

Timeline of the Alamo

1836 January – February	Much of the Texas militia that had driven General Martín Perfecto de Cos out of San Antonio in December 1835 had left the city to return home by this time. Those who stayed were waiting out the winter in San Antonio. They believed Santa Anna would not march his army north into Texas until later in the spring because of the harsh winter conditions. Some reports had reached the Texans that Santa Anna was coming, but most believed those reports must be rumors.
February 23	<p>People in San Antonio began receiving urgent reports that Santa Anna's army was approaching the city! The remaining militia and some civilians urgently evacuated the city, taking shelter on the outskirts of town in an old Spanish mission known as the Alamo. They had little food, few supplies, and not much ammunition.</p> <p>Santa Anna and the lead units of his army took possession of San Antonio that same day. He demanded that the Texans surrender, but the Texans fired their cannon in defiant response. Santa Anna and his army then surrounded the Alamo and began bombarding it constantly, beginning a siege.</p>
February 24	William B. Travis went to his room – the center room of the officers' quarters – and wrote a letter asking for help. He began his letter, <i>"To the people of Texas & all Americans in the world."</i> He explained the siege and constant bombardment of Santa Anna's army. He urgently requested help from anyone who could come to their aid, stating that <i>"If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor and that of his country. Victory or death!"</i> Travis sent this letter with a courier out of the Alamo.
February 25	Santa Anna launched a brief attack on the Alamo's southwestern corner, testing its defenses and the readiness of its defenders. That night, William B. Travis sent Juan Seguín through the Mexican lines as a courier with a letter asking for reinforcements. That same evening the temperature in San Antonio dropped and it became very cold.
February 26	<p>Santa Anna attempted another brief attack on the Alamo, this time at the stock pen in the northeast corner of the Convent Yard. Again, he was testing the defenses of the Alamo. The Alamo defenders used cannons from the top of the chapel to shoot at the attacking centralist troops. The troops retreated, ending the attack.</p> <p>Santa Anna continued his bombing of the Alamo throughout the course of the siege for the next two weeks. Every night, Santa Anna moved his</p>

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<p>March 1</p>	<p>cannons a little closer to the Alamo. In the morning, the Texans shot at the centralist troops, forcing them to move back again.</p> <p>Travis had been sending as many letters as he could out of the Alamo asking for help. At about 3:00 am, thirty-two Texas volunteers from the town of Gonzales arrived in response to these calls for help. The Gonzales reinforcements snuck through Santa Anna's southern lines.</p> <p>As soon as the Gonzales men snuck through Santa Anna's lines, the Mexican Army began shooting at them. When the Alamo defenders heard the sound of gunfire outside their walls, they thought they were under attack again and also began shooting. But then they realized that reinforcements had arrived, and the Gonzales men entered the Alamo through the main gate, on the south side. Hopefully more would come!</p>
<p>March 3</p>	<p>Earlier in the siege, William B. Travis had written a letter to James Fannin at the nearby fort in Goliad asking for reinforcements. On this day, a courier named James Bonham arrived with Fannin's response: he would not be sending any troops to reinforce the Alamo.</p>
<p>March 4</p>	<p>Conditions were still cold and rainy. Santa Anna's bombing had continued. Parts of the Alamo walls were damaged, and the north wall was crumbling.</p> <p>Every night, the Alamo defenders would sneak over the walls to try to repair the damage inflicted by Santa Anna's cannons. Many hardly slept. Gunpowder was running low so they could not fire their cannons back at the centralist army as frequently.</p>
<p>March 5</p>	<p>Today, Santa Anna's army appeared to be busy making preparations for something. It looked like they were building a lot of ladders. Night began to fall, and many Alamo defenders began working to strengthen their walls. Several men were posted outside of the Alamo to keep watch.</p> <p>Then, the Mexican army's bombardment that had been constant during the siege suddenly stopped. It was quiet for the first time in nearly two weeks. Many exhausted Alamo defenders fell asleep . . . including the guards outside the walls.</p>
<p>March 6</p>	<p>At around 5:30 in the morning, the Alamo defenders woke up to the roar of about 1,500 centralist troops charging the Alamo. The defenders quickly scrambled to their positions along the walls, shooting rifles and cannons at Santa Anna's troops as they approached and tried to climb the walls. William B. Travis was shot and killed almost immediately on the north wall as he fired down at the centralist army.</p>

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	<p>Santa Anna's soldiers suffered heavy casualties in this first attack as the Alamo defenders shot down into the Mexican troops attempting to climb the walls. Santa Anna's soldiers retreated under heavy fire, but the general ordered his men back to the Alamo for second attack.</p> <p>There was smoke everywhere from the guns and cannons. Santa Anna's second wave of soldiers again took heavy casualties, and again they retreated under heavy fire. Once more, Santa Anna ordered his men back for a third attack. This time, he also sent in his reserve troops to help overwhelm the Texans.</p> <p>This final assault broke through the Alamo's weak north wall.</p> <p>During the siege, the defenders had dug trenches as a fallback position in the barracks along the western wall of the convent yard. On the second floor, above these trenches, was the hospital where the sick were kept. James Bowie was likely not in the hospital, but rather in the small Guard House room on the south wall.</p> <p>Santa Anna's soldiers had come over the walls so quickly that they had been able to take control of the Alamo cannons. They turned the cannons toward the defenders at their fallback position, bombarding the Texans with their own cannons. The Mexican Army then charged the last of the Alamo defenders, who used their rifles as clubs in hand-to-hand combat.</p> <p>The battle lasted approximately an hour and a half. When the fighting was over, nearly every Alamo defender had been killed.</p> <p>There is evidence that a few of the Alamo defenders were captured at the end of the battle. Santa Anna ordered his men to execute these Texans immediately.</p> <p>The only survivors of the Siege and Battle of the Alamo were some civilians who had taken refuge in the chapel during the battle: a handful of women and children including Juana Navarro, Susanna Dickinson and her daughter Angelina, and an enslaved man named Joe. These survivors were brought before Santa Anna, who questioned all of them before he released them to spread the word of what had happened at the Alamo.</p>
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