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Troubled waters: A reprisal of sea power and maritime importance in the turbulent years of the Texas revolt

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TROUBLED WATERS: A REPRISAL OF SEA POWER AND MARITIME
IMPORTANCE IN THE TURBULENT YEARS OF THE TEXAS REVOLT

A Thesis Proposal

by

ANDREW REYNOLDS GALLOWAY

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Texas-Pan American
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

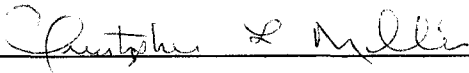
MASTER OF ARTS

May 2002

MAJOR SUBJECT: HISTORY

A Thesis
by
ANDREW REYNOLDS GALLOWAY

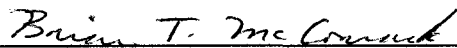
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ABSTRACT

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The first section shall deal with the role the sea played following Mexican Independence. In the foreign colonization of Texas, Stephen F. Austin developed and designed his colonies similar to the agricultural communities of the American South that were built around nautical transportation from 1821-1829.

The second area will deal with Mexican Texas from 1829 through 1832. By 1829 Mexico attempted to reinstate authority over Texas. Reaction to Mexican limitations was unified action through civil disobedience. As their rebellion brought the desired freedoms for the Texicans, they were encouraged to continue.

The third discussion is the revolutionary period from 1832 to 1835. Following their political ideals, the colonists met to petition for separate statehood. Mexican inaction indicated approval of the political meeting. Later, when Mexico thwarted the Texican proposals, the colonists rebelled. This revolt was strengthened when a ship carrying Austin, the *Laura*, took up arms against a Mexican vessel.

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INTRODUCTION

Histories of Texas, and of the Republic of Texas in particular, often leave the impression that this was a land-locked region. When considering the process that moved the Texians to risk civil disobedience and eventually independence, historians have tended to concentrate on land-based issues like Mexico's proscriptions concerning slavery and restrictions on immigration, ignoring the region's long Gulf Coast. This perhaps is understandable; historians have followed Texas's former Spanish and Mexican rulers, who adopted restrictive and antiquated maritime policies that did not capitalize on a potential natural partnership between land—and sea—based economies. And yet a review of events both before and during the Texas Revolution reveals not only that maritime concerns were a flashpoint for the revolutionary movement, but that in the fight for independence, maritime commerce and coastal protection played a major role in the internal politics practiced by the infant Republic of Texas. To a considerable extent, maritime activity enabled the rebel Republic, lacking in financial resources and political/military infrastructure, not only to survive, but also even entertain dreams of empire because of its position as a potential military power.

As noted, historical literature that gives serious attention to coastal activities, especially in the areas of maritime military and diplomatic endeavors,

has been rather sparse. This is especially evident in those studies that trace the Spanish and Mexican periods of Texas rule, but, with a few notable exceptions, extends to treatments of the colonial and revolutionary Texas as well.

One crucial item that has been misconstrued in many Texas histories continuing to the modern day is the interpretation of the Mexican “Decree of April 6”. In her movement towards independence, Texas historians have made much of the land-focused issues of the “Decree of April 6, 1830”—which set limits on American immigration and settlement—and have ignored many of the economic ramifications of this act that directly affected maritime issues. It can be argued that this not only propelled revolt against the commercial restrictions placed by the “Decree of April 6, 1830,” but through the utilization of the combined economy, thrust Texas onto the world stage, demanding her recognition and consideration by the world community.

While larger maritime issues have largely been ignored, two dated studies have focused specifically on the history of the Texas Navy during the Republican period. The first of these, a series of articles by Alex Dienst published in 1909, provides much of the basis for all subsequent discussions of Texas naval matters.ⁱ The other, *The Texas Navy*, by Jim Hill drew heavily from Dienst’s earlier work.ⁱⁱ

Dienst's work consists of a rather standard consensus military history. Well supported with evidence, most of which is from government sources, Dienst does not stray too far from traditional lines, nor does he engage in further interpretation. One could argue that major weakness such as a dated perspective, or limits on outside sources, might jaundice the eyes of modern readers. Although Dienst does offer some material regarding this period, their main value involves the republic itself. Consideration to the pivotal period regarding the transition from colonials to partisans is omitted.

Since that time however, discussion concerning the broader subjects of Texas politics and diplomacy suggest that there is more to maritime matters than these earlier studies admit. Biographies such as *The life of Stephen F. Austin founder of Texas*,ⁱⁱⁱ *Teran and Texas*,^{iv} and *Samuel May Williams*,^v offer excellent primary as well as secondary material regarding some of the actors of this drama. Sources such as *The Shaping of America*,^{vi} "British Merchant Houses in Mexico",^{vii} and *Germans and Texas*^{viii} offer excellent primary and secondary sources on the economic aspects of the international and commercial importance of Texas.

Primary sources dealing with the role maritime affairs can be found in many areas. Examples of the primary sources include newspaper reports, letters,

personal testimonies and speeches. Many important translations, and sources can be found in the *Southwestern Historical Association Quarterly*. Another area that will be utilized is the Texas State Library. Most of the secondary literature required can be obtained through the Libraries of the University of Texas Pan-American, the University Texas at Brownsville, the City of Harlingen, or through interlibrary loan. Secondary sources will be utilized to further the importance of how certain events worked into the larger picture of world actions.

As the foregoing discussion makes clear, existing treatments of Texas' Colonial/Republican history have, on one hand, neglected maritime issues as a matter of central importance, but have, on the other hand, suggested their significance in terms of the young nation's diplomatic strategies, military objectives, and dreams of empire on the part of some important figures. Bringing this matter into a synthesis with political and diplomatic efforts will further the understanding of these important dimensions in Texas history. Moreover, by showing how this neglected aspect in Texas' history bore upon the relations between her and other nations, this study will help to demonstrate the degree to which the budding republic's fate was a matter of some significant international concern that also centered on the global maritime importance of the entire Gulf Coast/Caribbean region.

The first section of my thesis shall deal with the role that the sea played during the tumultuous period following Mexican Independence. Following the Spanish fear of an unpopulated northern border shared with the expanding United States of America, Mexico took the drastic step of allowing foreign colonization of Texas. Although this step was taken to forestall revolution, the most successful colonizer, Stephen F. Austin, brought with him the seeds of an economic revolution that would germinate later into political revolution. From 1821 to 1829, Austin developed and designed his colonies similar to the agricultural communities of the American South. As these were also areas that relied on utilization of the maritime as a key to their prosperity, protection of those rights were a priority. Mexican officials, busy birthing their own nation, were pleased that the vacant land was being filled. As such, not only was Austin allowed to continue, but numerous preferential laws were passed allowing expansion of not only the colonies, but more specifically maritime traffic as well. During this time Anglo-American colonization flourished while attempts by Mexican colonizers, unfamiliar with nautical incorporation, stagnated. The maritime *laissez-faire* that Mexico had allowed began to be threatened by 1829. For reasons of financial need, Mexico began to look at the tremendous traffic along the Texian shores and desired to profit from it.

The second chapter will deal with Mexican Texas spanning from 1829 through 1832. In her desire to profit from nautical activities, Mexico dispatched General Manuel Mier y Teran to Texas in 1829 to report on what he had found. The inspection tour of General Mier y Teran not only revealed the success of the immigration plan, but also fears of Anglo-American dominance of the province. The resulting "Decree of April 6, 1830" was an attempt to affect a balance back to intrastate commerce within the Mexican Republic as well as increased dependence on Mexico. Reaction to Mexican enforcement of limitations upon the maritime resulted in the unification of merchants and colonists to take political action. As their attempts to petition injustices failed, civil disobedience, resulting in the Battles of Anahuac and Velasco, followed. The colonists, using maritime forces in combination with land forces, won both battles. Mexico rescinded "the Decree", and the Texas colonists learned the value of corporate activity and sought a larger voice in the Mexican system. The focus of this chapter will be two-fold. Economically, the importance of Maritime freedoms will be studied. Freedoms so precious, that they transcended the social, and became a keystone of the political voice of the Texans. As their civil disobedience had brought the desired rewards, or freedoms, for the Texans, Mexico had established a terrible precedent. That

civil disobedience was seen as legal political action that would be rewarded. This notion would later return to haunt Mexico in her relations with Texas.

The third chapter that will be discussed is the revolutionary period from 1832 to 1835. The maritime history of Texas from the years 1832 until the outbreak of revolution in 1835 was punctuated by years during which mercantile concerns bonded to political concerns. Believing in the federalist promises of Gen. Santa Anna, the colonists knew that their energy should be focused on making progress towards separate Mexican statehood that would be sure to arrive. Following their old political ideals, the colonists first met to petition in the conventions of 1832 and 1833. Mexican inaction seemed to indicate approval of the political meeting. Later, however, when Mexico acted in ways that thwarted the Texian proposals, the colonists rose into civil disobedience. In these matters, it was the nautical concerns of Stephen F. Austin's economic revolution that were first infringed. It should come as no surprise that in this matter, those most effected, the merchants, would take up positions of leadership in the battle for their maritime freedoms. The tense victory at Anahuac slowly decayed as the actions of increasing Mexican control and passage of customs duties stifled the mariners. This anger was reflected not only in the capture of a Mexican schooner attempting to impress the brig *Tremont* and her cargo of lumber, but also against Mexican reinforcement of

the tariff. Rather than reflecting an anger of all those who lived in Texas, discontent against Mexico was at first limited to those on the coast. Upon Austin's return from imprisonment in Mexico City, however, the die was cast with civil disobedience when the very ship that carried Austin home, the *Laura*, took up arms against a Mexican vessel. The melding of political and economic concerns in the Texican mind will be the focus of this chapter.

Through examination of the material gathered, the importance and central role of the maritime in Texas' revolutionary history should become obvious to the reader. Not only was the maritime a uniting force in the economy and prosperity of Texas, but as her liberties became curtailed she also became a fulcrum for political unification. The notion of this importance has been lost to many modern historians. A study of events leading to the Texian Revolt however displays their importance.

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- ^v Henson, Margaret Swett, *Samuel May Williams: Early Texas Entrepreneur*, College Station, Texas A&M University Press, 1976
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CHAPTER I

Austin beginnings

The Mexican government...must not forget for an instant, that as soon as the intrepid descendants of the English gained their independence and consolidated their sources which a mediocre and under populated land had furnished them. To fulfill their destiny and to acquire a political preponderance in the new world...they justly aspired to national aggrandizement and to an extension of their limits towards the south and west and encroached upon lands that were more fertile and where climate was more favorable.

--Tadeo Ortiz reporting on Mexican Colonization by Americans in 1822

The free, sovereign and independent state of Coahuila and Texas...encourage agriculture and cultivation in their fertile lands... offers to foreigners who may come and domicile themselves in its territories....

--Elias Wightman, surveyor for Stephen F. Austin

Following her independence, Mexico found that Spain's legacy left two huge and conflicting problems. At first the problems, namely difficulties in her infrastructure and a xenophobic fear of the United States, may seem divergent, however the solution attempted towards both, led to a tremendous clash. In the critical frontier of Texas, both of these problems met, and in the attempted solution, the seeds of the Texas revolution were formed.

In dealing with the weak and archaic infrastructure bequeathed to them by Spain, Mexico faced many obstacles. Spanish policies had fragmented Mexico

into various economic and politically semi-independent regions. The merchants, in turn, found themselves dealing with a number of small, isolated local markets rather than with a unified national economy. Further impediments, such as hazardous roads, high tariffs, and unscrupulous officials, constricted attempts at a natural expansion of trade towards an interstate, much less international, commerce.ⁱ Mexico, accustomed to the Spanish trade that limited the opportunities for economic expansion, needed both financial backing and a fundamental change in economic ideology to carry matters forward.

These conditions were only multiplied in Texas. This vast and distant frontier area held only one legal entreport with the distant Mexican outpost of Nacogdoches, separated from San Antonio by more than 600 miles. The only mode of transportation developed by Spain was the infrequently traveled *El Camino Real*, or Royal Highway, where raids by aggressive Native American nations such as the Comanches or Apaches were common. The main export of Texas, cattle, also did not reinforce the use of the maritime as a viable option. The ranchers and missions that raised them, seldom used Texas' only legal seaport, El Copano, to get their cattle to market.ⁱⁱ Two reasons supported this. First, the conversion of cattle to the more easily transported hides or tallow was unprofitable. Secondly, if the ranchers were to take either the live cattle or their

prepared goods to El Copano, the risk of losing all to a Karankawa raid was a likely probability.ⁱⁱⁱ

Shunning water as transport, the *El Camino Real* was utilized to take the livestock to market. This same road tenuously tethered Nacogdoches to Mexico through its connection with San Antonio. San Antonio in turn was similarly tied to the nation through Monclova and Saltillo. Mexico realized that the four hundred mile space between San Antonio and Saltillo had to be populated.

Mexico, however, bought into the political paranoia respecting the United States. In the first report of the Mexican Commission on Foreign Relations, Tadeo Ortiz, defined the problem clearly in 1825,

...if we do not take the present opportunity to people Texas, day by day the strength of the United States will grow until it will annex Texas, Coahuila, Saltillo, and Nuevo Leon like the Goths, Visigoths, and the other tribes that assailed the Roman Empire."^{iv}

This description of the United States of America may not have been exaggerated.

As her neighbor in North America, the United States of America had proven herself to be a republic with a voracious territorial appetite. As early as 1763, while still colonies under the British, the American colonists chafed under obstacles, such as the proclamation line of 1763, to their westward expansion.

The formidable obstacle against American expansion, the Mississippi River disappeared in 1803, with the sale of the Louisiana Purchase to the United States.

Rather than quenching the land hunger of the United States, the acquisition of territory that more than doubled their land mass had the opposite effect – it intensified the American hunger for empire. This reality was made all too clear in the last days of Spanish Texas with continued attempts by filibustering expeditions supplied by the United States that continually battled Spanish sovereignty in Texas.¹ To provide a bulwark against possible encroachment by the United States of America, Mexico believed they could best preserve their sovereignty over their extensive frontier through populating it. The problem then facing Mexico was how she could best fill the vast unpopulated gaps that existed.

It was into this arena that Stephen F. Austin arrived with a possible solution. In his solution he also carried the Spanish legacy of his father, Moses Austin.

¹Of the differing expeditions to Texas, The Gutierrez/Magee expedition, led by Don Jose Bernardo Gutierrez and Augustus Magee with the Republican Army of the North (1811), Jean and Pierre LaFitte (18-14-1820), Louis Michel Aury (1816), and Dr. James Long (1819, 1821) were all series of filibusters that had gained America's favor, and supply. In an important observation, of all that gained limited victory, they succeeded either by control of the sea – as in the case of LaFitte or d' Aury – or won by depriving Spain of her control of the maritime – both the Gutierrez/Magee expedition and Dr. James Long took over Goliad the only Spanish presidio protecting the coast

Moses Austin had a successful legacy in the empresario business. Utilizing his right to settle 30 American families in Spanish Missouri in 1797, Moses established a thriving community. Supported by a lead mine and smelting furnaces he established, Moses became a leader in his community. Reacting to American acquisition in 1804 the community was flushed with new wealth. The National Panic of 1819 however brought the prosperity to an end. A cofounder and principal stockholder of the Bank of St. Louis, Moses Austin's fortunes, like those of many on the frontier, vanished.^v

Well versed in acting as an empresario, Moses Austin sought to repeat his former success and wealth by forming a new partnership with the Spanish. Texas, with its location on the Spanish Frontier, was surmised to be an idyllic locale for such an endeavor. After discussing his plans with his son, Stephen F. Austin, Moses set out in the fall of 1820 on an 800-mile journey to the political center of Spanish Texas, San Antonio.

At Moses Austin's arrival in San Antonio, his biggest hindrance lay in the fact that he was an American. The normal xenophobia that Spain had held throughout her colonial experience in the new world had only been intensified by the Louisiana Purchase. To the Spanish, Texas was recognized as "the key to all New Spain"^{vi} after the sale of Louisiana to the "infamous usurper" of the

United States.^{vii} Defense General Fernan Nunez's fear of Texas' proximity to the United States was placed forward in that he claimed that all colonies "which lie in contact with a republic are the same as inflammable materials next to a great bonfire, which will catch fire at the slightest puff of wind."^{viii} To buttress this belief, Texas served as a gateway to numerous filibusters, either supplied or from the United States, that challenged the authority of Spain. The latest filibuster, United States citizen Dr. James Long, had been so bold of his success due to his location he declared of his revolt in July 1819 that:

Nothing will prevent our success; we increase daily in soldiers and citizens join us from all parts, and I was much better supported than I expected- everything is in good train and there is no doubt of the success of the republican army.^{ix}

Reaction to quell the uprising was swift. The Governor of Texas, Antonio Martinez, was commanded not to permit any *norteamericanos* into Spanish Texas. It is therefore no surprise that Moses Austin's petition to Governor Martinez met with failure.

A chance meeting however, delayed Austin's departure, and in so doing forever altered the history of Texas. Leaving the governor's mansion, Moses Austin met with an old acquaintance, Felipe Enrique Neri, also known as the Baron de Bastrop. Although historical inspection has found that the title of

Baron that Neri bequeathed upon himself was of questionable authenticity it had served to secure him into the circles of the Mexican elite in the capital of Tejas. As such, Neri was able to advocate successfully for a second meeting with the governor. Promising to act as Austin's agent, Bastrop was able to obtain permission for Moses Austin to settle 300 families in Texas. This request was made official on January 17, 1821, when General Joaquin de Arredondo notified the governor that Moses Austin's petition had been granted.^x The hazards of his return journey, proved too much however and Moses Austin "returned home in time to die."^{xi}

Stephen, who had watched his father successfully settled the families in Spanish Missouri, was chosen to pick up his father's mantle. However with the change in government in Mexico, Stephen Austin knew that much work awaited him. Upon his arrival in Nacogdoches, Spanish Commissioners Juan de Veramendi and Erasmo Seguin acknowledged the legitimacy of his fathers grant, and passed it forward to Governor Martinez. Governor Martinez was so impressed with Stephen that he advised him to explore for a possible site while his petition went through the channels. Wisely Austin pursued this exploration wholeheartedly.

