

# *"To all Americans in the World. . ."*

## A Lesson in Citizenship

### Introduction

#### Objectives:

Students are asked to analyze reasons why Travis used this phrase in his appeal for help. What may have motivated him to use these words? How might these words connect to the larger themes of citizenship and the nature of government?"

Compare and contrast the political views of the Mexican authorities in 1835 with the views of Colonel Travis and other War Party members in Texas.

**TEKS:** 7.16, 7.17, 7.18

#### Resources:

- Copy of the William Barret Travis letter written February 24, 1836
- Travis letter worksheet
- Copy of the Tornel Decree
- Tornel Decree worksheet
- Vocabulary worksheet

#### Warm-up:

- Complete the vocabulary worksheet.

#### **Section 1: Travis' Letter and his views on citizenship**

Read the Travis letter of February 24, 1836.

Complete the worksheet.

#### **Section 2: The Tornel Decree**

Read the Tornel Decree of December 30, 1835.

Complete the worksheet.

## *"To All Americans in the World"*

### **Warm-up Activity**

**Instructions:** Define the following terms.

1. American-

2. Citizen-

3. Compatriot-

4. Liberty-

5. Patriotism-

6. Honor-

7. Tejano-

8. Anglo-

# *"To all Americans in the World... "*

## The Travis Letter Worksheet

1. The letter is addressed to, "The People of Texas & all Americans in the world—" Who do you believe Colonel Travis was hoping would read this letter?
2. Was Colonel Travis a citizen of Texas? Of Mexico? Of the United States? Who were his compatriots?
3. Colonel Travis uses the terms liberty and patriotism. How do you think these terms apply to the situation in Texas in 1836? How do you think Colonel Travis learned about these terms?
4. How does the term "honor" apply to the actions of the men who fought and died in the Battle of the Alamo? Does it apply equally to the Mexican soldiers?
5. What is the difference between the Anglo Colonists, like Travis and the Tejanos?
6. Do you believe that the Tejanos also believed that this battle was a matter of honor? Do you believe they considered themselves Travis' compatriots?

Commandancy of the Alamo--  
Bejar, Fby 24th 1836--  
To the People of Texas & all Americans in the world--  
Fellow citizens & compatriots—

I am besieged, by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna--I have sustained a continual Bombardment & connade for 24 hours & have not lost a man -- The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise, the garrison are to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken -- I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, & our flag still waves proudly from the walls – I shall never surrender or retreat. Then, I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism & everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid, with all dispatch -- The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily & will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible & die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor & that of his country -- Victory or Death

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William Barret Travis  
Lt. Col. comdt

P.S. The Lord is on our side --When the enemy appeared in sight we had not three bushels of corn -- We have since found in deserted houses 80 or 90 bushels & got into the walls 20 or 30 head of Beeves –

Travis

Since the above was written I heard a very heavy Cannonade during the whole day think there must have been an attack made upon the alamo We were short of ammunition when I left Hurry on all the men you can in haste When I left there was but 150 determined to do or die tomorrow I leave for Bejar with what men I can raise [ ] at all events---  
Col. Almonte is there the troops are under the Command of Gen. Seisma  
Albert Martin

Nb I hope that Every One will Rondevu at gonzales as soon poseble as the Brave Solders are suffering do not neglect this powder is very scarce and should not be delad one moment  
L. Smither

## William Barret Travis

William Barret Travis, commander of the Alamo, was born on August 9, 1809 in Saluda County, South Carolina. Travis' father moved the family to Conecuh County, Alabama in 1817. Travis was enrolled in a school in Claiborne, Alabama. There he assisted other students in their studies. Travis became an apprentice of the leading attorney in Claiborne and eventually his partner.

On October 26, 1828, Travis married Rosanna Cato. Their first child, Charles Edward Travis, was born on August 8, 1829. Travis became involved in the Claiborne community by joining the Masonic Lodge, starting a newspaper and accepting a position in the Alabama Militia. Despite these personal successes, the Travis' marriage was falling apart. Both accused the other of infidelity and Travis would leave his wife, son and unborn daughter.

Travis, like so many others, chose Texas to start a new life. He arrived in 1831 and established a law practice in Anahuac on Galveston Bay.

In the course of practicing law in Texas, Travis met men associated with the war party, a group of militants opposing the Law of April 6, 1830.

In 1832, Travis was retained to help secure the return of runaway slaves being held by the commander of the Mexican garrison at Anahuac. Eventually, Travis and his law partner were jailed in two brick ovens. As men began to gather in protest, the Mexican Commander realized that he was outnumbered and released the two men.

Travis moved his law practice to San Felipe and was elected to the town council. He also met Rebecca Cummings and they became engaged in 1834. Meanwhile, Travis' wife, Rosana traveled to Texas in the fall of 1835, in order to get her husband's signature on divorce papers. She left their son, Charles, with him. Travis arranged for Charles to stay with David Ayers and family as he was caught up in the Texas Revolution.

Travis participated in the Grass Fight near Béxar. He accepted a commission of lieutenant colonel of cavalry. He was ordered to recruit 100 men and reinforce the Alamo. Although he could only recruit 29 men, he arrived in San Antonio in January 1836. He shared command of the Alamo with James Bowie until Bowie fell ill on February 24<sup>th</sup>. After General Santa Anna's arrival in San Antonio on February 23<sup>rd</sup> Travis penned letters to the provisional government of Texas explaining their situation and requesting reinforcements. The most famous of these letters was written on February 24, 1836 and began, "To the people of Texas and all Americans in the world..." Travis was killed early on the morning of March 6 as the Mexican army attacked the compound. According to his slave, Joe, Travis was shot through the head early in the battle as he directed fire on the north wall. His body was burned with those of the other defenders.