grant as a right to occupy and use land legally, a model that involved a relationship between the state and the recipient. Americans believed strongly in the concept of ownership; once owned, land could not be taken away without due process. Prospective settlers in the United States were operating under a false assumption that Texas land was for sale and that they were the sole owners.[10]

Land represented wealth, independence, and status. However, in Texas the Anglos were restricted to the amount of land they could occupy, and the Mexicans controlled the sale of land. The "General Law of Colonization, No 72" clearly stated in 1824 the rights and limitations of the

colonists. Article 9 specifies the preference given to Mexican citizens. This article as well as the "April 19, 1834 Colonization Act" eventually allowed unscrupulous Americans to speculate in Texas land using Mexican citizens as their representatives.[11]

When Frederick Jackson Turner enumerated the succession of pioneer images—traders, cattlemen, and farmers—all moving as if in a procession across the continent, he omitted a major player, the land speculator. Speculation was a motivating force behind the westward movement, and large sums of investment money changed hands in the American "wilderness." Land speculators sought land for investment rather than homesteading.[12]

This "land enthusiasm" had two aspects: the first revealed the desire to live better and more independently, and the second, to profit by selling land to the migrants when they arrived. In the 1780s land companies evolved, each promoting more grandiose schemes. One French visitor stated that a more suitable name for the United States would be the "land of speculation."[13]

Land speculation was rampant throughout the United States. George Washington became a wealthy man as a speculator, owning much of West Virginia and vast parcels of land in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Kentucky. Alexander Hamilton, as Secretary of Treasury, engaged in dubious land speculation practices, rewarding his political friends before making official announcements of policy. James Monroe bought property in Paris as many of the owners were led to the guillotine. [14]

Most of the prominent early Texans were land speculators before they moved to the state. Stephen F. Austin and his father engaged in speculation in Missouri, and after losing a considerable sum of money, came to Texas to pay off their debts. Mary Austin Holley was a major land speculator even though she lived only for a brief time in Texas. Jim Bowie was a

fugitive from the law and a wanted man in Louisiana and Arkansas for engaging in fraudulent land speculation. David Burnet, Mirabeau Lamar, and Anson Jones (all future Texas Presidents) not only engaged in land speculation before their arrival in Texas, but continued to be associated with land companies while holding political office. Austin's family argued constantly over who held the most land in the best location. Ben Milam, one of the earliest empresarios, was implicated in a number of land schemes throughout his Texas career. The heroes of the Alamo, William Barrett Travis, Jim Bowie, and Davy Crockett, were all land speculators both before they came to Texas and after they arrived. Bowie was the most notorious land speculator of the group.[15]

Mexican official José Maria Sanchez believed that profit from land speculation was Austin's goal. The empresarios were professional land speculators, receiving the largest parcels of land and deciding which individuals received the best tracts. However, virtually all who moved to Texas were, to a greater or lesser degree, speculators. The colonization program established by Mexico restricted unlimited speculation in huge tracts although speculation on smaller grants occurred from the beginning of the Anglo movement into Texas.

Empresarios Joseph Vehlein, David Burnet, Lorenzo de Zavala, and others founded the Galveston Bay and Texas Land Company in New York on October 16, 1830, for the purpose of colonizing the lands. Samuel Swartout, the noted land speculator and associate of Aaron Burr, was one of the principals of the company. The company, a real-estate promotion firm with agents, land counselors, surveyors, and salesmen, did not own land itself but sold scrip that allowed the settlers simply to move into the area allotted to the three empresarios. There the settlers had to complete all requirements of the Mexican colonization law before they could obtain title to land.[16]

Land was the magnet that drew the Anglos, but the remoteness of Texas settlement never appealed to the Spanish. In spite of the prospect of free land, Spanish officials had been unable to attract *gente de razón* (people of Hispanic origin) in strategic areas such as Texas. Colonists had no reason to migrate to economically dormant areas. Spain experimented with a number of initiatives such as free transportation, land, and tax exemptions, but these measures lured few colonists. The government relocated orphan girls, soldiers, and convicts along with their families to Texas, but these forced migrations failed to achieve immigration quotas.[17]

The Spanish Minister for overseas affairs, in his report to the Spanish *Cortes*, stated that the distribution of land in America was politically and economically of great importance and that the King expected positive results in both areas. The minister said, "The populating of Texas required the most urgent circumspection as well as the greatest prudence in the matter of the distribution of the land in that immense territory."[18]

In 1821 after an eleven-year war with Spain, Mexico gained its independence. The war started on September 16, 1810, when a progressive Catholic priest, Miguel Hildago y Costilla, declared Mexican independence. Hildago's declaration sparked the extended war. Eventually Spain officially recognized Mexican independence. As a result, empresario agreements approved previously by Spain were declared void until the Mexican government could review the applications.[19]

By the 1820s, Mexican liberals viewed the traditional institutions for populating the frontier, the mission, and the presidio as outdated and ineffective. Only the influx of colonists offered any hope for the development and defense of the north, but colonists had to come from outside of Mexico. Only about six million inhabitants spread over thousands of miles from

Guatemala to Oregon populated Mexico. The country lost about ten percent of its population in the wars for independence.[20]

At the beginning of the decade, Mexico was a new nation implementing profound changes to its political, economic, religious, and social institutions and was too weak to deal effectively with its northern region which encompassed Texas. The nation struggled to overcome the deprivations of a ruinous decade of civil war. It was still staggering under the effects of numerous economic crises, unsettled relations between church and state, the plots of unscrupulous Army officers, the challenge of local leaders who put regional interests before loyalty to the nation, and the constant threat of foreign invasion. The civilian government was overwhelmed and did not have the experience or expertise to bring order out of chaos. Mexican government officials understood that they had serious problems in Texas, but it was only one of many issues confronting them. They had to accept foreign settlement and pacify the Native American population or risk losing Texas entirely.[21]

The war ravaged Texas. Mexican soldiers, responding to the Gutierrez–McGee Expedition, left much of the settled areas in ruins. On May 1, 1821, the governor of the province, Antonio Martínez, described the conditions in Texas: "Since 1813 when this Province was reconquered, it has advanced at an amazing rate toward ruin and deprivation." He went on to describe the Indian attacks, the lack of roads, jails, schools, and businesses.[22]

One of the most difficult tasks facing the new Mexican government was the establishment of a frontier policy and the integration of frontier regions into the political and economic system centered in Mexico City. Over the years local officials in the frontier regions were rather lax in monitoring official decrees, preferring instead to encourage peace and quiet in the region. This proved to be a difficult task in Texas. Tejanos had already established trading

links with Americans in New Orleans, and Anglos had been drifting into the province for years, settling on land under the indulgent gaze of local officials.[23]

The new Mexican rulers of Texas took control of the colonization process, reluctantly establishing the empresario system in hopes of checking the Native American threat and halting the illegal migration of America's brigands. An empresario granted the right to settle on Mexican land had to recruit and take responsibility for new settlers in his grant. The word *empresario* is Spanish for entrepreneur. In 1820, the *Cortes*, the Mexican parliament, passed legislation allowing for the colonization and development of Texas and granted permission for foreigners to settle on condition that they respect the constitution and laws of the new Mexican government.[24]

The 1824 Constitution changed the standing of Mexican provinces: they became states with their own constitutions and control over their internal affairs. The Constitution legitimized the empresario system. Texas and Coahuila formed the Estado do Coahuila y Texas. For the Anglos, this unwieldy governing arrangement eventually became a cause for conflict a decade later. Saltillo, the state capital, was approximately 400 miles from Béxar (San Antonio), and the state itself encompassed Mexican Texas, northern Mexico, New Mexico, and southern California. The Anglo settlers deplored the lack of direction and failure on the part of Coahuila to address the needs of frontier Texas. Pressure built immediately to separate Texas from Coahuila. When General Manuel Terán inspected Texas in 1828, he reported that "between the Mexicans and the foreigners there is most evident a unity of opinion on one point, namely the separation of Texas from Coahuila."[25] Mexican colonizer and writer, Tadeo Ortiz, stated in 1832, "I am certain that all the ills of Texas date from its annexation to the State of Coahuila."[26]

Following ratification of the Constitution, the Mexican Assembly passed the National (Imperial) Colonization Act of 1824 which gave individual Mexican states the power to award public lands under their domain within prescribed limitations. On March 24, 1825, the state of Coahuila y Texas passed several colonization decrees that lasted until 1836. These decrees granted a league (4,605 acres) of grazing land plus a labor (177 acres) of farming land to each family brought to Texas by an empresario. The Mexicans understood that the colonists would use their land primarily to raise vast cattle herds similar to the Tejanos in the Rio Grande Basin. Only naturalized Mexican citizens who adopted the Roman Catholic religion received a league of land. Also, foreign colonists had to "prove their Christianity, morality, and good habits," and establish permanent residence before being considered a naturalized Mexican. Single men who fulfilled the same requirement would be given one-fourth of a league. To encourage the assimilation of foreigners, lawmakers provided that those who married Mexican women could obtain additional land. Fees totaling $200 could be paid in installments over six years, and collection would not begin until the fourth year, giving the new settlers three years to become established. The grants defined a specific amount of land to a fixed number of families, and no titles were issued without approval of a government land agent. Also, all taxes and duties would be waived for the first ten years.[27]

One of the primary issues that forced Mexico to institute the empresario system was the migration of illegal Anglo-Americans into Texas. If the Mexican government did not take the lead, the Americans would eventually infiltrate the province and demand separation from Mexico. Before 1821 the proximity of Texas to the settled areas of Louisiana and the absence of a natural barrier made it easy for Americans to enter Texas either legally or illegally. They sought land or were lured by trade, adventure, or the opportunity to escape justice. Often, with

the willful knowledge of government officials, the Americans traded with the Indians and Mexicans.

Mexicans watched this influx of strange, untamed men to their province with trepidation. They became increasingly concerned that the riotous behavior of Anglo males would eventually lead to conflict. This anxiety concerning the Anglo settlers increased as a result of the actions of the Edwards brothers, Haden and Benjamin. On April 25, 1825, Haden Edwards obtained an empresario contract to settle eight hundred families in the Nacogdoches area. This area had undergone some settlement by both Tejanos and Anglo squatters since 1716, and Mexican authorities requested that Edwards honor the existing titles within his grant. Like all empresarios, he was to uphold land grants certified by the Spanish and Mexican governments, provide an organization for the protection of all colonists in the area, and receive a land commissioner appointed by the Mexican government. Edwards chose to disregard the requests of the Mexican government and threatened the Mexicans in his grant with eviction if they did not pay him $520 apiece. In spite of the entreaties of the local Mexican officials, Edwards and his brother Benjamin refused to recognize the claims of the Mexicans. Finally, the Mexican President intervened and ordered the two brothers out of the country.[28]

When they refused to leave, the Mexicans ordered the military commander in Texas to the area. He left San Antonio on December 11 with twenty dragoons and 110 infantrymen. It was clear to Haden Edwards that his only chance of success was to separate from Mexico. He began preparations to meet the Mexican force in the name of an independent republic he called Fredonia. Edwards prepared and signed Fredonia's Declaration of Independence on December 21, 1826.[29]

Haden Edwards designated his brother as military commander and appealed to the United States for help. Stephen F. Austin sided with the Mexican government and headed for Nacogdoches with his militia. When the Mexican officers and militia and members of Austin's colony reached Nacogdoches on January 31, 1827, the revolutionists fled and crossed the Sabine River.[30] This ill-conceived "republic" collapsed by the time Mexican troops arrived in San Antonio in January 1827. Edwards had little support from the more successful foreign-born colonists, who had much to lose by severing relations with Mexico.[31]

The Edwards revolt convinced the Mexicans that they had to initiate an investigation into the Anglo migration. The idea of a Comision de Limites (Boundary Commission) began to take form. The Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819 had established a boundary between Spain and the United States, and independent Mexico inherited the agreement. Mexico had not ratified the treaty, and the actual boundary line lacked a formal survey.

The primary purpose of the Boundary Commission was to survey the dividing line between the United States and Mexico (as set forth in the Treaty of 1819). However, the Anglo issue caused the planned expedition to assume a larger importance for the Mexican government than that of a routine boundary survey. The underlying function of the Boundary Commission was to determine the dimensions of the Anglo problem. It was to ascertain the actual numbers of Anglos in Texas legally and illegally, the results of the empresario system to date, and the colonists' compliance with Mexican laws. The issue of territorial integrity concerned the governor. The Commission was also to report on the natural resources of Texas, its agricultural, mining, and commercial possibilities, and the history of its settlement; it also was to perform a geographical survey.[32]

Named to head this difficult and ambitious undertaking was General Manuel de Mier y Terán, one of the most qualified men in Mexico for the position. Terán was thirty-eight years old and in charge of Mexico's artillery school. He had graduated from the National College of Mines and was a recognized specialist in mathematics, natural sciences, and engineering. As a result of his service in Mexico's War of Independence from Spain, he had close connections with many of the top officials in the Mexican government.[33]

Terán was not happy with what he saw on the frontier; the indigent squatters he encountered were living in abject poverty, and a variety of prosperous colonists such as Jared Groce had grown rich through the exploitation of slaves. He feared, more than social conditions, the political outlook of these new "Mexicans" and whether or not their views would lead to the loss of Texas. Uneasiness extended even to Stephen F. Austin.[34]

Terán reported to President Guadalupe Victoria on March 28, 1828, that he saw a race of savage Anglos who had no respect for borders and boundaries. They chose the best land regardless of whether or not they had a legitimate claim. He proposed a four-point program to alleviate what he considered a crisis on Mexico's northern border. First, he requested an additional cavalry company be specifically located at Béxar to instill upon the Anglos respect for Mexican law.[35] Second, he recommended the suspension of settlement by North Americans in Texas, but the established colonies should remain and be granted as much freedom as possible in the cultivation of land, the sale of their products, and the importation of those products. Third, Mexican nationals should settle the eastern part of Texas where its principal rivers begin to be navigable; these settlements would provide a human barrier against further Anglo encroachment. Fourth, colonies of soldiers should be established in Texas.[36]

General Manuel de Mier y Terán described the Anglos as vicious and wild men with evil ways. Some of them were fugitives from the United States, and once in Texas "they create disturbances and even commit evil acts."[37] Other Mexicans shared Terán's assessment. José Maria Pucheta, a Mexican Deputy in the *Cortes*, stated that the Anglo settlers were not "good Americans" but "bad Americans" and, as a result, the Mexican government had been forced at great expense to keep a regiment of soldiers near the Louisiana border.[38]

José Manuel Zozaya, the Mexican minister to the United States, wrote the "Anglo-Americans view the Mexicans as inferiors, not as equal. They love dearly our money, not us, nor are they capable of entering into an alliance agreement except for their own profit." As if to prove Zozaya correct, in 1826 President John Quincy Adams offered $1 million for Texas, and when the Mexicans refused, he pursued a series of diplomatic initiatives to change their minds. Four years later President Andrew Jackson upped the amount to $5 million, never hiding his intention to see Texas as part of the United States. He felt that Texas had too much territory and that the Mexicans would never to able to develop it. Detaching Texas through purchase or bribery, he said, would not be difficult since "I have scarcely ever knew a Spaniard that was not a slave to avarice."[39]

José Maria Sánchez, a draftsman in Terán's party, echoed many of his leader's thoughts. He alleged that the Americans had taken possession of practically all of eastern Texas without any official permission. He also lamented that the Mexican government did little to halt this criminal behavior and suspected an American plot to own the entire country. According to Sánchez, the leader of this insidious policy was Stephen F. Austin who had lulled the Spanish authorities into a false sense of security, while he worked diligently for his personal goals.[40]

Records describing Mexican attitudes toward the Anglos reveal largely the opinions of Mexican officials due to the high degree of illiteracy among the poorer classes. Terán stated that the Mexicans respected the education level of the Anglos, the desire to open schools in the colonies, and their willingness to send their children back to the United States for further education. However, General Terán told a group of colonists that he wished to "remove" Austin from his leadership role in the Colony. Terán wrote that the Americans displayed a desire to establish an independent Texas.[41] The Mexicans were suspicious of foreigners and had an "inveterate jealousy of strangers."[42]

Mexicans seem to have differentiated the Americans into classes. All Anglos were considered aggressive and unruly. The wealthy class was considered to be "for the most part industrious and honest." Another group was said to be lawless and criminal fugitives, but with some exceptions they changed their way of life when given the opportunity to obtain land and became industrious and law-abiding. Ugartachea wrote in 1834, "They only obey the laws which suit their fancy, laws which in substance are adopted from the United States, as may suit their convenience."[43]

The Mexican Governor of Texas, Antonio Martínez, had a negative impression of the Anglo settlers. In December 1821 he wrote that the United States considered the permission to settle in Texas granted to Stephen F. Austin an open invitation that had already resulted in the entrance of five hundred families, "the worst that the United States could produce." His letters to his superiors contained references indicating that the Americans were bandits and armed ruffians. He was constantly requesting more troops, supplies, ammunition, and guns to halt the Anglo infiltration.[44]

Luis de Onís, who negotiated the Adams-Onís Treaty, described the Americans as litigious, over-reaching people who were continually destroying each other by huge frauds and deceptions. He added that Americans had "personal courage and fortitude and pride" but were "arrogant and audacious" and always animated by the "spirit of liberty."[45] They think "themselves superior to all the nations in Europe" and believe "that their dominion is destined to extend, now, to the isthmus of Panama, and hereafter, over all the regions of the New World."[46]

The Mexican distrust of the Anglo settlers and the empresarios started with Moses Austin in December 1820. Once the Mexicans overthrew the Spanish, Austin traveled to San Antonio to obtain permission to settle Texas with Anglos who would abide by the provisions of Mexican law. He was a former Spanish citizen by virtue of his residence in Spanish Louisiana. He stated that he represented three hundred Louisiana families who wished to settle in Texas, and that they were all law-abiding, industrious, and of good character.[47]

A businessman and land speculator, Moses Austin was an extremely demanding father who expected much from his son, Stephen. He owned a lead mine in Virginia that went bankrupt, forcing him to move his family to Missouri where he owned another lead mine. The governor of Louisiana, Baron Carondelet, was urging Americans to settle in Louisiana, which included Missouri, to form a barrier against the encroachments of the British.[48]

Austin did not prosper in Missouri. The War of 1812 paralyzed trade and industry in the region, and before the family could recover financially, the depression of 1818-1819 bankrupted them. Austin, now tremendously in debt, conceived the idea of making enormous profit in land speculation in Texas.[49]

On December 23, 1820, ignored by Governor Antonio María Martínez, he happened to meet the Baron de Bastrop in one of the most famous turn of events in Texas history. Austin and

Bastrop had met nineteen years earlier in New Orleans on unrelated trips. They had not been in contact since.[50]

A dejected Moses Austin and Bastrop met in the street as Austin literally was saddling his mule to leave town. The two recognized each other. After Bastrop, a resident of San Antonio, heard the enthusiasm with which Moses spoke of his colonization plan, the Baron intervened and convinced Martínez to accept Austin's venture. On December 26, 1820, Governor Martínez endorsed and forwarded the plan to higher authorities.[51]

On the trip home to Missouri, Moses contracted pneumonia after four weeks of wet, cold weather during which he subsisted for the last week on roots and berries. A thief he met on the road robbed him of all his possessions. Shortly after reaching home, he learned that the Spanish granted official permission for the colony. Two days before he died, he called his wife to his bed. "After a considerable exertion to speak," she wrote, "he drew me down to him and with much distress and difficulty of speech, told me it was too late, that he was going . . . he beged me to tell you to take his place tell dear Stephen that it is his dying fathers last request to prosecute the enterprise he had Commenced." Moses Austin died on June 10, 1821.[52]

Stephen F. Austin was the first and most successful empresario. However, Mexican discussions surrounding Austin's empresario contract displayed the degree of mistrust the Mexicans felt toward the United States. Originally, the Mexican government wanted Austin's settlers to be located near the abandoned missions in San Antonio. The government hoped that if placed in the vicinity of the missions, the colonists would ultimately be absorbed by the Mexican inhabitants of San Antonio. More importantly, the colonists' contact with the United States would be diminished by the vast stretch of unsettled territory inhabited by Indians. The Mexican government felt that the United States had advanced its boundaries by questionable means and

that Mexico should not encourage further expansion of its territory by planting an Anglo colony in their line of encroachment.[53]

Over the next fifteen years Stephen F. Austin carried out his father's plan of populating Texas with Anglo-American settlers. His Mexican title was empresario or colonization agent, but the more generic English term "impresario," defined as a "manager, producer, or sponsor" of a large production seems more appropriate.

The proposal that Stephen F. Austin laid before the governor of Texas in 1821 provided that each head of family receive 640 acres for himself, and an additional but smaller grant for his wife, children, and slaves. The colonization law passed by the Junta of Iturbide superseded Austin's proposal. The Mexican law increased the acreage to not less than one labor (about 177 acres) or one sitio (about 4430 acres). The status of the head of the family determined the amount and usage of the land, whether farming or raising stock. A commissioner, appointed by the governor of Texas, distributed the land and issued titles to the settlers designated by Austin. The Spanish appointed Austin the judicial head of the colony, commander of the colonial militia, and general administrative leader. The law gave Austin and the commissioner joint power to increase without limit the quantity of land assigned to persons who, in Austin's opinion, deserved special consideration. Under this stipulation, James Cummins, John Coles, and William Rabb received additional lands for erecting mills. Jared Groce possessed ten times the amount of land given to ordinary settlers due to the number of slaves he brought with him. Most of the original settlers were not slave owners. The colonists who came to Texas early in 1821 and 1822 acquired larger tracts due to the hardships that they endured.[54]

In March 1822, Stephen Austin discovered that official complications concerned his substitution as empresario for his deceased father. By this time Mexico had thrown off Spanish

rule and was an independent country. Numerous opportunists were already in Mexico City, petitioning for the chance to be empresarios. Furthermore, various officials who had never heard of Stephen F. Austin had conceived their own schemes for populating Texas. In light of these considerations and the possibility that a technicality would nullify the Austin contract, Governor Martinez advised Austin to travel to the capital "to protect his interests." Austin by now had labored for several months and had heavily invested his personal funds; he therefore wasted little time in journeying to Mexico City.[55]

Austin set out for Mexico City in the spring of 1822, disguised as a beggar to discourage any bandits, and armed with only a Spanish grammar text. He hoped to salvage his plan to bring Anglo colonists to the Mexican state. He spent the ensuing eighteen months in the Mexican capital, learning the language and trying to persuade the Mexican government to reinstate his father's empresario contract. He contended that only Americans would be willing to enter the vast wastelands of Texas and compete for survival with the Indians that had thwarted the Spanish for several centuries. Austin alleviated the Mexican fears of Anglo empire-building, and his resolute perseverance convinced the Mexicans to endorse the empresario idea. He stressed that Mexico's hope for wealth from its northern province would come only from the labors of an enterprising people. The Mexican Congress approved Austin's empresario contract, and the President signed it in April 1823.[56]

Austin, finding that he was "destitute of almost everything necessary to insure success," returned to Texas with actual power greater than that exercised by any man in the province.[57] During a long and busy year in the Mexican capital, Austin established a number of key relationships with important Mexicans of the era and helped write the Mexican constitution.[58]

While in Mexico City, Austin met several other individuals seeking empresario contracts. He identified a Mr. Irwin and Mr. Leftwich in a letter to J. H. Hawkins.[59] These men were professional land speculators, representing the Texas Association (later known as the Nashville Company) whose purpose was to acquire land in Texas to sell at a profit. They intended to make a business out of the settlement of Texas, and the land they obtained was to be an object of trade or speculation. Austin believed that it was doubtful any of these individuals would leave their comfortable surroundings for the wilds of Texas.[60]

The Mexican government over the next ten years awarded Austin five empresario contracts. Austin's empresario contracts were well worth his time and effort, for they gave him influence which would be a decisive force in the events leading to the Texas Revolution. Since the national government had little money for the administration of Anglo colonies, Austin had broad administrative powers. When settlers first began arriving in Texas in 1821, Antonio Martínez informed Austin that his colonists "must be governed by, and subordinate to you."[61]

Austin consolidated his role of empresario throughout the remainder of the 1820s. He successfully lobbied for a law protecting Texas settlers from foreign creditors. The Mexican governor of Texas, José María Viesca, agreed with Austin's proposal and laid it before the legislature. The law passed in January 1829. It granted the colonists a twelve year exemption from seizure of land or tools for nonpayment of debts they had contracted in foreign countries before emigrating. Texas already enjoyed a reputation as a haven for debtors from the United States; this act, Texas's first homesteading law, helped to bolster that reputation.[62]

Austin exercised supreme authority within his colony. He decided how much land a settler would get and where the land was located. He also charged a fee of 12.5 cents per acre plus taxes to the Mexican government. This led to charges of favoritism and land speculation.

Austin certainly was guilty of favoritism: his personal friends and relatives received more land than the rest in the most favorable locations. Austin defended himself, listing his duties and responsibilities and justifying his fees, but these charges followed him throughout his life.[63]

Austin considered himself the only person to govern the colonization of Texas. Austin's ego did not allow him to see that others might make competent empresarios. Austin felt that what was good for Stephen F. Austin was good for Texas.[64]

Historian Eugene C. Barker wrote extensively about Stephen F. Austin. He describes an Austin who was unselfish, tenacious, diplomatic, loyal, modest, altruistic, and honorable.[65] A review of Austin's papers reveals that Austin thought of himself in the same manner. However, there are some indicators that Austin was more complex and enigmatic.

When Austin died, he was one of the wealthiest if not the most wealthy man in Texas, even after all his Missouri debts were paid. He saw himself as the family savior, lifting them from the burden of his father's debts. He desired social prestige, prosperity, and wealth, and he gained all of this as an empresario. However, Victor M. Rose, composer of a ten-page poem on Austin based on anonymous letters from "Old Texians," called Austin "a selfish, narrow minded and jealous man. He lacked the elements of greatness of character."[66]

A careful examination of Austin's papers reveals that the empresario did not hesitate to render praise and laudatory accounts of himself and his work. It is interesting that he ignored those who helped him the most and without whose assistance he most likely would not have been so successful. Baron de Bastrop is the most notable example. Bastrop intervened and saved Austin's empresario contract. He later served in Austin's place while Austin spent eighteen months in Mexico City securing his contract. He was also responsible for certifying the land surveys and contracts and performed numerous other tasks such as serving as Austin's interpreter.

Austin failed to give any credit to Bastrop, giving the distinct impression that only due to his own diligent efforts did Texas evolve.[67]

Historian George Garrison paid the ultimate compliment to Moses and Stephen Austin when he wrote:

> Of all the men in American history there are no other two who have attracted so little attention from their contemporaries and have yet done things of such vast and manifest importance . . . Their great work consisted in the making of Anglo-American Texas an enterprise planned and begun by one and carried into execution by another.[68]

Austin has received mixed reviews from Texas historians. Henderson Yoakum, the first serious historian of the state, considered him a great hero. Greg Cantrell, author of the most recent biography of Austin, casts him as an ordinary man with a sense of greatness. Cantrell gives personality to Austin, something his previous biographer, Eugene Barker, missed. However, Barker resurrected Austin from the obscurity where early Texas historians had placed him.[69]

Andreas V. Reichstein pays grudging respect to Austin. While not a perfect man, Austin made the decisions that led to Texas. He was in the forefront of everything in the Texas colony until the Revolution. It was Austin who made the final decision to seek a break from Mexico. However, according to Reichstein, Austin could have handled the crisis differently and averted war.[70]

H. W. Brands states that it is hard not to respect Austin who followed his father's wishes and built a colony through some difficult times, sacrificing his personal wishes. Austin really did not want to go to Texas but provided leadership in spite of formidable obstacles. His leadership and exploits are far more important than his ego and successful financial ventures.[71]

Measured by the objectives he set for himself, Austin was tremendously successful. He achieved his primary goal of restoring his family's wealth and paying off all debts. He was worth close to a million dollars at his death, primarily in land. He fulfilled his great dream of changing Texas from a "wilderness" and settling the land with industrious and resourceful families. The statement made by Austin to Mary Holley, even though it exemplifies his insatiable ego, best describes the man: "The credit of settling this country and laying the foundation for a new Nation which at some future date will arise here cannot be taken from me."[72]

Austin issued three hundred and seven titles in his first colony; nine families received two titles each, which left, not including Austin, two hundred and ninety-seven, the actual number of families introduced under this contract. The law required that all lands be occupied and improved within two years after receipt of the deed. Settlers forfeited only seven of the grants.[73]

Austin was not the only empresario. From 1823 to 1835, twenty-seven different groups representing thirty-four different empresarios (including individuals and representatives of business interests) concluded forty-one empresario contracts with the Mexican government. If all thirty-four different empresarios were to be successful and abide by the terms of their contracts, approximately 60,000 individuals including men, women, and children would have to settle in Texas.[74]

However, not all the empresarios were successful. In fact, only two empresarios—Stephen F. Austin and Green DeWitt—completed their contracts. Austin obtained five empresario contracts and brought to Texas approximately 1500 families.[75] Fourteen empresarios were partially successful, and the remainder had no success. The reasons for their lack of

success are complicated. Illness, changes of the law by the Mexican government, and Texas Independence were the predominant factors for nonperformance.[76]

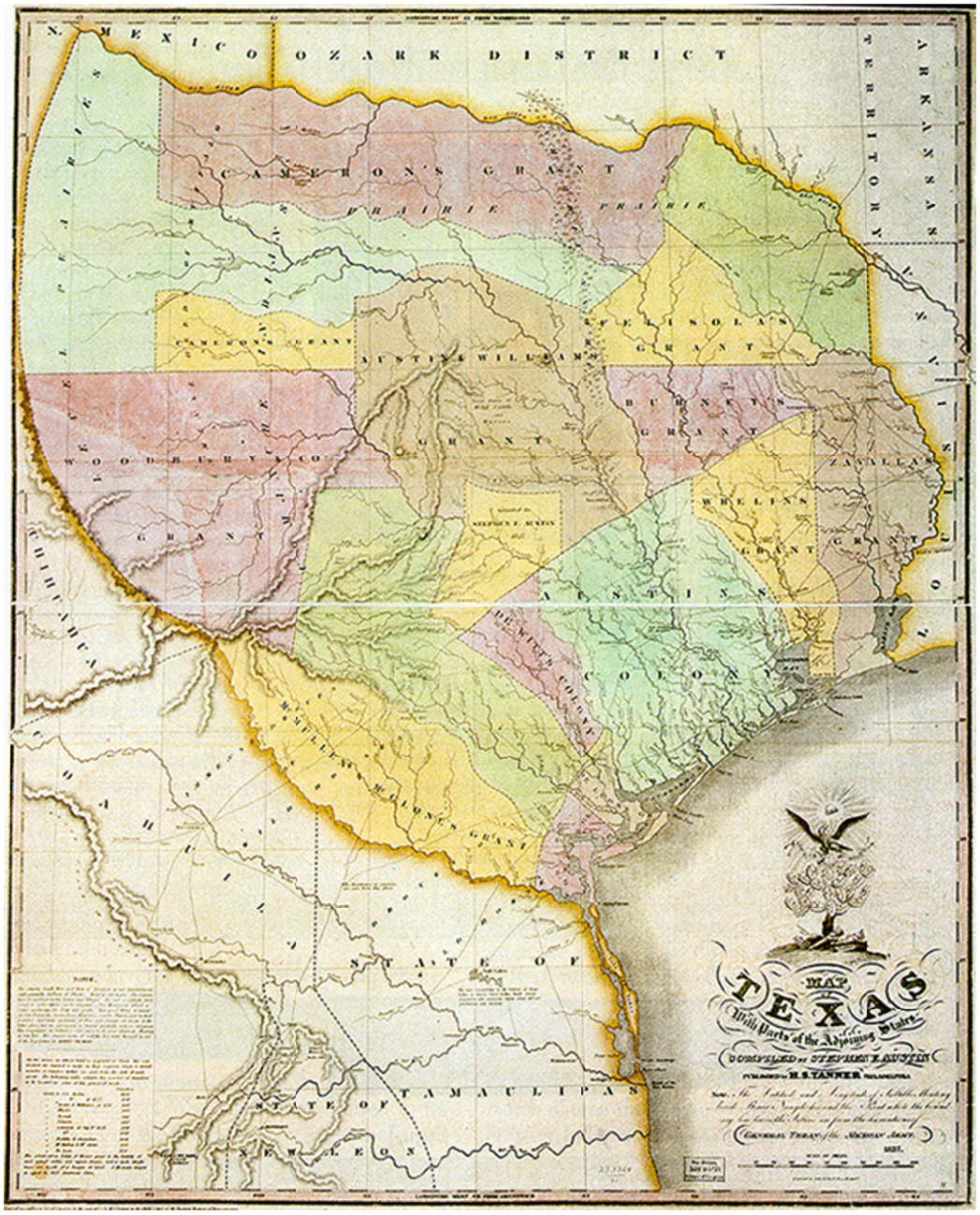

Figure 3. Texas empresario grants *(courtesy of The University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin)*

Empresario Martin De Leon's was the only Mexican colony preferring Mexican customs and institutions to those of the United States. De Leon's colony differed from the other minor empresario colonies. His contract was non-specific as to number of families, time limits, or boundaries. Because De Leon preferred Mexican families, the Mexican government did everything possible for him to succeed.[77]

Many of the contending empresarios disliked Austin's status as the first empresario. Some unsuccessful empresarios blamed Austin for their problems. General Arthur Wavell accused Austin of betraying him. Wavell was a land speculator and a miner who made a deal with Austin when they were both in Mexico City attempting to obtain empresario contracts. They were to evenly split any land either one of them received. Wavell returned to England where he informed the partners of his speculation company that they would soon reap a fortune. Austin apparently backed out of the deal, stating that his primary interest at that time was settling Texas, not speculating on land or mining for silver and lead.[78] Wavell was not the only enemy Austin incurred. Along with the envy of those jealous of his success were those who did not pass his personal test of being industrious, law-abiding, honest citizens.

