



# Expansion in Texas

## MAIN IDEA

Mexico offered land grants to American settlers, but conflict developed over religion and other cultural differences, and the issue of slavery.

## WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Today, the state of Texas shares an important trading partnership with Mexico.

## Terms & Names

- Stephen F. Austin
- land grant
- Antonio López de Santa Anna
- Texas Revolution
- Alamo
- Sam Houston
- Republic of Texas
- annex

In 1821, **Stephen F. Austin** led the first of several groups of American settlers to a fertile area “as good in every respect as man could wish for, land first rate, plenty of timber, fine water—beautifully rolling” along the Brazos River. However, Austin’s plans didn’t work out as well as he had hoped; 12 years later, he found himself in a Mexican prison and his new homeland in an uproar. After his release, Austin spoke about the impending crisis between Texas and Mexico.

### A PERSONAL VOICE STEPHEN F. AUSTIN

“Texas needs peace, and a local government; its inhabitants are farmers, and they need a calm and quiet life. . . . [But] my efforts to serve Texas involved me in the labyrinth of Mexican politics. I was arrested, and have suffered a long persecution and imprisonment. . . . I fully hoped to have found Texas at peace and in tranquillity, but regret to find it in commotion; all disorganized, all in anarchy, and threatened with immediate hostilities. . . . Can this state of things exist without precipitating the country into a war? I think it cannot.”

—quoted in *Texas: An Album of History*

Austin’s warning proved to be prophetic. The conflict between Texas and Mexico would soon escalate into a bloody struggle.

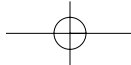


▲ Stephen Austin established a colony of American settlers in Tejas, or Texas, then the northernmost province of the Mexican state of Coahuila.

## Americans Settle in the Southwest

During three centuries of Spanish rule of Mexico, only a few thousand Mexican settlers had migrated to the vast landscape of what is now Texas. Despite the region’s rich natural resources and a climate conducive to agriculture, a number of problems scared off many potential Mexican settlers. One was the growing friction between Native American and Mexican inhabitants of the area.

**THE MISSION SYSTEM** Since the earliest Spanish settlements, the Native American and Mexican populations in the Southwest had come into close contact. Before Mexico won its independence in 1821, Spain’s system of Roman



Catholic missions in California, New Mexico, and Texas tried to convert Native Americans to Catholicism and to settle them on mission lands. To protect the missions, Spanish soldiers manned nearby *presidios*, or forts.

The mission system declined during the 1820s and 1830s, after Mexico had won its independence. After wresting the missions from Spanish control, the Mexican government offered the surrounding lands to government officials and ranchers. While some Native Americans were forced to remain as unpaid laborers, many others fled the missions, returning to traditional ways. When Mexicans captured Native Americans for forced labor, groups of hostile Comanche and Apache retaliated by sweeping through Texas, terrorizing Mexican settlements and stealing livestock that supported many American settlers and Mexican settlers, or *Tejanos*. **A**

#### MAIN IDEA

#### Analyzing Effects

**A** How did relations between the Mexicans and Native Americans in the Southwest change after 1821?

**THE IMPACT OF MEXICAN INDEPENDENCE** Trade opportunities between Mexico's northern provinces and the United States multiplied. Tejano livestock, mostly longhorn cattle, provided tallow, hides, and other commercial goods to trade in Santa Fe, New Mexico, north and west of Texas.

Newly free, Mexico sought to improve its economy. Toward that end, the country eased trade restrictions and made trade with the United States more attractive than trade between northern Mexico and other sections of Mexico. Gradually, the ties loosened between Mexico and the northern provinces, which included present-day New Mexico, California, Texas, Arizona, Nevada, and Utah.

Mexico was beginning to discover what Spain had previously learned: owning a vast territory did not necessarily mean controlling it. Mexico City—the seat of Mexican government—lay far from the northern provinces and often seemed indifferent to the problems of settlers in Texas. Native American groups, such as the Apache and the Comanche, continued to threaten the thinly scattered Mexican settlements in New Mexico and Texas. Consequently, the Mexican government began to look for ways to strengthen ties between Mexico City and the northern provinces.

**MEXICO INVITES U.S. SETTLERS** To prevent border violations by horse thieves and to protect the territory from Native American attacks, the Mexican government encouraged American farmers to settle in Texas. In 1821, and again in 1823 and 1824, Mexico offered enormous **land grants** to agents, who were called *empresarios*. The empresarios, in turn, attracted American settlers, who eagerly bought cheap land in return for a pledge to obey Mexican laws and observe the official religion of Roman Catholicism.

