

The ALAMO™

THE CRADLE OF TEXAS LIBERTY



A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO
ANTONIO LÓPEZ DE SANTA ANNA



Dear Educator,

Here at the Alamo, we know that your time is precious, and we appreciate the work you do in educating our future leaders, innovators, and thinkers. Therefore, we have created this TEKS aligned lesson plan to be utilized in your classroom, so that you can spend more time doing what you love – teaching our youth. Please feel free to use this guide as you see fit, and let us know if you have any questions or suggestions by emailing us at: **education@thealamo.org**.

Sincerely,

The Alamo Education Department

WHY SANTA ANNA?

Mexico's history can be confusing for anyone who has not studied it. Learning Santa Anna's role in Mexican history is an important step in understanding Texas history. His life is more than his victory at the Alamo, and his defeat at San Jacinto. His part in Texas history continued during the Republic of Texas and the Mexican War.



TEKS Alignment

Grade 4 Social Studies

- (2) D
- (3) A, B, C, E
- (7) A
- (14) B
- (16) A
- (21) C, D

Grade 7 Social Studies

- (1) A, B, C
- (2) D
- (3) A, B, C
- (4) A, C
- (8) A
- (9) A
- (17) A, C
- (21) D, E



BIOGRAPHY

For most Texans, the name Santa Anna is synonymous with the Texas Revolution. However, his influence over both Texas and Mexico existed before his disastrous Texas campaign and lasted for decades after his defeat at San Jacinto. Born on February 21, 1794 in Xalapa, **Veracruz**, Antonio López de Santa Anna Pérez de Lebrón was destined to be a shopkeeper. However, Santa Anna did not find the expected course to be to his liking, and he gained his parents' approval for a career in the military. With this one step, Santa Anna embarked on a path to greatness, infamy, and an irrevocable place in history.



Veracruz

At only 16 years of age, Santa Anna became a cadet in the Fixed Infantry Regiment of Veracruz in July of 1810 – only two months prior to the beginning of the Mexican War of Independence from Spain. Three years later, Santa Anna set foot in Texas for the first time. In what would come to be known as the Gutiérrez-Magee Expedition, Mexican citizen José Gutiérrez de Lara and other rebels solicited aid from the United States in the hopes of overthrowing the government. After taking San Antonio with the help of American volunteers, the movement was crushed shortly thereafter by Santa Anna's regiment in the Battle of Medina. Most of the captured rebels were executed. It appeared to make an impression on the 19-year-old lieutenant who would repeat many of his commander's actions 23 years later in an attempt to smother another Texas rebellion.



The bloody and brutal Mexican War of Independence served as a hardening and eye-opening training ground for the young soldier, and after eleven years in service to his country, **Santa Anna** made a radical change. Shortly after his twenty-seventh birthday in 1821, he broke with the Spanish government for whom he had been fighting and joined the rebellion for a free Mexico. As a criollo (Spaniard born in Mexico), he would rise in society by abandoning Spain. The defection came with a promotion to colonel and excellent timing as the shrewd soldier had chosen the winning side only a few months before Spain admitted defeat.

The years after independence proved to be a tempestuous time for Mexico with many of Santa Anna's contemporaries rising and falling in popularity – often ending their careers by firing squads or a push into exile. Santa Anna, however, only gained popularity and prestige. He was promoted to general, married for the first time, bought considerable land in Veracruz (including his favorite hacienda **Manga de Clavo**), served as governor of Veracruz, and furthered his reputation with the people of Mexico when he repulsed a Spanish invasion in 1829. All of these stepping stones led to his election as the president of Mexico in 1833.

The citizens of Texas also endured the political turmoil of Mexico – from the Tejanos whose ancestors first came to the land in the late 1600s to the foreign settlers beginning with **Stephen F. Austin** and his Old Three Hundred in 1821. One of Santa Anna's predecessors had called for a stricter government and had outlawed foreign settlement of Texas.