Austin knew that he must not depend on the Mexican *Camino Real* to deliver his produce and receive goods and merchants. Because the road was a dirt road, travel on it would be hazardous, seasonal, and unreliable. Also, as the roads were an inheritance of the limited linear Spanish Trade infrastructure, his “uncertain trips to local markets” would retard the development of exports, and limit the markets to a far less profitable South.^{xii} Therefore, it was imperative that he choose land for his agricultural settlers that, just as in the South and Mississippi Valley of the United States, had easy access to water transport. This land would not only have easy access to rivers, but more importantly rivers that were connected to the Gulf of Mexico, that provided the settlers with easy access to markets outside of Texas.

Austin explored for land that fit the requirements necessary for the development of a successful agricultural empire. During 1821, Austin spent time surveying the rich river bottoms on the lower river valleys of the Brazos, Colorado, Guadalupe and San Antonio Rivers.^{xiii} In selecting a point for his center, Austin wisely chose land that lied “on a low bluff overlooking a good anchorage on the Brazos”.^{xiv} From this point, commerce could be both controlled and promoted. Austin cleverly named his town site, San Felipe de Austin, after the new Governor Luciano Garcia’s patron saint and himself. Not only was this

land outside of the dangerous Indian country, but in its rich lands the plantation style agriculture of the Southern United States could be replicated. With his knowledge of the land gathered, Stephen F. Austin briefly returned to Natchitoches in October of 1821, to prepare for his colony.

At Natchitoches, Austin discovered that news of his grant had proceeded him. Citizens of the United States financially damaged by the Panic of 1819, increasingly saw the possibility of starting over in Mexican Texas as a ray of hope. Land prices in Texas were 12.5 cents an acre compared to the \$1.25 an acre in the United States. With the possibility of cheap land enticing, Austin wrote Governor Martinez that “nearly a hundred letters of inquiry from Missouri and many from Kentucky”^{xv} had greeted him. He excitedly included that he was convinced “that I could [count] on fifteen hundred families as easily as three hundred” to settle in Tejas, as long as he was “permitted to do so.”^{xvi} Aware of the importance of naval transport due to the inadequate road system, Austin went to New Orleans. He quickly worked out an arrangement with Joseph Hawkins² where the *Lively*, a small merchant vessel, and supplies were acquired

² Joseph Hawkins was both a lawyer as well as a merchant/investor who had befriended Stephen Austin earlier while his father Moses made his trip into Spanish Texas. Besides the *Lively*, Hawkins so eagerly supported Stephen F.

on credit.^{xvii} This vessel was to transport materials and supplies to his colonies. As Austin left early in the spring of 1822 for Mexico City to gain national validation for his *empresario* contract, the Baron de Bastrop acted as Austin's land commissioner. ^{xviii} By the beginning of 1822, Bastrop had completed the contract, settling two hundred and ninety-seven of the allotted three hundred families.

While in Mexico City, Austin had to fight for the right of his colony. The idea of allowing members of the feared society of the United States to enter the county as settlers, was very disturbing to many Mexicans. Tadeo Ortiz, the Mexican Consul at New Orleans stated his caution thusly:

The Mexican government...must not forget for an instant, that as soon as the intrepid descendants of the English gained their independence and consolidated their sources which a mediocre and under populated land had furnished them. To fulfill their destiny and to acquire a political preponderance in the new world...they justly aspired to national aggrandizement and to an extension of their limits towards the south and west and encroached upon lands that were more fertile and where climate was more favorable.^{xix}

The Mexican government however, perceived the threat of unoccupied land greater than possible territorial incursion by the United States of America.

Believing that controlled immigration would be easier to assimilate than

Austin that he loaned him the sizeable amount of \$7000 to assist in establishing credit for Austin's dream.

unchecked American intrusion, Mexico devoted much discussion to Austin's grant.

In his time away from the Mexican legislature, Austin learned the social graces of Mexico, and increased his Spanish vocabulary. His stay was elongated due to the transmission of power from Agustin de Iturbide to a more federalist system. In the transitional period "opinion and parties vacillated between monarchy, aristocracy, and Republicanism."^{xx} Austin however, was patient and for his efforts was rewarded with sweeping powers in establishing new grants. A new national law regarding colonization was also passed. This law set forward limitations to all colonial ventures, and three shall be pointed out for discussion.

- (1) That foreigners should not be settled within twenty leagues of the national boundary nor within ten leagues of the coast without the concurrent approval of both the state and federal executives;
- (2) That no individual should be allowed to hold title in his own person to more than forty-nine thousand acres of land; and
- (3) That Congress reserved authority to stop at discretion immigration from any particular nation.^{xxi}

Austin however was exempted from these laws, and returned to Texas with a Carte Blanche towards colonizing new tracts that he had received. Realizing the importance of nautical support the agricultural economy, Austin's demanded

that each farm should receive 320 river front acreage as well as additional bonuses for farm labor: slaves and children.^{xxii} . These allotments were located along “the bordering coastal strip” allowing his tracts to be located “along the Brazos, Colorado, and lesser streams all the way from the old Camino Real to the Gulf.”^{xxiii} Reasons why Mexican authorities allowed Stephen such freedom displayed their urgency to populate this crucial frontier.

Austin utilized his powers wisely in furthering the future success of his colonies. Knowing that most of the new colonists that would arrive would come for agricultural pursuits, Austin hired surveyors for reconnaissance of his newly acquired expanse. In his surveying notes regarding the area, Elias Wightman, quickly pointed out many advantages of the area. The land that the colonists would settle was described as “different from lands along the Atlantic coast, being of rich alluvial bottomlands, of great depth near the Rivers.”^{xxiv} The crops that could be grown in Texas, were varied and productive, but Wightman paid particular attention to the possibilities of cotton, which he described as:

of much longer staple, or more soft and silky texture, than that of Mississippi, producing 2,500 pounds of seed cotton to the acre as an average crop, while Mississippi [sic] will not produce over 1,600 when not endangered by rot....^{xxv}

A reason for the emphasis on cotton is due to the fact of the markets growing demand for this product at the time. The effects of the revolutionary

invention of the cotton gin in 1793, by Eli Whitney, rapidly increased cotton consumption across the globe. The reason for this demand was the now relative ease of production. In 1791, the arduous task of separating seed from the cotton produced only six pounds per worker per day. After the invention of the cotton gin, that number was rapidly increased to 1,000 pounds per worker per day. Profits for cotton production rose accordingly and Great Britain's as well as the growing industrial sector of New England's appetites were voracious.^{xxvi}

Wightman spent several pages on his description of rivers explaining their importance in taking products to market. These rivers, he claimed, would be navigable "for greater or less vessels" where "Vessels of sixteen feet draught can enter the bay at Matagorda, at Paso Caballo, and nine feet to the mouth of the Colorado, and good steam and other navigation for one hundred or more miles."^{xxvii} The coastline, meanwhile offered a number of "safe harbors in bays or rivers" for large vessels to enter to ship the produce to markets. To attract the lands with the needed population, Wightman wrote of the ease to which the new settlers could acquire large amounts of land.

The free, sovereign and independent state of Coahuila and Texas...encourage agriculture and cultivation in their fertile lands... offers to foreigners who may come and domicile themselves in its territories – provided they comply with the laws on the subject, to present a certificate from the authorities whence they came of their Christianity, moral character and industrious habits – to each man

of family, one square league, of 5,000 varas (4,446 acres), and to unmarried or single men, not attached to any family, one-fourth of said portion, and a full league to be completed to him when married, and if marriage be contracted with a Mexican, one-fourth more.

No other compensation is required for this than \$30 as an acknowledgement.

...From the date of settlement no other tax, duty, impost or tonnage, of whatever name shall be imposed for the term of ten years, except that which shall be generally imposed in case of invasion to repel the same, this term being concluded they shall be on the same footing as other inhabitants of the State.^{xxviii}

The reason for alleviation of taxes was an attempt to motivate more interstate trade within Mexico. However, the close proximity of New Orleans, the second largest city in the United States as well as an international transportation hub, drew the lion's share of the business.

To further insure the success of his colonists, Austin had made many preparations for mercantile business. Toward the end of 1823, Austin met with marketer Samuel May Williams. Williams, arriving by the vessel *Good Intent* in June of 1822, had already worked out a trade for tobacco with the Karankawa. He would serve as an excellent financial counterpart to Austin as he held many valuable contacts with merchants on the Gulf Coast and Eastern Seaboard in the United States.^{xxix} Undaunted by a lack of deep-water ports, the shallow hulled American merchant vessels were ideally suited for the limited water depth along most of the Texas coast. This mobility was utilized to drop off the cargo at

whatever locale seemed expedient, scarcely utilizing the recognized, yet distant seaport of *El Copano*. As these vessels were limited in cargo capacity, and restricted to travel in the tranquil Gulf of Mexico, Austin sought a deep-water port closer to his American markets and interests.

In 1825, Austin also forwarded a request that Galveston be made a legal port of entry, to Mexican General Manuel de Mier y Teran, the departmental commander with headquarters at Matamoras. This port could not only serve to open Texas to trade with world markets, but would also provide a nautical outlet for trade with the distant Santa Fe. The feasibility of such a project was made a reality by a successful French effort in 1824. The merchants had successfully traveled from El Copano to Santa Fe with much profit, however American competition from Missouri in conjunction with the constant fear of Comanche attack persuaded against return journeys.^{xxx} The American interest in Santa Fe was obvious, as traders were willing to face difficult terrain and hostile natives for commerce with this locale. Austin believed that a trail from Texas would limit the danger, and thereby increase profits. The urgency of Austin's petition for the recognition of Galveston was displayed through his feeling that without the said seaport, "commerce would be paralyzed and agriculture strangled."^{xxxi} The positive response, as well as further dreams of prosperity, led Austin to seek

official recognition of other de facto ports such as Brazoria. These requests however, were denied.^{xxxii}

Undaunted, Austin continued to work towards the growth of the fortunes of Texas. Besides making “painstaking surveys and personal observations” for a map of Texas, published by Tanner in 1829, much of Austin’s work was focused on the maritime. To support his exports, Austin spent numerous days expanding and exploring outlets for his goods. Besides further surveys and observational data on the land, Austin charted Galveston Bay and other harbors and navigable rivers in the territory. To insure continued and expanded markets for his colonies produce, Austin utilized Williams’ trading company to promote trade with the United States. Austin encouraged the erection of gins and sawmills to refine his exports and limit his dependence on imports.^{xxxiii}

The success of the colonies, both economically and physically, called for a desire from many in Mexico to profit from the surprising success of Texas. A new tariff passed by the Mexican congress in 1827 would have placed a \$2.12 per ton fee on all foreign vessels entering ports, including those in Texas. As a majority of the vessels that entered Texas ports were under United States registry, Austin fought against implementation of this tariff. He argued that this tariff would establish an “insurmountable barrier” to the sustaining trade with

New Orleans while leaving the Texas colonists insufficient time to develop commercial and credit relations with the merchants of Tampico and Vera Cruz.^{xxxiv}

To further help expedite the needs of the community, Austin decided that an *ayuntamiento*, or city council, should be formed. This was done for two reasons. First was to free Austin to concentrate his efforts on governmental issues. Secondly, the formation of this council was also viewed as a step towards Mexican statehood for Texas. Texan statehood was important because according to the liberal constitution of 1824, it would have provided Texas with a larger voice in national government and policy. Therefore, on the second Sunday of February 1828, hopes were lifted as officers were installed.^{xxxv}

With the success of his colonies tethered to maritime outlets, Austin wasted no time in expanding his possibilities. To attract more settlers, Austin wrote a description of Texas to attract European immigrants. Other members of his family sought to expand their wealth through the acquisition of merchant routes. By expanding his reach, Austin “hoped to make the fortunes of thousands and my own.”^{xxxvi} In so doing he could fulfill his dream of “redeeming Texas from its wilderness state.”^{xxxvii}

In his description of Texas, Austin focused on two major items – its ability to produce, and its ability to get products to markets. To display how good the possibilities of production were, Austin described Texas as being favored by nature “a great agricultural, grazing, manufacturing, and commercial country.”^{xxxviii} To attract those who realized the lucrative price of cotton, Austin wrote of cotton grown that was “superior to Louisiana cotton.”^{xxxix} To point out its ideal locale as a commercial center, Austin wrote that it only took “a simple glance at the map will be sufficient to indicate the great advantages derivable from its local position...”^{xl} This was due to the fact that “intercourse by water along the coast is easy and safe. Three or four days’ sail takes you from the coast of Texas to the mouth of the Mississippi, or to Vera Cruz, or the Havana...”^{xli} In finishing out his publication, Austin wrote of a Mexican government that ruled “with a high degree of liberality” where obedience to the government was maintained without “the aid or necessity of one soldier.”^{xlii}

Mercantile possibilities became so profitable that Austin’s family relations shunned the emprisario business and leapt directly into commercial enterprises. In 1828, Stephen’s brother, James E. Brown Austin joined with his cousin, John Austin, in the purchase of the schooner *Eclipse*.^{xliii} Dreams of turning this vessel into a coastal trading vehicle became a reality, leading to increased family

profits. Another cousin, Henry Austin, took up the mantle of Austin's dream of opening trade with Santa Fe, but his scheme sought a waterborne approach.

Henry Austin informed the United States State Department that such trade was possible. To increase his business, he suggested that the United States might offer "a couple of million dollars" as well as land from the Louisiana Purchase west of the Rocky Mountains in exchange for the lands about Santa Fe.^{xliv} Joined in his attempt with a Mexican officer, Colonel Juan Davis Bradburn, Austin purchased "the shallow draft, eighty-six ton *Ariel*", in July of 1829, at New Orleans.^{xlv} With this craft, Henry Austin believed that he could easily traverse the 2000-mile distance on the Rio Grande to Santa Fe.^{xlvi}

However difficulties soon rose against Henry Austin's commercial venture. The difficult and meandering river reflected the legal impediments that Henry Austin faced with the state government of Coahuilla. Restrictions became so frustrating that Bradburn, his partner, pulled away his support. Acting as a further obstacle, Mexican merchants on the Rio Bravo were hesitant to use his vessel as some took "his boat for a living thing and were afraid of it."^{xlvii} Suspicions continued, and after three months Henry Austin had only made enough money to cover his expenses. Although he wrote that "nothing but my pride and the censure to which I should expose myself by abandoning a project

of my own choosing has induced me to continue here so long," Henry Austin left the Rio Grande in frustration.^{xlviii}

While Austin may have been the most successful of the Empresario's he by no means was the only one. A total of twenty-five contracts were issued in 1825. While most of these met with failure, some were successful. Green DeWitt, the second most successful *empresario* brought numerous families from the United States as well. James McGolin and John McMullen received a grant from the Mexican government to bring 200 Irish families into Texas, in settlements that would become San Patricio and Refugio. James Power and Dr. James Heweston also landed "hundreds of families" at El Copano during the early 1830s. A final successful colonist was Martin De Leon. Martin De Leon, a successful *empresario* from Mexico brought in the next greatest amount of settlers. DeLeon's colony however was the exception to the rule, and the Mexican population brought to Texas, as well as the indigenous Mexican population, slowly became dwarfed by the growing incoming Anglo-American population. Their colonial ventures were not as successful at cultivating the mercantile contacts as Austin had been, and logically were not able to duplicate his progress.

Meanwhile the mercantile situation in the interior of Mexico contained impediments that not only matched those met by the merchants in Texas, but in

some cases exceeded them. The non-lateral and linear trade as carried on by the Spanish forced the trade to be seasonal. The *nortes* that belted towards the coast were a huge danger to deep-hulled transatlantic vessels. This danger was intensified by the fact that the majority of Mexican harbors were shallow and unprotected.^{xlix} To further complicate matters, high trade duties and tariffs impeded merchants while Texicans were exempt. These same duties were arbitrarily enforced and in a state of constant political flux that affected the nation; illegal practices and graft continually frustrated business.^l

Just as nature detests a vacuum, so do politicians and merchants. With the departure of Spain, Mexico was left unaccustomed and ill equipped to carry out international trade. Though they recognized the importance of control of the maritime, one of the national governments first purchases was the schooner *Iguala* in 1822, they lacked the experience, knowledge, and finance for the private sector to take advantage of this control.^{li} Some European nations were eager to advance on such an endeavor. Especially in an area where “her demand for manufactured goods seem insatiable,” and included the profitable exports of “silver, cochineal, vanilla, indigo, medicinal herbs, and stirring poles for dyeing vats” which proved quite lucrative for foreign merchants.^{lii}

It was politics that first drew England into this complex situation, Spain had come under French control, driving Thomas Canning, the British Foreign Minister, to extend *de jure* recognition to the rebelling Spanish colonies in the New World. Justifying this action by calling “the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old,” Canning could rely on naval supremacy to enforce such a sweeping decree.^{liii} In refuting criticism of the break with protectionist mercantile policies, Parliamentarian William Huskisson stated:

I hope I shall never bear any share in the councils of England when a principle shall be set up that there is one rule of independence and sovereignty of the strong and another for the weak; when, abusing its naval superiority, England shall claim for herself either in peace or war, maritime rights which she refuses to acknowledge in other states, or shall, under any circumstances, either neutral or belligerent, impose upon others obligations from which she claims, under the like circumstances, to be herself exempt.

