

# Who's Who of the Republic of Texas Grade Level

## Sam Houston

Sam Houston led the Texas army to victory over Santa Anna at the Battle of San Jacinto in April 1836. Five months later, he was elected the first president of the Republic of Texas. He won by a large majority, easily defeating Stephen F. Austin, who was also running for president.

Houston faced many challenges as Texas' first president. He successfully established peace treaties with most Texas Indian tribes, including the powerful Comanches on the western frontier. He gained diplomatic recognition from the United States and established trade with the U.S. He was not able to secure any loans from the U.S. government, however. Additionally, U.S. tariffs on Texas cotton negatively affected the Texas economy. Houston raised revenue, or money, for the Texas government by passing high taxes and disbanding the army. He relocated the capital from West Columbia to the new, small village of Houston, named in his honor. By the end of his first term in office, Texas' debt had increased to approximately \$3-4 million, and the Texas economy remained in very poor condition.

The constitution of the Republic of Texas prohibited a president from serving two terms in a row. Houston's vice president, Mirabeau Lamar, was elected the next president of Texas in 1838. During Lamar's presidency, Houston served as a congressman in the Texas House of Representatives from 1839 to 1841. He opposed many of President Lamar's policies, including Lamar's war against the Texas Indians. During his time as a congressman, Houston married a young woman named Margaret Moffette Lea.

Houston served a second term as president of the Republic of Texas from 1841 to 1844. During this second term he worked to reduce government spending and reestablish peace agreements with Texas Indians. He also decreased the size of the Texas government and attempted to sell the Texas navy. Some of these measures helped Texas financially, however, Houston stopped making payments on Texas' debt. As a result, the Republic of Texas debt increased to \$12 million by 1846.

During Houston's second term, the Mexican army invaded Texas and occupied San Antonio twice in 1842. Houston authorized the Texas Rangers and militia to invade Mexico. This led to a battle in the Mexican town of Mier, where the Texans were defeated, captured, and imprisoned in Mexico.

Finally, during his second term in office, Houston worked to persuade the U.S. to annex Texas. The United States Congress denied this second application for annexation, however. In the end, Texas was finally annexed to the United States on December 29, 1845, a year after Houston left office.

### Mirabeau Lamar

Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar was born in Georgia on August 16, 1798. He grew up on his father's plantation near Milledgeville, Georgia. As a young man he became involved in politics and worked for the Georgia governor in 1823. Lamar married Tabitha Jordan in 1826, and they had a daughter named Rebecca Ann. Then, Lamar and his family moved to Columbus, Georgia, where he started a newspaper called the Columbus Enquirer. Lamar served as a senator in the Georgia state senate in 1829. He was running for reelection in 1830 when his wife died of tuberculosis, and he withdrew from the race.

In 1835, Lamar sold his newspaper and traveled to Texas with James W. Fannin just before the start of the Texas Revolution. Though he supported the war for Texas Independence, he spent much of the Revolution back in Georgia. When he learned of the Alamo and the Goliad Massacre, he returned to Texas, joined Sam Houston's army, and fought in the final battle at San Jacinto.

After the Texas Revolution, Sam Houston was elected president and Lamar was elected vice president in 1836. When Houston's term ended, Lamar was elected the second president of the Republic of Texas. He opposed many of Houston's policies. He did not support annexation to the United States, and he did not follow the peace treaties Houston had established with many Texas Indian tribes. He began a "war of extermination" against Texas Indians, forcing tribes like the Cherokee out of east Texas. He also sent the rangers to fight the powerful Comanche in the west. These wars were very costly, and by the end of Lamar's time as president, Texas debt increased to \$10 million.

As president, Lamar relocated the Texas capital from Houston to a new village called Austin on Texas' western frontier. He also sent an unauthorized expedition to Santa Fe in 1841. He hoped this expedition would establish trade with the Mexican city and convince the government there to join the Republic of Texas. The Santa Fe expedition failed, however, and the members of the expedition were imprisoned by President Santa Anna. The failure of the Santa Fe expedition was an embarrassment for Texas and the Lamar administration.

During his term, Lamar also worked to set aside public lands for schools and universities. Although the Texas public school system would not be established for several more decades, this action caused some people to refer to Lamar as "the Father of Texas Education."

### Anson Jones

Anson Jones was born in Massachusetts on January 20, 1798. He studied medicine in New York and worked as a doctor for a short time; however, he had little success. He spent two years in Venezuela from 1824 to 1826 before returning to the United States. Then, in 1832 he moved to New Orleans where he briefly worked as a merchant.

