



Alamo Audio Tour Script 2019 with Garden Content

This script is the property of the Alamo and the Texas General Land Office and shall not be reproduced in any form for any purpose without written consent from the above-named entities.

Stop 1 Audio Wand Tutorial

(Music) Welcome to the Alamo. As you explore the site's historic grounds and buildings, you'll have the chance to immerse yourself in the landscape where Catholic missionaries, Spanish royalists, Mexican soldiers, Texan revolutionaries, and U.S. military have walked before you. The stories of many of those brave-hearted men and women will be told today, yet hundreds more will remain unknown.

To ensure that you experience all of the Alamo's resources and history during your visit, please pick up a free site map of the grounds. The message stops for the audio tour are numbered and titled on this helpful guide, which means you can enjoy the audio program in any order you like.

To learn more about the historic or cultural significance of a particular building, event or object listed on the map, please enter the corresponding three-digit number on your audio wand's keypad. In some locations the messages are 'layered,' so after the main message is finished, you will be prompted to press the # key to access the additional information.

To end a message before it's finished, press the "Stop" button located on the bottom center of the keypad. To hear it again, simply re-enter the number. You can adjust the volume by pressing the up or down arrow.

For your convenience, the restrooms are handicapped-accessible. Visitors may borrow a wheelchair and scripts of the audio program. Alamo guides are available to assist you and answer questions from 9 am to 5:30 pm.

Ready to begin? Please remember to watch your step while you visit the site, and keep an eye out for posted safety messages.

Enjoy the program!

Stop 2 Welcome to the Alamo

On February 24th 1836, 26-year old Lt. Colonel William B. Travis, commander of the Texas defenders, wrote this letter of appeal from behind the walls of the Alamo:



(Actor): *“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 & cannonade 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, and our flag still waves proudly from the walls – I shall never surrender or retreat. (Begin fade out at this point) Then, I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism, & of everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid with all dispatch.”*

Welcome to the Alamo. Best known for the famous 1836 battle that took place here, the Alamo’s history actually spans many centuries. Today, the Alamo is owned by the State of Texas. However, in 1905 the Texas State Legislature appointed the Daughters of the Republic of Texas custodians of the historic site and called for the Alamo “to be maintained as a sacred memorial for the men who sacrificed themselves upon that hallowed ground.”

This audio tour is designed to introduce—or maybe reintroduce—you to The Alamo story. When you have finished, we hope that you have many new reasons to Remember the Alamo!

Stop 3 What is The Alamo?

Originally named Mission San Antonio de Valero, The Alamo served as home to missionaries and their Indian converts for nearly seventy years - from 1724 until it was shut down in 1793. During those years, the mission was a place where indigenous people were converted to Catholicism, trained in Spanish culture and taught necessary skills to become productive members of society.

The entire mission compound covered nearly three acres. The central plaza of the old mission is now called Alamo Plaza. If you look to the west (away from the church) you will see a line of 1880s storefronts. These were built where the houses for Indian converts who came into the mission once stood. To the north, the Federal Post Office Building now rests on top of the old north wall, where William B. Travis was killed. To the south a low limestone planter marks out the location of the old south wall. The only original parts of the mission standing today are the church and the stone structure called the Long Barrack.

Stop 4 How did it get the name Alamo?

Although the mission was closed in 1793, it was not abandoned. In the early 1800s, Spanish soldiers from the presidio across the river moved in. The Spanish military stationed a cavalry unit here in 1803. The soldiers referred to the old mission as the Alamo (the Spanish word for “cottonwood”) in honor of their hometown San Carlos de Alamo de Parras, Coahuila.



The military unit occupied the Alamo from around 1803 until the outbreak of the Texas Revolution in 1835. The company was largely made up of local residents called Tejanos, or men who were born in Texas. Although originally Spanish subjects, in 1821 these men shifted their loyalty to the newly independent nation of Mexico. Throughout their stay at the Alamo, the soldiers of the company patrolled the area, keeping it safe from foreign invasion and marauding Indians. The Texas Revolution, however, split the company. Some soldiers stayed loyal to Mexico but others sided with the rebels. The conflict ended the company's presence as a unit at the Alamo.

Stop 5 Why was the Alamo important?