Sterling C. Robertson of the Texas Association of Nashville became one of Austin's bitterest enemies even though at one time they were quite amicable.[79] In 1823, Robertson and several other Tennesseans representing the Association explored Texas with the idea of eventually establishing a colony in the Mexican province. On April 15, 1825, the agent for the Association, Robert Leftwich, whom Austin had previously met during his stay in Mexico City, received an empresario contract from the Mexican government to settle 800 families in an area north of Austin's colony. When he returned to Nashville, Leftwich resigned from the Association and sold his interest to an investment group. In 1826 Robertson, who served as

president of the Association, led a party of thirty Tennesseans to Texas, establishing a camp at the mouth of the Little Brazos. The outbreak of the Fredonian Rebellion stalled his efforts to colonize the area. Land claims made by squatters who had moved into the area between 1824 and 1826 also caused a delay. In 1827 the Mexican government approved the transfer of Leftwich's grant to the Association which, after some initial problems, named Robertson as empresario. However, the Law of April 6, 1830, which suspended all further Anglo migration, halted his attempts to bring settlers into the area.[80]

Manuel De Mier Y Terán, the Governor General of Texas, notified Robertson that the April 6 law suspended all contracts except those already established. Later he ordered civil and military authorities to expel Robertson and the families he had introduced. Terán suggested to Austin that he request permission for the families to settle in his grants. Ostensibly, out of concern for the families, Austin made an official request to Terán which he approved.[81]

Robertson challenged Austin's action, first in the local courts and later in the Texas legislature. Both the court and legislature sustained Robertson claims, and the government voided Austin's contracts, recognizing the land titles of the Nashville Company. Nevertheless, the episode began a legal battle to clear land titles in Robertson County that continued until the Texas Supreme Court settled it in 1847.[82]

Austin revealed himself to be a hypocrite throughout the entire Robertson ordeal. Maybe he did not like the idea of speculative land companies interfering with his colony or future profits, but after his initial offers to assist the Nashville Company, he did everything to undermine their contract. Austin lost the court battles and made new enemies as a result of his action.[83]

The success of an empresario depended on the number of settlers attracted to his land grant. Most settlers moved to their new lands with the expectation of improving their social and

economic positions. The early settlers had dreamed of a better setting in a different environment. Many of them experienced simultaneously some sort of difficulty at home and the enticement of distant attractions and opportunities, a combination of "push-pull" factors. The push factor consisted primarily of financial or emotional distress at home; the pull factor, the prospect of acquiring large tracts of land for next to nothing as long as the individual agreed to occupy it.[84]

Fear of imprisonment for debt, aversion to the religious and social restraints prevalent in many of the Atlantic states, oppressive or inequitable taxation, and unrepresentative government were factors that contributed to the decision to migrate elsewhere. American historian Ray Allen Billington states that settlers in the Appalachian Plateau region from 1795 to 1812 were less concerned with finding ideal conditions in their new homes than in escaping deplorable conditions in their old.[85] Reginald Horseman, the author of *Race and Manifest Destiny*, asserted that "in moving West, the American pioneers were perceived . . . as a continuing movement of civilization that had been continuous since the earliest times."[86]

Reverend Timothy Dwight of Connecticut wrote in 1821 that the migrants were "restless inhabitants . . . who have nothing to lose and expect to be gainers by every scramble." The first to leave were those who "have met with difficulties at home." Others with large families and small farms sought land for the sake of "settling their families." Included were the "discontented, the entering, the ambitious and the covetous."[87]

The individual or family, whatever the motivation, who set out for the unknown was a special breed distinguished by a willingness to take on some degree of risk. Billington called it "a touch of the gambler." He further stated that those who did not respond "to the lure of the frontier were the content, the cautious, and the secure." He declared that "they were a breed different from their fellows that stayed behind." Others speculated that a selective screening

process operates in migration, eliciting certain psychological and social types. Immigration, suggested Richard Hofstadter, may have given America "more than its share of the exceptionally restless, the exceptionally bold, the cranky and the intractable." Historian George Pierson contended that migrants were not average; rather they tended toward great hope and optimism. Migration "selected the up-and-coming and the hopeful. It required sacrifice . . . and it rewarded the successful. Pessimists didn't bother; you had to be an optimist to move." Professor Frank Thistlethwaite concludes the migrants had a revolutionary spirit: "Among emigrants, in fact, the dissenter was the archetypical personality."[88]

Historian Francis Philbrick, who studied the movement of American pioneers across the Appalachians, argued that the dominant influence in migration was not dreams of the future but discontent at home. Philbrick identifies the westward migrating population as the discontented and dissatisfied. The reasons for discontent ranged from boredom to flight from a sheriff's posse. He further states that no one "faced the dangers of the old frontiers for trivial reasons."[89]

Geographer and historian Donald Meinig describes the migrants to Texas as an assemblage of Indian hunters, serious settlers, crass speculators, whiskey peddlers, itinerant preachers, and "all the other types of the Southern frontier." Ray Billington writes, "Some were psychological or social misfits . . . most were poverty stricken, perennially restless, drifters by inclination, and hopelessly sunk in indolence. They sought the outer fringes of the settlements partly to escape the company of their fellows whose superiority accentuated their own sense of inadequacy." A visiting Frenchman in 1840 disagreed. While most Texans did appear "radically different from most North Americans in their social temperament," they possessed "that vivacity of character and especially that combative spirit which is characteristic of the American frontiersman." Mary Polley Baker stated that the early settlers were among the better citizens of

the United States, well educated, socially prominent, amicable, and generous. She disputed the characterization of the early settlers as "rough and unpolished."[90]

In many cases the drifter and fugitive from justice were the first who wandered into a new region. A remarkable number of these people made it to Texas. Historian David B. Edwards characterizes the settlers "as composed of a class who had been unfortunate in life" since the fortunate would not voluntarily move to a new locale where they would encounter numerous difficulties. In a letter to his father, Elisha Pease discouraged him from settling in Texas: "Texas would be settled by the poor that were always the pioneers."[91] Author A. Garland Adair writes about the Texans that left the confines of the United States:

> The political boundary served increasingly as a selective social screen . . . blocking the flow of those with strong attachment to … their homeland and positively sucking in those who had strong reasons to escape its laws. Certainly not all who came were fleeing debts and courts but the proportion who were, together with the drifters and the adventuresome, the smugglers and speculators, was very high.[92]

In spite of the impulse to describe the pioneer saga as mere myth, the pioneering experience did require many of the qualities of determination, sensibleness, resourcefulness, creativity, and resilience attributed to the American character by Frederick Jackson Turner. John Holland Jenkins, an early Texas pioneer, describes a life that was enacted everywhere on the American frontier. He portrayed a hard, difficult life "squatting out on the raw prairie, where never a stick of timber had been hewn and deprived of many things generally regarded as being among the very necessities of life."[93] Jenkins' description of a people that lived with few comforts and eventually prospered provides realism to Turner's interpretation.

Most of the early Texans did not fit the image of the mythical hero of legend or of visionaries seeking a distant paradise. Their primary concern was not to subdue the wilderness

but to survive. It is only part of the story that the American migrant left his former home to make things better. Others were drifters who found steady employment confining. Less determined to subdue the wilderness than merely to survive in an environment more suitable to their roving propensities, they constantly moved on to new territory. James Reese in his dissertation revealed the slovenliness and carelessness of the early Texas frontier workingman. He further states that the process of migration had an adverse effect on artisans, "rather than the ambitious moving west, it was the incompetent—those who could not make a living in a more competitive situation."[94] Nicolas Clopper wrote home on July 20, 1826, stating that Texans abounded "in vice and immorality" and called the first settlers "a Class of people who do not Labour."[95]

In a remarkable coincidence, two occurrences seemed to solve the Mexican government's inability to colonize Texas. The economic depression that resulted from the Panic of 1819 occurred and the Spanish government deciding to seek Anglo settlers for Texas.[96]

The panic wiped out the hopes and dreams of a generation and left many destitute. Suits for debts, foreclosures, and evictions overwhelmed the courts, and the references to hardships and misery are prevalent throughout the letters and journals of the period. It is clear that a significant number of the early Texans were economically unsuccessful, disappointed, or simply unfortunate and unlucky.[97]

The great majority of the Anglo settlers came from the trans-Appalachian states of Tennessee, Missouri, Arkansas, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. These states suffered most from the credit tightening policies of the Bank of the United States.[98] Many of the new immigrants to Texas were men deeply in debt who fled their homes to escape embarrassment, harassment, and in many cases, imprisonment. Numerous debt collectors and sheriffs in the

Appalachian country and the South approached a dwelling only to find "G.T.T." (Gone to Texas) scrawled on the door. Stephen F. Austin described the settlers "as owing debts in the country from which they came."[99]

Outside of the jurisdiction of the United States until 1846, Texas served as a sanctuary for all who had reason to leave. First, the Spanish colony attracted a transient population of fugitives and filibusters from various countries. Later, legal and illegal settlers entered Texas to start a new life and obtain land. The 1806 Neutral Ground Treaty between the United States and Spain created a lawless territory on the border between Texas and the United States which served as a refuge for derelicts from both countries. Since the United States and Mexico had no extradition treaty, the Sabine River in East Texas acted as a boundary line and served as an unseen border between freedom and prison for those seeking asylum from the law.[100]

Thus began the process of characterizing Texas as a region that attracted ruthless men, seeking action, adventure, and war, who did as they pleased. One American frontiersman stated, "Now-a-days you can't put an inch or so of knife in a fellow . . . and law, law, law is the word. I mean to go to Texas where a man can have some peace and not be interfered with in his private concerns."[101] Another piece quoted by Noah Smithwick put the attitude toward Texas settlers in perspective:

> The United States, as we understand,
> Took sick and did vomit the dregs of the land.
> Her murders, bankrupts, and rogues you may see,
> All congregated in San Felipe.[102]

Texans themselves admitted that "it is nothing uncommon for us to inquire of a man why he ran away from the States, but very few persons," according to William Dewees, "feel insulted by such questions." Colonel Alexander MacRae was upset when he found that people readily volunteered the crimes and shortcomings of their neighbors: "In traveling along, you are sure to

find out the black spots in the character of each person you see — not from himself, but from a neighbor." Jesse Benton in Louisiana, writing to a friend in Texas who had a fire in his home, stated, "I looked and expected to hear of your losing your property by the rascality of the people of Texas . . . I wish you was out of Texas."[103] Noah Smithwick claimed, "It was the regular thing to ask a stranger what he had done, and if he disclaimed having been guilty of any offense he was regarded with suspicion."[104]

All frontier communities attracted drifters and fugitives from justice, but due to its relatively lawless status, Texas was an attractive environment for these societal misfits. In 1822, the *Niles Register* called Texas "a rendezvous for criminals," and the initials G.T.T. (Gone to Texas) would become infamous. An American explaining migration to an Englishman stated, "When we want to say shortly that it's all up with a fellow, we just say G.T.T., just as you say gone to the devil, or the dogs." He further stated that Texas was an "Elysium of rogues" and described the Anglos as "renegades and ruffians."[105] Benjamin Milan, a hero of the Revolution, observed in 1829 that Texas attracted the "most desperate people."[106]

The early settlers were considered wealthy as a result of their land grants. However, they were in Mexico, and the land could not be transferred without Mexican permission. Regardless of their economic picture, life was still difficult, lonely, and harsh. Indian raids, drought, cholera, depression, scorpions, and rattlesnakes were just a few of the daily hazards facing them. They had to be focused just to stay alive. Early settlers led a miserable existence until their homes were built and crops were gathered.

Most of Austin's original settlers, known as the "Old Three Hundred," had professional credentials: doctors, lawyers, surveyors—a class of settlers that the Spanish had failed for two centuries to place in Texas. Many were well educated; one traveler was thunderstruck to hear a

farmer slopping his hogs while reciting a Latin lesson from Tacitus. Austin wanted to avoid problems with this initial group of settlers. He accepted only those of a "better" class; only four were illiterate. Another indication of their financial status was, of the original three hundred families, sixty-nine owned slaves.[107]

Texas's reputation as a haven for adventurers, scoundrels, and fugitives is not completely true. According to a census of Austin's colony in 1825, including 443 slaves, over sixty percent were married, and eighty percent were under forty. Most new immigrants were family people, and their motivations were rarely frivolous or illegal. The Mexican government required that immigrants provide proof of good character, and Austin enforced that rule "with the utmost vigor." In the early years of his colony, Austin expelled men known to be "of infamous character and bad conduct." Austin was also aware that his colony was under close scrutiny by the Mexican government. If he did not enforce strict standards, the entire empresario program would be in jeopardy.[108]

Austin described the settlers in his colony as moral, industrious, and good citizens. All immigrants were "to bring credentials and testimonials proving their good character and conduct." [109] In spite of his severe regulations, Austin was unable to completely keep the lawless element out of his colony. One of the terms of settlement in Austin's colony stated, "No frontiersman who has no other occupation than that of a hunter will be received."[110]

There is no indication that the other empresarios felt any duty to establish standards or a code of ethics in selecting colonists. It was important to attract colonists, and success depended on attracting a specified number of settlers, not a certain quality of settler. If they failed to reach that number, they were not eligible for their empresario land grant. The problem of preferring

quantity over quality became apparent in the 1830s. Many of the rabble-rousers and revolutionaries were settlers outside of Austin's colonies.

Many settlers came to Texas looking for adventure and land; many others migrated to the region as a last resort. Their journals and letters indicate a determination to find success, and most were delighted with their new home in spite of the difficulties. William Aldridge confessed to his sister in 1837 that sorrow and depression had plagued him all of his life: "Here in Texas therefore must be my only and last home." Ira Freeman came to Texas for land; he pledged, "I am determined to make property or lose my life in the attempt."[111]

Although settlers experienced difficult hardships along the way, many liked their new land. Thomas Decrow came to Brazoria from Maine via Boston and New Orleans. He wrote his brother in 1831, shortly after his arrival, attempting to convince him to migrate to Texas. He stated that Texas had a need for carpenters and that within four hours a man could catch oysters, deer, ducks, turkeys, and even wild geese in the winter. Asa Brigham, who moved to Texas in 1830, wrote home that he would like to visit his home in Massachusetts again but would never want to spend another winter there. Although lightning killed his brother soon after they arrived in Texas, Claiborne Rector wrote his sister to encourage her to come to Texas, stating that he was pleased with the country and had been in good health since his arrival.[112]

Service to manifest destiny became the call of Mary Austin Holley. Sister to early colonist Henry Austin and cousin to Stephen F. Austin, Holley wrote one of the best known guides to Texas in the 1830s after a trip to visit her relatives. Widowed in 1827 with two children, she came to Bolivar on the Brazos River with her son. The Austins welcomed them eagerly, hosting them in their home for months. While she stayed with her relatives, Holley spoke to the residents of Austin's Colony, learning as much as she could about the colony and

province as a whole. What she saw and heard about Texas impressed her so much that she decided to write a book lauding its beauty, its people, and especially its lushness. Published in 1831, *Texas* sang about the adventures of the soil, and particularly the "salubrity of the climate, the fertility of the soil, and the facility with which the lands can be brought under cultivation." In her work Holley contributed substantially to the call for new immigrants. Although she never saw the whole region, relying frequently on secondhand information, the author impressed thousands of readers across the United States and Europe with the idea of moving westward.[113]

She wrote to assist her cousin, Stephen, in his enterprise. She owned a significant amount of acreage, so the success of the colony directly impacted her economically. She quickly perceived that Texas was a subject that could sell books, and her first book made close to a thousand dollars profit.[114]

Primarily, Holley intended her work to be an emigrant guide. Too many rumors existed regarding this strange colony for Americans to know what Texas was actually like. Reports often made exaggerated claims, leaving unrealistic expectations in their wake. The author recognized that too often duped emigrants became "the certain victims of privation, disappointment and ultimate ruin," and Holley wanted to make amends for their losses. More importantly, she directed much of her work to women, an audience that other published works ignored but a group that constituted a large segment of the reading public. Holley insisted that women understand the nature of their endeavor as well, because "the comfort of every family and the general well-being of the infant colony" depended on their efforts. As a woman she could provide "more hints for the judicious arrangement of the voyage and the indispensable attentions to the comfort and economy of the infant establishment, then could be gathered from the abstract and general views of gentleman travelers."[115]

Despite her optimism, Holley realized that the colony was not perfect. She warned housekeepers to be prepared for anything, including a lack of clothing and other sundries: "Ladies, in particular, should remember that in a new country, they cannot get things made at any moment, as in an old one, and that they will be sufficiently busy, the first two years in arranging such things as they have, without occupying themselves in obtaining more.[116]

William Thompson of New York wrote his relatives in Bastrop, Texas, that "We have concluded on emigrating to Texas . . . That Texas will and very soon be a great nation and certainly it is but fair that to enjoy good things we should also share a few of the hardships and privations which attend the early settlers in any country bearing in mind that they are the first to reap the advantage and occupy situations which will be the envy of their later neighbors."[117] Thompson had many doubts about migrating to Texas. The region was an untamed and dangerous country inhabited by over thirty thousand Native Americans. It was a Mexican province beyond the territory of the American government where any semblance of law and order was virtually unknown. In the few scattered towns, some three thousand Mexican residents spoke a language and practiced a religion alien to the Anglo culture.

Many immigrants came to initiate or recoup financial fortunes. The Cloppers failed in three business ventures before coming to Texas in the late 1820s. Their relatives called the trip to Texas "a wild goose chase." Nathaniel Townsend came to Harrisburg, Texas, from New Orleans because Texas symbolized "a land promising milk and honey."[118]

John J. Linn, one of the earliest Irish settlers, who arrived before the availability of land grants from the Mexican government, recalled in his old age that "Texas was then a terrestrial paradise. Health, Plenty and Good-Will teemed throughout the land."[119] From the evidence of their own memoirs, the Irish pioneers who settled primarily in two communities, San Patricia and

Refugio in south Texas, were familiar with the concept of paradise and accepted it as part of the explanation of their mental and physical migration to the New World. One of the Irish colonists, Annie Fagin Teal, on seeing the location of her frontier home on the banks of the San Antonio River, described it as "a Paradise [of] such beautiful country, green grass and trees in mid-winter, horses running and playing over the vast prairies, deer grazing, quietly."[120]

An anonymous writer in 1826 recorded that, "These regions, which present no obstacle to the traveler in any direction, except where they are crossed by streams, and whose soil is generally rich, and often of almost incalculable fertility, present superior attractions to colonists." He continued to describe the opportunities and requirements.

> I might easily obtain a quarter of a league of unappropriated land, on condition of professing the Roman Catholic religion, becoming a citizen of the Republic of Mexico, and residing on the soil for six years receiving title from the government. It was surprising to see in how short a time a settler, with a moderate sum of money in hand could become independent in such a country.[121]

Another European settler, Caroline von Hineuber, heard while in New Orleans that every settler who came to Texas with their family would receive a league and labor of land from the Mexican government. This information induced the von Hineuber family to abandon their plan to settle in Missouri.[122]

> At the time we left New Orleans hardily anything was known of Texas, except that my ideas and those . . . formed by a letter from Fritz Ernst who described Texas . . . as a beautiful country, with enchanting scenery and delightful climate, similar to that of Italy, the most fruitful soil and republican government, with unbounded personal and political liberty, free from so many disadvantages and evils of old countries.

Von Hineuber's voyage to New Orleans was utter misery. They were "as uncomfortable as the dogs." They lived at a friend's house for the first six months until they could build their own home, describing it as "a miserable little hut, covered with straw and having six sides which

were made out of moss." She also noted, "The roof was by no means waterproof, and we often held an umbrella over our bed when it rained at night, while the cows came in and ate the moss"; she further related the lack of sufficient clothing, the great distance between families, the meals for the first few months consisting solely of cornbread, and the great expense of buying cloth and yarn. She talked of a neighbor and her young children being kidnapped by Indians. The Anglos eventually paid the ransom for the wife but did not have enough money to free the children: "No one can imagine what a degree of want there was of for the merest necessities of life and it is difficult for me now to understand how we managed to live and get along under the circumstances." Caroline's mother once walked five miles to assist a neighbor's child.[123]

German immigrant Carole Louise Baron von Roeder wrote in a letter home in 1835, "Hurry, hurry, and join us. This is truly the land of freedom and romance." Countless other immigrants shared the liberty von Roeder felt and urged their friends and family to do the same.[124]

Robert Hunter, upon his arrival in Texas, described a chaotic beginning. An Indian guide robbed his family of all their money. They lost all their belongings when his father left to survey their tract of land. Only by hard work, dedication, and much sacrifice were they able to survive.[125] David Burnet, the governor of Texas during the Revolution, traveled to Texas alone in 1817, suffering greatly from a lung disease. His family doctor told him that he might regain his health if he went to Texas and lived with the Indians. The Comanches watched him warily and, noting his failing health, brought him into their camp where he lived for over a year. He moved back to Cincinnati but returned to Texas in 1824 when Mexico approved Anglo immigration. He described Texas as one of the "few regions on the globe which the bounties of

nature have been profusely dispensed." Burnet later married, raised a family, and feuded with Sam Houston during the revolution concerning Houston's ego and military tactics.[126]

William Buford Dewees was in Texas early enough to qualify for a grant of land as one of Stephen F. Austin's Old Three Hundred. There were no provisions under the Mexican colonization law for granting land to single men, but in some instances two or more of the unmarried men among Austin's colonists joined together to constitute a legal family in order to qualify for land grants. Dewees and James Cook were two of these, and on August 3, 1824, they received a league of land in present Colorado County: "As far as we have seen, we are well pleased with this part of the country. As high up as we have explored, the Brazos has the appearance of being a large navigable stream. The land is very rich and fertile." [127]

For most settlers, the first view of their new home was the barren Texas coast, and the first people they met were frequently the Karankawas, described by settler Noah Smithwick as "the most savage human beings I ever saw." After landing at the mouth of the Brazos or Colorado, the settlers moved inland to locate their property. They led a "dreary" existence, desperate at times for food, shelter, and other basic staples of life and terrified of the vast wilderness with real and imagined dangers. They found themselves isolated from the United States by a three-day ocean voyage, even if regular service was available. The strangeness of their new homes, their isolation, and their sense of despair was a catalyst for violence between themselves and the Native Americans who occupied the same land.[128]

In 1827 as a boy of nineteen, Noah Smithwick left Kentucky with only a few dollars to his name, a change of clothing, and a rifle. In New Orleans he worked at a factory for extra money. His trip to Matagorda by schooner only took forty-eight hours. Later, he remembered,

"My first meal on Texas soil was dried venison sopped in honey . . . It looked like starvation to me, but I was adaptive."[129]

Captain Jesse Burnam, one of the original members of Austin's colony, chronicled the horrendous conditions for many of the early colonists. He described being out of bread for nine months and keeping his honey in a deerskin while his daughter wore a dress of buckskins. He barely kept his family alive while they were constantly harassed by Indians.[130]

Anglo settler Asa Parker attempted to dispel the prevailing myth that travel to Texas was not perilous and, once there, life was not initially difficult. He described a beautiful country of rich soil and forests of stately trees. But he also warned of the perils of Texas, describing an immigrant from Missouri whose wife died on the journey, leaving him to take care of two babies. Another lost four hundred dollars while crossing the Red River, and one from Mississippi had his horse stolen. [131]

The population of Austin's colony increased from approximately 1,800 in 1825 to 5,555 in 1831, and the rest of Texas grew proportionately. However, not all immigrants heading west were enthusiastic about Texas. Even though the Anglo population exceeded thirty thousand within fifteen years of Austin's first settlement, economic times remained difficult. Mexican antislavery laws particularly discouraged Southern planters. In contrast to the concern, the *Texas Gazette* commented in 1830, "when all the incentives to Texas immigration are considered, we are astonished that the moving multitude do not all concentrate or converge to Texas."[132]

Dilue Harris wrote of a disappointed settler who said that if he were back in Kentucky, under no circumstances would he move to Texas. George W. Smythe wrote home, "I would not advise any man of good property to resign there for the sake of uncertain advantages which this country may seem to offer."[133]

Amos Parker wrote in the mid-1830s, "I found some of the emigrants disappointed, discontented and unhappy; and I met one man on his return to the land from whence he came. He was from Tennessee, had moved to Texas with his family and a small portion of his goods in a wagon; but they did not like the country as well as the one they had left, and unanimously agreed to return." Parker went on to chide the migrants to appreciate their previous home.[134]

Parker attempted to dispel some myths for the new colonists. The abundance of buffalo did the new settlers little good, and the soil varied considerably in richness which meant that wheat could be difficult to grow with the consequent effect of high flour prices. Noah Smithwick commented, "The beautiful rose color that tinged my visions of Texas while viewing it through Robertson's long-distance lens paled with each succeeding step."[135]

Eduard Ludecus planned to settle on the Missouri River when he left Germany in 1833. However, once he arrived in New York, Dr. John Charles Beale persuaded him to join his colony on the Rio Grande River in Texas. Upon arriving in Texas, Ludecus wrote cautionary letters to other German emigrants concerning the deprivations of living in Texas. As he began to realize that Dr. Beale and his assistants had never visited Texas and had no knowledge of the land to which they were leading the colonists, he desired other Germans to understand the pitfalls of settling in Texas and Mexico.[136]

Ludecus states that most of the colonists would not have come to Texas if they had been informed of the dangers that they would experience on the trip, especially the constant fear of Indian attacks. He described the surrounding country as a "sad sight" and lamented that wood for construction of houses and barns was nowhere to be found.[137]

Among those women who stayed in Texas, Harriet Ames did not handle the isolation well. She lived for a year without any Anglo women nearby "in a country filled with Indians."

Prior to settling in with her new husband, Ames expressed concerns about the living arrangements. "There are no neighbors but the Indians," she informed her husband. "I do not see anyone living here. What are we going to do without Neighbors?" Although her husband tried to assure her that "Indians make the best neighbors," she remained dissatisfied until "we saw the country around us inhabited by white People."[138]

Mary S. Helm agreed with Ames's assessment of the situation. Texas was, for all practical purposes, on the other side of the world from her home and family. In 1829, the territory was "beyond the bounds of my own country, beyond the reach of our own mails … hemmed in by savages and almost unknown." Not only did Helm still have obvious ties to the United States when Texas remained a Mexican province, but she also viewed her new home as a mysterious threat rather than an exciting opportunity, and a threat too dangerous to face alone.[139]

The son of a wealthy New England shipping merchant, Henry Austin went to sea as a cabin boy at age twelve. He returned from a journey to find his father dead of yellow fever and the family business on his young shoulders. By 1824, his family included six children, increasing the financial pressure. A cousin of Stephen F. Austin, he decided to try steam navigation on Texas rivers and settled his family in Bolivar.[140]

The reasons for coming to Texas varied with each settler, but if there is a fairly common theme, it was the desire to begin anew. According to family tradition, Jared Ellison Groce came to Texas "in order to avoid paying his numerous creditors that were suing him." Another account is that Groce settled in some of the wildest land in Texas to soothe a broken heart due to the death of his wife. When John Hassell came to Texas in 1834, he deserted his wife and daughter for the second time. His brother had to write the wife to explain his actions. James

Grant hated his wife and left Scotland. A handsome gentleman named Claude Riviere arrived in Nacogdoches in 1827 representing himself as the son of a wealthy sugar planter.[141]

These accounts reveal a desire for new opportunity and a fresh start. Historian Eugene Baker finds that the primary reason for emigration was economic.[142] He emphasizes that Texas was a continuation of the westward movement and stimulated by the poor financial conditions in the United States. In addition to the economic considerations, other factors added credibility to the economic impetus. One prospective settler stated that he was "determined for a warmer climate."[143] Political dissatisfaction encouraged some to migrate. Austin's mother wrote him that "the people were so dissatisfied with the country, or rather with those that govern it."[144]

A number of wives followed their husbands to Texas and faced incredible hardships while traveling. Nathaniel Townsend, in a letter to his parents dated December 2, 1821, described his wife, who was at least six months pregnant during the trip from New Orleans, delivering a baby two months after arriving in Texas. Lucinda Caldwell was not so fortunate. She came to Texas from Alabama and buried her newborn along the Mississippi. The Klebergs began the nine-month voyage from Germany to Texas which ended in a shipwreck on Galveston Island.[145]

Amos Andrew Parker estimated that in the 1820s there were ten men to each woman in Texas: "Could the surplus maiden population of New England be induced to migrate to Texas, they would meet with cordial reception and it might prove not only advantageous to them, but also highly beneficial to the country."[146]

The offers of inexpensive land and extraordinary opportunity caused a surplus of Anglo-American men without wives or children to migrate to the province. Texas law allowed single women to obtain land, but settlement in the wilderness was dangerous and solitary, requiring an

intensive amount of hard manual labor. However, it was not unusual for widows with children to move to Texas. Stephen F. Austin's "Register of Families" in his colony describes twenty widows, most with children. In 1835 Abigail Fokes, a widow with six children, moved to Texas from Florida, and Mary Peevyhouse Smith, also a widow, came with her children in 1833.[147]

Frontier conditions made marriage critical for the new migrants. Sons and daughters provided a valuable work force on the farms. But the demands of homesteading placed tremendous pressures on Anglo Texas women. Given their residence on farms and ranches, women acutely felt the loss of friends and family and the impact of severe loneliness. Men were frequently gone for days and weeks at a time while the women stayed at home tending the farm and children. These efforts inevitably took their toll on even the most compatible of marriages.[148]

In contrast to the role of Texas women, the social disorganization of a wilderness ignited the ethos of male violence. Historian Joan Cashin noted that men from the upper South brought with them a legacy of feuding, which meant they settled private arguments without the assistance of law authorities. To a degree, maintaining order through personal violence served well in a province that lacked any law enforcement. The danger of Indians, Mexican soldiers, and wild animals contributed to the concept of unregulated self-help. In Texas, male violence was exhibited predominantly in the campaign to eradicate Native American tribes that inhabited land coveted by the Anglos.

