

Name:

Date:

Class/Period:

Women in the Texas Revolution: The Runaway Scrape and the Aftermath

Instructions: Read the background information and analyze the primary source excerpts by answering the document analysis questions below.

Accounts of the Events of the Runaway Scrape

Background Information:

When news of the fall of the Alamo spread, so did panic associated with it. Santa Anna's intention with the slaughter at the Alamo was to instill fear into everyone who might resist him and that worked well. Houston's army was also retreating, which added to the panic. If the army was moving eastward, what was going to protect them against the onslaught of Santa Anna? Nothing, apparently. People began abandoning their farms and homes and fleeing East to escape the Mexican army.

As it happened, it was a tremendously rainy spring in 1836. The rains had come and come and turned the roads, such as they were, into muddy bogs. Many of the men, moreover, had left to join Houston's army. So, the roads were littered with women driving oxen and tending children, trying to wade through impossible mud.

Background information provided by Dr. Andrew J. Torget, University Distinguished Teaching Professor Department of History, University of North Texas

Document A

Noah Smithwick rode through the aftermath of people leaving and described the scene:

"Houses were standing open, the beds unmade, the breakfast things still on the tables, pans of milk moulding in the dairies. There were cribs full of corn, smoke houses full of bacon, yards full of chickens that ran after us for food, nests of eggs in every fence corner . . . all abandoned."

Smithwick, Noah. "The Evolution of a State, or, Recollections of Old Texas Days 1900." 1997-2021. Sons of DeWitt Colony Texas. Wallace L. McKeehan.

<http://www.sonsofde Wittcolony.org/smithwickevolutionofastatechIX.pdf>

Document B

Angelina Peyton Eberly, a tavern owner, recalled in a letter to a friend the evening she evacuated San Felipe across the Brazos:

"Much was left on the river banks. There were no wagons hardly . . . few horses, many had to go on foot the mud up to their knees - women and children pell mell."

"Early Texas Inns: A Study in Social Relationships." *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 12, no. 4 (April 1909): 302

Document C

Creed Taylor, who served in the Texas Army, recalled in 1900:

"I have never witnessed such scenes of distress and human suffering . . . Delicate women trudged alongside their park horses, carts, or sleds from day to day until their shoes were literally worn out, then continued the journey with bare feet, lacerated and bleeding at almost every step. Their clothes were scant, and with no means of shelter from frequent rains and bitter winds, they traveled on through the long days in wet and bedragged apparel, finding even at night little relief from their suffering since the wet earth and angry sky offered no relief . . . Thus these half-clad, mud-besmeared fugitives, looking like veritable savages, trudged along."

"The Runaway Scrape Narrated by Creed Taylor." Ca. 1900, in *Tall Men with Long Rifles* by James T. DeShields and Wallace L. McKeehan, Sons of DeWitt Colony Texas, 1997-2018.

Analysis Questions:

1. Noah Smithwick described the scene of a colony left abandoned during the Runaway Scrape. Based on the information from Document A, were the colonists prepared to leave town? Why or why not?
2. Examine Documents B and C as related to the information from the second paragraph in the background information. Using three to four complete sentences, summarize the conditions colonists encountered during the Runaway Scrape in your own words. Include supporting text evidence.

3. In what ways were women and children more harshly impacted by the Runaway Scrape?

Accounts of the Aftermath of the Runaway Scrape

Document A

"Innkeeper Angelina Peyton returned to San Felipe after the Runaway Scrape to find her 'place barren of everything - ruins all my things burnt up - crockery piles of cinders - ashes and incombustibles in heaps as left by the fire.' She could stand to stay but a short time . . . before moving on to Columbia to open another tavern"

Lack. *The Papers of the Texas Revolution, 1835-1836*, pp. 235. The Texas Revolutionary Experience. Austin, Texas: Presidial Press, 1973.

Document B

"Few had suffered more than Fanny Menefee, the wife of George Sutherland. She had lost a son at the Alamo and then spent two months 'wandering about' the countryside looking for a place of safety. With three little girls in tow, she fled from their home west of the Colorado River to the Sabine [runaway scrape, I assume], a journey of about two hundred miles made with little help from her soldier-husband. In mid-May the family became one of the first to return to the frontier region. There she 'found nothing in the world worth speaking of.' Houses and warehouses had all been burned in a destruction so complete as to leave 'no one mouthful of anything to eat. God knows how we will make out,' she acknowledged to her sister. 'We are trying to raise something to eat but I fear we will miss it.' Nevertheless, she concluded, 'if we can have peace and can have preaching I wont care for the loss of what property is gone.'"

Paul Lack, *The Texas Revolutionary Experience: A Political and Social History, 1835-1836* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1992), pp. 236-237.

Document C

Thomas Jefferson Rusk later observed:

"The men of Texas deserved much credit, but more was due the women. Armed men facing a foe could not but be brave; but the women, with their little children around them, without means of defense or power to resist, faced danger and death with unflinching courage."

Texas State Historical Association. "The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Volume 90, July 1986-April 1987, periodical 1986/1987." The Portal to Texas History. University of North Texas Libraries, September 14, 2010. <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Texas State Historical Association. Accessed July 11, 2021. <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph117152/>

Analysis Questions:

1. Document A gives an account of Angelina Peyton's return to her tavern in the aftermath of the Runaway Scrape. The closing remarks state, "She could stand to stay but a short time . . . before moving on to Columbia to open another tavern." In your opinion, do you think other colonists did the same thing? Why or why not?
2. In Document C, would you think it was unusual for a woman to own a tavern during this time? Explain your reasoning.
3. Based on the accounts from Documents B and C, use three adjectives to describe the type of women that endured the events of the Texas Revolution.