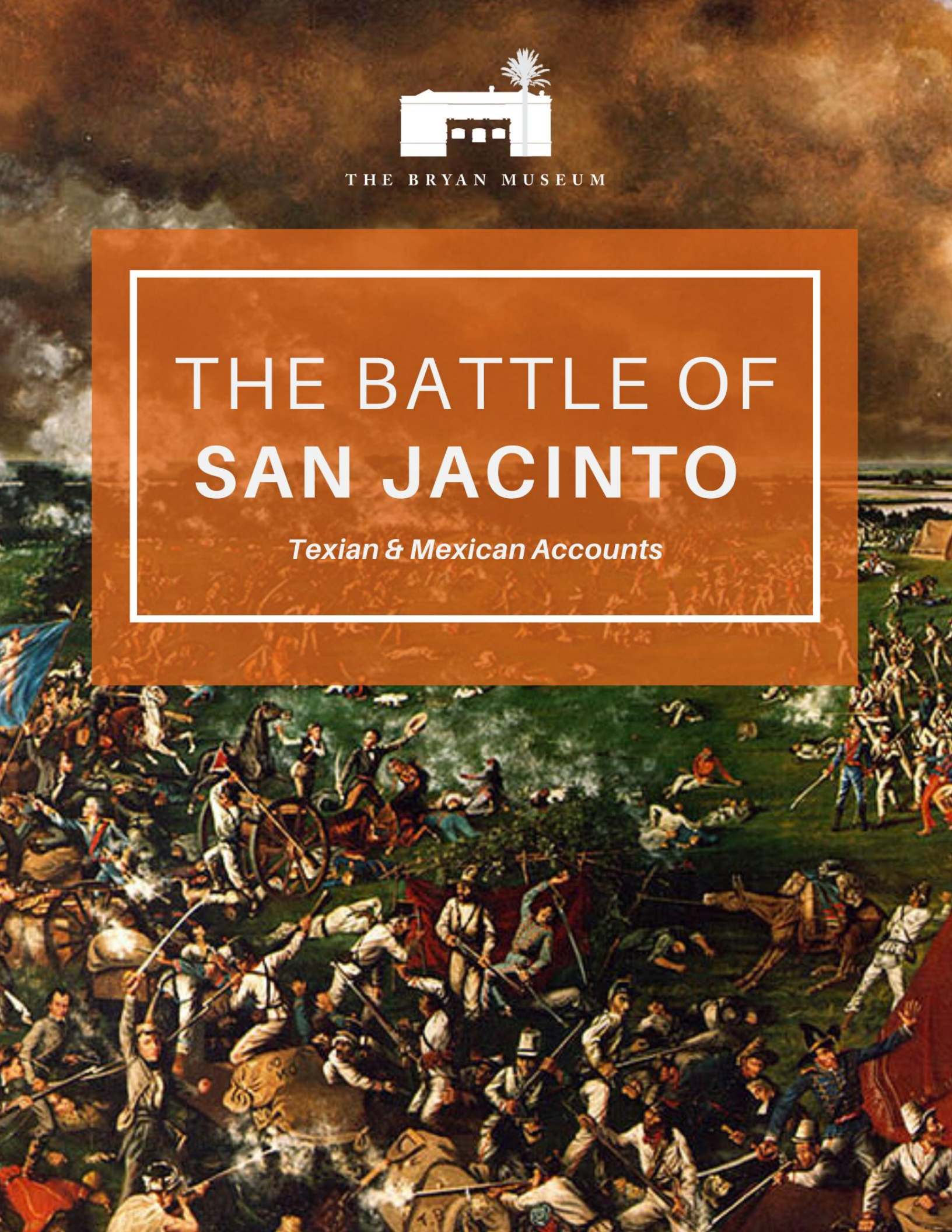




THE BRYAN MUSEUM

THE BATTLE OF SAN JACINTO

Texian & Mexican Accounts



Dear Friend:

This year marks the 184th anniversary of the Battle of San Jacinto - one of the most decisive battles in world history. How did a small band of ill-equipped Texians under the leadership of General Sam Houston defeat Santa Anna's army?

On the afternoon of April 21, 1836 at 3:30 pm in the afternoon, the Texians sprang into action, catching the Mexicans by surprise. With infantry, cavalry, and the Twin Sisters cannons, the Texians bore down on the enemy with the battle cry of "Remember the Alamo! Remember Goliad!" According to Houston's official report, 630 Mexicans were killed and 730 taken prisoner. While Houston's ankle was shattered by a musket ball, only nine Texans were killed.

The inscription on the base of the San Jacinto Monument reads:

"Measured by its results, San Jacinto was one of the decisive battles of the world. The freedom of Texas from Mexico won here led to annexation and to the Mexican War resulting in the acquisition by the United States of the states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, California, Utah, and parts of Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas, and Oklahoma. Almost one-third of the present area of the American nation, nearly a million square miles of territory, changed sovereignty."

Texas has the greatest history of any state in the Union and is living proof that individual exceptionalism was part of our past – and still part of our present. The history of Texas remains a vibrant force for inspiration and accomplishment for ourselves, our children, and their children.

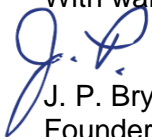
I am a sixth generation Texan. My great-great-grandmother was Emily Austin Bryan Perry. She was the sister of Stephen F. Austin, who in 1825 brought 300 families from the United States to Texas, which at that time was part of Mexico. But, not everyone is lucky enough to be born in Texas – even those Texas stalwarts, Stephen F. Austin and Sam Houston were not from Texas. Houston responded best to this criticism when he said, "I have stood in my own blood in service to the cause of Texas freedom. I am Texan not by chance but by choice. I expect many of you feel the same way.

Over the last 60 years, I have dedicated myself to preserving the story of Texas by collecting historic maps and letters, rare books, firearms, saddles and spurs, that now number close to 70,000 objects – you might say my habit of collecting is an obsession, but the obsession is all about Texas, a history rich in adventure and inspiration.

Early in life, my grandmother told me to serve those things that serve your interest and not your self-interest. I have tried to seek balance in my life between building successful business enterprises and using my time and resources for historical preservation and restoration. In 2015, I opened The Bryan Museum at 1315 21st St, in the old Galveston Orphans Home. I wanted to share my collection and the incredible story of Texas with others. The Museum has exhibits on colonial Spanish Texas, Mexican Texas, the Texas Revolution, the Republic, and Statehood. A large diorama depicts the Battle of San Jacinto and in a case next to it is the sword, of soldier Joel Robison, that was used to capture Santa Anna after the battle.

