TSHA
Texas State Historical Association

THE BATTLE OF THE ALAMO

No. 3 of 7

A *Handbook of Texas*, *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, and *Texas Almanac Companion*.

INDEPENDENCE! ROAD TO THE TEXAS REVOLUTION HISTORY SERIES.

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Dear Texas History Community,

Texas has a special place in history and in the minds of people throughout the world. Texas symbols such as the Alamo, oil wells, and even the shape of the state, as well as the men and women who worked on farms and ranches and who built cities convey a sense of independence, self-reliance, hard work, and courage. At the same time, Texas has long been a meeting place of many peoples and cultures, sharing much with the rest of the world. Texas history speaks a universal language.

For more than a century, the Texas State Historical Association (TSHA) has played a leadership role in historical research and education and has helped to identify, collect, preserve, and tell the stories of Texas and the Southwest. TSHA works in collaboration with numerous colleges and universities, especially its host the University of Texas at Austin, to carry on and expand its work. In the coming years these organizations, with their partners and members, will continue to create a collaborative whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. This collaboration will provide passion, talent, and long-term support for the dissemination of scholarly research, educational programs for the K-12 community, and opportunities for public discourse about the complex issues and personalities of our heritage. This collaboration, at its best, will demonstrate that it is possible to find both simple truths and nuanced meanings in the study of the past.

TSHA's core programs include the *Texas Almanac*, *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, *Handbook of Texas*, TSHA Press, and education programs that reach out to students and teachers at all levels throughout the state. The central challenge before TSHA is to seize the unprecedented opportunities of the digital age in order to reshape how history will be accessed, understood, preserved, disseminated, and taught in the twenty-first century. In recent years, we have capitalized on these momentous opportunities to expand the scope and depth of our work in ways never before possible.

In the midst of this rapid change, TSHA will continue to provide a future for our heritage and to ensure that our history and the complex, always evolving, cultures found in the Southwest continue to serve as resources for the people of Texas and beyond. We encourage you to join us today as a member of TSHA, and in doing so, you will be part of a unique group of people dedicated to an inclusive Texas heritage and will help us continue to develop innovative programs that bring history to life.

Since 1897, TSHA has sought to spread the rich and varied history of Texas and the Southwest across not just the country but the world. As we celebrate progress across more than 120 years, we look forward to bringing our region's past into your life through ever-shifting digital presences, the expansion of publications, and the growth of our immersive educational programs. With your membership, donations, and support, all these things are possible.

With appreciation for the past and hope for the future,

Heather G. Wooten

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Executive Director
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I. The Battle

The siege and the final assault on the Alamo in 1836 constitute the most celebrated military engagement in Texas history. The battle was conspicuous for the large number of illustrious personalities among its combatants. These included Tennessee congressman David Crockett, entrepreneur-adventurer James Bowie, and Mexican president Antonio López de Santa Anna. Although not nationally famous at the time, William Barret Travis achieved lasting distinction as commander at the Alamo. For many Americans and most Texans, the battle has become a symbol of patriotic sacrifice. Traditional popular depictions, including novels, stage plays, and motion pictures, emphasize legendary aspects that often obscure the historical event.

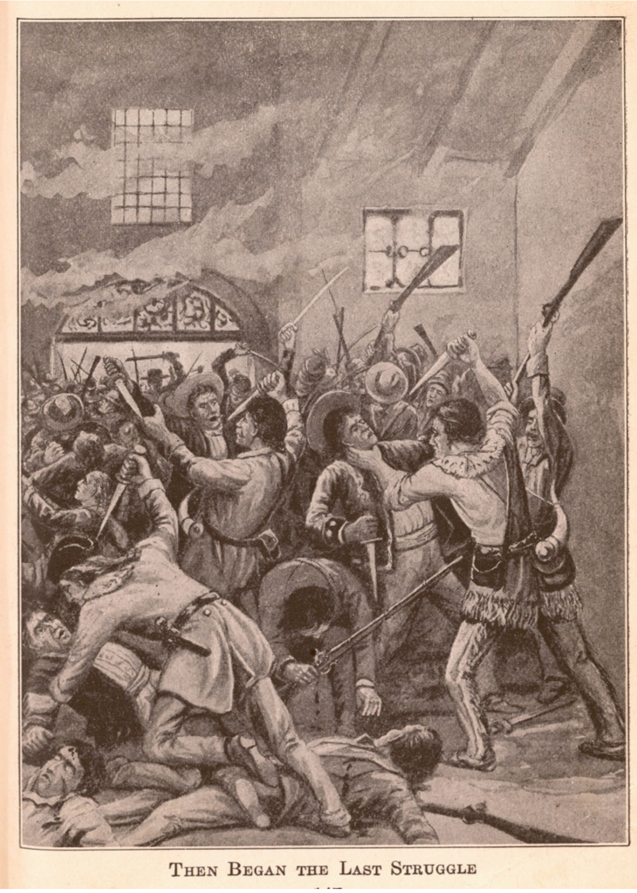
Then Began the Last Struggle

Figure 1: "Then Began the Last Struggle," from *Texas History Stories*, E.G. Littlejohn (B.F. Johnson Publishing Company, 1901)

To understand the real battle, one must appreciate its strategic context in the Texas Revolution. In December 1835 a Federalist army of Texan (or Texian, as they were called) immigrants, American volunteers, and their Tejano allies had captured the town from a Centralist force during the siege of Bexar. With that victory, a majority of the Texan volunteers of the "Army of the People" left service and returned to their families. Nevertheless, many officials of the provisional government feared the Centralists would mount a spring offensive. Two main roads led into Texas from the Mexican interior. The first was the Atascosito Road, which stretched from Matamoros on the Rio Grande northward through San Patricio, Goliad, Victoria, and finally into the heart of Austin's colony. The second was the Old San Antonio Road, a camino real that crossed the Rio Grande at Paso de Francia (the San Antonio Crossing) and wound northeastward through San Antonio de Béxar, Bastrop, Nacogdoches, San Augustine, and across the Sabine River into Louisiana. Two forts blocked these approaches into Texas: Presidio La Bahía (Nuestra Señora de Loreto Presidio) at Goliad and the Alamo at San Antonio. Each installation functioned as a frontier picket guard, ready to alert the Texas settlements of an enemy advance. James Clinton Neill received command of the Bexar garrison. Some ninety miles to the southeast, James Walker Fannin, Jr., subsequently took command at Goliad. Most Texan settlers had returned to the comforts of home and hearth. Consequently, newly arrived American volunteers-some of whom counted their time in Texas by the week-constituted a majority of the troops at Goliad and Bexar. Both Neill and Fannin determined to stall the Centralists on the frontier. Still, they labored under no delusions. Without speedy reinforcements, neither the Alamo nor Presidio La Bahía could long withstand a siege.

At Bexar were some twenty-one artillery pieces of various caliber. Because of his artillery experience and his regular army commission, Neill was a logical choice to command. Throughout January he did his best to fortify the mission fort on the outskirts of town. Maj. Green B. Jameson, chief engineer at the Alamo, installed most of the cannons on the walls. Jameson boasted to Gen. Sam Houston that if the Centralists stormed the Alamo, the defenders could "whip 10 to 1 with our artillery." Such predictions proved excessively optimistic. Far from the bulk of Texas settlements, the Bexar garrison suffered from a lack of even basic provender. On January 14 Neill wrote Houston that his people were in a "torpid, defenseless condition." That day he dispatched a grim message to the provisional government: "Unless we are reinforced and victualled, we must become an easy prey to the enemy, in case of an attack."

By January 17, Houston had begun to question the wisdom of maintaining Neill's garrison at Bexar. On that date he informed Governor Henry Smith that Col. James Bowie and a company of volunteers had left for San Antonio. Many have cited this letter as proof that Houston ordered the Alamo abandoned. Yet, Houston's words reveal the truth of the matter:

"I have ordered the fortifications in the town of Bexar to be demolished, and, if you should think well of it, I will remove all the cannon and other munitions of war to Gonzales and Copano, blow up the Alamo and abandon the place, as it will be impossible to keep up the Station with volunteers, the sooner I can be authorized the better it will be for the country [italics added]."

Houston may have wanted to raze the Alamo, but he was clearly requesting Smith's consent. Ultimately, Smith did not "think well of it" and refused to authorize Houston's proposal.

On January 19, Bowie rode into the Alamo compound, and what he saw impressed him. As a result of much hard work, the mission had begun to look like a fort. Neill, who well knew the consequences of leaving the camino real unguarded, convinced Bowie that the Alamo was the only post between the enemy and Anglo settlements. Neill's arguments and his leadership electrified Bowie. "I cannot eulogize the conduct & character of Col. Neill too highly," he wrote

Smith; "no other man in the army could have kept men at this post, under the neglect they have experienced." On February 2 Bowie wrote Smith that he and Neill had resolved to "die in these ditches" before they would surrender the post. The letter confirmed Smith's understanding of controlling factors. He had concluded that Bexar must not go undefended. Rejecting Houston's advice, Smith prepared to funnel additional troops and provisions to San Antonio. In brief, Houston had asked for permission to abandon the post. Smith considered his request. The answer was no.

Colonel Neill had complained that "for want of horses," he could not even "send out a small spy company." If the Alamo were to function as an early-warning station, Neill had to have outriders. Now fully committed to bolstering the Bexar garrison, Smith directed Lt. Col. William B. Travis to take his "Legion of Cavalry" and report to Neill. Only thirty horsemen responded to the summons. Travis pleaded with Governor Smith to reconsider: "I am unwilling to risk my reputation (which is ever dear to a soldier) by going off into the enemy's country with such little means, and with them so badly equipped." Travis threatened to resign his commission, but Smith ignored these histrionics. At length, Travis obeyed orders and dutifully made his way toward Bexar with his thirty troopers. Reinforcements began to trickle into Bexar. On February 3, Travis and his cavalry contingent reached the Alamo. The twenty-six-year-old cavalry officer had traveled to his new duty station under duress. Yet, like Bowie, he soon became committed to Neill and the fort, which he began to describe as the "key to Texas." About February 8, David Crockett arrived with a group of American volunteers.

On February 14 Neill departed on furlough. He learned that illness had struck his family and that they desperately needed him back in Bastrop. While on leave, Neill labored to raise funds for his Bexar garrison. He promised that he would resume command when circumstances permitted, certainly within twenty days, and left Travis in charge as acting post commander. Neill had not intended to slight the older and more experienced Bowie, but Travis, like Neill, held a regular army commission. For all of his notoriety, Bowie was still just a volunteer colonel. The Alamo's volunteers, accustomed to electing their officers, resented having this regular officer foisted upon them. Neill had been in command since January; his maturity, judgment, and proven ability had won the respect of both regulars and volunteers. Travis, however, was unknown. The volunteers insisted on an election, and their acting commander complied with their wishes. The garrison cast its votes along party lines: the regulars voted for Travis, the volunteers for Bowie. In a letter to Smith, Travis claimed that the election and Bowie's subsequent conduct had placed him in an "awkward situation." The night following the balloting, Bowie dismayed Bexar residents with his besotted carousal. He tore through the town, confiscating private property and releasing convicted felons from jail. Appalled by this disorderly exhibition, Travis assured the governor that he refused to assume responsibility "for the drunken irregularities of any man"-not even the redoubtable Jim Bowie. Fortunately, this affront to Travis's sense of propriety did not produce a lasting breach between the two commanders. They struck a compromise: Bowie would command the volunteers, Travis the

regulars. Both would co-sign all orders and correspondence until Neill's return. There was no more time for personality differences. They had learned that Santa Anna's Centralist army had reached the Rio Grande. Though Travis did not believe that Santa Anna could reach Bexar until March 15, his arrival on February 23 convinced him otherwise. As Texans gathered in the Alamo, Travis dispatched a hastily scribbled missive to Gonzales: "The enemy in large force is in sight. We want men and provisions. Send them to us. We have 150 men and are determined to defend the garrison to the last." Travis and Bowie understood that the Alamo could not hold without additional forces. Their fate now rested with the General Council in San Felipe, Fannin at Goliad, and other Texan volunteers who might rush to assist the beleaguered Bexar garrison.

Santa Anna sent a courier to demand that the Alamo surrender. Travis replied with a cannonball. There could be no mistaking such a concise response. Centralist artillerymen set about knocking down the walls. Once the heavy pounding reduced the walls, the garrison would have to surrender in the face of overwhelming odds. Bottled up inside the fort, the Texans had only one hope-that reinforcements would break the siege.

On February 24 Travis assumed full command when Bowie fell victim to a mysterious malady variously described as "hasty consumption" or "typhoid pneumonia." As commander, Travis wrote his letter addressed to the "people of Texas & all Americans in the world," in which he recounted that the fort had "sustained a continual Bombardment and cannonade for 24 hours." He pledged that he would "never surrender or retreat" and swore "Victory or Death." The predominant message, however, was an entreaty for help: "I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism & everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid, with all dispatch." On March 1, thirty-two troops attached to Lt. George C. Kimbell's Gonzales ranging company made their way through the enemy cordon and into the Alamo. Travis was grateful for any reinforcements, but knew he needed more. On March 3 he reported to the convention at Washington-on-the-Brazos that he had lost faith in Colonel Fannin. "I look to the colonies alone for aid; unless it arrives soon, I shall have to fight the enemy on his own terms." He grew increasingly bitter that his fellow Texans seemed deaf to his appeals. In a letter to a friend, Travis revealed his frustration: "If my countrymen do not rally to my relief, I am determined to perish in the defense of this place, and my bones shall reproach my country for her neglect."

On March 5, day twelve of the siege, Santa Anna announced an assault for the following day. This sudden declaration stunned his officers. The enemy's walls were crumbling. No Texan relief column had appeared. When the provisions ran out, surrender would remain the rebels' only option. There was simply no valid military justification for the costly attack on a stronghold bristling with cannons. But ignoring these reasonable objections, Santa Anna stubbornly insisted on storming the Alamo. Around 5:00 A.M. on Sunday, March 6, he hurled his columns at the battered walls from four directions. Texan gunners stood by their artillery. As about 1,800 assault troops advanced into range, canister ripped through their ranks. Staggered by the concentrated cannon and rifle fire, the Mexican soldiers halted, reformed, and drove forward.

Soon they were past the defensive perimeter. Travis, among the first to die, fell on the north bastion. Abandoning the walls, defenders withdrew to the dim rooms of the Long Barracks. There some of the bloodiest hand-to-hand fighting occurred. Bowie, too ravaged by illness to rise from his bed, found no pity. The chapel fell last. By dawn the Centralists had carried the works. The assault had lasted no more than ninety minutes. As many as seven defenders survived the battle, but Santa Anna ordered their summary execution. Many historians count Crockett as a member of that hapless contingent, an assertion that still provokes debate in some circles. By eight o'clock every Alamo fighting man lay dead. Currently, 189 defenders appear on the official list, but ongoing research may increase the final tally to as many as 257.

Though Santa Anna had his victory, the common soldiers paid the price as his officers had anticipated. Accounts vary, but best estimates place the number of Mexicans killed and wounded at about 600. Mexican officers led several noncombatant women, children, and slaves from the smoldering compound. Santa Anna treated enemy women and children with admirable gallantry. He pledged safe passage through his lines and provided each with a blanket and two dollars. The most famous of these survivors were Susanna W. Dickinson, widow of Capt. Almeron Dickinson, and their infant daughter, Angelina Dickinson. After the battle, Mrs. Dickinson traveled to Gonzales. There, she reported the fall of the post to General Houston. The sad intelligence precipitated a wild exodus of Texan settlers called the Runaway Scrape.

What of real military value did the defenders' heroic stand accomplish? Some movies and other works of fiction pretend that Houston used the time to raise an army. During most of the siege, however, he was at the Convention of 1836 at Washington-on-the-Brazos and not with the army. The delay did, on the other hand, allow promulgation of independence, formation of a revolutionary government, and the drafting of a constitution. If Santa Anna had struck the Texan settlements immediately, he might have disrupted the proceedings and driven all insurgents across the Sabine River. The men of the Alamo were valiant soldiers, but no evidence supports the notion-advanced in the more perfervid versions-that they "joined together in an immortal pact to give their lives that the spark of freedom might blaze into a roaring flame." Governor Smith and the General Council ordered Neill, Bowie, and Travis to hold the fort until support arrived. Despite all the "victory or death" hyperbole, they were not suicidal. Throughout the thirteen-day siege, Travis never stopped calling on the government for the promised support. The defenders of the Alamo willingly placed themselves in harm's way to protect their country. Death was a risk they accepted, but it was never their aim. Torn by internal discord, the provisional government could not deliver on its promise to provide relief, and Travis and his command paid the cost of that dereliction. As Travis predicted, his bones did reproach the factious politicos and the parade ground patriots for their neglect. Even stripped of chauvinistic exaggeration, however, the battle of the Alamo remains an inspiring moment in Texas history. The sacrifice of Travis and his command animated the rest of Texas and kindled a righteous wrath that swept the Mexicans off the field at San Jacinto. Since 1836, Americans on battlefields over the globe have responded to the exhortation, "Remember the Alamo!"