Many Americans as well as Mexicans rushed at the chance. The same restless determination that produced new inventions and manufactured goods fed the American urge to remove any barrier to settlement of the West. The population of Anglo, or English-speaking, settlers from Europe and the United States soon surpassed the population of Tejanos who lived in Texas. Until the 1830s, the Anglo settlers lived as naturalized Mexican citizens. **B**

**AUSTIN IN TEXAS** The most successful empresario, Stephen F. Austin, established a colony between the Brazos and Colorado rivers, where “no drunkard, no gambler, no profane swearer, and no idler” would be allowed. By 1825, Austin had issued 297 land grants to the group that later

#### MAIN IDEA

#### Analyzing Motives

**B** What did Mexico hope to gain from Anglo settlement in Texas?

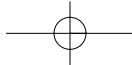


#### TEJANO CULTURE

The Anglo and Mexican cultures of Texas have shaped one another, especially in terms of music, food, and language.

For example, Tejano music reflects roots in Mexican mariachi as well as American country and western music and is now a \$100 million a year industry. As for language, Tejanos often speak a mixture of Spanish and English called Spanglish.

As Enrique Madrid, who lives in the border area between Texas and Mexico, says, “We have two very powerful cultures coming to terms with each other every day on the banks of the Rio Grande and creating a new culture.”



became known as Texas’s Old Three Hundred. Each family received 177 very inexpensive acres of farmland, or 4,428 acres for stock grazing, as well as a 10-year exemption from paying taxes. “I am convinced,” Austin said, “that I could take on fifteen hundred families as easily as three hundred.”

At the colony’s capital in San Felipe, a visiting blacksmith, Noah Smithwick, described an established town, with “weddings and other social gatherings.” Smithwick stayed in a simple home but learned that “in the course of time the pole cabin gave place to a handsome brick house and that the rude furnishings were replaced by the best the country boasted.” **C**

In 1836, Mary Austin Holley, Stephen Austin’s cousin, wrote admiringly about towns such as Galveston on the Gulf Coast and Bastrop.

**MAIN IDEA**

**Evaluating Leadership**

**C** Why was Stephen Austin’s colony so successful?

**A PERSONAL VOICE** MARY AUSTIN HOLLEY

“Bastrop . . . continues to grow rapidly. It is a favorite spot for new settlers, and is quite the rage at present. . . . It is situated on a bend of the [Colorado], sloping beautifully down to the water, with ranges of timber—first oak, then pine, then cedar, rising in regular succession behind it.”

—quoted in *Texas: An Album of History*

Word about Texas spread throughout the United States. Posters boldly stated, “Go To Texas!” Confident that Texas eventually would yield great wealth, Americans increasingly discussed extending the U.S. boundaries to the river they called the Rio Grande (known in Mexico as the Rio Bravo). President John Quincy Adams had previously offered to buy Texas for \$1 million; President Andrew Jackson later upped the bid to \$5 million. Mexico not only refused to sell Texas but also began to regret its hospitality to Anglo immigrants.

**Texas Fights for Independence**

As Texas’s Anglo population surged, tensions grew with Mexico over cultural differences, as well as slavery. The overwhelmingly Protestant settlers spoke English rather than Spanish. Many of the settlers were Southern cotton or sugar farmers who had brought slaves with them. Mexico, which had abolished slavery in 1824, insisted in vain that the Texans free their slaves.

**“COME TO TEXAS”** In 1830, Mexico sealed its borders and slapped a heavy tax on the importation of American goods. Mexico, however, lacked sufficient troops to police its borders well. Despite restrictions, the Anglo population of Texas doubled between 1830 and 1834. In 1834, Austin won a repeal of the prohibition on immigration. By 1835, more than 1,000 Anglos each month streamed into Texas, scrawling the initials “G.T.T.” on their doors to indicate that they had “Gone to Texas.” A year later, Texas’s population included only 3,500 Tejanos, 12,000 Native Americans, 45,000 Anglos, and 5,000 African Americans. **D**

Meanwhile, Mexican politics became increasingly unstable. Austin had traveled to Mexico City late in 1833 to present petitions for greater self-government for Texas to Mexican president **Antonio López de Santa Anna**.

**MAIN IDEA**

**Contrasting**

**D** List some of the cultural conflicts caused by the influx of Anglo settlers into Texas.

**KEY PLAYER**

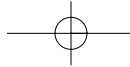


**SANTA ANNA**  
1795–1876

Antonio López de Santa Anna began his career fighting for Spain in the war over Mexican independence. Later, he switched sides to fight for Mexico.