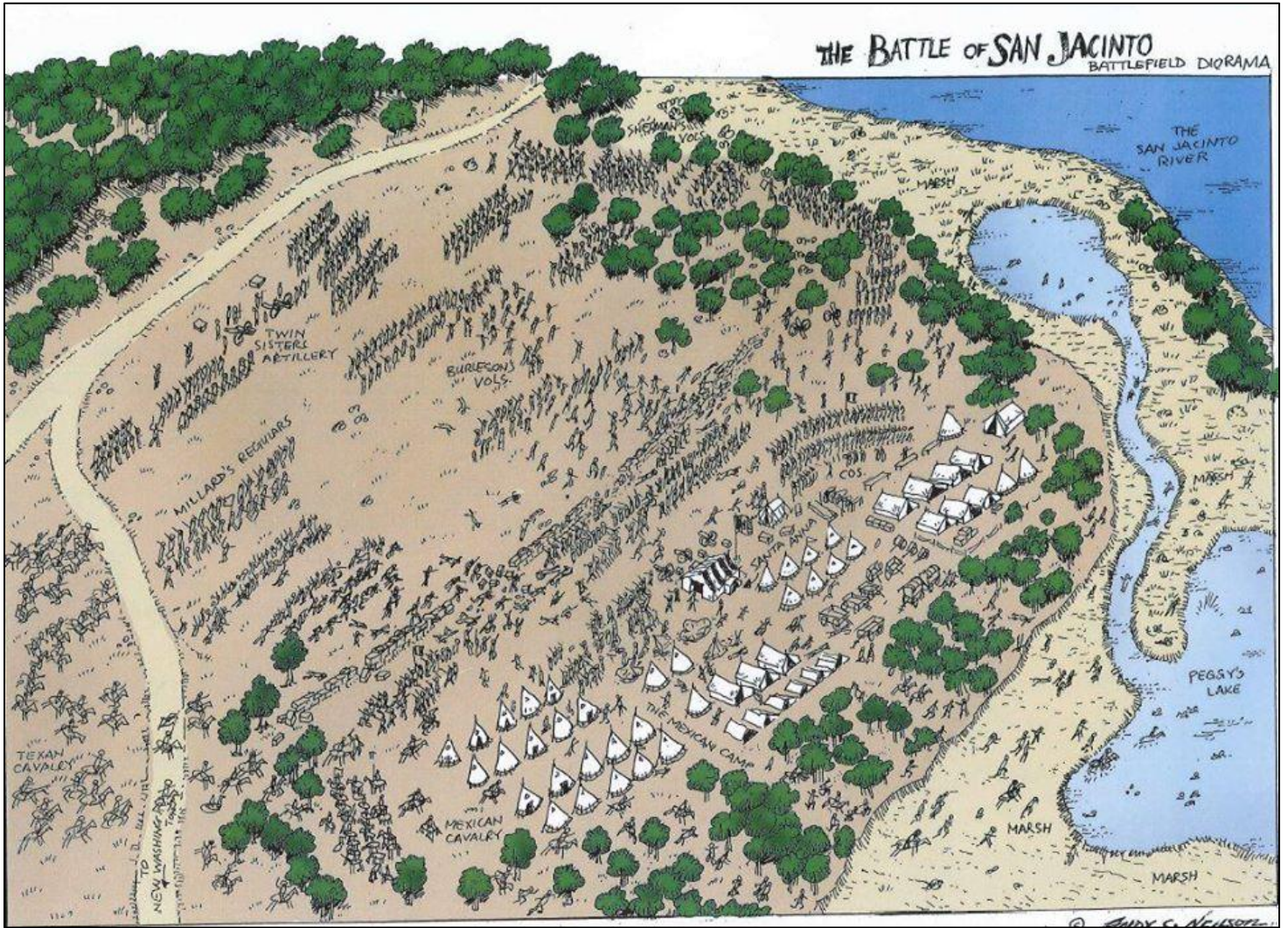
I am proud to say that The Bryan Museum has become a jewel in the crown of Galveston, once known as the Pearl of the Gulf. Galveston is where the story of the West began, with the first Europeans including Spanish explorer Cabeza de Vaca, who shipwrecked on the island in 1528, and the stream of other immigrants who came later to begin their dreams of a new life. Too often, people repeat the expression, "Live and learn." I like to think that history can be our guide to "learn and live." I hope you enjoy your free e-book about the Battle of San Jacinto and remember the proud history of our state!

With warm regards,



J. P. Bryan,
Founder, The Bryan Museum





San Jacinto battlefield design for The Bryan Museum diorama



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CHAPTER 1 **TEXIAN ACCOUNT**

April 19, 1836:

After the long eastward retreat from the Mexican Army, known as the “Runaway Scrape,” the Texian Army, under the leadership of General Sam Houston, turned south and crossed the bayous near Vince’s Bridge on April 19, 1836. Houston ordered camp to be made along the southern banks of Buffalo Bayou, placing the bayou at their rear, with the banks of the San Jacinto River at the Texian left flank. They camped in a grove of live oak trees, obscuring the army from view. There the Texians readied themselves for battle and waited for the Mexican army to arrive.

April 20, 1836:

General Santa Anna’s army arrived on April 20, 1836, and Col. Juan Almonte arrived later that day, after burning the town of New Washington. The Mexican army set up camp across an open field from the Texian army, with their backs to the marshes along Peggy’s Lake and with the marshes and trees along the shore of Galveston Bay to their right. From this cramped position, the Mexican army could not see the Texian army concealed within a grove of trees. The Mexican cannon was moved close to the Texian camp and opened fire within a mott of live oak trees, accompanied by Mexican infantry. The Texians returned fire, driving back the infantry, but the Mexican cannon remained in position and fired into the Texian camp throughout the afternoon of April 21.

Col. Sidney Sherman wished to take the fight to the Mexican army and capture their cannon. General Houston did not support Sherman’s desire, although Houston allowed him to ride out with mounted riflemen (not, however, the cavalry). The Texians charged at the cannon, which had already been removed toward the Mexican breastwork. The Mexican cavalry responded, defending the cannon, and staving off any hope of Texian success. This mini battle achieved nothing, although it did reveal the courage of Mirabeau Lamar, who was promoted to colonel and placed in charge of the cavalry before the big battle began the next day.

April 21, 1836:

On the morning of April 21, 1836, Mexican General Cos arrived on the battlefield with reinforcements for Santa Anna’s army. After these additional troops arrived, General Houston ordered Vince’s Bridge over Buffalo Bayou to be destroyed. Erastus “Deaf” Smith and a group



of soldiers burned the bridge, ensuring that no further reinforcements would arrive on the battlefield.



*Miniature Portrait of Sam Houston in Uniform,
from collection of The Bryan Museum*

While the Texian troops ate their mid-day meal, Houston and his commanders held a meeting to decide if they should initiate a surprise attack on the Mexican encampment. The majority of Houston's commanders voted against attacking the Mexican forces, with only two men in favor. Houston adjourned the war council. Although some historians attribute the sudden shift in action to Houston moving from campfire to campfire, encouraging the soldiers to fight, it is not entirely clear who ordered the Texian troops to the ready. Regardless, at 3:30 pm the troops paraded for battle.

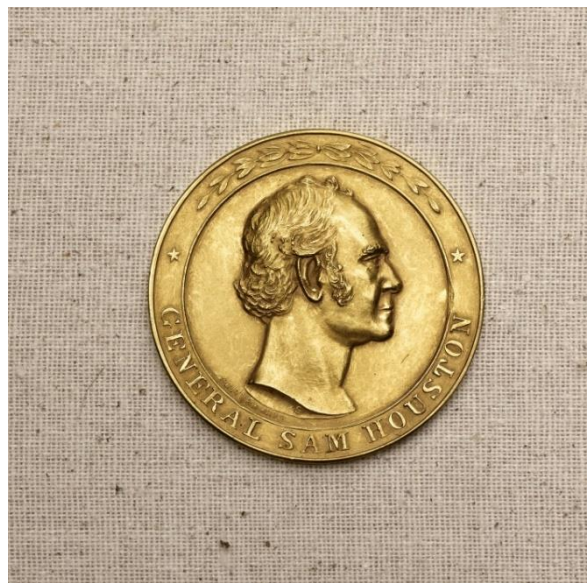
By 4:00pm, the Texian army was fanned out in four main divisions with a central artillery corps:

- On the far-left flank, next to the tree line, Col. Sidney Sherman's Second Regiment, ten companies with 330 men, along with the two-dozen *Tejano* troops under Col. Juan Seguín
- To the right of Sherman, Col. Edward Burleson's Volunteers, eight companies comprised of 386 men
- In the center of the field, Col. George Hockley's artillery, the "Twin Sisters"
- To the right of the cannons, Lt. Col. Henry Millard's 92 regular soldiers
- On the far-right flank, the 62 Texian cavalymen commanded by newly promoted Col. Mirabeau Lamar.