Why was the Alamo important? Dr. Bruce Winders, Historian and Curator of the Alamo reveals one of the key reasons.

(Historian): "One of the things about the Battle of the Alamo is, it's not the Alamo itself that's the important prize, but it's the town of San Antonio that's across the river. There was a population of about 2,000 people. It was a garrison town, a seat of government, crossroads. And all those things together combine to make it one of the most important places in Texas. And it was worth fighting for. It was worth both the Texans trying to capture the town in December, and then for Santa Anna to come back and to re-capture it. So it's the town that's important, the Alamo just happened to overlook it."

Stop 6 The Alamo Church (Nave) outside

Construction on the church for Mission San Antonio de Valero began around 1756, more than thirty years after Spanish missionaries arrived at the site. The church was constructed using limestone from a nearby quarry. An earlier stone church, built to replace a temporary structure, had collapsed. Thus, the building before you is actually the mission's third and final church; it is a splendid example of Spanish mission architecture. But not all of it is Spanish. The distinctive rounded cap on the top of the façade was placed there by the United States Army in 1850.

Some traces of the 1836 battle can still be found. Look at the bottom of the "V" shaped carving below the right-hand niche. You can still see an indentation there that was made by a cannonball.

Stop 7 Church Interior

The interior of the church reveals its rich history. This building has been a mission church, a fortified stronghold, a US Quartermaster depot, a warehouse for merchants and the city of San Antonio, and a memorial to the Alamo's fallen garrison. John Richardson, the Alamo's History Interpreter points out that remnants from all of these periods can be found if you know where to look.

(Actor): "When people come in they ask, what's original, or is this an original building? It's original to four periods - Mission period, siege period, warehouse period, and of course, the



shrine period. When you walk into the shrine, some things you can look at to notice the difference: the window above the front doors is a choir loft window from the mission period.

Construction on the church ended when the mission was closed. At that time the building was only four stone walls without a roof. So the walls that surround you were erected by the Spanish.

Two small rooms flank the entrance. These once had a religious function. During the 1836 battle, these two rooms served as powder magazines.

Notice the columns that line the walls. These are called "pilasters." They are original to the church. Do you see the rectangular notches cut into them about three quarters of the way up? These were put there by the US Army in 1850 when the building was converted into a quartermaster depot. The notches secured beams, which held up a second story floor, which the army installed. The army also placed the first permanent roof over the church."

Walk to the back of the church where the altar would have been located. During the 1836 battle this area had been converted into an artillery position by filling it in with stone and rubble. Cannons looked eastward from atop this platform. A long earthen ramp stretched from the top of the platform towards the front entrance. You can still see where the church walls had been lowered on either side to create a place for the cannon to fire.

Stop 8 The Alamo Church (Monks Burial Room)

The church has two side rooms. The first is sometimes called the Monk's Burial Room, although there are no "monks" buried here. It originally was an outdoor patio. With construction on the church slow, a decision was made to enclose this area and use it as a temporary sacristy. The configuration of this room has been changed many times. Notice the doorways that have been blocked off. The ones with arches represent the Spanish mission period. Rectangular indentations indicate doorways after the US Army took over the church. The niche in the buttress along the south wall originally was a receptacle for holy water.

In the second side room, you will hear stories of both amazing beauty and savage brutality. Enter the #9 on your keypad when you get there.

Stop 9 The Alamo Church (Sacristy)

This room was built to be the church sacristy, a place for keeping vestments, sacred vessels, and parish records. It was used as a chapel, while the church was being constructed. The wooden pieces embedded in the south wall are believed to have been from an altarpiece. Look closely at the walls and you will see traces of frescoes that date back to the mission era. Ask an Alamo Guide to point them out if you need help.

The artwork was done by the Indians and missionaries of Mission San Antonio de Valero. First, the limestone walls were covered with a smooth coating of plaster. Then while the plaster was



still wet, the paint was applied. The designs are religious symbols. Can you find a three petal flower representing the Holy Trinity?

As Alamo Museum educator Sherri Driscoll explains, these walls have also served as more than a canvas for beautiful art.