Santa Anna, circa 1830



Manga de Clavo, The Hacienda of General Santa Anna



Stephen F. Austin, circa 1820



Many **Federalists** hoped that Santa Anna would be bound by the popular, liberal Constitution of 1824, and for a time, this proved to be the case. When Austin sought an audience with Santa Anna, he convinced the president to repeal the section of the Law of April, 1830 which had ended US immigration into Texas.

FEDERALISTS

Mexican political party which believed that governmental power should belong to all of the country's citizens.

CENTRALISTS

Mexican political party which believed that governmental power should belong to a small group – the army, church, and nobles.

Unfortunately, in 1834, the pragmatic president shifted sides to the **Centralists** after deciding that Mexico was not ready for such a free and liberal government. The already divided political factions of Mexico began to split violently following Santa Anna's change – beginning with the Mexican state of Zacatecas in 1835. His swift and harsh treatment of this rebellion terrified and outraged the other defiant states – including Texas. Upon hearing of the uproar in the far-flung Mexican state and their plans to fight for a return to the republican government under which they had prospered, Santa Anna made plans of his own to treat Texas to the same punishment that Zacatecas had endured.

Santa Anna assembled **6,000 Mexican troops** for the Texas campaign. He personally led part of the force northward to Texas on a march of several hundred miles during the coldest months of the year. By the time he arrived in San Antonio on February 23, 1836, his detachment of 1,500 soldiers had suffered sickness and bitter cold, and he had lost more than four hundred men.



Map of Zacatecas



Mexican Soldiers



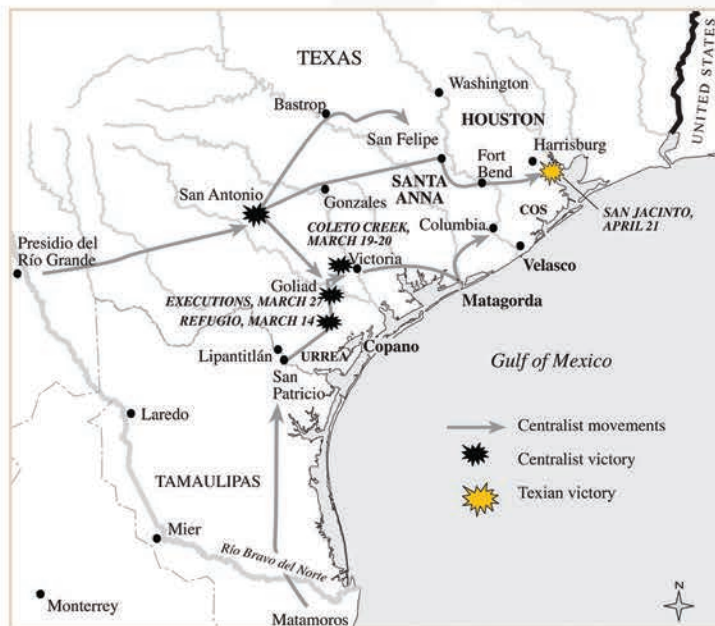
The Texian soldiers were not prepared for his arrival, and thus, the town of San Antonio was taken without a shot. Meanwhile, the Texian rebels took refuge inside the mission turned fort of the Alamo. After a two week standoff, Santa Anna ended the siege and **attacked the Alamo** on March 6, 1836, killing every fighting man.



The Battle of the Alamo: A Moment in Time, by Gary Zaboly

After this victory, he **divided his newly reinforced army into four sections**. One section went to Goliad and met another column who, per Santa Anna's orders, had massacred the men there. Another section stayed in San Antonio while a third section headed north toward Bastrop. Finally, Santa Anna's section raced to catch

General Sam Houston's army and the leaders of the newly formed Republic of Texas.



Texas Revolution: military movements from the Battle of the Alamo, to the Battle of San Jacinto, March 6 – April 21, 1836

With Houston and the Texas cabinet as a prize, Santa Anna began shedding more of his army in an attempt to move more quickly and put an end to the war. Though he had thousands of soldiers in Texas, by the time he clashed with Houston at San Jacinto, their armies were evenly matched. Houston waited until Santa Anna and his army were resting, and attacked – winning the victory in under 20 minutes on April 21, 1836.