Declaring himself the “Napoleon of the West,” Santa Anna took control of the government about ten years after Mexico won independence in 1821. He spent the next 34 years alternately serving as president, leading troops into battle, and living in exile. He served as president 11 times. Santa Anna was a complex man with much charm. He sacrificed his considerable wealth to return again and again to the battlefield and died in poverty and almost forgotten.





While Austin was on his way home, Santa Anna suspended the 1824 Mexican constitution and had Austin imprisoned for inciting revolution. After Santa Anna revoked local powers in Texas and other Mexican states, several rebellions erupted, including what would eventually be known as the **Texas Revolution**.

**“REMEMBER THE ALAMO!”** Austin had argued with Santa Anna for self-government for Texas, but without success. Determined to force Texas to obey laws he had established, Santa Anna marched toward San Antonio at the head of a 4,000-member army. At the same time, Austin and his followers issued a call for Texans to arm themselves.

**MAIN IDEA**

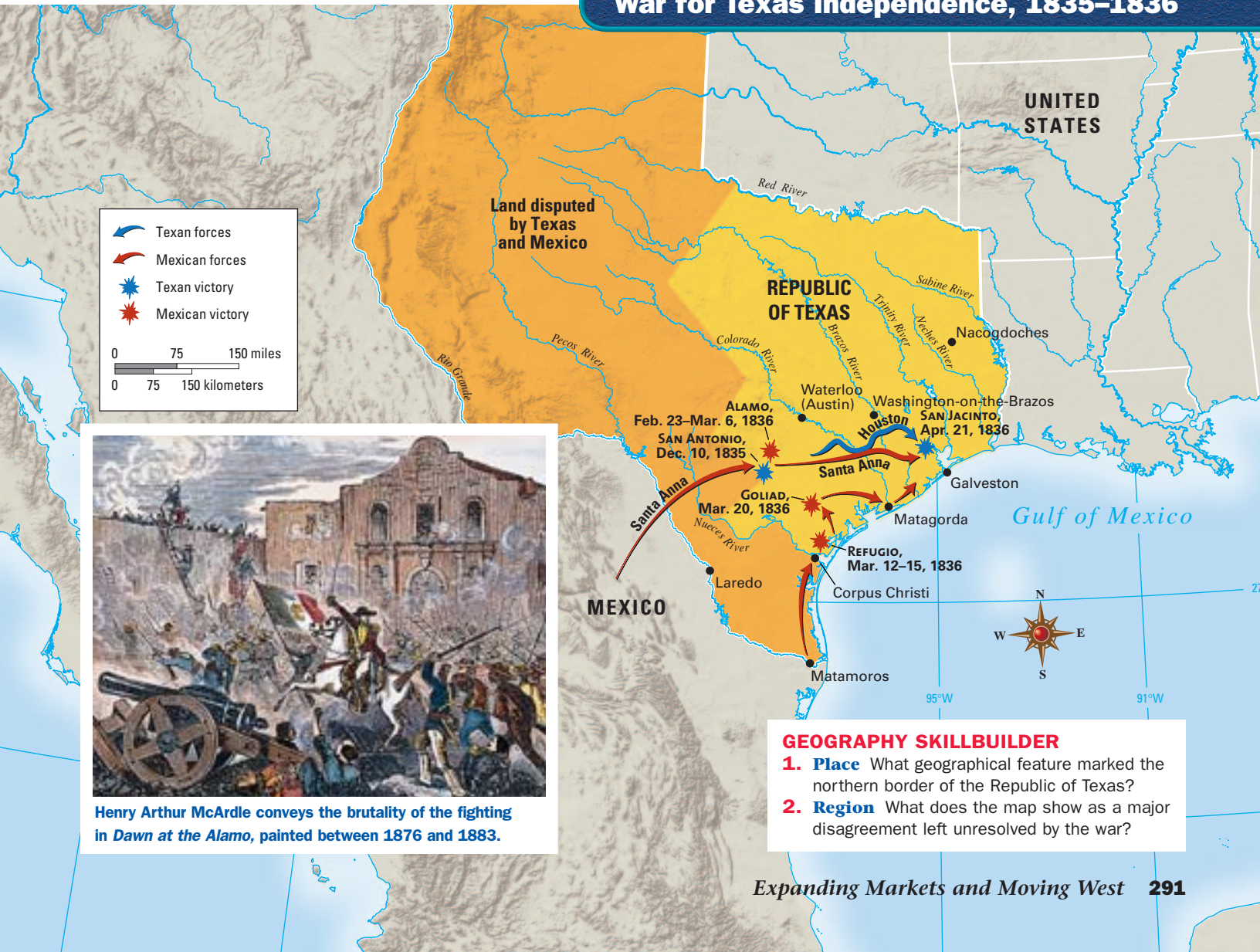
**Comparing**

**E** Compare the reasons for the Texas Revolution with the reasons for the American Revolution.

Late in 1835, the Texans attacked. They drove the Mexican forces from the **Alamo**, an abandoned mission and fort. In response, Santa Anna swept northward and stormed and destroyed the small American garrison in the Alamo. All 187 U.S. defenders died, including the famous frontiersmen Jim Bowie, who had designed the razor-sharp Bowie knife, and Davy Crockett, who sported a raccoon cap with a long tail hanging down his back. Hundreds of Mexicans also perished. Only a few women and children were spared. **E**

**THE LONE STAR REPUBLIC** Later in March of 1836, Santa Anna’s troops executed 300 rebels at Goliad. The Alamo and Goliad victories would prove costly for Santa Anna. Six weeks after the defeat of the Alamo, on April 21, the Texans

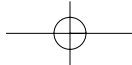
**War for Texas Independence, 1835–1836**



Henry Arthur McArdle conveys the brutality of the fighting in *Dawn at the Alamo*, painted between 1876 and 1883.

**GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER**

- 1. Place** What geographical feature marked the northern border of the Republic of Texas?
- 2. Region** What does the map show as a major disagreement left unresolved by the war?



## KEY PLAYER



**SAM HOUSTON**  
1793–1863

Sam Houston ran away from home at about age 15 and lived for nearly three years with the Cherokee. He later fought in the U.S. Army, studied law, was elected to Congress, and became governor of Tennessee.

In his memoirs, Houston told of listening in vain for the signal guns indicating that the Alamo still stood.

“I listened with an acuteness of sense which no man can understand whose hearing has not been sharpened by the teachings of the dwellers of the forest.”