(Historian): *"This room is where the women and children that were still inside the walls of the Alamo took refuge during the twelve-day siege and the actual attack on March 6, 1836. Amongst these women and children was Susanah Dickinson, whose husband Almeron, would die on the cannon ramp at the back of the church. With her was her 19-month old daughter, Angelina. Also, inside the Sacristy was Anna Esparza and her four children. One of her little boys, Enrique was just eight years old."*

These women and children were eventually released but would first witness the horrific sights and sounds of a fierce battle. They would carry the memory of Mexican General Santa Anna's attack with them throughout their lives. Susanah Dickinson vividly recalled one of those memories for a San Antonio Express reporter almost fifty years later.

(Actor as Dickinson): *"The barbarous horde followed the ill-fated Walker and shot him first, then stuck their bayonets in his body and lifted him up like a farmer does a bundle of fodder on his pitchfork."*

Because she was the only English-speaking survivor that day, Santa Anna ordered Susannah to carry a message to General Sam Houston, the commander of all Texian forces.

Once you exit the church, enter the #10 on your keypad.

Stop 10 Alamo Long Barracks and Gift Shop

Another historic Alamo structure - referred to today as the Long Barrack can be seen through the break in the wall to the left. This structure is older than the Church as construction began in 1724. The Long Barrack is currently undergoing preservation work and is not open to the public. Archaeologists are also busy working on uncovering even more Alamo history!

The Wall of History stands just to the right of the opening in the wall. This timeline exhibit is very helpful in understanding the more than 300 years of Alamo history. We recommend that you return to the Wall of History after you have finished this audio tour, to learn more about the amazing people that settled the land and the events that shaped the fight for freedom.

Directly across from the church exit is the Alamo Gift Shop. This building, with the small bell near the roofline, was constructed in 1936, in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Battle of the Alamo. It originally served as a museum.

When you are finished here, go to the small bridge to the right that crosses the Alamo acequia. You will see stop #11 on the railing to the left of the bridge.



Stop 11 The Acequia

Water was an important survival asset for any frontier village. That is one reason why the Spanish, chose to settle near the headwaters of the San Antonio River. The challenge, though, was getting water to nearby farms, so crops like corn, beans and grains could be grown. Their solution was to dig 75 miles of 'acequias' or irrigation ditches and line them with rock and earthen clay to deliver water to the missions' fields.

This 1930s era concrete ditch is the site of an actual acequia that ran behind the Alamo church. Water, driven by gravity, flowed from a dam on the San Antonio River located about a mile to the north. The acequia then ran southward.

The fish you see here are Japanese Koi. While Japanese Koi are not native to Texas waters, other fish like carp, trout and bass were common before the acequia system was disconnected from its source, the San Antonio River. Fish bones have been found in archaeological digs conducted here at the Alamo, indicating its residents depended on the river to supplement their diet.

Now make your way down the sidewalk to the left along the south wall of the Alamo Gift Shop. Continue on to the next bridge and turn right, where you will enter the Alamo gardens. Once you get there, look for the two large trees in the grassy area off to the right and press #12.

Stop 12 Cottonwood Trees

These two tall trees with the deeply furrowed bark are Cottonwoods, a type of poplar. Spanish settlers were encouraged to plant trees for shade and to help beautify the town. The Spanish word for cottonwood is Alamo. Commerce Street, a main thoroughfare just two blocks south of here, was at one time called the "Alameda" because it was lined with cottonwoods.

The Alameda was also the location for two of the funeral pyres on which the dead bodies of the Alamo's defenders were burned. One reason may have been that the nearby cottonwood trees provided the necessary fuel for the fires.

The area that we call a garden today was the responsibility of the Mexican Army Lancers in 1836. A Mexican lance measured 8 feet long and was carried by a soldier mounted on horseback. These troops were highly trained and were respected by their peers and their foes.

Their job was to ride back and forth during the battle to ensure that no one tried to escape the Alamo or send in reinforcements. While we know that 32 men from Gonzales were able to gain access to the Alamo from the east on the night of March 1, 1836, we do not know if the skilled Mexican Lancers allowed this to happen or if the Texians were just lucky that fateful night.

Continue down the sidewalk toward the cactus garden surrounded by chain, when you get there, press #13.



Stop 13 Cactus Garden (Prickly Pear & Yucca)

The reason a Cactus plant thrives in arid regions like Texas is because they can store large amounts of water in their stems, while their thick waxy skin helps prevent evaporation. Those long thorns or spines, also keep the plant from being eaten by hungry animals.

