

Battles of the Texas Revolution: 1835 Campaign

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Battle of Gonzales

Date: October 2, 1835

Texian Force: 150

Texian Commander: John Henry Moore

Centralist Force: 100

Centralist Commander: Francisco Castañeda

Texian Casualties: 1 wounded

Centralist Casualties: 2 killed

Analysis: Opening engagement of the Texas Revolution, hence the “Lexington of Texas.” The Texians actually boasted two artillery pieces: the six-pound “Come-and-Take-It” cannon and another that Castañeda described as an “*esmeril*”—a diminutive gun firing a ball that weighed about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a pound. The *esmeril* remains on display at the Gonzales Memorial Museum. While more a skirmish than a battle, the engagement was nonetheless important as the spark that set off the powder keg. Shots were fired; blood was shed; the dye was cast.

Battle of Gonzales: Location and Images



Capture of the Presidio La Bahía (Goliad)

Date: October 9, 1835

Texian Force: 125

Texian Commander: George Collinsworth

Centralist Force: 50

Centralist Commander: Juan López Sandoval

Texian Casualties: 1 wounded

Centralist Casualties: 1 killed, 3 wounded

Analysis: Centralist General Martín Perfecto de Cos stripped the garrison, leaving a skeleton force to defend the presidio. The small number was insufficient to defend the perimeter. Following an assault lasting about half an hour, the centralist garrison capitulated. Collinsworth paroled the captured centralists, most of whom retired to a point below the Rio Grande. Texian militiamen appropriated some \$10,000 worth of enemy supplies, including numerous cannon. Collinsworth transferred the artillery to General Stephen F. Austin's "Volunteer Army of the People of Texas" outside San Antonio de Béxar. With Goliad now under Texian control, Cos was unable to receive reinforcements and supplies from Copano Bay, the closest port to Béxar. Cut off from the coast, centralist relief forces now had to make their way along the desert roads that stretched northward from the Mexican interior.

Capture of Presidio La Bahía: Location & Images



The Siege of Béxar (San Antonio)

Date: October 12-December 11, 1835

Texian Force: 600

Texian Commanders: Stephen F. Austin, Edward Burleson

Centralist Force: 1,200

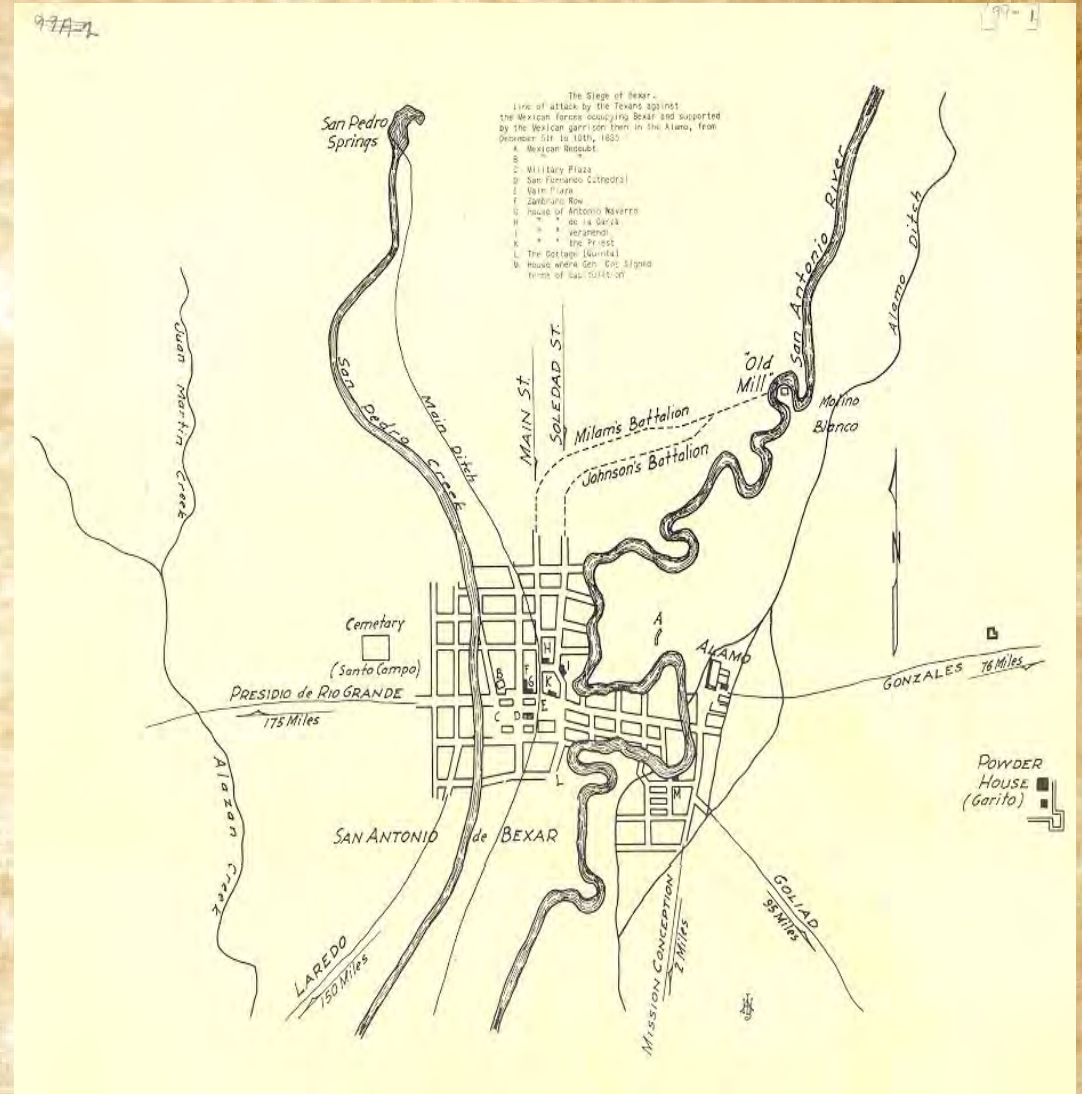
Centralist Commander: Martín Perfecto de Cos