In 1833, he moved to Brazoria, Texas, where he began a successful medical career. At the time, Texas was still part of Mexico. When the Texas Revolution broke out, Jones enlisted in the army as a surgeon and served at the Battle of San Jacinto. After the war, he returned to his home in the town of Barrington in Brazoria to work at his medical practice.

During the first years of the Republic of Texas, Jones became involved in politics. He served as a congressman during Houston's first administration, where he worked for policies to regulate medical practices and promote education. Houston appointed Jones minister to the United States in 1838. His primary goal was to persuade the U.S. to annex Texas.

Jones then served as a senator under Texas' second president, Mirabeau Lamar. Jones opposed many of Lamar's policies, including the Santa Fe Expedition and the expensive wars against the Texas Indians. During this time, Jones married a woman named Mary Smith McCrory on May 17, 1840. After finishing his term as a Texas senator, Jones moved with his wife to his home in Brazoria where he continued his medical practice.

During Sam Houston's second presidency, Jones served as the secretary of state. As secretary of state, Jones was in charge of handling Texas' relations with other countries. Jones faced several challenges as secretary of state, including two Mexican invasions of Texas, struggles to pay for the Texas navy, and a second failed attempt at annexation to the United States.

In September 1844, Jones was elected to serve as the fourth president of the Republic of Texas. Many Texans were angry when Jones did not continue to work for annexation to the U.S. Instead, he tried to build a partnership with Mexico and strengthen Texas' relationship with Britain. The Texas congress continued to work for annexation, however. Texas was finally annexed to the United States in 1845.

After Texas' annexation, Jones retired to his plantation in Barrington near Washington-on-the-Brazos. He spent the rest of his life managing his plantation. He also helped establish the Medical Association of Texas. He died on January 9, 1858 and was buried in Houston. Today, his home in Barrington is a state historic site.

### John Coffee Hays

John Coffee Hays, known as Jack, was born in Tennessee in 1817. When he was a young man, he learned to be a surveyor. Surveyors measured land carefully and marked where different pieces of property began and ended. This helped people prove land ownership. His surveying skills became very useful after he moved to Texas in 1836.

Hays arrived in Texas during the Texas Revolution. He joined the Texas army and then joined the rangers. During the revolution, the provisional government created groups of rangers to protect people living on the frontier. The rangers kept settlers safe from thieves, fought Mexican soldiers and Native American tribes. As a ranger, Hays fought against Mexican soldiers several times during the revolution.

After the Texas Revolution, Hays worked as the deputy surveyor in San Antonio. He also continued his service with the Texas Rangers. From 1840 to 1846, Hays served as a captain and then a major in Ranger companies. His companies included Anglo and Tejano volunteers and Indian allies, mostly from the Lipan Apache tribe.

In 1842, Hays led the Rangers against the Mexican invasions of Texas. After Mexican soldiers took over San Antonio, Hays and his small group of Rangers fought alongside the Texas army at the Battle of Salado Creek near San Antonio. The Rangers and Texas army won the battle and chased the Mexican soldiers as they retreated to Mexico.

Hays also fought many battles with Native American tribes in western Texas while he was a Texas Ranger. He led fights against the Comanche tribe at Plum Creek, Cañon de Ugalde, Bandera Pass, Painted Rock, and Walker's Creek. His Rangers also patrolled the border between Texas and Mexico to stop thieves and smugglers. When Hays and his men caught people they thought were thieves, Hays and his men often executed them without a trial.

John "Jack" Coffee Hays and the Texas Rangers played a significant role in the development of the Republic of Texas.

## Chief Bowles

Chief Bowles was a Cherokee leader who lived from around 1756 to 1839. People also called him Duwali, Diwal'li, and Chief Bowl. He was born in North Carolina to a Scottish father and a Cherokee mother. As a young man, he became the leader of a Cherokee village in western North Carolina. However, his tribe had to move several times because white settlers kept expanding into Cherokee land, often without permission. His tribe moved to Missouri and Arkansas, but again, white settlers forced them to leave. Finally, around 1820, they moved to Texas near Nacogdoches, hoping to find a place to call home.

Chief Bowles became the primary peace chief of several Cherokee villages in east Texas. In 1827, he worked with the Mexican government to stop the Fredonian Rebellion. He tried many times to get the Mexican government to recognize Cherokee ownership of land in east Texas, but he was not successful.