General Houston took the center of the field, mounted on his dapple-gray horse, Saracen. Col. Thomas J. Rusk marched with Sherman's troops and would bring word to Houston when they had initiated battle with the Mexican camp. The army moved forward, concealed from view by a slight depression and a rise in the terrain of the battlefield.

Sherman's soldiers struck first blood from the Mexican army, catching General Cos' troops asleep or eating in their encampment. Sherman's Second Regiment quickly overran those troops, who retreated with many of Col. Juan Almonte's soldiers into the trees and marshes to their rear, along Peggy's Lake. Sherman's troops broke the right flank of the Mexican camp, creating disorder. At the same time, Lamar's cavalry advanced unnoticed in a thicket of trees along the Texian right flank. They initiated battle with the Mexican cavalry, camped on the left side of the Mexican breastwork. Down the center of the nearly mile-long battlefield ran soldiers under the command of Col. Bureson and Col. Millard, to either side of the advancing Twin Sisters. They struck an early mark, hitting in the vicinity of the Mexican cannon, killing and scattering the artillery corps. After each round, the Twin Sisters were hauled forward, advancing toward the Mexican breastwork.



General Sam Houston Gold Medal Presented to Alphonso Steele (Last Living Veteran of San Jacinto), from collection of The Bryan Museum



The heaviest Texian casualties occurred directly in front of the Mexican breastwork, especially in front of the cannon. Mexican officers were able to re-man their cannon and organize two columns of advancing soldiers. These columns charged directly at the Twin Sisters. Men under the commands of Burleson and Millard mingled together as they approached the Mexican line. The Texians repulsed the Mexican charge, sending the columns of soldiers back into their camp in full retreat. The Texian troops then overtook the defensive barricade and captured the Mexican cannon. It was reported that the cannon had fired just three shots at the Texians. Mexican infantry concentrated their fire at a prominent target in the center of the battlefield: General Sam Houston. As Houston approached the barricade, his horse was shot out from under him, falling dead with five holes in its chest. Houston was left momentarily on foot, and he suffered a gunshot wound to his ankle at the same time his horse was shot. Col. Rusk rode to the center of the field and held the charge as Houston was given another mount, which he then rode into the Mexican camp.

By this point, men under the command of Sherman and Seguín had chased a portion of the Mexican army into the waters and marshes of Peggy's Lake, shooting, stabbing, and drowning the enemy combatants when they attempted to surrender. Finally, Seguín, Burleson, and Rusk calmed the Texian soldiers somewhat, accepting the surrender of several groups of soldiers and officers, including Col. Juan Almonte, the highest-ranking Mexican officer alive on the battlefield. General Santa Anna and General Cos escaped on horseback during the early part of the battle but would both be captured over the following days. General Castrillón bravely stood and fought at the Mexican breastwork, rallying his troops, before finally succumbing to multiple gunshot wounds. Houston's second horse was shot out from under him and he mounted a third horse, which fared better. Burleson, too, had been dismounted when his horse was killed under him during the charge. With the capture of the Mexican cannon and the mass surrenders along Peggy's Lake, the battle came to an end, after just 18 minutes. The slaughter at the rear of the camp and the bayonetting of injured Mexican soldiers along the breastwork continued for a time.

The Days After the Battle:

Immediately after the cessation of the battle, General Houston, his ankle gravely injured, returned to the Texian camp for medical attention and began to interview the captured Mexican officers. Col. Almonte served as a translator for the interviews, including for his commander, Santa Anna, who was captured along the banks of Buffalo Bayou the next day. General Cos and Santa Anna's personal secretary, Ramón Caro, were captured over the next two days and



were also brought back to the Texian camp as prisoners. Houston and Rusk prevented the Texian troops and several of the officers from executing the Mexican officers. Houston forced Santa Anna to issue an order to his second in command, General Vicente Filisola, at Fort Bend, directing a full retreat of the remaining Mexican army back across the Rio Grande. Burleson was placed in charge of a mission to trail the defeated Mexican army, and he commanded a group of several hundred mounted Texians, including Erastus "Deaf" Smith and Juan Seguín, to ensure compliance. In May 1836, Santa Anna signed the Treaties of Velasco, acknowledging his own defeat and the successful independence of Texas.



"The Sword that Captured Santa Anna," Joel Robison's U.S. Army Pattern 1832 Foot Artillery Short Sword, from collection of The Bryan Museum





CHAPTER 2 **TEXIAN PARTICIPANTS**

General Sam Houston (1793 – 1863)

Commander in Chief



*Daguerreotype of Sam Houston,
from collection of The Bryan Museum*

General Sam Houston ended the months-long “Runaway Scrape,” the retreat from the Mexican army in San Antonio, when he turned the Texian Army south, crossing Buffalo Bayou on April 19, 1836. He ordered the Texians to set up camp at this position. On April 21, Mexican General Cos arrived on the battlefield with reinforcements for Santa Anna’s army. After seeing Cos arrive, Houston ordered Erastus “Deaf” Smith to destroy Vince’s Bridge to halt the arrival of any additional reinforcements.

In the afternoon, Sam Houston convened a war council to determine if his officers wanted to attack the Mexican encampment rather than wait for Santa Anna to initiate battle. The officers, with the exception of just two, voted against attacking. Some historians attribute the abrupt rally of Texian soldiers to Houston, although it is not entirely clear why the Texian army paraded for an attack at around 3:30pm.

At about 4:00pm, Houston ordered the Texian line forward. He rode on his dapple-gray horse, Saracen, down the center of the battlefield, encouraging his men to advance. Even when Saracen fell dead beneath him, Houston continued forward almost into the Mexican artillery post. It was likely in the same attack that fell Saracen that Houston was shot in the ankle. He found another horse and rode with his men into the Texian camp. Houston’s second horse was also shot out from under him, and he then mounted a third horse. Within 18 minutes, the Mexican army was routed, their single cannon captured, and the battle won.

After the battle, Houston rode back to the Texian camp. He sought medical attention on his ankle and began to interview captured Mexican officers. Col. Juan Almonte was detained as a translator for the other officers, including Santa Anna, who was captured on April 22 along the banks of Buffalo Bayou. Houston managed to control his own soldiers and officers, many who wanted to execute Santa Anna and the other prisoners. That same day, Houston forced Santa Anna to issue an order to General Vicente Filisola, Santa Anna’s second in command located at Fort Bend, to direct the remaining Mexican army into full retreat back across the Rio Grande. Houston arrived in New Orleans in late May 1836 to receive medical treatment on his wounded ankle.



Colonel Sidney Sherman (1805 – 1873)

Second Infantry Regiment



On April 20, 1836, the day before the main battle, Col. Sidney Sherman and some sixty mounted volunteers attempted to capture the Mexican cannon. Sherman did not achieve his goal, but rather lost several horses and wounded two Texian soldiers. At the commencement of the main battle, Sherman's Second Infantry Regiment—ten companies and some 330 men—formed up at the far left flank of the Texian battle line. He and his men advanced through the live oak trees along the edge of the field and the marsh, surprising Mexican General Cos' troops while they rested from an all night march. Sherman is largely credited with the battle cry, "Remember the Alamo," and was noted by several of his soldiers for his admirable conduct during the battle. His men fired the first shots of the battle, though many of the men did not get a chance to fire another shot: the fighting quickly became hand to hand where the Mexican breastwork joined the woods. Sherman's command suffered no fatalities, partly because Cos' troops, attacked without warning, immediately retreated from their position on the right flank of the Mexican defenses.