Texian Casualties: 35 killed, wounded, & captured

Centralist Casualties: 150 killed, wounded, & captured

Analysis: From Camp Salado, five miles east of San Antonio, General Austin could make out the Mexican fortifications. He considered a frontal assault to be out of the question; a slow strangling siege seemed the only option. On October 26, Austin wrote to Goliad commander Philip Dimmitt expressing his intentions to “commence such operations on the town as to shut in the force now there so that it will be obliged to surrender for want of provisions.” During the blockade, federalist units under Juan Seguín and Plácido Benavides first offered their services to Austin. Concepción and the Grass Fight, discussed here separately, occurred as part of the Siege of Béxar. The siege culminated in the Storming of Béxar.

Siege of Béxar: Location & Images



Battle of Concepción

Date:	October 28, 1835
Texian Force:	90 militia infantry
Texian Commanders:	James Bowie & James Walker Fannin, Jr.
Centralist Force:	275 infantry and cavalry
Centralist Commander:	Domingo de Ugartechea
Texian Casualties:	1 killed
Centralist Casualties:	14 killed, 39 wounded (some of whom died later)
Analysis:	<p>On October 27, General Stephen F. Austin dispatched a reconnaissance from his headquarters at Mission Espada. The ninety-man unit led by James Bowie and James W. Fannin, Jr. marched up the San Antonio River until they located a horseshoe bend in the stream near the Mission Concepción. It seemed the perfect spot. Not only was the site protected by the river on three sides, it was also closer to San Antonio. Bowie sent word to Austin that he and his men were pitching camp for the night and that the main Texian army should rendezvous with them the following morning. In the interim, however, General Cos had learned the location of Bowie's isolated detachment and made plans to crush it early the next morning before rebel reinforcements could arrive. Before dawn on October 28, Cos dispatched Colonel Domingo de Ugartechea with 275 men to attack the vanguard. Instead, the rebels took up a strong defensive position under the river bank and repelled Ugartechea's assault; the centralists suffered many casualties before abandoning the field. As the centralists forces were retiring, Bowie led a headlong charge and captured one of their artillery pieces. Austin arrived after the engagement and ordered an assault on the town. Bowie and Fannin, who had just witnessed the damage men in a strong defensive position could dispense, talked him out of the notion. The Texians suffered one man killed: Richard Andrews, the first Texian fatality of the war. Andrews County in West Texas honors his sacrifice.</p>

Battle of Concepción: Location & Images



Capture of Lipantitlán

Date: November 3, 1835
Texian Force: 60-70
Texian Commander: Ira Westover
Centralist Force: 21-27
Centralist Commander: Nicolás Rodríguez
Texian Casualties: 0
Centralist Casualties: 0

Analysis: Captain Nicolás Rodríguez, garrison commander at Fort Lipantitlán, received orders to harass Texian rebels at Presidio La Bahía. Rodríguez, with a force of some 80 men advanced toward Goliad, leaving behind between 21 and 27 soldiers and two artillery pieces to hold the fort. While Rodríguez drove northward, a Texian militia force under Ira Westover approached Fort Lipantitlán from the east. Arriving in San Patricio about thirty minutes after sundown on November 3, Westover positioned two small groups of men to guard the Nueces River crossings, some seventy yards from the fort. Irish colonist James O'Riley offered to persuade the Mexican garrison to surrender. He convinced the skeleton force inside the earthen fort that the rebels greatly outnumbered them. By 11 pm the centralist soldiers surrendered; Westover immediately paroled them. The rebels took possession two 4-pound cannon, 18 muskets, and 3-to-4 pounds of enemy gunpowder. On November 4, to deny the centralists future use of the fort, the Texian militiamen burned the *jacales* adjacent to the post and demolished the embankments.