A number of the men who initially migrated to Texas brought with them social values that were an anathema to family cohesion. This philosophy emphasized individualism, competiveness, and a willingness to take risks corresponding to the standards of Jacksonian democracy and laissez-faire democracy. What these men wanted was to live a defiantly

unconstrained life free from the traditional interference of families. Their stories were about personal fulfillment of dreams rather than obligations to one's family.[149]

The rowdy behavior of many men appears to have origins other than frontier disorganization. A large number of the arriving men were already prone to discount their moral obligations to the public and other individuals. The reports of other early settlers and leaders attest to the rebelliousness and irresponsibility of these Anglo Texas males often described as antisocial misfits. In a letter to Stephen Austin, Thomas White described the male population of Texas as convicts from state prisons.[150] Austin himself complained about the men in his colony, noting their propensity for drunkenness, riotousness, laziness, public fighting, as well as slandering him and others in leadership positions. Summing up the situation in 1829, Austin stated, "I had two difficult tasks to perform here, one to manage the government and the other to manage the settlers, of these the latter was by far the most difficult." [151]

Besides settler issues and problems with the Mexican government, Austin had to deal with a mostly hostile press. While Austin was in Mexico City, a drought plagued Texas, resulting in massive crop failure. Disease and Indians continued to confront the fledgling colony. The press in other western states publicized these reports, for those regions desired the same immigrants that were migrating to Texas. The Arkansas *Gazette* warned colonists they had "better wait" several years rather than "run the risk they now do of suffering vastly from the total destitution of everything like comfort." Remarking on the "wretchedness and poverty" of the early Texans, the *Gazette* expressed the desire that their experiences would "operate as a serious warning to others; and teach them to limit emigration to their own country." The western press also noted the preponderance of "murderers, horse-thieves, counterfeiters, and fugitives from justice" in Texas.[152] The fierce competition for colonists meant that categorizing Texas and

Texans in the worst possible manner made other regions more appealing. Upon reaching "sixty thousand free inhabitants,"[153] a region could apply to the United States for statehood.

Conversely, *Debow's Review*, a Southern journal devoted to commerce, agriculture, and the arts, called Texas "the true springs of national greatness and individual prosperity." Texas offered wealth and a fresh start for those wishing to make themselves better.[154]

The fresh start did not apply to the first Texas pioneers of European descent who had called the region home for the previous one hundred and fifty years. In Texas, the Anglos encountered a different kind of native (Tejanos), many of whom had European names and lived in Spanish style homes. The harsh environment demanded accommodation, but by the time the Anglos arrived, the adjustment had already taken place. European culture and institutions had already adapted to the problems of water, industry, and the management of natural resources. This new region had a social order befitting its particular natural environment, and both forces would affect the Anglo-American experience.

Many of the early Texas Anglos had nothing but disdain for the Tejanos with whom they shared Texas. They had limited contact with the Tejano population and considered them a lazy, degraded race. Most of the Mexican population was concentrated in the San Antonio and La Bahía areas, far from the Anglo colonies. However, this distance did not prevent the Anglos from developing a negative predisposition toward the Tejanos, calling them descendants of "paganism, depravity, and primitivism."[155]

After their victory at San Jacinto and the threat from Mexico diminished, Anglo-American rebels controlled not only Texas but the writing of its history. They became propagandists with a new twist. They portrayed themselves as heroes, a "superior race of men."[156] But heroes needed villains, and the early Texas histories found them in the Hispanic

past. The first comprehensive history of the Spanish era in Texas to appear in English (and the standard work until the twentieth century) ended with a dismal recording: "We have herein traced the history of Texas through the dim records of a hundred and thirty-six years, rarely finding in that long period a congenial spot for human happiness. Ignorance and despotism have hung like a dark cloud over her noble forests and luxuriant prairies."[157]

In their greedy appetite for land, American settlers ignored laws and crowded out the Tejanos and Mexicans. The size of the Anglo migration ruined any chance for the empresario system to work as designed. For every family that settled legally under an empresario contract, many others made Texas their home illegally. One Mexican official, Juan Almonte, lamented, "If then, the condition of Texas is so prosperous, what precludes Mexicans from enjoying its prosperity? Are they not the owners of those precious lands?"[158]

While many ethnocentric Americans who flocked to Texas in the 1820s and 1830s proclaimed their preeminence in practically every aspect of human behavior, the only concession they made to Tejanos was that they handled horses very well. The sanctimonious Mary Austin Holley believed Mexicans and Tejanos to be "ignorant and degraded, and generally speaking, timid and irresolute" but granted that they were "universally acknowledged to be the best hands that can be procured, for the management of cattle, horses and other live stock." Mary S. Helm scorned those of Hispanic ethnicity as the "debris of several inferior and degraded races" who were "demoralized by a long course of indolence and political corruption." Mrs. Helm's bigoted philippic represented the viewpoint of many Americans of her era.[159]

The early Texans harbored deep racial dislike for the Mexicans and regarded them as deceitful and lazy. Austin wrote that the Mexicans "were considered ignorant, bigoted, and stupid and lazy, interested only in pleasure."[160] In 1827 J. C. Tanner wrote to Austin, "You

know I am not in favor of the Spanish except the Women of this Country. For the men are the damndest rascals in the world."[161] To Henry Austin they lacked "faith in all transactions" and "were villainous." Another commented that "all the government in the world would not make them worth the powder that it would take to blow them to Hell—that which God made a Jack Ass cannot be educated so as to make a fine Horse."[162]

Austin provided a synthesis of the Americans' attitude toward the Mexicans when he stated:

> The population . . . is very mixed . . . and a great proportion of them are miserably poor and wretched . . . the people are bigoted and superstitious to the extreme, and indolence seems to be the general order of the day . . . in fact the City Magnificent . . .is at least one century behind many other places in point of intelligence and improvement . . . and the nation generally is in the same situation.[163]

A number of cultural differences exacerbated the relationship between the Mexicans and Anglos. The first was language. The settlers realized that difficulties arose because of their failure to read and speak Spanish. Another was the problem of understanding Mexican laws and regulations. Ignorance of Mexican law provided the incentive for the Anglos to fall back upon their own concepts of behavior. The third was slavery. The majority of Texas settlers supported slavery. They were not adverse to the idea of future emancipation but insisted that slavery was the only way to keep them economically viable for the present.[164]

African-Americans had lived in Texas for over 400 hundred years before the Anglo migration, longer than any other region in the United States. Estevan, a Moor slave, was a member of the ill-fated Pánfilo de Narváez expedition. He traveled across the length of Texas with Cabeza de Vaca, cementing forever a reputation for his keen ability to learn Native American languages. This ability saved the lives of the survivors many times.[165]

Even such men as Stephen F. Austin believed that African-American slavery was absolutely essential to the development of Texas. He wrote, "Prohibiting slavery . . . would destroy the whole Anglo population, destroy property, destroy agriculture, lose many skillful artisans and businessmen, and many families and industries would leave Texas." The land was a rough country upon which single laborers could make but little impression, and labor was not available, even had the colonists possessed the money to pay for it. Moreover, the most fertile soil, found in the river bottoms of the Brazos, Colorado, and Trinity Rivers, were malaria ridden, and the settlers did not want to subject themselves to such a virulent disease.[166]

Like most white Southerners, white immigrants considered slavery central to their lives. In the first ten years of Texas Anglo colonization, two thousand slaves accompanied the first twenty thousand settlers to Texas. However, antislavery sentiments were strong in post-revolutionary Mexico. Benjamin Lundy, the noted Texas abolitionist, stated, "The war in Texas is the result of a long premeditated crusade against the government set on foot by slaveholders, land speculators, etc., with the view of re-establishing, extending and perpetuating the system of slave trade and slavery in the Republic of Mexico."[167]

The Spanish approved Moses Austin's contract to establish the first Anglo-American colony in Texas. Austin's slave accompanied him to San Antonio, the capital of the province when he presented his empresario application. After Mexico became free from Spain, the permission to bring slaves into Texas became nebulous. This issue and others prompted his son Stephen F. Austin to travel to Mexico and clarify the legality of the empresario grant.[168]

By the time Austin reached the capital, other empresario applicants were besieging the government as the Mexicans debated a national colonization policy.[169] The Mexican Congress floundered as it tried to address the conflicting question of liberty and property. Eventually,

antislavery and emancipation passed.[170] Austin stated in his letter to Edward Lovelace on November 22, 1822, "The principal difficulty is slavery, this they will not admit—as the law is all slaves are to be free in ten years, but I am trying to have it amended so as to make them slaves for life and their children free in 21 years."[171]

The news spread throughout the United States that Mexico was hostile to slavery, and Austin received a number of anxious inquiries from prospective settlers. One wrote, "Our most valuable inhabitants here own negroes. I am therefore anxious to know what the laws are on that subject. Can they be introduced as laboring servants of emigrants?" Another wrote, "You know such is the sensitive feelings of slaveholders on that subject that the least agitation will deter them from emigrations." These men were from the Southern United States cotton growing class. They realized that Texas had the potential to be the greatest cotton producing region in the world, and slaves were indispensable to large-scale cotton production. For Austin and the settlers already in Texas, Mexican hostility to slavery was a grave issue. Their property was endangered, and their future in jeopardy. Only rapid and well-organized immigration could develop Texas, enhance the value of their property, and bring the comforts of a civilized society. Since this depended on slavery, the Anglos did everything to maintain it.[172]

The Mexican government initially issued a federal act on July 13, 1824, prohibiting slavery on all Mexican soil. Erasmus Seguin, the Texas representative to the Mexican Congress, told Austin that the government was determined to eradicate slavery throughout the country "under any pretext." Their many years under harsh and cruel Spanish rule made them highly sympathetic to others living under the same conditions.[173]

Austin, who owned slaves, was involved in the buying and selling of slaves and realized that his hopes for wealth depended on slavery. He immediately appealed the government's

decision. Austin proposed that until 1840 colonists, but no others, should be allowed to take slaves to Texas for their own use and property. After studying the Act, Austin found a loophole in the law that the statute applied only to slave trade, not slave ownership. [174]

In July 1826, Austin received notice that Mexican officials, working on the state constitution, reached a critical juncture regarding slavery. Again, Austin mounted a defense for slavery. His remarks emphasized the early permission to bring slaves to Texas when the colonists first came to the province. He stressed that Anglo widows and orphans could not live without slave labor, and the colonists deserved better than to be buried in the wilderness without laborers and "without consolation for the present or hope for the future."[175]

The state legislature discounted Austin's personal appeal. The final law passed on January 31, 1827, recognized existing slavery but declared free all children born to slaves.[176] The government made no effort to enforce the provisions of this law. However, Austin continued to pursue the cause of slavery relentlessly. He proposed a system of labor contracts between master and slave before entrance into Texas. Austin introduced a law that stated, "All contracts not contrary to the laws of this State made in foreign countries between emigrants to, or inhabitants of, this State and servants or hirelings introduced by them are guaranteed as valid in this State."[177]

Before the close of the decade, the government made one more assault on slavery in Texas. In August 1829 President Guerro issued a proclamation abolishing slavery throughout the republic except in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. The purpose of the document was to halt emigration from the United States.[178]

Austin again initiated a spirited defense of slavery. He stated that his constitutional rights allowed him to own slaves and that the entire procedure was illegal and unconstitutional.[179] The

Mexican government decided to exempt Texas from the order: "His Excellency declares that no change must be made as respects the slaves that legally exist in your part of the state."[180]

The news delighted Austin. His exuberance seems justified as the close of 1829 saw one of the greatest immigrations to Texas to date. One hundred and fifty-three families arrived in November and December. A number of Alabama planters made plans to migrate to Texas. On March 28 Austin wrote his brother-in-law, "You have no idea at all of this country nor of the great emigration that is daily coming to it, nor of the character of the immigrants. We are getting the best kind of men, the best kind of settlers. Pay no attention to rumors and silly reports."[181]

The issue of slavery was not the only problem in the Texas province. The Native Americans continued to raid and menace the Anglo colonies. The lack of support from the Mexican government to halt these marauders proved to be as contentious as slavery. The Indians had always provided a check against expansion of the Texas frontier and persistently were the most serious problem in any plans to colonize Texas. The Indian issue was a fundamental component of the Mexican colonization plans. The Mexicans felt that to date, the only people who had dealt effectively with the Indians were the Americans who simply exterminated Native American populations in their quest for expansion.[182]

Texans' aggression, their antagonistic mentality and inclination for hostility, their individualism and racism, and most of all their covetousness for profit and land made conflict with the Indians almost inevitable. But this was true throughout the West. However, in Texas the Indian wars lasted fifty years, and the violence on both sides was horrific.

Indian raids increased in Texas as the Anglos moved further westward. Anglos reversed the balance of power and upset the trade alliances across the region, and the nebulous Mexican response to Anglo expansion worried Indian leaders. The Anglos had already forced the

displacement of most tribes in the Eastern United States. Several of these tribes had migrated to Texas ahead of the Anglos, resulting in a competition for resources and power.[183]

Deceitful Anglos helped to tip the delicate balance of power between the Indian tribes and the Mexicans. Miguel Ramos Arizpe noted that prior to the influx of the Americans the Indians "did not have firearms except a small number of old muskets which they received as gifts from the Spaniards, with a very small supply of powder that hardily served them because of its quality." Americans "broke that dependency by furnishing Indians good guns and very exquisite powder." The Indians raided Mexican settlements in order to trade livestock and human captives to the Americans for more guns and powder.[184] Mexican officials believed that the Anglos were responsible since they carried on a "clandestine trade in arms and ammunition with the Indians."[185]

Most of these incoming American settlers brought with them their racial ideology that put white men on top of the social pyramid and Indians, Tejanos, and African-Americans at the bottom. The Americans hoped to obtain vast amounts of land, some for agriculture, some for grazing, and some for speculation. Since Indians lived on the best lands in Texas, the Anglos viewed them as barriers to their economic progress. One of the primary differences between the newly arrived Americans and their Spanish and French predecessors was that the Anglos were not interested in détente; instead, they raided Indian and Tejano villages for horses and hides. If Texas settlers feared Indian raids, many Indians came to fear Anglo Texans just as much.[186]

Each side had issues with the other. Nineteenth-century Texans held Indians to a standard that they refused to accept themselves. Texans ignored Indian land claims while insisting that their own claims be recognized. They refused to accept that a tribal leader could not control his young men; at the same time, Texans could do little about their own law breakers.

Demanding that the Indians obey every detail of a law or treaty, Anglo Texans, predominantly southerners, championed the right to disregard the laws of the United States and Mexico.[187]

The settlers of Austin's colony intentionally dispossessed the Karankawas of their homes and land through a campaign of violence and terror. In order to justify actions that violated their own moral code, the colonists demonized the Indians in such a manner as to legitimize their actions. They fabricated tales concerning Indian actions to portray the Karankawas as guilty of the most horrendous crimes which removed them from the ranks of humanity.[188]

Austin used his first militia, or the Texas Rangers, to assert his claims to lands in the Colorado and Brazos River valleys. Rangers proceeded to attack Karankawa and Tonkawa villages, massacring everybody except young children and females. Later, he convinced Mexico of the danger of the Wacos and Tawakonis and literally forced them from their land, opening up to Anglo settlement valuable sections of Texas for which Austin immediately applied and was given an empresario grant.[189]

Slavery, Indians, land speculation, and lack of government resources created an undercurrent of mutual suspicion, tension, distrust, and frustration during the decade. Barker described these issues as "dull, organic aches."[190] The Anglos arrived in greater numbers than planned. Many migrants simply crossed the Sabine and occupied land without government sanction. This rapid pace of growth caused Mexican officials to reconsider their liberal land policy. U.S. diplomatic efforts to obtain Texas also raised the apprehension level among Mexican leaders.

By the mid-1820s Mexico had begun to doubt its decision to open Texas to immigration from the United States. The huge influx of Anglos threatened their traditions, and few North American colonists seemed inclined to convert to a "Mexican" point of view. The Americans

kept their religious and political beliefs and insisted that slavery was their right. They agitated loudly for Mexico to recognize their concepts of self-government and made threatening gestures when authorities requested their adherence to the Mexican regulations. Already they outnumbered the native-born Tejanos, and the demographic imbalance was rapidly increasing.[191]

The Mexicans attempted to dispel the concept that Texas was a border province and to make it an integral part of Mexico. The 1830s brought more Mexican presence into Texas affairs and resistance on the part of the Anglos. The Mexican attempt to halt further Anglo migration in early 1830 was the first salvo in a war that would not only birth a nation but also a people with a strong sense of Texas nationalism and exceptionalism. These strongly individualistic people moved to Texas because of their inability to function in a more structured society. The Mexicans were foolhardy to think they could civilize a group of people bent on individual freedom and negligible local governance. The cracks had begun to appear, and the fissure would split in the next decade.

In early 1830 a different Anglo Texan emerged. At one time appreciative of the opportunities given by Mexico, the Anglos wanted more. The Mexican government gave the Anglos much latitude and freedom and did not mistreat the American settlers. The Mexican Constitution of 1824 and the lack of Mexican officials allowed a large measure of local autonomy. English was the language of business and real estate transactions where the Anglos settled. The Mexicans did not enforce the Catholic religion requirement. The authorities did not interfere in the Anglo economic and farming endeavors. Generally, the Mexican government had little impact on the day-to-day life of the settlers.

But this tolerance did little to satisfy the Anglo hunger for independence. The wary détente in existence in 1829 was to undergo a severe test in the ensuing years.

CHAPTER IV

THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD, 1830 – 1836

This chapter traces the events leading to the Texas Revolution and the role played by Texas settlers. During this time, the settlers who arrived before 1830 grew comfortable in their new country and began to reap the benefits of their land grants. They were comparatively land wealthy and hesitant to make any substantial changes in the status quo. The newer, mostly illegal migrants who came after Mexico prohibited Anglo migration in April 1830 wanted political change and a severing of the relationship with Mexico. The resulting tension between the two groups reverberated throughout the Texas Revolution. In the meantime, Texans continued to wage war against the Native Americans, imported more slaves, and treated Tejanos with increasing disdain and suspicion.

The Texas Revolution was a small war as wars go: probably no more than 2,500 men from both sides were ever engaged in a single action. It was also a short war, lasting approximately seven months, and fought in one of the most obscure areas of the world. Yet the Texas War for Independence evolved into a celebrated narrative of heroic character. Historian and retired Army Officer Michael Lee Lanning considered the Battle of San Jacinto to be the twenty-third most important military battle in the history of the world as it opened the American southwest to Anglo expansion. The freedom from Mexico won at San Jacinto eventually led to annexation and to the Mexican-American War.[1]

Ironically, the firebrands of the Texas Revolution arrived after the April 6, 1830 Law was enacted. William B. Travis, Jim Bowie, James Fannin, Davy Crockett, and Sam Houston encountered various difficulties at home, and they considered Texas a place to cast aside past

indiscretions and start a new life. Dissatisfied with Mexican government, these soldiers of fortune envisioned that the severing of Texas from Mexico would give them the same or better opportunities than those they had previously squandered.

By the early 1830s, Texas had caught the imagination of practically an entire generation of Americans. For thousands of young men and their families, the promise of opportunity and the prospect of future wealth made severing ties with the United States relatively easy. The lure of potential riches in Texas was stronger than ancestral ties in Kentucky, Tennessee, and a host of other states.

In large numbers, Anglo-Americans migrated to Texas in the 1820s, creating apprehension among Mexican officials. These Anglos randomly attacked Native American villages for the sole purpose of taking their land. They became obstinate and arrogant. They saw themselves as biologically and culturally superior to their Native American and Tejano neighbors. They brought with them a claim of exclusive ownership of the land. They sought individual and family freedom. However, they never really severed their ties to the United States, an identification that gave them a strong sense of military and economic power. This bond to the United States prevented any real relationship with Mexico, further inflaming an already volatile situation.[2]

Mexico had good reason to fear Anglo immigration. It unleashed powerful forces, as regionalism, isolation, nationalism, and foreign influence began to push Texas away from its Mexican origins. Suffering from a series of coups and revolutions that rendered it increasingly unstable politically, the Mexican government appeared powerless to stop these forces in Texas. As a result, many Anglo frontiersmen questioned the legitimacy of Mexican leaders, laws, and institutions that were unresponsive to their needs.

The Anglos complained incessantly about the Mexican political system. When they crossed the Sabine River into Texas, they brought with them a distinct set of assumptions about law, politics, and individual rights that they believed to be indisputable and God-given. With the Mexican state government and appellate courts in Saltillo, hundreds of miles from the Anglo colonies, the colonists felt isolated and alienated. They were also frustrated judicial processes were in Spanish, not English, and that there was no trial by jury.[3]

By 1830, the Mexican government, suspecting the motives of the Anglo migrants as well as of the U. S. government, became alarmed at the evolving Americanization of Texas. The United States was making ominous threats to separate Texas from Mexico. Andrew Jackson authorized his Minister to Mexico, Joel Roberts Poinsett, to make a five-million-dollar offer to Mexico for Texas. Washington recalled Poinsett before the Mexicans received any formal offer, but these intrigues deeply concerned the Mexican government.[4]

Even before John L. Sullivan coined the term "manifest destiny" in the 1840s, Mexicans were aware of Americans' tendency to explain their territorial expansion as part of "God's plan." In the 1820s, a series of dispatches written from the Texas frontier by Inspector-General Manuel Mier y Terán made it clear that American designs on Mexico's northern territories deeply concerned the Mexican government: "Texas is contiguous to the most avid nation in the world. The North Americans have conquered whatever territory adjoins them." In less than fifty years, they "have become masters of extensive colonies which formerly belonged to Spain and France, and even the spacious territories from which have disappeared their former owners, the Indian tribes." He concluded that the Anglo power "has made conquests of momentous importance."

Terán recognized Americans' tremendous ability to rationalize and justify westward expansion. He noted that, "If considered one by one, the Americans' methods of expansion

would be rejected as slow, ineffective and at time palatably absurd." He continued that the Anglo settlers "begin by assuming rights . . . which it is impossible to sustain in serious discussion, making ridiculous pretensions based on historical incidents which no one admits . . . In the meantime, the territory against which these machinations are directed, begins to be visited by adventurers who gradually complicate the political administration of the coveted territory by discrediting the efficiency of the existing authority and administration." Terán indignantly concluded that the Americans "incite uprisings in the territory in question while manifesting a deep concern for the rights of the inhabitants."[5] In his opinion, "the whole population is a mixture of such strange and incoherent elements . . . and colonists that have come from another, more advanced society, better educated but also more malicious and mistrustful than are the Mexicans. Among the foreigners are all kinds: fugitive criminals, honorable farmers, Vagabonds and ne'er do wells, laborers, etc."[6]

Terán had touched on one of the most important elements of American expansionist impulses. The United States' incursion and conquest of Mexican territory was, of course, important, but Terán recognized that this represented only the first step in American expansion. Ultimately, the critical aspect of the annexation of the West proved to be the power that conquest bestowed on Americans to explain what had occurred there. As Reginald Horseman notes in his analysis of the Mexican War, "total Mexican defeat convinced the Americans that their original judgment of the Mexican race had been correct." The Mexicans failed to keep Texas because they were "a mixed, inferior race."[7]

In one of his dispatches, Terán warned of the increasing influence of the Anglos and predicted that Mexico might lose the province. Jose Maria Sanchez, a Mexican inspector accompanying Terán, confirmed that the Americans had almost completely occupied eastern

Texas, and many more were entering the province illegally without the knowledge or permission of the local authorities. Sanchez was convinced that the Americans wished to have all of Texas and stated, "The vigilance of the highest authorities has been dulled while our enemies from the North do not lose a single opportunity of advancing . . . toward their treacherous design which is well known."[8]

In 1828 Sanchez wrote that the Anglo Americans were a "lazy people of viscous character." When he encountered a kind and courteous Anglo American, he characterized their qualities as "a very rare thing among individuals of his nationality." He felt Anglo Americans were "adventurers" who liked to engage in "fraudulent" activities. In one report, he stated, "Let us be honest with ourselves, Sir, the foreign empresarios are nothing more than money-changing speculators caring only for their own well-being and hesitating not in their unbecoming methods."[9]

Mexican apprehension turned into action when Mexico passed the Law of April 6, 1830, which limited Anglo settlement in Texas. Its primary purpose was to stop the flood of Anglo immigration from the United States to Texas. The Mexican Secretary of State, Luis Alamán, thought that the action had to be taken: "Texas will be lost for this Republic if adequate measures to save it are not taken." Like Terán, Alamán believed that the American colonists were attempting to gain Texas in the same manner they had obtained Louisiana and Florida. Alamán wrote, "Where others send opposing armies, the Americans send their colonists."[10]

Many Anglos compared the April 6 Law to the Stamp Act enacted by Great Britain prior to the American Revolution. The law, reasonable from the Mexican point of view, authorized a loan to finance the cost of transporting colonists to Texas, opened the coastal trade to foreigners for four years, provided for a federal commissioner of colonization to supervise empresario

contracts in conformity with the general colonization law, and forbade the further introduction of slaves into Texas. However, to Anglos, the most outrageous part of the law was Article 11, which halted immigration from the United States: "It is prohibited that emigrants from nations bordering on the Republic shall settle in the states or territory adjacent to their own nation."[11] Henry Austin insisted that the Mexican government was "determined to ruin Texas and desire all N Americans out of it—that they are about to separate Texas from Coahuila and make it a Military Commandancy." He called upon the "people to take up arms for self preservation."[12]

The passage of the April 6, 1830 Law marked a turning point in Anglo-Mexican relations. It alienated the Americans and united them the Mexican government, convincing them that Mexico would never accept them as genuine citizens but regarded them as potentially dangerous aliens. One Texan exclaimed, "This law was sufficient to goad us to madness." The Law initiated a chain of events that eventually resulted in revolution.[13]

Empresario Stephen F. Austin tried to quash any overt public reaction but protested the law to Mier y Terán and President Anastasio Bustamante. Austin immediately went to work lobbying to amend the law, which he considered a disaster, telling President Bustamante that it was certain to "destroy on one blow that happiness and prosperity of the colony which Your Excellency has always protected." For Austin and other Texans the Law of April 6, 1830, clouded the future. Halting immigration would eventually reduce the Anglos to a minority, and, without slaves, they would be unable to cultivate the land and become prosperous. Austin obtained an exemption for his colony and that of Green DeWitt, but the Mexican government canceled the contracts of those empresarios who had not completed the terms of their empresario contracts.[14]

The law shook Austin's belief in the good will of the Mexican government. Shrewdly Austin took advantage of the Mexican ignorance of the actual immigration process. The Mexicans believed that Austin completed a formal contract with individual immigrants prior to their leaving the United States. In reality, most colonists simply heard of Austin's colony and showed up in San Felipe where they were welcomed by the empresario. Austin told Bustamante "all the families with whom I have contracted to introduce are already en route or have made preparations to move here." With the support of Terán who endorsed his interpretation of the law, Austin built a case that the Mexican government was doing a great injustice if they would not let him complete all five of his empresario contracts.[15]

To enforce the new law, the Mexican government appointed Mier y Terán as Commissioner of Colonization. However, Mier y Terán himself doubted the wisdom of Article 11 and the articles restricting slavery. He felt that certain provisions in the Law were unenforceable. He understood that the Mexican government could not completely restrict Anglo immigration to Texas and prohibit the introduction of new slaves if it could not even field a simple military expedition into Texas.[16]

Terán was worried that legitimate colonists would not settle in Texas and that criminal elements would not be deterred from entering the region. A haven for debtors and rogues before 1830, Texas continued to enjoy that dubious distinction. "The world would lose many bad citizens and the devil would gain some faithful servants. Everybody knew that the immigrants to Texas were vagabonds and refugees from justice," the *Louisiana Gazetteer* printed in 1835.[17]

As Commissioner of Colonization, Terán attempted a series of measures to mitigate the influence of the Anglo settlers, including sending convicts to Texas as Mexican settlers and building a series of forts to increase Mexican military presence. All of these ventures eventually

failed. After two years of frustration, Terán wrote to a friend that Mexico, then in the throes of another civil war, could not expect to hold Texas if Mexicans could not agree amongst themselves. On July 3, 1832, despondent over the future of Texas and in poor health, he rose early, dressed in his finest uniform, and ran a sword through his heart.[18]

Tadeo Ortiz de Ayala, a recognized Mexican authority on colonization, succeeded Terán as Commissioner of Colonization in Texas. Earlier, in 1830, he had also strongly advised the government to ban colonization by Americans. He feared the United States desired to acquire Mexico and warned that armed U.S. citizens had already entered Texas. De Ayala requested additional Mexican soldiers to forcefully remove the Americans from Texas.[19]

De Ayala desired more colonists from the Canary Islands. Earlier colonists from the Canaries demonstrated the ability to adapt and presented no threat to the government. Also, he suggested colonizing Texas with the Irish since Ireland was a Catholic country with a large population that lived under the oppressive rule of Great Britain. De Ayala died in the Texas cholera epidemic in 1833, before his plans materialized.[20]

One of the provisions of the April 6, 1830 Law was to send another commission to Texas ostensibly to re-survey the border but in reality to investigate the conditions in Texas with particular emphasis on any revolutionary activities in the province. The leader of that Commission was Juan Almonté who rose to power despite being the illegitimate son of a priest who had supported the earlier Hidalgo revolution.[21]

Almonté kept a diary of his journey through Texas. He noted that the Tejanos hated the Anglos and considered them "heretics, thieves and fugitives from justice." In his diary, he repeatedly expressed concern over the influx of slaves contrary to Mexican law and the continued flow of illegal immigrants. He identified increasing signs of the forthcoming rebellion,

stating, "the audacity of the colonists is now intolerable." Almonté's final report recommended positioning troops in Texas to halt the illegal migration and to impress upon the colonists the hazards of rebellion.[22]

In spite of the new law, families continued to migrate to Texas, many illegally, because the area was still considered a land of opportunity. Rough estimates suggest that the number of Anglos and their slaves residing in Texas in 1834 was nearly double the number in 1830.[23] These settlers continued coming to Texas in spite of the chronic insecurity of living in a violent region. One such settler came to Texas chasing a swindler. Thomas J. Rusk was a successful lawyer in Clarkesville, Georgia, who had invested all his money in a promising mining venture. The manager of the company stole Rusk's money and headed for Texas. Rusk followed the thief seven hundred miles to the Sabine River and overtook him. There is no record of what happened when he found out that the manager had gambled away all the stolen money. But Rusk himself remained in Texas and became a political leader and patriot.[24]

Rusk applied for a land grant in David B. Burnet's Colony, obtaining a league of land for less than $200 or approximately five cents per acre.[25] In a letter to his wife, Polly, he wrote, "There are in this town about three hundred American and two hundred Spaniards and the country affords all the conveniences and most of the luxuries of life and those who will be prudent here must become wealthy very soon." In the same letter, he discussed his land speculation endeavors: "I have a speculation on foot here which if I succeed at will make me a fortune and if I fail I shall lose nothing."[26]

One of many who came to Texas against the advice of friends and family, college-educated Moses Lapham arrived in 1831. He found the rawness and easy morality of the Texas frontier distressing. In fact, Lapham did not like most of the residents in San Felipe, where he

lived. In a letter to his father, he complained about all the "drinking, gambling, swearing and fighting." He also detested maintaining a fictional devotion to Catholicism.[27]

Lapham felt that Stephen F. Austin was one of the most "avaricious men in the world." He wrote his brother that Austin had deceived the government and that many of the colonists were as frustrated with him and as they were the Mexican government. Dissatisfaction with Austin slowly grew throughout his colony as more settlers arrived and noted that he charged fees for surveying and kept the best land for himself and his family. However, the lure of Texas overcame Latham, and he never returned home, dying while fighting the Comanches in December 1838.[28]

Asa Parker embarked on a trip through the west in September 1834. Having sufficient money, he journeyed in style, but even with wealth, he sometimes could not find adequate accommodations. Parker found that the best of frontier standards could not begin to compare favorably with his native New Hampshire.