Sherman's troops mixed with Col. Bureson's behind the Mexican barricade, driving the Mexican soldiers behind their camp and into the marsh along Peggy's Lake. At that location, Sherman's troops continued to fight Mexican soldiers who refused to surrender. Sherman did accept the surrender of any man who offered it, however. Following the battle, he was placed in charge of distributing the war booty from the Mexican camp, including arms, supplies, and luxury property.

Colonel Juan Seguín (1806 – 1890)

Tejano Company



During the battle of San Jacinto, Col. Juan Seguín and his twenty-four *Tejano* (Mexican citizens who lived in and identified with Texas) cavalymen acted as infantry under the command of Col. Sidney Sherman. They advanced with Sherman's troops through the live oak trees along the far left of the battlefield, bordering the marsh. Seguín's men fired one of the first volleys into the Mexican camp, surprising the sleeping and eating soldiers under the command of Mexican General Cos. Seguín's soldiers advanced with Sherman's into the Mexican camp, pushing the enemy toward Peggy's Lake. Behind the Mexican camp,



Seguín and his men accepted the surrender of a group of Mexican soldiers and officers. While guarding captured Mexican officers, Seguín was informed of a large sum of money hidden in the vicinity of the Mexican camp. Seguín earned congratulations from his fellow Texian officers when some \$12,000 in a large chest was located. Following the battle, Seguín and his company of Tejanos rode with Col. Burleson and Erastus “Deaf” Smith to follow the retreating Mexican army until it crossed the Rio Grande.

Colonel Thomas J. Rusk (1803 – 1857)

Secretary of War



During the Battle of San Jacinto, Col. Thomas Rusk initially charged into the Mexican camp with Sherman’s troops, at the left flank of the Texian battle line. Once Sherman’s men engaged the enemy there, Rusk crossed the battlefield to General Houston’s position at the center of the field and reported the commencement of the battle against the Mexican right flank. As Rusk approached, however, Houston’s horse fell dead from several shots to the chest and Houston was shot in the ankle. Rusk remained in the center of the battlefield, encouraging the Texian troops and rallying them to continue to the Mexican breastwork, until Houston was again mounted on a replacement horse.

Rusk entered the Mexican camp with the general advance forward. Behind the encampment, along the marshes of Peggy’s Lake, Rusk helped to end the Texian assault on fleeing and surrendering Mexican soldiers and officers. He accepted the surrender of some of the Mexican officers along the shoreline. After the battle, in the Texian camp, Rusk aided Houston in calming the soldiers and some of the officers who called for the execution of Mexican prisoners.

Colonel Edward Burleson (1798 – 1851)

First Volunteer Infantry



Prior to the Battle of San Jacinto, Edward Burleson was awarded the rank of colonel of the First Infantry Regiment of Volunteers, the largest in the Texian army. This made Col. Burleson Houston’s second in command. At the battle, Burleson’s troops were itching to take the fight to the Mexican army. He and his eight companies of 386 men charged up the center-left of the battlefield, Burleson on horseback. He wore a dark red sash and had two pistols tied around the pommel of his saddle. Burleson, along with Houston



to his right, had his horse shot out from under him during the charge. The heaviest Texian casualties occurred in front of and behind the Mexican line, and Burleson's volunteer regiment suffered twice the amount of casualties as Col. Sherman's men, who advanced under the cover of the woods at the left flank.

After mounting the Mexican breastwork, Burleson's men combined with those under the command of Col. Millard and together drove the Mexican troops away from the Mexican cannon. Behind the Mexican camp, near Peggy's Lake, Burleson accepted the sword and surrender of Mexican Col. Juan Almonte, one of Santa Anna's highest-ranking officers. Following the battle, Houston ordered Burleson to send out riders to search for Mexican General Santa Anna, and any other soldiers they may encounter attempting to flee. Burleson ordered that none of the captured soldiers or officers be killed, but rather, should be taken back to meet with Houston at the Texian camp. Burleson was placed in command of several hundred mounted men, including Erastus "Deaf" Smith and Col. Juan Seguín's *Tejano* cavalry, tasked with trailing the defeated Mexican army to ensure its retreat across the Rio Grande.

Colonel George Hockley (1802 – 1854)

Artillery

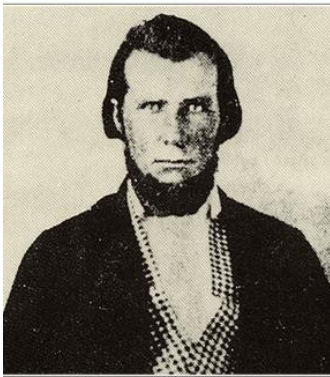
Col. George Hockley, a close friend of Sam Houston, was placed in charge of the "Twin Sisters," two identical iron 4-lb cannons. The artillery corps occupied the center of the Texian battle line, between Col. Burleson's regiment to the left of the artillery, and Col. Millard's infantry to the right. Hockley did an admirable job commanding the Texian artillery, ripping the enemy line with fire and likely scoring a direct hit on the Mexican cannon crew. The Texian artillery corps moved the cannons forward after each discharge. Accounts from the battle indicate that the firing of the Twin Sisters visibly encouraged and emboldened the Texian soldiers.

At one point during the battle, two columns of Mexican soldiers, under the command of Col. Manuel Céspedes and Lt. Col. Santiago Luelmo, charged at Hockley's artillery. The Texian infantry breached the Mexican breastwork at the same time, creating havoc. This, combined with heavy fire from the Twin Sisters, turned the columns of Mexican troops back in retreat, their commanders wounded or dead. After the battle, Hockley tended to Sam Houston, who had been shot in the ankle. Hockley diffused tensions in the camp when many Texian soldiers and their commanders called for General Santa Anna's death.



Lieutenant Colonel Henry Millard (1796? – 1844)

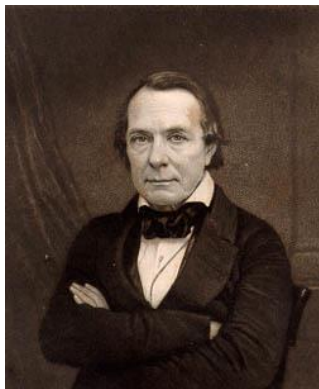
Regular Army



Lt. Col. Henry Millard had no military experience going into the Battle of San Jacinto. He commanded the 92-members of the regular Texian infantry, lined up to the right of Col. Hockley's artillery corps. Millard and two companies of regular infantry and a battalion of volunteers charged down the center of the battlefield and breached the Mexican breastwork. The men fought fiercely, ultimately capturing the Mexican cannon and overrunning the Mexican camp. Some of Millard's regulars remained on the breastwork, bayonetting wounded Mexican soldiers. Following the battle, Houston gave Millard two dueling pistols that had belonged to Mexican General Santa Anna.

Colonel Mirabeau B. Lamar (1798 – 1859)

Cavalry



The day before the Battle of San Jacinto, Mirabeau Lamar was promoted to colonel and given command of the Texian cavalry after he bravely rode back into the fray to rescue a dismounted and injured Texian rider. During the main battle, Lamar led the cavalry attack on the far-right flank of the Texian charge. A grouping of trees shielded the approach of the 62 cavalymen in order to surprise the enemy forces. Once out of the trees, they met the Mexican cavalry and quickly overtook them, advancing into the Mexican camp. There are reports that the Mexican cannon fired into Lamar's attack, although it is unclear if this happened. When Lamar and his men rode into the Mexican encampment, soldiers on the Mexican left flank retreated into the marshes along Peggy's Lake. It was reported that Lamar's charge into the heart of the Mexican camp caused General Santa Anna to abandon his army and flee the battlefield. While this may or may not be the cause of Santa Anna's flight, it is true that members of the Texian cavalry gave chase to fleeing Mexican soldiers and cavalry to the West and Southwest of the battlefield. Lamar's men even overtook Santa Anna's escort but were unable to ride him down at that time.