Capture of Lipantitlán: Location & Images



Battle of Nueces Crossing

Date: November 4, 1835

Texian Force: 60-70

Texian Commander: Ira Westover

Centralist Force: 90

Centralist Commander: Nicolás Rodríguez

Texian Casualties: 1 wounded

Centralist Casualties: 2-5 killed, 14-17 wounded

Analysis: A spy informed Rodríguez that the rebels had captured his fort. He forced marched his men back toward Lipantitlán, arriving about 4 pm. By the time the centralist force appeared, only half of Westover's militiamen had crossed to the east bank of the Nueces River. As Rodríguez attacked, the Texans took cover in a grove of trees. These trees prevented the centralist cavalry from approaching. Rodríguez's men dismounted and attempted to envelope the rebel position. They could make no headway because the rebel rifles boasted a longer range than the centralists' Brown Bess muskets. After a thirty-minute firefight, the centralists abandoned the field. With the capture of Fort Lipantitlán and the victory at Nueces Crossing, the Texian rebels now controlled both the eastern and southern approaches to Béxar. Holed up in San Antonio, General Cos became even more isolated than he had been.

Battle of Nueces Crossing: Location & Images



The Grass Fight

Date: November 26, 1836

Texian Force: 140 mixed cavalry & infantry

Texian Commander: James Bowie & William Jack

Centralist Force: 100-150 mixed infantry & cavalry; 1 cannon

Centralist Commander: Unknown

Texian Casualties: 4 wounded, 1 deserted

Centralist Casualties: 3 killed, 14 wounded

Analysis: On November 26, 1835, Texian scout Erastus “Deaf” Smith observed a centralist mule train approaching Béxar. General Edward Burleson, who had replaced Austin as commander of the Army of the People, ordered troops under James Bowie to prevent the enemy detachment from entering the town. A firefight ensued in the vicinity of Alazán Creek west of town. At length, the centralists surrendered the field and fell back into the town, abandoning the mules. Expecting a cascade of silver coins, the Texans ripped open the packs only to find them stuffed with grass—fodder for the starving horses stabled inside the town. With much wry and self-deprecating humor, Texans thereafter recalled the skirmish as the “Grass Fight.”

The Grass Fight: Location & Images



"Grass Fight":

November 26, 1835



- A Texas soldier spotted some Mexican soldiers just outside of San Antonio with a large number of mules. It was said that the mules carried a lot of silver to pay Mexican soldiers.
- The Texans led by Jim Bowie attacked the Mexicans and after a fierce battle the Mexicans fled to S.A. leaving the mules behind.
- The Texans captured the mules only to find out they were only carrying hay which was to be food for the Mexican troops horses. Thus the name "Grass fight".

The Storming of Béxar

Date:	December 5-10, 1835
Texian Force:	300 volunteer assault troops; joined by 100 reinforcements on December 8.
Texian Commanders:	Colonel Ben Milam and Colonel Francis Johnson
Centralist Force:	1,200
Centralist Commander:	Martín Perfecto de Cos
Texian Casualties:	35 killed and wounded
Centralist Casualties:	150 killed and wounded.
Analysis:	On December 5, employing the diversion of an artillery barrage conducted by James C. Neill, Texian units under Ben Milan and Francis “Frank” Johnson penetrated centralist defenses. That day Texian volunteers captured two houses in the Military Plaza. The Texians fortified the houses and dug in during the night. On December 6, bitter house-to house fighting continued. The superior range and accuracy of the Texian long rifles and the superior quality of their gun powder proved decisive. On December 7, Milam's force pushed the centralists back and captured more buildings but suffered a severe loss when a centralist sniper killed Ben Milam. Colonel Johnson then took command of both assault units and drove the centralists further back into the town. The Texians finally forced Cos and his men entirely out of the town and the centralists withdrew into the Alamo. Texians pounded the fortified mission with their artillery, while Cos entrenched his position. Six hundred reinforcements under Colonel Domingo Ugartechea subsequently arrived, but most of them were forced conscripts who were disobedient and unwilling to fight. Cos hoisted the white flag and requested surrender terms. General Burleson agreed to a cease-fire and began negotiations with Cos. Following much haggling, the opposing forces agreed on terms around 2 a.m. on December 10. Cos agreed to withdraw to a point south of the Rio Grande and he and his men swore an oath to never again take up arms against the Constitution of 1824.