He described a couple traveling to Texas with whom he spent the night and sarcastically remarked: "In the morning, his wife went a quarter of a mile for water, picked up wood and built a fire; and the two men looked on and did nothing. What young lade would not marry, if she could pass such a honeymoon as this!"[29]

Deeply moved by the tragedy he sometimes witnessed, Parker described an encounter with a fellow traveler to Texas that described the difficulty of living in early Texas and the resolve of the first settlers:

> I found a young man who deserved some commiseration. With his young wife and two small children the youngest not quite a year old, he started a wagon for Texas. He had been two months on the road encamped out on the woods every night although they had some wet and chilly weather. The fatigues of such a long journey and the many attentions such small children required at the hands

> of the wife on the route were more than her constitution could bear. She became daily more enfeebled; but as they were approaching the end of the journey, she kept up a good heart and exerted herself to the utmost. She sickened and died –and left her husband in a distant land with two infant children.[30]

Parker described the Anglos as "indolent.[31] According to Parker, the typical Texian was "disinclined to till the ground and by the sweat of his face to obtains his bread. It often happens, where the earth produces in abundance with little labor, that labor is indifferently performed so that all the comforts and conveniences of life are less enjoyed."[32] He further stated, "Their most prominent fault is, in being too fond of pastime and hunting, to the neglect of tilling the land, building decent homes and procuring the conveniences of life." He disputed the popular conception of the settlers as "robbers and murders, screening themselves from justice by fleeing from their own country and coming to this." He described the early Texans as simply lazy and self-absorbed in their personal interests.[33]

Fourteen-year-old Dilue Rose Harris migrated to Texas in April 1833 while Texas was still predominantly a white and male. Harris noted in her memoirs "Mother and Mrs. Johnson were the only white women in our party."[34] She further described the living conditions: "Everything in Harrisburg was different from what we had been accustomed to. No church, nor preacher, school house nor court house. They had no use for a jail; everybody honest."[35] Harrisburg (named by a distant relative and New York entrepreneur, John Richardson Harris) apparently had more stores than most Texas settlements at the time. "There were two dry goods states at Harrisburg. The export trade consisted of cotton and hides. Twice a year a schooner would bring groceries and other necessaries from New Orleans."[36]

Harris understood at a young age that political tensions were building in the Mexican province. In her correspondence, she wrote, "Here was great dissatisfaction with all the Mexican

government, which was in reality no government at all. The settlers were constantly saying that the Mexicans gave them no government; they could not see why they could not have a government of their own."[37]

After the passage of the April 6 Law, Mexican officials detained at Nacogdoches a large group of settlers sent by Sterling Thompson from Tennessee. Alexander Thomson, the leader of this group, informed the Mexicans that he was applying for acceptance into Austin's colony. Colonel Piedras, the Mexican official in charge of Nacogdoches, agreed to let the group camp east of town while they waited for the required permits. However, unseen by the Mexican officials, the immigrants improvised and built a new road around Nacogdoches to Robertson's colony. The colonists used a variety of ruses to bypass the anti-immigration ordinance.[38]

Harriet James wrote in her memoirs that early life with her husband was difficult due to his "indifference" to his family and his refusal to work. However, after hearing about Texas from a ship captain, he promised to change: "My husband had set his heart on going to Texas; he said that I could get a piece of land if I went; that the government would give it to me, and, best, of all, promised he would go to work." Unfortunately, Texas did not mend Mr. James' lackadaisical approach to life.[39] Apparently, just being in Texas did not make one exceptional.

Anson Jones, who would later become President of the Texas Republic, was a failed businessman living in New Orleans in 1833 when friends urged him to move to Texas. "My impressions of Texas were extremely unfavorable," he later lamented. "I had known it only as a harbor for pirates and banditti." In his own words, he had already endured a series of failures that made him lose faith in himself. Since leaving his home in Massachusetts at age eighteen in 1816, he wrote: "I have struggles in vain against innumerable obstacles, and finally abandoning myself to a fate which I could not control or direct, I passively floated as if on a tide to Texas."[40]

Jones was not by nature a pioneer; he was a medical doctor who had been unsuccessful in four previous practices. He had nothing in common except a feeling of hopelessness with the people who were leaving the United States for Texas attracted by cheap land and a chance to begin life again on a farm.[41]

Gail Borden, inventor, publisher, surveyor, and founder of the Borden Company (famed for condensed milk), followed his brother Thomas Borden to Texas in late December 1829. One of Austin's "Original 300," Thomas Borden served as the colony's principal surveyor. Both men needed work, and Gail suffered from an illness requiring a warmer locale. After their arrival, they founded the *Telegraph and Texas Register* which became the principal means of communication throughout the Revolution. Showing the same audacity and fearlessness that brought them to Texas, they continued printing the paper as Santa Anna's army entered San Felipe, escaping with their lives only minutes before the destruction of their offices and printing press.[42]

These settlers came to Texas to seek a new life with abounding opportunity. But the people coming to Texas were no different from all those who crossed into "unsettled" regions. Facing similar difficulties, they believed in themselves and their ability to withstand the challenges of Texas. They also brought with them their arrogance, bigotry, and a belief in representative government for free white men.

The German migrants represented the largest group of Europeans that settled in nineteenth-century Texas. In 1830 Stephen F. Austin was considering introducing Swiss and German immigrants to Texas. He valued the character and industry of the Swiss and Germans, writing that "I sometimes think that Swiss and Germans will promote the prosperity of the country more than the North Americans . . . they are industrious and moral, they have not . . .

that horrible *Mania* for speculation which is so prominent a trait in the English and North American character." He described the Anglos as the "the most obstinate and difficult people that manage to live on earth."[43]

Germans were attracted to Texas for the same reason as the Anglos: improving their material welfare. After the Napoleonic wars in Europe, the various German states imposed onerous taxes on their citizens, not only to pay off war debt but also to maintain their expensive military establishments. Many Germans looked to the United States to escape the heavy taxation and obtain cheap land.[44]

The earliest proposal to settle Germans in Texas came in 1812 when the Spanish consul in New Orleans proposed sending German and Polish soldiers to Texas "where they could devote themselves to agriculture and the useful arts, thus securing their own happiness and the welfare of the province." The plan was not approved for fear that the soldiers would revolt against the Spanish.[45]

In 1818-19, a German traveler, J. Valentin Hecke, visited Texas. He described the country as "extraordinary[ly] fruitful in wheat, maize, cotton and indigo; the climate is healthful and temperate; only on the coasts are there any swamps." He advised Prussian colonization in the following words:

> If there is a piece of land on the transatlantic continent favorable for a colonial possession for Prussia, it is the frontier of Texas, whose acquisition by purchase from Spain easily made. Although at present, there is no or very little civilized population; in a short time it would become a flourishing colony, if Prussia would make use of its emigrants from Germany.

He recommended that Prussia send over 10,000 infirm soldiers to protect the colony.[46]

Beginning in 1821, Germans migrated to Texas, and by 1826 more than two hundred Texas residents had German surnames. German newspapers advertised land for sale in Texas,

encouraging many to emigrate. Although most Germans entering New Orleans settled in Missouri, a few came to Texas.[47]

In 1832, Doctor J. C. Beales secured two empresario contracts for settling foreign families in Texas. The German families who accompanied Beale got their transportation and one hundred acres of free land in return for six months labor for Beales. Beales' colony eventually failed as a result of the devastation caused by Santa Anna's army in 1836.[48]

One of the first German emigrants to bring his family to Texas was a bookkeeper, Friedrich Ernst, who arrived in Harrisburg. He and his family traveled by oxcart to San Felipe de Austin, finally settling on a piece of land 28 miles from San Felipe. Moss covered all six sides of their house. Mrs. Ernst slept on the floor. In spite of the troubles, Ernst wrote a letter to his former neighbors in Germany urging them to emigrate.[49]

The German migration to Texas really started in 1844 and 1845 with the founding of the Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas. Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfel secured land for German settlers, laying out villages in central Texas for the migrants. Between1845 and 1850 over seven thousand Germans migrated to Texas.[50]

Jane McManus, rumored to be the 26-year-old mistress of the 76-year-old Aaron Burr, owned 11 square leagues (approximately 48,000 acres). In 1833 she began indenturing unidentified German immigrants who would trade two years of service and 12 dollars per year for passage to Texas. In September 1833, McManus chartered a vessel to transport her German indentures and supplies from New York to Texas. When her partner backed out, leaving her $250 short, she requested a loan from Burr, but he refused her request. Instead of giving up, she sold 500 acres of her Texas land to Justus Morton for $250.[51] In November 1833, Jane, her

husband, and an undisclosed number of German immigrants and settlers from Kentucky arrived in Matagorda.[52]

Annie Fisher Harris, who arrived in Matagorda less than six months before the McManuses, recalled that the harbor was not deep enough for ships, so small boats transported freight and passengers to and from the deep water landing on the Colorado River. A seven-mile logjam of trees and branches blocked the river's mouth and created a giant marsh. The McManus pilgrims walked two miles into town along a path newly cut through the six-foot-tall marsh grass. While some settlers lived in sheds, tents, and in the open because of a shortage of lumber, Harris recalled that her mother and siblings shared a room with McManus' husband at that time.[53]

James Power, a native of Ireland, and James Hewetson, a resident of Monclova, contracted on June 11, 1828, with the legislature of Coahuila y Texas to introduce into Texas two hundred families, half of whom were to be Mexicans and the other half Irish.[54]

Attracting European migrants to Texas was a safeguard against further Americanization of the province. From a Mexican perspective, the Irish, among all Europeans, were the most desirable of settlers. They were loyal Catholics, having suffered cruel persecution in the defense of their faith. They were not too friendly to England or the United States, so that in the event of war, Mexico could rely upon soldiers known for their fighting ability.[55]

Texas still attracted restless, ambitious men who heard the protests over the new Mexican immigration law throughout the United States. Ironically, a law designed to lock out a certain national group encouraged the illegal entry of unattached individuals, among them political adventurers, mercenaries, land fraud specialists, and the criminal element that had always found refuge in Texas.[56] Writing to a friend on December 29, 1833, George W. Smyth stated, "We

have in Texas too many who would be great, too many whose ambitions have been unsuccessful in their own country, and have taken refuge in this one, and who view it as their ultimate field of glory, the whole object and design of their actions being to stir up a revolution."[57]

Sam Houston is considered the archetypical Texan. When his first marriage dissolved, he cast aside a promising career in national politics and moved to Arkansas to live with the Cherokees. In December 1832, Houston ended his self-imposed exile with the Cherokees, abandoned his common-law Indian wife, and went to Texas, ostensibly to pursue his interests in land speculation and politics. Houston ran and won a position as delegate to the April 1833 Texas General Council of Consultation (Council) as the representative from San Augustine.[58]

Henry Steel Commager, in the introduction to Marquis James' Pulitzer Prize–winning biography of Sam Houston, *The Raven,* lauds Houston as an individual only mythology could have created. He sees Houston as the embodiment of the best masculine qualities: intelligent, creative, and brave. Houston "symbolized the most romantic qualities of the American character at mid-century."[59] No historian questions Houston's bravery and political skill. Some have even acknowledged that Houston was not flawless, but they have ignored the body of evidence that shows how the Sam Houston of so many history books belongs in the realm of fiction.

Houston spent his first years in Texas working his contacts and monitoring the political system. He later spent several months in Arkansas gathering information on the Indian situation in Texas, formally divorced his first wife, Eliza, and traveled to Washington DC to discuss the Texas situation with President Andrew Jackson. Houston was already preparing for a war that he felt was inevitable. Again elected as a delegate to the Council in early 1836, he was named Commander of the Texas Army because of his past military experience.[60]

Texas historians and Houston biographers have described Houston's command competency during the San Jacinto campaign, but little objective analysis has focused on Houston's actions prior to the famous campaign that ended the rebellion. Sufficient evidence suggests that Houston was not an innocent bystander during the Alamo disaster. Rather, Houston was aware of his culpability and went to great lengths to protect his reputation. Anson Jones, the last president of the Texas Republic, describes Houston this way: "No man is more complete master of the art of appropriating to himself the merits of others' good acts, and shifting on to others the odium of his bad ones, than Gen. Houston." Houston was an arrogant man who felt that he was better than other Texans. He redeemed himself in later years, resigning as Texas governor when the State became part of the Confederacy.[61]

In late February 1836, as the Mexican Army descended on Béxar and the Alamo, Houston was in East Texas with his Cherokee friends signing a peace treaty. Houston claimed to be an authority on Indian affairs. He was sent to negotiate a treaty with the Indians to ensure that they would not enter the war allied with the Mexicans or take advantage of the rebellion to strike back at the Anglos, who had been attacking Indian camps with a vengeance in November and December 1835. On March 1, 1836, Houston, with full knowledge of the desperate situation at the Alamo, was safely sitting in his seat at the Council, representing a district that he had visited only once in his life. Houston ignored his military responsibilities as the Commander-in-Chief of the Texas army so he could play politician even while he stated, "War is raging on the frontiers."[62]

Houston spent most of his time at the Council indulging in an alcoholic binge. Edwin Waller described Houston with these words: "I found Genl. Houston drunk at the Consultation in Nov 1835 and left him in the same situation in Washington [on-the Brazos] in 36. He had often

to be picked up and put to bed by his friends."[63] He was an embarrassment to many of his fellow Texans with his folksy sense of humor and his manner of dress which closely approximated an Indian.[64]

Houston was not the only famous figure to emerge from the Texas Revolution. While Sam Houston lived long after the Texas Revolution and garnered fame, respectability and wealth, another "hero" of Texas, Jim Bowie, died at the Alamo surrounded by dead Mexican soldiers. Innumerable stories of his prowess as a fighter, land speculator, and slave trader, both real and fictitious, have made him a legendary figure in Texas history and an American folk hero. His rise to fame began in 1827 on reports of the Sandbar Fight where he killed the sheriff of Rapides Parish. He was severely wounded but managed to win the fight with a very large knife.[65]

The Texas Revolution cemented Bowie's reputation. After moving to Texas in 1830, Bowie became a Mexican citizen and married the daughter of the vice governor of the province. His fame in Texas grew following his failed expedition to find the San Saba gold mine, during which his small party repelled an attack by a large Indian raiding party. At the outbreak of the Texas Revolution, Bowie joined the Texas militia, leading forces during the early battles against Mexican General Cos at Bexar. In January 1836, he arrived at the Alamo, where he commanded the volunteer forces until typhoid left him bedridden. Bowie died with the other Alamo defenders. Despite conflicting accounts of the manner of his death, the most popular and probably the most accurate accounts maintain that he died in his bed after emptying his pistols into several Mexican soldiers.[66]

David "Davy" Crockett was a renowned nineteenth-century American folk hero, soldier, and politician. He represented Tennessee in the U.S. House of Representatives. On October 31, 1835, Crockett left Tennessee for Texas, after losing reelection to the House of Representatives

in 1834, stating, "they might can go to hell, and I would go to Texas." Crockett also envisioned making a fortune in land speculation.[67] Once in Texas, Crockett and sixty-five other men signed an oath before Judge John Forbes to serve as a volunteer in the Texas army for six months: "I have taken the oath of government and have enrolled my name as a volunteer and will set out for the Rio Grande in a few days with the volunteers from the United States." The Provisional Government promised each man about 4,600 acres of land as payment.[68]

Once across the Red River, he was enthralled by the region, describing Texas as the "garden spot of the world." He was sure that Texas would be the place to revive his political ambitions. Crockett was on the greatest adventure of his life: "I am rejoiced at my fate. I had rather be in my present situation than be elected to a seat in Congress for life. I am in hopes of making a fortune yet for myself and family bad as my prospects have been . . . Do not be uneasy about me, I am among friends."[69] Crockett seemed to know that his days were coming to a close. As he was passing through Little Rock on his journey to Texas, he stated that his life would end in the Mexican province.[70]

James Walker Fannin was the commander of the ill-fated Matamoros expedition. When the decision was made to abort that endeavor, he commanded the largest Anglo army in Texas. In Texas, Fannin prospered as a slave trader and land speculator. His attendance at West Point for less than two years ostensibly gave him his military credentials.[71]

Fannin's success had less to do with his business acumen than his occupation. The slave trade was unlawful, punishable by death by hanging; if a slave trader was successful or lucky, the business was highly profitable. One letter of introduction described Fannin as follows: "I believe he is an enterprising man and from what I can learn he is worth nothing and perhaps as we say [worse] than nothing, and his case is desperate, for he has nothing to lose and all to gain."[72]

Fannin arrived in Texas penniless, but he had something desperately needed by the plantation owners in Austin's colony: the ability and connections to provide slave labor. The cholera epidemic of 1833 had ended, and the political problems with Mexico abated; thus, the early settlers were eager to get back to making money. Slavery was a profitable venture in Texas, even if its legality remained questionable as long as Austin sought and obtained exemptions to allow slavery.

Fannin became a respectable citizen in the newly emerging Texas society. He started calling himself "Colonel" even though his total military experience encompassed only two years as a failed cadet at West Point. Slave trading was not considered a nefarious profession because slaves were critical to the future success of the plantation owners and the province.[73]

For unknown reasons, William B. Travis fled Alabama in early 1831 to start over in Texas, leaving behind his wife, son, and unborn daughter. According to Travis's personal Bible, he left because his wife was unfaithful, and he had murdered her lover. However, he left a considerable sum of money in a local bank for the support of his family and joined an emigrant train to Nacogdoches. He eventually applied for a land grant and settled in Anáhuac , Texas, the location of a customs office, working as an attorney.[74]

Other lesser known figures that played prominent roles in the Texas Revolution came to Texas under similar circumstances. David G. Burnet had his share of misfortune before coming to Texas. His parents died when he was young, and he lost his family inheritance attempting to keep his business out of bankruptcy. From 1806 to 1808, he served as a filibusterer in the Caribbean, taking part in the Venezuelan revolution in Caracas. Tuberculosis forced him to close his Louisiana trading post in 1818. He wandered into the Texas wilderness as a very sick and emotionally depressed young man. After falling from his horse, a band of Comanches

nursed him back to health, and he stayed with them for two years. In 1819 he returned to Cincinnati to study law, and over the next several years he moved frequently between the United States and Texas. In 1826, he returned to Texas, acquiring an empresario contract the next year. He served as one of the Republic's presidents and late in life was elected to the U.S. Senate.[75]

Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar was the private secretary to Georgia Governor George M. Troup during the 1820s. Later he took an active role in Georgia's nullification debate in the early 1830s and even ran for Congress in 1834 on the nullification platform. His attempts to run for Congress were defeated twice. He arrived in Texas in 1835, lacking self-confidence and thinking himself a failure. At the Battle of San Jacinto he exhibited great valor as a private, the lowliest rank in the Army and later also served as a President in the Republic.[76]

The magnet for Lamar and the other revolutionary heroes as well as the common settlers was land. Land speculation excited every Texas settler, whether he or she intended to stay or move on. Each saw prospective profits in real estate. They anxiously tried to excite everyone in order to attract immigration and raise land values. Texans wanted to ensure that everybody throughout the U.S. was aware of the great potential and way of life in Texas. Asa Brigham wrote to a friend, "Texas is no doubt the finest part of North America." James McKinney proclaimed, "Texas is certainly the best country in the almost known world." James Tarleton writing in the *Louisville Journal* states, "Texas will soon become densely populated with industry, wealth, and honest talents, and be able to compete with any country in our western hemisphere."[77] Moses Lapham complained in 1836 that Texas was "full of speculators."[78] Even Austin, a land speculator himself, wrote, "Our country is again assailed by aspirants and speculators; they are attempting to deceive the people."[79] Many thought that an independent Texas, linked to the United States, would result in increased land values.[80] Speculation in land

values crossed the social spectrum. One soldier in the Revolution estimated he made a profit of $1,968.25 on the value of his land, and this consideration, rather than patriotism, had been his motivation for fighting.[81]

As the Anglo leaders of the Revolution migrated to Texas, the Mexicans continued to contend with the problems of governing a vast region. In March 1833, the capital of Coahuila y Texas was moved from Saltillo to Monclova. In order to fill the empty state treasury, Mexico made the decision to sell land in Texas. This move made land speculation a sanctioned government activity, but some Anglos saw this as a Mexican attempt to undermine their land speculation schemes. Austin's secretary and confidant, Samuel May Williams, illegally participated. Williams' actions reflected on Austin and later resulted in Austin's loss to Sam Houston in the election for the first President of the Texas Republic. Texans greatly resented the Mexican sale of land as an exploitation of their resources for the benefit of Coahuila. *The Texas Republic* proclaimed, "A Law was obtained for the sale of four hundred leagues of vacant land and the most shameless acts of speculation were committed against the state and the interests of Texas." Eduardo Gritten wrote to General Ugartechea, "All the inhabitants of Texas protest against the conduct of land speculators, but they will unite themselves unanimously against the Mexicans."[82] This practice also violated the 1825 Colonization Law that limited the amount of land a person could own. It threatened the profits of Anglo land speculators who saw their business being taken over by the government.[83]

After the Mexican Congress limited American migration to Texas, several of the empresarios pooled their claims and assigned their grants to the Galveston Bay and Texas Land Companies, which were controlled by a syndicate of New York speculators. This group cared little that settlers and immigrant Indians already occupied most of the land. Ignoring the

colonization laws of Mexico, they sold script that entitled the purchaser to land in east Texas. Thus, as Mexico sought to close the border to migrants, potential settlers in the United States were purchasing acreage in Texas from land speculation organizations at five to ten cents an acre.[84]

Many Texans felt that a split with Mexico would ensure them the opportunity to make a fortune in land speculation. As a result, beginning in 1830, small armed revolts against Mexican government officials occurred in Texas. These acts of violence were directed against specific grievances—the tariff and the ban on immigration—but they alerted government officials because they were often accompanied by seditious sentiment throughout the region. Because of its alien population and close proximity to the United States, Texas seemed to be the center of this sedition. Texans saw their opportunity for profit inhibited by Mexican officials.[85]

Feeling that the Mexican government was limiting their freedoms and opportunity for potential wealth, especially in land speculation, the settlers began to organize. The Anglos increasingly complained about the lack of services from the Mexican government. The settlers remarked constantly that the Mexicans gave them no government; they could not see why they could not have a government of their own.[86] Many new Texans were eager for self-government, although most of Austin's colonists, who came to Texas in the previous decade, opposed it for fear of jeopardizing their large land holdings. In October 1832 a large group of Texans met in the first Consultation in San Felipe de Austin, passing a number of resolutions and issuing a conditional declaration of independence. However, Austin never forwarded this document to Mexican officials, fearing the convention was illegal.[87] The mostly Anglo-American delegates declared that the Mexican centralist government had "dissolved the Social Compact which existed between Texas and the other members of the Mexican Confederacy." They continued

stating that they "would defend their liberties and the Constitution of 1824." Disingenuously, they vowed fidelity to the nation "so long as the nation is governed by the Constitution of 1824." Since Santa Anna had withdrawn the 1824 Constitution, the Texans felt they could "withdraw from the Union, to establish an independent government." By declaring allegiance to the old Constitution, the Texans were able to assert the right to independence while retaining the appearance of loyalty.[88]

Following the enactment of the April 6 Law, the Mexican army established a number of military garrisons throughout Texas to stop smuggling and curtail illegal immigration from the United States. Outrage against the Mexican government was high, and membership in the war party gained impetus. According to Lucas Alamán, "Rumors of an uprising led by adventurers who have neither home nor country" reached Mexican officials in the summer of 1830.[89] In response, the Mexicans sent additional soldiers to Texas solely for the purpose of bringing the Americans under control and securing the border against further illegal immigration. The knowledge that most of the new soldiers manning the Mexican military garrisons were convicts exacerbated the tension between the two sides. Efforts at tariff enforcement resulted in violent confrontations between colonists and Mexican soldiers at Anáhuac on Galveston Bay and at Velasco at the mouth of the Brazos River.[90]

The newly arrived firebrands quickly found tariffs an issue with which to confront the Mexicans. To encourage settlement, the Mexican Congress in 1823 granted the Anglo settlers a seven-year exemption from Mexican tariff laws. In 1830, Texans demanded an extension, but the Mexicans did not respond. Over the next two years, Mexico deployed customs agents and soldiers to Nacogdoches, Velasco, and Anáhuac on Galveston Bay to collect the taxes and stop

illegal immigration. William Barrett Travis saw this incident as an opportunity to incite rebellion.[91]

In Anáhuac , the Anglo-Americans resented the Mexican soldiers, many of whom were conscripted convicts. As ship captains tried to negotiate Mexico's complicated customs bureaucracy, merchants handed over money to customs officials, and illegal prospective settlers were detained in filthy jails. The soldiers at each of these garrisons evacuated their fortifications. Stephen F. Austin urged General Terán, the Commander of Mexican forces in Texas, to remove the entire army, stating that the presence of the army would result in further confrontations.[92]

In June 1832 the Anáhuac ANÁHUAC Mexican political chief arrested William Barrett Travis, who had already clashed with local officials for his antigovernment tariff rhetoric. Travis let no opportunity pass to criticize government officials whom he considered corrupt and impulsive. When he tried to recover an escaped slave for a client, he was charged with sedition and jailed. A minor riot ensued led by Anglos who resisted the Mexican tariff policy, resulted in Travis' release. Later he gloated, "Mexicans have learned a lesson. Americans have their rights and will assert and protect them."[93] Travis justified his actions with the explanation: "I volunteered in that expedition with no motive than of patriotism and a wish to aid my suffering countrymen in the embarrassing strait to which they were likely to be reduced by military tyranny."[94]

On June 26, 1832, another battle erupted in Velasco close to Anáhuac when the local Mexican commander learned that the Texans were attempting to move a cannon to the town. In the ensuing battle ten Texans and five Mexicans were killed. The Mexicans surrendered when their ammunition ran out. The Anglos released the Mexican commander and allowed him to

return to his home in Mexico where he stated that the Americans intended "to separate the territory from the Govt of the State and the federation."[95]

In the late summer of 1833, the assumption of the presidency by General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna caused the angry reaction by the Anglos to subside. He was known as a liberal federalist, and many Anglos gave enthusiastic support to his presidency. They used this moment to announce their desire for a separate state of Texas within the Mexican confederation. At a convention in San Felipe, Anglos passed a number of resolutions known as "The Turtle Bayou Resolutions" explaining their attack at Anáhuac, requesting their own state government and the repeal of the April 6, 1830 Law that closed Texas to American migration.[96]

The Anglo settlers rarely agreed on anything but generally banded together on major issues. However, the dispute with Mexico caused major divisions among the Anglos. The Anglo radicals failed to win popular support, and both Anglos and Tejanos condemned them. George Smythe, a recent Alabama immigrant who eventually served in the U.S. Congress, characterized the rebels as people "whose ambitions have been unsuccessful in their own country . . . the whole object and design of their actions being to stir up revolution."[97] Ramón Músquiz, a San Antonio merchant and political leader who favored many of the goals of the moderates, described the rebels as "violent and desperate men who have nothing to lose. It is not lawful for a faction to assume to themselves the rights of the majority, or demand with arms in their hands."[98]

The Anglos called for another Consultation in 1833. Ramón Músquiz again disapproved of the meeting. Many Anglo Texans apparently agreed with Músquiz and desired to work within the Mexican political system to resolve their grievances peacefully. On October 1, 1832, and again on April 1, 1833, delegates representing most Texas communities met at San Felipe de

Austin and prepared petitions to separate Texas from Coahuila, repeal Article 11 (the anti-immigration clause) of the Law of April 6, 1830, and extend tariff exemptions. The convention also requested more adequate Indian defense, judicial reform, and improvement in mail service. Assuming that the petition for statehood would be granted, a committee, chaired by Sam Houston, prepared a constitution for submission to the Mexican Congress. This document was fashioned after the Massachusetts constitution of 1780 because a delegate from Massachusetts carried a copy with him.[99] Due to the rudimentary characteristics of Washington-on-the-Brazos, this was the only resource they had. The delegates asked Austin to deliver a new state constitution and the petitions to Mexican government officials in Mexico City.[100]

The *Texas Gazette* proclaimed the problem was the lack of a proper local government: "The cause and sole cause, of any and all the bickering and confusion that may have existed in Texas, have proceeded from the want of proper organization of our local government." The Anglos clamored for more representation in order to solve their particular internal issues. They had experienced ten years of indifferent leadership from the provincial capital, Saltillo, and the national capital, Mexico City. They now were determined to govern themselves.[101]

Austin set out for the capital in April 1833, convinced that this was the last opportunity for moderate views to prevail. He wrote, "I have always been opposed to hasty and imprudent measures but if our application fails, I shall say we have exhausted the subject so far as it can be done by mild steps, and that a totally different course ought to be adopted." If the government failed to approve statehood for Texas, Austin wrote that "the consequences of a failure will no doubt be war."[102]

While Santa Anna was consolidating his power in Mexico, Austin waited patiently to present his petition. His trip to Mexico City was largely successful, although he suffered

personal misfortune. In exasperation, Austin had earlier sent a letter to the ayuntamiento of San Antonio urging that preparations begin for the organization of a state government. Frustrated by his long wait in Mexico City and not realizing the traitorous implications, the correspondence advocated self-rule for Texas "even though the government refuses its consent." Mexican officials interpreted the letter as a call to revolution. The letter eventually filtered to the highest officials in the Mexican government, resulting in the imprisonment and detention of Austin.[103]

Although Austin failed in his attempt to separate Texas from Coahuila, he achieved many of the Texans' more limited goals. Santa Anna rescinded the anti-immigration clause in the Law of April 6, 1830, effective May 1834. Austin waited for an audience with Santa Anna for close to a year, but though Austin was well received by the Mexican president, Texas was not granted statehood. Concerned about the possibility of a Texas revolution, the state legislature at Coahuila y Texas adopted many of the reforms requested by the Texans. The Mexican government gave the Anglos greater representation in the state legislature at Saltillo, guaranteed religious tolerance, and upgraded the Texas court system. The legislature increased the number of government offices in Texas and enacted judicial reforms, including trial by jury and an appellate court for Texas.[104] Mexico had virtually eliminated all the outstanding Anglo grievances.[105]

While Austin waited for passage of an amnesty law that would allow him to leave Mexico City, Coahuila y Texas emerged as a troublesome area for the Mexican centralists. Liberal politicians in Monclova, which replaced Saltillo as the state capital, denounced the Santa Anna government. Saltillo, meanwhile, declared support for the centralist government and reestablished the state government in that city. Santa Anna sent troops to Monclova and violence and chaos spread throughout the region, including Texas.[106]