African Americans on the San Jacinto Battlefield:

The Texian army included at least five African Americans. Three were known to be on the battlefield on April 21. The first was Dick, a gray-haired freed black from New Orleans. He served as drummer for the Texian army's band. The second was Maxlin Smith, known as "Mack," an indentured servant for Major Ben Fort Smith. Mack fought as a volunteer soldier in the battle. The third man was Henrick Arnold, who successfully guided the Texas Army into San Antonio to lay siege against Mexican General Cos in December 1835. He was later cited as one of the most efficient members of Erastus "Deaf" Smith's Spy Company and an active participant in the battle of San Jacinto.

Two other African Americans served as guards with the Texian army's baggage, stationed at the recently burned Harrisburg, Texas, only a few miles from the San Jacinto battlefield. James Robinson, the manservant of a white cavalryman, guarded the baggage, though he had wished to fight in the battle. The second man, Peter, the servant of Captain Wyly Martin, offered and drove his own team of mules and wagon to help transport supplies for the Texian army. Peter remained with Capt. Martin at Harrisburg, and therefore missed the opportunity to fight in the battle.

There was one other African American who was rumored to have participated in the battle: Emily D. West (her biography is #9 under the "Mexican Army" heading). West was the mulatto woman who has been preserved as the legendary "Yellow Rose." Although often misnamed in modern literature as "Emily Morgan," Emily D. West was a free woman who had signed an indenture contract in New Haven, Connecticut in 1835. She traveled to Texas to work as a housekeeper for Col. James Morgan, the commandant at Galveston Island during the revolution, at his plantation located at a town he was building, New Washington. Emily was captured by Mexican soldiers under the command of Col. Juan Almonte when he attempted to capture the Republic of Texas government, namely President David G. Burnet, at New Washington on April 20. After burning the town, Almonte brought Emily with Morgan's other indentured servants to the battlefield. Emily wrote in her passport application that her original passport had been lost at the San Jacinto battlefield. Whether or not she was in General Santa Anna's tent when the battle began will likely never be proved or disproved, but Emily D. West was almost certainly in the Mexican camp during the Battle of San Jacinto.



The Texian Artillery: The “Twin Sisters”



*4-lb Cannonball from Battle,
from collection of The Bryan
Museum*

During the battle, two cannons under the command of Col. George Hockley were located at the center of the Texian battle line, between Col. Bureson's regiment and Col. Millard's regulars. The guns were nicknamed the “Twin Sisters” and have been alternately described as being iron or brass and either four- or six-pounders. The purchasing agent for the Texas Army, William Bryan, called them iron cannons and General Houston and Col. Rusk, in their reports of the battle, referred to them as six-pounders. Every contemporary account by those who saw the cannons and described their material said they were made of iron while all who said they were constructed of brass were later historians or newspaper accounts.

The evidence is strong enough to say these were iron cannons, however, confusion arises over their caliber. Hockley, who was in command of the artillery and should have known what he was firing, called them four-pound cannons. General Santa Anna, who viewed the cannons from a different perspective, also described them as four-pound cannons. This was corroborated in a letter written on April 22, 1836, by W.C. Swearingen, a battle participant, who called them four-pounders. But the most conclusive evidence of both their caliber and material was incorporated in a letter written by Henry Valente, a member of the committee of Cincinnati citizens commissioned to acquire the cannons. Valente wrote, "In March of 1836, we sent to you two iron 4-pound cannons." These contemporary sources lead to the conclusion that the Twin Sisters were four-pound, iron cannons.

Legend also surrounds the naming of the weapons and their whereabouts today. We know these cannons were provided by the citizens of Cincinnati, Ohio, and may have been were manufactured by the Cincinnati firm of Greenwood and Webb, exclusive manufacturers of iron goods. Called "hollowware" to disguise their true identity, they were shipped from New Orleans on March 16, 1836, arriving at Brazoria, Texas on March 20. Accompanying the guns was Dr. Charles Rice of Cincinnati, who had traveled his twin daughters, Elizabeth and Eleanor. The girls were given short speeches to memorize and after delivering them, they presented the cannons to Captain Louis Allen of the Texian army at Brazoria. At that point, they were baptized with the name, “The Twin Sisters.”

After San Jacinto, the Twin Sisters were used in various celebrations. Following the annexation of Texas by the United States (1845), they were shipped to Louisiana. There is positive evidence that they served



once on the side of the Texans during the Civil War. They were restored by the Legislature of Louisiana at a cost of \$700 and shipped to Galveston from New Orleans on April 20, 1861.

The last official correspondence regarding the weapons was on November 30, 1863, when they were reported to be in camp in the vicinity of Austin, Texas. From there, rumors abound as to the final history. The best legend is that they were buried somewhere near the Houston and Texas Central depot by five disembarking Confederate soldiers, led by Dr. H. M. Graves, as they awaited shipment to the north. The reason this story has credibility is that in 1909, there was an article reprinted in a Houston newspaper written by M. A. Sweetman of Cincinnati, Ohio, which read as follows:

In the latter part of the month of July, 1865 the 140th regiment of Ohio volunteer infantry in which I was then a member was quartered in the Kennedy building in the city of Houston, Texas. On some vacant ground immediately north and back of the Kennedy building on July 30, 1865 I saw a number of old cannons. Among these, entirely dismantled with the following inscription, on brass plates attached to the wooden carriages on each of two guns, was the following: Twin Sisters. These guns were used with terrible effect at the Battle of San Jacinto, presented to the state of Texas by the state of Louisiana March 4th, 1861.

The newspaper article concluded with the names of the committee of presentation. Sweetman's letter was written in response to a newspaper account in Cincinnati, Ohio, regarding the whereabouts of the Twin Sisters and it seems highly unlikely that he could have falsified such complete detail at the time regarding the inscription on the cannon. Most importantly, the date of Sweetman's observance of the cannons preceded, by only a few days, the time in which Dr. Graves and his five friends are reported to have seen the cannons and buried them near the same location. Therefore, we can assume that these twin women of war are resting not too far from the place where they struck the Mexican army with double portions of grapeshot and wrath.

