

This Day in History... December 29, 1845

Texas Admitted to the Union

On December 29, 1845, Texas was admitted as America's 28th state.

About 30,000 Native Americans lived in Texas when the first Europeans arrived in the area. The Caddo were the largest of many tribes, and were known for farming and living in permanent homes. The Arkokisa, Attacapa, Karankawa, and other smaller tribes lived along the coast. The Coahuiltecans lived in southern Texas. The warlike Lipan Apaches lived on the Edwards Plateau in the west and the Comanche and Tonkawa Indians roamed the plains.

"Glory, God, and gold" was the motto of the Spanish explorers who arrived in the Texas region during the early 1500s. In 1519, Alonso Álvarez de Piñeda mapped the gulf coastline from Florida to Mexico.

Most historians believe the members of this expedition were the first Europeans to reach Texas. Many Spanish explorers set out into the interior of Texas looking for "golden cities," called the Seven Cities of Cibola. In 1682, Franciscan missionaries built the first two missions in Texas. These expeditions and missions were the basis of Spain's claim to Texas.

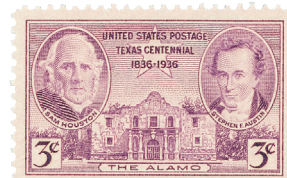
The French began to explore the area in 1685 and even built a mission there, called Fort Saint Louis. Spain sent a force to remove the French, but Native Americans killed the settlers and destroyed the fort before they could arrive. By 1731, the Spanish had sent over 90 expeditions into Texas and had established missions in the central, eastern, and southwestern portions of the region. Forts were built to protect missions from attack. In 1718, a fort near San Antonio de Bexar was built to defend the mission of San Antonio de Valero. The mission and fort stood at the site of present-day San Antonio. Spain made San Antonio the center of power in Texas.

In 1803, the United States made the Louisiana Purchase, buying 827,987 square miles of land from France. France had made claims involving Texas all the way to the Rio Grande. However, an 1819 treaty between the two nations fixed the southern boundary of the Louisiana Territory at the Sabine and Red Rivers. Mexico became independent of Spain in 1821, and Texas became part of the Empire of Mexico. In 1824, Mexico became a republic.

In 1820, a Missouri banker, Moses Austin, obtained permission from Spanish officials to establish an Anglo-American colony in Texas. His son, Stephen F. Austin, brought 300 families there. The colony grew rapidly. In 1823, he founded San Felipe de Austin in today's Austin County, which became the colony's seat of government. Soon, more Anglo-Americans received land grants from Mexico. Between 1821 and 1836, the number of settlers grew to about 30,000 – and most were Anglo-Americans.

The Mexican government became concerned over the high percentage of Americans living in its territory. In 1830, Mexico officially halted Anglo-American immigration. Relations between the settlers (known as Texians) and the government quickly deteriorated. In 1833, Mexican politician and soldier General Antonio López de Santa Anna was elected president and these laws were soon repealed by his liberal federalist vice president, Valentin Gomez Farias. However, two years later, Santa Anna, with the backing of the conservatives, repealed the federalist Constitution of 1824 ending the First Mexican Republic and formed the Centralist Republic of Mexico, a unitary political regime.

After a few clashes between Texians and Mexican soldiers, Texian leaders organized a temporary government on November 3, 1835. Texian 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



Stamp picturing two notable Texans – Sam Houston and Stephen F. Austin.



Stamp commemorating the Republic of Texas and the Battle of San Jacinto.



Stamp issued for the 150th anniversary of Texas statehood.

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the uprising. Texian 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. Even while the Alamo was under siege, Texian delegates signed the Texas Declaration of Independence.

On March 27th, Santa Anna ordered 330 Texian rebels executed after they surrendered at Goliad. Rather than crush the independence movement, these actions galvanized Texian resolve. Texans rallied to the cries "Remember the Alamo" and "Remember Goliad." On April 21, Sam Houston led a smaller Texian army against Santa Anna's forces in a surprise attack at the Battle of San Jacinto. Houston captured Santa Anna and crushed his army. Texas had won its independence.



The single star on the "Lone Star Flag" mirrors the state's history of independence and unity.



Texas adopted its flag the same year it became a state.

Texas was admitted to the Union on December 29, 1845. Mexico ceased diplomatic relations with the US immediately after. Boundary disputes erupted a short time later, and in 1846 the Mexican-American War began. By 1848, Mexico surrendered, signing the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. With this treaty, Mexico ended all of its claims to Texas and much of the Southwest. Texas gained a great deal of territory. During the 1850s, settlers poured into the western region of the state, and 89 new counties were organized.

In March 1861, Texas seceded from the Union and joined the Confederate States of America. However, there were mixed feelings about the Confederacy in the state. Governor Houston refused to take an oath to support the Confederacy's constitution, and was forced out of office. More than 50,000 Texans fought in the Civil War. The last battle of the war was fought at Palmito Hill on May 13, 1865 – the soldiers had not yet heard that the war ended on April 9th.



Issued on the 100th anniversary of Texas's statehood.

After the war, Texas became embroiled in a struggle between Northern sympathizers called Radical Republicans and the Ku Klux Klan. Texas was readmitted to the Union on March 30, 1870.

Starting in the mid-1860s, Texans drove cattle along trails to major railroad centers. Between 1900 and 1920, the state greatly improved its rail and road systems, great irrigation projects were begun, and the state's oil and gas industries were started. At that time, many Texans began working in cities. During the 1960s, Texas took a major role in the nation's space program. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration began constructing the Manned Spacecraft Center near Houston in 1962. It was renamed the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center in 1973.



Stamp pictures the Alamo, the state flower, and a longhorn.

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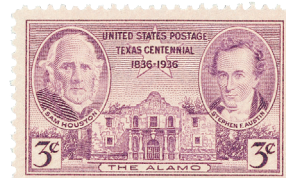
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