

# 1) Challenges Facing the Republic of Texas 1836 - 1845

## Grade Level



The Republic of Texas faced many significant challenges during its almost ten years as a nation. It had already gained \$1.25 million dollars of debt by 1836 because it had borrowed money to finance the Revolution. It was difficult to establish trade with other countries, and nearly impossible to get any more loans. As a result, Texas' debt climbed to \$12 million by 1845.

It was also very difficult to gain diplomatic recognition from other nations for two main reasons. First, Mexico claimed that Texas was still a Mexican state in rebellion. Second, the Texas economy depended on slave labor. At that time in history, many people were starting to oppose

slavery around the world, and some countries like Britain wouldn't trade with Texas as a result. It was very difficult for Texas to succeed as an independent nation for these reasons.

Additionally, as more and more Anglos immigrated into the Republic, conflicts and violence often broke out between the new settlers and the American Indians in Texas. The Republic of Texas' government struggled to find a policy to address the conflicts that arose between Anglos and Texas Indians throughout the era.

This era of Texas history was characterized by Texas' struggle to address the many challenges it faced during its time as an independent nation.

# 2) Texas' First President: Sam Houston 1836 - 1838

## Grade Level



The first man to serve as president of the Republic of Texas was the hero of the Texas Revolution, Sam Houston. Houston had several goals for his presidency. He wanted to secure peace agreements with the Texas Indian tribes, establish diplomatic and commercial relationships with other countries, and perhaps most importantly, get the United States to annex Texas.

In 1836, a large majority of Texans supported annexation to the United States. The U.S., however, denied Texas' application for annexation because northerners and southerners disagreed over whether to admit a new slave state into the union. Additionally, annexing Texas could cause a war between the U.S. and Mexico.

Unable to achieve Texas' annexation, Houston focused on his other goals. He established peace

treaties with many of the Texas Indian tribes, including his adopted tribe, the Cherokee of east Texas.

Houston also worked to establish diplomatic relationships with other important countries. The U.S. recognized Texas independence in 1837, though the U.S. wouldn't lend Texas any money. The U.S. also charged tariffs, or extra taxes, on Texas cotton. Great Britain refused to recognize Texas' independence and would not trade with Texas due to its slave-based economy.

Sam Houston moved the Texas capital to the new and undeveloped city of Houston. To save money and raise revenue, Houston ended up disbanding the Texas army. He also passed high taxes on Texans. By the end of his two-year term, many Texans viewed Houston's presidency as a failure.

### 3) The Córdova Rebellion *August – October 1838*

#### Grade Level



During Sam Houston's presidency, a rebellion broke out near Nacogdoches in east Texas. A Tejano leader in Nacogdoches named Vicente Córdova organized and led a rebellion against Anglo settlements in the area. Córdova had not supported Texas independence during the Texas Revolution. He was also upset about the unfair treatment many east Texas Tejanos received from Anglo settlers.

Córdova recruited American Indians in the area to join his rebellion, promising them titles to lands in east Texas. Some members of east Texas tribes, including the Caddo, Kickapoo, and Cherokee, joined Córdova's rebellion. Córdova's rebellion also had the support of a Mexican general named Vicente Filisola.

In August 1838, Córdova led approximately 300 to 600 men in attacks against Anglo settlements along the Angelina River near Nacogdoches. A Texas militia led by Thomas J. Rusk forced Córdova and his men to disband, or break up, without a fight.

Then in October, Córdova and his men began new attacks against Anglo settlements near the Trinity River in Cherokee territory. This time, the Texan militia under Rusk fought Córdova and his men. Córdova fled to Mexico, and the rebellion ended. Rusk's militia, however, continued fights against the Caddo who had taken part in the rebellion. His men eventually forced the Caddo out of Texas. This event is known as the Córdova Rebellion.

### 4) Texas' Second President: Mirabeau Lamar 1838 - 1841

#### Grade Level



In the Republic of Texas, a president could not serve consecutive, or back-to-back terms. This prevented Houston from running again immediately following his first term. Houston's vice president, Mirabeau Lamar, ran for president on a platform that opposed nearly all of Houston's policies.

Houston had worked to establish peace treaties with Texas tribes, while Lamar began a "war of extermination" against them. Lamar used the army and the Texas Rangers to drive eastern tribes like the Cherokee and Wichita out of Texas. The army and Rangers also fought battles against powerful western tribes like the Comanche who had been raiding Anglo settlements along the western frontier.

Lamar pushed many American Indian tribes out of Texas with his war of extermination, but these

wars cost the Texas government a lot of money. As a result, Texas' national debt climbed even higher.

One of Houston's goals that Lamar did not oppose was establishing diplomatic and commercial relationships with foreign countries. Lamar was able to establish relationships with France and Holland. He was unable to finalize a treaty with Britain because the British opposed slavery in Texas.

Lamar moved the Texas capital from Houston to the new and undeveloped city of Austin, which was on the far western edge of the Republic. By the end of Lamar's presidency, the Republic of Texas' debt had increased to \$10 million mostly because of the expensive Indian wars and moving the Texas capital.

