



0. GOLIAD MASSACRE - Story Preface

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Known as "The Angel of Goliad," Senora Alvarez is memorialized for saving the lives of people who would have died in the Goliad massacre. Dr. Joseph Henry Barnard, one of the men whose lives she saved, tells the story: "...when, on the morning of the massacre she learned that the prisoners were to be shot, she so effectually pleaded with Colonel Garay (whose humane feelings so revolted at the order) that with great personal responsibility to himself, and at great hazards at thus going counter to the orders of the then all-powerful Santa Anna, resolved to save all that he could; and a few of us, in consequence, were left to tell of that bloody day." Her statue is located at Goliad.

Two weeks after the Alamo fell, James Fannin—who had refused to reinforce the Alamo defenders because of his own developing situation with the Mexican army at Goliad—was in serious trouble.

He and his men (who possessed rifles, 500 spare muskets and nine brass cannon) lost the Battle of Coleto. They wanted to surrender, provided they would be treated as prisoners of war who could be paroled and returned to the United States.

In light of Santa Anna's continuing orders to kill anyone who raised arms against the Mexican government, Gen. Jos' de Urrea faced a difficult dilemma. If he outright denied the proposed terms of surrender, Fannin and his men would keep fighting. The continued battle would have been brutal and, like events at the Alamo, would have ALSO caused the deaths of many Mexican soldiers.

Urrea proposed written terms of surrender which would place Fannin and his men "at the disposal of the Supreme Mexican Government." Assuring Fannin that he knew of no instance where such a surrender resulted in death, Urrea said he would recommend it to Santa Anna.

He then told Fannin, with a straight face, that he was confident Santa Anna would approve in eight days. The men, suspicious that death lay ahead of them, were somewhat assuaged, and gave up their arms, when Col. Holzinger told them:

Well, gentlemen! In eight days, home and liberty!

Over the next several days, Fannin and his men (numbering around 300) plus William Ward and his Georgia Battalion (who had laid down their arms before they were captured) marched back to Goliad (also known as La Bahia Mission) where they were imprisoned in the chapel.

Urrea wrote to Santa Anna, recommending clemency, but did not tell the General about the terms Fannin and his men had originally requested.

Santa Anna ordered an immediate execution of all Goliad prisoners who had not laid down their arms. Believing Urrea would not carry out his order, Santa Anna sent a letter to Col. Jose' Nicol's de la Portilla, then in command at Goliad, ordering him to carry out the death sentences.

The prisoners, meanwhile, believed they would soon be free. On the night of March 26th, they sang "Home Sweet Home." The next morning—Palm Sunday that year—the able-bodied men were ordered to march for various reasons: to gather wood, to drive cattle, to catch a ship (bound for New Orleans, from the port of Copano).

As the marching men reached previously specified points, their guards turned into firing-squad executioners. Point-blank fire killed most, although some escaped. Those fleeing for their lives were slaughtered by lance, bayonet or gunfire. Only about 28 escaped.

Fannin, and those who did not march, met a similar fate back at the Goliad presidio, although the lives of about twenty others were spared due to the kindness of Col. Francisco Garay and the pleas of Francita Alavez (known as the "Angel of Goliad").

In all, about 342 men were slaughtered. Their bodies were burned and whatever remained was left to scavenging birds and animals.

More than two months later, when General Thomas J. Rusk passed through the area, some of the remains were still lying around. Rusk ordered their burial with military honors.

Before the Alamo and Goliad, most people thought Santa Anna (who later disavowed responsibility for the massacre) was a shrewd, effective dictator. But news of his cruelty spread quickly.

Atrocities at Goliad and the Alamo inflamed people in Texas, aroused fury in foreign lands—the United States, Great Britain and France—and provided Sam Houston with a meaningful rallying cry.

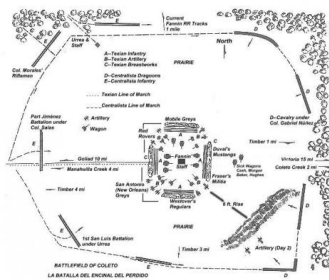
See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/GOLIAD-MASSACRE-Alamo-The>

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Media Stream



Battle of Coleto Diagram

Image online, via Texas A&M University.

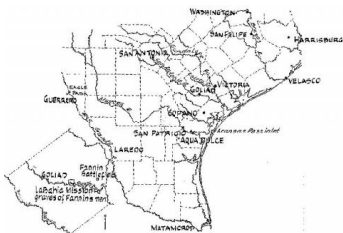
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General Jos' de Urrea

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Goliad and Location of Graves following the Massacre

Image online, courtesy Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

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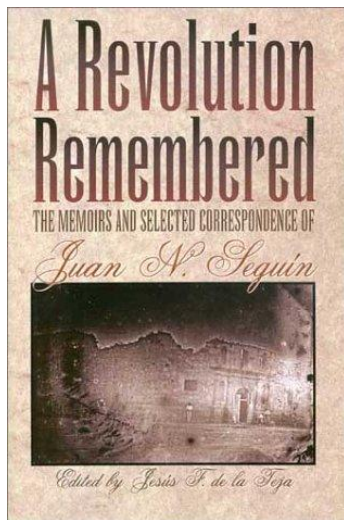
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General Thomas J. Rusk

Image online, courtesy [Texas A & M University](http://www.texasaandm.edu) website, the Old Stone Fort Museum.

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A Revolution Remembered

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