To act as if there were one rule of international law for ourselves, and a different rule for other states, would not be only monstrous injustice, but the only course, I verily believe, by which our maritime power could be brought into jeopardy. Such a pretension would call for and warrant a combination of all the world to defeat it; and it is only in such a combination, acting together in a just cause, that this country can have anything to apprehend.^{liv}

This relationship led Mexico increasingly into a state of dependency. Once the dust had settled from the revolution, the fact that Mexico was in poverty and needed money desperately to stay afloat came into play. President Guadalupe Victoria gained power in 1824 and found representatives from

foreign nations were more than ready to help with Mexico's "steadily worsening financial situation."^{lv} England eagerly assisted and the resulting loans "were deemed to be the salvation" of Mexico's financial needs.^{lvi} However Mexican land titles served as collateral for these loans giving England a virtual receivership power over Mexico.^{lvii}

Because of this receivership arrangement, Mexico's continued national existence was in England's best interest. Through the utilization of a business partnership known as a merchant house, the British were able to profit off of the chaos in Mexico. The flexibility of these businesses performed ancillary services that existed in Europe, but were not to be found in Mexico. Examples of these included acting as agents for shipping, insurance, finances, and exchanges of all sorts. As these were large, multifaceted companies, it was no surprise that the largest houses became involved in government *negocios* and policy formulation. With such a multifaceted business approach, England moved in to take the keystone position to the distribution pyramid in Mexico. In 1826, seventeen British merchant houses opened in Mexico with brilliant prospects for the future and lent Mexico fourteen million pesos as capital for future business.^{lviii} In this position they acted as the middleman between the industry of Europe and the producers of Mexico. While this relationship benefited Mexico as a nation, the

role England played made it unnecessary for Mexico to deal constructively with the trade difficulties that the merchants and planters of Texas faced.^{lix}

Germany's involvement however arose out of necessity: unemployment. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the industrial revolution in Britain produced a glut of British goods on the market. This in turn drove down the prices of competing German products that were more expensive. The loss of sales led to the disappearance of many markets. In combination with a population growth in Germany, the opportunities for sales at home were severely constricted.^{lx}

In their search for new markets, Germany entered the New World. They established a commercial system that allowed German merchants with little or no money to set up business overseas. As the larger German towns liked to support merchants from their own town, the exodus of German merchants was met with support provided that success was met. As the warning of German merchant Nicholase Hesse stated:

Merchants, who possess adequate means, and have the necessary business experience, who are able to acquaint themselves with the peculiarities of the local trade, and who are good salesmen of the goods they have, will certainly not prove failures.... Of course, they must not be too conservative in starting a new venture. ...In this land of speculation not much is gained without daring, and he who is too cautious may be compared to a creature suspended between heaven and earth, without being able to descend or ascend.^{lxi}

Mexico proved to be a fertile ground for German commerce. Rather than merely attempting to sell German goods, the majority of German merchants were excitedly supporting and exporting Mexican products. While Britain may have been at the top of the merchant scheme, German trade expanded rapidly. It rose to a level that led the states that would become Germany to begin fearing the wrath of either Spain or Austria and the Germans cut back their expansion. However, unlike the British, small German merchants were not adverse to expanding their interests into Texas. Their success in business with Mexico was of paramount importance to the Germans.^{lxii}

Despite these successes, the government of Mexico still needed money. Although the duties levied against trade in Mexico proper were contributing cash, officials knew that they must continue to identify sources of income. In 1827, the foreign merchant houses had cooled their excitement and loan money from the House of Barclay and Goldschmidt had to be spent in putting down uprisings. Payments on the British debt had to be temporarily suspended due to a lack of revenue.^{lxiii} By the beginning of 1830 the incredible wealth of Texas began to fill the thoughts of Mexican officials. Many believed that now was the time that they were to profit from this protected territory.

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CHAPTER II

The Trial of the Merchants

Nature seems to have favored Texas for a great agricultural, grazing, manufacturing, and commercial country. ...the whole country produces cotton of the best quality acknowledged in New Orleans to be superior to Louisiana cotton.

--Description of Texas by Stephen F. Austin, 1828

If we now examine the present condition of Texas, brought about by the policy which I have unveiled at length we will find that the majority of the population is composed of natives of the United States of the North; that they occupy the frontier posts on the coast and the mouths of rivers; that the number of Mexicans inhabiting that county is insignificant, when compared with the North Americans; that they come from all directions to settle upon the fertile lands, taking notice that most of them do so without previously complying with the requests of our laws, or in violation of existing contracts.

--Lucas Alman, in speech to Mexican congress 1828

The placid and prosperous scene in Texas was soon threatened by the passage of "the Decree of April 6, 1830". The bill, having its foundation in the continued fear of the United States, limited the freedoms that the Texicans had held. The Texas colonials greeted most of the provisions--such as the Mexican occupation of Texas by convict soldiers and halting Anglo-American settlement, with angry huffs. One provision however, that which dealt with the erecting of custom houses and enforcing the payment of tariffs, drew colonists to an armed revolt in 1832. Not only did this skirmish foreshadow the revolution that would

occur 3 years later, but as it dealt with maritime freedoms, it was also fought via nautical means.

The "Decree of April 6, 1830" had its beginnings in a tour made by General Manuel Mier Y Teran. Mier y Teran, who had once been described as a "liberal reformer," was in charge of military operations in Texas. In 1828, he made an excursion to Texas to settle the boundary with the United States of America as well as to study the flora and fauna, and to note the number and persuasions of the colonists and Native Americans.ⁱ The situation he found in Texas, alarmed him.ⁱⁱ

Attempts to populate Texas and integrate that population into full Mexican citizenship had failed in Teran's eyes. Rather than the land populated by expected Hispanic or Franco-Louisianan peoples he expected, Teran found that Anglo-Americans had flooded the territory to the point where "the ratio of Mexicans to foreigners is one to ten" and "the Mexican influence is proportionately diminished until...it is almost nothing."ⁱⁱⁱ Offered as evidence

¹ As national/ethnic identity does play a role in describing the population of Mexican Texas, identity shall be defined as thus. Texican shall be the term regardless of race to describe the citizens of Mexican Texas. Should the Hispanic population be addressed, they shall be referred to as Tejano. The immigrants of America shall be referred to as Anglo-American (although it is quite presumptuous of the Historical reader to regard this misnomer and amalgamation

of the Anglo-American's failure to assimilate, Teran pointed to many issues. Unlike the Tejano population, who were born into the system, few of the Anglo settlers had journeyed to the state, much less the national, capital. As such, Teran believed them to assume that the lack of Mexican authority in Texas was reflective of all Mexico. This was especially dangerous as Teran described the Anglo population as a mixture of "honest laborers" and "fugitives from justice" who were so politically aware that they symbolically "carried their constitutions in their pockets."^{iv} Compared to the Tejano population, Teran described the Anglo settlers as of "another people...more progressive and informed...but also more shrewd and unruly."^v

As to the "Mexicans of this town [Nacogdoches]," Teran also found much lacking. Describing them as "the lowest class—the very poor and very ignorant,"^{vi} Teran describes how rather than acting to integrate the new colonists much of their time was spent "complaining about the superiority and better education."^{vii} Government officials were no better: he described them as "venal" and "ignorant," and recounted how rather than reconciling with the newcomers, they would "set themselves against the foreigners."^{viii} This animosity was so

of races to be appropriate). When revolution does break out and Independence is declared, Texian is the all-inclusive name of the rebel/independent residents of

great that Teran observed that the rulers would establish “nets...depriving the Anglo colonists both of land, as well as franchise.^{ix}

Teran’s opinions about both the population, and the government were similar to Stephen F. Austin’s. In an 1829 letter to William Wharton, Austin vented his frustration in that he had to deal with an

ignorant, whimsical, selfish, and suspicious set of rulers over me to keep good natured, a perplexed, confused colonization law to execute over an unruly set of North American frontier republicans to controul who felt that they were sovereigns, for they knew that they were beyond the arm of the Govt. or of the law, unless it pleased them to be controuled.^x

It was in their conclusions and how to find a solution to the problems presented that Austin and Teran differed greatly.

In such a divided community, only one solution met with agreement between the colonists and officialdom. The one solidifying argument was that Texas should be separated from Coahuila and organized into a separate territory of the Mexican federation. Both Austin and Teran pointed to numerous reasons—such as the fact that the wealth, as well as the political power, of Texas was being hindered by her continued unification with their mother-state

Texas.

Coahuila. Just as a border divided the two areas, so did their needs and difficulties. Nowhere is this more apparent than in addressing mercantile issues.

Texas, with her busy coastline carrying both international and interstate trade, had to address a different reality than that of the sporadic, and slow trickle of possible interstate but mainly intrastate trade that Coahuila carried. Many Texicans believed that their union with Coahuila prevented Mexico from aiding their interests “which are very different from those of the other sections.”^{xi} Teran pointed out that the Texicans believed that only through a separate statehood, could the unfettered Texas rise to the prosperity that the constitution of 1824 guaranteed.^{xii} Such an idyllic solution however was far from Teran’s mind.

By the following year, old fears of American usurpation arose. No doubt this phobia was a reaction to the Spanish attempt to reconquer Mexico in 1829. Though the Spanish force of 3,000 was defeated at Tampico by General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, xenophobia was heightened. Teran spent much of his 1829 report warning of the “North Americans” who have “conquered whatever territory adjoins them.”^{xiii} The “silent means” by which the United States acquired new territory is one hidden in subterfuge. As Teran claimed:

Instead of armies, battles or invasions, which make a great noise and for the most part are unsuccessful, these men lay hands on means, which, if considered one by one, would be rejected as slow, ineffective, and at times absurd. They begin by assuming rights

....In the meantime, the territory against which these machinations are directed...begins to be visited by adventurers and empresarios ...shortly, some of the forerunners begin to develop an interest which complicates the political administration of the coveted territory; complaints, even threats begin to be heard....They incite uprisings in the territory in question and usually manifest a deep concern for the rights of the inhabitants.^{xiv}

Teran concluded that action must immediately be taken, otherwise Texas, with its substantial Anglo-American population, "could throw the whole nation into revolution."^{xv}

Mier y Teran's report found a ready audience in Mexico City. Already mindful of the aggressive expansionist territorial and market driven tendencies of the United States of America, most recently carried out in Texas by Anglo-American colonists in the failed Fredonian revolt four years prior, the congress listened with biased ears. Forgetting that Stephen Austin offered troops to assist Mexico in putting down the revolt, the threat of foreign intrusion and conquest captivated their attention. The leader to whom they would unify about was thrust into the office of the presidency.

The conservative Vice-president Anastasio Bustamante was thrust into the Presidency and promised to bring Mexico stability and progress. To achieve the society he envisioned, Bustamante began recalling many of the freedoms granted

by his liberal predecessors, and turned the federal republic into a more centralistic form of government.

The Mexican congress was more than willing to acquiesce to Bustamante. Bustamante had shown success in cutting back costs through his reduction of the Army and successful renegotiation of the British loans. Both he and they believed that the liberal and *laissez-faire* attitude that had been taken not only towards the colonization of Texas but in republican federalism as well needed revision. This sudden shift in political ideology reflected the birthing pains of the Mexican nation. A federal republic is a difficult society to build. As testimony Jose Mora, a Mexican liberal at the time, stated, that unlike the United States of America where in the area of self-government “everything was done before separation from the mother country,” in Mexico “everything remained to be done.”^{xvi} It is interesting to note that Mora had not only romanticized the union of states to the north, but also that he was blind to the difficulty that strained the fabric of not only the United States of both Mexico and America, but of all republics – the balance of power between the state and central governments.

Such was the setting when the Mexican Secretary of State, Luis Alaman, who held Teran’s report, presented his *iniciativa* to Congress. Feeding off the

phobia surrounding perceived aggression by the United States, Alaman presented warnings similar to those Teran had in his 1829 observations. The Anglo-American settlers in Texas “came from all directions to settle upon the fertile lands.”^{xvii} The acquisition of these lands, according to Alaman, was only achieved through skullduggery as Alaman asked the Mexican Congress to “tak[e] notice that most of them do so without previously complying with the requests of our laws.”^{xviii} By utilizing the fact that the only item the “North Americans” are waiting for is for the “numerical” and “legal supremacy” that the colonists will “acquire from the act of the Legislature declaring to be citizens all who have resided five years in the State.”^{xix} To thwart such plans, Alaman insisted that the time was ripe to reassert authority over the province of Texas to prevent “the moment...when that territory will be taken from us and added to the United States of the North.”^{xx}

In their effort to “Mexicanize” Texas, the Mexican Congress passed the “Decree of April 6, 1830”. Mexico attempted to thwart Anglo-American expansion in a very straightforward way. The first order of the Decree was a military reorganization and establishment of a presence in Tejas. Secondly, the Decree provided for assistance to Mexican and European colonization, but prohibited Anglo-American settlement. Finally, in order to defray the expense of

carrying out such an enterprise, as well as to promote commercial integration, the Decree removed the Texicans' tax-exempt status and called for the construction of customhouses for tariff enforcement.^{xxi} This aggressive step toward trade made perfect sense in reflection of the observations of the English vice-consul at the Mexican port of San Blas in 1825, Eustace Barron. Barron stated that Mexican officials had "been taught to look upon every stranger entering this country with jealousy [*sic*] and even horror as a smuggler and as an interloper and a heretic." Barron continued to point out that specifically the maritime was eyed with suspicion as evidenced by "all kinds of vexatious difficulties and restrictions on their free intercourse with the shore."^{xxii}

The sweeping reorganization of Texas displayed an attempt by Mexico to strengthen its lack of a maritime presence. Stressing Mexico's weakness in Texas with "our base of operations...three hundred leagues distant while our enemies would be carrying on their struggle close to their base and in possession of the sea," Teran called for Texas to be divided into three military departments: the departments of Bexar, Brazos, and Nacogdoches, with forts built to strategically encircle the settlements.^{xxiii} Article Four provided for their construction. Each department would contain two forts. One would be placed along the El Camino Real to oversee commerce carried by land and the other would be in a coastal

position in view of maritime commerce. The old garrisons at San Antonio, Goliad, and Nacogdoches were augmented by new posts at the head of Galveston Bay (Anahuac), at the mouth of the Brazos (Velasco), the mouth of the Nueces (Lipantitlan), and the establishment of a new inland garrison at the Brazos crossing of the Bexar-Nacogdoches Road (Tenoxtitlan). This way not only could the movements of the newly suspected colonists be observed, but also tariff regulations could be enforced on all commercial traffic.

Mexico's attempt to colonize Texas, coincided with how they planned to man the newly established citadels. To limit the cost of such a grand design, Articles Five and Six allowed for the forts to be constructed as well as manned by "convict-soldiers."^{xxiv} These soldiers were permitted to bring their families and upon the end of their incarceration would be granted land and tools for settlement. To induce Mexican families to settle near the new outposts, Articles Seven and Eight stated that Mexican families who desired to become colonists "would be furnished transportation, maintained for one year, and assigned the best of agricultural lands."^{xxv} To assist the new colonists further, Article Thirteen exempted "Frame houses and all classes of foreign food products" from taxation for two years.^{xxvi} With such incentives offered, Mexico was sure that many Hispanic colonists would flock to Texas. Teran himself had hoped as early as

1828 that farmers from the Mexican province of Yucatan would arrive. This was due to the fact that their agricultural, and mercantile background would enable them to assimilate into the plantation/agricultural economy of Texas.^{xxvii} By 1830, Mexico was so hopeful of emigration, that a goal of receiving 5,000 colonists from each of the Mexican states was forecast.^{xxviii}

Discouragement of Anglo-American settlement was also enforced through specific articles in the Decree. Article Three, reflective of the centralist movements of the government, subverted the states regulation over colonization and authorized a new federal commission to oversee colonization. Article Nine restricted the admittance of any “foreigners across the northern frontier” unless an agent of the republic of Mexico issued them a passport. To discourage immigrants from the southern states of the United States of America, Article Ten forbade “the further introduction of slaves.” Article Eleven further limited Anglo-American colonization by stating that “emigrants, from nations bordering on this republic” could no longer settle in Mexican areas adjacent to their old homeland. It also revoked colonial contracts that had not filled the quota allotted to them.^{xxix}

Articles Twelve through Seventeen were an attempt by Mexico to halt the commercial ties that Texas had developed with the United States of America and

instead refocus them back towards Mexico. The refocus on Mexico as the target of trade is readily apparent in reading Article Twelve, which stated "Coastwise trade shall be free to all foreigners for the term of four years, with the object of turning the trade to ports of Matamoros, Tampico, and Veracruz." To discourage activity with the United States of America, as well as to recompense the government for their expenditures, tariffs were established and discussed in Articles fourteen through seventeen.

The effects of the "Decree of April 6" were varied. Many histories attempt to argue that a myriad of points about the "Decree of April 6" ignited frustrations that turned to revolution. The bans on immigration, and even slavery, are listed as flashpoints of the Texas rebellion. Inspection of historical data, however, displays that these issues were secondary, compared to the larger danger of encroachment and possible curtailment of the successful agrarian economy that had taken shape in Texas. The largest threat to this system, enforcement of the tariff, served as the spark that ignited revolt in Texas.

To help diffuse the incendiary importance of the ban on immigration and the curtailment of smuggling/slavery, a brief discussion of the Texican reality shall be included.

