

HOUSTON LEADS THE TEXANS TO INDEPENDENCE

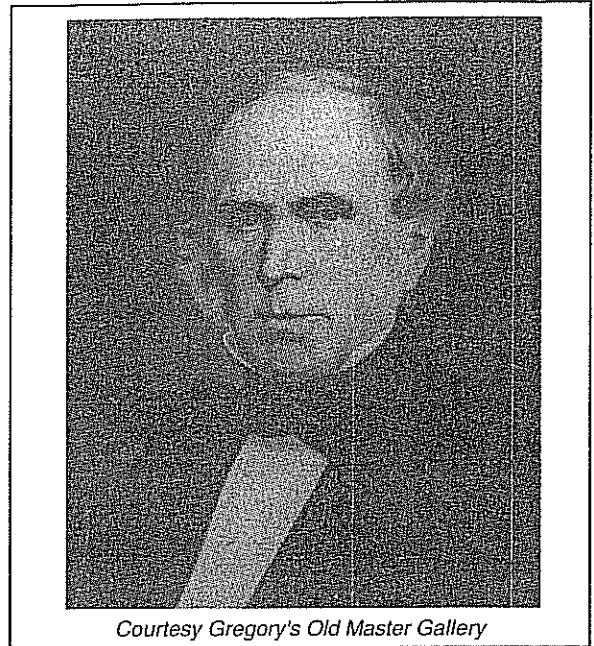
In the early 1830s, Texas was still part of Mexico, but its people were much different from those south of the Rio Grande. Texas had been a neglected part of Spanish territory until the Mexicans gained freedom. In 1820, Moses Austin had an idea of bringing American Catholic settlers into Texas, but he died before it could be arranged. His son, Stephen Austin, followed through with his idea, and in 1823, the terms were accepted. He was to settle 300 Catholic families in Texas. Each family would receive 177 acres for farming and 13,100 acres of grazing land. Austin would receive \$1 for each eight acres of land, and when 200 families had come in, he got a bonus of 65,000 acres. Other colonies were established as well, but Austin's was the largest and most important.

One who came was Sam Houston. His family had moved from Virginia to Tennessee, but he did not like the farm work he had to do, so he left home and went to live with the Cherokee Indians. During the War of 1812, he was in Jackson's army at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend and was badly wounded. After the war, he became a lawyer and was elected governor of Tennessee. When he and his wife broke up, he resigned as governor and went back to live with the Cherokees. In 1832, he went to Texas.

By 1835, relations between Texas and Mexico were very bad, and that led to a revolution. The first battles were disasters for the Texans. General Santa Anna surrounded the defenders of the Alamo, who fought to the last man. At Goliad, the Texans were defeated again. The Texans turned to Sam Houston to be their leader. Houston's strategy bothered many. He retreated and burned fields so that Santa Anna's army would have to bring up all their supplies. While he moved back, he trained his men so that when the time was right, they would be ready to win.

It was at San Jacinto Creek that Houston decided to attack. His men charged in on Santa Anna's camp, and shouting "Remember the Alamo," and "Remember Goliad," they won a quick victory. Prisoners were rounded up, but they could not find Santa Anna. Two days later, he was discovered in a corporal's uniform. Since he had been president of Mexico, Houston forced him to sign a statement giving Texas its independence. After Santa Anna was released, he said he had no authority to give Texas independence and it was still part of Mexico. Also, the boundary of Texas was in dispute. Mexico said Texas was the region north of the Nueces River, while Texans claimed the land south to the Rio Grande River.

RESULTS: The next few years were hard on Texas. It wanted to be part of the U.S., but many northern politicians did not want Texas because it allowed slavery. Texas was recognized as independent by England, France, and the U.S., but it lived under the threat that Mexico would send an army against it. It was not until after James Polk was elected U.S. president in 1844 that progress was made. Because Polk supported expansion into Texas, the outgoing president, John Tyler, pushed through a joint resolution admitting Texas to the Union. Mexico was angry and did not accept this as the final word. The issue of Texas and the boundary would be settled by war.



Sam Houston

Name: _____

Class: _____

CHALLENGES

1. What American got the idea of colonizing Texas? _____

2. How many acres of land did settlers get? _____

3. What Indian tribe did Houston live with twice? _____

4. At what battle was Sam Houston wounded? _____

5. What were the early battles that Texans lost? _____

6. What disputes did Mexico and Texas have over borders? _____

7. Why was the U.S. slow to bring Texas into the Union? _____

8. What countries recognized Texas as being independent besides the U.S.?

9. How was Texas admitted to the Union? _____

10. Who was U.S. President when Texas was admitted? _____