The paddle-shaped leaves of a Prickly Pear cactus, called 'nopals' in Spanish, can be harvested while still young and can be cooked or pickled. Look for this type of cactus near the back of the cactus garden.

When flowering in the spring, they produce yellow or reddish blooms. Their pollinated flowers produce a purple fruit called 'tuna' in Spanish. Ripe tuna can be eaten. Some restaurants on the Riverwalk serve Margaritas made with the juice of the prickly pear's fruit.

You may notice a white mass on some of the leaves. This is the nest of a small insect called a cochineal. Crushed cochineal, which produces a bright red paste, has long been used as a natural dye.

Another desert plant of note, with its long, pointed leaves, is the Yucca. There are 16 species native to Texas. Yucca juice from the roots has traditionally been used as a soap. While the leaf fibers have been used to create sandals, baskets, mats and more.

In the right corner of the cactus garden, the bush with small grayish-green leaves is known as Texas Sage. Texas Sage is the official native shrub of Texas and has traditionally been used in ceremonies by native people.

It's nicknamed the "Barometer Plant" because when the humidity begins to rise after very dry weather, this shrub bursts into bloom with hundreds of tiny purple flowers.

As you continue down the sidewalk past the cactus garden, you will see the Alamo Living History Encampment off to your left. The Living History staff works each day to bring the 1830s alive for our visitors, with demonstrations like: the Weaponry of the Texas Revolution; Medicine of the 1830s; and a visitor favorite, Gambling and Gaming of the period. Feel free to stop and interact with our Living History staff.

Just behind the encampment you will see a large Pecan tree. This is the oldest tree on the Alamo grounds. Look for Stop #14 along the sidewalk on the east side of the cactus garden.

Stop 14 Gallagher Pecan Tree

This 80-foot pecan tree was reportedly planted by Peter Gallagher around 1850. Gallagher, a native of Ireland, had settled in Texas in 1837. A stonemason by trade, he also operated a store. In 1841, as a member of the Santa Fe Expedition seeking to blaze a trade route for the Texas Republic into New Mexico, Gallagher was captured and held prisoner in Mexico for nearly a year, before he was released. Evidently possessing an adventurous nature, Gallagher then joined the Texas Rangers and served under Captain Jack Hays.



Peter Gallagher later acquired this property just east of the Alamo church, where he built a two-story frame house. Although the house no longer exists, this heritage tree stands as a reminder of a dynamic early period in Texas history.

To find out how one woman's vision, along with the help of a President, transformed this land behind the Alamo, press the pound (#) key.

Stop 14 Layer 1 - Works Project Administration

The gardens behind the Church owe their appearance to the Works Project Administration of the 1930s. Clara Driscoll, a member of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, had pushed for years to turn this area, which was filled with homes and businesses, into a park. When Texas celebrated one hundred years of independence in 1936, an anniversary that focused the country's attention on the Alamo, Clara knew it was now time for her dream to be realized.

With the United States in the midst of the Great Depression, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's administration established the WPA to create jobs by putting people to work on public projects. At its peak in 1938, it provided paid jobs for three million unemployed men and women.

The garden took shape as the Gallagher home came down, and the area east of the Alamo was cleared and leveled. A series of sidewalks were installed, and a low wall was erected around the perimeter of the new park. A concrete channel was created to represent the old acequia. Flowers and shrubbery were planted to give the newly-constructed area a park-like look and feel. Many of the WPA improvements in San Antonio, including the Riverwalk, are still in place today.

If you want to learn about one building that survived the WPA renovation, press the pound (#) key again. Otherwise, continue on the sidewalk toward the church. You'll find stop #15 on the south side of the Alamo church.

Stop 14 Layer 2 - Alamo Hall

Originally one of San Antonio's first firehouses, the yellow-stone structure on the left was saved from destruction, so it could be converted into a meeting hall for the Daughters of the Republic of Texas. Today the building serves as a lecture hall where educational programs are held. Alamo Hall can also be rented for dinners and other after-hours events.

Just behind Alamo Hall is Alamo Hall Patio. An adobe house once occupied this area. One resident was Wilhelm Carl August Thielepape, who served as San Antonio's mayor from 1867 to 1872. Take a closer look to find the markers in the flagstone that identify the four corners of the structure.

