



0. TENSIONS IN TEXAS - Story Preface

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Stephen Austin is known as the "Father of Texas." This artistic rendering of Austin depicts him with colonists in the territory. When Austin presented a proposal for statehood, to the Mexican government, he ended-up in jail. The idea of statehood did not resonate well with General Santa Anna, leading him to advocate strong central control over all of Mexico, including the Texas territory. Image online via Latin American Studies.org.

Vicente Guerrero, Mexico's president at the time, freed all slaves on September 15, 1829, although Texians obtained an exemption from the national emancipation law. Guerrero's unpopular decree was never put into operation, and he ended up losing his job and his life.

As Anglos poured into the Texas territory, they quickly outnumbered Tejanos (the word for a group of Mexicans, originally from the Canary Islands, who had lived in Texas for generations). Cultural differences, including religious issues, soon caused friction between the new and old settlers.

Anglos, for example, were obligated to swear allegiance to the 1824 Mexican constitution AND to be become Catholic in exchange for the privilege of buying land in Mexican Texas. Some Protestant Southerners who colonized the territory had no intention of actually converting. Others 'converted' but never really changed their beliefs.

People who lived in Mexican Texas spoke Spanish, but many of the settling Anglos (who wanted to make English an official language) had no interest in learning a new language. Some of the new settlers did not consider Tejanos their equal, but the feeling was mutual. "Grimo" then was as derogatory as it is now.

Leading Tejanos (like Jose' Antonio Navarro and Jose' Francisco Ruiz) pressed for economic development through Anglo immigration and rapid settlement in Texas. They hoped to make Texas another Mexican state which could thrive under the country's constitution of 1824. Anglo-Americans, like Stephen Austin and William Barrett Travis, agreed.

As long as Federalists (whose political philosophy incorporated the ideals of states' rights) ran the Mexican government (as opposed to Centralists who wanted to control the whole country from Mexico City), Texians and Tejanos had legitimate hopes to convert the Texas territory into a separate state. When Santa Anna - a Federalist - first came to national prominence, he had the support of people in Texas.

Everyone was encouraged that economic expansion (including exemptions from national tariffs) and increased immigration would continue.

But in 1833, when Stephen Austin presented a proposal for Texas statehood to the Mexican government, Santa Anna thought a revolution in-the-making was underway. Austin ended up in prison - accused of treason when an incriminating letter he wrote came to light - and Santa Anna dramatically changed his own political persuasion. He even tossed out the Mexican Constitution of 1824!

No longer a Federalist, Santa Anna wanted strong central control over the whole country - including the Texas territory. His subsequent actions created the very event he had tried to prevent: a Texas Revolution.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/TENSIONS-IN-TEXAS-Alamo-The>

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Vicente Guerrero - 2nd President of Mexico

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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They Called Them GREASERS

Anglo Attitudes toward Mexicans in Texas, 1821-1890



BY ARNOLDO DE LEÓN

They Called Them Greasers - by Arnaldo De Leon

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