Austin returned from Mexico City and became an advocate for the war party. He was a broken man both physically and emotionally. His two-year imprisonment had ruined his health to such an extent that he needed his body servant to help him mount his horse. While in command of the Texas Army at Gonzales and Béxar in November 1835, he wrote, "I believe my worn out constitution is not adapted to military command, neither have I ever pretended to be a military man."[107] Yet he predicted, "the inevitable consequence of sending an armed force to this country would be war." He now believed that Texas should separate entirely from Mexico as soon as it became "Americanized," which depended on the number of immigrants streaming into Texas. He wrote, "The fact is we must, and ought to become part of the United States."[108]

This decision was not easy for Austin. He wrote a lengthy letter to his cousin advocating massive immigration from the United States into Texas, abandoning all pretense of Mexican government procedure: "I wish a great immigration this fall and winter from Kentucky, Tennessee, everywhere, passports, or no passports, anyhow. For fourteen years I have had a hard time of it, but nothing shall daunt my courage or abate my exertions to complete the main objectives of my labors—to Americanize Texas."[109]

Austin's decision to part with Mexico occurred during his long imprisonment in Mexico City where he was deprived of anything resembling due process. Santa Anna's move to centralism and the brutal suppression of the federalists in Zacátecas also played a role in his change of heart. All Austin's efforts could be wiped out if such a military campaign was waged in Texas. His vision of a prosperous Texas, as well as the wealth he and his family had accumulated, convinced him that the only path to take was independence from Mexico.[110]

When Santa Anna ousted his Vice-President, Valentin Gómez Farías, and dissolved the Mexican Congress in 1834, Mexico shifted from federalism (a system of government in which

the power to govern is shared between national and provincial/state governments) to centralism (governmental power is exerted by a centralized political executive). This change became evident when Santa Anna reduced the size of the state militias, apparently attempting to mitigate any opposition to centralism. Texans, like most Southerners and Westerners, took their firearms and militias seriously. When the Mexican Congress announced the demise of the state militias, one Anglo-Texan nationalist proclaimed it as "the final blow at their liberties . . . [that lit] the flame of civil war; the civic militia had all times previously proven the sure and safe bulwark of the liberties of the People . . . to deliver up their arms, was to deliver themselves over to an aristocracy, whose object was plainly Monarch."[111] But in May 1835, Mexican federalists in Zacátecas rose in revolt in the first revolution against Santa Anna's rule. The self-appointed "Napoleon of the West" crushed them with a ruthlessness that became his trademark. Santa Anna rewarded his soldiers by allowing two days of rape and pillage in the town.[112]

The Anglo Texans received reports of the rape of Zacátecas with dismay and foreboding. Santa Anna hated Anglos, probably because their greed and arrogance matched his own. He ordered the execution of all North Americans in Zacátecas. Anglos worked the mines and served as accountants in the city's banks. Santa Anna considered them all "pirates," brigands, and "free-booters," and ordered his soldiers to search all the houses and kill all the "gringos" without quarter.[113]

Apprehensive Texans formed Committees of Correspondence and Safety. Their purpose was to keep people in touch with developments and make possible organized, effective resistance in the Texas Revolution.[114] Local Committees of Safety continued to function in 1835 throughout Anglo Texas. They attempted to fill the political void left by the absence of any Mexican officials in Texas, maintain communication with each other, raise funds and recruit

soldiers, and attempt to heal the divisions between the various war and peace factions. In September 1835 the Committees resolved, after acrimonious meetings in San Felipe, to organize plans for a consultation. The General Council of Consultation was to have "full and unlimited power, to organize a local Government, under the constitution of 1824."[115]

Violence reached Texas in June 1835. As Mexican soldiers mobilized for an invasion, a small group of radicals again forced the surrender of the military garrison at Anáhuac. The ostensible cause of the attack was the unfair enforcement of the tariff regulations, but the war party hoped to galvanize public opinion before the centralist forces occupied the province. Initially, it appeared the war party strategy failed, and communities throughout Texas repudiated the attack and supported the centralist government.[116] Mexico City ordered the arrests of the revolutionaries. Travis exemplified the growing revolutionary spirit when he announced, "I am determined to go with my countrymen: right or wrong, sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish. I am with them."[117]

The Mexican military's high command felt strongly that the revolutionaries in Texas must be defeated decisively. They had been carefully watching the situation in Texas for a number of years as the Anglo colonists' numbers and their disrespect for Mexican law drastically increased. Colonel Domingo de Ugartechea, the Principal Military Commander of Coahuila and Texas, submitted "a weekly report" on the state of public tranquility in Texas.[118] These reports alarmed the Mexican government. The colonists in 1832 refused to pay tariff duties and resolved not to allow any Mexican military garrisons. They also refused to reduce or eliminate the Anglo militias. They would arm "even their children" to keep Mexican soldiers out of Texas.[119] José Maris Torne, the Mexican Minister of War and Navy, assured General Cos that a substantial

military force "will be sent to Texas to settle the business there definitively." The Mexican military was increasingly concerned about what was going on in Texas.[120]

Mexican military leaders believed that the seizure of Anáhuac was the opening salvo for the expected revolution, and the actions of the Anglo rebels stiffened their resolve to send troops into Texas. Once Santa Anna crushed federalist rebellions in Mexico at Zacátecas and Monclova, he began to mobilize military forces for a Texas invasion. The military stated that it would respect the rights of law-abiding citizens but, as a sign of their loyalty, demanded the arrest of the instigators: Travis, Austin's partner, Samuel May Williams, and the ardent Tejano liberal, Lorenzo de Zavala.[121]

When Mexican forces invaded Texas in the autumn of 1835, they met united resistance. Mexican General Martín Perfecto de Cos (Santa Anna's brother-in-law) left Matamoros on September 17, but by the time he reached Goliad, the war had already started. Anglo colonists in Gonzales refused to surrender two cannons previously given to the Texans by Colonel Urgartechea for protection against the Indians. The cannon became a point of honor and a rallying symbol. They flew a flag stating "Come and take it" and opened fire on the Mexican forces. The Anglos routed the small contingent of Mexicans and assumed command of the Presidio at Gonzales. This shot triggered the Texas Revolution.[122] The "Lexington of Texas" was hardly a battle or even a skirmish. The unpretentious frontiersmen remembered it as the "fight at Williams place."[123]

The Gonzales clash accomplished little militarily, but it had tremendous political significance. The number of casualties on both sides was slight. The Mexicans suffered one or two dead, and the single Texian casualty was a bloody nose. Nevertheless, shots were fired, blood spilled, and a fatal step taken. Recruits responded to the news by speeding toward

Gonzales in the days after the fight, even though they still did not understand the reason for fighting. Noah Smithwick noted in his old age, "Some were for independence, some for the Constitution of 1824, and some were for anything, just so long it was a row."[124]

The Gonzales victors, then under the command of Austin, laid siege to San Antonio where Cos retreated with approximately eight hundred men. Running low on food and supplies, Cos surrendered on December 11 to a much smaller Anglo force after several days of fierce fighting in the streets. Cos was astounded when he first viewed the Anglo army: "We were surrounded with crude bumpkins, proud and overbearing. Whoever understands the character of the North Americans will appreciate the position in which we found ourselves."[125] The victorious Texans allowed Cos and his troops to withdraw from the province after gaining assurances that the Mexicans would not oppose the Constitution of 1824. Santa Anna was outraged at the Mexican defeat. He pledged in 1836 that he would see the complete destruction of "those who wished to betray the territory of Texas."[126]

Most Mexicans believed that the victorious Army that destroyed Zacátecas would quickly defeat the Anglo backwoodsmen of the Texas army. Local newspapers pictured the recent U.S. immigrants as immoral adventurers who would flee in panic at the sound of the first gun. Almonté, echoing the beliefs of many in Mexico, called American colonists "somewhat crude" and "not compatible with the manners practiced by persons of good breeding." Secretary of War José Maria Tornel expressed similar disdain: "Veterans seasoned by twenty years of war can't be intimidated by the presence of an army ignorant of the art of war, incapable of discipline, and renowned for insubordination."[127]

Austin's Army, while victorious at Béxar, proved to be a problem on the march as they terrorized civilians. Dr. Launcelot Smither wrote Austin two letters noting the abuses they had

suffered. One unit marching through Gonzales had "treated the wimon of this poace worse than all the comanshee nation could have done and dragged me out of the house and nearly beat me to death." In his second letter, Smither stated, "The conduct of wild savages would be preferable to the Insults of such Canebols."[128]

At the news of hostilities, the volunteers streaming into Texas from the United States provided fresh soldiers and new stamina that especially helped the army in the field during the last days of the campaign. However, their appearance on the battlefield fueled Mexican suspicion that Texas opposition was a result of external influences. This may have contributed to Santa Anna's "no quarter" order at the Alamo and Goliad. The Mexican dictator was deeply apprehensive of the United States and these volunteers, with no previous ties to Texas, certainly concerned him.[129]

Georgia was one of the states that mobilized for the Texas cause. Headlines of the *Macon Messenger* in November 1835 signaled the beginning of the Georgia mission to Texas: "Let all who are disposed to respond to the cry, in any form, assemble at the courthouse on Tuesday evening, at early candle light." On November 26, 1835, the *Messenger* reported that "up to today, eighty-two recruits for Texas, all well equipped have left for Texas."[130] The newspaper's editor stated, "The Texas fever has treated us worse than Cholera! Our office is completely swept! Journeymen and apprentices, men and boys, devil and angel, are all gone to Texas. If our readers get an empty sheet or no sheet at all, don't blame us."[131]

The provisional government had to rely upon volunteers since few Texians could be convinced to join the regular army. The original Anglo settlers had not yet faced reality; they had responsibilities at home and did not want to be gone for extended periods. As a result the Army consisted of volunteers who evaded the discipline of regular army life. Major Robert

Morris of the New Orleans Greys stated that his men preferred to avoid "any service connected with the Regular Army, the name of which is a perfect Bugbear to them." Morris revealed another potential source of problems for the Texas army. Many volunteers came in search of adventure and quick wealth but found nothing in the December Béxar campaign. Some were already searching for another campaign.[132]

The eagerness of U.S. volunteers to fight also proved to be a serious liability to the country. Soldiers had a propensity to go their own way and disregard directives from higher authorities, especially during the revolution. Sam Houston noted that the tendency toward insubordination was a greater threat to the country than the Mexicans.[133]

The war and peace parties united after learning of the approaching invasion by the centralist forces, fed by rumors that they would free the slaves, imprison the Anglo Texans, and lay waste to Texas like they had to Zacátecas.[134] A jubilant Travis sensed a shift of public opinion: "The people are becoming united more and more every day and I think in a month more, there will be no division at all."[135] Prior to the 1835 Council, the Texans could not agree on a course of action toward Mexico even though a considerable pro-autonomy sentiment existed.[136] Both parties sought some degree of political autonomy for Texas, repeal of Article11, more favorable customs regulations, an improved judicial system, and the continuation of slavery. These economic and social issues required political solutions—a task the Mexican government was incapable of delivering. The "peace party," of which Stephen Austin was the most influential member, wanted Mexico to sever the ties between Coahuila and Texas. The radicals, led by William B. Travis, sought complete independence from Mexico. Both groups wanted enough autonomy for Texans to make their own decisions without interference from Mexico.[137]

Initially the Council was hesitant to make any decisions. However, they did appoint Stephen Austin as the army commander in chief. But in other matters the Council acted as if they were dubious about the wisdom of stabling a provisional government. The leader of the Council, R. R. Royall, wrote Austin to explain the "delicacy" of the issues under consideration: "the People of our country . . . would not likely recognize the Council in such acts of Responsibility."[138]

In November 1835, the Council appointed a provisional government. A sizeable faction did not want to split with Mexico. Others questioned the government's legitimacy, and old factional disputes were resurrected along economic and class lines. The hesitant and indecisive Council set little precedent for establishing a government structure. The result was a government that dissolved into anarchy.[139] The early military successes of the Texas army allowed the new government to concentrate on organizing the army, lay plans for the future, clarify its political role, and gain support from the people. Instead, the government "deteriorated into political and military chaos."[140]

In late November 1835, the council selected Sam Houston to replace Austin as the Commander-in Chief of the regular army solely due to his previous military experience. The title was purely ceremonial because there was no regular army. Anson Jones described Houston as "anything but respectable and very much like that of a broken-down sot and debauchee." Frank Jones, a militiaman serving with Austin, described Houston's associates as "of questionable character" and that the general's "actions at times jarred the moral and high-class emigrants brought in by Austin and other empresarios."[141]

When the Council met in San Felipe de Austin to swear allegiance to the Constitution of 1824, Texas was already at war. The chances for peace were already dead, and many delegates

favored a declaration of independence. Most, however, agreed to a declaration of support for the federalist cause in the hope of obtaining aid from liberal Mexicans and the United States. The delegates elected a Provisional Governor and sent a mission to the United States (that included Stephen Austin) to garner support for Texas independence and future annexation.[142]

Even though Austin stated, " the best interests of the United States, require that Texas . . . is settled by a population that will harmonize with the neighbors to the East, in language, common origin, sympathy, and even interest," he still harbored doubts about independence. Before leaving for Washington DC, he warned that "if a stand is not taken against the self-dubbed patriots in Texas all our labors in Texas are gone to the devil and me with it." The empresario warned his friends that the military scenario threatened the interests of "the farmers and substantial men of Texas." Independence would result in increased reliance on U.S. volunteers, result in a huge national debt, deter future immigration, and saddle the country with power-hungry, self-serving politicians.[143]

To cause further disagreement within an acrimonious Council, another strategy emerged which eventually ended all efforts to organize a functioning government. Ardent Mexican federalist José Antonio Mexia led a failed attack on centralist Tampico in Mexico. Mexia escaped but left behind thirty-one of his fellow adventurers who were then executed by the Mexican military. Mexia traveled to Texas where he pressed the Council to mount an attack on Matamoros. The Council authorized a military campaign against Matamoros in early 1835 and appointed Houston as the Commander. Houston initially opposed the expedition but changed his mind upon finding out that he would be the leader.[144]

Confusion, stupidity, and ambition thwarted Houston's plans. The Council later bypassed Houston and authorized Frank Johnson and Colonel James W. Fannin to lead the

march on Matamoros. That capricious body, violating the basic military principle of unity of command, also named both as commander. To confuse matters, Governor Henry Smith ordered Houston to take command of the proposed offensive. In order to supply the Matamoros expedition, Smith and Johnson stripped the Alamo of even basic supplies.[145]

Lieutenant Colonel J. C. Neil, who was in San Antonio in command of a skeleton force at the Alamo, and Frank Johnson, one of the Matamoros commanders, exchanged bitter letters with the Council. Both cared little about the mission of the other, leaving command of the American army in disarray.[146]

Governor Smith was outraged. Smith denounced the Matamoras Expedition as idiocy and anyone who supported it as a fool or a traitor. He then chastised the Council. In an address dripping with vehemence and derision, Smith rebuked the supporters of the Matamoros Expedition as men who had "acted in bad faith" and who were determined "to destroy the very institutions which you are pledged and sworn to support." Smith continued that he had grown "tired of watching scoundrels abroad and scoundrels at home."[147]

The resulting rift between the Governor and the Council grew quite serious. Smith proclaimed the Council dissolved. The Council responded by impeaching Smith. No law or provision was in place for one to remove another from office. Bewildered Texans, now finding themselves with two quarreling governments, wondered who had legal authority. Meanwhile Neil, the military commander at the Alamo, wrote to both asking for assistance, but to his disgust, neither was able or willing to send him men or supplies to his San Antonio garrison.[148]

The Texas politicians threatened to achieve what earlier Mexican forays into Texas failed to do. When the Consultation adjourned in mid-November 1835, Texas had a provisional government consisting of a Governor and a Council, but the vague division of power between the

two ensured a power struggle. The Governor urged immediate action, abandoning any hope of reconciliation with Mexico.[149]

By early February, the Provisional Government had become fully ineffective. Many of the delegates had already left for home. The Provisional Government delegates scheduled another convention for late February, hoping that it would fix the sad state of affairs. The radicals were becoming increasingly stronger as Anglos streamed into Texas, bringing attitudes that were anti-Mexico, anti-Mexican, and anti-Tejano. The value of the Council and Provincial Government was that they formalized the tensions between Mexico and its Texas colony [150]

On March 6, Robert Potter, a delegate to the Texas Council and a North Carolina renegade who once castrated two men he suspected of showing unusual interest in his wife, rose to speak. He moved that the "Convention do immediately adjourn, arm and march to the relief of the Alamo." Houston, appointed commander of all armed forces in Texas, stated that Porter's plan was "madness." He declared that he would personally lead a detachment to "relieve the brave men of the Alamo." Houston did not wish to lead a mob of self-important politicians, most of whom he disliked and distrusted.[151]

As the political leaders of Texas fought with each other, the situation with the Army was not much better. Houston finally assumed his duties as army commander and went to Gonzales to join the Matamoros Expedition. Although Houston had pledged to exert all "mortal power" to save the Alamo garrison, he took five days to reach Gonzales, a journey that normally took only two. At a time when the Texas soldiers were overcome with anxiety over the fate of the Alamo, their commander-in-chief procrastinated. When asked about the siege of the Alamo, Houston "swore that he believed it to be a damn lie, & that all those reports from Travis and Fannin were

lies, for there were no Mexican forces there and that he believed that it was only electioneering schemes on the part of Travis & Fannin to sustain their own popularity."[152]

Houston had already created discord among the Texan militia volunteers. In October while visiting Gonzales, he actively encouraged mutiny in Austin's army that was fighting Cos in Béxar. William T. Austin described the near mutiny in Béxar as the actions of "designing persons from motives of jealousy and ambition." George Huff and Spencer Jack reported to the Council that Houston had "in the course of two or three hours in this Towne done more to convince every reflecting mind, that he is a vain, ambitious, envious, disappointed, discontented man."[153]

Again, Houston did as much as possible to undermine the authority of Dr. James Grant, the self-proclaimed commander of the Matamoros expedition. Grant had clashed with Houston previously calling for Houston's resignation from the army. When Houston went to Goliad in January 1836, he meant to assume command of the army but instead he chose not to instigate a confrontation. He waited in the background, convincing many of the soldiers who were part of the mission to leave and join Fannin. By mid-February, indecision, confusion, and scarcity of supplies had all but doomed the Matamoros Expedition.[154]

Houston sent James Bowie to Béxar with instructions to blow up the Alamo and withdraw.[155] However, Bowie was impressed with the work done to improve the appearance of the fort. Green Jameson, the Alamo's chief engineer, had installed artillery on the walls. Jameson wrote to Houston that if the Mexicans stormed the fort, the defenders could "whip 10 to 1 with our artillery."[156] The infectious bravado convinced Bowie to stay and disregard Houston's order. Bowie wrote Governor Smith that he and Neil resolved to "die in these ditches" before they would surrender the fort.[157]

The Governor knew to take Bowie seriously. He decided to send reinforcements to the fort, instructing Lieutenant Colonel William Barrett Travis to raise a company and provide support to the Alamo garrison. Travis was not pleased with the assignment. The old settlers had already grown tired of the war, and of the hundred volunteers that Smith requested, fewer than thirty reported with the proper equipment. Travis begged the governor to rescind the order: "I am willing, nay anxious to go to the defense of Bexar, but sir, I am unwilling to risk my reputation (which is ever dear to a soldier) by going off into the enemy's country with such little means. So few men, and with them so badly equipped." When Smith refused to relent, Travis marched reluctantly to the Alamo with his thirty soldiers.[158]

Davy Crockett arrived at the Alamo where he was welcomed as a dignitary. In the middle of a party in his honor, Crockett gave a speech which solidified his reputation amongst the soldiers manning the Alamo: "I have come to aid you all that I can in your noble cause . . . and all the honor that I desire is that of defending as a high private . . . the liberties of our common country."[159]

Travis desperately needed additional soldiers. He penned a frantic note to Andrew Pontonin in Gonzales and sent it off with one of the injured men: "The enemy is in sight. We need men and provisions. Send them to us, We have 146 men who are determined never to retreat."[160]

Bowie became ill with typhoid pneumonia; thus, Travis assumed sole command of the Alamo. Travis was not a man to be trifled with. Texans described him using a variety of characterizations: vain, ambitious, abrupt, prideful, sensitive, and self-important. He also had a temper. He probably was pompous, but nobody considered him incompetent, cowardly, or dumb.

Undoubtedly a sense of his new authority flowed into his letter to "the People of Texas and all Americans."

> I am besieged by a thousand or more of the Mexican under Santa Anna . . . I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, and our flag still waves proudly from the walls. I shall never surrender nor retreat . . . I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible & die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor and that of his country.

The masterful, emotional letter became Texas's unofficial declaration of independence, and its words displayed a man who took himself and his cause seriously.[161]

Throughout Texas and the United States, the name of William Barrett Travis and the Alamo were well known. The stand of the Alamo defenders and Travis's letters became integral to the Texas legend. Travis intended that his letters be published. Governor Smith called upon his fellow Texans "to fly to the aid of your besieged countrymen and do not let them be massacred by a mercenary foe." Across Texas and in New Orleans the message was the same, "Save Travis, Save the Alamo, Save Texas."[162]

Late in February 1836 the thirty-two men of the Gonzales Ranging Company of Mounted Volunteers made it through Mexican lines to help defend the Alamo. They represented a cross-section of the Anglo-Texas colonists, old and young, modestly successful and dirt poor, educated and illiterate. Isaac Milsaps was the eldest at forty-one; William King was the youngest at sixteen. The wealthiest was Thomas Miller whose wife had run off recently with Johnnie Kellogg, who was also a member of the Gonzales party. These thirty-two men rode through the Mexican army to join a group of Texans who were badly outnumbered and facing the blood red flag of Santa Anna's no quarter. They made the choice to make their stand at the Alamo, realizing full well that it was futile.[163]

On the morning of March 6, 1836, the Mexican Army, after a fight of less than ninety minutes, killed all the Anglo Texan defenders at the Alamo. Santa Anna ordered the execution of anybody captured. The news reached Gonzales as a mixture of fact and fiction, and rumors raced throughout Texas.

Houston was in Gonzales when two Tejanos from Béxar brought word that all died at the Alamo. He had the men jailed for inciting panic. However, the next day, Suzanna Dickinson, her infant daughter, and Travis's slave, Joe, arrived and narrated the news of the Alamo. Gonzales had contributed many of its men to the Alamo garrison, and now more than twenty of the women were widows. Captain John Sharpe describes the town that night: "For hours after the receipt of the intelligence, not a sound was heard, save the wild shrieks of women, and the heartrending screams of the fatherless children."[164]

What actually happened at the Alamo remains a mystery to historians. Every year new books attempt to recreate the final minutes, but the events at the Alamo remain an enigma. Texas exceptionalists describe a scene where two hundred brave Texans defended the mission, knowing that their cause was doomed but willingly sacrificing their lives for Texas. Other historians claim the defense of the Alamo was a waste of time and men. Nobody has a clear idea of either the number of defenders slain or of Mexican casualties. The Alamo remains a central figure in Texas exceptionalism because of its ambiguity.

The slaughter at the Alamo finally awakened the colonists to their perilous situation. The realization settled in that the war was far from over and that they must unite to fight or lose everything. Santa Anna sent word through Alamo survivor Suzanna Dickinson that all those who refused to submit to his rule would receive the same brutal treatment. The fate of the Alamo defenders and Santa Anna's threats gave the Anglo colonists the will to fight. Before his

death, Travis wrote, "We hope our countrymen will open their eyes to the present danger, and awake from their false security." As Travis predicted, "The Thunder of the Enemy Cannon and the pollution–the cries of the Famished Children, will only arouse them."[165]

In Goliad the lack of local support outraged the newly arrived American volunteers. They had come to Texas to fight alongside the Anglo colonists, not to carry the burden alone. The Texas government had no more success supplying the army at Goliad than at the Alamo. John Sowers Brooks, a young twenty-two year old from Virginia, wrote his father in December 1835 that he would never disgrace his name or that of a Virginian. In February 1836, he observed in a letter to his sister, "Death is one of the chances of the game I play and if it fall to my lot, I shall not murmur and you should not regret." Finally in March, he reflected, "We have no bread for several days, I am nearly naked, without shoes, and without money. We suffer much and as soon as Béxar has falls we will be surrounded by 6000 infernal Mexicans . . . We are in a critical situation."[166] Fannin wrote the Acting Governor, "Out of more than four hundred men at or near this post, I doubt if twenty-five citizens of Texas can be mustered in ranks—nay, I am informed while writing the above, that there is not half that number—does this fact bespeak an indifference, and criminal apathy, which is truly alarming . . . Could they hear the just complaints and taunting remarks in regard to the absence of the old settlers."[167]

In October 1835, Fannin was appointed commander of the First Division. It is unclear how many men he actually commanded, but the designation signified his relationship with the Provisional Government. He led a small group of men in the initial battles with the Mexican army in December 1835 which he leveraged to achieve positions of greater power and responsibility. Actually, the limited success Fannin achieved in these early encounters was primarily due to the incompetence of the Mexican commanders.[168]

Once he was appointed general, Fannin's inability to make an independent decision led to terrible consequences. At Goliad he dithered while the men at the Alamo died. The rank-and-file soldiers felt little loyalty to him. One states, "Our commander is Col. Fannin, and I am sorry to say, the majority of the soldiers do not like him, for what cause I do not know, without it is because they do not think he has not the interest of the country at heart, that he wishes to become great without taking the proper steps to attain greatness."[169] He did not properly feed, clothe, or pay his soldiers, igniting a smoldering hate for his abilities as a commander. His men also believed that he was reluctant, and even afraid, to confront the Mexicans.[170]

After the fall of the Alamo, Houston ordered Fannin to retreat and join the main body of the army. Fannin continued to delay his retreat and did not take the Mexicans seriously until March 19 when on the road to Victoria, the Mexicans attacked his army of over four hundred men. He surrendered after his supplies were exhausted and the Mexicans surrounded his army in an open prairie. After several days of incarceration, he and all of his men, with the exception of approximately thirty-five Anglos, were marched out of Goliad and shot by the Mexicans.[171]

The Goliad Massacre is typically considered an example of Mexican treachery, especially because the Anglo volunteers had been told that they would be treated as honorable prisoners of war. However, it was at Goliad that Santa Anna actually lost the war. He would have won a great victory if he allowed the demoralized and defeated army to leave Texas. The revolution would not survive the tales of young soldiers who were treated with respect by the Mexicans and virtually ignored by their Anglo Texas compatriots. Santa Anna had the opportunity to gain the moral high ground. Instead, Fannin and his soldiers, like the Alamo "martyrs," became symbols. The Texians who had stayed on the sideline for most of the Revolution finally rose up in

vengeance against Santa Anna and his army. Now all of Texas was united, something the Anglos by themselves had failed to attain.[172]

The second pedestal of Texas exceptionalism is the bravery and fortitude of the Texas army in the face of overwhelming odds after the Alamo. During the first skirmishes of the war in November and December 1835, the original colonists composed the majority of the Texas volunteer army. But after these battles the colonists began to drift home and American volunteers took their place. Established settlers responded to the crisis by moving east out of harm's way, to the despair of the army and government. David Burnet complained that the "lazy hounds" that gathered at Harrisburg refused to perform even the most mundane tasks. He hoped that the men would return to the fight once their families were safe. More men east of the Brazos River refused to serve in the military than were in the army.[173]

Many of the more affluent Anglo Texas settlers avoided serving in the Army. On March 5, 1836, the *Telegraph and Texas Register* stated: "We hear some complain, saying, they have already served longer, or contributed more, than some of their richer neighbors . . . We acknowledge that the burden of the present war has thus far, fallen very unequally on our citizens."[174] A large number of the rich and powerful Anglo settlers who served as delegates to the Constitutional Convention avoided army service. Obviously, age precluded service for some holding important positions in the cabinet or diplomatic missions. Seventeen of the delegates whose duties and age did not preclude them from serving in the army were more interested in their personal safety and the protection of their possessions.[175] They sympathized with the Revolution and, while some encouraged military action against the Mexicans, they were content to have others fight the war. The Irish empresarios, John McMullen and James Powers, had

much to lose with their huge estates, but both chose to flee to New Orleans rather than join the Army.[176]

Like most wars, the Texas Revolution was very much a rich man's war and a poor man's fight. Thomas J. Green, a commander of U.S. volunteers, was appalled by the situation that caused the death of so many common soldiers. In disgust he wrote how the lowly soldier fought and died in the "defense of the poor men, women, and children in this country," while the rich are nowhere to be seen. He wrote, "In God's name where are the larger land holders? Why are they not fighting for their freedoms . . . Is our blood to be spilt defending their immense estates?" As Green saw the situation, the only patriots in Texas were the recent immigrants who made up the majority of the soldiers.[177]

The volunteer soldiers risked their lives in the hope of gaining a small piece of the Texas dream. The early residents had already fulfilled those dreams—most of the "Old Texians" were wealthy merchants and large landowners and were absent from the Army when Texas suffered its worst defeats at the Alamo and Goliad. The *Baltimore Gazette* lamented that "lower class citizens in Texas fought and died only to enrich a few land speculators, robbers, and brokers."[178] Enrique Gonzales Pedrero, a Mexican historian, wrote: "Of the rebels who defended the Alamo, only a handful had been born in Texas. The great majority were settlers of U.S.-European extraction, backed financially by the Galveston Bay Company, and other land speculators based in New York and Galveston."[179]

One of the reasons for the absence of the "Old Texians" from the military was the question of ownership of the most fertile land in Texas. The "Old Texians" and the "Austin faction" were concerned that the generous land bounties promised to the newly arrived volunteers might redistribute the older land grants that the Mexican government had issued to the

empresarios. If the Texas Revolution was successful, the winners—generally recent arrivals from the United States—would have more of a claim to this land than the "Old Texians." The mere prospect of independence posed a threat to existing land claims approved by the Republic of Mexico.[180] Even after Houston's victory at San Jacinto, many (including Houston, the Republic's first president) felt that it was preferable to turn Texas back to the Mexicans rather than "turning it over to the U.S. volunteers."[181]

Another concern of the old settlers was that the war was not worth losing their lives or their property. The grievances against Santa Anna and the government had minimal influence on their lives. They were used to paying little attention to the directives of the Mexican government. Joining the rebellion risked everything. If they did not join the fight, they would be in no worse position than before.[182]

The Alamo massacre and Santa Anna's threats wakened the old settlers to their hazardous situation. The Anglos finally began to realize that they must fight or all would be lost. The Mexican dictator issued a proclamation that claimed the issues in the province were the result of "audacious adventurers, maliciously protected by some inhabitants of a neighboring republic." He further promised "to punish the criminals." [183] Before his death, Travis wrote, "We hope our country[men] will open their eyes to the present danger and awake from their false security." The old colonists who allowed outsiders to do the fighting up to that time finally saw the danger.[184]

Newcomers jumped right into the fray. In 1836, Frederick and Maria Atkinson decided to migrate to Texas. While en route Frederick left his wife and children alone at the Sabine River border to fight Santa Anna with Houston's army. Maria went on to Austin's colony, only to turn around as Santa Anna's army approached from the west. The women were left to travel

alone to safety in Louisiana. After the defeat of the Mexicans at San Jacinto, Maria began building a home in the small town of Bellville, while her husband accompanied Houston to ensure that the Mexicans left Texas.[185]

It was apparent that weariness and personal concerns ranked before any concept of patriotism. One young man who came to fight the Mexicans with the notion to resettle remarked the "want of society and government is to fill up with people who are for their own emotion to the exclusion of others." Government officials were also increasingly concerned about the outright refusal of many able-bodied males to enroll even temporarily in the militia. The Provisional Government, many of whom deserted Texas as the Mexican Army advanced and avoided military service, complained of the "unpardonable and almost criminal indifference of the people of Texas."[186]