Now follow the sidewalk toward the church. Look for stop #15 on the south side of the Alamo church.



Stop 15 Police Substation

Do you see the long horizontal line indented into the recessed stone wall of the Alamo shrine? There's an interesting story behind it. In 1883, the City of San Antonio became temporary custodians of the Church after it was purchased by the State of Texas. Soon after, the City Council approved constructing a small police substation against the south wall of the Church. That line marks where the roof of the old structure met the wall of Church. Since several bars and saloons once stood where the WPA arcade is located, it's not hard to imagine what purpose the small jail served.

Continue down the sidewalk toward the Memorial Fountain. You will find Stop #16 on the right near the arcade.

Stop 16 Arcade/Cannon

Another WPA feature at the Alamo is the stone arcade with its' graceful limestone arches. It was built in the early 1930s as a way of adding symmetry to the front of the Church. The Arcade offset the Long Barrack and placed the Church in the middle of these two "wings."

Today the Arcade serves as a place to highlight and display some of the Alamo's historic cannons. They were once part of the group of 21-cannons that were used to defend the Alamo in the 1836 battle for Texas independence.

The Mexican Army left them behind when they evacuated San Antonio after the Texan victory at the Battle of San Jacinto. Most of these cannons were uncovered in 1852 at the northwest corner of the Alamo's compound by laborers working for Samuel Maverick. Maverick, a member of the Alamo's garrison who escaped death because he had been sent to vote for independence at the constitutional convention, returned to San Antonio after the revolution and built his house where the Gibbs Building now stands.

In 2017, the Alamo began a joint project with Texas A & M University's Conservation Research Laboratory to have these historic cannons conserved. CRL is an internationally recognized facility that has helped preserve artifacts from around the world. The conservation process included electrolysis to remove dirt and old paint from the cannon's exterior, treatment with tannic acid to stabilize the metal, a coating of microcrystalline wax to seal the surface, and a new coat of paint.

Now make your way to the front of the building near the fountain. This is the Alamo Annex where our Alamo History exhibit is temporarily installed. Stop #17 will be along the sidewalk on the right.

Stop 17 The Annex

This building originally served as a research library. The central core of the building was constructed in 1950. The two wings on either side of the main building were added in the 1970s. The research library was operated by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, a heritage organization made up of women who are descended from people living in early Texas.



The DRT served as state appointed custodians of the Alamo from 1905 until 2011. Today, the building serves as a space for temporary exhibits.

Enter through the wooden doors to continue your tour and to view the Alamo History Exhibit. Stop # 18 will be on your left after you enter.

Stop 18 A Story Bigger Than Texas

Best known for the epic siege and battle that took place here in 1836, the Alamo has played an important role in Texas history for more than 300 years. Several factors made its location important. It was located near the springs that formed the headwaters of the San Antonio river, a feature that naturally attracted plants, wild life, and humans to the area. The Spanish quickly realized that a settlement here, would help in their effort to keep the French from establishing a deep foothold in Texas. By 1731, seven separate communities consisting of five missions, a presidio, and a civil town – formed a base for what would become San Antonio.

Although it began as a mission, the Alamo evolved into a frontier military outpost for Spain, Mexico, Texas, and the United States. Even Confederate troops occupied the site during the Civil War. This ‘defensive role’ explains why the Alamo was frequently the sight of battles. San Antonio was an important place: Whoever controlled the Alamo controlled San Antonio. Whoever controlled San Antonio controlled Texas, and whoever controlled Texas, controlled events beyond its border. It is for this reason we can say that, “the Alamo is a story bigger than Texas.”

Stop 19 Mexican Independence (Cylinder-side A)

On the cylinder in the middle of this room is the story of Mexico’s fight for their independence, which lasted from 1810 until 1821. Spain, which was weakened from fighting the French at home and rebels abroad, was in no position to prevent Mexico from breaking away. As you can see on the map, when the fighting was over, Mexico’s territory included all of modern-day Mexico, as well as most of what we now call the American Southwest. The peace treaty contained “The Plan of the Three Guarantees” and promised independence from Spain, Catholicism as the national religion, and equality among all Mexicans.