Storming of Bexar: Location & Images





Battles of the Texas Revolution: 1836 Campaign

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Siege of the Alamo

Date: February 23-March 5, 1836

Texian Force: 189-257

Texian Commanders: James Bowie & William B. Travis

Centralist Force: 3,100; troops arrived throughout the siege.

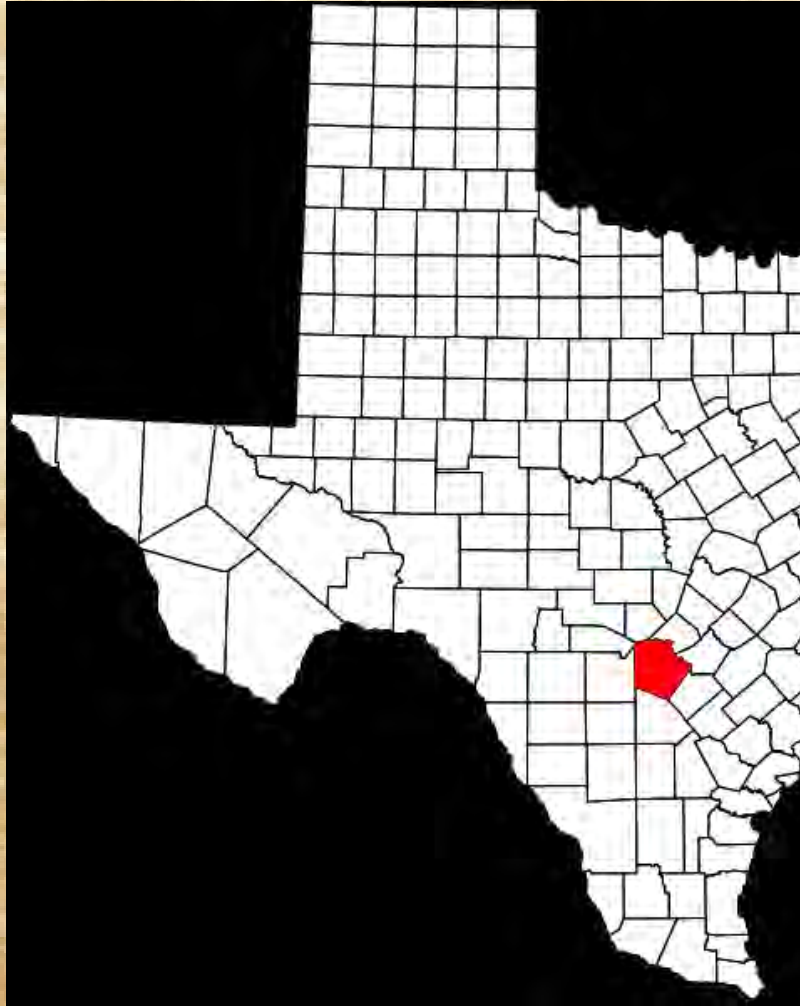
Centralist Commander: Antonio López de Santa Anna

Texian Casualties: None

Centralist Casualties: 6 killed, 14 wounded

Analysis: When Santa Anna's forces arrived on the outskirts of San Antonio, the rebel garrison abandoned the town and took refuge inside the walls of the Alamo. On February 23, Santa Anna called on the Texians to surrender; Travis replied with a cannon shot. On February 24, Travis penned his famous letter to "the people of Texas and all American in the world." That same day, Bowie collapsed from illness, leaving Travis in sole command. Throughout the siege, Travis sent out couriers requesting reinforcements but the only ones who responded were the thirty-two men of the Gonzales Ranging Company led by Lieutenant George C. Kimble and Travis's courier to Gonzales, Albert Martin. Throughout the twelve-day investment, Santa Anna maintained an almost constant artillery bombardment of the compound. On March 4, Santa Anna ordered an assault that was to take place in the early morning hours of March 6.

