

The Battle of San Jacinto- April 21, 1836

The eve of the battle was upon the Texan troops, they were camped in a grove of oak trees along the banks of the Buffalo Bayou where it joins the San Jacinto River. A wide prairie extended in front of the camp, Santa Anna's troops had moved to a campsite on the edge of the prairie along the San Jacinto River only $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the Texan camp. The battle would happen, SOON! Sam Houston had found his ideal fighting ground and felt he had an advantage over the Mexican army. Mexican officers had complained to Santa Anna that they were vulnerable against an attack but he laughed at them, he was confident that the Texans would NEVER attack. BIG MISTAKE! During the day the Texans got ready for an attack, they polished their cannons called the Twin Sisters, a gift from the people of Cincinnati, the cannons would play an important part in the attack the following day. Mirabeau B Lamar, a future president of TX, was promoted to Colonel and commander of the cavalry for his bravery during a small skirmish with the Mexican cavalry. The Texan soldiers were itching for a fight, after marching and drilling for weeks they were ready to take aim at the foe. The Texans didn't have as many men only about 900 compared the Santa Anna who had about 1350 and he was expecting more to arrive with General Cos throughout the night.

On the morning of the 21st Sam Houston the general of the Texan army had a brilliant idea, there was a bridge, Vince's Bridge, which crossed Vince's Bayou, and Houston ordered Deaf Smith to destroy the bridge to prevent a Mexican escape once the battle began. This was going to be EPIC! Juan Seguin, a Tejano, who had been at the Alamo with the defenders before being sent to deliver a message, was to lead the Tejano forces at the battle. The Tejano's were just as anxious to start this battle as the Texans were. After holding a war council it had been decided the Texans would ATTACK the Mexican forces around 3:30. Early that morning Cos had arrived with 540 more tired and hungry men. Santa Anna allowed his men to eat, sleep and relax. So when the Texans attacked the Mexican army many of the Mexicans were sleeping.

At 3:30 in the afternoon Sam Houston ordered his men to prepare for an attack, shouts of "Remember the Alamo" and "Remember Goliad" rang throughout the camp. And as the Texans sprinted ahead down the prairie towards the Mexicans they continued to call out their battle cries. The Twin sisters did their job blowing a hole in the middle of the Mexican defenses, and as Lamar's cavalry flanked the Mexicans preventing escape the Texans poured into the Mexican camp firing their rifles and taking aim at any Mexican opponent that got in their way. The Texans defeated the Mexicans in just 18 minutes, many of the Mexicans retreated towards Peggys Lake but there was no way across and they were massacred as they tried to escape through the deep lake. 630 Mexicans were killed and another 730 were captured while only 8 Texans lost their lives in the battle. Santa Anna who often referred to himself as the Napoleon of the West escaped on horseback. Later that day as the Texans brang prisoners back to camp, El Presidente was marched into camp, Santa Anna was dressed as a common soldier and was hoping to go unnoticed. To his dismay his men began to stand and salute him calling out "El Presidente" and the Texans had realized they captured the Mexican dictator.

As Santa Anna met with Sam Houston under a large oak tree on the skirts of the prairie Houston's men called out for the execution of the Mexican dictator Santa Anna, the blood thirsty Texans

had not seen enough bloodshed and would not do without the death of "El Presidente." Houston chose not to execute Santa Anna, instead he made him sign an order for all Mexican troops to retreat from TX and head back to Mexico south of the Rio Grande. Houston and the Texans had won, it cost them hundreds of men at the Alamo and hundreds more at the Massacre of Goliad but they had done it, the victory at San Jacinto meant Freedom for TX, a new chapter was to begin.

After the Battle of San Jacinto, the government of TX had moved from Galveston island to the town of Velasco. Santa Anna was taken there to sign two treaties with the Texan government. The Treaties would be called, "The Treaties of Velasco." They were signed on May 14, 1836 one treaty was made public the other kept private. Santa Anna had promised to never fight Texans again, agreed to remove all Mexican soldiers from TX, an exchange of prisoners, and all property taken by Mexican forces to be returned to Texans. In the Private treaty he agreed to work for Recognition of TX from Mexico (which he later denies and refuses to do) the Texans agreed to release Santa Anna and escort him back to Mexico to keep him from danger. Santa Anna also agreed to work inside the Mexican government to get the Rio Grande set as the border between the two countries (he later refused to do this also). Santa Anna boarded the ship "The Invincible" and was escorted peacefully back to Mexico.

The Battle of San Jacinto was one of the most decisive battles in history. By defeating the Mexican forces and capturing General Santa Anna the Texans had won their independence from Mexico. News of the victory spread and Texans began to return from the Runaway Scrape back to their homes, only to find many of them had been destroyed by Santa Anna and Mexican forces during the Revolution. United States men continued to arrive in TX disappointed to learn that the war was over, they had been determined to answer Travis' call from the Alamo but they had been too late. Texans returned to their farms not as Citizens of Mexico but as citizens of the new Republic of TX.