Mexico’s first government was a short-lived monarchy led by Emperor Augustin I, a former Mexican general. By 1823, however, the people were ready to govern themselves and established the Republic of Mexico. The new Constitution of 1824 based upon the United States Constitution called for a President and a Congress.

Unfortunately for Mexico, independence did not bring peace. Stop #20 is located on the opposite side of this cylinder.

Stop 20 Texas in the Mexican Federation (Cylinder-side B)

For years the Spanish had tried to increase Texas’ population. The harsh frontier conditions kept settlers away. On the eve of Mexico’s independence, they decided to allow inhabitants from the United States and Europe to colonize Texas as a way to develop the province.



Although colonization under the Spanish did not have time to happen, the new Mexican government—faced with the same problem—adopted the policy as its own.

Colonists came to Texas in search of land and other economic opportunities. They were drawn to Mexico because, like the United States, that nation also had a federal constitution.

Its small population affected Texas' status in the Constitution of 1824. Under the Spanish, Texas had been organized as a province with its own local government. The new government demoted Texas to the level of a territory and designated it a department within a state called Coahuila y Tejas. The town of Saltillo, several hundred miles away, became the capital of the twin state. The native residents of Texas—Tejanos—quickly began lobbying for separate statehood within the Mexican republic. Colonists arriving from the United States, who were drawn to Texas by the generous offer of land and a new life in the Federal Republic of Mexico, would soon support them in their effort.

Look for Stop 21 on the back wall of the exhibit on the panel titled, "Anglo-Tejano Interdependence"

Stop 21 Why did Texas Revolt?

Alamo Curator Dr. Bruce Winders reveals the real story behind the question, "Why did Texas revolt?"

(Historian): "In the traditional story of the Texas Revolution, most people think well, the Americans came into Texas, they didn't get along with the Mexicans and therefore there was a revolution and they broke away. The best way to understand the Texas Revolution is to see it as an event that happens within an ongoing Mexican civil war. The reason we remember the Texas Revolution is because Texas ultimately succeeded in breaking away from Mexico and forming its own nation – the Republic of Texas. But this was happening within a series of revolts in other Mexican states as well.

And if you don't understand the larger context, it makes the Texas Revolution seem like an isolated incident."

Following Mexican independence from Spain in 1821, Mexico's government had seen seven presidents and one emperor in the span of twelve years. It was during this political instability that a young, charismatic soldier, General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, was elected president in 1833. But in just one year, his strong support for a federal republic quickly fades, and Santa Anna removes the Constitution of 1824, in favor of a centralized system of rule. This act essentially strips all Mexican states of their state governments. For many it is the final insult.

(Historian): "And so that's what really sparks the revolution. But you really do have an ideological issue that's being fought over, and that's what is the government of Mexico going to be? Is it going to be a centralized government where control is held very tightly in Mexico City? Or is it going to be the federal system where you have states, and each state has its own government and its own governor."

The Texas Revolution would go through several different phases over the next few months.



(Historian): *“In the initial phase you have the Tejano population, and the American population that has come in, and essentially what they want are three things. They want to remove Santa Anna from power, they want to restore the Constitution of 1824, and they want separate statehood. Now as the revolution progresses, its’ goal is going to change. And that goal will be not for separate statehood within the Mexican Federation, but for independence – total independence – from Mexico.”*

You will find Stop #22 on the wall to your right.

Stop 22 San Antonio de Bexar in the Texas Revolution

While most people are aware of the Battle of the Alamo, many don’t know that two battles were fought in San Antonio during the Texas Revolution. Unlike the way it is often presented in movies, the Alamo was not an abandoned mission in the middle of nowhere. The Alamo had been serving as a military barracks for years and right across the river was the town of San Antonio de Béxar—a center of social, political, and economic activity on the Texas frontier. In addition, the town was located on an important crossroads that controlled the roads radiating outward from it. It was an important place worth fighting over.

In the first battle for San Antonio, troops loyal to the centralist government occupied the town and the Alamo. The rebels mounted a siege of the town that lasted from late October until early December. On the morning of December 5, the Texans entered the town, and over the next several days, fought their way towards the town’s main plaza. In the hours between December 9-10, negotiations took place that allowed the rebels to take control of the town and Mexican General, Martín Perfecto de Cos to withdraw from Texas with his army intact.

