

SAN JACINTO RIVER AUTHORITY KIDS PAGE

Some Interesting (but not well known) Texas History Facts



The month of March 1836 may well be the most important span of time in the history of the Lone Star State. Virtually everyone “remembers” the Alamo but some of the details have been lost over the years, and there is “more to the story” of some of the people we thought we knew...

The line in the sand and the Yellow Rose of Texas

One of the most celebrated sieges in military history took place in San Antonio, Texas from February 22nd to March 6th, 1836. Mexican president **Antonio López de Santa Anna** and his army of approximately 1800 men, surrounded the makeshift fort and raised the blood-red “no quarter” flag -- which promised a fight to the death. Inside, a ragged volunteer force of no more than 200 men prepared to stand their ground against impossible odds. On the 12th day of the siege -- March 5th -- **Lt. Col. William B. Travis** used his sword to draw his famous ‘line in the sand’, and invited all who would stand with him to defend the Alamo to step across it.

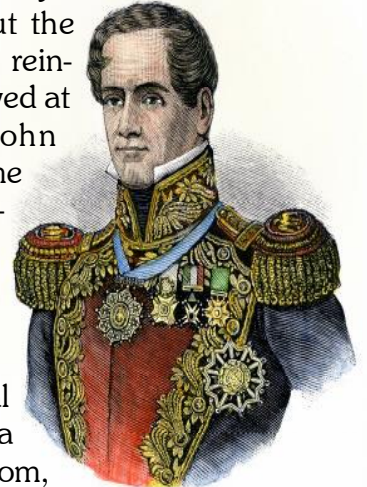
The traditional account of the Alamo legend is that all but one man did. **Louis “Moses” Rose** -- who, by this action, earned himself the nickname “*The Yellow Rose of Texas*” -- is said to have sneaked out of the Alamo the night of March 5th, evaded the Mexican forces, and found his way to Grimes County. Some historians have suggested that it was Rose who first told the story of Travis’ line in the sand. If there ever was a line drawn at all is a matter of some dispute -- as is Rose’s cowardice -- but it is accepted as fact that those in the Alamo were indeed given the opportunity to stay and fight...or to leave.

As for Col. Travis, there is no argument that he was a hero; in fact, he was among the first to die in the Battle of the Alamo. Since that horrific day in March 1836, Americans fighting on battlefields all over the world have rallied to the cry, “Remember the Alamo.” Rose, on the other hand, was branded a coward for the rest of his lifetime.

Santa Anna and the story of Vince’s Bridge

After his victory at the Alamo, Santa Anna and a force of about 700 men swept toward the Texas coast to claim the seaports. They crossed the Brazos River at Richmond, pressed on to Harrisburg and chased after the Texas government at New Washington on Morgan’s Point, but they had already fled to Galveston. In the meantime, **Sam Houston** and

his army camped on Spring Creek before taking the road to Harrisburg. When Sam’s forces reached White Oak Bayou, he learned that part of Santa Anna’s forces had headed down the west side of the bayou and the San Jacinto River, and had crossed over Vince’s bridge at Sim’s Bayou. This move offered a strategic opportunity, for not only would the Mexican army have to cross that bridge again to return, but the other half of Santa Anna’s reinforcements had not yet arrived at the rain-swollen river. John Coker, a young private, came up with the idea of destroying the bridge which would prevent either the Texans or Santa Anna from retreating towards Harrisburg.



The Mexican general made camp overlooking a marsh, and as was their custom, the exhausted army took an afternoon siesta, apparently without posting any sentries. Around 3:30 in the afternoon, Houston launched the **Battle of San Jacinto** with the cry, “Remember the Alamo! Remember Goliad!” The napping army was surprised and the battle lasted only 18 minutes. According to Houston’s account, 630 Mexicans were killed, 730 taken prisoner, but only 9 of the 910 Texans were killed or mortally wounded. Santa Anna was found the next morning, hiding dressed as a common soldier. The general was released on Houston’s command -- over the objections of many of the Texans -- because he believed the Mexican could be useful. Two treaties ended the war...one public, one private. The public version called for Mexico to recognize Texas independence and its armies to retreat beyond the Rio Grande. The secret version enlisted Santa Anna’s assistance in assuring that Mexico would comply with the provisions of the treaty.

Santa Anna wasn’t through, however. After being captured by Sam Houston, he returned to Mexico where he retired for a while, but went to battle to defend Mexico against the French in 1838. The next year, he helped depose the government of Anastasio Bustamante and became Mexico’s acting president. He was ultimately overthrown and exiled to Havana, Cuba. He was allowed to return to Mexico City where he died on June 21, 1876. 💧