II. William Barret Travis

Written by Archie B. McDonald

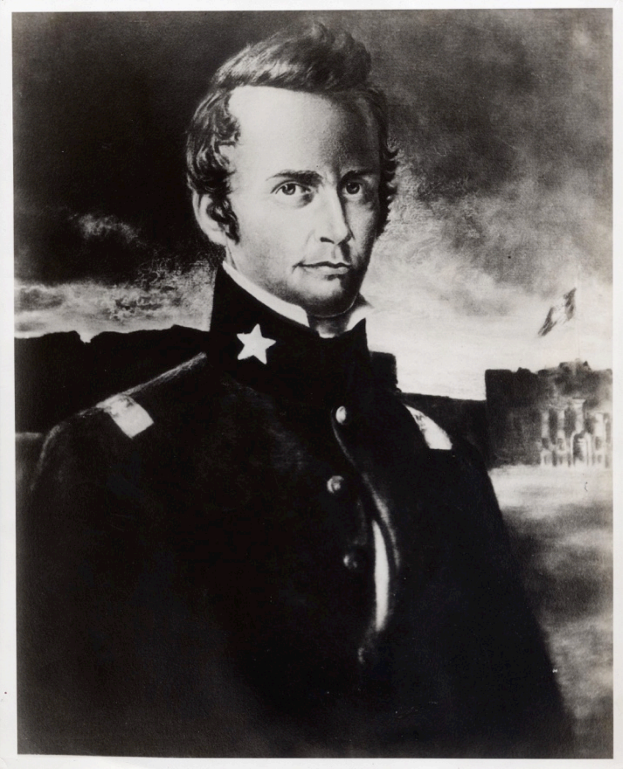

Figure 2: Portrait of William Barret Travis by McArdle, The McArdle Notebooks, Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

William Barret Travis, Texas commander at the battle of the Alamo, was the eldest of eleven children of Mark and Jemima (Stallworth) Travis. At the time of his birth the family lived on Mine Creek near the Red Bank community, which centered around the Red Bank Baptist Church in Edgefield District, near Saluda, Saluda County, South Carolina. There is some confusion regarding the date and circumstances of his birth. Many sources give the date as August 9, others as August 1, 1809. The family Bible, however, records the former date. Others have confused the date of his birth with that of his elder, and illegitimate, half-brother, Toliferro Travis. The first Travers, or Travis, to settle in North America landed in Jamestown, Virginia, in 1627. Edward Travers became a member of the House of Burgesses and amassed significant holdings of land. Subsequent generations of the family drifted southward to the Carolinas, where Barrick or Barrot Travers established a farm in the Edgefield District. Somewhere in the journey Travers became Travis, and Barrot came to be spelled Barret. Barrot Travis's sons, Alexander and Mark, became farmers, and Alexander also became a prominent clergyman.

Travis's boyhood centered around the work of the family farm, attendance at the Red Bank church, home schooling, and playing with area children. James Butler Bonham, who also served in the defense of the Alamo, was one of these, but it is difficult to establish a strong relationship between Bonham and Travis in these early years. Alexander Travis, the family patriarch, traveled to Alabama in 1817 and decided to move the entire family to Conecuh

County the next year. There they helped found the communities of Sparta and Evergreen. Travis attended an academy in Sparta until he learned all that was taught there; then Alexander Travis enrolled his nephew in a school in nearby Claiborne, Alabama. Travis eventually assisted in the instruction of the younger students. James Dellet (Dellett, Delett), the leading attorney in Claiborne, accepted Travis as an apprentice. Under his instruction Travis became an attorney and partner, and for a brief time operated a joint office across the river at Gosport, Alabama. On October 26, 1828, Travis married Rosanna Cato, one of the students he had helped to teach, when he was twenty years old. Their first child, Charles Edward Travis, was born on August 8, 1829. For a year Travis gave every evidence that he intended to remain in Claiborne. He began the publication of a newspaper, the Claiborne Herald, joined the Masonic order at Alabama Lodge No. 3, and accepted a position as adjutant of the Twenty-sixth Regiment, Eighth Brigade, Fourth Division, of the Alabama Militia. A year later he abandoned his wife, son, and unborn daughter (Susan Isabella) and departed for Texas. The story has been told that Travis suspected his wife of infidelity, doubted his parenthood of her unborn child, and killed a man because of it. The story is probably correct, given its persistence, but hard evidence of it is lacking.

Travis arrived in Texas early in 1831, after the Law of April 6, 1830, made his immigration illegal. He arrived at San Felipe de Austin, and on May 21 obtained land from Stephen F. Austin. He listed his marital status as single, although he was still married. He established a legal practice in Anahuac, a significant port of entry located on the eastern end of Galveston Bay. The purpose of the move there was to establish himself in an area where there were few attorneys while he learned the official language, Spanish. He traveled the country doing legal work and became associated with a group of militants who opposed the Law of April 6, 1830. Eventually this group became known as the war party as tension increased between the Mexican government and American settlers in Texas. Travis had many occasions to oppose the commander of the Mexican garrison at Anahuac, Col. John Davis Bradburn, a Kentuckian in the service of Mexico. Bradburn enforced the anti-immigration law, refused to allow state officials to alienate land to American settlers arriving after the passage of the law, and allegedly used materials and slaves belonging to the settlers to build his camp.

The principal dispute at Anahuac occurred in 1832 when William M. Logan of Louisiana engaged Travis to secure the return of runaway slaves being harbored by Bradburn. Logan returned to Louisiana for proof of ownership and threatened Bradburn that he also would return with help. Travis alarmed Bradburn with a note passed to a sentry that Logan had returned with a large force. Bradburn turned out his entire garrison to search for Logan, who, of course, was nowhere near the area. Suspecting Travis as the perpetrator of the prank, Bradburn sent soldiers to his law office to arrest Travis and his partner, Patrick C. Jack. They were held in a guardhouse and later in two brick kilns. Word of their arrest spread, and men assembled to demand their release. The group drafted the Turtle Bayou Resolutions, which pledged their loyalty to the states' rights Constitution of 1824, but not to the current Centralist regime, and demanded the release of the prisoners. John Austin traveled to Velasco to obtain a cannon to

force Bradburn to comply. Col. José de las Piedras, commander at Nacogdoches, hurried to Anahuac. Although in sympathy with Bradburn, he realized that the Mexican forces were outnumbered. He ordered Travis and Jack released to civil authorities, who soon released them altogether. This incident began the Anahuac Disturbances of 1832, which resulted in armed clashes at Velasco and Nacogdoches later that summer and produced the conventions of 1832 and 1833 with their petitions for repeal of the Law of April 6, 1830, and separate statehood.

Travis moved his legal practice to San Felipe in the aftermath of the clash at Anahuac. In 1834 he was elected secretary to the ayuntamiento there and was accepted, despite his youth, into the councils of government. He also met Rebecca (Rebeca) Cummings, who lived at Mill Creek, and began a courtship that resulted in a decision to marry once Travis was divorced. Rosanna Travis began divorce proceedings against her husband in 1834, charging him with desertion. They were divorced in the fall of 1835, and she remarried early the next year. She had permitted Charles Edward Travis to move to Texas, where he lived with the family of David Ayers, so that he could be near his father. Travis may not have known when the divorce became final, for he became embroiled in the rapidly moving events of the Texas Revolution in July 1835 and was constantly occupied until his death. In any event, he made no attempt to marry Rebecca Cummings.

After Stephen F. Austin carried the petition of the Convention of 1833 to the government in Mexico City and was incarcerated, fears for his safety cooled politics in Texas until the summer of 1835. By then Antonio López de Santa Anna had asserted full Centralist authority and reestablished a customhouse and military garrison at Anahuac under the command of Capt. Antonio Tenorio. A war group led by James B. Miller met and authorized Travis to return to Anahuac to expel Tenorio. In late June Travis led some twenty-five men by way of Harrisburg and Galveston Bay on an amphibious assault on Tenorio's position and captured the Mexican soldiers easily. The action alarmed the peace party, and for several months Travis was regarded by many Texans as a troublemaker. Gen. Martín Perfecto de Cos, Mexican military commander in the north, moved his command to San Antonio. He branded Travis and the other partisans at Anahuac outlaws and demanded that the Texans surrender them for military trial.

When Cos demanded the surrender of the Gonzales "come and take it" cannon in October 1835, Travis joined the hundreds of Texans who hastened there, but arrived too late to take part in the action. He remained with the militia and accompanied it to besiege Bexar. He served as a scout in a cavalry unit commanded by Randal Jones and later commanded a unit himself. He did not remain at San Antonio through the final assault in early December, but returned to San Felipe. He advised the Consultation on the organization of cavalry for the army but turned down a commission as a major of artillery. He later accepted a commission as a lieutenant colonel of cavalry and became the chief recruiting officer for the army. Governor Henry Smith ordered Travis to recruit 100 men and reinforce Col. James C. Neill at San Antonio in January 1836. Travis was able to recruit only twenty-nine men, and because he was embarrassed he requested to be relieved. When Smith insisted, Travis reported to Neill and within a few days found himself in command of about fifty men when Neill took leave. When James Bowie arrived with 100 volunteers, he and Travis quarreled over command. They were able to effect an uneasy truce of joint command until Bowie's illness and injury from a fall forced him to bed.

Travis directed the preparation of San Antonio de Valero Mission, known as the Alamo, for the anticipated arrival of Santa Anna and the main command of the Mexican army. With engineer Green B. Jameson he strengthened the walls, constructed palisades to fill gaps, mounted cannons, and stored provisions inside the fortress. He also wrote letters to officials requesting reinforcements, but only the thirty-five men came from Gonzales to his relief, thus raising the number of the Alamo's defenders to approximately 183. Travis's letter addressed "To the People of Texas and All Americans in the World," written on February 24, two days after Santa Anna's advance arrived in San Antonio, brought more than enough help to Texas from the United States, but it did not arrive in time. When Santa Anna had his forces ready, he ordered an assault on the Alamo. This occurred just before dawn on March 6, 1836. The Mexicans overpowered the Texans within a few hours. Travis died early in the battle from a single bullet in the head. His body and those of the other defenders were burned. The nature of Travis's death elevated him from a mere commander of an obscure garrison to a genuine hero of Texas and American history.

III. James Fannin

Written by Clinton P. Hartmann

James Walker Fannin, Jr., Texas revolutionary, was probably born on January 1, 1804, in Georgia, the son of Dr. Isham Fannin. He was adopted by his maternal grandfather, James W. Walker, and brought up on a plantation near Marion. He entered the United States Military Academy at West Point on July 1, 1819, under the name James F. Walker, but withdrew in November 1821. He returned to Georgia and several years later married Minerva Fort, with whom he had two daughters. In the autumn of 1834 he and his family moved to Texas and settled at Velasco, where he supposedly was a plantation owner. His letters affirm the fact that he was a slave trader.

Fannin became an agitator for the Texas Revolution and on August 20, 1835, was appointed by the Committee of Safety and Correspondence of Columbia to use his influence for the calling of the Consultation. On August 27 he wrote to a United States Army officer in Georgia requesting financial aid for the Texas cause and West Point officers to command the Texas army. In September Fannin became active in the volunteer army and subscribed money to an expedition to capture the Veracruzana, a Mexican ship at Copano; but the expedition did not materialize, and Fannin went to Gonzales, where, as captain of the Brazos Guards, he participated in the battle of Gonzales on October 2, 1835. On October 6 he was one of a committee urging Stephen F. Austin to bring all possible aid to Gonzales, and when Austin brought up the whole Texas army and moved toward Bexar, James Bowie and Fannin were sent as scouts to determine conditions between Gonzales and Bexar and to secure supplies. On October 27 Bowie and Fannin selected a campsite near Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña Mission and on October 28 led the Texas forces in the battle of Concepción.

On November 10 Fannin was ordered to cut a Mexican supply route between Laredo and San Antonio but returned to headquarters when he was not joined by a supporting force. On November 13 Sam Houston, commander in chief of the regular army, offered Fannin the position of inspector general, but Fannin received an honorable discharge from the volunteer army on November 22 and began an urgent campaign for a larger regular army. On December 5 the General Council, acting on Fannin's advice, established an auxiliary volunteer corps. Houston commissioned Fannin as a colonel in the regular army on December 7, and on December 10 the council ordered him to enlist reinforcements for the army and to contract for war supplies in the campaign against Bexar. Bexar had surrendered on December 9, so the accumulated supplies were used in the 1836 campaign.

Continuing as an agent of the provisional government, Fannin, on January 9, 1836, began recruiting volunteers for the Matamoros expedition. After Houston withdrew from the expedition, Fannin was elected colonel of the Provisional Regiment of Volunteers at Goliad on February 7 and from February 12 to March 12 acted as commander in chief of the army. When he learned that the Mexicans under José de Urrea had occupied Matamoros, Fannin went no further with plans for the expedition and fell back to strengthen defenses at Goliad. Other elements of the expedition, under James Grant and Francis W. Johnson, were destroyed by Urrea, who then proceeded to attack Goliad. On March 12 Fannin dispatched most of his force to aid Texans near Refugio. On March 14 he received Houston's order to retreat to Victoria, which rescinded a previous order to relieve the Alamo. Waiting for the forces under Amon B. King and William Ward to return from Refugio, Fannin delayed retreating until he heard of their capture. On March 19 he began his retreat, but he and his men were surrounded and forced to surrender at the battle of Coleto. The Texans were imprisoned by the Mexicans at Goliad and subsequently murdered by order of Antonio López de Santa Anna on March 27, 1836. Fannin, because he was wounded, was shot separately at the mission on the same day.

In the months leading up to the Goliad Massacre, Fannin had shown defects as a commander. Accustomed to the discipline of a regular army, he adapted poorly to his situation as head of volunteers. He scorned the idea of electing officers and was disturbed by the lack of a clearly established hierarchy among his forces. His arrogance and ambition earned him the contempt of many of the men under his command. One private, J. G. Ferguson, wrote in a letter to his brother: "I am sorry to say that the majority of the soldiers don't like [Fannin]. For what cause I don't know whether it is because they think he has not the interest of the country at heart or that he wishes to become great without taking the proper steps to attain greatness." In his final weeks, Fannin wrote repeatedly asking to be relieved of his command. Most historians now agree that Fannin made many serious mistakes as a commander. But despite his reluctance to carry on and his sometimes poor military judgment, he held out bravely until the end. Fannin County was named in his honor, as were the town of Fannin in Goliad County and Camp Fannin, a United States Army installation.

IV. James Bowie

Written by William R. Willamson

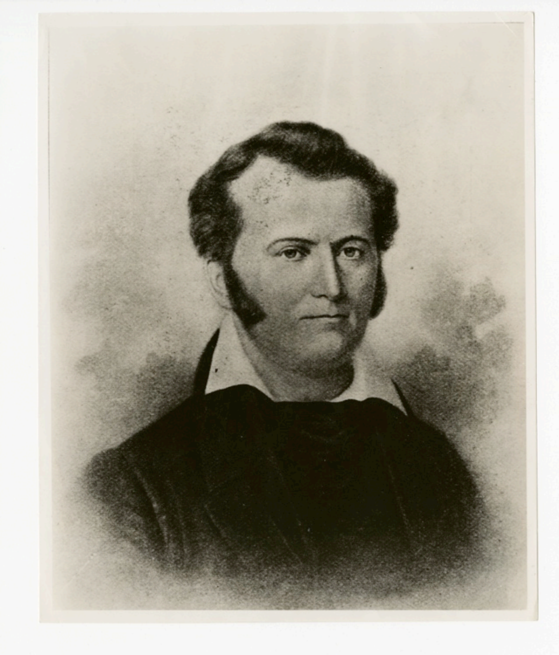

Figure 3: Portrait of James Bowie, The McArdle Notebooks, Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

James Bowie was born near Terrapin Creek (now Spring Creek) where it crosses Bowie's Mill Road (Turnertown Road), nine miles northwest of Franklin, Logan County (now Simpson County), Kentucky, probably on April 10, 1796. He was the son of Reason (or Rezin) and Elve Ap-Catesby Jones (or Johns) Bowie. In 1794 Reason Bowie had moved his family from Tennessee to Logan County, where he farmed and operated a gristmill with the help of eight slaves. In February 1800 he moved to Madrid, in what is now Missouri. On May 2, 1801, at Rapides, Louisiana, Reason Bowie and his brothers David, Rhesa, and John swore allegiance to the Spanish government. In October the families settled on farms in what is now Catahoula Parish. There Reason's sons, James, John J., Stephen, and Rezin P. Bowie, grew to manhood. The family took an active part in community affairs and the elder Bowie reportedly became the largest slaveowner in his locale, with twenty slaves. About 1809 the Bowie clan moved to the Atakapa country in southeastern Louisiana; there Reason purchased 640 acres on the Vermilion River near the mouth of Little Bayou. He then developed a plantation near Opelousas, where he grew cotton and sugarcane, raised livestock, and bought and sold slaves. Reason Bowie died there around 1821.