The first battle for San Antonio leads to the second more famous Battle of the Alamo. General Antonio López de Santa Anna marches at the head of a column to San Antonio to recapture the town and reestablish his government’s control of the region. Thus, if there hadn’t first been a Battle of Béxar there may not have been a Battle of the Alamo.

Stop 23 Touched by Heroes: Travis Book

Alamo History Interpreter, John Richardson, shares the story of his favorite piece of Alamo history.

(Actor) *“My favorite artifact? It’s a book of poetry that belonged to William Barrett Travis. And I’ll explain why. In the curatorial process, part of that process is to try to narrow the leap of faith that it takes to believe that that object or item came from that person or came from someplace. In the case of this book of poetry, it’s an 18th century anthology of poetry, prose, and plays, Travis’s name is in the book, his grandfather’s name is in the book, the school he attended is in the book, it’s his book. I know that Travis held that book in his hand.*

We can talk about whether that’s the actual ring, or that’s a lock of Crockett’s hair, or that’s the rifle that Crockett sold on the way down to Texas. And you know, we have ways to get close to



that, but ultimately, again, there's a little leap of faith you have to take. But that book of poetry, there's no leap, I call it a slam dunk. He held that book in his hand and he read the thing.

And when you have items like a book of poetry, a ring, or a rifle, or a lock of hair, that puts a face to a name and that person becomes alive through that artifact. We're talking about real people, not just names on a wall. I look at that book in a case called Touched by Heroes, and I know that book was touched by a hero."

Stop 24 Touched by Heroes: Travis Ring

In the Sacristy of the church, Sherri Driscoll, Museum Educator here at the Alamo, touched briefly on the story of the little girl who survived the events of March 6, 1836. Here is the rest of the story.

(Historian): "My favorite artifact is in fact, the Travis ring. This ring, which was given to this little 19-month old little girl - Angelina Dickinson - was actually purchased by William Barrett Travis for a girlfriend. And when he realized that he was not going to walk away from the Alamo, he took that ring off his finger and put it on a piece of leather and put it around the neck of this little girl. She and her mother left the Alamo with the ring. That little girl went to grow up, got married about 15-years old, and passed the ring on to her husband as a token of her love. He promptly went off to fight in the Civil War. Well, while he is part of the Confederate Army, he passes the ring on to his commander. The commander's family would pass that ring, with the story intact, down through the generations, and eventually donate it back to the Alamo, So this is something that is as small and simple as a ring, starting at the Alamo, being there at the time of the battle, making a very long journey, and then coming back to us so that people can see it today."

You will find Stop #25 in the case directly behind you.

Stop 25 Touched by Heroes: Crockett Rifle

Here in the first weapons display case you'll find one of Curator Dr. Bruce Winders' favorite items in the Alamo collection.

(Historian): "My favorite artifact is an antique long rifle that we have that's in the Long Barrack in one of the rifle cases, and in 1955, it was given by citizens in Philadelphia to Fess Parker who was playing Crockett for the Disney series at that time. And they gave it to him to replicate a festivity or a celebration in which, in the 1830's, people in Philadelphia gave the real Crockett a rifle in recognition of how much they admired him. So here what you have in this one artifact, is you have an actual authentic long rifle from the time of the Alamo, but then you also have that pop culture connection where you have Fess Parker and Disney. And we had so many people who said, 'I love Fess Parker. To me he is Davy Crockett.'

The ALAMO

And again, you can look at the series, and you can say well, it was kind of corny and it didn't really happen that way. But yet the introduction, whether it's John Wayne, whether it's Fess Parker, you know, however you get introduced to the Alamo that's a good thing. So, I like to point this rifle out because it is historic, but it also does tie in the pop culture connection with the Alamo."

Now turn back around for Stop #26, which is on the panel to the right of the display case.

Stop 26 Battle of the Alamo?

Antonio López de Santa Anna arrived in San Antonio de Béxar on the afternoon of February 23, 1836. He had with him approximately 1,500 soldiers. Another column would join him on March 3, bringing his numbers up to just over 2,500 men. General Santa Anna used the two weeks leading up to the March 6th attack to cut off the Alamo from outside help. This encirclement took time and explains why the trapped garrison was able to send messengers out in the early stages of the siege.