During the Texas Revolution, Chief Bowles signed a treaty with Sam Houston, who was working for the provisional Texas government. The treaty promised the Cherokees legal ownership of their land. However, after the Revolution, the Texas government refused to uphold this promise. When Vicente Córdova led a group of Mexicans and Indians in the Córdova Rebellion against Texas, Chief Bowles claimed the Cherokees were not involved. Later evidence showed that Chief Bowles secretly supported the Córdova Rebellion.

When Mirabeau Lamar became president of Texas in 1838, he started what he called a "war of extermination" against many Texas Indian tribes. This included the Cherokees in east Texas. Lamar sent a militia to fight and force the Cherokees out of Texas. Chief Bowles was killed in one of these fights known as the Battle of the Neches on July 16, 1839. He was carrying a sword that Sam Houston had given him. He was 83 years old.

After Chief Bowles died, the Texas army forced the remaining Cherokees to leave Texas and move to what is now Oklahoma. The sword Chief Bowles carried was taken from his body after the battle and changed hands many times over the years. In 1890, his sword was finally returned to the Cherokee Nation.

Today, the Cherokee Nation has 466,000 members. Their headquarters is in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, and many Cherokee people today live in northeastern Oklahoma across fourteen counties.

### William Goyens

William Goyens (or Goings) was an African American man born a free person in North Carolina in 1794. His father was William Goings Sr., a free man of mixed race, and his mother was a white woman. In 1820, Goyens moved to Texas and settled in Nacogdoches. He worked as a successful businessman, blacksmith, and wagonmaker. He also transported goods for trade. During one of his trade trips to Louisiana, someone captured him and tried to sell him into slavery. Goyens managed to escape back to Texas where he filed a lawsuit in court against the man who had tried to enslave him. The court upheld, or supported, Goyens status as a free man. In 1832, he married a white woman named Mary Pate Sibley, who had a son from her first marriage.

Goyens spoke Spanish and several Native American languages. Because of this skill, he played a significant role as a translator in official meetings between the Mexican government, Anglo Texans, and Native American tribes. During the Texas Revolution, Goyens helped Sam Houston secure a peace treaty with the Cherokees.

After the Texas Revolution, Goyens continued to work as a translator for the Texas government with the Cherokees. He also bought land near Nacogdoches. By 1841, he owned more than 4,000 acres of farmland, several buildings in Nacogdoches, and nine enslaved people. He built a large house and operated wood and grain mills. He and Mary lived there for the rest of their lives.

Throughout his life, Goyens fought for his rights to own property and run businesses in his mostly white community. He hired the best lawyers to protect his rights in court and usually won his cases. When he died in 1856, ten years after Texas became part of the United States, he owned almost 12,500 acres of land. His wife had died shortly before him, and they were both buried in Nacogdoches County. In 1936, the Texas Centennial Commission put a special marker on his grave to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Texas becoming independent from Mexico.

### Mary (Adams) Maverick

Mary Ann Adams was born in 1818 in Alabama. She was the daughter of William Lewis and Agatha Lewis Adams. She grew up on her family's plantation near Tuscaloosa and attended school, which was unusual for girls at that time. In 1836, she married Samuel Maverick, who had fought in the Texas Revolution. Two years later, Mary and Samuel moved from Alabama to the Republic of Texas.

Mary and Samuel first settled in San Antonio. When Mexican soldiers invaded Texas and took over the city twice in 1842, the Mavericks and many other San Antonio families left the city in search of safety. Over the next few years, they moved to several different places, including Gonzales and Matagorda Bay, before returning to San Antonio in 1847.

Mary and Samuel had ten children over the course of twenty-one years. Mary spent much of her time during those years raising her family and caring for her home. Four of her children died of illnesses before they turned eight. As her surviving children grew older, Mary became active in San Antonio. She helped at her church and was president of the Ladies' Parish Aid Society for twenty years. She also helped establish St. Mark's Episcopal Church in San Antonio, which is still an active church today.

After Mary's husband died in 1870, she dedicated much of her time to preserving Texas history. She joined the San Antonio Historical Society and the Daughters of the Republic of Texas. She was also president of the Alamo Monument Association for many years. In this role, she worked to protect the Alamo as a historic site and teach people about its history. She also wrote a short book about the fall of the Alamo.

During her early years in Texas, Mary kept diaries about life on the frontier. In the 1880s, she and her son George had her writings published as a book. These writings showed people today what life was like in the Republic of Texas and included her firsthand experience of the Council House Fight in 1840. Mary died in 1898 when she was 80 years old. She was buried next to her husband Samuel in San Antonio City Cemetery No. 1.



