

Looking Ahead: Trouble in Texas *Grade Level*

Unit 4: The Mexican National Era

Name:

Date:

Period:

On the Road to Conflict

1825	The Anglo-American empresario, Green DeWitt , arrived in Texas under the Empresario System. He founded the town of Gonzales , Texas, about 70 miles east of San Antonio.
1831	<p>Gonzales' population had grown to about 377 people. The people of the small town requested a cannon from the Mexican government. They hoped it would provide some protection against raids carried out by tribes like the powerful Comanche.</p> <p>Mexico granted the request and provided a cannon to the people of Gonzales. There was one condition: they must return the cannon if Mexico ever required it.</p>
1835	<p>President Antonio López de Santa Anna had been in office for two years at this point. During that time, he joined the Centralist rebellion that overthrew his own Federalist government and abolished, or got rid of, the Federal Constitution of 1824.</p> <p>Several states throughout Mexico broke out into civil war. Federalists in some states led rebellions against the centralists who had taken over the government. Many Anglos and Tejanos were worried about what this could mean for Texas.</p> <p>In the Fall of this same year, the Mexican government ordered the people of Gonzales to return the cannon they had borrowed four years earlier.</p> <p>The people of Gonzales refused to follow the order, however. The centralist government sent a small part of the Mexican military to make sure that the residents of Gonzales return the cannon. When the military arrived, the people of Gonzales still refused to return the cannon, and sent out a call for armed support from the surrounding areas ...</p>

Shots Fired! The Battle of Gonzales

Two weeks after the Anglo residents of Gonzales encountered the Mexican troops sent to retrieve the cannon, the *Telegraph and Texas Register* printed an account of the event written by an Anglo reporter named David B. Macomb. Macomb spoke with people who were involved to find out what happened.

Read the following excerpts from his article to determine what happened and why it was significant.

Excerpt 1

<p>“The Mexican commander, [Castañeda], then demanded the cause of our troops attacking him, and the reply by colonel Wallace, was that he had been ordered to demand our cannon, and had threatened, in case of a refusal, to take it <i>by force</i>.”</p> <p>“that this cannon had been presented to the citizens of Gonzales for the defence of the <i>Constitution</i>, by the <i>constitutional authorities</i>, under the confederation, and that none but constitutional authorities should be obeyed,”</p> <p>“that he [Castañeda] was acting under the orders of Santa Ana, who had broken down all the <i>state and federal constitutions</i>, except that of Texas; and we would fight for our rights under that until the last gasp.”</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> According to this excerpt, why did the Anglos at Gonzales attack Castañeda’s troops? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Commander Castañeda ordered the attack. They didn’t want Castañeda to take the cannon. They wanted independence for Texas. All answers are correct. Why did the Anglo residents of Gonzales say that they didn’t have to obey the request to return the cannon? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Because the cannon should be used to defend their rights. Because the cannon was given to them under the constitution. Because the new leaders weren’t following the constitution. All answers are correct. What did the Anglo residents promise to do? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Return the cannon to a federalist president. Fight for their rights if necessary. Meet with President Santa Anna. Return to the United States in protest.
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Excerpt 2

<p>“[Castañeda] then replied that he himself was a republican, and two-thirds of the Mexican nation were such, and that he was still an officer of the federal government, although that government had undergone considerable changes;”</p> <p>“that the majority of the states having decided upon that change, we, the people of Texas, were bound to submit to it, that he did not want to fight the Anglo-Americans of Texas;”</p> <p>“... that his orders from [General] Ugartechea were simply to demand the cannon, and if refused, to take up a position in the vicinity of Gonzales until further orders.”</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. According to the article, what were Commander Castañeda’s own views on the centralist government? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. He was a strong supporter of Santa Anna. b. He firmly believed in the centralist leadership. c. He supported federalism but he still had to follow his orders. d. All answers are correct. 2. What were Castañeda’s orders? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. He and his men were ordered to take the cannon by force. b. He and his men were authorized to mount an attack on Gonzales. c. He and his men were ordered to take the cannon but not attack. d. All answers are correct.
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3. Based on the account given so far, does an armed conflict between the Anglos in Gonzales and the Mexican army under Commander [Castañeda] seem likely? Explain your reasoning.

I think an armed conflict between the Anglos and Commander Castañeda **is / is not** likely because **(A)** neither side wants to take up arms to settle this dispute.

(B) Commander Castañeda has direct orders to immediately use force to retrieve the cannon. **(C)** the Anglo citizens are willing to fight to keep the cannon in Gonzales.

(D) General Santa Anna himself is marching to Gonzales to seize the cannon by force.

Excerpt 3

“Colonel Wallace immediately **ordered the cannon to fire on [the Mexican troops]**, and our troops advanced in double quick time, and perfect order, and when within about three hundred yards, the cannon still playing away upon them, **the Mexicans fled**, and continued to fly until entirely out of sight, on the road to San Antonio . . .”

“**The reason assigned by [Castañeda] for flying without giving battle**, was that **we had cannon**, and he had none; but that when he should receive a reinforcement, colonel Ugartechea would bring on cannon sufficient to **burn and reduce the whole town to ashes.**”

“**We therefore look for another attack soon**, in considerable force, and if our troops arrive soon enough, they will enable us to repel the attack successfully, and even . . . to take up the line of march immediately for San Antonio.”

“**We hope and trust that our citizens are now of one mind as to the intentions of Santa Ana.** “The *other* states have submitted,” and the people of Texas *must* embrace centralism – So says their commander.”

“We **object** to the premises, and of course, to the conclusion.”

1. Which of the events listed below occurred at the Battle of Gonzales? Circle all **TWO**.
 - a. The Anglos fired on the Mexican troops.
 - b. The Mexican troops attacked the town of Gonzales.
 - c. The Mexican troops seized the cannon by force.
 - d. The Mexican troops retreated under Anglo fire.
 - e. ~~The Mexican troops occupied the town of Gonzales.~~
2. According to this article, how will the Mexican Colonel Ugartechea respond to the events that took place at Gonzales?
 - a. He will attack and destroy Gonzales when he can.
 - b. He will attempt to negotiate a truce between both sides.
 - c. He will request orders from President Santa Anna.
 - d. ~~All answers are correct~~
3. According to the author, what is likely to happen next? Circle **THREE**.
 - a. Mexican troops will probably attack again.
 - b. The Anglos should prepare to fight back.
 - c. Hopefully, Texians understand that Santa Anna and centralism are bad.
 - d. People in Texas will try to work with the centralist government to avoid conflict