Siege of the Alamo: Location & Images



Battle of San Patricio

Date: February 27, 1836

Texian Force: 43

Texian Commander: Francis W. Johnson

Centralist Force: 200

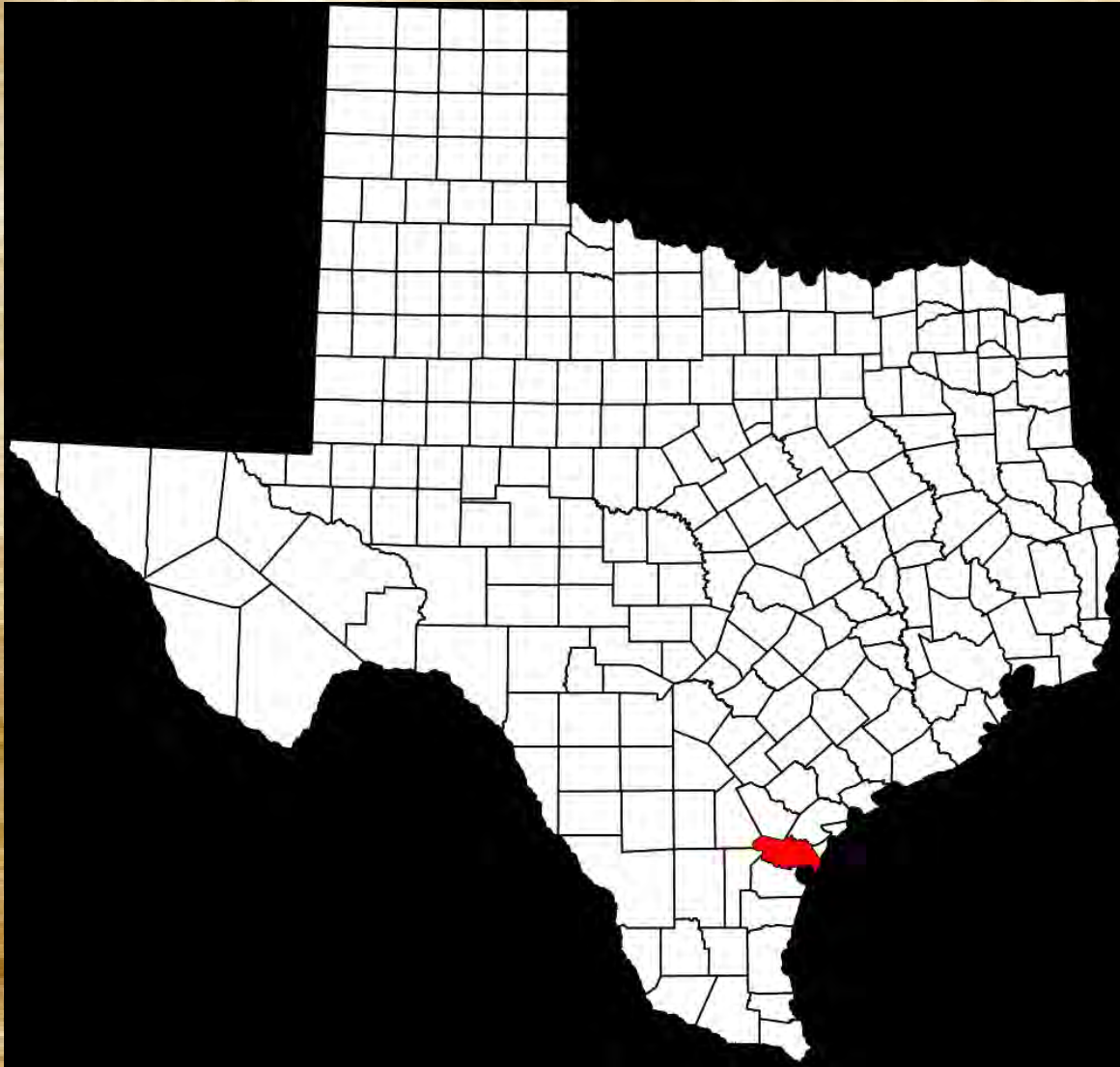
Centralist Commander: José de Urrea

Texian Casualties: 16 killed, 21 captured

Centralist Casualties: 1 killed, 4 wounded

Analysis: The battle marked the beginning of Urrea's Goliad Campaign, the centralist offensive to reclaim the Texas Gulf Coast. It took place in and around the town of San Patricio. Under the cover of darkness and a torrential downpour, Urrea achieved total surprise. Discovering themselves surrounded by centralists troops, one group of Texians surrendered. When the centralists called on another party of Texians to yield, they instead opened fire, killing a centralist officer and wounding two enlisted men. Aiming to avoid further casualties, the centralist attempted to set the house shielding the recalcitrant Texians on fire. Facing a fiery death, the ensconced Texians called that they were laying down their arms. As they left the house, the waiting centralists killed them. Colonel Johnson had been working late and thus managed to escape. The fight lasted about fifteen minutes.

Battle of San Patricio: Location & Images



Ambush at Aqua Dulce

Date: March 2, 1836

Texian Force: 53

Texian Commander: James Grant

Centralist Force: 150

Centralist Commander: José de Urrea

Texian Casualties: 12-15 killed, 6 captured

Centralist Casualties: 1 killed, unknown wounded

Analysis: A centralist force under Urrea ambushed Dr. Grant and his mixed unit of Texians and federalist Tejanos. Six of the volunteers escaped, five of whom joined James W. Fannin, at Goliad and subsequently died in the Goliad Massacre on March 27. The centralists captured six others and transported them to Matamoros as prisoners; all others, including Grant, died during the engagement.