In his teens James Bowie worked in Avoyelles and Rapides parishes, where he floated lumber to market. He invested in property on the Bayou Boeuf and traded in 1817–18 at what is now Bennett's Store, south of Cheneyville. He was fond of hunting and fishing, and family tradition says that he caught and rode wild horses, rode alligators, and trapped bears. When grown, Bowie was described by his brother John as "a stout, rather raw-boned man, of six feet height, weighed 180 pounds." He had light-colored hair, keen grey eyes "rather deep set in his head," a fair complexion, and high cheek-bones. Bowie had an "open, frank disposition," but when aroused by an insult, his anger was terrible. During the War of 1812, James and Rezin joined the Second Division, Consolidated, a unit that contained the Seventeenth through Nineteenth regiments, drawn from Avoyelles, Rapides, Natchitoches, Catahoula, and Ouachita parishes. In January 1815, according to family records, the brothers were on their way to join Andrew Jackson's forces at New Orleans when the war ended.

After the war they traded in slaves. They bought them from the pirate Jean Laffite, who captured slave shipments in the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico and ran a slave market on Galveston Island. Laffite landed slaves at Bowie's Island in Vermilion Bay, and the Bowies took the slaves up the Vermilion and sold them in St. Landry Parish. When they had $65,000 they quit the business. James and Rezin also dabbled in land speculation and developed friendships with local wealthy planters. James became engaged to Cecelia Wells (b. 1805), who died on September 7, 1829, in Alexandria, two weeks before their wedding was to take place.

He also made enemies. Norris Wright, Rapides parish sheriff and local banker, refused to make a loan that Bowie sorely needed. In 1826 Bowie met Wright in Alexandria, where tempers flared and Wright fired point-blank at Bowie; but the bullet was deflected. After this encounter, Rezin gave his brother a large butcher-like hunting knife to carry. On September 19, 1827, near Natchez, Jim Bowie participated in the Sandbar Fight, which developed at a duel between Samuel Levi Wells III and Dr. Thomas Maddox. After the principals had exchanged shots without effect, two observers continued the affair. Alexander Crain fired at Samuel Cuny, and when Cuny fell, Bowie fired at Crain but missed. Wright shot Bowie through the lower chest, and Bowie, said an eyewitness, "drew his butcher knife which he usually wears" and chased Wright. The Blanchard brothers shot Bowie in the thigh, and Wright and Alfred Blanchard stabbed him in several places. As Wright bent over him, Bowie plunged the knife into his assailant's breast, then raised himself and slashed Blanchard severely. All the witnesses remembered Bowie's "big butcher knife," the first Bowie knife. Reports of Bowie's prowess and his lethal blade captured public attention, and he was proclaimed the South's most formidable knife fighter. Men asked blacksmiths and cutlers to make a knife like Jim Bowie's.

During the late 1820s Bowie's land speculations centered on the southern Louisiana parishes; he lived in New Orleans, enjoying its excitement and pleasures. James and his brothers Rezin and Stephen established the Arcadia sugar plantation of some 1,800 acres near the town of Thibodaux, where they set up the first steam-powered sugar mill in Louisiana. Rezin was elected to the Louisiana state legislature. James spent little time at Arcadia, however; in the late 1820s he traveled to the eastern cities, as well as Arkansas and Mississippi. On February 12, 1831, the brothers sold Arcadia and other landholdings and eighty-two slaves to Natchez investors for $90,000.

When Bowie first entered Mexican Texas is unknown. He possibly was recruited in 1819 in New Orleans with Benjamin R. Milam and others for the Long expedition. If he did, he was not among those captured. On January 1, 1830, Bowie and a friend left Thibodaux for Texas. They stopped at Nacogdoches, at Jared E. Groce's farm on the Brazos River, and in San Felipe, where Bowie presented a letter of introduction to empresario Stephen F. Austin from Thomas F. McKinney, one of the Old Three Hundred colonists. On February 20 Bowie and his friend Isaac Donoho took the oath of allegiance to Mexico. Bowie, age thirty-four, was at his prime. He was well traveled, convivial, loved music, and was generous. He also was ambitious and scheming; he played cards for money, and lived in a world of debt. He reached San Antonio with William H. Wharton and Mrs. Wharton, Isaac Donoho, Caiaphas K. Ham, and several slaves. They carried letters of introduction to two wealthy and influential Mexicans, Juan Martín de Veramendi and Juan N. Seguín. Bowie's party continued on to Saltillo, the state capital of Coahuila and Texas. There Bowie learned that a Mexican law of 1828 offered its citizens eleven-league grants in Texas for $100 to $250 each. (A league was 4,428.4 acres.) Bowie urged Mexicans to apply for the eleven-league grants, which he purchased from them. He left Saltillo with fifteen or sixteen of these grants, and continued to encourage speculation in Texas lands. His activities irritated Stephen F. Austin, who hesitated to approve lands Bowie wanted to locate in the Austin colony but eventually allowed the tracts there.

In San Antonio Bowie posed as a man of wealth, attached himself to the wealthy Veramendi family, and was baptized into the Catholic Church, sponsored by the Veramendis. In the autumn of 1830 he accompanied the family to Saltillo, and on October 5 officially became a Mexican citizen. The citizenship was contingent on his establishing wool and cotton mills in Coahuila. Through his friend Angus McNeill of Natchez, he purchased a textile mill for $20,000. On April 25, 1831, in San Antonio, Bowie married Ursula de Veramendi. He had appeared before the mayor, declared his age as thirty-two (he was actually thirty-five), and pledged to pay Ursula a dowry of $15,000. He valued his properties at $222,800. But the titles to his 60,000 arpents of Arkansas land, valued at $30,000, were fraudulent. Walker and Wilkins of Natchez owed Bowie $45,000 for his interest in Arcadia Plantation, and had given McNeil $20,000 for the Saltillo mill. Bowie borrowed $1,879 from his father-in-law and $750 from Ursula's grandmother for a honeymoon trip to New Orleans and Natchez. The Bowies settled in San Antonio.

Veramendi family tradition says Bowie spent little time at home. He apparently became fascinated by tales of the "lost" Los Almagres Mine, said to be west of San Antonio near the ruin of Santa Cruz de San Sabá Mission. Bowie obtained permission from Mexican authorities for an expedition into Indian country financed by the Veramendis, and on November 2, 1831, he left San Antonio with his brother Rezin and nine others. On the nineteenth they learned that a large Indian war party was following them, and six miles from San Saba, Bowie camped in an oak grove. An attempt to parley failed. Bowie's men fought for their lives for thirteen hours. The Indians finally drew off, reportedly leaving forty dead and thirty wounded. Bowie lost one man killed and several wounded. The party returned to San Antonio. On January 23, 1832, Bowie

made another foray to the west. He now carried the title of "colonel" of citizen rangers. He left Gonzales with twenty-six men to scout the headwaters of the Colorado for Tawakonis and other hostile Indians. After a fruitless search of 2½ months, he returned home.

In July, in Natchez, he learned that José de las Piedras, Mexican commander at Nacogdoches, had visited the towns of Anahuac and Velasco to quiet the antagonisms between the government and the mainly Anglo citizens. Upon his return, Piedras demanded that all citizens in his jurisdiction surrender their arms. The colonists rejected the demand. Bowie hurried to Nacogdoches, and on August 1 accompanied James W. Bullock and 300 armed men in their siege of the garrison there. Piedras chose to fight. During the night he evacuated his men and marched south, having lost thirty-three killed. Bowie and eighteen men ambushed the Mexican column, and Piedras fled. Bowie marched the soldiers back to Nacogdoches. On March 9, 1833, Monclova replaced Saltillo as the state capital. When the two towns raised small armies to contest the change, Bowie favored Monclova. On one occasion when the forces confronted each other, he rode out and tried to precipitate a battle. He believed that the fortunes of Texas land speculators lay with Monclova.

In September, Veramendi, his wife Josefa, and Ursula Bowie died of cholera at Monclova. Ursula died on the tenth. A Bowie relative and Veramendi family tradition say Ursula and one child died in the epidemic. A Bowie family friend reported that Ursula had two children, but both died young. Bowie was ill with yellow fever in Natchez and unaware of the deaths. On October 31 he dictated his last will, in which he bequeathed half of his estate to his brother Rezin and half to his sister Martha Sterrett and her husband.

Mexican laws passed in 1834 and 1835 opened the floodgates to wholesale speculation in Texas lands, and Texas-Coahuila established land commissions to speed sales, since the state treasury was empty. Bowie was appointed a commissioner to promote settlement in John T. Mason's purchase. The governor also was empowered to hand out 400-league parcels for frontier defense. The sale of these large tracts angered some colonists, who also resented a rumored plan by speculators to make San Antonio the capital. They questioned Bowie's handling of Mason's 400-league purchase. One traveler met Bowie and Mason en route from Matamoros to Monclova with $40,000 in specie to pay the last installment on Mason's land. Bowie also sold Mason land certificates to his friends in Natchez. In May 1835, however, Santa Anna abolished the Coahuila-Texas government and ordered the arrest of all Texans doing business in Monclova. Bowie fled the capital for Texas. On June 22 he wrote a friend in Nacogdoches that all communication between Mexico and Texas had been cut, that troops were boarding ships at Matamoros for the Texas coast, and that Mexican forces were en route from Saltillo toward the Rio Grande. In July, Bowie and others in San Felipe and Nacogdoches were beating the drum for war. Bowie led a small group of Texas "militia" to San Antonio and seized a stack of muskets in the Mexican armory there.

On July 31, 1835, William B. Travis wrote Bowie that Texans were divided and that the Peace Party appeared the stronger. Travis was a leader of the War Party. Bowie had hired Travis as early as 1833 in San Felipe to prepare land papers, and in June 1834 Travis represented Bowie and Isaac Donoho in a case filed by Francis W. Johnson. Travis also did legal work for Bowie's friend Jesse Clifft, a blacksmith who is often credited with making the first Bowie knife. The War Party sought military support among the Indian tribes in East Texas. On August 3, Bowie reported on a recent tour of several villages where he found many of the Indians on drunken sprees and all reluctant to cooperate.

On September 1, Austin arrived home from a long imprisonment in Mexico City. On October 3, Santa Anna abolished all state legislatures in Mexico. After being elected to command the volunteer army, Austin issued a call to arms. On October 16 his forces camped on Cibolo Creek twenty miles from San Antonio. Bowie arrived with a small party of friends, principally from Louisiana, and Austin placed him on his staff as a colonel. Travis and others joined the army. Gen. Sam Houston, in command of the Texas regular army, arrived and condemned the idea of attacking Bexar. He maintained that Austin's army, weak and ill-trained, should fall back to the Guadalupe or Colorado river. Bowie and Capt. James W. Fannin, at Austin's orders, scouted south of Bexar for a new campsite. On their way, Bowie drove off a Mexican patrol. On October 26, Austin moved 400 men to San Francisco de la Espada Mission. Bowie took ninety-two horsemen and inspected area of Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña Mission, near Bexar. At dawn on the twenty-eighth, in a heavy fog, the Mexicans attacked Bowie with 300 cavalry and 100 infantry. Bowie fought for three hours. "Bowie was a born leader," Noah Smithwick wrote years later of the battle of Concepción, "never needlessly spending a bullet or imperiling a life. His voice is still ringing in my old deaf ears as he repeatedly admonished us. Keep under cover boys and reserve your fire; we haven't a man to spare." Bowie captured a six-pounder cannon and thirty muskets. He lost one man, while the Mexicans left sixteen on the field and carried off as many. Bowie, Fannin, and the detachment remained in the immediate area south of Bexar while Austin moved his army and established headquarters on the Alamo Canal.

Three days after the battle Austin sent Travis and fifty men to capture some 900 horses being driven south to Laredo, and asked Bowie to create a diversion to cover the escape of Mexican soldiers who wanted to desert. Bowie made a display of force, yet the soldiers failed to come out. On October 31 Bowie notified Gen. Martín Perfecto de Cos that he would join Austin in an attack on Bexar. On November 1 Austin demanded that Cos surrender; he refused. Austin hesitated. On November 2, Austin's officers voted 44 to 3 against storming Bexar. Bowie did not vote. He asked the same day to be relieved of command and again tried to resign on November 6. He had earlier served in a volunteer ranger group, fought Indians, and was the type of officer who served the community in time of need. He apparently had little interest in a formal command. Provisional governor Henry Smith and Houston wanted him to raise a volunteer group and attack Matamoros, but the General Council declared that Bowie was not "an officer of the government nor army."

Bowie left the army for a brief trip to San Felipe in mid-November. He was back in San Antonio on November 18, and on the twenty-sixth he and thirty horsemen rode out to check on a Mexican packtrain near town, while Burleson followed with 100 infantry. Bowie met the train and charged its cavalry escort. He fought off several assaults by Mexican infantry, and the Mexicans retired with the loss of sixty men. As the train was loaded with bales of grass for the garrison livestock, the clash was called the Grass Fight. Bowie subsequently proceeded to Goliad to determine conditions there. During his absence, Burleson attacked Bexar on December 5 and forced the Mexican garrison to surrender and retire to the Rio Grande. The volunteers left for home. Bowie received a letter from Houston dated December 17, suggesting a campaign against Matamoros. If that was impossible, Houston suggested, Bowie could perhaps organize a guerilla force to harass the Mexican army. The Matamoros expedition was approved, but the issue of command was muddied by the political rivalry between Governor Smith and the council, and Houston soon found another assignment for Bowie.

On January 19, 1836, Bowie arrived in Bexar from Goliad with a detachment of thirty men. He carried orders from Houston to demolish the fortifications there, though some historians believe these orders were discretionary. The situation was grim. Col. James C. Neill, commander of a contingent of seventy-eight men at the Alamo, stated that his men lacked clothing and pay and talked of leaving. Mexican families were leaving Bexar. Texas volunteers had carried off most of the munitions and supplies for the Matamoros expedition. On February 2 Bowie wrote Governor Smith, urging that Bexar be held because it was a strategic "frontier picqet guard." Travis, promoted to lieutenant colonel, arrived with thirty men on February 3; David Crockett rode in with twelve men on the eighth. The garrison had some 150 men. On February 11, Neill gave his command to Travis and left. The volunteers preferred Bowie as commander and insisted on holding an election on February 12. The volunteer vote placed Bowie in command, and he celebrated by getting drunk. While under the influence Bowie ordered certain prisoners set free and paraded the volunteers under arms in Bexar. Travis took his regulars from the Alamo to the Medina River to escape implication in the disgraceful affair. On February 13 Bowie and Travis worked out a compromise giving Travis command of the regulars, Bowie command of the volunteers, and both men joint authority over garrison orders and correspondence.

On February 23 Bowie and Travis learned that some 1,500 Mexican cavalrymen were advancing on Bexar, and sent a dispatch to Goliad asking Fannin for help. Within hours the Mexicans marched into Bexar and requested a parley. Without consulting Travis, Bowie asked for and received terms: the Texans must surrender. These terms were rejected. On February 24 Bowie, who was suffering from a disease "of a peculiar nature," which has been diagnosed as pneumonia or typhoid pneumonia but probably was advanced tuberculosis, collapsed, ending his active participation in commanding the garrison. Most historians no longer believe that he fell from a platform while attempting to position a cannon. He was confined to a cot and urged the volunteers to follow Travis. He was occasionally carried outside to visit his men.

On March 6 the Mexicans attacked before dawn, and all 188 defenders of the Alamo perished. Santa Anna asked to see the corpses of Bowie, Travis, and Crockett, and Bexar mayor Francisco Ruiz identified the bodies. Bowie lay on his cot in a room on the south side. He had been shot several times in the head. During his lifetime he had been described by his old friend Caiaphas K. Ham as "a clever, polite gentleman...attentive to the ladies on all occasions...a true, constant, and generous friend...a foe no one dared to undervalue and many feared." Slave trader, gambler, land speculator, dreamer, and hero, James Bowie in death became immortal in the annals of Texas history.

V. Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna

Written by Wilfred H. Calcott

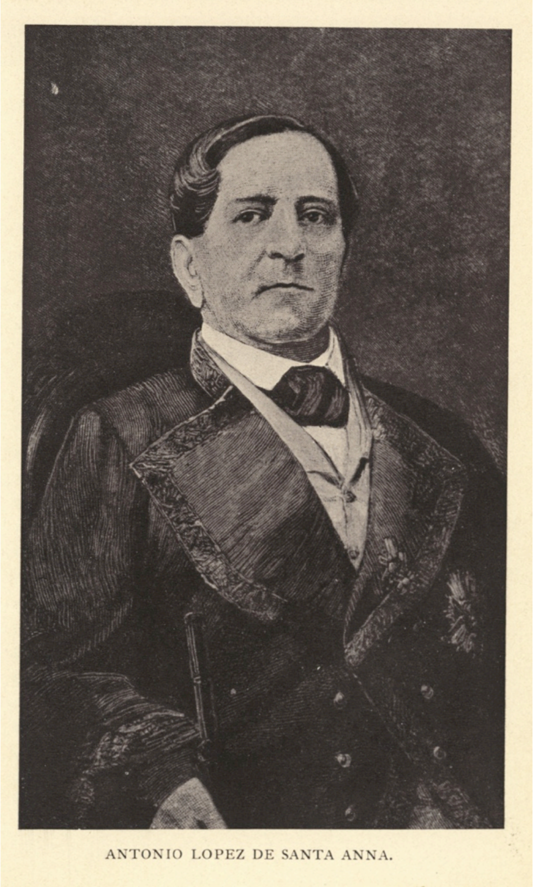
ANTONIO LOPEZ DE SANTA ANNA.

Figure 4: Portrait of General Santa Anna, from the Original by Paul L'Ouvrier, The Battle of San Jacinto Notebook, The McArdle Notebooks, Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

Antonio López de Santa Anna Pérez de Lebrón, soldier and five-time president of Mexico, was born at Jalapa, Vera Cruz, on February 21, 1794, the son of Antonio López de Santa Anna and Manuela Pérez de Lebrón. His family belonged to the criollo middle class, and his father served at one time as a subdelegate for the Spanish province of Vera Cruz. After a limited schooling the young Santa Anna worked for a merchant of Vera Cruz. In June 1810 he was appointed a cadet in the Fijo de Vera Cruz infantry regiment under the command of Joaquín de Arredondo. He spent the next five years battling insurgents and policing the Indian tribes of the Provincias Internas. Like most criollo officers in the Royalist army, he remained loyal to Spain for a number of years and fought against the movement for Mexican independence. He received his first wound, an Indian arrow in his left arm or hand, in 1811. In 1813 he served in Texas against the Gutiérrez-Magee expedition, and at the battle of Medina he was cited for bravery. In the aftermath of the rebellion the young officer witnessed Arredondo's fierce counterinsurgency policy of mass executions, and historians have speculated that Santa Anna modeled his policy and conduct in the Texas Revolution on his experience under Arredondo. He once again served under Arrendondo against the filibustering expedition of Francisco Xavier Mina in 1817. The young officer spent the next several years in building Indian villages and in occasional campaigns, while he acquired debts, some property, and promotions. In 1820 he was promoted to brevet captain, and he became a brevet lieutenant colonel the following year. In March of 1821 he made the first of the dramatic shifts of allegiance that characterized his military and political career by

joining the rebel forces under Agustín de Iturbide in the middle of a campaign against them. He campaigned for Iturbide for a time and was promoted to brigadier general. In December 1822 Santa Anna broke with Iturbide over a series of personal grievances, and he called for a republic in his Plan of Casa Mata in December 1822.

After serving as military governor of Yucatán, Santa Anna retired to civil life and became governor of Vera Cruz. In 1829 he defeated the Spanish invasion at Tampico and emerged from the campaign as a national hero. In the course of this campaign, he demonstrated several of his characteristic military strengths and weaknesses; he was able to pull an army together quickly and with severely limited resources, but he also combined elaborate planning with slipshod and faulty execution. He rebelled against the administration three years later and was elected president of Mexico as a liberal in 1833, but in 1834 he stated that Mexico was not ready for democracy and emerged as an autocratic Centralist. When the liberals of Zacatecas defied his authority and an attempt to reduce their militia in 1835, Santa Anna moved to crush them and followed up his battlefield victory with a harsh campaign of repression. In December 1835 he arrived at San Luis Potosí to organize an army to crush the rebellion in Texas. In 1836 he marched north with his forces to play his controversial role in the Texas Revolution. After his capture by Sam Houston's army, he was sent to Washington, D.C., whence he returned to Mexico. He retired to his estates at Manga de Clavo for a time, then emerged to join the defense of Mexico against the French in December 1838 during the so-called "Pastry War." He lost a leg in battle and regained his popularity. He was acting president in 1839, helped overthrow the government of Anastasio Bustamante in 1841, and was dictator from 1841 to 1845. Excesses led to his overthrow and exile to Havana.

At the beginning of the Mexican War, Santa Anna entered into negotiations with President James K. Polk. He offered the possibility of a negotiated settlement to the United States and was permitted to enter Mexico through the American blockade. Once in the country he rallied resistance to the foreign invaders. As commanding officer in the northern campaign he lost the battle of Buena Vista in February 1847, returned to Mexico City, reorganized the demoralized government, and turned east to be defeated by Winfield S. Scott's forces at Cerro Gordo. Secret negotiations with Scott failed, and when Mexico City was captured, Santa Anna retired to exile. In 1853 he was recalled by the Centralists, but again power turned his head. To help meet expenses he sold the Mesilla Valley to the United States as the Gadsden Purchase and was overthrown and banished by the liberals in 1855.

For eleven years he schemed to return to Mexico, conniving with the French and with Maximilian. After a visit from the American secretary of state, W. H. Seward, he invested most of his property in a vessel that he sailed to New York to become the nucleus of a planned invading force from the United States. Disappointed in his efforts, he proceeded towards Mexico, was arrested on the coast, and returned to exile. From 1867 to 1874 he lived in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Nassau. During this time he finally abandoned politics and wrote

his memoirs. In 1874 he was allowed to return to Mexico City, where he lived in obscurity until his death on June 21, 1876. He was buried at Tepeyac Cemetery, near Guadalupe Hidalgo. Santa Anna was married twice, to Inés García in 1825, and, a few months after the death of his first wife in 1844, to María Dolores de Tosta, who survived him.

VI. David “Davy” Crockett

Written by Michael A. Lofaro

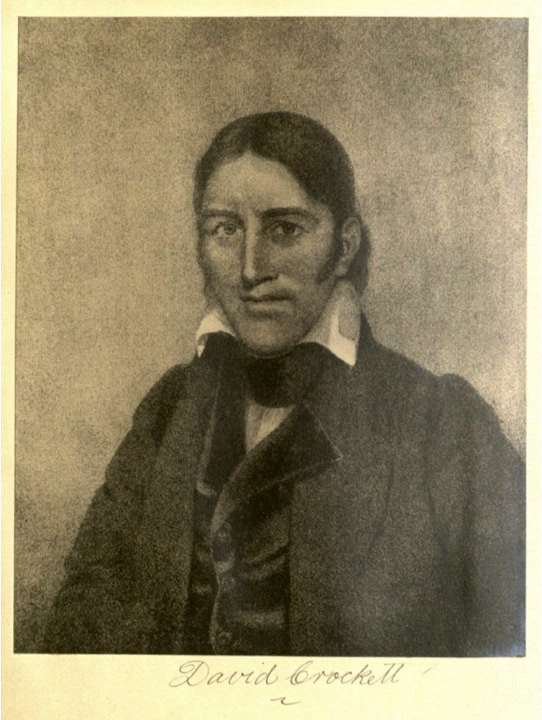

Figure 5: Portrait of David Crockett, The McArdle Notebooks, Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

David (Davy) Crockett, frontiersman, congressman, and defender of the Alamo, son of John and Rebecca (Hawkins) Crockett, was born in Greene County, Tennessee, on August 17, 1786. In 1798, two years after the Crocketts opened a tavern on the road from Knoxville to Abingdon, Virginia, John Crockett hired his son out to Jacob Siler to help drive a herd of cattle to Rockbridge County, Virginia. Siler tried to detain David by force after the job was completed, but the boy escaped at night by walking seven miles in two hours through knee-deep snow. He eventually made his way home in late 1798 or early 1799. Soon afterward he started school, but preferred playing hooky and ran away to escape his father's punishment. This "strategic withdrawal," as Crockett called it, lasted 2½ years while he worked as a wagoner and day-laborer and at odd jobs to support himself. When he returned home in 1802 he had grown so much that his family did not recognize him at first. When they did, he found that all was forgiven. Crockett reciprocated their generosity by working for about a year to discharge his father's debts, which totaled seventy-six dollars, and subsequently returned to school for six months.

On October 21, 1805, Crockett took out a license to marry Margaret Elder of Dandridge, Tennessee, but was jilted by her, perhaps justly, since local legend intimated that he was a less than constant suitor. He recovered quickly from the experience, courted Mary (Polly) Finley, and married her on August 14, 1806, in Jefferson County; they remained in the mountains of East Tennessee for just over five years. Sometime after September 11, 1811, David, Polly, and their two sons, John Wesley and William, settled on the Mulberry Fork of Elk River in Lincoln County, Tennessee; they moved again in 1813, to the Rattlesnake Spring branch of Bean's Creek in Franklin County, Tennessee, near what is now the Alabama border. Crockett named his homestead "Kentuck."

He began his military career in September of that year, when he enlisted in the militia as a scout under Major Gibson in Winchester, Tennessee, to avenge an Indian attack on Fort Mims, Alabama. On November 3, under Andrew Jackson, Crockett participated in the retributive massacre of the Indian town of Tallussahatchee. He returned home when his ninety-day enlistment for the Creek Indian War expired on the day before Christmas, and reenlisted on September 28, 1814, as a third sergeant in Capt. John Cowan's company. He arrived on November 7, the day after Jackson took Pensacola, and spent his time trying to ferret out the British-trained Indians from the Florida swamps. After his discharge in 1815 as a fourth Sergeant Crockett arrived home and found himself again a father. Polly died the summer after Margaret's birth, although she had been in good health when David returned.

On May 21, 1815, Crockett was elected a lieutenant in the Thirty-second Militia regiment of Franklin County. Before summer's end he married Elizabeth Patton, a widow with two children (George and Margaret Ann), and he explored Alabama in the fall with an eye towards settlement. He nearly died from malaria-was reported dead-and astonished his family with his "resurrection." By about September of the next year the Crocketts had moved to the territory soon to become Lawrence County, Tennessee, rather than Alabama. They settled at the head of Shoal Creek, and David continued his political and military career. He became a justice of the peace on November 17, 1817, a post he resigned in 1819. He became the town commissioner of Lawrenceburg before April 1, 1818, and was elected colonel of the Fifty-seventh Militia regiment in the county that same year.

New Year's Day 1821 marked a turning point in Crockett's career. He resigned as commissioner to run for a seat in the Tennessee legislature as the representative of Lawrence and Hickman counties. He won the August election and, from the beginning, took an active interest in public land policy regarding the West. After the session concluded he moved his family to what is now Gibson County in West Tennessee. He was reelected in 1823, defeating Dr. William E. Butler, but was in turn defeated in August 1825 in his first bid for a seat in Congress. In 1826, after returning to private business, Crockett nearly died when his boats carrying barrel staves were wrecked in the Mississippi River. When he was brought to Memphis he was encouraged to run again for Congress by Maj. M. B. Winchester and won election over Gen. William Arnold and Col. Adam Alexander to the United States House of Representatives in 1827. He was reelected to a second term in 1829 and split with President Andrew Jackson and the Tennessee delegation on several issues, including land reform and the Indian removal bill. In his 1831 campaign for a third term, Crockett openly and vehemently attacked Jackson's policies and was defeated in a close election by William Fitzgerald.

By this time Crockett's reputation as a sharpshooter, hunter, and yarn-spinner had brought him into national prominence. He was the model for Nimrod Wildfire, the hero of James Kirke Paulding's play The Lion of the West, which opened in New York City on April 25, 1831. Life and Adventures of Colonel David Crockett of West Tennessee was published in 1833 and reprinted the same year under the more accurate title of Sketches and Eccentricities of Colonel David Crockett of West Tennessee. Much of the same material spilled over into the first few issues of a series of comic almanacs published under Crockett's name from 1835 to 1856 that, as a whole, constituted a body of outrageous tall tales about the adventures of the legendary Davy rather than the historical David Crockett.

Building in part upon his growing notoriety, Crockett defeated the incumbent Fitzgerald in 1833 to return to Congress. The following year he published his autobiography, written with the help of Thomas Chilton, A Narrative of the Life of David Crockett of the State of Tennessee, the only work that he actually authored. It was intended to correct the portrayal given by Mathew St. Clair Clarke in Sketches and Eccentricities and to deny Crockett's authorship of that account, which did not bear Clarke's name. The Narrative was also a campaign biography of sorts, for Whig politicians were touting Crockett as an anti-Jackson candidate for the presidency in 1836. On April 25, 1834, he began a three-week triumphal tour of the eastern states, and his "campaign swing" was recorded in the first of two Whig books published the next year under his name, An Account of Colonel Crockett's Tour to the North and Down East. The second, a negative Life of Martin Van Buren, was issued less than three months later.

Crockett apparently thought himself a serious candidate, but he was likely only a convenient political tool to the Whigs, an independent frontiersman with a national reputation perhaps the equal of Jackson's who opposed Jackson on key political issues. The point became academic, however, when Crockett lost his 1835 congressional campaign to Adam Huntsman, a peg-legged lawyer supported by Jackson and by Governor Carroll of Tennessee, by 252 votes.

Disenchanted with the political process and his former constituents, Crockett decided to do what he had threatened to do-to explore Texas and to move his family there if the prospects were pleasing. On November 1, 1835, with William Patton, Abner Burgin, and Lindsey K. Tinkle, he set out to the West, as he wrote on the eve of his departure, "to explore the Texas well before I return." At this point he had no intention of joining the fight for Texas independence.

The foursome reached Memphis the first evening and, in company with some friends congregated in the bar of the Union Hotel for a farewell drinking party, Crockett offered his now famous remark: "Since you have chosen to elect a man with a timber toe to succeed me, you may all go to hell and I will go to Texas." They set off the next day. Their route was down the Mississippi River to the Arkansas and then up that river to Little Rock; overland to Fulton, Arkansas, and up the Red River along the northern boundary of Texas; across the Red River, through Clarksville, to Nacogdoches and San Augustine; and on to San Antonio.

At San Augustine the party evidently divided. Burgin and Tinkle went home; Crockett and Patton signed the oath of allegiance, but only after Crockett insisted upon the insertion of the word "republican" in the document. They thus swore their allegiance to the "Provisional Government of Texas or any future republican Government that may be hereafter declared." Crockett had balked at the possibility that he would be obliged to support some future government that might prove despotic.

In early February Crockett arrived at San Antonio de Béxar; Antonio López de Santa Anna arrived on February 23. On the one hand Crockett was still fighting Jackson. The Americans in Texas were split into two political factions that divided roughly into those supporting a conservative Whig philosophy and those supporting the administration. Crockett chose to join Col. William B. Travis, who had deliberately disregarded Sam Houston's orders to withdraw from the Alamo, rather than support Houston, a Jackson sympathizer. What was more, he saw the future of an independent Texas as his future, and he loved a good fight.

Crockett died in battle of the Alamo on March 6, 1836. The manner of his death was uncertain, however, until the publication in 1955 of the diary of Lt. José Enrique de la Peña. Susanna Dickinson, wife of Almeron Dickinson, an officer at the Alamo, said Crockett died on the outside, one of the earliest to fall. Joe, Travis's slave and the only male Texan to survive the battle, reported seeing Crockett lying dead with slain Mexicans around him and stated that only one man, named Warner, surrendered to the Mexicans (Warner was taken to Santa Anna and promptly shot). When Peña's eyewitness account was placed together with other corroborating documents, Crockett's central part in the defense became clear. Travis had previously written that during the first bombardment Crockett was everywhere in the Alamo "animating the men to do their duty." Other reports told of the deadly fire of his rifle that killed five Mexican gunners in succession, as they each attempted to fire a cannon bearing on the fort, and that he may have just missed Santa Anna, who thought himself out of range of all the defenders' rifles. Crockett and five or six others were captured when the Mexican troops took the Alamo at about six o'clock that morning, even though Santa Anna had ordered that no prisoners be taken. The general, infuriated when some of his officers brought the Americans before him to try to intercede for their lives, ordered them executed immediately. They were killed with bayonets and swords. Crockett's reputation and that of the other survivors was not, as some have suggested, sullied by their capture. Their dignity and bravery was, in fact, further underscored by Peña's recounting that "these unfortunates died without...humiliating themselves before their torturers."

