

# The Council House Fight Extension *Grade Level*

## *Unit 6: The Republic of Texas*

Name:

Date:

Period:

### **The Council House Fight**

The Comanches migrated to Texas in the mid-1700s, dominating the Great Plains region as skilled hunters and warriors. As Tejano and Anglo settlers expanded their settlements closer to Comanche territory, violence often occurred between the Comanches and the new settlers. The Comanches carried out raids against settlers living near *Comanchería*, or Comanche lands. During the Republic of Texas era, various local militia groups like the rangers led attacks against the Comanches on the western frontier of Anglo settlements. These conflicts increased during President Mirabeau Lamar's Indian Wars.

In 1840 during Lamar's presidency, several chiefs from the Penateka Comanche tribe arrived in San Antonio offering a peace agreement. The Comanche had several reasons for seeking peace at that time. The number of Comanches was decreasing due to smallpox and regular battles with the rangers as a result of Lamar's Indian Wars. Additionally, the Comanches were facing threats from other powerful tribes, like the Cheyenne and Arapaho along the northern frontier of *Comanchería*. For these reasons, the Comanche wanted to establish peace with the Republic of Texas.

The government of the Republic of Texas agreed to meet with the Comanches on the condition that they return all the Anglos they had captured. The meeting took place on March 19, 1840, at the Council House in San Antonio. Approximately 60 Comanche men, women, and children arrived in San Antonio for the meeting, but they brought only a few Tejanos and one Anglo captive. The Anglo captive was a teenage girl named Matilda Lockhart. Matilda reported that she had been tortured while held captive. The Comanche leadership at the meeting claimed that they were not involved in the capture of any other Anglo captives, and they did not have the power to return captives taken by other tribes. When the rangers declared they would hold the Comanches as prisoners until the rest of the Anglo captives were returned, a fight broke out. Thirty-five Comanches were killed and 29 were taken prisoners.

The Council House Fight ultimately increased tension between the Comanches and the Anglos in the Republic of Texas. In retaliation for the Council House Fight, the Comanches carried out the largest raid in the history of the American southwest on the Anglo towns of Victoria and Linnville in August 1840. The town of Linnville was completely destroyed.

1. Which statement best describes one significant result of Anglo and Tejano settlers establishing settlements near Comanche territory on the western frontier of Texas?
  - a. American Indian tribes like the Comanche were forced to live in the growing Anglo communities and give up their traditional ways of life.
  - b. The Comanches carried out raids and attacks on Anglos who established settlements in or near *Comanchería*, or Comanche territory.
  - c. Anglo communities established anti-Comanche patrols that worked to push the Comanche west into New Mexico.
  - d. Under President Mirabeau Lamar, violence between Anglos and Comanches decreased as a result of his peace agreements with Native American tribes.
  
2. Why did the Comanche seek a peace agreement with the Republic of Texas in 1840? Choose THREE correct answers.
  - a. The Comanche suffered from diseases like smallpox that dramatically reduced their population.
  - b. The Republic of Texas approached the Comanche leadership with terms of a peace agreement that were beneficial to the various Comanche tribes.
  - c. Battles between the Comanche and militia groups like the rangers reduced the Comanche population.
  - d. Northern tribes like the Cheyenne pressured the Comanche to make peace with the Anglos to prevent future violence.
  - e. The people of the town of San Antonio sent a message to the Penateka Comanches asking the leaders to come to San Antonio to return Anglo captives.
  
3. What was the Council House Fight and why was it significant?

The Council House Fight was a fight between \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

The fight occurred because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

The outcome of the Council House Fight was \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

The Council House Fight is significant because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

## Mary Maverick and the Council House Fight

A twenty-two-year-old Anglo woman named Mary Maverick was living in San Antonio in 1841 at the time of the Council House Fight. Decades later in 1896, she wrote a book about her life called *Memoirs of Mary A. Maverick*, in which she described her first-hand experience of the events of Council House Fight. Create a storyboard of the events based on the six excerpts in this activity.

1 <i>The Comanches Met at the Council House</i>	2 <i>A Fight Broke out</i>
3 <i>Mary Maverick Fled Back to her home.</i>	4 <i>People Sought Safety or Joined the Fight</i>
5 <i>The Fight Came to an End</i>	6 <i>The Aftermath of the Fight</i>