

# The Alamo

Welcome to San Antonio, Texas, home of the Alamo! “Remember The Alamo” was a rallying cry, inspiring hundreds of colonists in Texas to take up arms against the Mexican army in 1836, but many of us today do not quite remember what was so special about the site and the battle there.

The Misión San Antonio de Valero, now known as the Alamo, was constructed in 1724 and served as a residence for missionaries and Native American converts for almost seventy years...until Spanish officials took over the property and parceled out the land in 1793. By the early 1800's, the Alamo was a station for the Spanish cavalry unit and remained a military base until the Texas Revolution...but by this time it had fallen into disrepair.

In 1835, anticipating that Texas rebels would attack San Antonio, the Mexican government sent General Martin Perfecto de Cos to fortify the town and repair the walls. As expected, in December of 1835, Texian and Tejano volunteers attacked Mexican troops stationed in the city, and after a few days of fighting in the streets, General Martin Perfecto de Cos's men surrendered. Texian and Tejano volunteers occupied the Alamo, growing in number to between 182 and 260 men by the time General Santa Ana attacked the fort with approximately 1500 soldiers. Commanded by James Bowie and William B. Travis, the smaller force defended the Alamo through a 12-day siege, followed by three assaults. With the third assault on March 6, 1836, Mexican troops scaled the walls and overwhelmed the smaller force inside. Eyewitness accounts reported between 182 and 257 Texians dead, and historians estimate that 400–600 Mexicans were killed or wounded.

You might find the legend of Texan commander William B. Travis interesting. Legend has it that with little hope left, Travis drew a line in the sand and asked any man ready to fight for the key to the “defense of Texas” to step over - all but one did. These men were prepared to fight and sacrifice their lives for Texas, and among the courageous fighters were legendary figures James Bowie and David Crockett.

Although Texas was not victorious in defending the Alamo, the site stands a symbol to “heroic struggle against impossible odds - a place where men made the ultimate sacrifice for freedom.” In the weeks following the Alamo battle, Sam Houston rallied volunteers from east Texas and successfully overcame Santa Ana and the Mexican army at the battle of San Jacinto.

Over 2.5 million people come each year to visit this shrine to Texas Liberty. Now located in downtown San Antonio, you will find the Alamo surrounded by other attractions in the busy River Walk area. The Alamo is a “must see” of San Antonio where you can imagine and experience Texas' rich 300 years of history within the chapel, fort and gardens.

## **Source(s):**

## **Author(s):**

Written by Brittany Williams (Undergraduate Student) and edited by Andria N. Godfrey (Graduate Student) in the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences at Texas A&M University, as part of a National Park Service Trails and Rails project funded by Amtrak, 2009.