## 5) The Council House Fight *March 19, 1840*

### Grade Level



The Comanche still dominated the Texas Great Plains region during this era. Comanche raids on frontier settlements happened frequently. In some cases, Comanches would kidnap Anglo settlers and keep them as prisoners. Texas militias, or volunteer fighters, often confronted the Comanche, but these local militias often could not stop the raids.

Then, in January 1840, during Mirabeau Lamar's presidency, several Comanche chiefs traveled to San Antonio and offered a peace treaty for several reasons. The Comanche population was decreasing due to disease, Anglo attacks against them were increasing, and other Plains tribes had been pressuring them to make peace with the Anglo Texans. Texas leaders in San Antonio accepted the offer on the condition that the Comanche bring all of their Anglo captives with them to the peace negotiations.

On March 19, 1840, approximately sixty Comanche men, women, and children arrived at the Council House in San Antonio for the meeting with the Texas Rangers and military. The only prisoners they brought with them, however, were a few Mexican children and one teenaged Anglo girl named Matilda Lockhart. Matilda told of the torture she had experienced while she was a prisoner of the Comanche.

A fight broke out when the Anglo leadership stated they would hold all of the Comanches as prisoners until the rest of the Anglo captives were returned. All of the Comanches were either killed or captured in the fight. In retaliation, or payback, for the Council House Fight, a thousand Comanche warriors later led the largest Comanche raid in the history of the American southwest against the south Texas towns of Victoria and Linnville.

## 6) The Santa Fe Expedition *June - October 1841*

### Grade Level



At the end of Mirabeau Lamar's presidency, Lamar had the idea to send a commercial expedition to Santa Fe. Santa Fe was a city in the state of New Mexico and a significant trading center between Mexico and the United States. Although the Treaties of Velasco stated that Santa Fe belonged to Texas, in reality Santa Fe was the capital of the Mexican state of New Mexico. Lamar wanted to establish trade with Santa Fe and convince the government of New Mexico to join Texas.

When Lamar proposed this idea to the Republic of Texas' Congress, they rejected the proposal. Despite this, Lamar went ahead with his plan. He gathered people and supplies to make the 700-mile journey. Lamar sent a letter in advance to the New

Mexico government informing them that the expedition was coming. When the governor of New Mexico received Lamar's letter, he requested instructions from the president of Mexico – Antonio López de Santa Anna. Yes, *that* Santa Anna.

President Santa Anna ordered the governor of New Mexico to capture and arrest the members of the expedition when they arrived. The expedition finally arrived in mid-September after experiencing a very difficult journey. They were arrested and marched over 1,400 miles to Mexico City. They were then imprisoned in Veracruz. The Santa Fe expedition was a complete disaster and an embarrassment for both Texas and the Lamar administration.

## 7) Sam Houston's Second Presidency 1841 - 1844

### Grade Level



Sam Houston ran for president again in 1841, promising to provide stability to the Republic of Texas. Many Texans were willing to give Houston another chance after the embarrassment of the Santa Fe expedition and the growing debt of Mirabeau Lamar's presidency. It was incredibly difficult to provide stability to the young republic, however.

The Mexican military invaded Texas twice in 1842, briefly occupying San Antonio both times. In response, a Texas military force invaded the Mexican town of Mier, where they fought the Mexican army. The Texans were defeated and imprisoned in Mexico. This caused fear, embarrassment, and great concern for Texas.

Considering the many challenges facing Texas, Houston believed there were two primary options for Texas' survival. Either Texas should form a strong commercial partnership with Great Britain or, more preferably, Texas should be annexed to the United States.

The U.S. was still reluctant to annex Texas because that would mean adding another slave state to the union, but most Americans were also opposed to Great Britain having a significant role in Texas affairs. Houston hoped the U.S. would annex Texas in order to prevent Britain from gaining power in Texas. Yet when the U.S. Congress voted in 1844 on Texas annexation, it voted against annexation for a second time.

## 8) The Last President of Texas: Anson Jones 1844 - 1846

### Grade Level



A man named Anson Jones was the last president of the Republic of Texas. Jones had been Sam Houston's Secretary of State during Houston's second presidency. Under Jones' administration, the Texas congress continued many of Houston's policies, including Houston's goal of Texas' annexation to the United States.

Although the U. S. had just denied Texas' second application for annexation in 1844, many Americans were starting to support Texas annexation because they wanted to prevent the British from being active in Texas. Many opposed British involvement in Texas more than they opposed another slave state joining the Union.

The U.S. president at the time, John Tyler, decided to act on the growing public support for Texas

annexation. With only a few months left in his term, Tyler pushed Congress to finally admit Texas into the Union.

Under the annexation agreement, Texas entered the union in 1845 as a U.S. state with full representation in the government. Texas still had to pay off its own debt, but the state was allowed to keep all of its own public lands, rather than surrendering them to the U.S. government. The U.S. promised to enforce the Rio Grande as the southern border of Texas despite objections from Mexico. Finally, Texas had the power to split into five different states if it chose. Under these conditions, the Republic of Texas accepted annexation into the United States. The Republic of Texas no longer existed as an independent nation.