### José Antonio Navarro

José Antonio Navarro was a Tejano who became friends with Stephen F. Austin and helped bring Anglo settlers to Texas with the Empresario System. He was one of three Mexicans who signed the Texas Declaration of Independence in 1836. He and his uncle, Francisco Ruiz, were the only Texas-born Mexicans to sign this significant document. After Texas won its freedom from Mexico, Navarro became a member of the Texas Congress in 1838, representing San Antonio. As a leader, he worked hard to protect the rights of Tejanos.

During Sam Houston's presidency, Navarro opposed many of Houston's policies. When Mirabeau Lamar became the next president, Navarro supported many of his ideas. In 1841, Lamar asked Navarro to join an expedition to Santa Fe to start trade with New Mexico and bring it into Texas.

Navarro faced many challenges during the Santa Fe Expedition including lack of food and supplies, attacks from American Indians, and becoming lost. When the expedition arrived in Santa Fe, Mexican soldiers captured Navarro and many others. The soldiers forced the captives to walk 2,000 miles to Mexico City, where they were questioned and then imprisoned near Veracruz. Mexican leaders told Navarro they would free him if he abandoned his position in the Republic of Texas government and promised to be loyal to Mexico. Navarro refused, and the Mexican government sentenced him to death for treason.

Navarro's punishment was later changed from execution to life in prison. Navarro spent four years in the terrible conditions of Perote prison in Veracruz. In 1844, when President Santa Anna lost power, Navarro escaped from prison and took a ship to Galveston. He was 50 years old when he finally returned to his Texas home on February 18, 1845. Many Texans welcomed him home as a hero.

Navarro continued to serve his community until his death in 1871. He supported Texas' annexation to the United States. He helped write the Texas constitution in 1845, and served twice as a U.S. senator for Texas. He often wrote articles about history and politics for the local newspaper to help keep the people of San Antonio informed. He died on January 13, 1871, at his home in San Antonio, which is now a historic site called Casa Navarro.



### Vicente Córdova

Vicente Córdova was born in east Texas in 1798, when Texas and Mexico were colonies of Spain. As a young man, he played an active role in the Spanish government of Nacogdoches. He served as an *alcalde*, or mayor, a judge, and a member of the town council. By the time Mexico became free from Spain, Córdova was one of the largest land owners in Nacogdoches. He married María Antonia Córdova in 1824, and they had several children.

In 1832, Córdova was the captain of a local militia group in Nacogdoches. After a conflict between some Anglos and the centralist troops at Fort Anahuac, the Mexican military in Nacogdoches ordered all residents to surrender their firearms. The military hoped to prevent a similar uprising from occurring in Nacogdoches. Anglos and Tejanos in the area, including Córdova's militia, fought against this order. They defeated the centralist troops in east Texas and forced the Mexican army out of the region.

When the Texas Revolution began, Córdova supported the war against the centralists, but he did not want Texas to be independent from Mexico. Instead, he wanted Mexico to return to the Constitution of 1824. While working as a judge in Nacogdoches in 1835, he secretly began organizing people to fight against the Texas rebels. He made a deal with Cherokee Chief Bowles, promising to give the Cherokees their own land in east Texas in exchange for an alliance with the Cherokees.

After the Texas Revolution, Córdova opposed the new Republic of Texas government. In 1838, he organized a group of Tejanos and local Indians to fight against the Republic of Texas. The Córdova Rebellion attacked several American settlements before the Texas government sent Thomas J. Rusk's militia to end the rebellion.

After the failed rebellion, Córdova tried to escape to Mexico with a small group of rebels. A Texas militia led by Edward Burleson caught up with Córdova and his men near Austin. A fight broke out, and Córdova was badly injured but still managed to reach Mexico. There, he joined the Mexican army under General Adrián Woll. He took part in Woll's invasion of Texas and occupation of San Antonio in September 1842. Córdova was killed in the Battle of Salado Creek on September 18, 1842.

### Thomas J. Rusk

Thomas Jefferson Rusk was born in South Carolina on December 5, 1803. As a young man, he worked as a district clerk while attending law school. In 1825, he moved to Georgia to become a lawyer. Two years later, he married Mary "Polly" Cleveland and went into business with her father, General Benjamin Cleveland.

