

THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS

The republic of Texas had its own growing pains. Sam Houston was elected the first President. He was faced with debt, no currency, and an unreliable army. Houston sought recognition for Texas through building relations with the United States and European countries.

Leaders of the Republic realized if it were ever going to be important it needed a much greater population. It had almost unlimited quantities of land, and during the war it offered land to soldiers. Afterward all veterans received land. The Texas Congress also reinstated the empresario system that had been so successful in attracting settlers during Mexican rule. These land developers advertised with maps and handbooks. Some tried to get Americans to come, while other empresarios focused on Europe. This is why there were many maps made in Germany, and why there are still a lot German communities in Texas. Between 1836 and 1841, the government distributed almost 37 million acres!

The Republic of Texas had other problems: Indian raids, virtually no education system or roads. However, the population did increase 4 fold by 1846, with the population numbering 150,000. Most of these lived in the country, and 30,000 consisted of African-American slaves that were here to work the cotton fields.

With these issues, most leaders of the Republic wanted to be annexed by the United States. Many U.S. congressmen feared that Texas would enter as a slave state and voted against it, but on December 29, 1845, U.S. President James K. Polk signed the Texas Admission Act. The terms of the Act were: Texas reserved the right to divide itself into as many as 5 states, and the state retained ownership of its vast public lands as well as its enormous debt.

Discussion: Guess how many voted in the 1st presidential election in the Republic of Texas in 1836? (Only 6,449) This points out how little the population was. Who was eligible to vote then? (White males) Do you remember who won? (Sam Houston)

Interesting Facts: Of the 59 signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence, only 10 had been in Texas for more than 3 months, and only 2 were native Texans!

MATH QUESTIONS:

If there were 30,000 slaves in Texas and the total population was 150,000, what percentage of the population were slaves? (20%)

In 1846 the population was 150,000 which was 4 fold the number of people at the time of the revolution. What was that population in 1836? (37,500)

Plate 24: In 1842 a map was made to promote German settlement in Texas. The map's chart locates roadways, Indian tribes and areas described as "excellent land" and "delightful country."