In spite of the contributions of numerous women to the war cause, "A Lady of Texas" wrote to the newspaper requesting support to make clothing for the army, stating, "Have we not as much patriotism as our mothers and grandmothers?" However, other women put their own patriotism to work when the war began. Ann Raney Coleman remembered hearing from her house the cannon fire in Velasco. She and other local women applied themselves as best they could to help their relatives and neighbors in their fight. Coleman and a friend spent two nights "molding bullets and making bullet patches" for ammunition. Later she heard that in nearby Brazoria ladies occupied themselves in the same way. As their ancestors had done in an earlier revolution, they poured their patriotism into ventures such as home manufacture of material. In that way, both the thirst for involvement and prescriptions for gender were satisfied.[187]

The Texas revolution also elicited assistance from unlikely sources. Typically women offered their sewing for the cause, sending clothes and other items. Mary Austin Holley solicited

support to aid the cause. She wrote a letter to the *Lexington Intelligencer* in Kentucky asking all women to help her and Texas in their fight. Women did not participate in battle, but they could sew for the "holy cause of Texas," providing uniforms for the threadbare armies. Another woman, Joanna Elizabeth Troutman of Georgia, made a more renowned contribution. A group of men from that state had volunteered to fight for Texas in 1835. Wanting to help, Troutman created a flag for the Georgia volunteers. A lone star sat proudly in the center of a white field, with the words *Ubi libertas habitat, ibi nostra patria est* ("Where liberty lives, there is our fatherland") emblazoned across the bottom. Soldiers in Texas drew encouragement from her work. "Your flag shall yet wave over fields of victory in defiance of Despotism," Lieutenant Hugh Mcloud wrote her. The Lone Star Flag, as it became known, later flew at Velasco and eventually became the first flag of the republic. Although Troutman never saw Texas, her efforts demonstrated women's deep feelings for the revolutionary effort. Troutman's body was moved from Georgia to the State Cemetery in Austin in 1913; her picture hangs in the State Capitol, her flag draped across her lap.[188]

Army muster rolls for Texas can be very confusing because the lists are based upon Texas war veterans who applied for land grants. The Army of Texas was basically a volunteer organization, the attempt to form a Regular Army having failed. The Texas Army went through three distinct phases. First, 63 percent of the 1835 Army which fought the initial skirmishes at Gonzales and Béxar was primarily composed of soldiers that had been in Texas for at least one year. Fourteen percent of the Army had lived in Texas for eleven or more years. At the end of this first phase of the Texas Revolution, many of the old settlers felt that they had made their point by defeating a professional army. They thought Santa Anna would compromise and make Texas a separate federalist state of Mexico.[189]

The structure of the army changed during the Alamo-Goliad phase. The volunteer army basically disbanded itself after the December victory of Cos at Béxar. The old settlers went home to plant crops, worried that any more fighting would affect their land claims. Seventy-eight percent of the Army of Goliad and the Alamo was composed of U.S. volunteers who had been in Texas less than five months. Only four percent of the 917 soldiers in the army at that time migrated to Texas before 1825. Sixty-three percent of the volunteers came from the southern United States.[190]

The army configuration again radically altered for the final phase, the Battle of San Jacinto. Volunteers who lived in Texas for less than five months comprised only twenty-one percent of the army while twenty-four percent had been settled in Texas at least six years. Pioneering historian Eugene C. Barker, the champion of Texas exceptionalism, admits that the majority of Anglo Texans remained 'pacific' rather than militant during much of the war; however, he concluded, "it was the 'setters' who did, almost unaided all the effective fighting," including, "practically alone" winning the battle of San Jacinto.[191]

Much of the nation appeared to rally to the Texas cause. The Texas Provisional Government ensured that their statements concerning reasons for the war were widely disseminated.[192] The *Arkansas Gazette* proclaimed that the Mexican "army and priesthood are to mete out the measure of our wretchedness. War is our only alternative!"[193] *The Daily National Intelligencer* stated that the enthusiasm for Texas would see "thousands of the hardy sons of the West . . . cross the boundary to join their former citizens in maintaining the principles of '76'."[194] The *Arkansas Gazette* further noted that the stout and independent men of Texas "are . . . too averse to tyranny of any sort to be humbled by a conduct" displayed by Santa Anna.[195] Of course, not everybody stood solidly behind Texas. One man who had escaped North Carolina to

evade a trial for murder returned and surrendered to the court, stating "he would rather be hung than live in Texas."[196]

In only its second edition, *The Telegraph and Texas Register* addressed "Texas patriotism." It described the various ways "the public spirit" declared itself "in the service of the country." The paper wrote, "We know one man who has taken the leaden pipes out of his aqueduct to furnish ammunition for the army; and a number of others who have melted up their clock weights (thus stopping, as it were 'the hands of time') for the same purpose." After several more examples, the editors concluded with the following: "But one spirit pervades the whole population, and that is a determined resolution to free themselves from military usurpation and tyranny, or perish in the attempt."[197]

Texans viewed the Mexican invasion of Texas as a threat to slavery and an attempt by Santa Anna to reduce them to a status lower than slaves. On July 5, 1835, Ben Milam stated, "Their intention is to gain the friendship of the different tribes of Indians, and if possible to get the slaves to revolt . . . If the Federal system is lost in Texas, what will be our situation? Worse than that of the most degraded slaves." General Cos inflamed the settlers' fears when he issued a warning in July that the consequences of revolution would "bear heavily upon them and their property."[198]

The fears came to fruition in October in a revolt in the Brazos River valley where slaves were most numerous. The slaves planned to divide the cotton farms in the valley and force the whites to work for them. The minor revolt was put down, but many slaves were whipped to death.[199]

Texans prepared themselves for any internal slave revolts. They were aware that losing the war to Mexico would mean the end of slavery in the area because in February 1836, Santa

Anna stated that he would free the slaves once the Texas Revolution was squashed. Steven F. Austin, in one of his appeals for aid to the United States, said that Santa Anna meant to exterminate the American population of Texas and fill "that country with Indians and Negroes."[200]

In early 1836, slavery played a significant role in the Texas Revolution. One of the reasons for Houston's retreat may have been a concern for the reaction of the slaves to the advancing Mexican army. William Parker alleged that one of Houston's purposes was "to prevent the negroes from joining the enemy in small parties." Many Texans were under the assumption that Santa Anna meant to start a slave revolution. Several slaves did seek freedom with the Mexican army. General José Urrea noted in his diary, "Fourteen Negro slaves with their families came to me on this day and I sent them free to Victoria." Ann Raney Coleman described how four of her husband's slaves ran away, leaving him "inconsolable at his loss."[201]

The fear of a Native American insurrection or the Indians becoming allied with the Mexican Army hung like a dark cloud over the Texas revolutionaries. Rumors of new Indian tribes arriving in Texas abounded throughout the region. Houston signed a treaty with the Cherokees granting land if they supported the Texans or at least remained neutral. This agreement did not stop the Anglo settlers from occupying the promised Indian lands and, once the Mexican army surrendered, the proposal to concede land to the Indians subsided. [202]

Most of the rumors of Indian participation on the side of Mexico were untrue, and Anglos continued their unprovoked attacks on Indian villages in spite of the revolution. Texas rangers attacked and burned a Caddo village, killing and wounding a number of Indians. The sole purpose of the raid was to acquire horses to sell for a profit. Men joined the newly formed Texas Rangers simply to pillage and kill Indians.[203]

A few prominent Tejanos applauded the benefits of Anglo immigration, disagreeing with the Mexican government. They argued that the Americans, unlike the Europeans, had a form of government similar to Mexico, knew how to deal with the Indian problem, and could immigrate at little cost.[204] Francisco Ruiz, a member of the San Antonio city council, candidly stated, "I cannot help seeing the advantage, which, in my way of thinking, would result if we admitted honest, hard-working people, regardless of what country they come from . . . even hell itself."[205]

Tejanos remained skeptical of the Anglo intention and were scared of Santa Anna with good reason. Lorenzo de Zavala was the only prominent Mexican to aid the Texas cause. At first disposed to help the Texans, the Mexicans later became suspicious when the Texans refused to cooperate with other Mexican federalists in exile. Valentin Gómez Farias, a prominent exiled Mexican federalist and the individual who had Austin arrested in Mexico, viewed Austin as unscrupulous and despised Texans who would put such a man in a leadership position.[206] Texans felt the same way about Mexicans and even treated de Zavala with suspicion. Texas President David Burnett stated that "we must depend on ourselves and not upon an aspiring Mexican."[207] Henry Smith, the leader of the provisional Texas government, stated that "it is bad policy to . . . trust Mexicans in any matter connected with our government . . . we will in the end find them inimical and treacherous."[208]

Meanwhile, the delegates to the Provincial Government quickly came to the conclusion that they would receive no assistance from liberal Mexicans. As a result, their racial prejudices quickly became apparent. One delegate raved, "We are separate from a people one half of whom is the most depraved of the different races of Indians, different in color pursuits and character." David Burnet, who became Texas's interim governor, would tell Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky that "Texas has pronounced a final separation from the miserable and revolutionary

government of Mexico . . . due to a difference between the two people, the Texians and the Mexicans. The first are principally Anglo-Americans; the others a mongrel race of Spaniards and Indians more depraved than they."[209]

Tejanos were caught between two worlds during the Texas Revolution. Juan Seguin was the most notable Tejano who fought with the Anglos at San Jacinto. Still others, however, were more cautious. Most of the Tejano support for the insurrection came from Béxar. The number of Tejanos serving in the militia and army is difficult to determine since they received no pay or land grants for their service.[210]

Such participation on the part of local Tejanos did not deter the unruly Texas army from taking revenge on the Tejano civilian population of Béxar. When Austin commanded the army in December 1835, he cautioned the soldiers against "laying waste the country round Bexar. I think too hard on the inhabitants who are our friends." This restriction was a source of friction within the army, but Austin remained adamant in his order to discriminate between friends and foes.[211]

Tejano participation depended on the region they resided in Texas. In the vicinity of Goliad and Victoria more Tejanos fought with the Mexicans than the Anglos. However, several Tejanos aided the few Anglos able to escape the Goliad massacre, providing food and clothing as well as information on the location of Mexican soldiers.[212]

Whether they welcomed the Mexican army or opposed it, the war devastated the lives of many Tejanos. Some of the noncombatants died in the guerilla fighting. In Refugio, the Tejanos lost all of their possessions when William Ward burned the town on March 13, 1836. Fannin burned the town of La Bahía at the beginning of his ill-fated retreat, and the Tejanos were left

destitute. Santa Anna claimed that the Texas brand of warfare "had reduced [the Tejanos] to the most dreadful situation."[213]

Uncertain support from African Americans, Tejanos, and Indians complicated the goals of the revolutionaries. In spite of the moral and physical support from the United States, the days following Goliad and the Alamo were the darkest of the Revolution. Bowie, Crockett, Travis, and Fannin were dead, and over a thousand Texas volunteers followed them to their graves. Santa Anna and his army were sweeping across Texas, bringing death and devastation everywhere they went. The Provincial Government was divided along ideological lines and scattering to the east for safety. The Anglo population was doing the same, forfeiting their belongings and the homes they had built over the years. Houston was proving to be an unstable commander as the remnants of the Texas army was retreating with Santa Anna's troopers on their heels. Nationalism and exceptionalism were far from the minds of the frightened mob as they ran for their lives hoping for United States intervention. Only a miracle or a terrible mistake by Santa Anna offered any hope for the future.

The Battle of the Alamo is no doubt a significant part of history, and as Sam Houston said, we should "Remember the Alamo." However it is important to put the battle in its correct context as a "Pyrrhic" victory. Neither the Anglos nor the Mexicans won this battle as they both suffered horrendous losses. For the Mexicans, the Alamo ultimately led to their downfall several weeks later at San Jacinto.

The United States refused to admit Texas to the Union. The U.S. was concerned that the political situation in Texas and its relationship with Mexico was still in a state of chaos. The admittance of Texas as a slave state changing the Congressional balance of power was also a major consideration. As a result the Texas Americans now considered themselves an atypical

citizenry—as *Texans*. Moreover, they had little in common with their fellow Tejano countrymen, whom they considered a mongrel race "under the complete dominion of their liberty hating priests."[214]

At the end of February 1836, the Anglos were a divided, defeated, dispirited race rushing to the Louisiana border to seek sanctuary in the United States. Texas was a land of death and destruction. The war was lost; the grand experiment failed. If this were the end of the Texas Revolution, the Anglos would be the subject of scorn. Instead, under the raining skies of early April, fortune smiled on the revolutionaries.

CHAPTER V

MYTH AND POSTERITY

Late March and early April 1836 were the dark days of the Texas Revolution. The revolt appeared to have failed, and the army and settlers were running from the Mexican army as it burned and pillaged homes and farms. Nobody felt exceptional as they fled Texas. This is the real face of the Revolution—fear, terror, and disappointment.

If Houston's retreat was the final chapter in the Texas Revolution, there would be no Texas myth. However, the Texas Army defeated the Mexicans at San Jacinto, providing the basis for Texas exceptionalism. This chapter analyzes the events after the defeats at the Alamo and Goliad, ending with today's Houston Rodeo. The events of the Runaway Scrape, the victory at San Jacinto over a demoralized Mexican Army, the problems of the Texas Republic's new government reveal a Texas in the midst of chaos. In addition, the contributions of women, slaves, Tejanos, Native Americans and Mexican soldiers are rarely voiced in the same context as the Texas legend. Texans allowed the Alamo and the battlefields at San Jacinto and the Goliad to be forgotten and only took notice of these physical links to the past when pressed by Tejanos or non-Texans. Finally, the chapter researches the pioneer experience in Kansas and Oklahoma and makes a comparative analysis with the Texas settlers.

The cloak of Texas exceptionalism has distorted the actual events of the later stages of the Texas Revolution. This complex and difficult period deserves more than simple reliance on the established Texas myth. From the mud and fear of the Runaway Scrape and the extraordinary good luck that resulted in victory rose the beginnings of Texas exceptionalism. Fear, looting, and land speculation were as much a part of the Texas Revolution as the Alamo

and San Jacinto. The voices of those fighting for Mexico have remained muted, but morale problems, lack of supplies, the large number of dead and wounded, and the lack of confidence in the Mexican leadership contributed both to their defeat at San Jacinto and to the myth that Texans are extraordinary. The Texas Revolution was actually a license to continue slavery, abuse the Tejanos, engage in land speculation, and wage war with the Native Americans. In their victory, Texans felt that God ordained them to rule; thus, they had the right to abuse or exterminate all who blocked their path.

After the Revolution, Texans faced the daunting task of rebuilding in the midst of chaos. They had won the war, but the future of the Republic remained bleak. Texans remained divided. In the ensuing years, Texans showed little interest in maintaining the memory of their victory. They allowed the Alamo to deteriorate, and they never built a monument at Goliad or San Jacinto. Not until the late nineteenth century did the State of Texas recognize those who sacrificed so much for it. Texas has always represented a "land of new beginnings," and those in the new republic and the millions that followed concentrated on taking advantage of the opportunities the state offered. They had little time or interest in celebrating the past.

Actually, Texans did not consider themselves exceptional until the early twentieth century, when historians such as Eugene Barker trumpeted their achievements. During this period in Texas history, the state's economy was booming with the discovery of oil. Texans began seeing themselves as different, better than the rest of the country. Even in modern times, few states and even world nations could match the wealth and opportunity in Texas. They began to believe that Barker was correct, that they were an exceptional people.

However, in early 1836 the situation was quite different. After the defeats at the Alamo and Goliad, the Revolution was close to collapse. Little was going well for the Anglos as the

Army, the settlers, and even the Provisional Government Officials were fleeing before Santa Anna's army. Fear gripped the populace as they looked behind and saw their ranches and settlements burning to the ground. The army was in a state of near rebellion over the leadership of General Houston. The dream of an independent Texas was dimming as the Mexican army devastated the Anglo settlements. The revolution was on life support when the Texas army confronted Santa Anna at San Jacinto.

Ironically, the defeat and massacre of the Anglos at the Alamo marked the turning point of the revolution. Many saw the rebellion as a criminal land grab and a Southern attempt to spread slavery. Before the Alamo battle, many newspapers in the United States treated the conflict as foreign news. The *Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser* denounced the rebellion, calling it a land speculators' plot: "They cannot as yet count enough American riflemen to drive the rightful lords of the soil out of their own country: therefore they make up a pitiful face and cry oppression."[1] However, the death of a national figure, Davy Crockett, renewed interest in the plight of Texas.[2] The demise of the Alamo defenders changed American opinion of the Texas Revolution. The revolution became a national story. Politics and the slavery debate were previously the topics of discussion concerning Texas. Once the Alamo story filtered to the rest of the United States, newspaper editors changed their viewpoint and joined Democratic and Southern leadership in support of Texas independence. Texas was now considered an unofficial part of the United States and Mexicans were characterized as foreigners. The *United States Telegraph* admitted that before the Alamo, the paper "had no particular attachment, at the commencement of hostilities, but the whole face of the war has now changed." The newspaper described the "savage butchery" of the Alamo defenders and requested that those that are able go to Texas.[3] The *Memphis Enquirer*, a newspaper long opposed to the Texas independence

movement, also changed its view: "we have been opposed to the Texas war from first to last, but our feelings we cannot express—some of our own bosom friends have fallen at the Alamo."[4]

Americans take umbrage when a foreign army kills other Americans. The death of a well-known politician like Davy Crockett by brown-skinned Catholics angered many in the United States. Arrogance, racism, bigotry, American exceptionalism, and religion played a role in the resentment toward the Mexicans.

Sensational and inaccurate statements, like the first verbal accounts of the battle, filled the early newspaper stories. Obviously, there were no war correspondents at that time and nothing even approaching objective journalism. However, these reports printed across the United States gave Americans the first news of the tragic events. The *Arkansas Gazette* estimated the Mexican deaths "at not less 1,000 killed or mortally wounded, and as many more displaced—making worthy their loss in the first assault, between 2,000 and 8,000 killed and wounded."[5] Individual gallantry was sensationalized. The *New Orleans Commercial Bulletin* noted, "Col. David Crockett . . . was among the slain." Crockett's "conduct . . . was most heroic, having used his rifle as long as possible, by loading and discharging, and the enemy crowded upon the wall, he turned the britch of his gun, and demolished more than twenty of the enemy before he fell."[6] Davy Crockett already was a legend due to a book published in 1834, *Narrative of the Life of David Crockett*, exploiting his feats as a mountain man and bear hunter. The Alamo added to the Crockett mystique.[7] Newspapers cast the Anglos as martyrs for the cause of liberty against the immoral Mexicans led by a tyrant.

The Alamo battle elicits powerful themes of courage, sacrifice, treachery, and purification. Its trinity of heroes—Travis, Crockett, and Bowie—have been elevated to historic deities. The *Telegraph and Texas Register* proclaimed their spirit immediately after the battle,

even before a full accounting of the dead was completed: "Spirits of the mighty, although fallen! Honors and rest are with ye: the spark of immortality which animated through your forms, shall brighten into a flame, and Texas, the whole world, shall hail ye like demi-gods of old, as founders of new impressments action, and as patterns of imitation."[8]

The deaths of Crockett, Travis, Bowie, Fannin, and all the others at the Alamo and Goliad was only one phase of the Texas myth. Sam Houston and the Texas army was the next chapter. Sam Houston made pomposity, arrogance, and deception an art form. After wandering into Texas, Houston became a Mexican citizen, swearing to abide by Mexican law. He was the archetypical cheater, applying for and receiving a married man's grant of land in Stephen F. Austin's colony and then going to David Burnet and Lorenzo de Zavala's colony and obtaining an additional unmarried person's grant.[9] Military historian, Phillip Thomas Tucker, claimed that Houston ignored the pleas for help from the Alamo and Goliad because he wanted the Mexicans to eliminate any political competition after Texas gained its independence.[10]

Houston realized his small army was the last hope for Texas. Initially the men were optimistic, but Houston's actions dampened their spirits.[11] The men met his silence and retreat with disdain. Between two and three hundred men left the army; some received furloughs to aid their families, but many others simply deserted. As Houston retreated across Texas, his army was near rebellion. The general never really understood the type of men he was leading. As volunteers, they were in the ranks only by their own choosing. They followed a man because they respected him, but they demanded that the respect be reciprocal. They despised military discipline and officers who needed their rank to enforce orders. This frontier egalitarian attitude was the essence of their being. Santa Anna could tell these men how to live or behave—Sam Houston could not. Houston was a competent leader, but he was accustomed to being obeyed

without challenge, a trait that did not endear him to the men of the Texas Army.[12] Angry soldiers, disgusted to be running from an enemy they derided, whispered that the army might do better with a commander who was not afraid to fight.[13] Historian and author of a biography of Sam Houston, Robert Coleman wrote, "Thirteen hundred Americans retreating before a division of 800 Mexicans. Can Houston's strong partisans presume to excuse such dastardly cowardice under the pretense of laudable prudence."[14]

Houston ignored the complaints and continued the retreat. When he stopped at Groce's Retreat to give his men several days of rest, Texas president David Burnet wrote him a harsh rebuke: "Sir, The enemy are laughing you to scorn. You must fight them. You must retreat no further. The country expects you to fight. The salvation of the country depends on your doing so."[15]

Burnet, who never fought in any battle or skirmish in the Revolution, was not the only person scorning Houston's leadership. One soldier, Jesse Benton, wrote Thomas Rusk, the Secretary of War, "the most discouraging of all things was the appointment of Sam Houston as commander in chief. I have long considered him unsound in mind and unsound in his heart or will as his head."[16]

Houston's army suffered miserably as it retreated east. The weather was cold and wet, and the soldiers had little to eat as they were instructed by Houston not to steal from any of the farmhouses in the vicinity. To make matters worse, hundreds of warfighters were deserting in spite of Houston's order to shoot anybody deserting. On April 13, 1836, he issued another statement to the people of Texas. He blamed his inability to defeat the enemy on popular panic. He also issued another appeal for soldiers: "Reflect, reason with yourselves . . . if you wish your country saved join her standard. Protect your wives, your children, your homes, by repairing to

the field, where alone, by discipline and concert of action, you can be effective . . . Come and free your country at once; and be *men*! Those who do not aid Texas in her present struggle, but flee and forfeit all rights of citizens, will deserve their fate."[17]

After sparring with the Mexican army across Texas, the Texas army attacked the over confident Mexicans on the afternoon of April 21, 1836. If Houston had not let the army attack at San Jacinto, the army would have simply melted away and Texas would have remained a Mexican province with few (if any) Anglos. The Mexicans—sleeping, talking, and playing games, many recuperating from the lack of rations and bouts of dysentery—were caught completely by surprise. Houston marched the disorganized Anglo lines to within two hundred yards of their camp before a bugle called them to arms. The Texans charged, and the assault soon turned into a bloody orgy, with the Texans screaming "Remember the Alamo!" and "Remember Goliad!"[18]

The final battle of the Revolution did not portray the Texans in a good light. The months of cold, rainy weather, the exasperating retreat across Texas, and the steady stream of rumors about Mexican brutality overcame any thoughts of mercy. A Mexican officer describes seeing "our troops flying in small groups, terrified, and sheltering themselves, behind large tree . . . they were a bewildered and panic-stricken herd."[19] Houston tried to stop the massacre by appealing to the sensitivities of his men, but the ghosts of the Alamo and Goliad were more powerful than Houston's entreaties. The battle lasted nineteen minutes, but the atrocities occurred much longer as the Anglos killed approximately 700 Mexican soldiers. Many died as they ran from the battle.[20]

The next day the Texans captured Santa Anna dressed as a common soldier. The incarceration of the Mexican general changed the status of San Jacinto from a battlefield victory to a decisive win with major implications.

Houston did not defeat the Mexican army at San Jacinto, only a small contingent of it. Santa Anna had divided his army into three columns. The northern column was to attack Nacogdoches, and the southern column was to follow the Texas coast to the Louisiana border. As Santa Anna pleaded for his life, he stated that he could stop the other two columns. The deal was struck, and the Mexican army left Texas.[21]

The lifeblood of the Revolution continued to be young men who streamed into Texas looking for action and adventure. The settler volunteers are the heart of the Texas legend. In 1859, the *Texas Almanac* stated, "These are the men who beat back, step by step, the treacherous and bloody savage, and open the highways of civilization into the unknown desert." Charles Morse addressing a Texas Veterans' organization, himself a veteran of the Revolution and Indian wars, asked the question that had no answer: "Where else in the world has this been done, except in Texas?"[22] Newspapers throughout the U.S. summoned the ambitious and aggressive to arms in support of Texas. The *Southern Advocate* noted, "the cause of Texas was the cause of justice against oppression."[23] The *Daily Commercial Register and Patriot* made an announcement to stir the patriotic feelings among the citizens of Mobile, Alabama: "The friends of Texas and humanity, the descendants of heroes and patriots, all those who truly love the cause of civil and religious liberty, all who can sympathize in the wrongs and sufferings of their fellow beings, are now called upon to make every exertion."[24] The *Mobile Mercantile Advertiser* urged citizens to give more than moral support: "Of what use are paper resolutions if not backed by

money and men. Rise then, good men and true, and march to the aid of your brothers in Texas."[25]

To the newspaper call to arms, the newly arrived volunteers responded with patriotic enthusiasm. They came to fight noble battles and to stand for liberty and freedom. John M. Thruston wrote, "I am a volunteer from Kentucky and have come to Texas to aid in her struggle . . . I wish to remain in the cause of Texas until the termination of her struggle." In December 1835, Daniel Cloud in a letter home said: "We go [to Texas] with arms in our hands, determined to conquer or die; resolved to bury our all in the same ditch which ingulphs the liberties of Texas." John C. Goodrich, another recent arrival to Texas, wrote family members in November 1835: "I feel a great desire to render some service to this country of my adoption in her struggle for freedom."[26]

A single word cannot characterize the volunteers. They came to Texas for a variety of reasons, most notably escaping from the law, the prospect of land and wealth, patriotism, adventure, and revenge. Volunteer John Brooks candidly wrote, "I am a soldier of fortune." Noah Smithwick described the plethora of reasons that the volunteers came to fight for Texas. The desire for adventure motivated some, and others were "actuated by no higher principle than prospective plunder."[27]

U.S. volunteers joined the army not only for the thrill of danger and excitement but also the considerable social pressure derived from the danger. The Texan concept of masculinity was intimately bound to a man's physical skill and martial proficiency. The individual who avoided battle was suspect. Texans expected every male to participate in military campaigns. Husbands and fathers not only bore the hardships associated with brutal military operations but also endured the anxieties associated with leaving wives and children to their own resources. Texas

society, much like that of the Plains Indians, honored the brave and skillful warrior. Colonel Ed Burleson was, in the opinion of many, a brave and skillful military commander. On that reputation alone, he rose to the position of Vice-President of the Republic. The electorate shunned his opponent who had never served in the military. Those who did not participate were essentially shunned from public office. In the nineteenth century only two of twenty Texas Presidents and Governors had no military experience.[28]

By almost any measurement, it would be difficult to classify Houston's army as a proper military organization. It was small, hungry, filthy, and disorganized with no proper training, and equally ready to go on a wild goose chase, go home, or go fight. As they sat in the mud in Gonzales after the Alamo battle, drinking and gambling, the men ran the risk of being surrounded by Mexican troops. They lacked military instruction or discipline. Historian Phillip Thomas Tucker argues this lack of formal military training was a principal cause of the Anglo defeats at the Alamo and Goliad.[29]

Texans both welcomed and feared the newly arrived American volunteers depending on the fortunes of war. When Texas was threatened, their gallantry, nobility, and chivalry were emphasized. Governor Smith stated, "No sordid or mercenary considerations have induced them to leave their homes and share our fate." President Burnet publicly agreed but privately expressed reservations about inundating "our country with an unprofitable tribe of needy adventurers." Moses Lapham noted that the soldiers were "generally collected from the very dregs of cities and towns, where they had obtained a scanty living by pelf and petty gambling. They are the most miserable wretched that the world ever produced."[30]

The volunteers were sensitive to the charges that they simply were mercenaries. "Tis no filthy lucre that promotes us to the battle field of Texas; no desire to enrich ourselves in land,

which has been deluged in patriot blood," wrote one mercenary to the Ladies Legion of Lexington. "Ours is, I trust, a far purer and noble aspiration."[31]

Texas needed warfighters and was luring them with the same currency offered to wealthy lenders—land.[32] After the fighting ended, the old settlers initiated an attack on the U.S. volunteers. In April 1836, David Burnet, the first President of Texas, called the volunteers from the United States "mere Leeches. They never have and never will do Texas much good; but much evil, independent of the cost, results from them." Burnet said the motivation of the volunteers was greed, not sacrifice. In addition, the three-month enlistees tended to desert, get drunk, and generally cause trouble. Burnet further stated, "We have no use for such and do not want any men for a less period than one year or during the war. Such men we will be happy to receive."[33]

The volunteer army continued to be ill-disciplined, insubordinate, and disorganized. They came to fight Mexicans, and those who arrived late were disappointed on reaching Texas to find that the fighting was over. The son of Confederate General Albert Sydney Johnson commented "Here were gathered the indomitable men of battle . . . the ardent youth of the South, burning for glory and military enterprise . . . Some of the best and some of the worst people in the world were thrown into contact [with one another]; but in one quality all were alike, a hardihood that no danger could check."[34]

Praise for the volunteers centered on their fighting qualities. Houston wrote, "No men are more patriotic or brave on God's earth, than what the boys of Texas are." This reputation has stayed with Texas soldiers since the Alamo. Zachary Taylor remarked, "On the day of battle, I am glad to have Texas soldiers with me for they are brave and gallant, but I never want to see them before or after, for they are too hard to control."[35]

In May 1837, after the victory at San Jacinto, President Sam Houston ordered most of the army furloughed to relieve the financial crisis facing the Texas treasury and to give a sign to Mexico that the new Republic did not want to continue the fight. The leaders of the early Texas Republic faced nearly insurmountable difficulties keeping the army in a defensive posture as long as Mexico talked of renewing the war to reconquer their lost province and encouraged Indians and angry Mexicans to attack the Texas settlers. The adventurers from the United States, who arrived after actual combat with the Mexicans had ended and were eager to renew the fight, and the Texas frontiersmen, who suffered much during the revolution, were upset that the full force of the army was not used to maintain security from Mexican bandits, lawless Texan raiders, and Indians.[36]

The Army was not the only group retreating as Santa Anna's army advanced eastward across Texas. Civilians abandoned homes, businesses, and ranches as the Mexican army advanced. The myth portrays the flight eastward from Santa Anna's army, known as the Runaway Scrape, as a heroic people fleeing before the advance of Mexican barbarians. Reports of devastation by the Mexican Army in the western region of the Texas province stimulated the Runaway Scrape throughout the rest of Texas. The Runaway Scrape became simply a mob action, as self-interest and widespread hostility prevailed. James Fannin, in his position as the Goliad commander, wrote that Santa Anna's army planned to "expel or exterminate every white man" and to rape "the fair daughters of chaste white women." The Mexican army did engage in several acts of senseless violence. In Refugio where many Irish colonists did not flee before the advance of the Mexican Army, the women were spared but several men were executed based upon flimsy evidence of their being revolutionaries.[37]

The first evacuations took place under military supervision. Houston burned Gonzales and began his retreat. He ensured the army escorted families from the area and often sent troops back to ensure that no families were left behind. Colonel William Fairfax Gray, a land agent from Virginia, wrote that "thousands are moving off to the east. A constant stream of women and children and some men, with wagons, carts and pack mules, are rushing across the Brazos night and day . . . to escape the anticipated storm of war." A merchant in Galveston reported that people "are so alarmed—so panic struck that they are flying in every direction." He further noted that most of the men refused to join the army.[38]