Coincidentally, a work mostly of fiction masquerading as fact had put the truth of Crockett's death before the American public in the summer of 1836. Despite its many falsifications and plagiarisms, Richard Penn Smith's Col. Crockett's Exploits and Adventures in Texas...Written by Himself had a reasonably accurate account of Crockett's capture and execution. Many thought the legendary Davy deserved better, and they provided it, from thrilling tales of his clubbing

Mexicans with his empty rifle and holding his section of the wall of the Alamo until cut down by bullets and bayonets, to his survival as a slave in a Mexican salt mine.

In the final analysis, however, no matter how fascinating or outrageous the fabrications were that gathered around him, the historical David Crockett proved a formidable hero in his own right and succeeded Daniel Boone as the rough-hewn representative of frontier independence and virtue. In this regard, the motto he adopted and made famous epitomized his spirit: "Be always sure you're right-then go a-head!"

VII. The Little Book that Wasn't There: The Myth and Mystery of the da la Pena Diary

By James E. Crisp

For more than a century and a half, the death of Davy Crockett at the Alamo has fascinated and inspired countless Americans. In recent years, it has also become the subject of a sometimes-heated historical debate, in which the participants have often revealed more about their own values and agendas than about the actual evidence and its implications.

Contemporary published reports varied wildly as to the circumstances of Crockett's death, ranging from glowing reports of his fighting like a tiger to the bitter end, to descriptions of his summary execution along with a handful of other prisoners on the express orders of General Santa Anna. These inconsistencies notwithstanding, Crockett, who was already a national celebrity at the time of his demise in 1836, instantly became both a "martyr on the altar of manifest destiny" and a powerful symbol of the exuberant innocence at the core of mid-nineteenth-century America's self-image.

Though his fame had dimmed considerably by the middle of the twentieth century, folklorists had already begun to take a new interest in the Crockett legend when the Cold War provided a splendid backdrop for the reemergence of a hero who seemed to embody the cardinal virtues of postwar America: physical strength, confident innocence ("Be always sure you're right, THEN GO AHEAD!"), and a readiness to sacrifice life itself in defense of liberty against the assaults of a despotic foe.

Of course, the pivotal moment in the rebirth of the legend came with the television broadcast of the "Disney version" of Crockett's life and death with Fess Parker in the leading role, culminating in the third installment, "Davy Crockett at the Alamo," on February 23, 1955. The national craze which followed was a commercial and cultural sensation that fixed Davy's heroic image-an image which was reinforced by John Wayne's portrayal of Crockett in the 1960 movie *The Alamo*-in the collective memory of a generation of young Americans.

Yet only three weeks after the last glimmers of Fess Parker's hopeless stand against an irresistible tide of Santa Anna's soldiers had faded from American television sets, a book appeared in Mexico City which would ultimately threaten to supplant Crockett's heroic final image with a contrasting portrait of submission and helplessness. The cold-blooded killing, at the behest of Santa Anna himself, of Crockett and a half dozen other captured Alamo defenders in the immediate aftermath of the battle is described (and condemned) in the narrative diary of Lt. Col. José Enrique de la Peña, which, edited by Jesús Sánchez Garza, was published in March of 1955 under the title *La Rebelión de Texas*.

Neither de la Peña in writing the diary nor Sánchez Garza in editing it was especially concerned with Crockett's fate, nor with that of his legend. It was the loss of the rich and beautiful province of Texas through the incompetence of men who later attempted to evade their culpability that motivated de la Peña to make public what he had seen of the disastrous campaign. The execution of the Alamo prisoners was only one of a series of senseless acts, both cruel and cowardly, that the young Mexican officer attributed to his most powerful superiors, Generals Antonio López de Santa Anna and Vicente Filisola. Jesús Sánchez Garza did not mention Crockett's death in his long preamble to the diary, nor is it a subject of even one of the many documents that he appended to *La Rebelión de Texas*. It was de la Peña's ultimately tragic fate at the hands of *his* enemies, not Crockett's fate, that concerned the Mexican editor.

The publication of de la Peña's diary in Mexico had no immediate impact on either Texas historiography or the American image of Crockett. Lon Tinkle, in the bibliographical section of his well-known 1958 account of the siege of the Alamo, *Thirteen Days to Glory*, called the diary one of "the most interesting contributions to Alamo investigation in recent years," but it is unlikely that Tinkle was truly familiar with the book, since he failed to mention the title, and incorrectly listed both the date of publication and the diarist's name (he called him "Gonzalez Peña") Tinkle labelled the book's contents as "vitriolic," but made no reference to de la Peña's version of Crockett's death.

In 1961 Walter Lord undoubtedly raised some eyebrows when he incorporated de la Peña's narrative of the fall of the Alamo and the execution of the prisoners into his meticulously researched and dramatically written book, *A Time to Stand*. But widespread attention to the story came only with the publication of Carmen Perry's English translation of the diary in 1975, and the notoriety given de la Peña's tale by Dan Kilgore 's subsequent presidential address to the Texas State Historical Association, which was published as *How Did Davy Die?* in 1978. These two books created a firestorm of public protest by challenging the heroic and filiopietistic versions of Crockett's last stand, versions made immensely popular in the 1950s and 1960s by Walt Disney and John Wayne, and even endorsed by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas.

Yet despite the anguished complaints of Crockett's defenders, the revised rendering of his death gained considerable scholarly acceptance. In one of the more insightful passages of his new book, *Defense of a Legend: Crockett and the de la Peña Diary*, Bill Groneman notes the change in the political and social atmosphere by the mid-1970s, when a generation of Americans disillusioned by Vietnam and Watergate found it far harder than ever before to celebrate "the image of Crockett clubbing away at hoards of swarthy men," and easier than ever before to accept a cynically revisionist image of Crockett as a "sly politician" who tried to talk his way out of trouble when caught by the Mexicans in the Alamo.

Groneman points out the inhibitions which may have prevented some of those who did not accept the de la Peña account from speaking out: a desire to avoid "being categorized with the kooks who harassed Perry and Kilgore," or qualms about being seen as irrational defenders of "childhood heroes." He also claims that there was a fear of being branded a "racist . . . if you did not believe the de la Peña account." And he tells us that for many who swallowed their doubts, it was simply unthinkable that the "serious historians" who endorsed the de la Peña version did not know ''what they were talking about. "

Today, Bill Groneman is ready to cast aside these inhibitions, and to challenge the conventional wisdom as to the reliability of the de la Peña diary. Fully prepared to defend the legend, he finds "something undeniably wrong" with the fact that Crockett "went from a hero to a coward in the public's mind" primarily because of the de la Peña diary - a document, he is ready to argue, that is worthless as a historical source. How well has he made his case for the defense?

With unconscious irony, Groneman begins his *Defense of a Legend* with a backhanded tribute to the influence of Walter Lord, whose *A Time to Stand* is, he says, "still regarded as the best book on the subject" of the battle of the Alamo. Although Lord only went so far as to say that it is "just possible" that David Crockett surrendered at the end of the legendary struggle, he did state unequivocally that the diary of José Enrique de la Peña was originally published in Matamoros in September 1836, and then suppressed by Mexican authorities.

Groneman believes that Lord was wrong about de la Peña's diary, and that his error has sent a generation of historians off on the wrong track. "Mr. Lord would become a very strong influence to anyone studying the Alamo battle for years to come," says Groneman, who adds: "Once he placed his imprimatur on any aspect of the story, it became as good as fact to those who came later." Groneman did not know just how right he was about the extent of Lord's influence, nor did Groneman realize how suddenly and how subtly his own words might come back to haunt him.

It is Groneman's hypothesis - which he admits he cannot prove - that the "diary" is actually a twentieth-century forgery. He even presents us with a prime suspect: an improbable character by the name of John Andrechyne Laflin, who called himself John A. Laffite, and who claimed to be the great-grandson of the famous pirate. This latter-day "Laffite," to whom handwriting expert Charles Hamilton devoted an entire chapter of his *Great Forgers and Famous Fakes*, traveled around the United States between 1940 and 1970 peddling alleged Laffite documents, most of which apparently ended up in Texas.

Why does Groneman believe that the de la Peña diary is a fake? The linchpin of his argument is that bane of forgers, the anachronism. Perhaps it would be best to let him tell us in his own words, from this inexplicably undocumented paragraph from *Defense of a Legend*:

As I read the "diary," as it is translated in Carmen Perry's book, I noticed a footnote by "de la Peña," in which he complained that Gen. Urrea had copied some of de la Peña's information in an account of his own on the Texas campaign…. [Urrea's account] was published in 1838. Hmmm! The de la Peña "diary" is supposed to have been written and published in 1836, yet its author cites another account which was not published until 1838. Tapping on my past investigative experience [Groneman is an arson detective for the New York City Fire Department], could not help but get the feeling that something might be wrong here.

Lest the reader miss the point, Groneman returns to the Urrea citation in a later chapter, proclaiming: "So, for one last time to avoid any misunderstanding, the de la Peña 'diary,' purported to have been written and published in 1836, cites a document which was not published until 1838!" It was the "revelation" provided by the "prematurely cited" Urrea document, says Groneman, that "suddenly heightened my suspicion that the 'diary' was not a diary at all, but simply a story written years after the Texas campaign. It placed the origin of the 'diary' no earlier than 1838."

This is where Groneman's logic becomes rather slippery, and the slope gets steep very quickly. His first error is in assuming that the Urrea reference placed the *origin* of the diary no earlier than 1838. It did not. If we consider the diary as a complex document written (and rewritten) over time, the reference instead placed the *completion* of the diary no earlier than 1838. Groneman himself acknowledges early in his book that the account that Perry translated "is not a spontaneous, on-the-scene report, despite the fact that it is supposedly de la Peña's 'diary.' The account states in no uncertain terms that the author waited to compile additional information before putting the story together." In other words, de la Peña could have continued to work on a revision of his original campaign diary through 1838, incorporating in it the material from General Urrea's published account."'

This brings us to Groneman's next error of logic. Rather than admitting that the already acknowledged rewriting of the diary could have been completed by de la Peña in the late 1830s, Groneman instead sets up a false dichotomy. Noting that the diarist has included a shortened form of William Barrett Travis's famous letter from the Alamo, and informing his readers that similarly shortened versions of the Travis letter appeared in print in 1 838 and 1936, Groneman writes tendentiously: "Obviously, if de la Peña was writing a diary in 1836, he would not have had access to those sources. If someone was *forging* an account in the twentieth century, though, he may very well have been influenced by these sources." Groneman conveniently forgets that a diary completed in the year 1836 and a forgery done in the twentieth century are not the only possible alternatives.

Thus we come back to Groneman's basic argument from anachronism: that a diary "purported to have been written and published in 1836" cannot be authentic if it contains material that is undeniably from a later date. The crucial issue here, however, is *who is doing the purporting*. If it were the diary itself, Groneman would be correct. But it is not. *The diary makes no such claim*. As we shall see, de la Peña himself made it clear that his work on the diary, which he did indeed intend to revise and to augment for publication, extended well beyond the year 1836. It was Walter Lord, and not José Enrique de la Peña, who said that the diary was published in 1836. And "once he placed his imprimatur on any aspect of the story," said Groneman of Lord, "it became as good as fact to those who came later"-including Bill Groneman himself.

But how could Walter Lord have stated so unequivocally that the diary was published (and suppressed) in 1836, if there is no evidence to substantiate such a claim? To answer that question, we must go back to the late 1950s, to a scorching summer in Austin, Texas, as Lord researched the book which became *A Time to Stand*. Lord was fortunate, and very grateful, to have the aid of the eminent Texas librarian and historian Carlos Eduardo Castañeda, who despite his failing health, spent much of the summer with Lord "translating and interpreting page after page, looking up points from a stack of obscure Mexican books beside him, muttering Spanish phrases to himself ... always meticulous, always thorough."

One of the obscure Mexican books that Castañeda translated for Lord, at least in part, was the work edited by Jesús Sánchez Garza, entitled *La Rebelión de Texas: Manuscrito Inédito de 1836 por un Oficial de Santa Anna*. This, of course, was the de la Peña diary, edited by a man whom Bill Groneman considers a likely co-conspirator in forgery. Moreover, Groneman directly accuses Sánchez Garza of having "launched the story that [the diary's 1836 edition] had been suppressed by Santa Anna and Filisola'' in order to explain "why there are no copies dating from 1836."

Groneman is mistaken. It was not Jesús Sánchez Garza, but Walter Lord (relying on information provided by Carlos Castañeda), who said that the diary was published and then suppressed. As if Sánchez Garza's subtitle were not enough to answer Groneman' s charge (for "inédito" means "unpublished" in Spanish), the Mexican editor states the following on the very first page of his *Preámbulo*:

> *El manuscrito, según deseos del autor, se intitula:* Reseña y Diario de la Campaña de Texas*; no se publicó luego por penuria y porque Filisola y después Santa Anna usaron de todos sus artificios para impedirlo; pero, cerca de ciento veinte años después, nosotros, amantes de la verdad, aunque duela, y con gran afición a la historia, lo sacamos del polvo del olvido para que cumpla con el fin para que fué escrito.*

(The manuscript, according to the wishes of the author, is entitled: *Review and Diary of the Texas Campaign*; it was not immediately published due to poverty and because Filisola and later Santa Anna used all of their tricks in order to impede it; but, nearly a hundred and twenty years later, we, lovers of the truth, however it may hurt, and with great affection for history, are retrieving it from the dust of forgetfulness so that the goal for which it was written might be fulfilled.)

It is conceivable that a hasty, incomplete, or out-of-context translation of this sentence could produce the false impression that Mexican authorities had suppressed an early edition of the diary. This is apparently what transpired on one of those hot summer days Austin. At the end of six pages of notes from the de la Peña diary covering the siege and fall of the Alamo-notes dictated to Walter Lord by Carlos Castañeda stands the following paragraph:

(All foregoing from *Reseña y Diario de la Campaña de Texas*, consisting of Peña's own experiences plus the collated diaries of others in the army. It was published in Matamoras [*sic*] on September 15, 1836, but was immediately suppressed and not republished until 120 years later. Finally, in 1955 "it was again brought out, edited by J. Sánchez Garza, under the title, *La Rebelion de Texas, Manuscrito Inedito de 1836 por un oficial de Santa Anna*.)

Throughout his long preamble (which has not been published in English, as it was omitted in Carmen Perry's translation) Sánchez Garza repeatedly states that de la Peña spent more than a year revising his manuscript, but was unable to publish it during his lifetime. Moreover, in a lengthy documentary section also omitted in the Perry edition, editor Sánchez Garza allows José Enrique de la Peña to tell us in his own words that his diary was not published in 1836.

In a letter written in January 1837 and published in the Mexico City newspaper *El Mosquito Mexicano* on February 3, de la Peña announced that he was preparing to intervene in the flurry of finger-pointing which had been going on among the ranking officers of the Texas campaign since their armies had been ordered back across the Rio Grande by the captive Santa Anna:

> Inasmuch as the interested parties are writing, and writing as interested parties, I, without interest other than that of clarifying the truth, plan to produce a *Review of the Texas Campaign*, in order to present it without dissimulation nor consideration of persons, whatever may have been their rank, and without fearing the persecution which this decision will bring me. I am a pygmy [*un pigmeo*] who is going into combat against giants; but, having reason on my side, I expect to come out victorious, although the power upon which I am dependent may crush me under its weight. I will die content after having made public the obscenities and the disgraces that have been committed in this matter of such great importance and of such transcendent consequences for all Mexicans.

De la Peña had been motivated to write upon learning that Gen. Vicente Filisola, Santa Anna's second-in-command, had been absolved of culpability for the humiliating retreat from Texas following the disaster at San Jacinto. He declared that Filisola's retreat had been a blunder which resulted in the unnecessary loss of Texas, but he also said that he was not yet ready to offer a full accounting of the events of the campaign. "This material needs an extended treatment," wrote de la Peña on January 31, 1837, "but in order to organize my notes I need time, at least a month…."

Filisola didn't give him a month. Two days after reading de la Peña's letter, he submitted a counterblast to the same newspaper aimed at "*Señor Pigmeo*" (an adopted name, said Filisola, which fit "Señor Peñita" perfectly well). This junior officer, said the outraged general, had forgotten everything he had been taught in school, and had apparently learned nothing from his service in the armed forces, either. This upstart Argus, fumed Filisola, was in fact merely "nearsighted" (*miope*).

Ready or not, the nearsighted pygmy immediately struck back. Three days after Filisola's lengthy reply appeared in the pages of *El Mosquito*, de la Peña handed the newspaper a rejoinder more than twice as long as Filisola's, entitled "*Texas y un Miope*" ("Texas and a Nearsighted Person"). The argument between Filisola and de la Peña centered on issues of geography, strategy, and logistics, but it would be inappropriate to pursue at this time their convoluted claims and counterclaims concerning the proper allocation of blame for the catastrophe in Texas. However, some of the comments made in passing by de la Peña in the course of this debate are quite pertinent to the present controversy over the authenticity of his manuscript.