The first item of discussion shall be the ban on immigration. While Article Nine did limit immigration on paper, it also left a large loophole. The exception provided by Article Nine, which gave permission for agents of the Mexican republic to issue passports, allowed Austin the authority to continue to admit Anglo-American citizens, who happened to become colonists legally. Enforcement of the Articles seemed to be lacking in the case of unfulfilled empresario contracts as well. Some of the unfulfilled contracts were simply folded into a larger empresario contract nearby. For others, such as Samuel May Williams unfulfilled contract, Stephen F. Austin utilized his political skill to overcome obstacles. In this case, Stephen F. Austin simply acted as the agent for his partner Samuel May Williams empresario grant, which had become void due to its incompleteness and renewed its terms.^{xxx} Anglo-American colonists still entered Texas, even if illegally, and at a much slower rate than before. While this fact in isolation, could be considered an irritant, its difficulties were not insurmountable and weakens its importance to revolutionary action.

The belief that the ban on slavery began the Texas revolution also appears weak in the light of historical evidence. Prior to passage of the "Decree of April 6", many Texans had made fortunes off the slave trade. One way this wealth was easily acquired was through importing them from Cuba at the cost of \$1 per

pound and reselling them in the United States at \$1,000 per head.^{xxxii} By pursuing such action Resin P. James and John Bowie accumulated a profit of \$65,000.^{xxxiii} Just as in the 'illegality' of Anglo-American colonization, a loophole in the law was utilized to circumvent it. Historian Ernest Fisher points out that "a Texas planter could go to the United States, buy slaves, and make contracts with them at such low wages that they and their children could never pay their way out of peonage."^{xxxiii} Just as in Anglo-American immigration, its illegality merely slowed, but did not stop the deplorable practice.

The common thread that united all of the secondary issues was the key issue of maritime freedom. As long as the core issue that supported the prosperity of the new Texican economy remained untouched, the colonists remained placid.

Before the implementation of the new fortifications, smuggling continued unabated. This is evidenced by the continuing confiscation of contraband goods at points in the interior as far as San Antonio. A report from Erasmo Seguin dated June 2, 1830, revealed that "forty pairs of men's shoes of foreign manufacture" were confiscated. Two months later, in a report filed by Jose M. Salinas spoke of "eight sacks of ammunition of foreign manufacture" that were uncovered.^{xxxiv} Because ships from the United States of America were designed

to put into shallower ports not patrolled by Mexican authorities, smuggling slowed but did not stop.

As illustrated by the experience of Mexican customs official, George Fisher, original attempts to place the tariff without a military presence was folly. George Fisher arrived at the busy port of Brazoria on May 18, 1830, attempting to enforce a tax on the busiest industry, with no military support at all. His attempts to collect tonnage duties met with failure. His failure at collection should have been no surprise. Rather than choosing on merit, Fisher achieved the post due to influence by the York Masonic lodge, and Teran's misconception that the Texicans would welcome collection by an American expatriot.^{xxxv} After confiscation of a cargo of two hundred bales of tobacco from an American schooner in June, anger spread quickly. In response, merchants, led by Samuel Williams, informed Fisher of the illegality of his action. Fisher maintained that he would stop as soon as he was shown the exemption papers for Austin's colony.^{xxxvi} Frustrated, the merchants proceeded to voice their discontent in two ways. The first step taken was the filing of continuous complaints against Fisher to General Teran. Secondly, as word spread quickly among the merchants of the tariff collection, civil disobedience erupted. This protest commonly arrived in

two forms. Either the port was avoided or cargo was dumped overboard if a confrontation with the tax collector was feared.

Establishing a dangerous precedent, Mexico responded to the Anglo settlers protests by halting collection of the tariff and closing Fisher's office. Although Teran obliged the Texicans as he found that Texas was still legally tax-exempt, the Texicans viewed it differently. The majority of the colonists assumed that the sovereign states rights established by the Mexican decree of 1824 were effective. As shown by Teran's actions, the merchants believed that petitions in conjunction with civil disobedience were effective political motivators. The colonists, believing they had won a victory against the tariff promised in the "Decree of April 6" became complacent and did not notice the problem on the horizon.

While involved with the primary problem of tariff enforcement, the settlers remained silent on the crucial step that would allow rigid implementation of the blockade – namely, the establishment of a military presence. The embodiment of the colonist's worst fears of Mexican infringement on prosperity arrived in November 1830 at Anahuac. For at this time, Colonel Juan [John] Davis Bradburn and eighty soldiers had been dispatched by Gen. Mier y Teran to erect a customs house and fort at the mouth of the Trinity

River.^{xxxvii} Due to this site's proximity to the United States of America, it was crucial that a Mexican presence be established there. The commandant, Bradburn, appeared to be the logical choice for this strategic outpost. He, like the majority of the surrounding colonists, was an American expatriot. After flight from the law, this native of western Virginia arrived in Texas as a Mexican revolutionary under Mina's expedition in November 1816. Utilizing both his political and military acumen, this bilingual adventurer quickly rose through the Mexican ranks. Throughout his career he consistently displayed his loyalty to the Mexican cause. In dispatching him to survey the area in October 1830, Mexican officials assumed that the colonists would see all his actions -- encouraging Spanish, surveying for steamboat usage on nearby rivers, and the military protection he would provide--as beneficial.^{xxxviii} Bradburn chose an excellent site for the location of his forces to enforce commercial law. Bradburn and his troops erected a brick and stockade fort on a high bluff that commanded the entrance to the Trinity River which also provided oversight of an old smuggling road nearby. With its solid brick walls over four feet thick and the main walls at seven feet thick, Bradburn and his two 18-pound pivot guns were an obvious show of force.^{xxxix} Mexican officials, including Mier y Teran, were

sure that with the new garrison in place, and the stability it provided, controlled prosperity would now be attainable for all.^{xi}

The colonists however, did not concur with this view. Rather they experienced numerous occurrences where their liberties were infringed. With the arrival of soldiers for construction of the fort, it was observed that true to the "Decree of April 6", many were convict-soldiers. Although their crimes varied from serious to trivial,^{xli} it appears that the colonists reacted by exaggerated rumors. The rumors grew so large that the colonists reported that one of them had "murdered over 11 men."^{xlii} The colonists were further irritated when Bradburn began to impress their slaves for further construction of his fortress. While anger was placated at first by the promises of recompensation by Bradburn, the colonists were horrified to learn that he was telling the slaves that as slavery was illegal in Mexico, they should be free. It should be noted, however, that although many aggravating secondary items were present, the main threat to the agrarian economy was the flashpoint of outright revolt: maritime commercial enforcement.

The first warnings of enforcement of the tariff with the strength of the military behind it entered with the new year of 1831. Bradburn, confident in his strength and wanting to display his adherence to centralist policies, placed the

tariff into effect. As the "Decree of April 6" contained numerous exemptions and had opened trade up to international coastal vessels, Bradburn decided to utilize an earlier tariff, one passed in 1827 of \$2.12¹/₂ a ton.^{xliii} This action would affect the Texicans directly as they still had most of their ships under foreign registry. For the vast majority, the ships retained their registry under the United States of America. A lesser reason for this retention include that many of the merchants were unwilling to go through the necessary paperwork to change registration. More importantly however was the fact that if the ships held their registration from the U.S.A., then the duties levied upon them in New Orleans would be much less than those levied against a 'foreign' vessel. Boldly, Bradburn ordered East Texas under martial law and closed all Texas ports save Anahuac. The first victim of this edict was the captain and owner of the sixty-five ton schooner, *Champion*, Samuel Rhoads Fisher. When it was revealed to him that he would have to pay tonnage fees for the cargo of tobacco he was carrying to Tampico both at Anahuac and again at Tampico, he was outraged.^{xliv} Figuring that the cost of his voyage merely in tonnage fees would be \$552.50, Fisher claimed, "No vessel can stand this and unless a change is made the trade must be abandoned." Pointing out that a surveyor for a planned nearby town of Liberty, Samuel Hiram, advised him to ignore the orders, Fisher continued to question the

veracity of Teran's claim.^{xlv} Practicing civil disobedience, Fisher refused to pay the tariff on his ship, wanting for Bradburn to prove the veracity of the tariff.

As Fisher began to file complaints against Bradburn, the colonists at the closed port of Brazoria were also taking action. The populace of Brazoria gathered to explore how they should make their discontent known. They met and chose merchants Branch T. Archer and George McKinstry to petition Bradburn to reopen the other Texas ports. In his petition, not only did Archer believe that Mier y Teran was ignorant of Bradburn's action, but also warned that unless removal of the tariff was soon enacted, war was soon to follow.^{xlvi} Bradburn acquiesced and released the *Champion* and abandoned martial law and the tariff. This pardon granted by Bradburn was not because he believed that his actions were wrong, rather he felt that he did not have the military strength at that moment. Once again, the colonist's belief that necessary steps of civil disobedience and petitions were vital for political change was reinforced.

Realizing the threat that the Mexican garrison at Anahuac would make to the important clandestine commerce supporting Texas, colonists began to look towards ways to subvert the new Mexican authority. The colonists enlisted Francisco Madero, a new land commissioner for Coahuila and Texas, to begin the town of *Villa de la Santissima de la Libertad*, anglicized to Liberty, on May 2, 1831.

The location of this town site was important in that it was on the Trinity River, next to an old Indian trail turned smuggling road from Opelousas Louisiana to La Bahia, and as far from Anahuac as possible. The information that the town had a disproportionately large population of people who excelled at filing petitions did not please Bradburn either. This fact was compounded by the evidence that despite the number of people acting as lawyers – only one citizen of the self-proclaimed advocates, Thomas Jefferson Chambers, had actually obtained the license issued only in Mexico City that authorized citizens to practice law.^{xlvi}

Knowing that the tariff exemption for Texas was about to expire by the end of 1831 Mier y Teran also knew that steps should be taken to ensure peaceful collection. As an initial step in this process he reestablished George Fisher at the Custom House, or *aduana*, on Bolivar Peninsula on September 27, 1831. Fisher was ordered merely to oversee commerce and check the smuggling of goods into the interior. Though the colonists along the Brazos felt that Fisher's presence was an act of revenge for the humiliation he had suffered at their hands, because he was not seeking to enforce the tariff, no steps were taken.^{xlvi}

But when Fisher arrived at Anahuac during the first part of November 1831, the furies were unleashed. With his arrival, Bradburn finally held an

effective solution of his problem with the town of Liberty – a proclamation of martial law for east Texas. With martial law in effect not only could his difficulty with Liberty be solved, but he could also begin enforcing the tariff. Bradburn announced that the *ayuntamiento* of Liberty was dissolved and that the ports of Texas except Anahuac were closed.^{xlix}

At first, the reaction of the colonists was one of **disbelief**. Since the encounter with George Fisher earlier, the customhouse and fort had remained placid. The soldiers inside had only emerged to “inquire for passports and the tonnage of vessels.”¹ There were four merchant vessels located at Velasco; the *Nelson*, the *Williams*, the *Tiscon*^{*}, and the *Sabine*, all of which were all involved in the trade between New Orleans and Velasco. As they had already unloaded their cargo, the captain of the *Sabine*, Jerry Brown, was the first to be informed that he would have to pay a duty and get permission from the commander at Anahuac before his vessel could leave.¹ⁱ Confronted with a hundred-mile overland trip to Anahuac, the captain protested. The owner of the ship, Edwin Waller, went to the commander at Velasco and offered a bribe of fifty dollars. This sum was refused, however Waller was informed that one hundred dollars

^{*}This is the name given by Filisola-it is probably a misspelling of either *Tyson* or *Texian*

would satisfy the customs official.^{lii} Considering this price exorbitant, Waller turned to more drastic steps.

With assistance from William H. Wharton, Waller persuaded Captain Brown to run the blockade. Much to the excitement of the spectators on shore, on the 15th of December 1831 the vessel was untied and began to float downstream. Although fired upon by Mexican troops on shore, the *Sabine* unfurled her sails, and protected by bales of cotton, the crew responded in kind.^{liii} Another vessel, the *Tiscon*, followed the *Sabine's* example and also escaped. Although Wharton and Waller were arrested, their influence helped them largely to escape punishment, though Waller was forced to buy two cannon with the sale of his cargo and return with them to Velasco.^{liv} The reason for this strange penalty was that the cannon were to be used to bolster the Mexican defenses, and it would also serve to assist in the collection of duties. A few days later during another blockade run by the *Nelson*, shots were also exchanged. A shot from the Mexican garrison apparently grazed Captain Samuel Fuller, which angered him into calling for his rifle. One of the passengers, Spencer H. Jack, grabbed and aimed the rifle, wounding one of the guards.^{lv} This drastic form of civil disobedience brought immediate results: the *Williams*, which departed only

moments after the *Nelson*, experienced no difficulty in leaving even though its papers were in disorder.

Learning of this action, Teran lost all patience with the Texicans. With all the disorder afoot, his Mexican superiors were wondering whether Teran was loyal to the regime, while at the same time, Texican colonists were looking to him for protection. He knew that he must act quickly and his reply attempted to appease both parties. For his Mexican superiors, Teran ordered the violators cargoes to be held subject to collection of the fee's and their ships detained should they return. But in an effort to assuage Texican anger over Fisher's actions, Teran rebuked him for his unreasonable rules.

Having won limited success through civil disobedience, the colonists next turned to their second historically proven political alternative – petitions. In February 1832, Austin dispatched a petition to Mier y Teran requesting a renewal of the tariff exemption for five more years, as well as replacement of George Fisher. Teran, who felt that Austin was partially to blame for the problems with tariff collection, was not overjoyed to receive this request. In a communiqué to the governor, Teran noted “in the villa of Austin the decrees and orders of the government do not circulate when they are contrary to the interests of the enterprise of colonization,” so Austin's request was not taken seriously.^{lvi}

However, wanting to maintain the peace, Teran did relieve George Fisher of his post, and placed Francisco Duclor in his place.

Having won only partial success, however, colonists continued both civil disobedience and petitions. Inflaming incidents however, continued as well. At Brazoria, which did not have as strong as a military presence, the overwhelmed commander Domingo de Ugartechea allowed Texican ships pass rather than risk mob action. Even after the construction of Fort Velasco, with its corresponding detachment of 100 troops and six-pound cannon in May 1832, Ugartechea continued to let the vessels pass.^{lvii} He excused this action stating:

the merchants testified that these offenses [non payment of tariff] were due to the hardships imposed on the captains of the vessels and on the trade since they had to unlash at the mouth of the river, where there was no building to shelter the goods from the weather to present their reports.^{lviii}

At Anahuac however, Bradburn kept a much tighter reign on the citizens. Always fearful that the colonists would rise against him, Bradburn made sure to upkeep his strong military presence and state of martial law. Bradburn continued not only tariff collections but he also “took property from the colonists, disclaimed their land titles, and declared that all of their slaves were freed.”^{lix}

Stephen F. Austin reacted to the increasing anger and sense of injustice in his colonists' part by continually pressing for patience. Austin observed that many liberals shared the anger at the repressive centralist policies and had begun their push to change Mexico. Under the standard of states rights as promised in their revolutionary manifesto, *The Plan of Veracruz*, revolts had broken out. Led by General, and politician extraordinaire, Santa Anna, the Federalists fought for change in the heart of Mexico. Austin predicted that the Santa Anna party would be victorious in their fight and the *santanistas* might use any turmoil as an excuse to end the Texas experiment with colonization. Also, and more pressing, the existence of an estimated seventeen hundred troops poised in Matamoros, with reinforcements available at Tampico, were seen as a force sufficient to stop any rebellion that might occur in Texas. Therefore, Austin believed that patience at this time was the better part of valor.^{lx}

Under the conditions the colonists faced, of limitations placed not only on their freedom but also their prosperity, a breaking point was soon reached. In May 1832, an opportunity arose that gave the colonists a rallying point when two of the convict-soldiers attacked an Anglo woman, and a neighbor failed to come to her rescue. The men of the community rose en masse and tarred and feathered the inactive neighbor. They then organized themselves, chose

merchant Patrick C. Jack as their leader, and began to march on the fort. When asked by Bradburn to disperse they stated that they were merely a self-defense committee formed against the nearby, Alabama-Coushatta tribe. The formation of a self-defense militia to guard against Indian attack was an extra-legal body. The fact that the Alabama-Coushatta was a peaceful and settled tribe brought the veracity of their claim into question. As Bradburn viewed himself as the first line of defense against encroachment by the United States of America, it is no surprise that Bradburn did not believe them. Viewing them as a possible gang of filibusters, Bradburn arrested Jack, and threw him into jail alongside one of the quasi-lawyers from Liberty, William B. Travis. When William Jack, Patrick Jack's brother, appeared before Bradburn to protest his brother's capture he was given fifteen minutes to leave Anahuac, lest the same misfortune befall him.^{lxi}

William Jack quickly left and spread the word of what had occurred. Colonists began flocking to the vigilante militia. The colonists felt that if Bradburn and Anahuac could be defeated, economic prosperity in the unregulated commerce would return as would their continued prosperity.²

² The reason for this conflict can be found in the revolutionary schemata contained in Crane Brinton's work, Anatomy of a Revolution. In this work, a comparative work of four revolutions, the schemata developed by Brinton fit well to the situation in Texas. In one specific area, economics, Brinton's approach

At San Felipe, Jack was able to gather 90 men to fight against Bradburn's tyrannical action. As he continued to Brazoria, people continued to flock to his side. To lend more credence to the legitimacy of the protest, John Austin was elected to command the revolutionaries. His arguments were so compelling that even the commander at Velasco, Ugartechea, not only wrote a petition for the release of the prisoners, but also sent his adjutant, D. N. Dominguez, with the crowd.^{lxii} John Austin's rhetoric however was not able to persuade Ugartechea to give him a cannon as he requested. By June 4th the angry colonist, now numbering around one hundred and thirty, gathered a few miles south of Anahuac.

