

This Day in History... April 21, 1836

Battle of San Jacinto

On April 21, 1836, Texan soldiers led a swift attack on an unsuspecting Mexican force at the Battle of San Jacinto.

The Anglo-Texans and Mexicans had been at odds since the early 1830s. Up to that time, Mexico had allowed Americans to form a colony in Texas, but it quickly grew to nearly 30,000 people, many of whom were slave owners.

Mexican leaders grew concerned about the high number of Americans living in their territory, particularly after Mexico abolished slavery in 1927. In 1830, immigration from the United States was forbidden, along with the importation of additional enslaved people. Relations between the Anglo-Texans and the government quickly deteriorated. In 1834, a Mexican politician and soldier, General Antonio López de Santa Anna, took over the Mexican government and established himself as a dictator. On March 2, 1863, Texas declared its independence from Mexico.

After a few clashes between Texans and Mexican soldiers, Texas leaders organized a temporary government on November 3, 1835. Texas troops under Colonel Benjamin Milam captured San Antonio on December 11, 1835. Enraged, Santa Anna sent a large army to San Antonio to put down the uprising.

Texan forces withdrew to the walls of the Alamo. From February 23 to March 6, 1836, Santa Anna's forces attacked the fort until it finally fell. Many famous men died while defending the Alamo, including Jim Bowie, Davy Crockett, and William B. Travis.

On March 27th, Santa Anna ordered 330 Texan rebels executed after they surrendered at Goliad. Rather than crush the independence movement, these actions galvanized Texan resolve. Word of Santa Anna's merciless treatment of the Texans quickly spread, and the ranks of the Texas Army swelled. As the Mexican Army continued its march into Texas, General Sam Houston was training about 900 men to stop them.

The two forces met on April 20 along the San Jacinto River near present-day Houston. On that day, Santa Anna tried unsuccessfully to penetrate the enemy position. He decided to rest his weary men the next day.

But there was no rest for the Texans. Houston ordered an attack instead. The cavalry quietly surrounded the Mexican flanks while ground troops crept within 200 yards of the Mexicans before being detected. The artillery opened fire while the infantry attacked the unprepared enemy with a rallying cry of "Remember the Alamo, remember Goliad!" In less than 20 minutes, the Mexican Army surrendered. Santa Anna

tried to escape wearing a private's uniform but was captured the next day.

Santa Anna signed a peace treaty three weeks later, promising that the Mexican Army would leave Texas. The Republic of Texas applied for annexation to the United States that same year, but would remain an independent sovereign country for nearly a decade. There was significant opposition from those opposed to another slave state, as well as those who wanted to avoid a war with Mexico. However, Texas became the 28th state on December, 29, 1845 and the Mexican-American War began the following April.



This stamp was issued on the 150th anniversary of the creation of the Republic of Texas.



Houston went on to become the first president of the Republic of Texas.



"Remember the Alamo" became the battle cry of the Texas independence struggle



Issued for the 100th anniversary of Texas statehood.



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