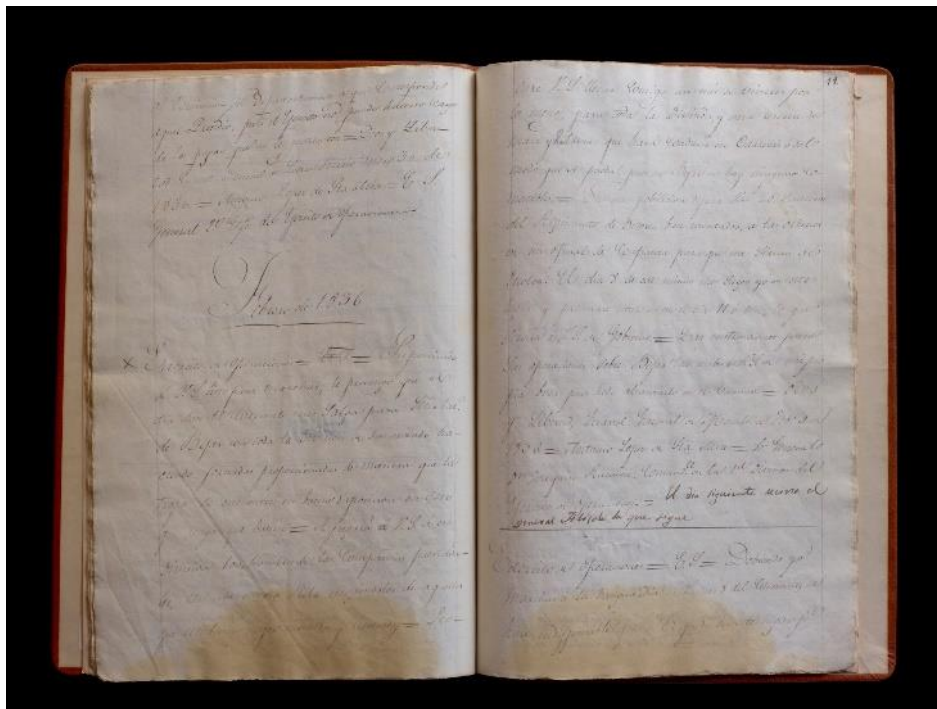




CHAPTER 3 MEXICAN ACCOUNT

April 20, 1836:

General Antonio López de Santa Anna arrived on the San Jacinto battlefield on April 20, 1836. The Texian troops had already made camp in a grove of trees across the field, backed into a corner between Buffalo Bayou to their rear and the place where the San Jacinto River empties into Galveston Bay to the Texian's left. Santa Anna, against the advice of his officers, made the Mexican camp in a similarly untenable position, backed against the marshes near Peggy's Lake to the rear and against a grove of live oak trees and the marshes along Galveston Bay to the right. Houston's army blocked the route of escape to the north, toward Vince's Bridge and the recently burned town of Harrisburg. A grove of trees in which Houston made camp obscured the Texians from the Mexican position.



Mexican Army Field Commands or Order Book, Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, from collection of The Bryan Museum

On the same day, Santa Anna, responding to some provocation from the Texian army, which fired its cannons, the "Twin Sisters," ordered his own artillery, a single cannon, to be moved into a grove of trees near the Texian camp and to open fire. Mexican infantry moved silently forward with the cannon. The Texian troops returned fire with their rifles and the Twin Sisters, causing the Mexican troops to withdraw. The Mexican cannon continued to fire at the Texians throughout the afternoon of April 20. Just before dusk, around 5:00pm, Santa Anna ordered the Mexican cannon withdrawn from the battlefield. At about the same time, mounted Texian



volunteers, under the command of Col. Sidney Sherman, set out to capture the Mexican cannon. The Mexican cavalry, under the command of Captain Miguel Aguirre, repulsed Sherman's men. The Texian attack achieved nothing.

April 21, 1836:

The next morning, April 21, 1836, General Martín Perfecto de Cos and Col. Manuel Céspedes arrived at the San Jacinto battlefield with 400 more soldiers. Cos had ordered an all-night march to reinforce Santa Anna, and his troops were exhausted and hungry. Santa Anna allowed them to make camp, eat, and rest. They camped along the right flank of the Mexican line, closest to the grove of live oaks and the marsh. Santa Anna talked with his commanders and preferred to wait until the next day to initiate an attack on the Texians, noticing no preparations by the enemy force. Most of the Mexican army was camped and resting, including General Santa Anna, when the Texian army initiated a surprise attack at 4:00pm.

Santa Anna had allowed his personal guard detail to eat and rest during the afternoon and they had never returned to their positions near his tent. Santa Anna was himself resting in his red and white striped tent when the battle began. There is a legend surrounding his preoccupation at the advent of the battle. It is impossible to prove or disprove the possibility of Santa Anna enjoying the company of Emily D. West, reportedly the "Yellow Rose." Regardless, Santa Anna wrote in his accounts of the battle that he had placed General Manuel Fernández Castrillón in command and was surprised when he exited his tent to find the Mexican army in disarray and a large portion of his troops already in retreat.



*Porcelain Plate Found on San Jacinto Battlefield, featuring
Image of General Bustamante,
from collection of The Bryan Museum*



Texian Col. Sidney Sherman's troops fired the first shots of the battle in the mott of live oak trees to the East of the battlefield, along the right flank of the Mexican line. These troops, under the command of General Cos and Col. Almonte, had been sleeping, eating, and resting when the battle began. A majority of these soldiers immediately retreated into the marshes at the rear of the Mexican camp, and into Peggy's Lake. Those that stayed and fought against Col. Sherman's Texians and Col. Juan Seguín's *Tejano* troops were quickly overwhelmed, breaking the right flank of the Mexican breastwork and allowing the Texian forces to enter their camp.

At the same time, on the Mexican army's left flank, the Texian cavalry under the command of newly promoted Col. Mirabeau Lamar, had advanced through a thicket of trees and caught the Mexican cavalry off-guard. The Mexican cannon trained its shots on the Texian cavalry, firing into the melee of horses and men. Lamar's force eventually broke through the Mexican cavalry and entered the Mexican camp near Santa Anna's tent. The main thrust of the Texian army charged down the middle of the battlefield, their immediate approach shielded from the soldiers in the Mexican camp by a depression and slight rise that was in front of the Mexican barricade.

In the center of the Mexican breastwork, the cannon turned toward a new threat: the nearby Twin Sisters, which had advanced down the battlefield after each shot. An early volley actually landed near the Mexican artillery, killing some of the soldiers in the vicinity and scattering many others into retreat. Lt. Ignacio Arenal remained at his post, along with his commanding officer, General Castrillón, who stood on an ammunition crate encouraging the Mexican soldiers to stand their ground. The Mexican cannon was readied to fire in support of two advancing columns of Mexican troops. Lt. Col. Santiago Luelmo charged with his select companies (*de preferencia*) toward the Twin Sisters from the left side of the Mexican cannon, while Col. Céspedes managed to assemble a column from the Guerrero Battalion and advance from the artillery's right toward the same goal. Heavy fire from the Twin Sisters and the advancing Texian troops commanded by Cols. Millard and Burleson crushed the Mexican advance and forced those troops into retreat. Lt. Col. Luelmo was killed in the charge, while Col. Céspedes was gravely wounded but was able to retreat to the Mexican camp.

Mexican infantry concentrated their fire on a prominent target: Sam Houston's horse, Saracen, was killed under him, with five shots to the chest. The Texian General shot in the ankle and left on foot in the center of the battlefield until a second horse was located and brought to him. The combined forces commanded by Cols. Millard and Burleson breached the Mexican barricade



and overwhelmed the soldiers manning the cannon. Lt. Arenal was killed at the cannon, which the Texians found loaded and primed, ready to fire at the Twin Sisters. General Castrillón was also killed in the Mexican camp near the location of the artillery, falling after receiving several gunshot wounds.



*Texas Star Medal Awarded to Mexican Officers
for Participation in the Texas Campaign, from
collection of The Bryan Museum*

At some point during the battle, General Cos and Santa Anna's secretary, Ramón Martínez Caro, escaped the battlefield mounted on officer's horses. Santa Anna escaped on his requisitioned black horse, Old Whip. There was a retreat of Mexican soldiers and officers to the West of the battlefield as well as to the South, into Peggy's Lake. At first, surrendering Mexican soldiers were shot, stabbed, and drowned where they stood. The violence was ended by the entry of Texian Cols. Thomas J. Rusk and Edward Burleson, who accepted the surrender of several Mexican officers. One officer, Col. Juan Almonte, the highest-ranking officer who remained alive on the battlefield, surrendered to Col. Burleson with several hundred of his men in the marshes of Peggy's Lake. Col. Juan Seguín's Tejano troops captured several other high-ranking officers and soldiers in the vicinity as well. Within just 18 minutes, the battle was finished. The slaughter of Mexican troops continued, however, as did the surrendering.