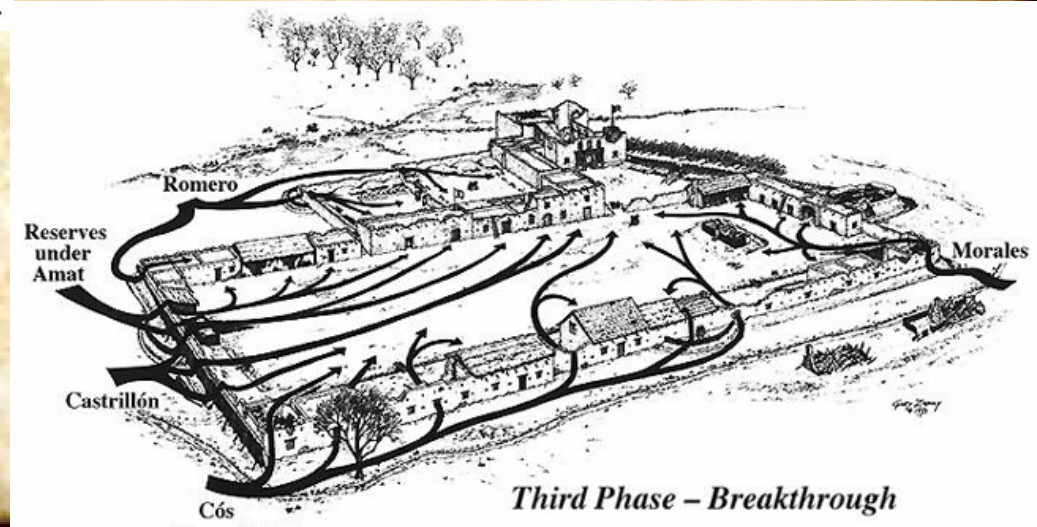
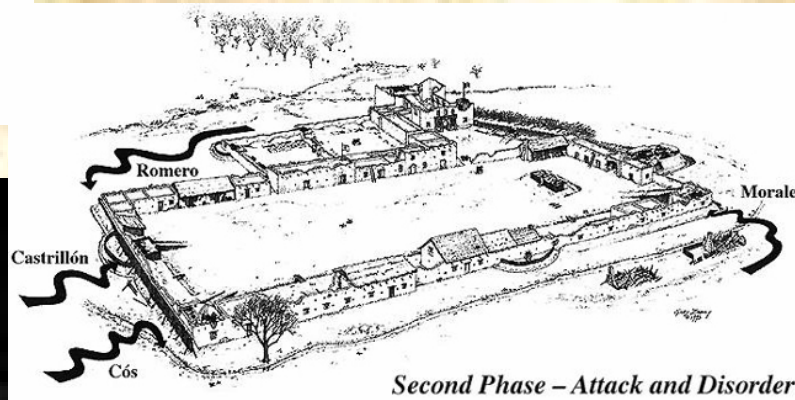
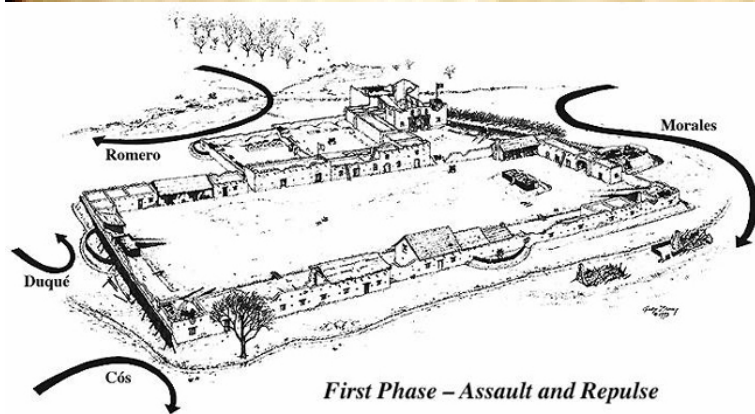
Ambush at Aqua Dulce: Location & Images