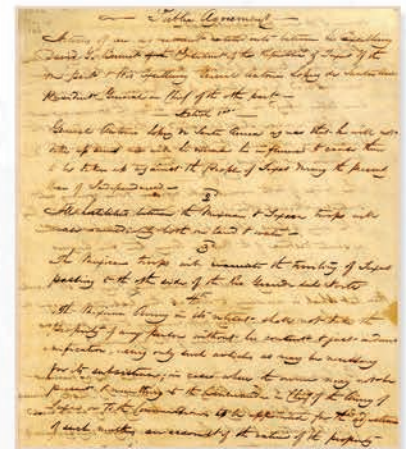




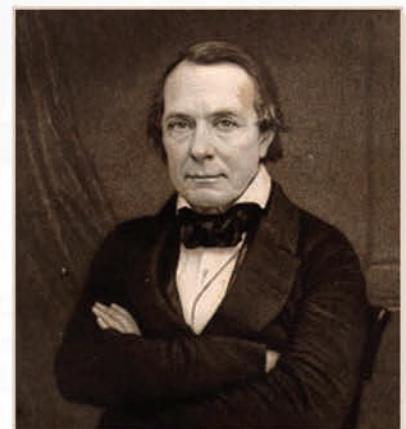
Santa Anna's Surrender at San Jacinto

Though Santa Anna fled during the battle in an attempt to reach his other armies, he was captured by Texian soldiers and brought back to officially **surrender to General Sam Houston**. After his capture, a series of humiliations were waiting for Santa Anna. He ended hostilities in Texas by signing the **Treaties of Velasco** and ordering General Vicente Filisola to withdraw to Mexico. He spent six months in prison and was forced to endure calls for his death and an actual attempt on his life. He was sent to speak with U.S. President Andrew Jackson on behalf of Texas before returning to Veracruz in disgrace in 1837.

For almost a decade, Santa Anna's star rose and fell in Mexican politics with startling regularity. In 1841, he was once again president when the president of the Republic of Texas, **Mirabeau B. Lamar**, made an ill-fated decision to establish trade and authority over the Santa Fe area in what would come to be known as the Santa Fe Expedition. The men were captured and taken to Mexico City, and it led to a series of reprisals on both sides.