William B. Travis was the Alamo's commander during most of the thirteen-day-long siege. His co-commander, James Bowie, had become ill and had to be confined to his quarters. Travis' pleas for his countrymen's support were causing a stir throughout Texas, but help was slow in coming. One group of colonists, the Gonzales Ranging Company, is known to have made it through Santa Anna's siege lines to the Alamo. A bronze plaque commemorating their arrival can be found on one of the stone monuments in Convento Courtyard.

But still the men of the Alamo faced odds of 10 to 1 when Santa Anna launched his dawn assault early on the morning of March 6th. A letter from the courageous Lt. Colonel William B. Travis spoke of the beliefs that lived in the hearts of all the men that died that day.

(Actor): "Take care of my little boy. If the country should be saved, I may make for him a splendid fortune; but if the country be lost and I should perish, he will have nothing but the proud recollection that he is the son of a man who died for his country."

Stop 27 What happened after the Alamo?

The Texan defeat at the Alamo was quickly followed by another disaster at Goliad. There, a force of nearly 400 American volunteers and Texans surrendered, only to be marched out and executed on Palm Sunday, March 27, 1836. This sad episode is known to most as the Goliad Massacre.

The twin defeats convinced many Texans that the war could only end as Travis had warned—Victory or Death! Throughout March and early April, volunteers and colonists



banded together under the command of General Sam Houston. On April 21, Houston's men attacked Santa Anna in his camp on the San Jacinto River near the modern-day city of Houston. Santa Anna's column was crushed. The next day, Texan scouts brought in prisoner they had found hidden along a creek bank—it turned out to be Santa Anna himself.

The Battle of San Jacinto was a lopsided engagement. The Texan's lost 9 killed and about 30 wounded out of 1000 men present. Santa Anna lost 630 killed and more than 700 captured, many of them wounded. The explanation for such Texan vengeance: the potent battle-cries of "Remember the Alamo!" "Remember Goliad!"

For the list of Alamo Defenders, look to your right for Stop #28.

Stop 28 Why We Remember the Alamo

Each year, nearly 3 million visitors from all over the world come to visit the Alamo. What Curator Dr. Bruce Winders finds remarkable is that everyone has a reason as to why we continue to remember the Alamo.

(Historian): "And what it is, is when you start to talk to people, they'll usually say, 'We have something like this in our history. We have our own Alamo.' And when you boil that down, the Alamo represents really a definite sense of values that cut across culture and nationality – self-sacrifice, bravery, devotion, honor. These are things that it doesn't matter who you are, these are traits that you can say, 'that's worth remembering.' And so it's convinced me that it may be something that happened out on the Texas frontier in 1836, but yet it represents really a universal story."

To many, the defense of the Alamo against overwhelming odds represents a heroic stand. Others remember the Alamo for the role it played in history. The battle was an important step in the United States' path to becoming a world power. Texas independence, Texas statehood, and the subsequent Mexican War in 1846, added millions of acres of land to the United States, including California, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada and Utah.

Still others remember the Alamo because the story, first heard in childhood, has become an ingrained part of their lives. The account has been preserved in television and motion picture for almost 100 years. And although not always accurate, these works have left an indelible mark on people all over the world.

Texans, however, remember the Alamo for the part it played in establishing its' independence from Mexico and in the creation of a unique Texan identity. But as Alamo History Interpreter John Richardson reminds us, ultimately, the reason is quite simple.



(Actor) "What we do at the Alamo, we talk about the political implications and the military aspects, but you know, if it wasn't for those 189 men, that's what it really boils down to is the men behind the event."

There were at least 189 men who defended the Alamo and lost their lives. Men like David Crockett, James Bowie, Gregorio Esparza, and Toribio Losoya. They were doctors, lawyers, and farmers. They were Texan, American, European, Tejano, Mexican, and Freedmen. As you leave here today, we hope that you will remember their struggles, their victories, and their stories. Thank you for spending some time with us today and please, always, "Remember the Alamo!"

We hope you enjoyed your tour of The Alamo. Before you leave, please place your audio player in the Drop Box located outside of this building or return it at the Welcome Center. We look forward to seeing you again soon!