

THREE GOVERNMENTS OF TEXAS, 1821-1836

Spain's power in Europe had been declining and it was not able to maintain strong rule in New Spain of which Texas and Mexico were a part. In 1810, Mexico revolted against Spain, won its independence after a few battles, and implemented the Federal Constitution of 1824. Texas wanted to be its own state within Mexico, but did not have enough population. The young Mexican nation turned to colonization to bring growth and prosperity to Texas.

Mexico established a policy for Texas in which immigrants should adopt Mexican citizenship and the Catholic religion. The government decided to conduct colonization through contractors, or "empresarios." Each contractor received a designated territory and each tried to settle a specific number of people. To attract colonists, they advertised with maps and handbooks. Many settlers came from the United States, spoke English and kept their American ways. Mexico wanted to keep the language and culture of Mexico and prohibited immigration from the U.S.

The Mexican Republic was not stable, and General Antonio López de Santa Anna rose to power. In 1832 he became president. Three years later he disbanded congress and announced that the Constitution of 1824 would no longer be followed. Most Texans were not happy with this, and after attempts to become a separate Mexican state failed, a group of Texas leaders decided to seek independence.

The Texas Revolution from Mexico lasted only about 6 months. Between October and December, 1835 rebels captured Goliad and San Antonio, driving Mexican soldiers from Texas soil. However, in February Santa Anna mounted a two-pronged counter attack and retook Goliad and San Antonio. Then Santa Anna turned eastward to drive the rebels out of Texas. On April 21, Santa Anna's plans came to a sudden halt when General Sam Houston handed him a crushing defeat along the banks of the San Jacinto River. It was a good thing that the rebels won since they had already declared Texas independence on March 2, 1836. Santa Anna agreed to withdraw to the Rio Grande River. The Republic of Texas claimed the Rio Grande as the southern border all the way to Santa Fe, NM.

Discussion: Texas changed nationalities 3 times between 1821 and 1836. How many years is this? Can you imagine being ruled by 3 different governments in you life time? Perhaps this is one reason why Texas was still a large frontier.

Discussion: Reverse immigration situation when Mexico did not want immigrants from the United States. Why?