At the war council on June 5th, 1832, the Texicans took a crucial step. Johnson knew that the options of his land force were extremely limited. The Mexican force comprised of 162 men outnumbered Johnson's 130.* Johnson,

looking to the economic hopefuls rather than the economic elite, as Marxist Charles Beard would have studied, is more appropriate to the social realities of Texas. Just as in the revolutions studied by Brinton, Texas fit the description that it was the government of Mexico that was in "financial difficulties" not in Texas itself.² Just as in Brinton's societies Texas was a society that was "economically progressive" rather than in an economic depression, and it was through the tariff that caused those who saw their opportunity for prosperity vanish.²

* The number of Bradburn's men is disputed. One Texican visitor claimed that there were 300 Mexican soldiers; Bradburn claimed that he only had 80.

utilizing time as his greatest ally, decided to lay siege to Anahuac. Not only would besieging Anahuac buy him time, but would isolate the Mexican guard, while allowing his own troops to be reinforced by the continually arriving recruits. In a move that would forecast the actions of the Texas Navy in their revolution against Mexico, a flotilla of three ill armed and hastily furnished tiny schooners were chosen to enforce the blockade by sea.

The tiny fleet carried out their jobs beyond all expectations. The ships were the 5-ton *Stephen F. Austin* (crew of 5, 5 guns), the 5-ton *Red River* (crew of 5, 5 guns), and the 4¹/₂-ton *Water Witch* (crew of 4, 4 guns).^{lxiii} The “guns” that the vessels carried were literally rifles; the *Waterwitch* was armed with “a small swivel” – the largest weapon in the fleet.^{lxiv} Each vessel was assigned a certain area to patrol and “make prizes of all vessels loaded with provisions for Fort Anahuac.”^{lxv} The *Stephen F. Austin*, under Captain William Scott, was assigned the area from Anahuac to Double Bayou. The *Red River*, under Captain D. L. Kokernot, was to patrol from the mouth of the Trinity to the west following the shore of the bay. The *Water Witch*, under Captain James Spillman was to guard Trinity bay.

Records of the Mexican payroll however display 162 and this number has reached consensus among Texas historians.

It was not long before the ships saw action:

About the 5th of June, 1832, Captain Kokernot discovered a vessel crossing the bay, in the direction of Anahuac, and gave chase, overtook and captured her. She was loaded with butter, eggs, chickens and other provisions for the Mexican garrison at Anahuac which was converted to the use of our little army.

Captain Scott made prize of a boat near the mouth of the Double Bayou, loaded with beef and corn meal for the fort. About the same time Captain Spillman took two boats, off Cedar Point, loaded with corn and other provisions for Fort Anahuac.^{lxvi}

The Naval victories however were not reflective of success on shore. At first it appeared that victory would come easily. Reinforcements for Johnson's troops had arrived and augmented his troops to one hundred and sixty. The Texican soldiers had massed and moved so quickly that on June 9th they were able to capture Bradburn's only cavalry contingent without a shot. The next day they proceeded to occupy the buildings on the north side and prepare for attack. Austin approached Bradburn, presented the petition made by Colonel Ugartechea and assumed that the prisoners would be released. Thinking quickly as to how to demilitarize the colonists, Bradburn replied that he was no longer in charge of the garrison and that the Texicans should retreat to the plaza, *La Malinche*, to await further word. Austin, expecting to receive positive news, ordered his men to the plaza. Upon leaving their protection and gathering in the

defenseless plaza, Bradburn demanded the colonists leave Anahuac so that their presence would not disrupt negotiations.

The next morning, as the militia was preparing to enter Anahuac to negotiate, plans suddenly changed. During the night, Bradburn had wisely prepared his defenses by collecting all the ammunition stored in the town and dispatching couriers “to every military post in Texas” to come to his aid. In a letter to Austin, Bradburn claimed that the Texicans had broken the truce thereby justifying his action of preparing his defenses. Goaded Austin, Bradburn stated, “it was already time, that he was well fortified, and that he might come and receive the prisoners.”^{lxvii} As a further display of his power, Bradburn threatened to loot the citizens of Anahuac’s houses and fired the two 8-pound pivot guns at some homes.^{lxviii} Austin angrily led his troops in and in the brief skirmish that occurred, one Texican and five Mexican soldiers were killed with no progress toward the release of the prisoners.^{lxix} Austin and his men retreated to Turtle Bayou to discuss the next step.

Bradburn had elevated the stakes through his refusal to release the prisoners and the colonists felt that it was time to list their grievances. This list of grievances became known as the Turtle Bayou Resolutions. In these resolutions, the colonists were sure to point out that they did not want to break with Mexico,

rather, they had arrived at the realization that the only way their voice and petitions would be heard was if they were a separate Mexican state. Encouraged by Federalist revolts in Mexico that fought for increased states rights, they pledged their allegiance to the State rights Plan of Veracruz, as supported by General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna. Many of the problem areas listed dealt with Federal assertion of power over areas freely given to the states. The restrictions placed over the maritime were of course listed as one of the difficulties to be fought against.

Realizing that more firepower was needed to dislodge Bradburn and his troops, the dissidents decided that the answer to their problem depended on the sea. The closest cannon not already being used in the blockade was to be found in Brazoria – and the easiest and quickest way to get it to the scene was to bring it by ship. A team consisting of John Austin, George B. McKinstry, Henry S. Brown, and Captain William J. Russel, among others were chosen to go to Brazoria for men and to retrieve three cannon located there.^{lxx}

Arriving on June 20th the team found the residents ready for action. A force of around 125 men flocked to the protest. Quickly, the *aduana* of the town was seized and its cannon taken. The merchant schooner *Brazoria*, having just docked from a New Orleans passage, was impressed and the cannon mounted.

In preparation for possible combat, cotton bales were placed around the vessel to repel small arms fire. A detachment of forty men armed with rifles was chosen as marines to accompany the vessel. As time was of the essence, John Austin was elected commander-in-chief of the combined naval and land forces with Captain Russel chosen to command the vessel.^{lxxi}

The colonists left for Anahuac on June 22, knowing that the only obstacle to successful completion might be found at Fort Velasco. For four days the force numbering between 150 and 199 men including those aboard the *Brazoria* maneuvered towards the mouth of the Brazos. At about midnight the outpost was reached. A message was dispatched to Ugartechea to join their Federalist cause and allow them to pass. Ugartechea and his approximately one hundred and twenty five troops refused. Rather than disheartening the Texicans, Ugartechea's refusal displayed the haughty corruptness they had come to expect of the centralized government. Bolstered in the need to display the necessity for state's rights, the Texicans prepared for battle, a battle that would last for more than ten hours.^{lxxii}

During this battle, the role of the *Brazoria* proved indispensable to the success of the dissention. The ship proved its worth from the very beginning, providing the cover fire that allowed the land force to establish itself within

thirty yards of the fort.^{lxxiii} Throughout the night gunfire remained sporadic, save the continuous fire of the *Brazoria's* cannon. With the arrival of dawn, the Mexican guard was able to clearly see its enemy. At this time, the Mexican guard began to lay down fire that pinned the ground force down. Only verbal shots of "Vivias" for "Santa Anna," "la Republica," "la Constitucion y las leys," and "el Supremo Gobierno" were launched back at the enemy from the ground. The marines on board the *Brazoria*, however, were able to prevent the Mexican artillery from effectively utilizing their exposed cannon. In the action, the mooring rope of the *Brazoria* was shot away, causing the ship to drift towards the fort becoming grounded only 170 yards distant. Gunfire continued until a voluminous downpour wet the powder of the land forces on both sides. The *Brazoria's* cannon and marines continued to pummel the fortress until 10 a.m., when Ugartechea raised his white flag.^{lxxiv}

A casual glance shows that the casualties on both sides were somewhat even. Ugartechea reported seven killed and nineteen wounded, while the Texicans counted seven dead and fifteen wounded.^{lxxv} The casualties on both sides of the battle however, were insignificant compared to its consequences.

With the surrender of Ugartechea, the Texicans reiterated their conviction of the supremacy of state's rights. The belief of violent civil disobedience as a

valid source of political change was upheld in the surrender agreement of Ugartechea. In this agreement, all of the demands to address the items of provocation were met. Ugartechea, his garrison, and his tariff collector agreed, “not to return, to take arms, against the express plan...of General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna.” As a further display of the removal of the tariff from the Texas coast, it was agreed that the soldiers would be taken to the distant Mexican port of Matamoros aboard the schooner *Elizabeth*.^{lxxvi}

Meanwhile the siege at Anahuac was also nearing a momentous conclusion. During the wait for Austin’s return, 50 more colonists joined the revolutionaries, increasing their number to over two hundred.^{lxxvii} Attempts to reinforce the Mexicans were not as successful. The commander of Tenoxtitlan, Francisco Ruiz, responded that eighteen men who he had allowed to go out and work to supplement their income had reduced his garrison. As they had not returned, Ruiz believed that he was left defenseless and unable to send more troops.^{lxxviii} At the closest and largest garrison nearby, led by Col. Jose de la Piedras at Nacogdoches, departure was delayed due to the lack of money, as stated:

I am not able to count upon ten dollars in silver for the expenses of this expedition, and I hope that you may procure some aid of this kind for me, without which I shall find myself in danger.^{lxxix}

Col. Piedras did however; finally lead 100 soldiers who discovered the problem at Anahuac. The Texicans had sent scouts to patrol the perimeter and discovered the movement. Placing detachments at the two available crossings to Piedras' army, the Texicans forced Piedras to call a truce. Under the white flag, Piedras went to Anahuac to discover the problem.

When confronted by Piedras, Bradburn continued to deny any responsibility for the uprising. Attempting to place blame of the revolt on the incendiary talk of William Travis, Bradburn sought clemency from Piedras.^{lxxx} Piedras however, was not persuaded and removed Bradburn from office putting his second, Juan Cortina, in charge. To placate the crowd, Bradburn was ordered to leave immediately. The effectiveness of the Texican naval blockade, now considered *santanista* vessels, prevented nautical escape. Fearful for his life, Bradburn escaped to New Orleans utilizing the same smuggling roads he had been dispatched to eradicate.

In Col. Piedras' truce, the Texicans were rewarded graciously for their civil disobedience. The overbearing Bradburn and his tariff enforcement had been removed. The new commander, Cortina, was specifically ordered to "act with much more tact to avoid such a rupture."^{lxxxi} The *ayuntamiento* at Liberty was reestablished, the prisoners were released, and petitions were allowed to

bypass regular channels and appear directly before Mier y Teran. As pointed out by scholar Margaret Swett Henson, the eagerness of Piedras to conciliate the rebels was due more to self-preservation than agreement with their demands.^{lxxxii} Overjoyed by the victory, the Texican flotilla upon hearing the news “sailed to Galveston Island, captured the deputy collector and his men, and took possession of the custom house” effectively ending tariff collection in East Texas.^{lxxxiii}

The rejoicing and relief of the Texicans was cut short on July 16, 1832. On this day, a flotilla of five ships led by the Mexican brig-of-war *Santa Anna* appeared off mouth of the Brazos River. On board the vessels were four hundred troops led by *santanista* officer General Jose Antonio Mexica as well as Stephen F. Austin. Mexica, having left Matamoros on July 6, arrived to discover if this revolt was truly a *santanista* backed rebellion, or a rebel movement towards separation from Mexico. During his ten-day voyage, Stephen F. Austin continually worked to persuade Mexica that the Texicans were only acting in support of Santa Anna, and his federalist revolution. Upon his arrival, Mexica sent off a dispatch to John Austin that clearly stated his objectives.

This document will inform you of the motives which brought me to Texas, and what would have been my course had the late movements here been directed against the integrity of the national territory. But if, as I have been assured by respectable citizens, the

past occurrences were on account of the colonists having adhered to the plan of Vera Cruz, and I am officially informed of that fact in an unequivocal manner, you can in that case assure the inhabitants that I will unite with them to accomplish their wishes.^{lxxxiv}

Mexica remained at this location to observe the Texicans for one week. He found the colonists “placid, loyal, and exulted” over the continued victories of Santa Anna in the interior. Pleased at his discovery, Mexica sailed away on July 24 giving the Texas *santanistas* his blessing. Motivated by newfound confidence in the system, the Texicans rose and expelled the centralist Col. Piedras from Fort Teran in Nacogdoches, and forced Col. Ruiz at Fort Tenoxtitlan to retreat to San Antonio.

The role of the Texican “navy” in this series of civil disobediences was tremendous. Had it not been for the blockade, which, according to Bradburn “kept continuous watch across the bay”; many items crucial to the Texican victory would have been absent.^{lxxxv} Lacking the blockade, Bradburn’s troops would easily have been resupplied and able to increase their tactical advantage. Without the food and supplies gathered, the Texican siege may have been lifted. Without the actions of the *Brazoria* in the battle of Velasco, the rebels certainly would have met defeat and the customhouse would have remained. As a unified body, Texicans had joined in civil disobedience and thanks to opportunities provided by their navy, their political aims had met with success.

The Texicans—bloodied by the lessons learned—believed they had learned how to make changes in the Mexican political system. Now that they had cast their lot with the Federalists' the Texicans continued in pursuit of their goal. A goal that would grant them the political voice that they sought—separate Mexican statehood.

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lxxxiv Gen. Jose Antonio Mexica to John Austin, 16 July 1832, as seen in Barker, *Mexico and Texas 1821-1835*, 115-116

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CHAPTER III

The Leading of the Merchants

I landed at this place near 4 weeks. Since I have had some dammed rough usuage, having my goods landed against my will by a military force. The people would calmly stand by and see me lose all. God damn them. ...My business has been delayed. My provisions and groceries have been [confiscated] as contraband and the whole duties claimed on the balance and the goods withheld till the deputies shall be paid. And all this by deputy collector and 40 soldiers!!!

--Merchant Andrew Briscoe

Between 1832 until the outbreak of revolution in 1835 mercantile concerns increasingly became bound to political concerns. Believing in the federalist promises of Gen. Santa Anna, the colonists knew that their energy should be focused on the separate Mexican statehood that they were sure would soon arrive. Following their old political tactics, the colonists first met to petition in the conventions of 1832 and 1833. Mexican inaction seemed to indicate approval of the political meeting. Later, however, when Mexico acted in ways against the Texican proposals, the colonists rose into civil disobedience. In these matters, it was the nautical aspects in Stephen F. Austin's economic revolution that were first infringed. Therefore it was in waterborne trading areas where skirmishes

broke out that predated the officially recognized opening of the Texas revolution at Gonzalez.

Drunk with the victory at Anahuac the Texas colonists organized to ensure that the rights won would not be taken away. As many of the Anglo-American settlers of Texas had come from the southern states of America, it should come as no surprise that they copied the actions of South Carolina who had called a state convention to deal with a perceived threat to their agricultural economy: the "Tariff of Abominations". Just as in South Carolina, who called for a collectivization of their political power through meeting in a state convention, on October 1, 1832 a call was issued for a political organization to meet at the capital of Austin's colony, San Felipe, for a convention. In response, fifty-six democratically chosen delegates arrived in representation of sixteen settlements. Politically, the moderate Stephen F. Austin was elected president of the convention. However the convention elected the radical merchant Francis Johnson as secretary.

As the delegates presented and discussed their concerns at the meeting, they slowly formed two groups: the peace and war parties. The groups split on how best their political aspirations could be met. The Peace Party adhered more towards Austin's beliefs that patient and slow movements through political

appeals was appropriate. The War party however, felt that bold and immediate action should be taken to ensure the rights desired and would have been more than happy to follow the lead of the South Carolinians who claimed that the states held the power of nullification, or to abolish orders of the central government that were contrary to the success of the state.¹ Many histories focus on the steps taken towards independent Texan statehood at this gathering. Of equal if not paramount importance to the delegates present however was discussion concerning an exemption of tariffs for the next three years. This should come as no surprise as thirty-six of the fifty-six delegates were from the south that had recently undergone tremendous conflict over U. S. President Jackson's Tariff of Abominations. The population also had twenty-three farmer/planters and fifteen merchants who would have strongly opposed any such tariff enforcement.¹ Knowing that moderation was the key for such a bold statement, the delegates showed the good faith move of electing tariff collectors. The colonists knew that in the federal form of government the volume of their political voice would only increase with separate Mexican statehood. Therefore,

¹ See figure 3-1

it was only after the political goal of free trade was discussed that the repeal of the decree of April 6, and independent statehood were presented.

The results of this convention however, made such discussion moot. Despite the wishes of many present, Austin did not believe that the time was right for presentation to the national government. Austin had three reasons for believing thusly. First, the absence of Goliad and San Antonio representatives would make it appear that only Anglo-American concerns were being addressed. Although San Antonio did send a *Representacion*, or a list of their grievances that mirrored Anglo-American concerns, Austin felt it better to wait.ⁱⁱ Austin knew that only cooperation with the Tejanos would provide hope for success of the petition.ⁱⁱⁱ Also, as Santa Anna had not yet captured power, Austin feared that his presentation for separation from Coahuila would appear seditious to the Bustamante Government. So it was that on October 6, 1832, the convention was dissolved promising that it would meet again in a year's time to reach agreement.

