

## A Growing Nation

**Introduction:** After the War of 1812, the United States began changing greatly. Major changes occurred in the ways that goods were produced and shipped.

Water power ran factories to make thread and cloth. People once made these goods by hand. People began to move from farms to cities to work in the factories. New inventions, such as the cotton gin, steel plow, and mechanical reaper, speeded up farm work.

The transportation system also grew. The country built canals, a national road, and railroads. These cut travel time for people and goods.

More people gained the right to vote. Before, in most places, only white male property holders could vote. By 1828 almost all white men could vote. But most nonwhite men and all women were denied the right to vote.

The United States grew in land and in power. In 1819, after a series of battles between the United States and American Indians in Florida, Spain agreed to sell Florida to the United States. We studied this when we studied James Monroe. At about the same time, Mexico began allowing United States citizens to settle in Texas. In the 1840s, Mexico and the United States fought a war over Texas. Mexico lost the war and in 1848 sold much of the land to the United States. This land included California as well as part of the Southwest region. This is where we will continue our story of America!

### The Story Continues: How did the United States Gain Texas?

By the 1820s and 1830s Americans were moving into the Southwest, specifically into Texas, which contained very fertile land. Mexico tried to encourage this settlement by granting Stephen Austin a grant of land in 1821 who promised to bring several hundred families into the area. Austin charged these families about twelve cents an acre for fertile farming and grazing land. By the early 1830s, over 20,000 American settlers were living in Texas.

Tensions began to grow between the American settlers and the Mexican government. The settlers were allowed to move into Texas only if they agreed to certain terms: they were not allowed to have slaves (which they ignored), and they were to convert to the Catholic religion (which they refused to do). The Americans also wanted more say in the Mexican government. The Mexicans were

afraid of a rebellion, because tensions continued to grow between the two groups; therefore, they banned anymore Americans from coming into Texas.

In 1835, the Texas settlers rebelled against the Mexican government, starting the Texas Revolution. Texas leaders declared their independence, and formed the Republic of Texas on March 2, 1836. The new government wanted to drive the Mexican leader out of Texas, so the leaders ordered the Texans to attack the Mexican troops in San Antonio. After four days of fighting the Mexican troops retreated. Their leader was so upset that he marched into San Antonio himself with troops to back him up to retake the city. The Texans in San Antonio took shelter in an old Spanish mission called the Alamo. The Mexican troops attacked the Alamo on February 23, 1836, and by March 6, 1836 all 189 Texans were killed.

By April 21, 1836, the Texan troops led a surprise attack on the Mexican troops. Their battle cry was "Remember the Alamo!" The Texans were able to beat the Mexican troops, and were able to capture their leader. The Mexican leader agreed to grant Texas its independence. Texas remained an independent republic until 1845 when it became a part of the United States.

Bringing Texas into the United States was not an easy decision for Andrew Jackson (who was President at this time). The South favored making Texas a state, but the North opposed. Why it was so difficult was over the issue of slavery. Many slave owners lived in Texas. Jackson was also worried that Mexico would retaliate and start a war with the United States to regain their territory. In the end Texas became our twenty-eighth state to enter the Union in 1845.

**Directions: Answer the following questions on loose-leaf paper. You are to write out the question, skip a space, and then answer it.**

1. Who took a group of several hundred families to Texas in 1821?
2. What did Texas offer that caused these people to want to move into the area?
3. What country owned Texas in 1821?
4. What two rules did the settlers have to follow if they moved into Texas?
5. What is the Alamo?
6. Who won the battle at the Alamo?
7. What happened to Texas in 1836?
8. When was Texas added to the United States?
9. Who was president when Texas became a state?
10. What issue caused major debate on whether to admit Texas into the United States?
11. What state did Texas become?
12. What were two reasons why the president of the United States was worried about admitting Texas into the Union?
13. What region favored Texas becoming a state?
14. What region opposed Texas becoming a state?