

The Battle of San Jacinto

Compare & Contrast

Mr. Steele's Account of the Fight and the Official Report of General Sam Houston

Group Discussion and Presentation to Class

Teacher's Guide

- 1) Print out Group Discussion Worksheets.
- 2) Divide class into groups for in-class discussion OR give as homework and permit group discussion on the following day.
- 3) Explain the importance of analyzing different documents (primary sources) for historical understanding.
- 4) Allow 5-10 minutes of group work. Ask representatives to read the passages "in character" and share the similarities and differences of the accounts.
- 5) Show the primary source document, from which the statements were taken, on the Portal to Texas History. (link & citation below)
(**see the image of the primary source under R4E 'Preparatory Resources')

Notes on Presentations

Group 1 _____

Group 2 _____

Group 3 _____

Group 4 _____

Steele, Alfonso. Biography of Private Alfonso Steele (Deceased) Last Survivor of the Battle of San Jacinto, Together with Mr. Steele's Account of the Campaign and Fight, and the Official Report of General Sam Houston, With Complete Roster of the Commands Composing the Little Army., Book, [ca. 1925]; digital images, (<http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph46832>), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History. <http://texashistory.unt.edu>: crediting University of North Texas Libraries. Denton. Texas.

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Group 1

Private Steele:

When we reached Harrisburg we learned that Santa Anna had burned the town and gone on. We camped right opposite Harrisburg, and when we camped Deaf Smith dropped on our trail and captured a Mexican courier. From him we learned that Santa Anna was ahead of us.

General Houston:

I have the honor to inform you that on the evening of the 18th, after a forced march of fifty-five miles, which was effected in two days and a half, the army arrived opposite Harrisburg. That evening a courier of the enemy was taken, from whom I learned that General Santa Anna, with one division of his choice troops, had marched in the direction of Lynche's Ferry, on the San Jacinto, burning Harrisburg as he passed down.

List the *similarities* between the two statements?

What are the *differences* between the two statements?

In your own words, describe what happened when the troops reached Harrisburg.

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Group 2

Private Steele:

We left a guard behind at Harrisburg to protect the women and children and property, and Mr. William P. Zuber, now living in Austin, Texas, was a member of the guarding party and was thereby prevented from being in the battle of San Jacinto.

We crossed the Bayou as fast as we cou'd, for we had but one little old leaky boat to cross in. There we got on Santa Anna's trail and followed it until after we crossed Vince's Bayou, marching all night.

General Houston:

The army was ordered to be in readiness to march the next morning. The main body effected a crossing over Buffalo Bayou below Harrisburg, on the morning of the 19th, having left the baggage, the sick and a sufficient guard in the rear. We continued the march throughout the night, making but one halt in the prairie for a short time and without refreshment. At daylight we resumed the line of march.

List the *similarities* between the two statements?

What are the *differences* between the two statements?

In your own words, describe what happened after the troops left Harrisburg.

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Group 3

Private Steele:

We quit Santa Anna's trail when we crossed Vince's Bayou we turning north, he east. About sun-up we were halted to get something to eat. About the time we got our fires kindled and some beeves shot down, the scouts came dashing in and said the enemy were just over the ridge. We were immediately ordered to arms and to move on. We camped on Buffalo Bayou, just above the junction of the San Jacinto river and the Bayou. Some more beeves were driven up and killed and we went to cooking and eating.

General Houston:

The Texas army halted within half a mile of the ferry in some timber, and were engaged in slaughtering beeves, when the army of Santa Anna was discovered to be approaching in battle array, having been encamped at Klop-per's Point, eight miles below. Disposition was immediately made of our forces and preparation for his reception.

List the *similarities* between the two statements?

What are the *differences* between the two statements?

In your own words, describe what happened when the troops crossed Vince's Bayou.

Bonus Question: What are beeves?

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Group 4

Private Steele:

In the evening Sherman took what cavalry we had and gave their cavalry a little skirmish and got one man wounded. He crowded them so close that the Mexicans put their infantry out, and consequently we were ordered out in battle line. Sherman had orders to not bring on a general attack, so he withdrew.

General Houston:

Colonel Sherman and his regiment having commenced the action upon our left wing, the whole line, at the center and on the right, advancing in double quick time, rung out the war cry, "Remember the Alamo!" received the enemy's fire and advanced within point blank shot before a piece was discharged from our lines.

List the *similarities* between the two statements?

What are the *differences* between the two statements?

In your own words, describe Colonel Sherman's impact on the beginning of the battle.
