

The Council House Fight Extension *Advanced*

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 mounted regular 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 escalated significantly 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 as a result of multiple smallpox epidemics and increasing 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 sought 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 were holding captive. 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 who 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 remainder 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 mounted 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. What was one significant result of Anglo and Tejano settlers establishing settlements near Comanche territory on the western frontier of Texas?
2. Why did the Comanche seek a peace agreement with the Republic of Texas in 1840?
3. What was the Council House Fight and why was it significant?

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. Add a title and brief description to accompany each image.

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3	4
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