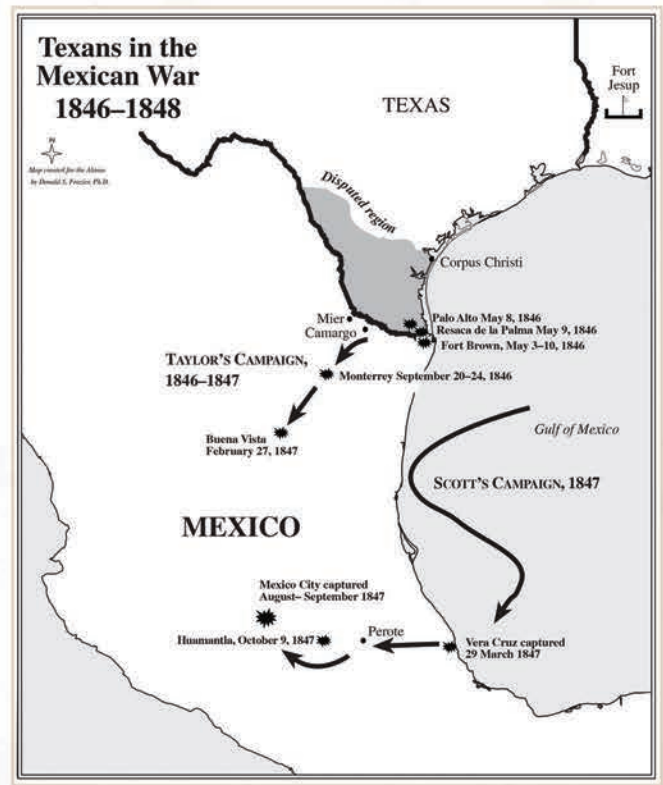
Treaty of Velasco



Mirabeau B. Lamar



After Texas' annexation to the United States in 1845, Mexico and the United States disagreed over their new boundary, and disagreements soon led to the **Mexican War**. Although Santa Anna was exiled in Cuba when the war began, he promised President James K. Polk that he would help with negotiations if he was allowed through the blockade. Rather than keeping his promise, Santa Anna accepted the presidency once again. The war proved disastrous for both Mexico and Santa Anna. By the end of the war in 1848, not only had the United States gained the Texas boundary for which they had been fighting, they gained half of Mexico's territory, including what would become the states of California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, parts of New Mexico, Colorado, and Wyoming in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.



While it seemed that Santa Anna's political and military career would be in tatters after losing half of Mexico's territory while in the preeminent position, he would actually rise to power once again before his **final exile in 1855**. This exile was brought about by the Gadsden Purchase in which he approved the sale of a small piece of Mexico to the United States. He was granted permission to **return to Mexico in 1874** and died on June 21, 1876 at the age of 82. Though controversial, the would-be shopkeeper from Veracruz earned a place in history as a general and president of his nation.

Santa Anna, at the time of his exile, circa 1855



Santa Anna, circa 1870



SANTA ANNA TIMELINE

- 1794** – Antonio López de Santa Anna is born in **Xalapa, Veracruz, New Spain**.
- 1810** – Santa Anna joins the Fixed Infantry Regiment of Veracruz.
- 1813** – Santa Anna enters **Texas** and takes part in the Battle of Medina.
- 1821** – Santa Anna breaks with the Spanish government and joins the rebellion for a free **Mexico**.
- 1822** – Santa Anna is promoted to general.
- 1825** – Santa Anna marries Inés García and buys Manga de Clavo.
- 1828** – Santa Anna begins serving as governor of Veracruz.
- 1829** – The Spanish Barradas expedition is repulsed by Santa Anna and his men.
- 1833** – Santa Anna is elected president of Mexico.
- 1834** – Santa Anna shifts Mexico to a Centralist government.
- 1835** – Santa Anna crushes the rebellion in Zacatecas and begins marching to **Texas**.
- 1836** – Santa Anna wins a costly victory at the Alamo and is ultimately defeated at San Jacinto.
- 1837** – Santa Anna meets the **United States** President and returns to **Veracruz, Mexico**.
- 1841** – President once again, Santa Anna orders reprisals because of Texan forays into disputed territory in the Santa Fe Expedition.
- 1844** – Santa Anna marries Dolores Tosta after the death of his first wife.
- 1845** – Santa Anna is overthrown as president and exiled to **Cuba**, but returns to **Mexico** through the U.S. blockade at the end of the year.
- 1846** – Santa Anna reestablished as president.
- 1848** – Santa Anna signs the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo.
- 1855** – Santa Anna's final exile begins in **Colombia**.
- 1874** – Santa Anna is granted permission to return to Mexico.
- 1876** – Santa Anna dies in **Mexico City**.



SANTA ANNA'S LOCATIONS

Use this 1811 map of North America to follow Santa Anna's life. The red stars indicate important locations in his life. Use the **words in red** on your timeline to determine the order of his travels, and use the other maps and reading as aids to mark his journey in order with a pen or marker.



TEXAS REVOLUTION PERSPECTIVES

In every war, there are two sides. Santa Anna firmly believed that he was correct in keeping Texas part of Mexico. He considered the Texian rebels to be land pirates and not true Mexican citizens. However, the Texans felt that the Mexican government was taking away their rights by not allowing Texas to become a state – effectively silencing their voice in Mexican politics. Based on the reading and your own research, think of other arguments for why each side went to war.