The delegates for the new convention, which met from April 1-13, 1833, consisted of many more who were favorable to the aims of the War party. There can be little doubt that one reason for their confidence was the fact that South Carolina had met perceived success. In March of 1833, the American congress

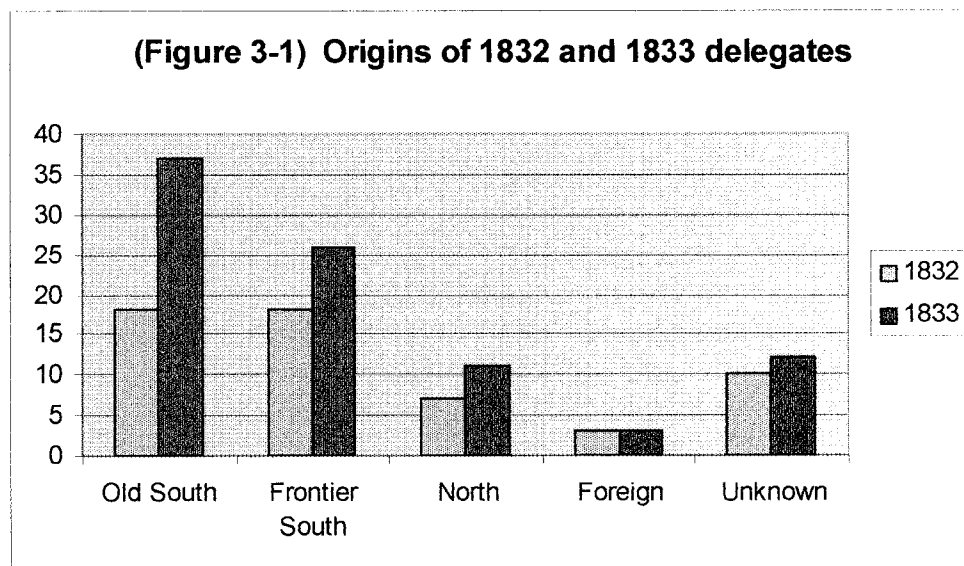
had passed a compromise tariff lowering the duties. Although American President, Andrew Jackson, had been willing to use force to subdue the nullifiers, the passage of the compromise tariff had relieved such tensions.^{iv} During the interim period members of the War party had busied themselves politicking and ensuring a large voice. Examination of the delegates however shows the results of their political machine. Nine members of the uprising at Anahuac were present. Thirty-one farmers/ planters and sixteen merchants were also present. A large majority of the delegates present, 63 of 89, were from the old or frontier south of America. To ensure the legality of the motions passed, eighteen lawyers also had been elected.²

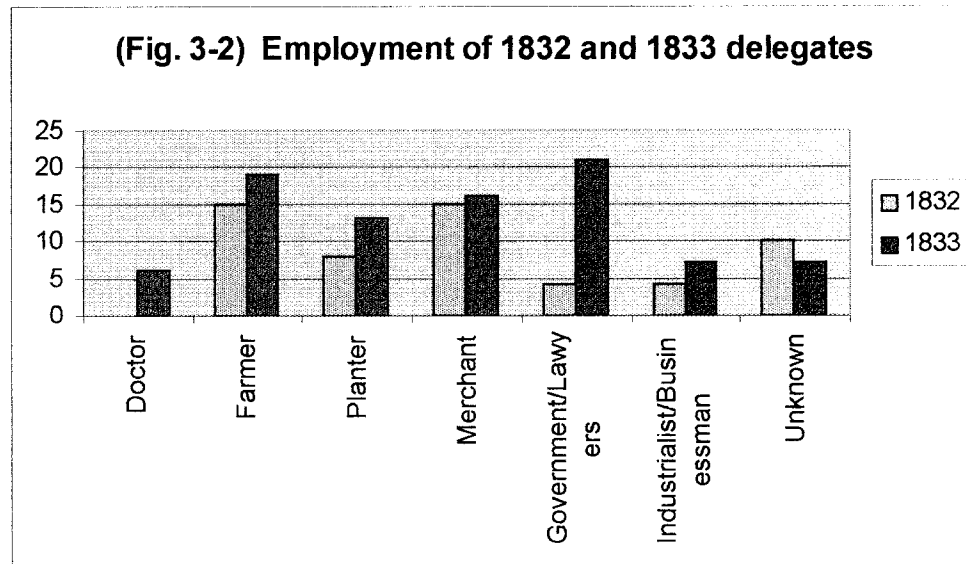
It should come as no surprise that once again, revocation of the tariffs was the first issue discussed, with separate Mexican statehood following. Representation from Goliad at this meeting, as well as some rogue San Antonio delegates³ were also present at the meeting. Not only was exemption from the tariff seen as vital, but also now a separation from Coahuila was deemed

² See figure 3-2

³ The reason why the San Antonio delegates are described as rogue is that they were not dispatched under the authority of the ayuntamiento. As San Antonio was the provisional seat of Mexican Authority in Texas they did not want to face the wrath of the troops garrisoned there, or upset the political powers present.

mandatory. The fact that Coahuila outnumbered Texas by nine to one dramatically reduced the power of their limited representation. The Texans knew that if their rights were to be protected, a stronger voice in national government must be heard. This could only be achieved through separate statehood. The fact that Santa Anna was so close to his federalist victory prompted the group to force Austin, with Erasmo Seguin and Dr. James Miller, to present the petition to Mexico City, on April 13, 1833.





(Information gathered for both fig. 3-1 and 3-2 names were gathered from www.tamu.edu/ccbn/dewitt/consult2.htm and cross-referenced with biographies from www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online)

The Texicans apparently seemed to believe that now that their petitions had been filed, they could let down their vigilance. All points seemed to display the victory of their rights. Their candidate, Santa Anna, had won his federalist revolution. Tariff enforcement had not returned to their coast. The “Decree of April 6” had been repealed. Texas would receive additional representation in the legislature. English could be used in legal documents, and now one could not be “molested” for holding a religious belief that was not Catholic.^v Prosperity had returned to the coasts. It is not surprising then that the simultaneous news that Austin had been arrested, was lost in the other victories the Texicans had gained.

Encouraged by the freedoms granted, the Texicans enjoyed prosperity on their Gulf shores. Immigrants continued to flood into the ports. Unregulated trade flourished. Bold men, such as Samuel Williams, dreamed of prosperous means garnished from supporting this trade. Williams, who was Austin's secretary, made plans along with merchant Thomas F. McKinney to build a "warehouse, wharf, and residences" at a newly proposed town of Quintana.^{vi} Such excitement indicates the belief that many Texicans cherished that the alliance formed with Santa Anna earlier at Anahuac remained valid. Such a belief was myopic and Texocentric.

Mexico had not bothered exerting their authority in Texas due to the fact that they were putting down rebellion closer to the capital. Encroachment of federalist changes to the states was viewed with suspicion and distrust. If scholar Timothy Anna is correct in his statement that the Mexican ""provinces created the nation, the nation did not create the provinces," then this period was reflecting the birthing pains of the nation exerting authority over the states.^{vii} Threats of revolution surrounded many of the provinces against the rule of Vice President Valentin Gomez Farias. Due to its foreign population and proximity to the United States of the North, Farias dispatched Colonel Juan Nepomuceno

Almonte to Texas to gather data. This data was to discover if the Texians were allies, or on the verge of revolt as Farias expected.

Almonte's travels in Texas began in Nacogdoches in May 1833. Spending until mid July in the Department of Nacogdoches, Almonte then traveled to the Department of Brazos, spending a month, and concluded his tour in the Department of Bexar. During his travels, Almonte wrote a report of what he had seen for submission to the federal government. From reading his report it is easy to see that the Texicans, wishing to display evidence of their prosperity and need for separate statehood, were more than willing to allow access to Almonte.

Almonte's report on the Texicans was favorable overall. Beginning by commenting that the absence of an uprising made his report not "worthy of the attention of the public"^{viii} he quickly pointed out the key of the prosperity of the Texicans. Noting that "its advantageous geographical position, its ports, its navigable rivers, the variety of its products, the fertility of its soil, its climate, etc., are taken into account, one must admit that Texas is soon destined to be the most flourishing section of its republic"^{ix} enabled Almonte to point out the key role of the maritime in Texas. As if in unison with Austin's foresight and economic revolution, Almonte described the maritime benefits of Texas as

extremely advantageous for commerce. Located upon the Gulf of Mexico, between the Republic of the North and Mexican States, it is

easy to see the privileged position which it enjoys for the exportation of its products. ...The recent recognition of our independence by Spain and the favorable terms of the commercial treaty between the two can not help but be especially advantageous to Texas, due to its proximity to the island of Cuba; and there can be no doubt that it will soon be the principle granary of that island. Above all, the abundance of navigable rivers and of good ports that are found in Texas, even though they may be navigable only for boats of small hold, give it an immense advantage over the rest of the states in the Mexican federation, which unfortunately do not possess the same facilities for the exportation of their products, and whose foreign commerce can not [sic] but be unimportant for many years to come.^x

To reinforce the prosperity of Texas, Almonte estimated the profits and trade of each department. Bexar, with its population of 4,000 and no navigable rivers, existed with little or no trade besides "eight or ten thousand pelts of different kinds and a few articles imported from New Orleans".^{xi} The Department of Brazos however was a sharp contrast. Steamboats plied not only the coastal waters, but her rivers as well. Carried on this bustling activity, was an estimated 600,000 pesos worth of commercial activity.^{xii} The Department of Nacogdoches, with its population of 10,600, gathered the most concern. Although its commercial trade was only 470,000 pesos, Almonte blamed failed *empresario* actions for its small revenues.^{xiii}

Trade not included in Almonte's commercial approximations was trade that passed through Texas into the interior of Mexico. Almonte estimated their

volume at 270,000 pesos, placing the total of untaxed trade in Texas at 1,400,000 pesos with “this commerce is increasing daily as the result of great cotton crops and the increasing consumption of goods due to the continued emigration from the United States to Texas.”^{xiv}

In his report, Almonte also listed some reforms that he believed should be implemented. The excellent port at Galveston surrounded most of his reforms. He felt that a canal should be dug to connect the Bay of Galveston to those of the Sabine and the Brazos.^{xv} He felt that Fort Anahuac in Galveston Bay was placed in the wrong location and should be moved to a fortification on Pelican Island at the mouth of the Bay.^{xvi} Also at Galveston, a shipyard and naval academy should be erected. Almonte’s reasoning for this was based on many reasons. First, it would help to funnel trade back to Mexico. Second, its safe location would provide excellent anchorage. Third, its proximity to the United States of America would provide it with the latest nautical tools. Finally, Almonte urged positioning there

because I believe it to be of the greatest importance and the only means of awakening in our youth a love for the sea. I do not desire that Mexico should become a maritime power, but I wish she would cease to depend on foreigners to command the few ships she has which are indispensable to the protection of her coastwise trade.^{xvii}

Almonte clearly urged in his report that Mexico take notice and take advantage of the maritime in his report.

When Almonte's report was finally transported to Mexico City, the political atmosphere had changed dramatically. The liberal and federalist changes of Farias were no longer welcome. In releasing power to the states, Farias had threatened the power of the Catholic clergy and Mexican army, both of which had been the foundation of Santa Anna's authority. In centralistic fashion Santa Anna returned to the president's chair on May 23, 1834. Dissolving the Mexican Congress, Santa Anna turned from his earlier federalist Plan de Veracruz to the highly centralistic Plan of Cuernavaca. To weaken the power of the states, a reduction of state militia to "one soldier for each five hundred inhabitants" was ordered.^{xviii} To reign in the maritime liberties, the Minister of War and Navy, Jose de Herrera, recommended on April 11, 1834, that the naval branch be expanded to collect customs and to "punish the transgressors."^{xix}

Although these changes had been announced recognition of the changes varied through the Mexican provinces. Texas' sister state, Coahuila, was torn between federalism and Santa Anna's new centralistic tendencies. The province was literally split by their affiliations. Two separate capitals vied for power. One, supporting federalism in Monclova and the other, supporting Santa Anna's

centralism in Saltillo. Travis, who had been elected secretary of the *ayuntamiento* at San Felipe, noted that the vacuum of political authority over Texas allowed a freedom that was “virtually an *ipso facto* without any legal government in the state or nation.” Reinforced with his war party beliefs, Travis felt that now was the time for action towards separate statehood. Justifying his beliefs, Travis claimed as early as 1834 that “We are actually in a state of revolution and discord, when it becomes the duty of every individual to protect himself.”^{xx}

Travis prediction of the political shift in 1834 became reality as the fruits of the shift towards centralism appeared in Texas beginning January 1, 1835. Colonel Ugartechea, in charge of the military, dispatched various garrisons to differing locations in Texas. The areas of Mexican reestablishment of authority made it apparent that the coast would be a prime target. Captain Antonio Tenorio with a detachment of soldiers and a collector arrived at the inflammatory Anahuac to reopen the customs house. A deputy collector was also placed at Velasco. To ensure enforcement of customs, a revenue cutter, the *Montezuma*, was dispatched to patrol the Texas coast. In an effort to defray the cost of establishing the defensive garrisons in Texas, as well as to fill governmental coffers, orders to collect customs were given.^{xxi}

With the motivation of profit and duty, and the danger of death or injury,

customs collectors pursued enforcement of the customs to varying degrees. At Velasco, where the collector had no supporting troops, attempts to collect only tonnage duties were made. ^{xxii} In Anahuac, however, Tenorio was ready to enforce the tariff fully. Not only did he have a supporting garrison, but also the knowledge that 265,000 pesos worth of goods had passed through the port the year prior, and he was ready and eager to enforce the tariff.

Establishing his presence at Anahuac, Tenorio let it be known that the tariff established in 1832 would now be enforced fully. Vessels were stopped and forced to pay the tariff. Anger and discontent with the new enforcement among the merchants began almost immediately. The most vocal of the agitated was Andrew Briscoe, an Anahuac merchant who was prohibited from carrying out his trade. An examination of a letter he sent to fellow merchant J. D. Allen provides the reader insight not only to the ramifications of customs imposition, but also the almost placid reaction by the rest of the population to this problem.

I landed at this place near 4 weeks. Since I have had some dammed rough usuage, having my goods landed against my will by a military force. The people would calmly stand by and see me lose all. God damn them. ...My business has been delayed. My provisions and groceries have been [confiscated] as contraband and the whole duties claimed on the balance and the goods withheld till the deputies shall be paid. And all this by deputy collector and 40

soldiers!!!^{xxiii}

While many of the coastal inhabitants may have been quiet, the majority of those at Anahuac however, began to move into civil disobedience. In a long letter to Colonel Ugartechea, Tenorio lamented many of his difficulties. Quick to place blame on the Anglo-American settlers, Tenorio listed his many grievances. First, the Merchants of Anahuac remembering the events of 1832, refused to furnish Tenorio any provisions. Utilizing the excuse that "in past years," the Mexican government "would not pay them for advances made to the troops," ^{xxiv} storekeepers refused to advance Tenorio goods. Tenorio found that as tensions increased, he became less able "to compel respect for the national honor." ^{xxv} In order to rectify this situation and effectively enforce the tariff, Tenorio requested the immediate granting of reinforcements and a boat as his "position was deplorably isolated."^{xxvi}

With the passing of days and no word from his courier, Tenorio became anxious and penned another letter to Ugartechea. This letter spoke of the difficulties listed prior and his plea for reinforcements was even stronger.

The Military Commander of Anahuac,
 -To the Military Commander of Coahuila & Texas
 I have already reported to Your Lordship...my exposed situation at this post with the small force under my orders, the

presence of a great number of inhabitants always ready to begin a conflict, and exasperated to see their smuggling stopped since the Customhouse office has been re-established here. I cannot, in such circumstances, vouch for the triumph of our arms, because my men are too badly armed and short of ammunition; and I would deeply regret to have to sacrifice the lives of Mexican soldiers in case of an outbreak for which I am looking from one moment to another. The offrenty [sic] of the Americans proves conclusively that they have no respect for the Mexican Laws, which cannot be enforced here. ...I must request Your Lordship to send me a reinforcement, some ammunition, and if possible, one or two pieces of artillery, with which I may keep this neighborhood within the bounds of respect, and show them that the Supreme Government is disposed and able to protect the frontier, as is its duty. I am satisfied that the anxiety of your Lordship to preserve a territory which they are trying to wrestle from us, will suggest you take with our accustomed activity, such measures as shall meet the object of this report.

I avail myself to this occasion, to tender to Your Lordship, the sincere assurance of my subordination and respect.

God and Liberty-Anahuac-April 9th, 1835

Antonio Tenorio^{xxvii}

After the dispatch of the second letter, Tenorio discovered what happened to his earlier report. The original courier returned after seven weeks and reported that he had become a victim of the effects of the very same civil disobedience complained of in the letter he carried. To answer for his dereliction of duty, the soldier explained that the American vessel, the *Ojallo* or *Ohio*, which was to provide passage, had not done so. Rather, the soldier stated that the Captain poisoned and abandoned him on a sand bar so that he would not provide information on the smuggled goods the vessel carried. It should come as no

surprise that a retainer of Travis, the trading company of Harris and Wilson, owned the vessel *Ohio*. In a future act of civil disobedience, Travis would turn to the company that would allow utilization of this very same vessel.

The merchants, following the tested means of political change, brought their petitions before the local government on April 17. At the *ayuntamiento* of Liberty however, they found no compassion. Rather, the council chastised the merchants for chaffing against the tariff. Claiming that “to establish its own system of revenue” was the right of every nation, they warned forceful resistance “would be more unwise and ill timed than the laws themselves.”^{xxviii} Responding directly to Briscoe’s case, the council claimed that it was the duty of the merchant to become aware of the mercantile laws and had no right to complain if his failure to comply led to trouble.^{xxix} These inland Texicans had no difficulties with Mexico over the last two years, and did not want to provide the central government any reason to change the *laissez-faire* attitude that seemed to have been given them.

