

Independence for Texas. By the early 1830s, some Texans began to resent Mexican control. The settlers were required to become Mexican citizens, join the Catholic Church, and free their slaves. They agreed to these conditions but found ways to get around them. For example, the settlers would free their slaves but then sign them to a lifetime contract as indentured servants. Differences in language and way of life also caused tension between Americans and Mexicans.

Fearing that Texas might slip from its grasp, Mexico restricted further immigration from the United States in 1830. From then on, relations between Texas and Mexico deteriorated, especially when a harsh ruler named **Santa Anna** came to power in Mexico. By 1835, many Texans wanted independence. Revolution broke out, and Santa Anna marched an army against the rebels. Texas declared independence from Mexico on March 2, 1836.

Santa Anna had already arrived in San Antonio, Texas, in February 1836. He was opposed by a force of 187 Texans, who found refuge in an old mission called the Alamo.



The Alamo was the chapel of a Catholic mission founded in the early 1700s. The building had been in ruins for some time before the famous battle for Texan independence was fought there. It has been restored as a historical site.

After besieging the Texans for thirteen days, Santa Anna's troops finally forced their way into the Alamo and killed all the defenders. Among the slain were **David (Davy) Crockett**, a well-known frontiersman, and **James (Jim) Bowie**, inventor of the bowie knife.

Santa Anna then pursued **Samuel (Sam) Houston** and his small army as they retreated through Texas. Finally the Texans attacked Santa Anna's army at San Jacinto (san juh SIHN toh) on April 21, 1836. The Texans routed the entire Mexican army and even



Left: Sam Houston (1793–1863) became the first president of Texas after its independence from Mexico. When Texas became part of the United States, Houston served as a senator and later as a governor of Texas. **Right:** Santa Anna's surrender to Sam Houston. General Houston lies under a tree, resting his broken right leg after the Battle of San Jacinto. He holds out his right hand to Santa Anna (standing).