Alamo Assault

Date:	March 6, 1836
Texian Force:	189-257
Texian Commander:	William B. Travis
Mexican Force:	1,800 assault troops
Mexican Commander:	Antonio López de Santa Anna
Texian Casualties:	189-257 killed
Mexican Casualties:	70-80 killed; 250 wounded (many of whom later died)
Analysis:	<p>At 5:30 a.m. Santa Anna launched his assault on the Alamo. At that hour most of the fort's defenders were asleep. "His Excellency" hoped his soldiers might be up and over the walls before the groggy garrison could rally but the nervous shouts of the attackers alerted the rebels who ran to their posts. Once there, however, the Texians could see almost nothing in the pre-dawn gloom. Travis had planned to keep attackers at bay with his artillery but the Mexican assault troops quickly advanced to a position "under the guns." The darkness worked to the Mexicans' advantage; those the defenders could not see, they could not shoot. Travis was among the first of the rebels to fall, shot through the head. Columns drove against all four walls, spreading thin defenders who were too few already. The Mexicans poured up and over the north wall. Then the southwest corner fell. Once the Mexicans breached outer perimeter, they quickly swept across the main courtyard. Surviving defenders fell back into the long barracks to make their final stand. It was there in dark and smoky rooms that the fiercest fighting took place. Jim Bowie, too weak to rise from his sick bed, died on the points of Mexican bayonets. Some seventy-five defenders jumped over the walls and tried to escape across the open prairie. Yet, Santa Anna had anticipated such a breakout and placed mounted lancers to cut escapees off. All died, skewered on those lethal lances. David Crockett and his men fell back into the church. Following the battle, General Manuel Castrillón presented six or seven prisoners to Santa Anna who immediately ordered their deaths. While Castrillón begged for their lives, staff officers, seeking to curry favor with their commanding general, fell on these unarmed men with their swords and cut them to pieces. José Enrique de la Peña and others who witnessed this outrage, minced no words when they identified one of the murdered prisoners as Davis Crockett. By the time the sun rose over the hills behind the church, every member of the garrison lay dead. The Alamo had fallen.</p>

Alamo Assault: Location & Images



Battle of Refugio

Date: March 12-15, 1836

Texian Force: 148

Texian Commanders: Amon King, William Ward

Mexican Force: 1,500

Mexican Commander: José de Urrea

Texian Casualties: 16 killed, 15 executed, 107 captured

Mexican Casualties: Est. 150 killed, 50 wounded

Analysis: Fannin dispatched King's unit to Refugio to evacuate Texian settlers. King, however, wasted time by harrying local Tejanos. Urrea's advancing forces caught King in Refugio and fighting ensued. When King's unit did not return, Fannin sent a portion Ward's Georgia Battalion to determine the reason. Ward reinforced King, but by that time Urrea had brought up his full force and greatly outnumbered the rebels. King surrendered; Ward's people attempted an escape. On March 16, Urrea ordered King and fourteen others executed for their offenses against Tejano civilians. Ward's men wandered across the prairie for days, but Tejano rancheros in service to the centralists subsequently located and captured them.

Battle of Refugio: Location & Images



Battle of Coleto Creek

Date: March 19-20, 1836

Texian Force: Est. 300

Texian Commanders: James W. Fannin, Jr.

Mexican Force: On the 19th: 340; on the 20th: 700-1000

Mexican Commander: José de Urrea

Texian Casualties: Est. 10 killed; 60 wounded

Mexican Casualties: Est. 100-200 killed, wounded, and missing

Analysis: Upon learning of the fall of the Alamo, Sam Houston wrote Fannin from Gonzales, ordering him to withdraw from Goliad with all possible speed. Instead, Fannin sent King and Ward to Refugio and waited for them to return. They never did. The Goliad garrison finally abandoned the Presidio La Bahia on the morning of March 19, bound for Victoria. Fannin even stopped at mid-day to rest. Some of his officers inquired why he would halt on an open plain without natural cover. Fannin replied that the Mexicans would never attack a unit as large as his. Yet soon afterwards, Urrea's cavalry appeared in hot pursuit. Fannin ordered his men to head for a slight rise, but an ammunition wagon broke down. The rebels had no choice than to form a square formation around the stricken wagon and stand their ground. Urrea's cavalry kept the rebels pinned in place while his infantry moved forward to engage. The Texians fought bravely throughout the afternoon and into the evening. That night they dug entrenchments and suffered from thirst. Dawn on the 20th revealed that Urrea had received reinforcement and a howitzer during the night. Now armed with the howitzer, Mexican artillery men could stand beyond rifle range and blast the rebel square to pieces. If the Texians broke their formation and ran for cover, Urrea's lancers stood poised to ride them down. Realizing the hopelessness of his situation, Fannin surrendered.



Goliad Massacre

Date: March 27, 1836

Texian Force: Est. 425-445

Texian Commanders: James W. Fannin, Jr.