The people of central Texas were "flying from their homes for a place of security." A few decided to leave Texas and return to the United States. Some went to New Orleans, and a boatload of forty families continued all the way to Mobile. Rumors abounded of Mexicans murdering women and children which caused the panic to spread to east Texas.[39] Houston dispatched couriers to carry the news of the fall of the Alamo. That news and the deaths of Fannin's men at Goliad as well as Houston's retreat created a panic among the Texas settlers. Their flight was impeded by the lack of wagons, draft animals to pull them, and the terrible traveling conditions brought on by heavy rains. In April 1836, after a prolonged drought experienced throughout Texas in 1835 the skies opened up and sent torrential rains down upon the fleeing settlers, making the roads a quagmire, and filling the rivers from bank to bank. The refugees repeatedly found themselves struggling for miles over bad roads only to be met at the riverbanks with uncrossable fords and crowded ferries. Washington-on-the-Brazos, along with the settlements on both sides of the Brazos River, was deserted by March 17.[40] Ferrymen held up traffic to extort exorbitant fees from the fleeing colonists. Noah Smithwick "describes men—or devils, rather—bent on plunder, galloping up behind the fugitives, screaming that the

Mexicans were just behind, thus causing the hapless victims to abandon what few valuables they had tried to save."[41]

The Runaway Scrape signified a breakdown in national purpose. They were not mythic Texans displaying bravery in the teeth of an adversity but a scared band seeking safety and shelter under the umbrella of the United States in Louisiana. Houston urged local leaders to place all recruits at his disposal "for the protection of the country and families." Few responded to his entreaty. The town of Velasco begged Houston not to reduce the number of U.S. volunteers protecting the town and promised to help build fortifications. When asked to assist with the fort, the few people remaining in Velasco refused to supply any labor or horses. Apparently, Santa Anna struck fear into the Anglo Americans after the Alamo. The Anglos now understood that he was serious about ridding Texas of foreign influence.[42] The war and the abandonment of businesses and homes as the Mexican Army advanced wreaked devastation on Texas. As described by a volunteer from Connecticut in a letter to his family, "The war has entirely broken up every kind of business in Texas. The war destroyed the personal belongings of thousands of settlers whose only wealth was their land. In fact, you can scarcely conceive of the suffering this War has occasioned. All of the country west of the Brazos has been deserted and pillaged by the enemy."[43]

A few saw the collapse of legal authority as a license to create havoc. Matthew Caudwell asked the provisional government for permission to retaliate against an assailant. James Boyce was "a man of no business and property, a curse and a nuisance to society," who commanded a "murdering, plundering, lawless band" which terrorized the community of Matagorda. Apparently, besides the men who joined the Army and others who sought safety, a third group took advantage of the situation to continue their criminal activities.[44]

For many Texas settlers the experience of losing property due to the war did not end with their return from the Runaway Scrape. Their sacrifice continued with the arrival of unscrupulous government purchasing or impressment agents. Only a subtle distinction separated sale from forced conscriptions since all transactions were on a credit basis. Earlier, the government had simply confiscated goods needed by the army. In essence, the army took what it wanted with no regard for personal possessions.[45]

The Texas Provisional Government also was in complete disarray. The seat of government moved from Washington to Harrisburg and then in mid-April to Galveston Island. The Mexican advance scattered the government, resulting in confusion and disorder. The government sent an appeal to the populace requesting unity and increased support for the military. The interim governor, David Burnet, declared, "past experience has demonstrated that following the ordinary operations of the law many unworthy" Texans would "rest quietly at home while their patriotic neighbors of volunteers from the United States did all the fighting. Yet, the lingerer would expect to partake of the ultimate benefit of the struggle." Burnet declared all of Texas under martial law.[46]

As conflict and confusion raged throughout Texas, land speculators saw the chance to make profits. A government-imposed moratorium on land sales did not stop speculation as colonists lost confidence in the government and sold land titles that had greatly depreciated. A pioneer in Austin's colony, a lawyer, and a revolutionist, Spencer Jack stated that the government had "put the honest but generally poor families in the hands of speculators and deprived the settlers of any inducement to fight the battles of the country." Speculators wandered amongst the scared families during the Runaway Scrape. Henry Millard, a notorious

speculator, said, "Buy all you can at a low price now is the favorable time when the country is in such a panic."[47]

From the ashes of this debacle, came thoughts of the future of Texas. Texas remained a broken state. Mirabeau Lamar, a hero at San Jacinto, described the state of government affairs: "Trembling, upon the verge of anarchy, with too little credit abroad and too much of the fiery elements at home, Texas is in a wretched state." Thomas J. Rusk stated, "Corruption stalks abroad in this Land, the still small voice of reason and truth is suppressed. Lord have mercy on us, save us from the enemy and from the mighty operations of our own Great men."[48] Two major questions confronted the Texans. First, could the new republic resolve the divisions that had earlier threatened the revolution? Second, could order be established in the present social quagmire? The Mexican Army had destroyed most homes, farms, and businesses. Members of the Provincial Government had scattered to such distant places as Pensacola, Florida. Finally, the United States would not consider the annexation of Texas at this time.[49]

Regardless of the sorry state of affairs in the new republic, many admired their success. The French Minister to the Texas Republic, Alphonse Dubois de Saligny, exclaimed in a report back to his government who was considering recognizing the young Texas Republic: "What A race. What can the Mexicans do against men of this kidney?" A settler from England found the country "full of enterprising and persevering people," and the British chargé noted that nowhere on earth was a "more enterprising and energetic" people. A German visitor stated that Texans deserved "all the praises which impartial observers have heaped upon them . . . even the really bad Texan is no common low, vulgar, debased criminal, but in his character is still discernible a certain degree of greatness." General Arthur Wavell gave his assessment of Texans in a report to the British Foreign Office. According to Wavell, Texans "add a reckless hardihood, a restless

spirit of Adventure, resources and coolness in themselves, keen perception, coolness, contempt of other men, usages, and Laws, and of Death, equal to the Wild Indian." Europeans were obviously impressed with the Anglo American victory.[50]

At the initial meeting of the Texas Congress in August 1836, *The Telegraph and Texas Register* portrayed the victorious Anglos in glowing terms.

> They have thwarted the policy of Spain, and have not only made Texas a country of population and wealth, but have added it to the Republics of the earth. They have reversed the order of Mahomet and bowed their faces to the West . . . No opposing force sufficient has been found to impede their westward course and march to greatness . . . To Texas success has thus far been given, because her citizens were engaged against a cruel, blood thirsty despot.[51]

This distortion of actual events provided impetus to Texas exceptionalism. The portrayal of the Mexicans as Mahomet (Mohammed) illustrates the dislike for Catholicism, as strange and thus as dangerous as Islam. The quote identifies a united Anglo front against the cruel Mexicans, but that was far from the truth.

Texans faced persistent threats of Mexican invasion and Indians who had not let up their fight against the Anglos. This constant warfare, checked only by citizen-soldiers, infused in the Texas character a sense of insecurity. Sam Houston in 1836 stated, "We cannot hope that the bosom of our beautiful prairies will be visited by the balmy breezes of peace. We must keep all our energies alive, our army organized, disciplined, and increasingly agreeable to our present necessities." Many Texans anguished over the ability of Texas, with fewer than 30,000 citizens in 1836, to survive against two powerful border countries. General Feliz Huston noted, "I believe that Texas, with minimum wealth, at war with Mexico and surrounded by numerous tribes of hostile Indians is not engaged in a trifling or easy contest . . . I see nothing but a long, protracted war."[52]

As the nation's press lamented the conditions in Texas after the Revolution, warning settlers not to bring their families, the Texas Congress initiated a number of land inducements to increase migration. Instead of attracting law-abiding citizens, Texas continued to attract adventurers, bandits, and those in the throes of bankruptcy in the 1840s. Congress decided to forego a Texas census in 1840 out of fear that it would negatively affect the country's image. President Lamar, in a message to the Texas Congress in 1841, noted that immigration "from which much had been expected proved generally not to be of that industrious and laboring class" but migrants who "rather destroyed, than strengthened the hopes, that our fertile plains would be shortly subject to the plow-share."[53]

The Anglo settlers were not the only faction that was deeply affected by the Texas Revolution. Historians have not given much attention to how the Mexican troops felt about the Alamo battle, but their beliefs affected the rest of the Mexican military campaign. Analyzing the diary of José Enrique de la Peña, the documents translated by Carlos Castañeda, the writings of General Vincente Filisola, as well as the correspondence back to Mexico and the military orders that Santa Anna himself wrote throughout the campaign, sheds new light on the Mexican side of the Texas campaign: a highly competent, professional army who felt that the Texas revolutionaries were decrepit, unappreciative bigots who needed to be ejected from the Mexican province. The Mexican accounts primarily describe the Anglo Americans as selfish revolutionaries whose arrogance pushed them into battle even though they were ill-trained and lacked the proper men and equipment. Perhaps because these narratives clash with the Texas legend, many historians continue to question the authenticity of the diaries on both sides.

Many of the Mexican soldiers felt that the attack on the Alamo, although counted a victory, was not worth the lives lost in the process. In his account of what happened at the Alamo, Santa Anna's private secretary referred to it as a massacre.

> One hundred and eighty-three unfortunate wretches who were sacrificed there cost us the lives of over 400 Mexicans! He would have us believe that 'life was guaranteed to the enemy on the condition that they surrender their arms and take an oath never to take them up again against Mexico.' There never was such a promise made. From the moment we entered Béxar, the enemy was asked to surrender at discretion to which the enemy never consented. Let them deny this fact if they dare; let them deny the fact that a red flag was raised on the steeple of the cathedral of that city as a sign that no quarter would be granted and that everything would be carried by fire and sword.[54]

Santa Anna angered many Mexican soldiers by lying in official reports to justify the losses that the Mexican army suffered at the Alamo. He stated, in his reports to Mexico, that his army had killed over 600 Anglos with a Mexican loss of 70. He wrote, "Among the corpses are those of Bowie and Travis, who styled themselves Colonels, and also that of Crockett, and several leading men, who had entered the Fortress with dispatches from their Convention. We lost about 70 men killed and 300 wounded, among whom 25 are officers."[55]

The morale of the Mexican army changed completely after taking the Alamo. Most of the soldiers agreed that the amount of bloodshed at the Alamo on both sides was futile and unnecessary, yet it appeared as though the losses meant nothing to Santa Anna so long as the ends justified the means. General Vincente Filisola, Santa Anna's second in command, expressed this sentiment in his account of what occurred during the Texan campaign published in 1849.

> In our opinion all that bloodshed of our soldiers as well as of our enemies was useless, having as its only objective an inconsiderate, childish, and culpable vanity so that it might be proclaimed that Béxar had been reconquered by force of arms and that in the attack many men had died on both sides.[56]

Santa Anna's reasoning for going ahead with the attack on the Alamo, even when he knew what the outcome might be for his soldiers, was to further his own fame and glory. He showed no regard for the loss of so many lives. Not until he saw firsthand the devastation among his ranks did he thank his troops on behalf of their country and praise them. Yet even after observing the casualties his troops suffered, Santa Anna still failed to see the Alamo as a loss for Mexico.[57]

The feelings of defeat experienced by the Mexican troops played an important role in the rest of the Texas campaign. The troops felt that the battle and the entire Texas operation was a disgrace for both the military and for Mexico. Many of the troops, like de la Peña, placed blame on Santa Anna because he was aware of the lack of preparation and training of the Mexican soldiers. The Texan victory at San Jacinto was gained against a demoralized enemy.[58]

The Texas rebellion generated bitter feelings in Mexico. A mere fifteen years after Mexico declared independence from Spain, Mexicans had Texas wrenched from them. Mexicans continued to have a love-hate relationship with the United States. They admired the U.S. Constitution, even using it as a model for their own, but after San Jacinto they felt betrayed by the same people they once held in high regard.[59]

Many Mexicans felt that hostilities should resume to regain Texas. The next time the "true enemy" would be held accountable. Retribution would be taken against not only the Anglo colonists but also the United States who, while abetting rebellion within another sovereign country, had hidden behind an "evil mask of scandalous hypocrisy." The inability of the

Mexican military to exact this degree of revenge did not affect the consensus within Mexico concerning the justice of that goal.[60]

Santa Anna in his *Manifesto* blamed the Mexican soldiers for the defeat at San Jacinto. He said that most of the troops had little military experience and thus created "disorder," especially when surprised. Throughout his explanation of the Texas Campaign, he complained about subordinates not following his orders and about the cruel treatment he received after being captured.[61]

Jose Enrique de la Peña asserted in his narrative that further bloodshed was unnecessary. The Anglos were in full retreat; if Santa Anna had acted humanely and rationally, the war would be won: "If he (the Anglo rebels) could have counted on the humanity of our leader, if he had not feared the bloodthirsty nature of the one who had subjected him to such terrible ordeals, he might have tried to capitulate before risking all, where instead he gained all, thanks to a criminal abandon unforgivable in a general."[62]

In contrast to the Anglo revolutionary spirit, Tejanos felt torn between their Texas homeland and their Mexican cultural heritage. At all the critical battles of the Texas Revolution, Tejanos fought on both sides with many families split over divided loyalties. San Antonio native Gregorio Esparza fought with the Anglos at the Alamo while his brother Francisco sided with the Mexicans. Due to his brother's entreaties to Santa Anna, Gregorio was the only Alamo defender to receive a formal burial.[63]

The Tejanos found themselves in an impossible position. Both the Anglos and Mexicans accused them of traitorous conduct. In December 1835, Governor Henry Smith warned Edward Burleson not to trust "false friends" among the Béxar residents during the Anglo siege of the town. In January 1836, Amos Pollard warned the governor of San Antonio about "our most

formidable foe—the Mexican Tory party of the country." Colonel Travis wrote from the Alamo that all San Antonio residents who were not assisting him were "public enemies." The Mexicans also wished the Tejanos a "thousand curses on the Mexican who should be dastardly enough to join in the murderous and anti-national plot [the Texas revolt]" and asserted that anyone who did not oppose the loss of Texas was a traitor who deserved death.[64] Anglos forgot that at least seven Tejanos died at the Alamo, and without Juan Seguín at San Jacinto, the battle might have turned against the Anglos.

The Anglos eventually forced Juan Seguin, a hero at both the Alamo and San Jacinto, to leave Texas. In his memoirs he describes "the jealousy evinced against me, by the American straggling adventurers who were already beginning to work their dark intrigues against the native (Tejano) families, whose only crime was, that they owned large tracts of land and desirable property."[65]

In November 1836, after resigning as vice-president of Texas, the Hispanic and Texas patriot Lorenzo de Zavala fell into the cold waters of Buffalo Bayou. Shortly thereafter he contracted pneumonia and died. He was buried next to the San Jacinto battlefield where many Mexicans lay unburied. Zavala was lucky because he did not live to see the extreme racial prejudice against Tejanos. The Texas Republic evolved into a viciously racist state terrorizing its Hispanic residents.[66]

The Texas Revolution was not a result of racial friction, but it did usher in a period of intense racial animosity and bigotry. Racism did not cause the Texas Revolution but it did precipitate it.[67] In late 1836, the Anglo Americans plundered, robbed, killed, and forced out of their homes over eight hundred Tejanos who had lived in Nacogdoches for decades. The number of Tejano residents dropped from 650 in 1834 to 300 in 1840. When the Anglos returned to

Victoria after the war, they accused all the Tejanos of conspiring with the Mexicans. Immediately the Anglo mayor received authority to order the arrest of any person suspected of spying, which included every Tejano. Each Tejano was required to obtain a passport within twelve hours of entering town, and any Tejano who wished to leave town had to obtain permission from the authorities. The Anglos expelled every Tejano who could not show a means of support.[68]

The Texas Revolution affected others in Texas. Slavery continued to be controversial. British abolitionist John Scoble argued that Great Britain should not recognize Texas as an independent republic, stating "That robber state" was settled by "hordes of characterless villains, whose sole object was to reestablish slavery and the slave trader." Mexican army general and politician José María Tornel provided a Mexican perspective of Texas slavery: "The land speculators of Texas tried to convert it into a mart of human flesh, where the slaves of the south could be sold and others from Africa might be introduced, since it is not possible to do it directly from the United States."[69]

The revolutionary essence did not flame brightly for everyone. Tejanos and African Americans play no role in the Texas myth. Benjamin Lundy claimed in 1837 that southern colonists initiated the Texas Revolution in order to evade Mexican emancipation measures. Their ultimate goal was to establish a slave republic. According to Lundy, the Texas rhetoric of liberty was a cover for greed and sin. He wrote that the conflict derived from "motives of personal aggrandizement, avaricious adventure, and unlimited, enduring oppression."[70]

The Texas Revolution was, from its beginnings, interpreted in the United States as a racial clash, not simply a revolt against unjust government or tyranny, in spite of the entreaties of many Texans. The superiority of the white race justified ridding Texas of hybrid Mexican rule.

Manifest destiny spoke only to whites. It held no promise for other races, especially African American slaves and Mexicans.[71]

Although there was a virulent hatred of Mexicans and Tejanos, especially after the Revolution, the issue of slavery in Texas has been virtually ignored by historians. Historian Phillip Tucker in a recent historical analysis of the Alamo states, "From the beginning, the institution of slavery played a vital element in the settlement of Anglo-Celtic Texas." He bases this conclusion on a statement from Austin who said, "Texas must be a slave country [because] circumstances and unavoidable necessity compels it [and] it is the wish of the people there."[72]

Increasingly Mexican historians are studying the relationship between slavery and the Texas Revolution. Mexican novelist and historian José María Roa Bárcena concluded that "the rebellion in Texas [was] more due to the emancipation of slaves in Mexico than to the fall of the federalist constitution of 1824." This analysis cast the myth of Texas exceptionalism into doubt. Most Mexicans feel that those who died at the Alamo and Goliad died for the right of one race to keep another in servitude.[73]

Native Americans also faced a quandary during the Texas Revolution. Due to his background with the Indians, Sam Houston was given the job of placating the Native Americans during the Texas Revolution. The Provisional Government was concerned that the Indians would raid homes and ranches while the men were fighting the Mexican army. The Indians wanted assurances that their land would be protected from further Anglo intrusions. Houston promised in writing that Indian land would be secured.[74] However, Anna Muckleroy in an article in the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* concluded that the Houston agreement had no validity since Mexicans had not ceded land to the Cherokees.[75] The Provisional Government in a report dated November 13, 1835, declared Houston's treaty "null and void."[76]

During the spring and summer of 1835, the Indians actively troubled the settlers on the Brazos and Colorado rivers. The Provisional Government organized a company of Texas Rangers to monitor Indian activities. The Rangers were given specific orders not to instigate any trouble with the Indians and to promise the Indians redress for their grievances.[77]

In December 1835, a surveyor, Henry Raguet moved into lands formerly ceded to the Indians, thus abrogating any treaties.[78] Later in December, after Mexican General Cos surrendered his force in Béxar, the status of the Indians was no longer a concern for the interim Texas government.

In April 1836, U.S. Army General Edmund Gaines occupied eastern Texas and Nacogdoches. Gaines' purpose was to prevent Mexican interference with the Indians and put down any Indian uprisings. The U.S. Army stayed in Texas until December 1836.[79] Historian Gary Clayton Anderson summarizes the plight of Native Americans and Tejanos: "In the increasingly opaque struggle, notions of 'loyal' Tejanos and Indians became obscured by the myopia of war. Texans soon concluded that only their beliefs, though at times prejudicial, hateful. And violent, were glorious and righteous."[80]

Following the Texas Revolution, the Indians remained calm, Tejanos returned to their fields, and the slaves did not initiate a major uprising. Juan Seguín returned to Béxar to collect the remains of the Alamo defenders. All he found was bones and ashes. Mexican priests buried some of the bodies, but their resting place is unknown. The remains not buried were placed in a crypt at San Fernando Cathedral, the Church where Santa Anna placed the flag of no surrender. A group of Alamo descendants wants the Smithsonian Institute to open the crypt and definitely determine that the crypt contains the remains of the Alamo Anglos.[81]

By April 1836 the Alamo defenders passed into immortality, at least among the Anglo revolutionaries. "Brave, chivalrous, patriotic band! Ye sleep in death but still are not free" wrote Thomas Chambers who was recruiting additional soldiers in the United States for Texas. For Chambers, the defenders were Texas' "first glorious martyrs in a holy struggle."[82]

Santa Anna's refusal to bury the Alamo dead added to the Texas mythology. Many felt that without a proper burial the ghosts of the Alamo dead could not enter heaven or hell and remained on the battlefield, angels of righteousness, responsible for defending any future assault on the Alamo. Rumors of ghosts and haunted spirits caused many San Antonio residents to avoid the old mission after dark until well into the twentieth century.[83]

The ghosts of the Alamo lay dormant for the next fifty years. In the late nineteenth century, Texans joined the rest of the country and became passionate about their past. As monuments were dedicated on Civil War battlefields, the *San Antonio Daily Express*, after realizing that no ceremony was held at the fiftieth anniversary of the Alamo battle, suggested that an organization be formed to "see that the prominent anniversaries of Texas histories are observed." A women's group, the Daughters of the Republic of Texas (DRT), assumed that task in 1892.[84]

Texans revered the memory of the Alamo defenders but not the Alamo itself. Santa Anna's artillery had destroyed much of the mission walls. Debris covered the chapel and the roof was gone. After San Jacinto, Santa Anna ordered General Juan Andrade, whose cavalry had occupied the fort since the battle, to destroy the fortress. The Mexicans tore down walls and set a number of fires throughout the old mission.[85]

Tourists pilfered the rubble and in 1840, the San Antonio town council allowed citizens to haul away Alamo stone for $5 a wagonload. Both the Texas Republic troops and Mexican

troops, on their forays into the Republic of Texas, occupied the Alamo. In 1846, an Illinois soldier deployed to San Antonio during the Mexican American war described the fort as "the place where Colonel Crockett and his little band of heroes fell . . . defending it . . . [It is] now an old building—and was once, no doubt, a handsome one, but it has mostly crumbled down now." It was a nesting place for owls and swallows; grass and weeds grew from its walls.[86]

The Catholic Church then sold the Alamo convent to a merchant who ran a grocery from the building and stabled horses in the patio. A mercantile company later bought the building. Bone fragments, pieces of cannon, and entire human skeletons found during construction projects on the grounds of the Alamo caught the public's attention. In 1881 the *Galveston County Daily News* published a letter from a visitor to the Alamo:

> You cannot imagine my amazement and disgust upon finding this my first visit to the old church fortress of the Alamo and finding the structure so famous not only in the history of Texas but the annals of liberty and the record of the world, filled with sacks of salt, stinking potatoes, odorous kerosene and dirty groceries generally, It is strange . . . that the great State of Texas . . . should permit a historic building like the Alamo, once consecrated to deity and latterly baptized in blood of heroes like Travis and Crockett, slain in the cause of liberty and democracy, the become a grocery warehouse.[87]

During the nineteenth century the Texas myth had not yet developed. Today's venerated temples of Texas exceptionalism were decrepit buildings that stood in the way of progress.

Figure 4. The Alamo Chapel, the most visited historic site in Texas
(image in public domain,
http:/www.pdphoto.org/PictureDetail.php?mat=&pg=5402)

In 1908, Aldina de Zavala, a Tejano who had a great love for Texas history and was the granddaughter of Lorenzo De Zavala, the first Vice-President of the Republic, began a campaign to ensure that the physical structure of the Alamo would stand forever. She was a preservationist who also wished to save four other Spanish missions that were threatened by a construction boom in San Antonio. Her grandfather was considered an outsider and a Mexican spy by many of the early settlers. By the twentieth century, even the Tejanos who were terribly mistreated during the Republic period now leapt on the bandwagon of exceptional Texans. They saw Texas history as their history.[88]

De Zavala issued a statement that she had "learned on good authority that a syndicate, which had an option on the property back of the Alamo," intended to seize the chapel itself and tear it down to use the space as sort of a front yard to the hotel, or amusement place, they

expected to erect. Since her lawyers were out of town she barricaded herself in the chapel. She absolutely refused to see the sheriff when he attempted to serve an injunction. After three days she marched out onto the Alamo Plaza which by now was crowded with journalists and supporters. Newspapers published her picture and story throughout the country, reigniting Alamo passions and making a heroine out of its savior.[89]

Since the state of Texas owned the title to the Alamo and the Daughters of the Republic of Texas maintained it, there was virtually no chance of any syndicate tearing it down for any purpose. Aldina de Zavala really was not fighting to save the Alamo but to resurrect the vision of what the Alamo represented. Her actions added fodder to the Texas mystique.[90]

De Zavala enlisted an ally to her cause, Clara Driscoll. Driscoll's ancestry included one of south Texas's founding Anglo families; the family was fabulously wealthy. After spending several years in Europe, Driscoll was appalled at the neglected state of the Alamo in comparison to European's care of monuments and cathedrals. She called upon Texans to save the Alamo: "There does not stand in the world today a building or monument which can recall such a deed of heroism and bravery, sacrifice and courage, as that of the brave men that fought and fell inside those historic walls."[91]

The two women raised sufficient funds to rescue the Alamo but later their relationship became strained as they had competing views of preservation, especially the buildings that were built earlier on the extensive grounds of the Alamo. De Zavala's vision diminished under Driscoll's influence and money. The Alamo shrine evolved into an Anglo-American monument with little thought to the Tejanos who had died within its walls.[92]

At the end of World War I, as the first Red Scare reverberated through the nation, the Alamo again became a symbol of capitalism, democracy, and individual rights—of

exceptionalism, Americanism in general, and Texas in particular. At the Alamo anniversary in 1920, General James Harbord stated that our patriotism would defend America against the "Red Terror," and that there is "no better evidence of the patriotic spirit than the sentiment that prompts the citizen of a nation to honor the undying memory of their heroic dead, and to cherish the monuments associated with their supreme sacrifice." The General further noted, "The Spirit of the Alamo . . . must become the inspiration of the Nation."[93]

Again, in World War II, as a new generation of young men marched off to war, the exceptionalism of Texans was used to inspire. Texas historian Charles Jeffries motivated Texas boys by stating, "What kind of soldiers will these men … make? They will be properly imbued for the ordeal. As they have shone on the Lone Star land for a hundred years, the lights of the Alamo will shine on them too." Evelyn Carrington of the Daughters of the Texas Revolution said on March 6, 1943:

> The children and grandchildren of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas are in every branch of service . . . Many have left the boundaries of their beloved Texas, but Texas still holds them close to her heart and asks that God in his mercy keep them safe . . . If [they] should fall—and lives will be lost—Texas knows that such sacrifice will have its roots . . . in the faith of their fathers who dreamed and labored that liberty, honor and justice would be a part of every life.[94]

One year later the Minister of the Madison Square Presbyterian Church hailed the early Texans as men who made America great. Finally upon the death of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the *San Antonio Evening News,* reflecting on Roosevelt's visit to the Alamo in 1936, wrote, "Could it be possible that the President . . . carried back to Washington, D.C. with him the spirit of the Alamo . . . Was his sacrifice in the glorious struggle against the forces of evil that would usurp the freedom of the world comparable with that of the heroes of the Alamo?"[95]

During the Vietnam War President Lyndon Johnson used the memory of the Alamo as a metaphor. In the last two years of his presidency, he repeatedly talked about drawing a line in the sand, manning a wall, making a stand, and being a man. In an interview with *Life* magazine reporter Hugh Sidey, Johnson stated the he had "gone into Vietnam because, as at the Alamo, somebody had to get behind the log with those threatened people," and he compared the siege at Khe Sanh to the siege at the Alamo. Historian Ronnie Dugger argued that Johnson saw the American soldiers fighting in Vietnam as the descendants of the Alamo, and he, at least in spirit, was William Barret Travis besieged on all sides by supposed enemies.[96]

The Alamo has evolved into a symbol of heroism and courage despite overwhelming odds. However, historians have little factual knowledge about what actually occurred at the Alamo. Some Alamo histories portray the vast majority of the Anglos killed as they sought escape. But the continual use of portraying and comparing the Alamo to contemporary issues perpetuates Texas exceptionalism.

Figure 5. ***Dawn at the Alamo*** *(Prints and Photographs Collection, Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission)*

Davy Crockett's death at the Alamo has been the subject of books, songs, movies, and television. Texas history lauds his achievements more than any other single individual during this period. Many Texans feel that Crockett's personal characteristics of "honesty, fair-play, self-reliance, loyalty, courage, justice, love for freedom" are the foundations of Texas culture.[97]

Crockett was well known to the Mexicans. Colonel Almonte, on his inspection trip through Texas in 1834, took notice of Crockett. Almonte identified him "as a lunatic politician from the United States." He further compared the Anglo residents to Davy Crockett.[98]

The Crockett legend evolved into fact in the 1950s when Walt Disney immortalized Davy Crockett. In the midst of the Cold War, Disney felt that Americans needed heroes. The United States was considered the fortress of the free world besieged by the growing tentacles of Communism. Disney constructed Crockett as the ultimate American hero. Prior to Disney, Crockett was obscure, remembered primarily by Texans due to his death at the Alamo. Reality

was immaterial to Disney as the Crockett myth was magnified and exaggerated. The United States, feeling besieged by the spread of Communism, immediately identified with Crockett. Disney created the mind-set that, in spite of the odds, Americans will win because our values are good and pure.[99]

In spite of the numerous assaults by intellectuals and historians, Richard Hofstadtler used Crockett as a prime example of the appeal that egalitarianism and anti-intellectualism had for Americans in the nineteenth century. However, the magic of Disney created a Crockett in the 1950s that appealed to the country's supreme characteristics and ideals—truth, justice, and martyrdom to a noble cause. Disney made the Alamo fight into America's fight.[100]

In 1960 John Wayne, America's ultimate masculine movie star, directed and acted in *The Alamo*. The movie opened to mixed reviews, resulting in a change to the promotion of the film. One advertisement cried out, "The Alamo will remind a forgetful world what kind of people Americans really are . . . savagely cruel against injustice, willing to carry their share of disaster—and at all times on the side of God fearing people." Wayne stated that the film was not only patriotic but also clean family fun in a period when Hollywood was awash in filth. The myth now had a movie and a star supporting it; with the added bonus of patriotic, family entertainment, only the most disloyal Texan would contradict Hollywood's version of events.[101]

The latest Hollywood Alamo movie is more historically credible than past versions. Released in 2004, it portrays the complexities in the lives of many of the Alamo's key participants and provides a more realistic view of life inside the Alamo during the siege. This version offers a more truthful and less glorified rendition of the Alamo battle. Obviously, the Alamo defenders are the heroes, but they are the type of heroes who live complicated and muddled lives and find themselves in a situation as chaotic as their lives. The Mexican soldiers

are seen as human, not the vicious, unkempt soldiers of past Alamo renditions. This adaptation of the Alamo ends with a realistic portrayal of the San Jacinto Battle. Finally, the de la Pená diary description of the death of Davy Crockett provides a degree of historical accuracy to the film. This Alamo is not only more entertaining than past versions, but also it degrades neither Anglos nor Hispanics. In this Alamo, there are no winners—just losers manipulated by poor leadership on both sides.

The film added a new dimension to Texas exceptionalism. Although a small brave group of volunteers still confronts the professional Mexican Army, the film's reality is more relevant to modern audiences. The Alamo defenders are seen as mere men beset with doubts and fear of dying. The audience can find solidarity with these men as they question their reasons for remaining, knowing full well their fate. The movie does not obviate Texas exceptionalism; instead, it expands the meaning of the term. One can be scared and doubtful and still be exceptional.