De la Peña wrote on February 13, 1837, that although he had kept a diary in Texas as carefully as possible so that someday he might give attention to the history of that campaign, he had not decided to publish it and to make some observations about it "until these latest days, in which, with sorrow, I have noticed that the events have been distorted to the point that we are unable to recognize the very ones which we have witnessed." He promised that "when time and circumstances" permitted, "you will see the reasons that are in my *Diario* against [Filisola's] retreat.'"

In this letter to the editors of El Mosquito Mexicano, de la Peña referred to both the penury and the political opposition that stood in the way of his publishing:

> In the work, quite painful for me, that I am going to undertake for myself, I do not, sirs, count on any support other than that of rectitude of conscience, which perhaps is not enough under circumstances in which reason and justice are scarcely heeded. While to the contrary, each one of those that may take themselves to be offended parties in the relating of the events in Texas, count on the power and influence that an elevated rank provides. What an unequal struggle!

And, continued de la Peña, if General Filisola had not yet been able to afford the publication of his side of the argument in defense of his honor, then how much less able to do so was one who made a "pygmy" salary! Moreover, he complained, although he should have received his monthly pay five times since leaving Matamoros in September, he had so far not received more than a third of one payment, and even that was in copper, and part of it was counterfeit!

In such poverty, wrote editor Jesús Sánchez Garza in his *Preámbulo*, "it was impossible for [de la Peña) to publish his notes, to the great rejoicing of those who would have been completely unmasked in all the vile deeds committed in the Texas campaign." Furthermore, as Groneman acknowledges in his book, de la Peña was imprisoned in 1838 as a result of his revolutionary activity in favor of Mexican federalists aligned with General José Urrea. It was "the great friendship that he bore for General Urrea ... to [the point of] rising up in arms with him," said Sánchez Garza, that "was the final slamming of the door" to the publication of de la Peña's manuscripts.

While in prison in 1839, de la Peña not only wrote letters to the Mexico City newspaper *El Cosmopolita* defending himself and his fellow prisoners, and complaining of ill health and poor treatment; he also wrote, but could not secure publication of, a lengthy and contentious defense of General Urrea against the attacks of Santa Anna. It was in this essay, says Sánchez Garza, that "in order to prove his points, Lt. Col. de la Peña offered his notes to whomever would bear the cost of their publication; but no one responded and they remained unpublished.

What Sánchez Garza did not know is that de la Peña's efforts toward publication from within prison walls were not wholly in vain. With the aid of friends who bore the cost, he brought out in November 1839 a *cri de cœr* entitled *Una Víctima del Despotismo*, a 16-page pamphlet published in Mexico City in the form of a letter addressed to his excellency *El General Presidente*, the conservative centralist Anastasio Bustamante. Only one copy of de la Peña's pamphlet is known to exist in the United States; it is located in the Manuscripts and Archives Department of Sterling Memorial Library at Yale University. Apparently it was unknown to Jesús Sánchez Garza and has remained so to other scholars concerned with the de la Peña diary. Incorporating much of the language of his previous protests against his unjustified incarceration, this publication also contains a reference to de la Peña's diary which should lay to rest any questions about how that manuscript could incorporate material which was not published until 1838:

> I know well that it is a hard thing in our country to tell the truth to men who have influence and power to do evil, but in writing about the Texas campaign, my principal object was to vindicate the honor, tarnished in it, of the nation and the army, because ignominy ought to weigh solely upon those who merit it.... *In good time I will expose the causes which have prevented me from publishing my diary and the observations which I*

> *have almost completed*, but I will do it in spite of my conviction that new sorrows are going to rain down upon me, [I will do it] because the noble goal which I have set for myself will give me the courage necessary to face all difficulties, and no consideration, however strong and personal it may be to me, will cause me to retreat.~'

Despite these brave words, the publication of the diary, the "noble goal" which de la Peña had set for himself, was not accomplished. Upon his release from prison, which probably occurred early in 1840, de la Peña was also released from military service, and what very likely followed was a short, tragic experience in poverty, illness, and early death, which may be inferred from de la Peña's subsequent disappearance from the historical record.

All of the foregoing direct testimony by de la Peña (with the exception of the pamphlet *Una Víctima del Despotismo*) is contained in the 1955 Sánchez Garza edition of the de la Peña diary. How, then, can we explain the reference made by Carlos Castañeda and Walter Lord to a "suppressed" 1836 edition that never existed, a reference which led ultimately to Bill Groneman's conclusion that the diary must be a forgery? A cursory examination of *La Rebelión de Texas* reveals the existence of several false clues that could lead the unwary scholar astray.'"

First of all, Sánchez Garza's subtitle, *Manuscrito Inédito de 1836 por un Oficial de Santa Anna*, could be easily misinterpreted by anyone who has not read the full text. The year 1836 in the title refers to the historical events covered by this "unpublished manuscript," and is not meant to imply, as one might assume, that the entire work was itself produced in 1836. As we have seen, both the diarist and the editor have made it clear that the manuscript was being revised for publication well past the end of that year.

Many readers, apparently including Carlos Castañeda, have also been misled by the "alleged title page" which introduces de la Peña's text at the end of Sánchez Garza's preamble. Carmen Perry refers to this page-a rendering in vaguely nineteenth-century style complete with author, title, city, date, and an engraving of a Mexican military bugler on horseback-as "a title page which purports to be from an edition of the de la Peña diary printed in September, 1836, in Matamoros, Tamps. [Tamaulipas], Mexico.

Ironically, Groneman's interpretation of this second false clue is, despite his errant aim, exactly on target:

> Regarding the alleged title page, there is nothing in Sánchez Garza's book which indicated that this is an authentic title page. In fact, it is not even listed as one of the illustrations of the book. Even Carmen Perry states that this page only "purports" to be from an edition printed in September of 1836. This page seems to have been included in Sánchez Garza's book merely as a means of opening up the narrative portion of the ''diary" and separating it from the introduction.

Another aspect of the 1955 edition which may have caused some readers to assume that the entire diary was completed in 1836 is Sánchez Garza's construction of the final page of de la Peña's narrative of the Texas campaign. That the term "construction" is apt in this case may best be understood after a brief examination of the manuscript diary itself, which is today housed in the Special Collections Department of the Library of the University of Texas at San Antonio.

There is a great variety of materials in the three large manuscript packets which now contain the diary, not to mention the twenty-three associated file folders of de la Peña correspondence and notes produced by Sánchez Garza. In addition to the hastily written inscriptions on the faded pages of what may have been de la Peña's initial "field notes," there is also in the first packet a 109-page version which begins: "Matamoros, July 21, 1836. On this date I begin to put my diary in clean form [*poner mi diario en limpio*]. "

The first sentence of this July rewrite suggests that de la Peña may have decided to keep a diary of the Texas campaign only in the days immediately following the dramatic fall of the Alamo on the sixth of March. He writes: "San Antonio de Bejar March 10, 1836 = Diary which starts on the 8th of October, 1835, and begins to take shape on today's date." In this first draft of the rewritten diary, de la Peña proceeds to summarize the major events and movements of the Texas campaign, to indicate where documents are later to be inserted, and to make notes to himself about what should be mentioned in the final Reseña.

The physical shape taken by that final review is a series of torn halves of larger sheets, with each of these halves folded in turn to provide a "quarto" with four writing surfaces. There are 105 of these consecutively numbered quartos, and although a few of these are one- or two-page inserts, the final narrative is about four times the length of the rewrite begun in July 1836. It is the last quarto of this final draft, which describes the approach of the retreating Mexican troops to the Río Grande, that forms the end of the de la Peña narrative.

Sánchez Garza, however, has provided two additions which serve to make more dramatic what would otherwise be a rather anticlimactic ending of the diary. The first is an edited passage taken from a little booklet of de la Peña's notes, labelled "Part of the review and the expositive with the introduction." The first sentence on the inside of this booklet is: "Notes on the most important events or which may be additions to the diary about the Texas campaign, which may serve as a guide to the editing of it." The last item in the booklet is de la Peña's "*Modelo de la conclucion*."

With the omission of a single embarrassing sentence (the reader may guess which one), and one inconvenient qualifier, both Sánchez Garza and Carmen Perry used this model conclusion as their own:

> These are the facts, Mexicans. Judge for yourselves, and may your terrible verdict annihilate those who deserve it. The events at which I have been present I have related faithfully, and those to which I have not been an eyewitness, I have confirmed with men most circumspect and truthful. If my mode of feeling is not agreeable, the frankness with which I have worked will testify at least that I am honest, in that I say what I feel and I judge without dissembling and without fearing the hatred of the strong. Tornel [the Minister of War] is a prick, Santa Anna a superprick, and Filisola an *Italian*.
>
> I have half finished [both Sánchez Garza and Perry ignored this important qualification-"half' (medio)] in the most difficult moments, and hours before marching, knowing already about San Luis [Potosi].

Having added de la Peña's own prefabricated conclusion to the end of the narrative, Sánchez Garza also tacked onto the end of the diary a photostat of de la Peña's signature from a letter written by him in Matamoros on September 15, 1836, and also added this place and date, making the last page of the published text an amalgam from four different sources: the final review, the model conclusion, the signature from the end of the Matamoros letter, and the place and date from the beginning of this letter. (Perry, following Sánchez Garza's lead, followed the same formula in concluding her translation.)

Both Perry and Sánchez Garza had already employed this letter (and its date) in crafting an "author's prologue" to the narrative. The false clues created by their alterations to the manuscript in beginning and ending the de la Peña diary may seem relatively trivial, but they have contributed in no small way to the myth of an 1836 edition. When Sánchez Garza and Perry used the letter of September 15, 1836, to serve as a prologue to the text, the Mexican editor and the Texan translator each took the liberty of subtly altering this document by moving the city and date written at the beginning of the original holograph letter and placing them by the signature at the end (Sánchez Garza puts them above a copy of the signature; Perry prints de la Peña's name, and puts the city and date be low it). They have also each removed the friendly closing at the end of the letter. The purpose in each case has not been to deceive, but rather to achieve the style of a genuine prologue; both Perry and Sánchez Garza included in their books a photostat of the last page of the letter, clearly showing that on this page of the original, the friendly closing is present and the city and date are absent.

The observant reader of the Perry edition of the de la Peña diary will also be able to discover with the help of this photostat a critical translator's error that is indicative of the power of suggestion, at least of a suggestion from Walter Lord. The first sentence of the last paragraph of this letter begins as follows: "*Si con dar a luz mis apuntes consigo el noble objeto que me he propuesto de vindicar el honor de esta infortunada Nación y el del ejército, que acaban de ser mancillados*,...'' Perry translates this phrase as: "If in bringing forth my notes I accomplish the

noble objectives I have pursued in vindicating the honor of this unfortunate nation and its army, which has recently been tarnished,…

Perry has changed de la Peña's "*noble objeto*" (which may be translated as "noble aim, or noble goal") from singular to plural, and she has completely mistranslated the verb form "*me he propuesto*," which is the past participle of "*proponerse*," meaning "to plan" or "to resolve." Thus de la Peña is actually writing on September 15, 1836, not about the publication of his diary in terms of "the noble objectives I have pursued," but rather in terms of "the noble goal which I have planned," or more literally, "the noble goal which I have set for myself."

This is an especially important lapse, because it is almost identical in effect to a less noticeable error earlier in Perry's translation of this letter. Both Perry and Sánchez Garza used this letter as a prologue because in it de la Peña lays out the rationale for the publication of his diary. After listing his reasons, de la Peña says (in Perry's translation): "these are the principal causes which compelled me to publish the diary I kept during the time I served in this unfortunate campaign, and at the same time to make a brief review of what is written there."

This is what de la Peña actually said: ''*son las principales causas que me han decidido a publicar el* ***Diario*** *que llevé en la parte del ejército en que me tocó hacer esta malhadada campaña y formar, a la vez, una reseña de ella*." Again the problem is with the past participle, this time in the phrase "*que me han decidido*." What Perry calls the reasons ''which compelled me to publish the diary" should instead be rendered as the reasons "which have decided me to publish the diary," or in proper English, "which have convinced me to publish the diary."

Carmen Perry dutifully translated de la Peña's plans for the diary in the future tense that he actually used throughout much of this letter: "I shall pour out the diary just as I have written it.... I shall make those observations which could not be made on the march.... I shall narrate just as if the campaign had been successful." But her shift from reasons ''which have convinced me to publish" to reasons "which compelled me to publish," and from "the noble goal which I have set for myself" to "the noble objectives I have pursued," dramatically alters the impression she gives her readers with regard to the diary's publication date.

With Perry's verbs, the publication is an accomplished fact by September 15, 1836, when the letter was written, and thus Bill Groneman and others may be led to assume incorrectly that the diary itself purports such a fact. However, de la Peña's actual words make it clear that in this private letter, as in his subsequent letters to *El Mosquito Mexicano*, he is referring to his plans for the *future* publication of a "*Reseña y Diario*."

Perry might not have made these mistakes, nor have assumed that Sánchez Garza's somewhat misleading old-fashioned title page referred to an actual 1836 edition, if she had included his preamble and appendices in her translation. The Mexican editor left no doubt in these sections that no such edition had ever existed. Yet despite Sánchez Garza's (and de la Peña's) explicit testimony that no edition of the diary appeared in the year of San Jacinto, Perry still found it necessary to say that "if ... this edition ever appeared, it is possible that most or all copies of it were destroyed because of the highly critical nature of its contents." Thus Carmen Perry, and those who have depended on her translation, have given an ever-growing cumulative power to the myth of that elusive first edition from 1836.

There is no more dramatic testimony to the power of that myth than can be found in the late John Jenkins's entry for the de la Peña diary in his authoritative bibliography, Basic Texas Books. Here, for perhaps the first and last time in his life, John Jenkins was satisfied with a second edition. The earliest printing of the Sánchez Garza volume identified by Jenkins was the "*Segunda Edición*" of June 20, 1955. Though he had never seen, and doubted the existence of, the 1836 edition in book form, he was still a captive of the myth that had been inadvertently initiated by Walter Lord and given new strength by Carmen Perry. Jenkins believed that "a version of the narrative must first have appeared in September, 1836, probably in a Matamoros newspaper, but no copy of any contemporary printing can n now be located." According to Jenkins, Sánchez Garza "called his publication 'Segunda Edición,' and began the diary with a purported reprint of [an 1836] title page.... "

Once again, it is a matter of who is doing the purporting. As we have already seen with regard to this "1836" title page it was not Sánchez Garza himself, but those who, like Jenkins, have insisted on reading a meaning into his artwork that is explicitly denied in his text. But what would have truly surprised John Jenkins (though I think he would have been very pleased once the shock had worn off) is that down the road in College Station, sitting on a shelf in the Evans Library at Texas A&M University, was a copy of a "*Primera Edición*" of the diary of José Enrique de la Peña. There was also a first edition copy a few feet from the de la Peña manuscripts at the University of Texas at San Antonio. And there was another one in the Fondren Library at Rice University! And another at SMU! And still others at Denton and Arlington! And at least two more in the University of California libraries! And what was the date on these ubiquitous but unrenowned first editions? It was "Marzo 15 de I955"-- in other words, Sánchez Garza's first printing.

Beware the Ides of March! Jenkins didn't find a first edition because he didn't look for one. And he didn't look for one because when he found a "*Segunda Edición*" at the University of Texas at Austin he merely assumed that Sánchez Garza was making an oblique reference to that "purported" first edition of 1836. And like too many other historians who have commented on the de la Peña diary, Jenkins clearly had not read the Spanish text.

Bill Groneman, in spite of the collapse of his argument by anachronism, can at least take comfort in the fact that notwithstanding his misreading of Sánchez Garza, he did realize, unlike so many Texas historians, that there simply was no 1836 edition of the de la Peña diary. He may take special pleasure in the statements that must now be retracted by Paul Andrew Hutton. In the documentation which Hutton provides with his introduction to a 1987 reprint of David Crockett's *Narrative*, one may find his flat statement that "Lieutenant Colonel de la Peña's diary was first published in Mexico in 1836." And in his introduction to Susan P. Schoelwer's fascinating *Alamo Images*, Hutton is equally blunt: "Of the Mexican sources on the Alamo battle, none was more reliable than the diary of José Enrique de la Peña, an officer on Santa Anna's staff, first published in 1836."

Hutton is the historian who has apparently most irritated Groneman with his seemingly condescending remarks about the "fragile psyches" of those who could not abide the thought that Crockett "did not perish in true Hollywood style," and with his unqualified assertions that those who have used the diary to document Crockett's "surrender" are "absolutely correct. "

On the narrow issue of the date of the diary's first publication, Groneman is right and Hutton is wrong. But on the larger and more serious question of the diary's reliability, Paul Hutton may still have the last laugh. Once the charge of anachronism is eliminated from Groneman's indictment of the de la Peña diary as a fraud, what remains is a very thin case indeed. And Groneman does not advance his case when he makes several embarrassing gaffes early in his work: conspicuous misspellings; a missing citation for a crucial reference; and a bizarre error, made more than once, in which he tells us that the manuscript of the diary is housed in the "Perry-Castañeda Library" at the University of Texas at San Antoio.