Mexican Force: unknown

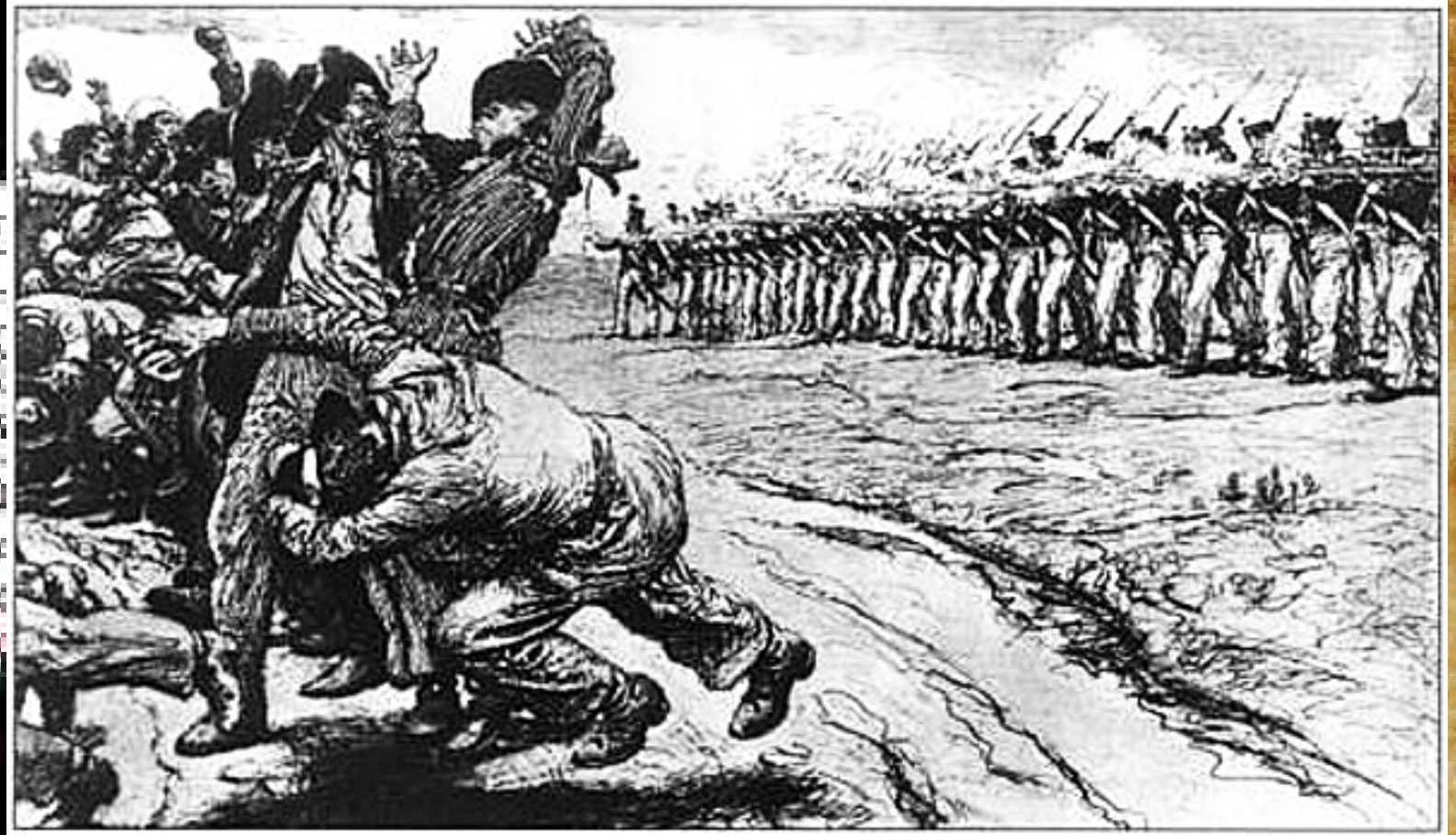
Mexican Commander: José Nicolás de la Portilla

Texian Casualties: Est. 342

Mexican Casualties: 0

Analysis: While not a battle, the Goliad Massacre was the consequence of the Texian defeat at Coleto Creek. Portilla found reasons to spare numerous Texans who possessed skills—physicians, carpenters, and the like—the Mexican army needed. Some twenty-eight prisoners escaped the massacre and made their way back to the Texian colonies; some fought at San Jacinto.

Goliad Massacre: Location & Images



Battle of San Jacinto

Date: April 20-21

Texian Force: 910

Texian Commander: Sam Houston

Mexican Force: 1,360

Mexican Commander: Antonio López de Santa Anna

Texian Casualties: 11 killed or fatally wounded; 30 wounded

Mexican Casualties: 650 killed; 208 wounded; 300 captured

Analysis: At 4:30 p.m. the Twin Sisters opened fire, launching the engagement. The Texans unleashed a single volley, broke ranks, and swarmed over the Mexican breastworks to engage in hand-to-hand combat. Within eighteen minutes, Mexican soldiers abandoned their campsite and fled for their lives, but the slaughter lasted for hours. Many Mexican soldiers retreated through the marsh to Peggy Lake. Texian riflemen stationed themselves on the banks and shot at anything that moved. Many Texian officers, including Houston and Rusk, attempted to stop the mayhem, but they were unable to gain control of the men. Texans continued to shout "Remember the Alamo! Remember Goliad!" while frightened Mexican infantry yelled "Me no Alamo!" and begged for mercy to no avail. Santa Anna escaped the battlefield, but Texian search parties captured him the following day.

Battle of San Jacinto: Location & Images