This willingness not to upset political relations with Mexico City for fear of the loss of freedom was also reflected by many in the other departments of Texas. One of the best examples is their reaction to the pleas of the liberal Governor Viesca of Coahuila. One time ally, Santa Anna, had become incredibly centralistic and his government followed suit to limit the freedoms of the states. Both legally

and physically, the states' power was stripped. On March 31, 1835, the Mexican congress passed legislation limiting the militias of the states, and therefore their ability to fight back. To further display the dominance of the central government, on May 2, Mexican legislatures announced that they "possessed extra constitutional powers" to modify and rewrite the liberal federal constitution of 1824.^{xxx} The effects of this shift towards centralism resulted in revolts of some of the Mexican provinces. Zacatecas and Coahuila were some of those who chose rebellion. Beginning with the provinces closest to the capital, Santa Anna marched against Zacatecas with between 4000 and 4800 troops. Santa Anna rewarded his victorious troops by allowing them to loot and pillage the capital.^{xxxi} In dealing with Coahuila Santa Anna dispatched General Martin Perfecto de Cos to march against Viesca. Although Viesca called upon the three departments in Texas for each to send him one hundred men, none responded. Bexar was prevented by the presence of the Mexican military. The Department of Brazos sent no troops and wrote to the Governor that his people had no sympathies with his government. As for the Department of Nacogdoches, there was simply no response at all.^{xxxii} This shortsightedness displays a concern among the Texans that by cloistering themselves, they might not face the wrath of Mexico City.

Such limitations by Liberty however did not stop increasing tensions between the coastal colonists and tariff collectors. Faced with such circumstances, it did not take long for the morale of the soldiers to deteriorate as well. Mexican soldiers began to desert. The Texicans, ever ready to enlist informants on the inside, acquired two soldiers that “went into the pay of the enemy, informing them of everything that went on in the quarters,”^{xxxiii} and encouraged their fellow soldiers to desert. So eager were the Texicans in their assistance of desertion, Tenorio claimed that the civil authorities would not only resist the call to find them, but would even provide false passports to expedite their escape.^{xxxiv}

As less and less of a Mexican military presence was felt, the Texicans became bolder in their civil disobedience. Lumber, which had been sent to Tenorio to rebuild the fort, was burned in the night of March 3, 1835, and the local official “took absolutely no steps whatever”^{xxxv} to pursue the guilty party. Merchant William Hardin led a group of twenty to twenty-five men who claimed responsibility for the destruction in a political assembly. One of the twenty-five was the vocal agitator Andrew Briscoe. Briscoe proposed that a memorial be sent to the governor of Coahuila and Texas. It was believed that then, aware of the merchant’s plight, the governor would work with the Mexican Congress for repeal

of the law. In their proposal, the merchants attempted to display a few of the of problems tariff enforcement created: unequal enforcement and unjust existence.

That for several years past no duties have been demanded in any part of these colonies, and even now none are demanded at any port but that of Galveston...though any part of these colonies are too poor to pay the regular duties according to the Mexican Tariff, this is the least able of any. ...and though they have so patiently submitted for so long a time to this injustice, they have at length resolved to pay no more, till custom houses shall be organized and duties collected throughout all the other parts of these colonies.^{xxxvi}

Also pointing to the lack of provision and securing supply as justifications of duty free goods, the citizens resorted once again to petition of their concerns.^{xxxvii}

The need for this petition, as well as the temperament of the merchant's, cooled considerably. Pressures concerning tariff enforcement had relaxed. Among the members of the deserting battalion at Anahuac was Don Jose Gonzalez, the customs collector. The very man with the petition, William Hardin, returned to the United States leaving the petition undelivered. Briscoe, the leading antagonist, had also left Anahuac to conduct his business elsewhere promising to return to repay his duties. Tenorio claimed that the merchants continued in merely passively rejecting Mexican authority.

Some...for a time paid the duties levied on their goods; others promised to pay and often never redeemed their pledge; while still others were considerate enough to bring in their cargoes under

cover of night without disturbing the officers, and thus there was no occasion for friction.^{xxxviii}

Tempers may have continued to cool had it not been for the actions of Tenorio. On May 1, the reinforcements that Tenorio had so desired finally arrived. The addition of nine soldiers, fifty guns, a hundred and fifty flints, as well as \$2,310 to cover salary and back payments strengthened the resolve of the garrison.^{xxxix} Although other Mexican officials, such as A. Palacio Miranda, the customs administrator at Mazatlan, had seen that enforcement of the tariff was an inducement to fraud, Tenorio eagerly began enforcement.^{xl} With the arrival of the *Montezuma* on May 12th, Tenorio reinstated the tariff acting as the customs agent himself. The first ship captured by the *Montezuma*, the American ship *Martha*, built Tenorio's belief in his own importance. Not only was the capture of this vessel a strong signal to the merchants of Mexican power, but the owners of the vessel, Harris and Wilson, also owned the vessel *Ohio*, that had supposedly poisoned one of his couriers. When the passengers aboard the *Martha* were unable to show passports they were imprisoned and her cargo, merchandise and sawmill machinery, was declared contraband. The *Montezuma*, despite protests from the *Martha's* owning firm, Harris and Wilson, left with the impounded

Martha in tow for Veracruz. Harris and Wilson wasted no time in contacting their attorney and occasional business partner, William Barret Travis.⁴

Tenorio's rule became increasingly draconian. With the support of his garrison, Tenorio felt secure in his authority. Feeling that he now had the merchants subdued, Tenorio offered the following report on the now kowtowing merchants:

They are not so proud, and they draw the conclusion that more troops are coming...we have lost the fear that they imagine we have of them, since we now dare to harm them, which we did not do **before**.

His reports of fear may have been correct as Mexican reinstatement of power did cause much concern. Rumors of Mexican abuse of authority began to spread. One of which concerned the capture of another merchant vessel, the *Colombia*, by the *Montezuma*. To further increase Tenorio's authority, a legitimate tax collector arrived at Anahuac on June 10. This tax collector was supplied with a squad of soldiers and was warned to monitor the activity of the now returned Andrew Briscoe, who was to pay back tariff duties.

⁴ Beyond the legal services provided, Travis had planned to establish a coastal/riverboat service with relation Robert Harris however the Mexican Government would not supply them with a license to establish the business.

On the night of June 10, 1835, some merchants acted to test the resolve of Tenorio. An event was planned to push Tenorio to his limits. Briscoe was paid a visit by merchant DeWitt Clinton Harris. Harris had arrived at Anahuac on the 10th to purchase supplies from Briscoe. Briscoe, however, was informed that nothing could be removed from his store until duties had been paid and compliant papers filled. All seemed well until that evening. An unidentified man from Harris' business arrived at Briscoe's store. He requested and received an empty box that was filled with bricks for the purposes of ballast. The man then leaved the store for a return to Harris. Along the way a guard, who demanded to know what was in the box, stopped him. The man called out for, and received William Smith to act as interpreter. Both Briscoe and Harris, who had been watching from their locations, came running as well. Apparently the statements satisfied the guard as the box was allowed to be loaded onto Harris' vessel. The return of the Americans to their businesses however was not as simple. Briscoe and Harris were surprised by a group of twelve soldiers who ordered them to stop. At this point, the stories diverge on what occurred. Briscoe and Harris claimed that they were suddenly surrounded by soldiers and commanded to stop. They complied, but Smith, who had been walking behind them, did not hear the order and was shot through the breast. Tenorio however,

claimed that the Americans “resisted with arms” and Smith was shot.^{xli} Either way, both Briscoe and Harris were placed under arrest. Harris was released the next day, however Briscoe was not. Briscoe was held as Tenorio found that “Mr. Briscoe was simply making fun of the collector with all this business...”^{xlii} and there is little doubt that Tenorio had heard of Travis and his hijinks at Anahuac three years prior.

With the release of Harris however, it was not long until his attorney, Travis, made his appearance. After his release, Harris traveled to Harrisburg where word was dispatched to Travis regarding the events at Anahuac. Upon reception of Harris’ message, Travis knew that now was the time to act. Word had filtered to San Felipe of the political change in Mexico City that reduced the liberties the Texicans had enjoyed. Members of the War Party in San Felipe sprung into action and captured a Mexican courier who was passing through San Felipe at the time. The papers the courier held were letters from General Ugartechea to Tenorio. The letters were to inform Tenorio that General Cos and the Morelos battalion would soon be arriving in Texas. With the ensuing military occupation, Ugartechea was assured that “these revolutionists would be ground down” and the fact that “nothing is heard but God damn Santa Anna, God damn Ugartechea” would stop.^{xliii} To further antagonize members of the

War Party, it also became known that the leaders, Samuel Williams, Francis Johnson, and Dr. Robert Peebles, were all being detained in San Antonio under charges of promoting revolution.^{xliv} Now was the time to act, and Dr. James B. Miller⁵, the Political Chief called upon all “freemen & lovers of liberty and the rights guaranteed by a federal republican Government” to join in a meeting the next day with the stated object was to “establish the supreme executive authority of the State of Texas.”^{xlv}

Despite all the excitement, disunion and confusion prevented solution at the meeting. Plans to march to Coahuila to free Viesea, lost its focus as differing members vied for supremacy. Infighting and bickering over purpose prevented conclusion. With the departure of the general population at the end of the day, members of the War Party met in a secret meeting. All that was discussed is unknown save for the fact that Travis left believing that he had been authorized to “collect a company of men and eject Tenorio from the garrison at Anahuac.”^{xlvi}

Armed with the blessings of the War Party, Travis prepared himself to become the liberating hero of Anahuac. Although upon his arrival at Harrisburg

⁵ Not only was Dr. James B. Miller the local Political Chief, he was also an avid leader/organizer for the local branch of the War Party. He was also well connected with Travis in that upon Travis’ arrival in Texas, both his law offices

he learned that Briscoe had been released, Travis pressed on. Not only were many of his client's merchants who had been troubled by Tenorio's rule, but also his earlier experience at Anahuac filled him with distrust over Mexican authority. A meeting was called on June 24 where more recruits volunteered, further resolutions were passed against Tenorio, and it was agreed that officers would be elected with departure for Anahuac on the 26th. With this decided, Travis left for Lynch's Ferry to meet with David Burnet and gain volunteers. Although rain prevented departure on the 26, merchant David Harris came to their assistance. His forty-five ton vessel, *Ohio*, was chartered and loaded with a six-pound cannon and set sail for Lynch's Ferry on the 27. At Lynch's Ferry the volunteer's, about thirty in number, elected Travis as their leader and prepared for an amphibious landing at Anahuac.

The arrival of Travis and his men at Anahuac was almost anti-climactic. The cannon on the *Ohio* fired a warning shot at the Mexican garrison as Travis and his men began to disembark.^{xlviii} Although his men landed in plain view of the Mexican garrison, no attempts were made to stop them. The Mexicans reacted to the Texican advance on the garrison by retreating to a nearby thicket.

and lodgings were in a building owned by Miller where the two presumably came into frequent contact.

As night was approaching, Travis and three men advanced to the Mexican position and demanded a council. At first Tenorio did not respond, but when Travis made the demand in Spanish, Tenorio answered. Travis demanded the immediate surrender of the garrison and their arms. Tenorio asked that he might have until the morning to make his decision. Travis however, remembering the trickery of Bradburn in the earlier attack at Anahuac, demanded an immediate submission. This was agreed upon, Tenorio agreed that he would return to Mexico never to take arms against Texas again. The next morning the prisoners were loaded onto the *Ohio* where Travis prepared to return to Harrisburg's July 4th celebration as a hero.

Much to Travis' surprise, his arrival at Harrisburg did not bring the greetings of a hero, rather he became the pariah while Tenorio received the warm welcome. Tenorio and his men were invited to eat, to dance, and even to enjoy games of cards.^{xlvi} Rather than uniting the people against Mexican rule, Travis' action seemed to rally the people against the War Party. This was especially true in the other departments of Texas. Unwilling to upset the political atmosphere, members of the Peace Party had been busy working at appeasement of Santa Anna. Even as Travis was preparing his expedition, Peace Party members in Columbia issued a call for a meeting on the twenty-eighth of June.

At this meeting, while Travis capture of Anahuac was imminent, the citizens informed Miller that they

protest against the conduct and acts of any act of individuals (less than a majority) calculated to involve the citizens of Texas in a conflict with the Federal Government of Mexico, and Particularly Protest against the proceedings of those persons at Anahuac who...[declared] that they would not obey the revenue laws of Mexico. The denounce said persons as foreigners, and disclaim all participation in the act whatsoever.^{xlix}

Tenorio was even invited to San Felipe so that he could see that not all Texians were against Mexican rule.

At San Felipe, Travis' support slowly deserted him. As some of Tenorio's men became ill their elongated stay of seven weeks acted as a visual reminder of Travis' action. The staunch support of Dr. James B. Miller also seemed to dissipate with the rise of public opinion against the action. Dr. Miller was petitioned to dispatch oaths of loyalty to both Cos and Ugartechea. Miller himself issued an apology for Travis' action and disclaimed any involvement. As his former allies turned against him, Travis attempted to play for time by writing two apologetic items. The first was a letter to Col. Ugartechea in which he claimed that he was "extremely anxious...to see the Government firmly established on a permanent basis."¹ To the citizens of San Felipe, he published a

card requesting that judgments be withheld until he could “appear before the public with all the facts and circumstances attending the Capture of the Fort.”^{li}

Reasons for his waning support in the Department of Brazoria are explained by the circumstances of its population. As scholar D.W. Meinig points out, while the population of Brazoria may have been predominately Anglo-American in substance, it was “Mexican in frame”⁶ and her population more stable.^{lii} As Ugartechea had not enforced the tariff fully, no problems arose. As their leader, Stephen F. Austin, had continually sent messages back to work with Mexico, the citizens were more than willing to do so. They did not want to cause political disturbances that would either bring Mexican reprisal or an incarceration of Austin, who had been released from prison and was to return to Brazoria to guide them.

Unbeknownst to the Brazorians, events were already transpiring against them. A forced peace in most of the revolting provinces, allowed Mexico to focus her attention on Texas. It is in this period that both Texas Naval historians, Alexander Deinst and James Hill, begin to concentrate their studies. Three vessels that had carried reinforcement troops to Texas, the *Josefa*, the *Ana Maria*,

and the *Correo de Mejico*, were to patrol the waters to protect Mexican commerce. The dispatch of these troops to Copano was not a new move as the arid southern plains between the Rio Grande and the San Antonio Rivers was a rather inhospitable surroundings to overcome. One vessel in particular, the *Correo de Mejico*, was dispatched off the coast at Anahuac. Thomas M. Thompson, an Englishman by birth and the Captain of the *Correo de Mejico*, was described by Ernst Fischer as a "soldier of fortune".^{liii}

Upon his arrival in Galveston Bay, Thompson's presence began to stir up trouble. Surprised to learn that Tenorio had retreated to San Felipe, Thompson began to enforce the tariff along the Texas coast. Anger immediately arose over his appearance and sudden enforcement. Following in the tradition of most of the Mexican commanders at Anahuac, Thompson categorized the citizens' anger as insubordination. When the citizens refused to obey his proclamation to disband the militia on the July 26th, Thompson threatened to burn the town.^{liv} By early August, Thompson was patrolling as far south as Brazoria in enforcement of the tariff. Faced with limitations to mercantile freedoms, the merchants of Brazoria began to complain. A. C. Allen, for example, testified that Thompson

⁶ By the statement, 'Mexican in frame', Meinig pointed to the ability and longer experience of the majority of Brazorians, that allowed a greater

had confiscated his sloop for tender, and had said that he was the “commander of the coast from Tampico to the Sabine.”^{lv}

The boasts of these stern measures may have been overstated. Evidence from U.S. commander Ritchie, who had been dispatched in the schooner *Grampus* for reconnaissance of Mexican naval activity, found the Mexican vessels – the *Josefa*, the *Ana Maria*, and the *Correo de Mejico* were acting in full compliance with international law. This evidence however could also be called into question as the vessel the information was gathered from, the schooner *Watchman*, was busy importing items for Lizardi and Company, a company that acted as agents for Santa Anna.^{lvi}

The answer to the threat felt by merchants at Brazoria however, may lie in the actions at New Orleans. Austin, who had arrived from Veracruz in order to reach Brazoria took passage upon the *San Felipe*, the newly acquired boat of Brazorian merchant Thomas McKinney. McKinney, who had been an established merchant in Brazoria since 1830, knew of the importance of maritime freedom and was also known to have carried illicit trade.^{lvii} Although both Deinst and Hill do not discuss why McKinney paid \$8,965 for the vessel and all freight on board, his action of outfitting her with one gun display the length to

understanding and acceptance of the Mexican system of government.

which McKinney would go in order to protect his vessels.^{lviii} In addition, her captain, William S. Hurd, was known for his aggressiveness. By this time, Stephen F. Austin was aggressive as well. During his two years spent in Mexico City, Austin viewed what Eugene Barker described as Santa Anna utilizing “a platform of liberalism merely as a stepping stone to *de facto* dictatorship,” as early as July 30, 1833, Austin had stated that “I am totally done with conciliatory measures, and for the future be uncompromising as [to] Texas matters.”^{lix} Now that he was free to direct Texas in a path away from despotic government, Austin would use his diplomacy as a weapon. The *San Felipe*, prepared for a confrontation, left New Orleans on August 21, 1835 for Brazoria.