It is not upon careless errors or sloppy proofreading, however, that we must base our ultimate judgment of *Defense of a Legend*, but on the relative soundness of its argument and its evidence. It is not always an easy argument to follow. Groneman's style, which combines elements of both the casual and the confrontational, will put off many readers, and his penchant for inserting whole chapters that are virtually irrelevant can be disconcerting. Chapters Two and Ten, for instance, entitled respectively "Texas Forgeries" and "Suspect Documents," seem to have been included for no more reason than to convince the reader that forgeries do take place and that suspicious documents do exist.

The broadest and most serious charge that may be legitimately levelled at Groneman is that he has a double standard for evaluating evidence, and that this double standard is directly related to his unconcealed desire to defend the Crockett legend. This double standard takes many forms. The most egregious is the selective use of documents-milking them for helpful information while ignoring inconvenient evidence. An obvious example may be found in de la Peña's letters to *El Mosquito Mexicano* that were published in February 1837. We have already seen that in these letters de la Peña makes it quite plain that he has not yet published his planned *Review and Diary of the Texas Campaign*, a point which gets to the very heart of Groneman's accusation that the diary is a forgery because of its alleged anachronisms. Yet all we learn from Groneman's discussion of these two letters is that de la Peña "hid behind a pseudonym" in the first one, and that in the second, a "lengthy and rambling" attack on Filisola, "de la Peña also made first mention of having kept a 'Diario,' but made no mention of any executions at the Alamo."

Either Groneman did not read all of these letters (or full translations of them), or he did not understand their import for his argument, or he is consciously concealing their full contents from his readers. None of these alternatives speak well for *Defense of a Legend*. A similar point may be made with regard to Groneman's use (or misuse) of the work of Jesús Sánchez Garza. Despite a self-serving claim that "no one ever really bothered to look into de la Peña's background," Groneman has relied almost exclusively upon Sánchez Garza's preamble and appendices from *La Rebelión de Texas* for his unflattering reconstruction of the military career of the lieutenant colonel. Yet we have also already seen that the Mexican editor, in both of these sections, makes it clear that de la Peña's manuscript was neither completed nor published in 1836, and thus undercuts, in a way that *Defense of a Legend* does not reveal, Groneman's central premise that the diary was "purported to have been written and published" in that year.

This selective presentation of documents is a serious, arguably a fatal, defect, but it is not the only manifestation of Groneman's double standard of evidence. He seems willing to stretch to the breaking point the significance of remarkably inconclusive handwriting similarities, which suggest to him a reputed master of forgery, the aforementioned "John A. Laflin a.k.a. John A. Laffite," lurking behind all manner of Texas deceptions, including the de la Peña diary. He gets so carried away by his willingness to see Laflin's hand at work in every questionable document that he even suggests his involvement in producing an alleged portrait of William B. Travis that first surfaced in a novel published in 1907, when the apparently precocious Laflin was only fourteen years old!

Despite Groneman's claim that "remarkable similarities between the [allegedly bogus] Laffite 'journal' and the de la Peña 'diary' are enough to direct some attention toward Laflin," his efforts to link these two works are anything but persuasive. His grounds for linkage are: 1) that neither is a true diary or journal, even though both claim to chronicle "legendary events and figures of Texas history"; 2) that neither has an acceptable provenance-that is, that the manuscripts both surfaced in the twentieth century with no clear record of their origins; and 3) that the diary and the journal contain "similar" passages that ''are almost identical in personality and temperament."

It is worth a look at these passages to see just how weak Groneman's argument is. "One of the more notable comparisons," he says, "portrays Laffite and de la Peña as selfless patriots.''

First he gives the "Laffite" statement: ".... at one time I did all I could to save that same nation from complete annihilation in order to preserve the liberty founded on that most sacred document, the Declaration of Independence, without receiving any compensation for myself."

The de la Peña statement from the Perry translation which ostensibly corresponds to this passage is: "... who expects no compensation .... If in bringing forth my notes I accomplish the noble objectives I have pursued in vindicating the honor of this unfortunate nation. "

The perspicacious reader will immediately note that Groneman has selected one of the passages that Carmen Perry mistranslated from de la Peña's letter of September 15, 1836. This is the sentence in which the lieutenant colonel was actually speaking of "the noble goal which I have set for myself' ("*el noble objeto que me he propuesto*"). Moreover, in order to achieve the effect of similarity, Groneman has created a statement which is in fact an amalgam of two different paragraphs from that letter. He has also cut off the phrase which directly follows the term "nation" in the Perry translation: " ... and its army, which has recently been tarnished."

The reader may also have noticed how closely this passage, selected by Groneman for its alleged similarity to the Laffite (i.e., Laflin) document, actually resembles a segment quoted earlier in this article from the long ignored de la Peña pamphlet, *Una Víctima del Despotismo*. One need not be fluent in Spanish to find the matching phrases in the following passages, the first from the holograph manuscript of the de la Peña letter of September 15, 1836, and the second from the rare 1839 pamphlet now at the Yale University Library:

> Si con dar a luz mis apuntes consugo el noble objeto que me he propuesto de vindicar el honor de esta infortunada Nacíon y el del ejército, que acaban de ser mancillados, …
>
> ... al escribir la campaña de Tejas, mi principal objeto fué vindicar el honor de la nacion y el del ejército mancillados in ella, ... el noble objeto que me he propuesto me dará el valor necesario para arrostrar con todos los inconvenientes, …

After this somewhat inauspicious initial comparison of "remarkable similarities" in the two manuscripts that he attributes to Laflin, Groneman moves on to what he calls an "even more significant ... portrayal of Laffite and de la Peña as sensitive soldiers." He apparently considers the following quotations to be evidence of common (and fraudulent) authorship. First, "Laffite" says: 'The spectacle of three thousand wounded and dead English soldiers on that marshy battle field was a dreadful and horrible sight." The selected corresponding statement from Perry's translation of de la Peña is: "The bodies, with their blackened and bloody faces disfigured by a desperate death, their hair and uniforms burning at once, presented a dreadful and truly hellish sight." There is evidence here of a certain similarity across time and space in the human response to the horrors of war, but this is hardly compelling evidence of fraud.

On this and other occasions in *Defense of a Legend*, Groneman has employed considerable imagination (not to say credulity) in stretching thin and resistant evidence to fit his twin theses that the diary is a forgery and that David Crockett died in combat. When it comes to his examination of material that tends to corroborate de la Peña and his less heroic version of Crockett's last minutes, however, Groneman's historical imagination is quite lacking, and he tends to be abruptly dismissive of evidence that deserves much more careful consideration.

One extended example of this unwillingness to pursue the possibilities of such evidence will have to suffice. It concerns what is probably the best single piece of corroboration to de la Peña's account of Crockett's death. This is a letter from a Texan sergeant written in July 1836 and published in a Detroit newspaper in September of that year, but not brought to the attention of historians until five years after Sánchez Garza's publication of the diary (and therefore of a completely and mutually independent provenance). The letter was reproduced in 1960 in the *Journal of Southern History*, with an introduction and editorial notes by Thomas Lawrence Connelly, then a graduate student in history at Rice University.

The sergeant's name was George M. Dolson, and his letter relates his service as an interpreter between an unnamed Mexican officer, captured at San Jacinto, and Col. James Morgan, Texan commander on Galveston Island. Unfortunately, Connelly somewhat muddied the waters by mistakenly identifying the Mexican officer as Col. Juan Nepomuceno Almonte. Almonte, who had been educated in the United States and spoke fluent English, would have needed no interpreter. As Dan Kilgore has pointed out, "he was, in fact, Santa Anna's interpreter and not only interpreted for him with General Houston after San Jacinto but also later accompanied his chief to Washington as aide and interpreter." Groneman, by following Almonte's whereabouts following his capture at San Jacinto, shows that Almonte was not at Galveston when the interview by Morgan took place.

Connelly was persuaded that the officer was Colonel Almonte (even though elsewhere in the letter Dolson was careful to refer only to "the Mexican officer," or "my informant") by an odd allusion in the passage which describes the death of Crockett:

> He [the Mexican officer] states that on the morning the Alamo was captured, between the hours of five and six o'clock, General Castrillon, who fell at the battle of San Jacinto, entered the back room of the Alamo, and there found Crockett and five other Americans, who had defended it until defense was useless; they appeared very much agitated when the Mexican soldiers undertook to rush in after their General, but the humane General ordered his men to keep out, and, placing his hand on one breast, said, "here is a hand and a heart to protect you; come with me to the General-in Chief, and you shall be saved." Such redeeming traits, while they ennoble in our estimation this worthy officer, yet serve to show in a more heinous light the damning atrocities of the chief. The brave but unfortunate men were marched to the tent of Santa Anna. Colonel

> Crockett was in the rear, had his arms folded, and appeared bold as the lion as he passed my informant (Almonte.) Santa Anna's interpreter knew Colonel Crockett, and said to my informant, "the one behind is the famous Crockett." When brought in the presence of Santa Anna, Castrillon said to him, "Santa Anna, the august, I deliver up to you six brave prisoners of war." Santa Anna replied, "who has given you orders to take prisoners, I do not want to see those men living-shoot them." As the monster uttered these words each officer turned his face the other way, and the hell-hounds of the tyrant despatched the six in his presence, and within six feet of his person.

Dan Kilgore, in *How Did Davy Die?,* offers a reasonable explanation for the misunderstanding: when the letter was printed in the Detroit newspaper, one sentence was "garbled in transcription." Actually, it would have taken only the slight movement of one word, the name "Almonte" in parentheses, from one side of the period to the other. The name could very well have been interlineated in parentheses in the original letter. According to Kilgore, the passage should read: "... appeared bold as the lion as he passed my informant. Almonte, Santa Anna's interpreter, knew Colonel Crockett, and said to my informant, … "

With the role of Almonte properly understood, it is fair to ask how similar this independently produced account is to that offered by de la Peña. The following is what appears in the *Reseña y Diario*:

> Some seven men had survived the general massacre and guided by General Castrillón, who protected them, were presented to Santa Anna. Among them was one of great stature, well-formed and with regular features, in whose face was stamped the pain of adversity, but in which could be observed a certain resignation and dignity which spoke well of him. It was the naturalist David Croket, very well known in North America for his novel adventures, who had come to examine the country and who, happening to be in Béjar in the moments of surprise, had confined himself in the Alamo, fearful of not being respected in his capacity as a foreigner. Santa Anna answered the intervention of Castrillón with a gesture of indignation, and addressing himself immediately to the sappers [the *zapadores*, de la Peña's unit during the invasion of Texas], which was the soldiery he had nearest, ordered that they shoot them. The junior and senior officers became indignant at this action and did not repeat the command, hoping that with the passing of the first moment of fury, those men would be saved; but different officers who were around the President and who perhaps had not been there in the moment of danger, made themselves conspicuous by a despicable act; surpassing the soldiers in cruelty, they pushed themselves forward to them, in order to flatter the [cruelty] of their commander, and sword in hand they threw themselves on those unhappy defenseless men, in the same way that a tiger leaps upon its prey. They tortured them before they killed them, and these miserable ones died moaning, but without humbling themselves before their executioners. It is said that General Ramírez y Sesma was one of

> them: I do not testify to it, because although I was present, I averted my gaze with horror, so as not to see such a barbarous scene.

Paul Andrew Hutton may have exaggerated slightly when he said that the detailed account related by Sergeant Dolson "agrees perfectly with that of Lieutenant Colonel de la Peña" (there are, after all, six prisoners in one scene and seven in the other), but the similarity of the two independent accounts is remarkable.

Yet Bill Groneman rejects the Dolson letter's implications, even claiming that "there is enough nonsense in the account to eliminate it as a credible source." What are his arguments against it? One tack is an attempt to discredit any story told by a Mexican prisoner living under the harsh conditions imposed by Col. James Morgan on Galveston Island. Quoting Walter Lord, who noted that the Mexican soldiers had a "tendency after San Jacinto to say absolutely anything that might please a Texan," Groneman suggests that the Mexican prisoners had by .July 1836 already picked up bogus rumors of Crockett's execution that were circulating among newcomers to the island. Dipping into the literature of criminal psychology, Groneman argues that the Mexicans were ready to identify Crockett if the "authority figures" who had control over them seemed to want such an identification, and that the Texans were indeed searching "for incriminating evidence against Santa Anna to insure his continued incarceration...." Yet after naming James Morgan as the "ultimate authority figure on Galveston Island," Groneman seemingly implies that the interview with him may not have occurred at all by pointing out that "in the voluminous James Morgan papers at the Rosenburg [sic] Library in Galveston, there is no mention of this alleged interview. "

Another argument used by Groneman against the Dolson letter is his suggestion that Kilgore and others who have wanted to use Almonte as a credible witness are barking up the wrong tree. Shifting the identification of Crockett from the unknown Mexican informant to Almonte, he says, "was important to make a credible case because Almonte was educated in the United States, and for that reason alone it is believed that he would have known Crockett on sight." Groneman then counters:

Actually, Almonte was educated in New Orleans, in 1815, a good 15 years before Crockett ever achieved national prominence. There is no documented evidence anywhere which indicates that Almonte would have known Crockett on sight or that he had ever heard of him before. Almonte's own diary, found on the San Jacinto battlefield, makes no mention of Crockett or any executions.

Groneman's statement may be technically correct, but it is profoundly misleading. Col. Juan N. Almonte's most significant contribution to Texas history came not at the Alamo or San Jacinto, though he was present at both battles. It was instead with his "Statistical Report on Texas," published in Mexico in February 1835, after Almonte had spent much of the previous year on a

personal inspection tour that took him from the Sabine to the Rio Grande. It is important to note how he got to Texas. He sailed from Vera Cruz to New Orleans in mid-February 1834, and although his original plan was to take passage from there to Velasco, on the Texas coast, he changed his mind and decided to go by way of Natchitoches, Louisiana, entering Texas through Nacogdoches in early May.

Thus Almonte, thoroughly fluent in English, was back in familiar territory in the United States for more than two months just as the nineteenth century's own Davy Crockett craze was getting off the ground with the appearance of Crockett's *Autobiography* and his regular appearance in the national press. The Whig party was lionizing Congressman Crockett after his break with Andrew Jackson, and with news taking less than two weeks to travel between New Orleans and Washington there is no doubt that Crockett was a familiar personality in Louisiana, even if his and Almonte's patths did not finally cross until that fateful morning in the A!amo.

Groneman, however, not only wants to argue that Almonte could not have recognized David Crockett, but that the entire Dolson letter ought to be dismissed as evidence because of the "nonsense" it contains. And what is this nonsense? The only example given by Groneman is Dolson's (and thus the Mexican officer's) allusion to Santa Anna's tent. When the writer of the letter said that Crockett and his fellow unfortunates were "marched to the tent of Santa Anna," claims Groneman, he made a fatal *faux pas*:

> There is no evidence that Santa Anna had a tent set up in the field on the morning that the Alamo fell. He had his headquarters right in the town of San Antonio de Bexar, and the center of town was less than a half mile from the west wall of the Alamo. The account indicates that after the prisoners were marched to the tent, they were executed within six feet of Santa Anna. That would have the executions taking place outside of the Alamo.

Accounts attributed to three independent witnesses who knew Crockett are all consistent in that they identify Crockett's body *inside* the Alamo following the battle.

If this is the best example of the letter's nonsense, then Groneman's case is in even deeper trouble. What he seems to have forgotten is that the Mexican officer could not have referred directly to Santa Anna's "tent." He spoke Spanish, not English. What Spanish word did he most likely use, that Sergeant Dolson would have translated in good faith as "tent"? It could have been "tienda," though that word in Mexico is most often used to designate a shop, store, or stall. In a military context such as this one, he would probably have referred to a "*tienda de campaña*," but could have easily used a single word that denotes a large military tent: "*pabellón*." This word would have been especially appropriate in the case of the President and commanding general of the army; a *pabellón* is no pup tent! But if the Mexican officer told

James Morgan that the prisoners were marched to the *pabellón* of Santa Anna, he may not have been speaking of a tent at all, for the word *pabellón* may also denote a banner, particulary the national flag. As the general (and president) strode into the rubble of the battle's immediate aftermath, one may easily envision him accompanied by a retinue including a flagbearer carrying the national colors, so that no one might mistake Santa Anna's presence in the confusion that still reigned inside the walls.