The Days After the Battle:

In the days after the battle, several important captures were made. General Santa Anna, who had slipped away on horseback, was forced to leave his mount, Old Whip, bogged in mud along the banks of Buffalo Bayou. Not a strong swimmer, he did not try to escape across the bayou,



but was captured on April 22, 1836 along its southern banks. The Texians who captured him, including Joel Robison, did not realize who he was until they returned to General Sam Houston at the Texian camp. That same day, Santa Anna was forced to send an order to his second-in-command, General Vicente Filisola, at Fort Bend. These orders informed him that he was in command of the Mexican army and that it should be put into full retreat back into Mexican territory.

Captain Karnes captured Santa Anna's personal secretary, Ramón Caro, on the same day on the north side of Buffalo Bayou, several miles down the road toward General Filisola's army located at Fort Bend. The last outstanding Mexican officer, General Cos, was captured on April 23 on the same road as Caro, having swum across the Bayou together. Cos was returned with great fanfare on April 24. All of these important prisoners were saved from execution and remained imprisoned together for some time. Col. Almonte served as an interpreter for Santa Anna and the others. While in captivity, Santa Anna signed the Treaties of Velasco in mid-May, acknowledging the Texian victory and the independence of Texas from the Mexican Republic.





CHAPTER 4 MEXICAN PARTICIPANTS

General Antonio López de Santa Anna (1794 – 1876)



In the weeks prior to the Battle of San Jacinto, General Antonio López de Santa Anna learned that the fledgling Texas government under President David G. Burnet was at New Washington, on Galveston Bay. In hopes of capturing Burnet and ending the Texas rebellion, Santa Anna and Col. Juan Almonte moved a select army of about 600 soldiers ahead for a surprise attack. Santa Anna left the remainder of the army under the command of General Gaona at San Felipe de Austin, General Filisola at Fort Bend, and General Urrea at Brazoria. After Almonte's forces missed their opportunity to capture Burnet at New Washington, he joined Santa Anna on the San Jacinto battlefield on April 20, 1836.

Camp was made, against the advice of Santa Anna's officers, on the southern side of the field, backed against the marshes of Peggy's Lake to their rear and a grove of trees and the marshes along Galveston Bay along their right flank. Santa Anna ordered the Mexican cannon to be moved out into the field under the cover of a mott of live oak trees. It periodically fired into the Texian camp. Santa Anna ordered a defensive breastwork be constructed out in front of the Mexican camp. The Mexican cannon was then towed back to the center of the barricade, behind which Santa Anna's own red and white striped tent was erected.

On the morning of April 21, 1836, General Martín Perfecto de Cos arrived with several hundred reinforcements. Santa Anna ordered them to set up camp along the right flank, nearest the trees and marshes, and rest during the afternoon. He did not believe that the Texian forces would initiate battle, and thus placed General Manuel Fernández Castrillón in charge of the Mexican defenses while he, too, rested. The legend of the "Yellow Rose of Texas," a mulatto woman named Emily D. West, records that she occupied Santa Anna in his tent while the Texians initiated battle. Whether or not this legend is true, Santa Anna exited his tent to find the attack already underway and the Mexican troops in disarray, some retreating into the marshes. According to Santa Anna's own accounts (which greatly from each other), he ensured that Castrillón, who he later blamed for the failure at San Jacinto, would command and hold the breastwork. Then, Santa Anna mounted his black horse, Old Whip, and rode away from the battlefield.



Not a strong swimmer, Santa Anna did not try to cross Buffalo Bayou. Rather, he abandoned Old Whip, bogged in mud, along the bayou's southern bank and moved westward on foot. A group of Texian soldiers discovered Santa Anna on April 22, captured him, and returned him to the Texian camp. Santa Anna's identity was reportedly revealed when other Mexican prisoners began saluting him, calling him *el presidente*. General Sam Houston saved Santa Anna from execution, which the Texian soldiers and many of their officers demanded. While in captivity at San Jacinto, Houston forced Santa Anna to send orders to his second in command, General Vicente Filisola, at Fort Bend, to take the remainder of the Mexican army into a full retreat back across the Rio Grande. Santa Anna also signed, probably not of his own volition, the Treaties of Velasco, acknowledging Texas' independence from the Republic of Mexico. Santa Anna and several other officers, including Col. Almonte, who served as his interpreter, were taken to the Orozimbo Plantation in Brazoria County. They traveled to Washington, DC to meet with President Andrew Jackson in February 1837, before being allowed to return to Mexico.

Brigadier General Martín Perfecto de Cos (1800 – 1854)



General Martín Perfecto de Cos arrived on the battlefield at San Jacinto on the morning of April 21, 1836. His reinforcement army crossed Vince's Bridge just prior to its destruction by Texian forces. His men camped on the right flank of the Mexican camp, closest to the trees and marshes along Galveston Bay. When the Texian attack occurred, Cos' troops were in the process of making their camp. Sherman's charge through the trees immediately scattered Cos' army and sent the soldiers retreating into Peggy's Lake and the surrounding marshland to their rear. Cos made his escape on horseback with Santa Anna, Santa Anna's personal secretary Ramón Martínez Caro, and several cavalrymen. Cos and Caro reportedly swam across the bayou and advanced several miles down the road toward Fort Bend and General Filisola's army. They were independently captured Texian search parties, Caro on April 22 and Cos the following day. The Texian searchers returned Cos to the battlefield on April 24 to much celebration and curiosity on the part of the Texians. He was held with the other Mexican prisoners for a period of time before being allowed to return to Mexico.



General Manuel Fernández Castrillón (? – 1836)

Artillery



When the battle began, Spanish-born General Manuel Fernández Castrillón was one of the few officers who stood and fought against the Texians. Texian Col. Thomas J. Rusk reported that Castrillón, in an attempt to rally his troops, stood fully exposed on an ammunition crate. When the Mexican soldiers around him failed to respond to his orders, Castrillón turned and slowly walked away from the Texian assault. After the Texian troops entered the Mexican camp, Castrillón was shot several times and died on the battlefield. In later accounts, Santa Anna blamed Castrillón for the overwhelming defeat at San Jacinto. In an effort to deflect the blame of defeat, Santa Anna claimed that Castrillón was not a hero but that his incompetence contributed to the Mexican defeat.

Colonel Juan Nepomuceno Almonte (1803 – 1869)



Col. Juan Almonte was Santa Anna's secretary and special advisor at both the Alamo and San Jacinto. During the Battle of San Jacinto, Almonte's troops were resting on the right flank of the Mexican camp, near General Cos' soldiers. They were among the first to be routed by Sherman's quiet approach through the mott of live oak trees. Driven back into the marsh around Peggy's Lake, Almonte advised the 250 Mexican soldiers under his command to lay down their weapons. The Texians accepted their surrender. After capture, Almonte's demeanor remained calm, reducing the tensions in the battle's aftermath. He acted as the translator for Santa Anna and other Mexican prisoners. Almonte was imprisoned with Santa Anna at the Orozimbo Plantation in Brazoria County before traveling with his commander to Washington, DC to meet with President Andrew Jackson. Almonte returned to Mexico with Santa Anna in 1837.