The Alamo had a different meaning for the Tejanos. Tejanos had this cultural symbol of Anglo superiority in San Antonio, a city with a large Hispanic population. They felt that the lack of understanding of Tejano participation in the Alamo battle was the base of the ideological and cultural hostility between Hispanic and Anglo-American communities in San Antonio. The racial aspect of the Alamo finally boiled out in public in 1988. The San Antonio IMAX Theater premiered the film *Alamo, The Price of Freedom*. The film made superstars of Bowie, Crockett, and Travis, but Mexican American activists found the script offensive because it ignored the contributions of Tejanos in Texas history.[102] Even a tacit admission of Tejano participation at the Alamo would undermine a basic tenet of Texas exceptionalism, that of the white underdogs facing a superior army of brown-skinned warriors.

Hispanic activists demanded that control of the Alamo be transferred from the Daughters of the Republic of Texas (DRT) to the League of Latin American United Citizens (LULAC). The Hispanic community had long resented the Alamo's place in Texas history, and a few radical activists, taking up the banner of New West History, condemned the site as a symbol of white racism and the DRT as an agent of Anglo oppression. The Daughters responded that six percent of their membership was Hispanic, a number corresponding to the Tejano population in 1836. This retort did not satisfy Hispanics who demanded that the DRT apologize for the negative portrayal of Mexican Americans and acknowledge the sacrifice of Santa Anna's troops.[103]

The suggestion offended many white Texans. One critic in the *Houston Chronicle* asserted that handing the Alamo over to LULAC "makes about as much sense as giving control of the Pearl Harbor memorial to the Japanese." Charles Edgren of the *El Paso Herald-Post* suggested that in addition to letting LULAC have the Alamo, we should give Harper's Ferry to the Ku Klux Klan. An editorial in the *Houston Post* exclaimed the following:

> Face it, man, about 188 men died defending the Alamo, and they came from many places. At least 10 of the defenders were Tejano men, and at least seven of them died there. But that means Tejanos played a relatively small role in the battle . . . We don't need another battle of the Alamo. The Anglos have it and aren't going to give it back—to the Tejanos any more than the Mexicans.[104]

In 1979, Arizona Governor Bruce Babbitt, while expanding his political base to see if he should run for the United States presidency, stated that the "Alamo is a symbol of the problem in our relationship with Mexico . . . a sacred symbol to Texans and an extension of the American ideal. But to Mexico, it's a symbol of territory lost, a nation plundered by overbearing gringo neighbors." Texans attacked Babbitt who pointed to the seven Tejanos who died at the Alamo as indisputable evidence that race had nothing to do with the battle.[105]

An editorial in the *Lubbock-Avalanche Journal* stated that "[t]he Alamo stands as one of the most cherished examples in recorded history of mankind's eternal struggle for human rights." The newspaper further noted, "It is not a racial symbol, nor even a nationalist symbol as Gov. Babbitt's ignorance would have him believe, but a beacon for all the world to see that man's struggle against oppression is never in vain." The *Bryan College Station Eagle* pointed out that the Alamo was "a shrine representing, not war with Mexico, but a Texas struggle for liberty that was endorsed by most Mexicans as well." Juan Seguin and the handful of Tejanos who had fought with the Americans and been long maligned and ignored by Texans had in 1979 been magnified to represent "most Mexicans" in Texas.[106]

Texans ignored the Alamo until a Tejano woman made it a cause. The subsequent fracas between Aldina de Zavala and Clara Driscoll brought to the forefront Anglo racism. The two women disagreed how much of the mission to save. Driscoll used her wealth and influence to force de Zavala out of the decision-making process. In certain minds, a Tejano cannot represent the Alamo. Before de Zavala, Texans paid little attention to the physical structure of the Alamo, even allowing it to be dismantled. Once de Zavala became concerned about saving the old mission, it became a monument to the Anglos. The Alamo as a tourist attraction became evident only after the television shows and movies of the mid-twentieth century. Interestingly, this monument to the early Anglos exists today predominantly due to the efforts of a Tejano and Walt Disney.

The Alamo remains a battleground in today's wars. It is like a sore to the growing Hispanic population of San Antonio. Several times a year, Hispanics demonstrate what they feel is a distortion of history in the streets surrounding the Alamo. The management by a small group

of society women, the Daughters of the Texas Republic, also is a subject of complaints. However, it remains the number one tourist site in Texas.

Like the Alamo, San Jacinto was not of any interest immediately after the Revolution. Peggy McCormick, the widow of one of Austin's Old Three Hundred Settlers, lived on the land on which the San Jacinto battles were fought. The fiery Irish widow asked Sam Houston to "take them dead Mexicans off my league." Houston tried to mitigate her temperament, stating that the land would soon be a historical landmark. Mrs. McCormick replied, "To hell with your glorious history! Take off your stinking Mexicans."[107]

Eight of the Texans who died during the battle were buried on the grounds of the Texas encampment after the battle. Wooden headstones with inscriptions were placed at the head of each grave. In 1881, one of the San Jacinto survivors unveiled a memorial, the culmination of a four-decade struggle with the Texas Legislature to erect a suitable monument to commemorate San Jacinto. The Legislature dismissed the repeated requests for a commemorative stating there were more important uses for the state's limited budget. That year the Legislature appropriated one thousand dollars for a memorial, but by then the wooden crosses were so decayed that only one grave could be identified.[108]

In 1883, the State of Texas purchased ten acres of the old McCormick farm to start a memorial park. Survivors of the battle were invited to the battlefield in 1894 to help mark out important sites. The San Jacinto Chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas took responsibility for ensuring that the sites were properly marked.[109]

The Public Works Administration started building the San Jacinto Monument in 1936. The monument rises 570 feet above the battlefield, fifteen feet higher than the Washington Monument. Atop the shaft is a thirty-four-foot star which symbolizes the Lone Star Republic.

If the battle at San Jacinto is the starting point of Texas exceptionalism, Texans showed little interest in saving the battleground. The Federal government built the monument and even today few Texans visit the site. The state moored the battleship Texas close to the monument to attract visitors, but the great ship lies sunk in mud and disrepair. The battleship and the monument stand lonely vigil over the battlefield that saw Texas freed from Mexico. The site is surrounded by oil and refinery facilities and visitors must maneuver between railroad cars and tanker trucks on the one road into the park.

Figure 6. San Jacinto Monument *(image in public domain, Tijuana Brass, Fall 2006)*

Goliad has become a forgotten phase of the Texas Revolution. The massacre of surrendered men does not resonate with a culture that celebrates glorious battles and fighting while being surrounded by an overwhelming force. It was over two months after the massacre

before the half-burned, animal-gnawed bones of Fannin and his men were found and buried. General Rusk, following the Mexican army as they retreated to Mexico, paused in Goliad to bury the remains on June 3, 1836. Rusk delivered an emotional eulogy that noted the idealism that brought many of the volunteers to Texas:[110]

> Without any further interest in the country than that which all noble hearts feel at the bare mention of liberty, they rallied to our standard. Relinquishing the ease, peace, and comforts of their homes, leaving behind them all they hold dear, their mothers, sisters, daughters, and wives, they subjected themselves to fatigue and privation, and nobly threw themselves between the people of Texas and the legions of Santa Anna.[111]

The mass grave at Goliad was not permanently marked at that time. Gradually, nature reclaimed the site, and the gravesite was almost lost. In 1848, a local Goliad merchant marked the site with a pile of rocks in order to keep cattle and other animals from destroying it.

It was not until 1928 that anybody paid any attention to the site. The town of Goliad, on vague evidence, purchased two acres that encompassed the mass grave. During the next couple of years informal digging unearthed human bone fragments. In 1932, a group of students from the University of Texas, as an archeology class assignment, finally confirmed the burial site.

During the Texas Centennial in 1936, the state allocated funds for the construction of a monument to commemorate the final resting place of Fannin and his men. Obviously, the Goliad massacre is an event that many in Texas would like to forget. The chaos in Texas political councils, incompetent Texan leadership, petty personal prejudices, factional intrigues, and the high-handedness of minor Texas officials in order to have their own way contributed to the horrors of Goliad.[112]

Herbert Davenport, the prominent Goliad historian, wrote:

> The Texans had . . . a shame-faced feeling that the men of Goliad had let them down. Texas undertook the unequal struggle with Mexico, sustained by an almost insolent dependence on race pride. The Texans were natural soldiers and brave men, and invincible against Mexican courage, and Mexican numbers, and Mexico's material and means, were the touchstones of Texas valor and faith. But if looked to closely, the defeat and capture of Colonel Fannin would have to be explained; and the explanation admitted that even Texan valor was not proof against hunger, thirst, and tactical errors, and that Mexicans could be brave.[113]

Figure 7. Fannin Monument, Goliad, Texas *(reprinted with permission of Stephen Arthur, photographer)*

The Alamo, San Jacinto, and even the defeat at Goliad are essential to the Texas legend that its early settlers were a unique and exceptional people. However, Texas is not the only state with a pioneer history. Other states had tragic and difficult beginnings, histories of bloodshed and violence, and were beacons of hope for those in search of a new beginning. Individual states repeated the national myth as pioneers forged a new beginning. There is a Kansas myth, an Oklahoma myth, and a Virginia myth—every state has a history and thus a legend. Such stories provide a sense of balance and a link to the past. Truth is not an element or important in the

equation. Texans traveling Interstate 10 outside of Houston cannot help but see the tall tower of the San Jacinto Monument and feel a sense of pride. When a young person joins the Texas National Guard, regardless of race or national ethnicity, their first training includes a history course that begins with the Alamo and ends with the Guard's deployments in Iraq. For serious historians, it marks an exceptionalist and nationalist distortion of history. But Texas is not interested in a realistic appraisal of its beginnings. The manipulation of history insures the continuity of the Texas myth.

However, it does not answer the question about the validity of the Texas settler experience when compared to other regions of the West. Texans consider themselves exceptional due to their heroic past, but other states also honor original pioneers. A brief examination of the early settler experience in states close to Texas—Oklahoma and Kansas—reveal similar experiences. Texas was first settled in the early nineteenth century, Kansas mid-century, and Oklahoma later in the century.

The pioneer experience in Kansas and Oklahoma mirrored the earlier settlement of Texas. The settlers in all three states forced Native Americans from their land either by force, in Kansas, or bribery, in Oklahoma. The settlers themselves shared similar characteristics; they were rugged individualists, risk-takers, with many seeking a second chance. Kansas and Oklahoma did not have a revolution but they endured experiences just as difficult. The division in Kansas over slavery and the rapid growth of early Oklahoma, while maybe not as spectacular as a revolution, were difficult periods in both state's histories. Finally, land speculation was a driving force in all three states.

Kansas also had its trouble with Native Americans caused primarily by the pioneers intruding on land the Native Americans had lived on for centuries. One Kansas soldier classified

the Indians as "monsters," and another characterized them "as a treacherous set of villains."[114] Like Texas, Indian aggression was exaggerated to justify terror against the Native Americans. According to War Department records, fourteen Anglo women were raped and approximately five captured during the peak two years of Indian raiding.[115] Even though these numbers seem small in terms of the terror inflicted in the twenty-first century, it is sobering when it is viewed in context both for those involved and for the implications.

Kansas historian Craig Miner aptly describes the Kansas settler as "ourselves, we think, or rather ourselves idealized," white, Protestant, male, unselfish, English speaking, competent, and unafraid. In 1882, Senator John Ingalls wrote, "The typical Kansan has not yet appeared. Blacks fought dust and wind with whites; women manned the homesteads while their husbands worked away from home; Catholics built cathedrals and Orthodox Jews broke prairie sod . . . The prospect of a new start appealed to socialists and capitalists, corporations and individuals." Craig Miner notes, "Charlatans migrated with honest people, agnostics with Christians, and little rain fell on any of them." These same characteristics could be applied to the Anglo Texans. [116]

Most of Kansas settlement occurred after passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854, Kansas' version of the empresario system. Millions of acres were opened to settlers excited by cheap land and the prospect of new opportunities. Western land agents and speculators exaggerated claims of a land full of promise to hard-working men and women. [117]

Mrs. John Kandt described the many trials that early settlers had to undergo. Frequent Indian scares, prairie fires, and grasshoppers made life miserable for Kansas settlers.[118] In addition, severe droughts and dust storms caused over one-third of the emigrant farmers to leave Kansas.[119]

Kansas differed from both Texas and Oklahoma due to the railroads. Initially few people engaged in industrial activities, but railroads hired large numbers of people to repair track and rolling stock. The state also claimed substantial coal mining. Kansas spearheaded industrial production long before other states in the region.[120]

In Kansas the land of opportunity was experienced by a fewer percentage of people than either Oklahoma or Texas. Land speculation drove up the price of land and a large amount of land went to railroad companies, becoming available to settlers only at higher prices. Land in Kansas averaged twenty-five dollars an acre, while in Texas it was practically given away.[121]

The settlement of Oklahoma took place late in the nineteenth century. From 1820 to the 1880s, Oklahoma served as Indian Territory. The Territory was like a dike of a different culture with the tide of white settlement constantly surging against it until it finally broke. A widely abused permit system allowed Anglos to enter the territory if they were artisans, skilled professionals, or tenant laborers. Union Agent John Tufts reported to Congress that white intruders who were apprehended were moved across the Oklahoma border where they "took one or two breaths of state air and returned."[122] Congress refused to take action as these white intruders were extolled as the common man trying to make a new life in Oklahoma. Oklahoma's first settlers had much in common with the illegal migrants who moved into Texas before 1821 and the others who came to Texas after the 1830 law closing the region to further Anglo settlement.[123]

The pattern of settlement was different in Oklahoma when compared to the rest of the Anglo movement west. In many states, a slow, steady infiltration of pioneers pushed Native Americans and others to less desirable lands. However, in Oklahoma the process was advanced. Historian Edward Everett Dale characterized the settling of other states to "the slow leaking of

water into the hold of an old type ship" while that of Oklahoma was "like the sudden bursting of water into a modern vessel divided into many watertight compartments. The first rush filled one compartment, then the others were filled."[124] Homesteaders steadily moved into the prairie, eventually overpowering the cattlemen both numerically and politically. These farmers, known as Boomers, advertised the merits of the country, manufacturing public opinion from the ostensible American dream—free land, the toiling farmer, the dutiful family and wife, and the home. The Boomer propaganda centered on a vast tract of nearly two million acres in the heart of Indian Territory, but no Indians had settled there. Advertisements flooded the surrounding states promoting the benefits of this area: "Oklahoma! Well watered, well timbered, rich in soil, a mostly enchanting clime, may in the near future be your home."[125]

The Oklahoma Land Run was a unique event in American history. Its number of participants and acreage, its vague rules which allowed for broad interpretation without benefit of a model, its singularity as a means of settling a new region, all combined with the insatiable American desire for land, produced a frenzied, dramatic occurrence unlike anything else in the American experience. It was a spectacular and tremendously important event to those who participated, yet many considered it a sporting event. Honesty was discouraged and dishonesty expected. It rewarded those who were politically powerful and others who resorted to lying, conniving, or bullying.

From the beginning, Oklahoma symbolized the chance to start again. Men who knew "how rotten and narrow and bigoted the other ways has been" with its "ugly towns, ugly politics, ugly buildings, ugly minds . . . were determined to forge a better society." The early Oklahoma settlers were generally two kinds of idealist similar to the Anglo Texans: those who failed

elsewhere and started again "confident of success" and those eager to succeed for the first time.[126]

The challenge for settlers may be different between states but the same type of individualist seeking a better life basically settled in each state. The pioneer experience throughout the movement west was similar to Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. Pioneer accounts of difficulty, hardship, loneliness, problems with Native Americans, land speculation, and even traveling across the country are similar. The United States also does not hold sole claim to large movements of people seeking opportunity. It has happened throughout the world and the same motivations pushed people to seek a new life whether Europe, Africa or Asia. It takes a distinctive person to move to a different environment but it does not characterize them as exceptional unless they are all exceptional regardless of state, region, or country.

Texans, much like other pioneer communities, maintained a close relationship with their previous domicile. Texans looked not to Mexico for its heritage, but to the United States. The United States—its people, its culture—had given Texas its genesis. The roots connecting the two had remained tight, particularly because the majority of the residents of the Lone Star Republic came from the United States. They also shared the same legacy of republicanism. When the Texas legislature developed a constitution, they patterned it after that of their eastern relatives, creating yet another republic on the continent.

The Texas Declaration of Independence, like that of the United States, contains a statement on the nature of government, a list of grievances, and a final declaration of independence. The separation from Mexico was justified by a philosophical argument and by a list of grievances submitted to an objective world. The declaration charged that the Mexican government had ceased to protect the lives, liberty, and property of the people; that it had been

changed from a federal republic to a consolidated, central, military despotism; that the people of Texas had argued against the misconduct of the government only to have their agents thrown into jail and armies sent to enforce the decrees of the new government. Further, the welfare of Texas had been sacrificed to that of Coahuila; the government had failed to provide a system of public education, trial by jury, freedom of religion, and other essentials of good government; and the Indians had been incited to massacre the settlers. According to the declaration, the Mexican government had invaded Texas with a large mercenary army to lay waste territory and to carry on a war of extermination. The final grievance justifying revolution charged that the Mexican government had been "the contemptible sport and victim of successive military revolutions and hath continually exhibited every characteristic of a weak, corrupt, and tyrannical government."[127] Texans felt that this document gave them the right to and was their destiny to control Texas.

Historian Frederick Merck described Texas as a perfect example of how Manifest Destiny would work. According to Merck, prior to American occupation, Texas was raw wilderness, rich in resources. American settlers had converted it into a society of homes and settlements. Its people built a republic and applied to the Union for admission. According to Merck, "Here was a plan, favored by God, for all North America."[128]

Manifest Destiny was a peculiar combination of boldness, fear, ideology, and crude political reckoning. In Texas, greed is an addition to the definition. Ideologically, Manifest Destiny was a mixture of evangelical Protestantism, Republicanism, and Hegelian philosophy. According to Hegel, history had a purpose or fate, and Providence had obviously chosen the United States. Since the white race was self-evidently superior to the black, red, or Hispanic, only the most deviously ignorant would stand opposed to God's will. Jeffersonian Republicans envisioned expansion as the way for the United States to continually grow and preserve itself.[129]

Historian Rodolfo Acuña, a professor at California State University, Northridge, writes, "Racism . . . is at the heart of colonialism . . . Anglo-Americans have failed to recognize that the United States committed an act of violence against the Mexican people . . . The violence was not limited to the taking of the land; Mexico's territory was invaded, her people murdered, her land raped, her possessions plundered." Historian Feliciano Ribera, a professor at San Jose State, describes Manifest Destiny as "a peculiar Anglo-American version of the chosen race theory . . . [T]he Mexican American found his lands gone, his religion seriously challenged and himself a citizen of a county whose language, laws and social customs he did not understand." The Anglos always considered the Tejanos a sub-race. They manifested this before the Texas Revolution by failing to associate with the Tejanos and completely disregarding the Tejano land claims. After the revolution, the blatant racism of the Anglos forced many Tejanos to leave Texas where some families had lived for decades.[130]

Manifest Destiny was the code of early Texas and frontier individualists. In Texas, an individual man was the equal of any other man, free to do whatever he pleased, and to govern himself without interference from any external agency. Whether because of resentment toward the upper societal classes who looked down upon the frontier settler as coarse, uncultured, and unrestrained or living life on the edge of danger, the settler was confrontational. If life did not go the way he wanted, he attacked any organization he felt opposed his desires. Also, he was a nationalist and, at that time, an expansionist. The Texan was aggressive, and that meant the nation should also be aggressive. His national policy was simply rough, undiplomatic, ruthless, and militaristic. Within the United States, unoccupied land belonged to those that took it; the federal policy on demanding payment was wrong. He was intolerant of anything that did not

resemble freedom and democracy for a select few. These were the fundamentals of good government; everything else was unfair and tyrannical.[131]

Texas settlers underwent the same hardships and trials as others who ventured west. They were rugged and individualistic, but they were also cruel and inhumane to anything that stood in their way. They became wealthy and wanted more such as no tariffs, more land, no government regulation, and no Catholic religion. There is no doubt that they did provide Anglo creativity and progress but at the expense of thousands of slain Native Americans and the diminution of a whole culture. They were exceptional only because of their arrogance.

The early Texas settlers did not see themselves as heroic pioneers and citizen soldiers, tilling the soil for the first time for the benefit of posterity. At its heart, the motivation for separation from Mexico was personal wealth, slavery, racism, and political independence. The incentive was land and the freedom that came with owning large amounts of it. The settlers were obviously proud of their efforts in building towns and establishing farms, but their primary intention was to benefit from these labors. Ira Ingram noted, "I did not, for one invade the wilderness of Texas, to speculate in cents, piccons, shillings, not yet dollars. I came here for a fortune expecting."[132]

Other states have special regalia to commemorate their heritage. The sod-house (Kansas) and the Land Run (Oklahoma) symbolize the differences between states and their regional pride. But, several characteristics made the Anglo Texas settler different from other American settlers. First, all Anglo Texas settlers were expatriates. They abandoned home and country to settle in an unknown and hostile land ruled by an alien society. They moved to a foreign country beset with hostile Indians and threatened by an unstable Mexico. They did not have the protection of federal law and the U.S. Army as did the rest of the American frontier. Others saw themselves

as empire-builders with an opportunity to be wealthy who disregarded national boundaries. Still many simply wished for anonymity and a place to escape from a wife, sheriff, or creditor. Some were simple farmers and businessmen, looking for a better life and a place to make a decent living like many other pioneers in the West.[133]

An Army wife described a Texan, Henry Clay Davis, in the 1850s. In her opinion, this individual epitomized the typical Texan. He left his home at fifteen, got into a fight, and killed his antagonist. A fugitive from justice, he went to Texas to fight in the revolution. Her description continues: "He found himself among men of tastes and dispositions similar to his own . . . Fighting simply for the love of it, he cared less for the pleasurable excitement it produced." Later Davis became the prosperous owner of a large ranch and was the leader of a local Texas Ranger Company.[134]

Many Americans agreed with the young Army wife. They envisioned Texans to have an adventurous spirit and an impulsive temperament. Travelers returned from Texas with stories of eating breakfast with murderers. Another reported that he spent a night at an inn with eleven fugitives from the United States. They came to Texas as a last resort. Samuel Chamberlain was a soldier, sailor, painter, and author who traveled extensively throughout Texas and Mexico. He remarked, "Take them all together with their uncouth costume, bearded faces, lean and brawny forms, fierce wild eyes, and swaggering manners, they were fit representatives of the outlaws who made up the population of the Lone Star State."[135]

The typical Texan is usually displayed as a tall, handsome male. The Texas myth holds only a small space for the role of women. But Thomas Rusk, the Secretary of War, acknowledged the sacrifice of women who had little to gain and much to lose in Texas: "The men of Texas deserved much credit, but more was due the women. Armed men facing a foe

could not but be brave: but the women, with their little children around them, without means of defense or power to resist, faced danger and death with unflinching courage."[136]

In general, women, many of whom were hesitant to come to Texas in the first place, displayed self-reliant determination rather than helpless dependence. Women took charge of their own destiny when their survival and that of their families were in peril. Mary Maverick, whose husband was a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence, remarked in her memoirs, "With heavy hearts we said goodbye to Mother, and my brothers and sister. Mother ran after us for one more embrace. She held me in her eyes and wept aloud, and said, 'Oh, Mary I will never see you again on earth.' I felt heartbroken and often recalled that trilling cry, and I have never held my dear mother again." In 1837, Mary Maverick single handedly held off a group of Indians that surrounded her house.[137]

During the revolution, several groups of army volunteers, particularly those from Kentucky, wore the designation of "Ladies'" battalions or legions. The Committee of Vigilance and Safety of San Augustine authorized Haden Edwards on February 12, 1836, to go to the United States and request donations from women in order to man and equip a battalion to be known as the "Ladies' Battalion." The names of the lady donors were to be preserved on parchment, and proper honor was to be accorded them in annual celebrations. When Edwards reached the United States, he read of the Runaway Scrape and the battle of San Jacinto; so he changed his request for men into a request for money contributions to purchase food for the refugees. The Ladies' Legion of the city of Lexington was organized, probably in April 1836, at the instigation of Mary Austin Holley, who had a group of ladies sew at her house twice a week to make clothing to send to Texas. Miss Henrietta Austin, Henry Austin's daughter, presented the Ladies Legion a silk flag of Texas designed by Stephen F. Austin. The ladies of Newport,

Kentucky, presented a stand of colors to the Newport Volunteers. A corps of 200 volunteers styled the "Ladies' Cavalry" left Louisville, Kentucky, in June 1836, each of the officers being presented epaulets by a young lady when the group stopped at Shelbyville. When the groups reached New Orleans, they were told that troops were no longer needed in Texas, and many of them returned home.[138]

Politically the Texas Revolution was a failed revolution led by failures. Texans had suffered massive dislocation and grief, and the Provisional Government was ill equipped to provide leadership and compel equal amounts of sacrifice throughout the populace. The result was social and psychological disorder that created a cycle of suspicion and distrust where petty jealousy and greed took the place of leadership and patriotism.

The Texas Revolution was a study in appalling leadership. Revolutions and battles require competent leadership to succeed. The irony is that the Texas revolutionaries prevailed in spite of the military and management qualities of their leaders. Most of the leadership, despite their enthusiasm, loyalty, and vigor, was abominable. The political leadership of the barely operating Provisional Government was incompetent, and most military officers were untrained and ineffective.

Unbelievably, the Mexican leadership was even worse, making the odds favorable for the revolutionaries. In 1833, Santa Anna usurped the government in Mexico City. Santa Anna was charming, charismatic, and politically astute, but he was also corrupt, cruel, and self-serving. His leadership failures in Texas were even worse than the bungling efforts of the Anglo commanders.[139]

The Texans prevailed only through the miscalculation of the Mexican army commander-in-chief, the arrival of just enough volunteers from the United States, the old settlers finally

joining the fight, the geography of Buffalo Bayou, the site of the Battle of San Jacinto, and extraordinarily good luck. However, the government continued to be weak, and the army continued its predominance in Texas leadership due to reports of another Mexican invasion and continued attacks by the Indians.[140]

Before April 21, 1836, many in the United States felt that the revolt was a fruitless exercise after the Goliad and Alamo debacles. Horace Greeley concluded that after suffering two crushing defeats, there was "the extinction of every rational hope for Texas." Many were surprised when the same Mexican soldiers who had performed so well at the Alamo were completely routed at San Jacinto. Texas veterans condemned them as cowardly, a label that is far from the truth. Santa Anna's soldiers were hungry, demoralized, and far from home. For many, this was the first time in their lives they had been more than several miles from their place of birth. In addition, after the waste of Mexican lives at the Alamo, the young warfighters had lost confidence in their commander. The Texas rebels thought little of Houston's abilities, but once in combat they were unstoppable. Obviously, they did not lack in self-confidence. When Santa Anna, disdainful of the rebel army, split his army into three columns, the Texas rebels were ready to exploit his mistake. But that does not mean that Houston performed his duties as a brilliant strategist. The Anglos were able to defeat Santa Anna only because the Mexicans neglected basic camp security. Santa Anna, overconfident to the end, also moved his army from the prairies where his superior cavalry would make short work of the Texans to the marshes where the rebels had the advantage. San Jacinto was more of a loss for Santa Anna than a win for Houston.[141]

Historian Donald Meinig writes of the twenty-five years after the Revolution, "Texans had strongly asserted and the nation had in some degree readily accepted the idea of Texas as a

highly individual place and Texans as a distinctive people."[142] The Lone Star in the Texas flag symbolized a people both geographically and culturally detached from the rest of the United States. Texans viewed themselves as a distinct civilization born in an atypical history. The Lone Star mystique has always been the essential psychology of Texas—a maverick nation, standing alone, surrounded by hostile forces. Even today the spirit of independence remains. The vestiges are manifested in a multitude of ways. Most striking is the omnipresence of the Lone Star. The flag of Texas is itself ubiquitous and gives the state a claim of separate sovereignty.

Figure 8. ***Texas, A Land of Opportunity*** *(reprinted with permission of Dalhart Windberg, artist)*

There is no singular Texas myth. It is part of a greater legend that enticed millions to immigrate to the New World to escape the problems of the Old World. It follows the plethora of myths prevalent in past ages—or the myth of the West and even the myth of American exceptionalism. What is unique about Texas is its great desire to firmly hold to this concept of uniqueness and counter any criticism. Modern historians face numerous attacks from Texas keepers of the spirit such as the Daughters of the Texas Revolution, Sons of DeWitt Colony, and the "Old Three Hundred" if they dare to question any action that may impugn the legend. Maintaining this distorted relationship with their ancestors has evolved into a personal religion.

Everywhere Texans are reminded of their past as it interfaces with the present. The heroes of the Alamo (Travis, Bowie, Crockett, and Bonham) and the leaders of the Republic (Houston, Lamar, Burnet, and Rusk) are represented in the names of banks, schools, and assorted other institutions. The citizens of Texas are introduced to Texas heritage at an early age as the state's history is required study in the public school system through college. Texas school teachers marvel that during the discussion of the Alamo even the most placid students pay close attention. When President Lyndon Johnson's daughter, Lynda Bird, had her husband bring a shovel full of Texas soil and place it under her bed as she gave birth in Bethesda Naval Hospital in Bethesda, Maryland, she carried on the family tradition of being born over Texas soil. The famed Texas National Guard 36th Division, which fought gallantly in Italy in World War II, named itself the Texas Army and carried the Lone Star flag as it stormed the beaches of Sicily.[143]

These are just a few typically Texan chauvinistic acts. The Texan expects the world to recognize him. An Englishman, Francis Sheridan, in 1839 wrote, "One great fault of the Texian is that they try to do everything at once, and having done very little and very badly, they imagine they have succeeded."[144]

Myth cannot serve indefinitely as a substitute for history. Americans recognize that they cannot cut themselves off from the past, since these same forces will eventually determine aspects of the future. But Americans must be careful when they look into the rearview mirror of history to see more than a Hollywood production.

In present-day Texas, exceptionalism, based on the exploits of the early settlers, is dissipating with the booming economy and the rapid influx of Anglos from across the nation and Hispanics primarily from Mexico. The state is still the land of opportunity, but the presence of employment opportunities combined with a low cost of living draws thousands of the economically disadvantaged daily. With the exception of the Alamo, the Texas shrines do not draw crowds. The San Jacinto Memorial is difficult to find because it is now surrounded by oil refineries. Few go to Goliad to remember Fannin. The Alamo has become a tourist attraction due to its proximity to the River Walk. The Spanish Missions a few miles from the Alamo receive few visitors. Even the latest Alamo movie was highly unsuccessful, netting worldwide less than $120 million while it cost $140 million.[145]

However, approximately two million people attend the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo each year. One of the principal goals of the Rodeo is Western Heritage. Houstonians of all cultures and ethnic origins (Hispanics, African Americans, and Vietnamese) dress in western garb and commemorate Texas and western history. It is a three-week celebration of Texas. Attendees revel in the knowledge that they are the best and most exceptional people in the land. It makes no difference to them that the basis of the Texas myth is greed, racial prejudice, fear, and incompetence. Regardless of fact, the legend will continue as long as there is a Texan.[146]

Texans remain proud of their state but for reasons other than the Revolution. The refrain from the Anthem sums up the modern day Texan.

> God bless you Texas! and keep you brave and strong,
> That you may grow in power and worth, Thro'out the ages long.[147]

ENDNOTES

CHAPTER I MIGRANTS TO TEXAS: A SPECIAL PEOPLE

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CHAPTER II SETTING THE STAGE

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CHAPTER III THE FIRST YEARS

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CHAPTER IV THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD, 1830 – 1836

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