Thus if General Castrillón, upon finding the last defenders still alive, marched them to the *pabellón de Santa Anna*, he did not necessarily take them outside the walls or into the city; it is in fact more likely that he directed their steps to where the *pabellón nacional* indicated the presence of the commander-in-chief inside the Alamo. This is the clear implication of the Dolson letter, which gives no indication that the prisoners were taken into the city and killed. The scene took place surrounded by Mexican soldiers and officers, not townspeople. Moreover, it fits the description given by Santa Anna's secretary, Ramón Martínez Caro, whom Groneman himself considers "the only verifiable Mexican eyewitness to the executions who left a firsthand account." This witness, whose testimony Groneman is ready to accept as accurate (especially because Crockett is not identified as one of the victims), describes the meeting of Castrillón, the prisoners, and the president as follows:

Among the 183 killed there were five who were discovered by General Castrillón hiding after the assault. He took them immediately to the presence of His Excellency *who had come up by this time*. When he presented the prisoners he was severely reprimanded for not having killed them on the spot, after which he turned his back upon Castrillón while the soldiers stepped out of their ranks and set upon the prisoners until they were all killed .... We all witnessed this outrage which humanity condemns but which was committed as described. This is a cruel truth, but I cannot omit it.

It should be noted that the Caro account was published in Mexico in 1837, long after the Dolson letter was written from Galveston Island. Thus the two completely independent sources agree on all essentials save the number of prisoners (five for Caro, six for Dolson), and yet Groneman wants to "eliminate [the 1836 letter] as a credible source" because it mentions a tent, which may well have been the Texas sergeant's forgivable mistranslation of the Spanish pabellón.

Would it be rude to suggest that Groneman's high standard for acceptable evidence in this case has more to do with the presence of Crockett in the letter than the presence of the tent? This is, after all, the same Groneman who offers this outrageous paragraph of testimony on a charge of fraud:

> Could Sánchez Garza, himself, have been involved [in the alleged forgery by John Laflin]? At least one acquaintance of his believes so. José Tamborrel of Cuernavaca, Mexico, and first president of the Numismatic Society of Mexico, knew Sánchez Garza and did

> business with him. Clyde Hubbard, another numismatist from Cuernavaca, who knew of the problems with the de la Peña "diary," asked Señior Tamborrel if Sánchez Garza *might* have forged the document. Tamborrel's answer was a "... very positive yes" [meaning he *might have* forged it], and he added, "You may quote me.

In the final analysis, Groneman's accusation of forgery against the de la Peña diary fails on virtually every count. He is willing to believe incredible tales of fraud on the basis of the flimsiest evidence, while dismissing the obvious as improbable (and injecting *ad hominem* barbs toward de la Peña and Sánchez Garza along the way).

It is revealing to note the reasons that he lists for rejecting the "theory ... that de la Peña actually did write this account, but he fabricated or at least padded all or part of it from hearsay and other published sources, which would have been available to him from the time of the Texas campaign in 1836 up until his death in 1841-42."

First he asks, "what the purpose of the ' diary' would have been if it were never published. Could [de la Peña] have written the account with the serious intention of publishing it, but failed?" He admits that this is "possible," but having made no serious attempt to investigate this (very distinct) possibility, he immediately asks another question: "[H]ow and why did this confusing document survive to this day? There is not a published version to link it to, to give the handwritten manuscript some value as a collectible."

Groneman can't believe that such a worthless text could survive! Nor can he conceive of its value in terms other than a vehicle for the delivery of the Crockett story. With a mixture of ethnocentrism and monomania, he finds it difficult to imagine that the information contained therein would have seemed important or of any value to anyone south of the border to have preserved it for almost 120 years until its publication in 1955 .... The only significant parts concern Crockett and the details of the Alamo, and then they only became important after Crockett was elevated to the role of a media hero in the 1950s. Lastly, de la Peña was not exactly a "big name" in Mexico, so something written by him would not have any particular intrinsic value.

Groneman's final reason for dismissing the diary as genuine is a fatally flawed argument based on his misunderstanding of the manuscript's chronology. He asks why the diarist should have been so critical of Santa Anna, when the historical de la Peña "did not turn on him until a few years after the Texas campaign." The diary's condemnation of Santa Anna, he argues, "reflects more of a modern day version of Santa Anna as the villain of the Alamo story, and it appears to be geared to potential buyers of the 'diary' north of the border."

One can only regret that all of these arguments are more revealing of the values and assumptions of an autograph collector than of a historian. Perhaps that is why it is no surprise when Groneman concludes his argument against the diary's authenticity with an appeal to the "expert examination" of manuscript dealer Charles Hamilton. Mr. Hamilton, who has not seen first-hand the de la Peña manuscripts at the University of Texas at San Antonio, nevertheless is ready to certify that I have carefully examined the document allegedly written by JOSE ENRIQUE DE LA PENA, entitled PERSONAL NARRATIVE 'WITH SANTA ANNA IN TEXAS, and find that it is a forgery by John Laflin, alias John Laffite. I have compared the handwriting in the PERSONAL NARRATIVE with other exemplars forged by Laffite that are illustrated in my book GREAT FORGERS AND FAMOUS FAKES (pp. 122-29) and noted that the NARRATIVE bears the same characteristic script, slightly modified, that appears in his other fabrications in English, French and Spanish.

What Hamilton has examined, in fact, are the photographs of documents that are published in Perry's book, the title of which he has misquoted! As Groneman himself puts it, "One opinion, even an expert one, does not a forgery make." Yet Groneman also has a point when he says that Hamilton's position as a "recognized expert in documents and handwriting" means that even "[i]f his opinion alone is not enough to label the diary a fake, it should be, at least, a call for further investigation."

Thanks in part to the publication of *Defense of a Legend*, most of the myths associated with the de la Peña diary can now be laid to rest, but many of the mysteries remain. When, and from whom, did de la Peña hear that one of the slaughtered prisoners was David Crockett? Why are there other handwritings, in addition to those that appear to be de la Peña's, mixed throughout the manuscript? Can the fact that the author was ill and imprisoned as he rewrote and expanded his diary explain either this or the odd mixture of paper sizes and types on which the *Reseña y Diario* was written? Why does the manuscript appear to have several systems of pagination?

It took C. Vann Woodward the better part of a decade to sort out similar puzzles in another diary that had already gone through two previous publications, the famous Civil War journal of Mary Boykin Chesnut. What the Yale historian found was that unbeknownst to previous editors, Mrs. Chesnut's thoroughly mingled papers included the original journal from the 1860s, a partially surviving rewritten "diary'' done in the 1870s, a completely redone Civil War "diary" painstakingly crafted by the original author in the 1880s, and parts of other manuscripts as well. Woodward's own painstaking editorial work eventually produced a magnificent volume which not only tells us much about the war, but also about the development of the thinking of the woman who lived it.

Does Jose de la Peña need his own Woodward? Although the presumption of forgery must be set aside, the manuscripts now at the University of Texas at San Antonio should still be subjected not only to the forensic tests of ink and paper urged by Groneman, but also to the careful analysis of scholars conversant with the complexities of Mexican history and sensitive to the context in which the diary was produced. One of the most important of the many lessons that should be learned from Groneman's errors, as well as the errors of others which his book has revealed, is that historians of the Texas Revolution should never forget that they are writing about Mexico, and that they must become, to the very best of their abilities, Mexican historians.

But on the duties of the scholar, we should let José Enrique de la Peña have the last word. In one of the little booklets that he crafted for himself from torn sheets of paper, there is a quarto which he entitled "Important additions to the diary, for organizing the editing of it..." On the first page he wrote:

> ... es importante huir de ... [parcialidad] si quiere uno ser creido. Mucho cuid. para que [sic] es muy dificil ser historiador.
> (... it is important to avoid partiality if one wants to be believed. Be very careful because it is very difficult to be a historian.)

VIII. Susanna Dickinson

Written by Margaret Swett Henson

Susanna Wilkerson Dickinson (also spelled Dickerson), survivor of the Alamo, was born about 1814 in Tennessee, perhaps in Williamson County. Her first name has also been recorded as Susan, Susana, and Suzanna; her maiden name is sometimes given as Wilkinson. On May 24, 1829, she married Almeron Dickinson before a justice of the peace in Bolivar, Hardeman County, Tennessee. The couple remained in the vicinity through the end of 1830. The Dickinsons arrived at Gonzales, Texas, on February 20, 1831, in company with fifty-four other settlers, after a trip by schooner from New Orleans. On May 5 Dickinson received a league of land from Green DeWitt, on the San Marcos River in what became Caldwell County. He received ten more lots in and around Gonzales in 1833 and 1834. The Dickinsons lived on a lot just above the town on the San Marcos River, where Susanna took in at least one boarder. A map of Gonzales in 1836 shows a Dickinson and Kimble hat factory in Gonzales. Susanna's only child, Angelina Elizabeth Dickinson, was born on December 14, 1834.

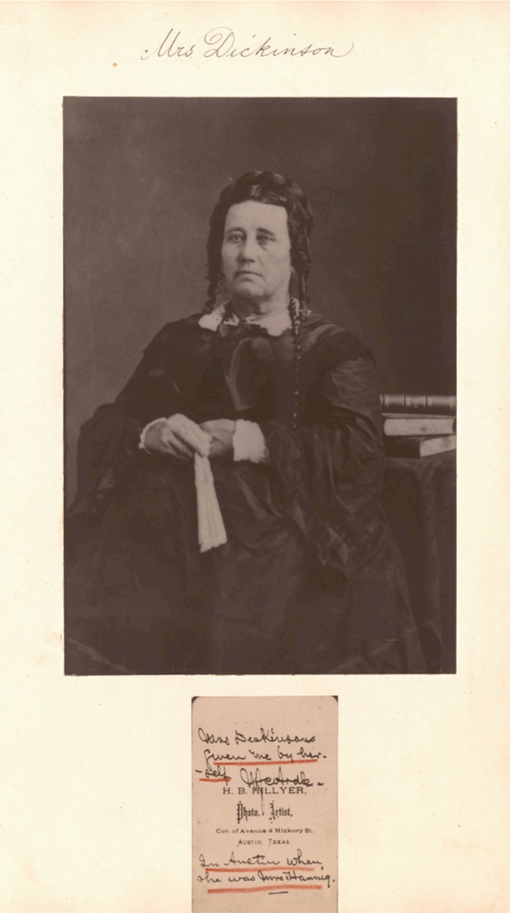

Figure 6: Portrait of Susanna Dickinson, Given to McArdle When She Was Mrs. Hannig, The McArdle Notebooks, Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

Susanna and her daughter may have joined other families hiding in the timber along the Guadalupe River in early October 1835, when Mexican troops from San Antonio demanded the return of an old cannon lent to Gonzales four years earlier. The resulting skirmish, the battle of Gonzales, was the first fight of the Texas Revolution. Susanna said goodbye to her husband on October 13 as the volunteers left for San Antonio under command of Stephen F. Austin. She remained in Gonzales through November, when newly arriving troops looted her home.

She joined Dickinson in San Antonio, probably in December 1835, and lodged in Ramón Músquiz's home, where she opened her table to boarders (among them David Crockett) and did laundry. On February 23, 1836, the family moved into the Alamo. After the battle of the Alamo on March 6, Mexican soldiers found her—some accounts say in the powder magazine, others in the church—and took her and Angelina, along with the other women and children, to Músquiz's home. The women were later interviewed by Santa Anna, who gave each a blanket and two dollars in silver before releasing them. Legend says Susanna displayed her husband's Masonic apron to a Mexican general in a plea for help and that Santa Anna offered to take Angelina to Mexico.

Santa Anna sent Susanna and her daughter, accompanied by Juan N. Almonte's servant Ben, to Sam Houston with a letter of warning dated March 7. On the way, the pair met Joe, William B. Travis's slave, who had been freed by Santa Anna. The party was discovered by Erastus (Deaf) Smith and Henry Wax Karnes. Smith guided them to Houston in Gonzales, where they arrived after dark about March 12.

Susanna Dickinson probably followed the army eastward in company with the other Gonzales women. Illiterate, without family, and only twenty-two years old, she petitioned the government meeting at Columbia in October 1836 for a donation, but the proposed $500 was not awarded. She needed a male protector, and by June 1837 she was cohabiting with John Williams, whom she married about November 27, 1837. He beat her and Angelina, and she petitioned in Harrisburg (later Harris) County for a divorce, which was granted on March 24, 1838—one of the first divorces in the county.

By 1839 Almeron Dickinson's heirs had received rights to 2,560 acres for his military service; they sold the land when Angelina reached twenty-one. Subsequent requests to the state legislature in November 1849 were turned down. Susanna tried matrimony three more times before settling into a stable relationship. She wed Francis P. Herring on December 20, 1838, in Houston. Herring, formerly from Georgia, had come to Texas after October 20, 1837. He died on September 15, 1843. On December 15, 1847, Susanna married Pennsylvania drayman Peter Bellows (also known as Bellis or Belles) before an Episcopalian minister. In 1850 the couple had sixteen-year-old Angelina living with them. But by 1854 Susanna had left Bellows, who charged her with adultery and prostitution when he filed for divorce in 1857. Susanna may have lived in the Mansion House Hotel of Pamelia Mann, which was known as a brothel, before marrying Bellows. The divorce petition accuses her of taking up residence in a "house of ill fame." Nevertheless, Susanna received praise from the Baptist minister Rufus C. Burleson for her work nursing cholera victims in Houston, where he baptized her in Buffalo Bayou in 1849.

Susanna's fifth marriage was long-lasting. She married Joseph William Hannig (or Hannag), a native of Germany living in Lockhart, in 1857. They soon moved to Austin, where Hannig became prosperous with a cabinet shop and later a furniture store and undertaking parlor; he also owned a store in San Antonio. Susanna became ill in February 1883 and died on October 7 of that year. Hannig buried her in Oakwood Cemetery, and even though he married again, he was buried next to Susanna after his death in 1890.

Appendix: Timeline of the 13 days of the Siege of Alamo

February 23, 1836 - Mexican dictator General Antonio López de Santa Anna and his troops arrive at San Antonio and begin siege preparations at the Alamo. Travis immediately sent a request to Gonzales for help.

February 24, 1836 - Travis assumes overall command of the Alamo after Bowie becomes too ill to serve as co-commander. Santa Anna ordered an artillery battery constructed on the west side of the river. Travis sent out his famous "Victory or Death" letter that began with the words "To the People of Texas & all Americans in the World."

February 25, 1836 - A two-hour engagement occurs when Santa Anna's troops attempt to occupy jacales (picket and thatch huts) located near the southwest corner of the compound. Members of the garrison venture out and burn the jacales this night. Santa Anna's soldiers construct artillery batteries south of the Alamo. James W. Fannin leaves Goliad with a relief column bound for the Alamo.

February 26, 1836 - A "norther" or cold front blows in, dropping the temperature and bringing rain. Fannin, returns to Goliad after learning that column of Mexican troops under Col. José Urrea is advancing northward from Matamoros.

February 27, 1836 - Work continues on the batteries and entrenchments ringing the Alamo. Santa Anna sends foraging parties to nearby ranches to look for supplies.

February 28, 1836 - The Alamo endures prolonged cannonade from Santa Anna's artillery batteries.

February 29, 1836 - Santa Anna sends troops toward Goliad to intercept Texian reinforcements reportedly being brought by Fannin. Mexican troops are also positioned east of the Alamo, completing the encirclement of the besieged garrison. Evidence indicates an informal truce completed today may allow some civilians inside the Alamo to leave.

March 1, 1836 - A second cold front arrives. A relief column from Gonzales arrives, responding to Travis' pleas for help. The Gonzales Ranging Company safely enters the compound,

increasing the garrison's strength by at least thirty-two. Finding no sign of Fannin's reinforcements, the detachment sent by Santa Anna returns.

March 2, 1836 - The siege continues. Unbeknownst to defenders of the Alamo, the provisional Texas government at Washington-on-the-Brazos declares independence from Mexico.

March 3, 1836 - Travis receives a letter from his friend Major Robert M. "Three-Legged Willy" Williamson carried in by James B. Bonham that details efforts to send aid to the Alamo. In the letter, Williamson asks Travis to hold out a little longer until help arrives. Santa Anna receives 1,100 reinforcements. Travis sends out his last known appeals for assistance, stating, "I am determined to perish in the defense of this place, and may my bones reproach my country for her neglect."

March 4, 1836 - Santa Anna ordered his artillery batteries moved closer to the Alamo. The prolonged artillery attack continues.

March 5, 1836 - Santa Anna announces to his officers that he plans to attack the Alamo in the morning and orders them to prepare their troops for assault. Although evidence is lacking, tradition holds that Travis gathered his command together one final time to offer them the chance to leave. According to one account, Travis draws a line in the sand and asks the garrison to make a decision to stay or leave. Only one man, Moses Rose, chooses to leave.

March 6, 1836 - Santa Anna gives the order to attack just before dawn. After a bloody 90-minute battle, the Alamo falls. Santa Anna orders the bodies of the slain defenders burned.