At that time, Rusk invested a lot of money in gold mining in Georgia. However, he lost his money when the company managers stole everything and fled to Texas. Rusk followed them to Texas to try to get his money back. Though he was unable to recover his stolen money, he decided to stay in Texas. He became a citizen of Mexico in February 1835 and settled in Nacogdoches. He then sent for his family to join him.

When the Texas Revolution began at the Battle of Gonzales on October 2, 1835, Rusk gathered volunteers to join Stephen F. Austin's militia at Gonzales. He and his men then continued with the militia to San Antonio but left before the Battle of the Alamo. Rusk attended the Convention of 1836, where he signed the Texas Declaration of Independence and helped write the Texas constitution. He then became secretary of war for the provisional government. He fought in the Battle of San Jacinto and was the commander of the Army of Texas for a short time after the revolution.

After Texas won its independence, Rusk played an active role in the Republic of Texas. He was secretary of war under President Sam Houston. Later, he served in the Texas congress from 1837 to 1838, when he became major general of the militia. Rusk led the militia against the Córdova Rebellion in 1838. Rusk continued to lead the militia under President Mirabeau Lamar and played a significant role in driving the Cherokee Indians out of Texas.

Rusk supported Texas annexation to the United States. He served as the president of the Convention of 1845, which accepted the terms of annexation. In 1846, he and Sam Houston became the first two U.S. senators from Texas. That same year, he helped establish the University of Nacogdoches.

As a senator, Rusk worked to improve transportation and mail service in Texas. In 1857, his wife died of tuberculosis. Rusk was also sick and died shortly after, on July 29, 1857. The state of Texas built a monument at Thomas and Mary Rusk's graves. Both the town and county of Rusk were named in his honor.

### Alexander Somervell

Alexander Somervell was born in Maryland on June 11, 1796. As a young man, he moved several times, working as a planter in Louisiana and then as a merchant in Missouri. In 1833, he moved to Texas, where he worked as a merchant in San Felipe de Austin in Stephen F. Austin's colony.

When the Texas Revolution began in 1835, Somervell joined the Texas volunteers after the Battle of Gonzales. He took part in the Siege of Bexar and later the Battle of San Jacinto. After the war ended, he worked in the government of Texas and served in the first and second congresses of the Republic of Texas.

Somervell continued to serve Texas in several different roles. He worked for the land offices and as a county clerk. In 1842, Sam Houston made him the commander of volunteers in San Antonio. When Mexican soldiers invaded Texas and occupied San Antonio twice that same year, Somervell led the volunteers who fought back. Houston authorized Somervell to follow the Mexican army into Mexico, and even to invade if Somervell thought they had a good chance of winning. Somervell led about 700 volunteers to a town called Laredo near the Mexican border.

The Somervell Expedition captured the Texas town of Laredo and a nearby Mexican town called Guerrero. Several hundred men returned to their homes at that time. Somervell believed his mission was complete, and that they would not succeed if they continued, so he ordered the rest of his men to return to Texas. Only 189 men listened to him. Somervell and those 189 men returned to Texas. The rest of the men continued under the leadership of William S. Fisher, and went on to fight the Mexican army at a town called Mier. The Texans that continued were defeated at Mier and many were executed or imprisoned in Mexico.

After the Somervell Expedition, Somervell got a job collecting taxes at the port of Calhoun. Later, he helped establish a town called Saluria. Somervell died under mysterious circumstances in 1854. His body was found in Matagorda Bay, tied to a sunken boat that contained a large amount of money.

### Adrián Woll

Adrián Woll was born in 1795 near Paris, France. After studying at military schools, he served in the French army before immigrating to the United States in 1816. Woll met with American General Winfield Scott, hoping to join the U.S. military. Instead, Scott suggested that Woll join the Mexican army in its fight for freedom from Spain. Woll followed Scott's advice and traveled to Mexico where he joined the Mexican army as a lieutenant colonel. He fought in Mexico's war for independence, eventually serving under General Antonio López de Santa Anna.

After Mexico became independent, Woll remained in the Mexican army. He became a Mexican citizen, married a woman named Lucinda Vautrey Griggi, and rose through the ranks under General Santa Anna. Santa Anna was a federalist at that time. When the centralists took control of Mexico's federalist government, Woll continued to support Santa Anna, who had joined forces with the centralists.

During the Texas Revolution, Woll arrived in San Antonio after the Battle of the Alamo. Woll took part in Santa Anna's pursuit of Sam Houston's army across Texas. Houston's army later captured Woll at the Battle of San Jacinto, but they released him after a short time, and he returned to Mexico.