On the day of Austin’s arrival, September 1, 1835, Thompson had been busy raising the ire of the Texians. That very morning, Thompson had captured the American merchant vessel, *Tremont*. The cargo of said vessel is in dispute. Hill claims that she carried lumber, whereas Dienst claims that slaves were the cargo. Whereas Hill provides no evidence, Dienst does offer a publication from New Orleans supporting the slave theory. However upon inspection, Dienst claims that lumber would not have provided a lucrative prize for Thompson.^{lx} On the contrary, lumber was a needed luxury in Texas whose capture by Thompson would have aided him to rebuild Fort Anahuac or sell to the highest

bidder.^{lxi} Not only that, but in the Mexican version of the attack, the Ocampo Declaration, no mention is made of slaves, rather smuggling is the reason for the attack.^{lxii} Finally, it has been claimed that the lumber aboard the *Tremont* was used as fuel by the steamship *Laura*. Whatever was the case, the citizens of Brazoria became so enraged by Thompson's action that a small steamer, the *Laura*, a ship also owned by McKinney, was boarded by volunteers, armed with rifles and a small cannon, who set out to liberate the *Tremont*. The small arms fire from the *Laura* forced a return of the prize crew and prevented capture. The volunteers aboard the *Laura* seized the opportunity to take the *Tremont* into tow. The Mexican account of the battle then states the following occurrence at around eight o'clock in the evening:

a heavy fire was kept up against us from the steamboat and the shore, which we returned; and things were in this state, when a sail appeared about eight miles to the northeast; the steamboat then stopped her fire and went towards the sail, which proved to be the schooner *San Felipe*.^{lxiii}

With the arrival of the *San Felipe*, the confrontation began in earnest. The *Laura*, at the schooner, unloaded Austin and loaded the volunteers. Thompson, curiously approached the *San Felipe* as he made preparations to take another vessel and secure his fortune. Although he fired the first shots, the *San Felipe*, much to his shock, fired back. The fire raged for two hours that evening, and

though Thompson felt that he had outdistanced the ship, to his surprise the morning light brought the revelation that the *San Felipe* had utilized the *Laura* to tow it "within half a cannon shot" of the Mexican Vessel.^{lxiv} Thompson surrendered his vessel to the Texians, and upon boarding, the damage of the battle was found. Two of the *Correo de Mejico's* guns were dismantled. Most of the crew had been wounded, including Thompson, who had two bullets lodged in his leg. One Mexican sailor, a Blackburn from Baltimore, had received a mortal wound during the attack.

The answer of what to do with Thompson as the battle was over was supplied by Thompson himself. When the boarding party asked for his papers and commission, neither could be found. As Thompson was without his papers, the Texians felt justified in arresting him and his crew on charges of piracy.

Although, it would be days before Thompson was taken to New Orleans to stand trial, the Texians in Brazoria had again joined hands with their compatriots in the Department of Nacogdoches in being driven to bloodshed to ensure nautical freedom and the prosperity that brought. As the merchants were the first to be adversely effected by such limitations, it should be no surprise that they acted as catalysts for the skirmishes. During this period, the policies and statements made on land were tested and enacted on water. Both Travis'

premature revolutionary action and Austin's vented frustrations became successful naval realities. The final straw that completed revolts in all of the departments of Texas was the refusal of colonists in Gonzales to surrender a cannon to Mexican authorities. With the Battle of Gonzales, September 20, 1835, the revolution became official as inland Texians became willing to fight against feared Mexican encroachment on their prosperity. The importance of the maritime however, continued to remain at the forefront as during this period political and maritime concerns blended together into one.

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- ⁱ For more information see Curtis, James C., *Andrew Jackson and the Search for Vindication*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1976, 141-145
- ⁱⁱ Webber, David J., *Troubles in Texas, 1832*, DeGolyer Library, Dallas, 1983
- ⁱⁱⁱ Steen, Ralph, *The Texas Story*, The Steck Company, Austin, 1948, 86
- ^{iv} Curtis, *Ibid.*, 145, 151
- ^v Barker, *Mexico and Texas 1821-1835*, 130, see also Roboles, Vito Alessio, *Coahuila y Texas desde la consumacion de la independencia hasta el tratado de paz de Guadalupe Hildago*, 2 Vols. (Mexico, 1945-46), 490-97 as seen in Weber, David J., *The Mexican Frontier 1821-1846: The American Southwest Under Mexico*, Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1982, 247
- ^{vi} W.C. White to S. M. Williams, December 10, 1833, Williams Papers; *Telegraph and Texas Register*, December 30, 1837; as seen in Henson, *Samuel May Williams: Early Texas Entrepreneur*, College Station, Texas A&M University Press, 1976, 50
- ^{vii} Anna, Timothy E., *Forging Mexico: 1821-1835*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1998, 131
- ^{viii} Almonte, Juan N., trans. by Castaneda, C. E., "Statistical Report On Texas, 1835," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3 (January, 1925), 178
- ^{ix} *Ibid.*, 178
- ^x *Ibid.*, 180-181
- ^{xi} *Ibid.*, 184, 192
- ^{xii} *Ibid.*, 200, 203-204
- ^{xiii} *Ibid.*, 206-207
- ^{xiv} *Ibid.*, 212-213
- ^{xv} *Ibid.*, 213
- ^{xvi} *Ibid.*, 211
- ^{xvii} *Ibid.*, 203-204
- ^{xviii} Henson, 69-70, see also Webber, 245
- ^{xix} *Memoria de la Mariana*, 1834, p.8, as seen in Hill, *The Texas Navy*, 21
- ^{xx} Travis to Henry Smith, October 11, 1834, in Brown, *Life of Henry Smith*, 27-29; Mixon, "William Barret Travis", 376-377; as seen in McDonald, *Ibid.*, 105
- ^{xxi} Barker, 137. 152
- ^{xxii} Barker, 152
- ^{xxiii} Andrew Briscoe to J.D. Allen, April 14, 1835, copy in MS collection, San Jacinto Monument as seen in McDonald, Archie P., *William Barret Travis: A Biography*, Austin, Eakin Press, 1995, 110
- ^{xxiv} Tenorio to Ugartechea, March 21, 1835, Bexar Archives, as seen in Barker, Eugene C., "Difficulties Of A Mexican Revenue Officer In Texas," *Texas Historical Association Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Jan., 1901), 191
- ^{xxv} *Ibid.*, 191
- ^{xxvi} *Ibid.*, 191
- ^{xxvii} Tenorio to Ugartechea, April 9, 1835 as seen in Jenkins, John H, ed., *The Papers of the Texas Revolution 1835-1836*, Austin, Presidial Press, 1973, 61
- ^{xxviii} Municipality of Liberty, April 17, 1835, as seen in Barker, Eugene, *Public opinion in Texas Preceding the Revolution*, <http://www.tamu.edu/ccbn/dewitt/pubbarber.htm>, [n.p.], 4, 5/13/2002
- ^{xxix} *Ibid.*, 4, 5/13/2002
- ^{xxx} Weber, *The Mexican Frontier 1821-1846*, 245
- ^{xxxi} *Ibid.*, 245

- ^{xxxii} Barker, *Ibid.*, 2
- ^{xxxiii} Tenorio to Ugartechea, May 18, 1835 as seen in Barker, Eugene C., "Difficulties Of A Mexican Revenue Officer In Texas," *Texas Historical Association Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Jan., 1901), 192
- ^{xxxiv} *Ibid.*, 192
- ^{xxxv} Tenorio to Ugartechea, April 2, 1835, Bexar Archives, as seen in *Ibid.*, 192; for more information on the importance of lumber to early Texas, see Newell, History of the Revolution in Texas, 179-180
- ^{xxxvi} Memorial to the Governor of Coahuila and Texas, in the *Texas Republican*, August 8, 1835, Austin Papers, as seen in Barker, Eugene C., "Difficulties Of A Mexican Revenue Officer In Texas," *Texas Historical Association Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Jan., 1901), 195
- ^{xxxvii} Memorial to the Governor of Coahuila and Texas, in the *Texas Republican*, August 8, 1835, Austin Papers, as seen in *Ibid.*, 195
- ^{xxxviii} Tenorio to Ugartechea, May 18, 1835, Bexar Archives, as seen in *Ibid.*, 193
- ^{xxxix} Tenorio to Ugartechea, May 18, 1835, Bexar Archives, as seen in *Ibid.*, 192
- ^{xl} A. Palacio Miranda, Customs Administrator at Mazatlan, "*Informe del administrador de la aduana maritime de Mazatlan*," in *Dario del Gobierno* (Mexico City), Dec 19, 1835 as seen in Heath, Hilarie J., "British Merchant Houses in Mexico, 1821-1860: Conforming Business Practices and Ethics," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, Duke University Press, Vol. 73, no. 2 (May 1993), 278
- ^{xli} Tenorio to Ugartechea, June 25, 1835 Bexar Archives as seen in Baker, *Ibid.*, 197
- ^{xlii} *Ibid.*, 197
- ^{xliiii} Ugartechea to Tenorio, June 20, 1835, in the *Texas Republican*, July 4, 1835, Austin Papers, as seen in Barker, *Ibid.*, 198; see also McDonald, *Ibid.*, 114
- ^{xliiv} McDonald, *Ibid.*, 113
- ^{xli v} Miller to Public, June 21, 1835 as seen in Barker, *Public Opinion*, 9
- ^{xli vi} Travis to Henry Smith, July 6, 1835, as seen in Barker, *Difficulties of a Mexican Revenue Officer*, 199
- ^{xli vii} see Captain Harris's *Account of the Flight at Anahuac*, as seen in Barker, Eugene C., "Difficulties Of A Mexican Revenue Officer In Texas," *Ibid.*, 200
- ^{xli viii} "Reminiscences of Mrs. Dule Harris," *The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association*, Vol. IV, 127
- ^{xli x} see Columbia Resolutions, June 23, 1835 and Columbia Meeting, June 28, 1835, Barker, *Public Opinion*, *Ibid.*, 4,5
- ^l Travis to Ugartechea, July 31, 1835, 1 & 15 Mexican Archives, Archivo de Guerra y Marina, Frac 1, Op Mil. Texas, 1835, Legajo 1, Exp. 9; *The Texas Republican*, Aug 22, 1835; *Publications of the So. Hist. Assn.*, VIII, 107-109 as seen in Baker, *Public Opinion*, *Ibid.*, 5
- ^{li} *Ibid.*, 5
- ^{lii} Meinig, D. W., *Imperial Texas: An Interpretive Essay in Cultural Geography*, University of Texas Press, Austin, 1969, 36, 37
- ^{liii} Fischer, Ernest G., *Robert Potter: Founder of the Texas Navy*, Gretna, Pelican Publishing Co., 1976, 33
- ^{li v} see Hill, 25, J.H. Brown, *Life and Times of Henry Smith*, 63 as seen in Hill, *The Texas Navy*, *Ibid.*, 25 and Travis to Bowie, July 30, 1835, MS. As seen in Dienst, "FNT", 167
- ^{li v} Deposition of A.C. Allen, Mexican Foreign Office Archives, Seccion 5, Caja 16, Expediente 8732 as seen in Hill, *Ibid.*, 25
- ^{li vi} Bauer, K. Jack, "The United States Navy and Texas Independence: A Study in Jacksonian Integrity," *Military Affairs*, Vol. 34, Issue 2 (April, 1970), 45
- ^{li vii} Henson, *Samuel May Williams: Early Texas Entrepreneur*, College Station, Texas A&M University Press, 1976, 50

^{lviii} for evidence of price see Fischer, *Robert Potter, Ibid.*, 34; for evidence of cannon see Bauer, K. Jack, "The United States Navy and Texas Independence: A Study in Jacksonian Integrity," *Military Affairs*, Vol. 34, Issue 2 (April, 1970), 45

^{lix} Barker, *Austin, Ibid.*, 392 and Austin to Perry, July 30, 1833 as seen in Barker, 393

^{lx} Hill, *Ibid.*, 26-27; Dienst, "First Navy of Texas," *The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association*, Vol. XII, 4 (April, 1909), 167

^{lxi} for necessity of lumber see Newell, *History of the Revolution in Texas*, 179-180

^{lxii} Ocampo Declaration, September 21, 1835, as seen in Jenkins, John H, ed., *The Papers of the Texas Revolution 1835-1836*, Austin, Presidial Press, 1973, 473

^{lxiii} Ocampo Declaration, September 21, 1835, *Ibid.*, 474

^{lxiv} Ocampo Declaration, September 21, 1835, *Ibid.*, 475

CONCLUSION

The central role of the maritime in the Mexican colonial period is an overlooked item. Beginning with Stephen F. Austin's colonization plans, it was effective use of the maritime that brought prosperity to his colonists. When political issues in the capital allowed Mexico to begin to exert their authority over the distant province of Texas, it was the limitations brought against the maritime that led to the beginnings of political unity amongst the Texians. A unity that went so far as the coordinated civil disobedience/military action against what was considered illegal actions by the garrison at Anahuac. Responding to the situation, Mexico rescinded the limitations put forth. This in turn gave the Texians the false belief that civil disobedience was an effective political motivator for change. When Mexico was finally strong enough to exert the changes and militarily enforce the maritime regulations and taxation, it was in the coastal areas that the revolution against Mexico began. For on September 1, 1835, the *Lara*, a vessel carrying the very empresario who brought effective maritime to Texas, Stephen F. Austin, opened fire and captured a Mexican vessel, *Correo de Mejico* that had been harassing the maritime. This action predated the recognized opening of revolt, the land battle of Gonzalez, by only nineteen days.

From the beginning, the maritime was key to the prosperity of Texas. Mexico, believing that controlled immigration was a key to maintaining the integrity along the northern border shared with the expanding United States of America. Although this step was taken to forestall revolution, the most successful colonizer, Stephen F. Austin, brought with him the seeds of an economic revolution that would germinate later into political revolution. From 1821 to 1829, Austin developed and designed his colonies similar to the agricultural communities of the American South. As these were also areas that relied on utilization of the maritime as a key to their prosperity, protection of those rights were a priority. Mexican officials, busy birthing their own nation, were pleased that the vacant land was being filled. As such, not only was Austin allowed to continue, but numerous preferential laws were passed allowing expansion of not only the colonies, but more specifically maritime traffic as well. During this time Anglo-American colonization flourished while attempts by Mexican colonizers, unfamiliar with nautical incorporation, stagnated. The maritime *laissez-faire* that Mexico had allowed began to be threatened by 1829. For reasons of financial need, Mexico began to look at the tremendous traffic along the Texian shores and desired to profit from it.

When Mexico believed themselves able to exert authority over Texas, and thereby profit from her, the next area regarding the maritime of Texas is entered. Beginning with the dispatch of 2. In her desire to profit from nautical activities, Mexico dispatched General Manuel Mier y Teran to Texas in 1829 to report on the commercial and social atmosphere of Texas. The conclusions of his report shocked Mexico. The goal of filling the province with inhabitants has succeeded to such an extent that Texas would no longer be a drain to Mexican coffers, but Mexico could gain from her profit. However, the majority by an increasingly wide margin were not immigrants from Mexico or Europe, but Anglo-American settlers. To rectify the situation the "Decree of April 6, 1830" was passed to hopefully to affect a balance back to intrastate commerce within the Mexican Republic as well as increased dependence on Mexico. The new immigrants reacted strongly against the sudden Mexican enforcement of limitations upon the maritime. The merchants and colonists united to take political action. Beginning with the filing of petitions, the political group took steps to remain within the Mexican Constitution of 1824. As their petitions remained unanswered and what the colonists considered "illegal" limitations continued the colonists turned to the next political step: civil disobedience. This civil disobedience was seen in the Battles of Anahuac and Velasco where the actions of ships, in coordination with land forces,

spoke of the political dissatisfaction. The Texians won both battles, but more importantly was the political victory gained. Mexico rescinded "the Decree", and the Texas colonists learned the value of corporate activity and sought a larger voice in the Mexican system. The role of the maritime during this period transcends the economic and became the foundation for the political movements of the Texians. In her reaction to the situation, Mexico established the precedent that civil disobedience was seen as an acceptable and rewardable political action. This notion would later return to haunt Mexico in her relations with Texas.

The maritime history of Texas from the years 1832 until the outbreak of revolution in 1835 was punctuated by years during which mercantile concerns bonded to political concerns. Believing in the federalist promises of Gen. Santa Anna, the colonists knew that their energy should be focused on making progress towards separate Mexican statehood that would be sure to arrive. Following their old political ideals, the colonists first met to petition in the conventions of 1832 and 1833. Mexican inaction seemed to indicate approval of the political meeting. Later, however, when Mexico acted in ways that thwarted the Texian proposals, the colonists rose into civil disobedience. In these matters, it was the nautical concerns of Stephen F. Austin's economic revolution that were first infringed. It should come as no surprise that in this matter, those most effected, the merchants,

would take up positions of leadership in the battle for their maritime freedoms. The tense victory at Anahuac slowly decayed as the actions of increasing Mexican control and passage of customs duties stifled the mariners. This anger was reflected not only in the capture of a Mexican schooner attempting to impress the brig *Tremont* and her cargo of lumber, but also against Mexican reinforcement of the tariff. Rather than reflecting an anger of all those who lived in Texas, discontent against Mexico was at first limited to those on the coast. Upon Austin's return from imprisonment in Mexico City, however, the die was cast with civil disobedience when the very ship that carried Austin home, the *Laura*, took up arms against a Mexican vessel. The melding of political and economic concerns in the Texian mind will be the focus of this chapter.

Through examination of the material gathered, the importance and central role of the maritime in Texas' revolutionary history should become obvious to the reader. Not only was the maritime a uniting force in the economy and prosperity of Texas, but as her liberties became curtailed she also became a fulcrum for political unification. The notion of this importance has been lost to many modern historians. A study of events leading to the Texian Revolt however displays their importance.

As the foregoing discussion makes clear, existing treatments of Texas' Colonial/Republican history have, on one hand, neglected maritime issues as a matter of central importance, but have, on the other hand, suggested their significance in terms of the young nation's diplomatic strategies, military objectives, and dreams of empire on the part of some important figures. Bringing this matter into a synthesis with political and diplomatic efforts will further the understanding of these important dimensions in Texas history. Moreover, by showing how this neglected aspect in Texas' history bore upon the relations between her and other nations, this study will help to demonstrate the degree to which the budding republic's fate was a matter of some significant international concern that also centered on the global maritime importance of the entire Gulf Coast/Caribbean region.

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