

Name:

Date:

Class/Period:

Voices: Tejanos in the Texas Revolution:

The Texas Revolution as Part of the Ongoing Civil War in Mexico

Instructions: Analyze the primary source documents by answering the questions using supporting evidence.

Background Essay

Most Tejanos considered the Texas Revolution part of a larger civil war within Mexico. That civil war had broken out in 1835, when Mexico's Constitution of 1824 had been overthrown by Santa Anna and his followers in Mexico City. The 1824 Constitution granted certain powers to the national government while also reserving many other powers for the individual states in Mexico, a division of power known as "federalism."

Most Tejanos and Anglo-American settlers supported the 1824 Constitution and federalism because they believed it was important for Texans to be able to decide how to govern themselves on local matters. Unfortunately, Texas did not have enough people to become its own state in 1824, so Mexico City attached Texas to another state called Coahuila, making the new state of Coahuila-Texas. This caused problems for Texans because the new capital was in Coahuila, far from most Texas settlements, and because the state legislature was dominated by Coahuilans, which made it hard for Tejanos to get laws passed that Texans wanted. Some Tejano leaders, like Erasmo Seguín, believed that Coahuila's leaders did not give Texas enough support, and they pushed against efforts in Coahuila and Mexico City to limit American migration into Texas.

By the early 1830s, Tejanos wanted Texas to become its own separate state, believing that the 1824 Constitution would allow them to make their own laws on important issues. When Santa Anna and his followers overthrew the 1824 Constitution, a civil war in Mexico broke out between "federalists" who wanted to restore the 1824 Constitution against Santa Anna's "centralists," who wanted to put all authority in the national government in Mexico City. Most Tejanos sided with the federalists against Santa Anna.

Document A, Background:

Spain and later Mexico struggled to establish strategic settlements throughout the frontier of Texas. The Tejanos in San Antonio, with the help of Stephen F. Austin, had invited Anglo-American colonization from the United States in hopes it would help develop and stabilize the region. This had been quite successful during the 1820s, as thousands of Americans moved into Texas. But by 1830, leaders in Mexico City worried that there were too many Americans in Texas, fearing that Mexico could lose control of the region. To prevent that, Mexico City passed the “Law of April 6, 1830,” which said that Americans could no longer migrate into Texas. Anglo-Americans in Stephen F. Austin’s colony were upset by this, but so were the Tejanos in San Antonio, who wanted American migration to continue to help develop Texas. In 1832, Tejano leaders in San Antonio wrote a protest against the Law of April 6, 1830, to the state legislature in Coahuila, explaining why they opposed it.

“What shall we say concerning evils caused by the general law of April 6, 1830, which absolutely prohibits immigration by North Americans? The lack of troops and other officials capable of supervising it has made it impossible to enforce this law. On the other hand, the law prevents immigration of some capitalists and of some industrious and honorable men who have refrained [stopped] from coming because of it, but has left the door open to wicked adventurers and others who constitute the dregs [scum] of society. Since they have nothing to lose, they have arrived furtively [secretively] in large numbers and may cause incalculable harm.”

Weber, David J. and Winn, Conchita Hassell. Excerpt from “Petition from Ayuntamiento of Bexar to Coahuila-Texas Legislature, December 19, 1832.” In *Troubles in Texas, 1832: A Tejano Viewpoint from San Antonio*. Dallas, Texas: Wind River Press for DeGolyer Library of SMU, 1982.

Analysis Questions:

1. Explain how the Tejanos view the Law of April 6, 1830, and its impact on the Texas economy. Support your answer with text evidence.

2. Do you think the Tejanos felt like Saltillo or even Mexico City considered Texas a valuable part of the republic? Cite evidence to support your response.

Document B, Background:

Part of why Tejanos wanted to repeal the Law of April 6, 1830, was that they believed that Anglo-American immigration brought real benefits for Texas and for Tejanos. The difficulty that Tejanos had in getting the state government in Coahuila or the national government in Mexico City to listen to them helped convince many Tejanos that Texas needed to be its own state in Mexico, which would help lead them to support the federalists against Santa Anna in 1835-36. In their 1832 protest, Tejanos explained some of this perspective:

“North Americans reclaimed a considerable part of these lands (Texas) from the desert prior to the passage of the law of April 6, 1830, and toiled [worked] assiduously [hard] to further agriculture and to introduce crafts unknown in these parts since the discovery of this land by the old Spanish government. They planted cotton and sugar cane, introduced the cotton gin, and imported machinery for the cultivation of sugar and sawmills to cut wood economically. We owe these advances to the efforts of these hard-working colonists, who have earned a comfortable living within seven or eight years.”

Weber, David J. and Winn, Conchita Hassell. Excerpt from “Petition from Ayuntamiento of Bexar to Coahuila-Texas Legislature, December 19, 1832.” In *Troubles in Texas, 1832: A Tejano Viewpoint from San Antonio*. Dallas, Texas: Wind River Press for DeGolyer Library of SMU, 1982.

Analysis Questions:

1. Explain the Tejano viewpoint on how the Anglo-American colonists would help Texas.

Document C, Background:

Tejanos worried that the new state government in Coahuila would not provide Tejanos enough support to protect their property and their lives from near-constant Comanche and Apache raids. Instead, Tejanos believed that continued migration into Texas by Anglo-Americans could help provide a buffer between them and the Comanche and Apache Indians. Tejano leaders talked about this in their 1832 petition:

“Immigration is, unquestionably, the most efficient, quick, and economical means we can employ to destroy the Indians and to populate lands they now occupy – directing the immigrants to the northern interior whenever possible. This goal can only be achieved by freely admitting these enthusiastic North Americans . . .”

Weber, David J. and Winn, Conchita Hassell. Excerpt from “Petition from Ayuntamiento of Bexar to Coahuila-Texas Legislature, December 19, 1832.” In *Troubles in Texas, 1832: A Tejano Viewpoint from San Antonio*. Dallas, Texas: Wind River Press for DeGolyer Library of SMU, 1982.

Analysis Questions:

1. Explain in your own words how colonization would help to “destroy the Indians.”

2. Spain tried to establish a buffer zone, which we know was not successful. Do you think bringing in Anglo-Americans as a buffer would work? Explain your reasoning.