After the Texas Revolution, Woll continued to serve in the Mexican military under Santa Anna. Woll led an invasion of Texas in August 1842, occupying San Antonio for about a week. Texas fighters defeated Woll at the Battle of Salado Creek, and he returned to Mexico with his army.

In 1843, Woll became a major general in charge of Mexico's northern armies. In 1862, while Woll was visiting his home country of France, the French leader Napoleon III started a war with Mexico. Woll joined the French army in its fight against Mexico. He even helped run their provisional colonial government in Mexico for a short time. When Napoleon III removed his troops from Mexico in 1866, Woll returned to France, where he lived until his death in 1875.

### Stephen Pearl Andrews

Stephen Pearl Andrews was born in Massachusetts in 1812. He was the youngest of Elisha and Ann Andrews' eight children. He attended Amherst College in 1828 but left after two years to go to Louisiana with his brother and sister. There, he taught at a religious school and later became a lawyer in 1833. While teaching at the school, he met Mary Ann Gordon, and they got married in 1835. They had four sons together.

The Andrews family then moved to New Orleans, where Stephen worked as a lawyer. He became friends with a man Lewis Tappan, who was an abolitionist. This means he believed that slavery was wrong and should be abolished, or officially ended. Tappan's abolitionist ideas had a significant influence on Andrews.

Andrews and his family faced financial problems in New Orleans in 1837. As a result of their financial struggles, they moved to Houston, Texas, in 1839 in search of new economic opportunities. In Houston, Andrews worked as a lawyer, took part in real estate, and advocated for the abolition of slavery in Texas.

In 1843, during Sam Houston's second presidency, Houston tried to persuade the United States to annex Texas. Houston's plan was to appear to be forming an alliance with Britain. Houston hoped this would make the United States eager to annex Texas to prevent Britain from gaining power of the Republic. Houston told the British that Texas would abolish slavery if Britain became its ally. In reality, it was incredibly unlikely that the people of Texas would support the abolition of slavery. Many people in Texas believed the promise was genuine, however, including Andrews. It gave him hope that an abolitionist movement could be successful in the Republic of Texas.

Andrews traveled to Galveston in 1843 to attempt to begin his abolitionist movement there. However, most people in Galveston strongly opposed the abolition of slavery and forced him to leave. When he returned to Houston, people there had heard about his attempts to organize an abolitionist movement in Galveston. An angry crowd attacked his home, and Andrews and his family fled to the United States for safety.

Andrews continued his work for the abolition of slavery after he left Texas. He also supported the growing women's suffrage movement, which supported women's right to vote in the United States. He became interested in phonography<sup>1</sup> in the late 1840s. He opened a school of phonography in Boston and worked as an editor and publisher of several magazines and books on phonetics in New York. Andrews died on May 21, 1886, at the age of 74.

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<sup>1</sup> **Phonography and phonetics:** studying language and sounds

### Rosa Kleberg

Rosalie von Roeder was born on July 20, 1813, in Westphalia, Germany. Her family was wealthy, but they experienced some financial troubles when she was young, so they decided to move to Texas, like many other Germans in the 1800s. Rosa married Robert Kleberg on September 4, 1834, when she was 21. Then that same year, she moved with her new husband and her whole family to Texas. She was 21 years old.

When Rosa's family arrived in Texas, they faced many challenges. Their ship wrecked on Galveston Island, several family members died in those first years, and the Texas Revolution started soon after they settled in Cat Spring. Two of Rosa's brothers and her husband joined the army to fight in the Revolution. During the Runaway Scrape, Rosa fled her home with her baby daughter. When she and her family later returned, their home had been destroyed by fire. Rosa later remembered that they had to start over with even less than when they first arrived in Texas.

After the Texas Revolution, Rosa and her family moved to DeWitt County in 1847. At that time, many Germans were leaving Germany because of problems in Europe and moved to Texas. Rosa helped her fellow German immigrants start new lives in Texas. She hosted them, entertained the newcomers, and took care of sick or dying neighbors. Over the years, she raised her eight children, several of her nephews, a foster son, and eventually she helped raise her grandchildren. Rosa also helped to manage the family farm, building a chicken coop and tending her garden.

Rosa's husband died in 1880. She lived another twenty-seven years after his death. She passed away on July 3, 1907, in Yorktown, Texas. One of her sons, Robert, married Alice King and took over management of the large King Ranch on the Texas Gulf Coast.