struck back. Led by **Sam Houston**, they defeated Santa Anna at the Battle of San Jacinto. With shouts of “Remember the Alamo!” the Texans killed 630 of Santa Anna’s soldiers in 18 minutes and captured Santa Anna. The victorious Texans set Santa Anna free after he signed the Treaty of Velasco, which granted independence to Texas. In September 1836, Houston became president of the **Republic of Texas**. The new “Lone Star Republic” set up an army and a navy and proudly flew its new silk flag with the lone gold star.

**TEXAS JOINS THE UNION** On March 2, 1836, as the battle for the Alamo was raging, Texans had declared their independence from Mexico. Believing that Mexico had deprived them of their fundamental rights, the Texas rebels had likened themselves to the American colonists who had chafed under British rule 60 years earlier. On March 16, they ratified a constitution based on that of the United States. In 1838, Sam Houston invited the United States to **annex**, or incorporate, the Texas republic into the United States. Most people within Texas hoped this would happen. U.S. opinion, however, divided along sectional lines. Southerners sought to extend slavery, already established in Texas. Northerners feared that annexation of more slave territory would tip the uneasy balance in the Senate in favor of slave states—and prompt war with Mexico. **F**

Then in 1844, the U.S. presidential election featured a debate on westward expansion. The man who would win the presidency, James K. Polk, a slaveholder, firmly favored annexation of Texas “at the earliest practicable period.”

On December 29, 1845, Texas became the 28th state in the Union. A furious Mexican government recalled its ambassador from Washington. Events were moving quickly toward war.

### MAIN IDEA

#### Contrasting

**F** Explain the differences between the Northern and Southern positions on the annexation of Texas.



## ASSESSMENT

**1. TERMS & NAMES** For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- Stephen F. Austin
- land grant

- Antonio López de Santa Anna
- Texas Revolution

- Alamo
- Sam Houston

- Republic of Texas
- annex

### MAIN IDEA

#### 2. TAKING NOTES

Use a diagram similar to this one to analyze the relationship between Mexican authorities and Anglos settling in Texas.

	Mexico	Settlers
Goals		
Actions		
Outcomes		

What other actions might Mexico or the settlers have taken to avoid conflict?

### CRITICAL THINKING

#### 3. COMPARING

Compare and contrast Santa Anna and Austin as leaders. Use details from the section to explain your answer. **Think About:**

- Santa Anna’s role as president of Mexico
- Santa Anna’s qualities as a military leader
- Austin’s settlement in Texas
- Austin’s abilities as a negotiator

#### 4. SYNTHESIZING

Which group or country gained the most from the entry of Texas into the United States? Who lost the most? Support your opinion with specific references to the section.