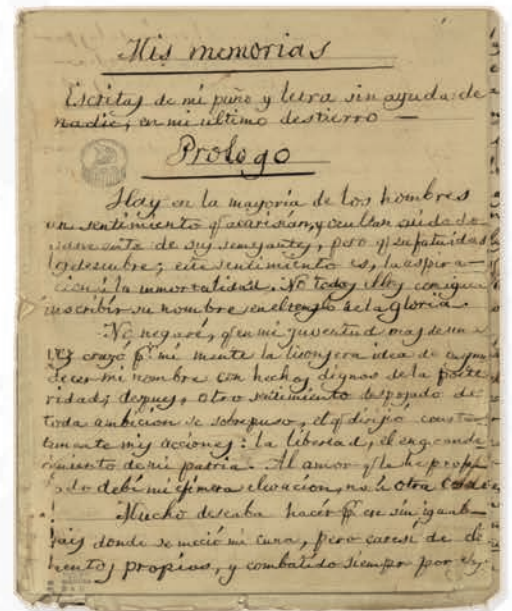
MEXICAN**TEXIAN**



SANTA ANNA BIAS

During his exile, Santa Anna wrote an autobiography of his life. Recalling his reasoning for marching to Texas with his troops in 1835, he had this to say:

“I as chief executive of the government, zealous in the fulfillment of my duties to my country, declared that I would maintain the territorial integrity whatever the cost...With the fires of patriotism in my heart and dominated by a noble ambition to save my country, I took pride in being the first to strike in defense of the independence, honor, and rights of my nation. Stimulated by these courageous feelings, I took command of the campaign myself, preferring the uncertainties of war to the easy and much-coveted life of the palace” (Santa Anna, 1988, p. 49).



This is an excellent example of bias - Santa Anna presented the facts in such a way as to present himself in the best possible light.

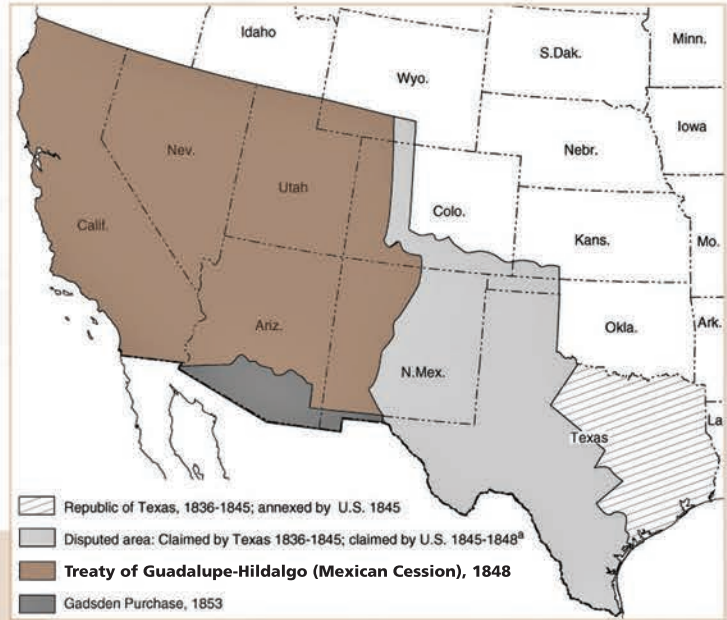
What do you consider to be the most biased statement in the paragraph? Why?

Should history be presented with bias? Why or why not?



TREATY OF GUADALUPE-HIDALGO

At the conclusion of the Mexican War, Mexico ceded the disputed territory of Texas and considerable other lands to the United States. This changed the face of both Texas and the United States, and with the Gadsden Purchase in 1853, the continental United States was complete.



Questions ?

What advantages were there for Texas as part of the United States?

How would Texas be different if these lands had not been gained?

Why do you think the United States wanted Texas and the other lands gained in the treaty?



RESOURCES

Below we have detailed the resources that proved most useful in our research of Sam Houston. Please feel free to use them to find out more about this Texas hero.

WEBSITES

- Texas State Library and Archives Commission: <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/>
- Texas State Historical Association Online Handbook of Texas: <https://tshaonline.org/handbook>
- The Portal to Texas History: <https://texashistory.unt.edu/>

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IMAGES

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