

The battle of the alamo



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This research paper explores the Battle of The Alamo with the intent of correctly demonstrating how this battle was not pointless to those whom fought, but rather engaged them to attest their allegiance to the principles of American Patriotism.

The disagreement between Mexico and the settlers who lived in the Texas territory was ruthless. The Mexican government sought to reclaim control of the land the Texans had established. As General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna began his march through Mexico to reach San Antonio, the settlers convened at The Alamo with armaments, ammunition, and provisions. In anticipation of the inevitable, messengers were sent in and out of The Alamo in search of support; but none came. The settlers knew they were outnumbered, yet continued to hold their ground within the mission. The blockade of The Alamo lasted 13 days, and although the battle was lost, the war was not.

The Alamo was built in 1724, originally named Mision San Antonio de Valero, and was home to missionaries and their Indian converts (The Alamo). In the early 1800s, the Spanish military stationed a cavalry unit at the former mission to deter migration further south into Mexico. The soldiers referred to the place as The Alamo, the Spanish word for "cottonwood," in honor of their hometown Alamo de Parras, Coahuila (The Alamo). Migration westward had been happening slowly, but surely, since the establishment of the original thirteen colonies along the east coast. Planters with dreams of vast land tracts and fertile soil were eager to start or expand their cash-crops. After the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the Spanish were concerned that Americans would migrate into their sovereign territory. When Mexico won its

independence from Spain in 1812, the Mexican government oddly encouraged migration of its citizens and Americans by offering land grants. American land speculators acquired some 180, 000+ acres from the Mexican government and sold it to incoming planters. Disagreements arose as the Mexican government tried to declare greater political control over the settlers. Two groups formed over this conflict of power. One group accepted Mexican rule but campaigned for political independence. The other group demanded independence. The southern people were restless to have Texas annexed to the United States, and such an aspiration was the popular feeling in that sovereign state. The proposition, when formally made, was opposed by the people of the North, because the annexation would augment the region and lead to a war with Mexico.

Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna was born in Mexico on February 21, 1794. In 1833, he was elected president of Mexico. He firmly believed that Mexico was not organized for democracy and pronounced himself dictator. Santa Anna is well remembered as a ruthless opponent. He returned to Mexico after the Battle of San Jacinto. Upon his return he participated in the Mexican War, and sold Texas territory to the United States. He died in 1876.

David Crockett was possibly best known as a decorated hunter in Tennessee. In Texas he will always be remembered as a valiant contributor in the Battle of The Alamo. Crockett was born August 17th, 1786 in Tennessee. He learned to read and write at age 18. He was elected to the State Legislature in 1821 and 1823. From 1827 to 1833, Crockett served in Congress. Dismayed with politics, Crockett left for Texas in 1835. There he was welcomed and seemed to enjoy his new environment. On January 9th, 1836

he wrote a daughter back in Tennessee, " I would rather be in my present situation than to be elected to a seat in Congress for life" (Barr 1990). Less than a month later Crockett was amongst the defenders that sacrificed their lives at The Battle of The Alamo.

James Bowie was born April 10th, 1796 in Kentucky. While still very young, he moved with his family to Louisiana from Missouri, where he spent most of his adolescence. It was there that he first acquired the status as a courageous fighter. In 1827, Bowie took part in a bloody battle near Natchez, Mississippi, where he was wounded. After recuperating he moved to Texas. He was commanding the volunteers in San Antonio when William B. Travis arrived with army troops. The two men shared command during much of the Battle of The Alamo, which caused some resistance. But pneumonia immobilized Bowie, and he was confined to his bed at the time of his death on March 6th, 1836 at The Alamo.

Born in South Carolina on August 9th, 1809, William B. Travis will be forever known as the lead commander at The Alamo. He spent his youth in Saluda Co., South Carolina, which was also the home of James B. Bonham, another Alamo defender. Arriving in Texas in 1831, William B. Travis purchased land from Stephen F. Austin. When resistance arose between Mexico and Texas, Travis was first to join the resistance. On orders from Governor Henry Smith in January 1836, Travis arrived at The Alamo with thirty men. After a few days, with James Bowie fallen sick, he found himself in command of the resistance. Travis commanded the Texas defenders during the Battle of The Alamo. His petition for reinforcements had become a symbol of uncompromising courage and valor. Although very few reinforcements

arrived, Travis and the defenders gave their lives on March 6th, 1836. Travis was only twenty-six years old at the time of his death.

The facts surrounding the Battle of The Alamo continue to be argued (Lone Star Internet). There is no doubt though what the siege has come to be known for. People continue to remember The Alamo as a heroic struggle against the impossible; a place where men made the ultimate sacrifices for freedom. Davy Crockett, the resilient frontier man with a funny raccoon hat, Jim Bowie who supposedly killed a fierce grizzly bear with a knife, or William B. Travis whom drew a line in the sand between dignified demise or spineless submission to the Mexican armies pushing through The Alamo's gates. These men were made famous by newspapers; fashioned romanticism for their heroism and performance of duty. For decades, I thought pioneers like them were worthy of some regard. Unsuspecting pawns of "Manifest Destiny," (Lord 1961) they fought for Texas independence at the Battle of The Alamo. None had an accurate account of Crockett's capture and execution. Many thought the legendary man deserved better, and they so provided it, from awe-inspiring accounts of his bludgeoning Mexicans with his empty rifle, to holding his section of the wall at The Alamo until being cut down by enemy fire. On February 24th James Bowie was suffering from a disease, most likely pneumonia. Most historians believe that he didn't fall from a garrison while attempting to reposition a gun (Lord 1961). He was limited to a bed and urged the defenders to follow Travis. On March 6th the Mexicans attacked before dawn, and all of the defenders of The Alamo perished. Bowie was found in a room on the south side. He was shot in the head several times. Travis died early in the battle. His body was burned,

much unlike the depiction that he, Crockett, and Bowie were the few remaining; attempting to keep the Mexican attackers from entering The Alamo.

The Battle of The Alamo demonstrates how the “ last stand” was not futile in the minds of its heroes, but rather challenged them to prove their loyalty to the principles of American Patriotism (Winders 2006). The Republic of Mexico wanted to reclaim control of the land the Texans had established. General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, along with approximately fifteen-hundred men, assaulted The Alamo. David Crockett, James Bowie, and William B. Travis were the leaders of men garrisoned at The Alamo. For the thirteen days, the two armies engaged in several skirmishes. The overwhelming numbers of Mexican soldiers eventually seize control of the mission.