Lieutenant Colonel Santiago Luelmo (? – 1836)

Select Infantry

Lieutenant Colonel Santiago Luelmo served as the commander of the select companies (*de preferencia*) of Mexican soldiers, comprising the Mexican reserve. They were stationed on the left side of the Mexican camp, near the cavalry, serving as protection for the Mexican cannon. When the Texians began their attack, Luelmo advanced a column of the Mexican select soldiers, with a column of soldiers under Col. Céspedes, into the center of the Texian attack. They charged toward the advancing “Twin Sisters,” the Texian cannons. The Mexican columns were quickly routed and forced to retreat toward their camp. Luelmo died during the attack.

Colonel Manuel Céspedes (1798 - ?)

Infantry

Col. Manuel Céspedes arrived at the San Jacinto battlefield the morning of the fight with Mexican General Martín Perfecto de Cos. His men had not slept or eaten in 24-hours due to an all-night march to reinforce General Santa Anna. When they arrived, Céspedes’ men made camp and rested along the right flank of the Mexican encampment.

After the Texian attack began, Céspedes commanded the charge of a column of Mexican soldiers from the Permanent Battalion of Guerrero. The advance aimed at capturing the Texian artillery, the “Twin Sisters.” Céspedes’ charge was quickly routed and the Mexican soldiers were forced to retreat to the Mexican camp. Lieutenant Colonel Santiago Luelmo, who led another column of reserve soldiers in the same effort, was killed, while Céspedes was gravely injured during the charge and later captured.

After a period of imprisonment, Céspedes and another officer escaped their Texian captors at Anahuac and fled to Louisiana. Although several Texian soldiers pursued them for twenty days, they ultimately escaped capture. What became of Céspedes is unknown.

Lt. Ignacio Arenal (1811 – 1836)

Artillery

Early in the battle, the Texian’s cannons, the “Twin Sisters,” scored a direct hit on the Mexican artillery corps. As a result, Lieutenant Ignacio Arenal commanded the cannon crew. Arenal continued to delivery orders to fire the cannon, even after his commanding officer, General



Manuel Fernández Castrillón, was killed nearby. Arenal remained at the cannon until he, too, was killed by Texian attackers who breached the defensive breastwork. The Mexican cannon was found primed and ready to fire when the Texian forces finally seized it.

Ramón Martínez Caro

Cuban-born Ramón Martínez Caro served as General Santa Anna's personal secretary during the Texas Campaign. Caro bolted during the Battle of San Jacinto on horseback with Santa Anna and General Cos. Caro is sometimes reported as having escaped across the Buffalo Bayou. He gave himself up for capture on April 22, and Captain Henry Karnes took him back to the Texian camp to meet with General Sam Houston. Houston's calming influence during the interview kept the Texian soldiers from executing Caro on the spot. Caro was held prisoner at the Orozimbo Plantation in Brazoria, Texas, from June to November 1836, with General Santa Anna, Col. Juan Almonte, and Santa Anna's brother-in-law, Col. Gabriel Nuñez. In 1837, Caro published a highly critical account of Santa Anna and the Texas Campaign, titled *Verdadera idea de la primera campaña de Tejas* (True Account of the First Texas Campaign), which repudiated Santa Anna's own account of his actions throughout the Texas Campaign, especially during the Battle of San Jacinto. The life of Caro after the Texas Campaign is unknown.

Emily D. West



One legend surrounding the Battle of San Jacinto is especially persistent: that an African American woman named "Emily Morgan" was with General Santa Anna in his tent leading up to the advent of the battle. Although it will likely never be confirmed that Emily, the so-called "Yellow Rose," was with Santa Anna, recent research has shed some light on Emily's identity.

Her name was Emily D. West, not Emily Morgan. Historians originally assumed, as a mulatto woman, that Emily was the slave of James Morgan (and hence carried his last name, a typical practice). However, it is now known that Emily was an indentured servant from New Haven, Connecticut, who signed her one-year indenture contract with Col. James Morgan of New Washington, Texas. She signed of her own volition, indicating that she was both free and educated, a rarity for African American women at the time. Her contract indicated that she was to receive a salary of \$100 over the course of her indenture



period, at which time she would be free to decide to continue her employment with Morgan or end it and leave Texas. Emily travelled to Texas by boat at Morgan's expense. In December 1835, she landed at New Washington, a planned town on the shores of Galveston Bay, to work as a housekeeper on Morgan's plantation, Orange Grove. Should the town continue to develop as planned, Emily would then work in a proposed hotel at New Washington.

On April 20, 1836, soldiers under the command of Mexican Col. Juan Almonte arrived at New Washington. Almonte had hoped to capture the fledgling government of the Republic of Texas, which had been stationed at New Washington waiting for transportation to Galveston Island. President David G. Burnet and his cabinet made their escape minutes before the Mexican soldiers arrived on the shores of Galveston Bay. Before rendezvousing with General Santa Anna at the San Jacinto battlefield, Almonte ordered the structures at New Washington be burned, the warehouse and plantation plundered for food and goods, and Morgan's servants imprisoned (most of Morgan's servants were slaves he owned while in North Carolina; when he arrived in Texas, he converted them to indentured servants with 99-year contracts). It is entirely possible, then, that Emily D. West was present in the Mexican camp at the battlefield at San Jacinto. Her activities there are unknown.

Following the battle, Emily applied for a new passport in order to leave Texas. In the application, which was recently located in an archive, Emily noted that her original passport had been lost on the battlefield at San Jacinto. The Republic of Texas government processed the application, but what became of Emily D. West is unknown. Some historians theorize that she returned to New Haven or possibly to New York City, which had a large population of free African Americans, while others have claimed that she settled in New Orleans. Still other historians have posited that Emily remained in Texas, perhaps dying before or after she received her passport.

The Mexican Cannon

The Mexican Army brought with them to the San Jacinto battlefield a single brass cannon of unknown poundage (some accounts report it was a six-pounder, while others indicate it was a nine-pound cannon). On April 20, 1836, the day before the big battle, General Santa Anna placed the cannon in a grove of trees roughly 400 yards from the Texian camp and commenced a periodic fire. Mexican infantry slipped through the trees as well, within rifle shot of the Texian



camp, but return fire from the Texian troops as well as from the Texian artillery, the “Twin Sisters,” forced the Mexican infantry into a retreat. The commander of the cannon, Captain Fernando Urriza, was injured during this episode, leaving the command to the capable second, Lt. Ignacio Arenal. The cannon continued to fire throughout the afternoon, as Santa Anna made his camp behind the depression and rise in the center of the battlefield. Shortly before sunset, the Mexican cannon was withdrawn from the field, at about the same time as a Texian cavalry charge was begun to try and capture the cannon. The resulting melee did not achieve its end, and the two sides withdrew from the battlefield.

As the main battle began on April 21, the cannon had been positioned roughly in the center of the Mexican breastwork. Guarding the cannon on the left were the Mexican cavalry and the select companies (*de preferencia*) under the command of Lt. Col. Santiago Luelmo. The Mexican cannon received a heavy fire early in the battle, killing a number of the cannon crew. Under the direction of Lt. Ignacio Arenal, the Mexican cannon fired perhaps three volleys, but no more. Arenal aimed the cannon at the Texian artillery, in support of a charge led by Luelmo and Col. Manuel Céspedes. Unfortunately, the advance was turned back by the Texian troops, and the cannon was captured quickly thereafter by a combination of Texian troops under the command of Col. Millard and Col. Burleson. Arenal was killed in the fighting around the cannon, as was his commanding officer, General Manuel Fernández Castrillón.

The Texans captured the Mexican cannon during the battle and was subsequently turned over to the Texan navy. What happened to it after that point is a matter of some speculation. Some historians believe that it was placed aboard a Texas warship but was thereafter lost.



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