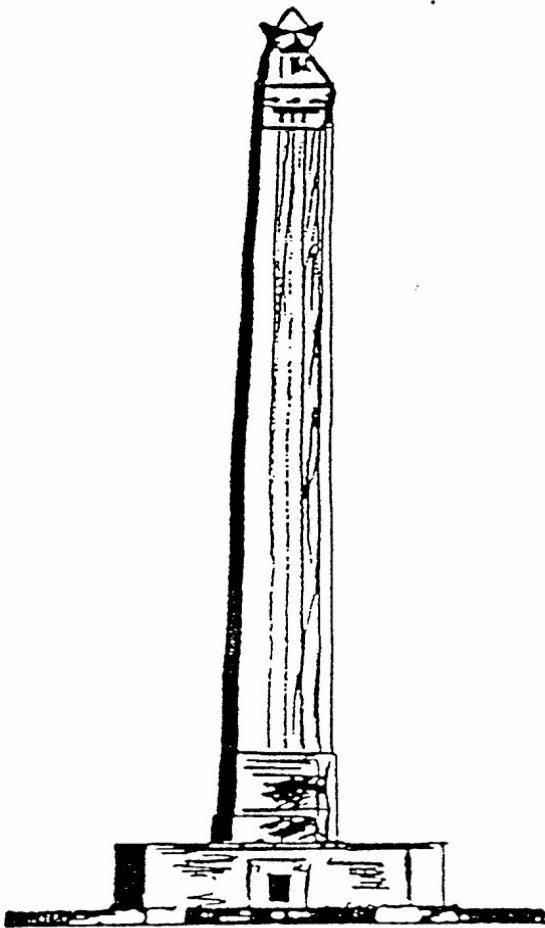


# THE SAM HOUSTON TRAIL:

## SAN JACINTO BATTLEGROUND

APRIL 21, 1836



San Jacinto Monument  
and  
Museum of History



Sam Houston Area Council  
Boy Scouts of America

# The Battle of San Jacinto

## A trail guide to The Sam Houston Historic Trail

Thank you for your interest in Texas heritage. We believe that this cooperative effort between the Sam Houston Area Council and the Texas State Historical Commission will not only prove to be fun but highly interesting and instructive for all.

This package includes a map of the San Jacinto Monument State Historical Park, five (5) sets of narratives to be read to your group at specific points during your hike, and a request for patches to be completed at the end of your hike. **To qualify for the patch each participant must follow the trail as indicated on the map and participate (reading or listening) in each of the five (5) narratives at the proper points.**

Here's how it goes:

1. Get your unit together on any day of the year preferably in uniform.
2. Drive to the San Jacinto Monument at the Historical Park in La Porte. Park in the parking provided around the monument. Disembark your unit and walk to Point A. Reading Stops are defined on your map with blue letters **A-E**. Monuments are defined as black squares around the numbers 1 through 20.
3. At Point **A** (Monument 11) have one or more of your group read **History Stop Program Stop A** narrative to the group. When you have finished, have your group follow the road toward point **B**.
4. Your walk has now taken you past Monuments 12 and 9, across Independence Parkway, and to Monument 4 Point **B**. Here you are to have one or more of your group read **History Stop Program Stop B**. After completion of your reading, continue past Monument 3, Monument 2, around to Monument 1, past Monument 5, and back up to Monument 8. In this area, you have seen several grave markers. The largest group of these markers is the burial site of eight (8) of the nine (9) Texans who died in the Battle of San Jacinto.
5. You now leave this portion of the park and again cross Independence Parkway to Monument 10 beside the Reflection Pool. This is Point **C** where you again have **History Stop Program Stop C** read. Afterwards, proceed along the pool toward the monument passing the Habermehl family cemetery. This cemetery has no significance to the battle of San Jacinto. Follow around the San Jacinto Monument and down the road to Point **D**.
6. At Point **D** read or have read the **History Stop Program Stop D** narrative and then move through the Monuments 15, 14, 19, 13, and 16. You are now at Point **E** to read the **History Stop Program Stop E** narrative.
7. After Point **E** continue down the roads over to Monument 17 where the biggest portion of the carnage occurred as mentioned in **History Stop E** narrative. Peggy Lake is over the breastworks in front of you.

You have now completed your historical hike. We hope that you have had fun doing it. Return to your car or one of the many areas of the park as listed below.

As you are hiking through the park, remind your Scouts that most of the water that they see was not present in 1836 at the time of the battle. A great deal of swampy areas existed, but subsidence in the area has created the water areas that we see today.

Be aware as you plan your day at the San Jacinto Battleground that you have more available to you. For example:

- a. Considerable picnic areas. Go in the morning, take your lunch, and picnic before your hike, after your hike, or during your hike.
- b. The San Jacinto Monument Museum. There is a tremendous amount of memorabilia here.
- c. Elevator rides up the San Jacinto Monument (taller than the Washington Monument). There is a fee for these rides but the vast panorama of the area is worth it.
- d. A historical slide show at the Museum. We understand that this is a tremendous show of over 3500 slides. There is a fee for the slide show, but again it is well worth it. Check the prices and times of shows.

We hope you enjoy your visit and your hike in the San Jacinto Monument. Remember though: qualification for the patch consists of participation in the hike! The other items: monuments, slide shows, are all extras if you wish to participate in them. Complete your patch request form and send it with your payment to the council office as indicated. Good Scouting to you all.

# HISTORY STOP PROGRAM

## STOP # A

### Historical Information

Welcome to **History Stop #A**, the first of five history stops scattered at key locations across the battleground. Here we will talk about the background events leading up to the 21st of April 1836, including the events here on the previous day, the 20th.

In 1836 this was the north pasture of the Widow Peggy McCormick's ranch. Her husband, Arthur McCormick, drowned in 1825 in Buffalo Bayou, but she continued to operate the ranch.

The terrain is much different today than it was in 1836. The land has sunk 10-12 feet through subsidence, caused by the pumping out of underground water in this area. The marshes along the San Jacinto River, to the east, where much of the battle took place, are now under several feet of water. There is far less vegetation and trees here today. The contours of the battlefield have remained much the same, except around the monument and reflecting pool, where the landscape was altered during construction in the late 1930's.

The reason the two armies met in this pasture is because of Nathaniel Lynch's ferry across the San Jacinto River, where it joins Buffalo Bayou, about a mile to the north. It was the only practicable crossing in the area to proceed from the region to the southwest eastward toward the Trinity and Sabine Rivers. Santa Anna had pursued interim president David G. Burnet and other members of the new Texan government to New Washington, at Morgan's Point on Galveston Bay, in present La Porte. He almost captured the official party there on April 19.

Houston arrived at Harrisburg, on Buffalo Bayou about 11 miles to the west, just southeast of downtown Houston, on the 18th. Santa Anna had already been there and burned the town. That night, Houston learned of Santa Anna's movements from documents carried by a captured Mexican courier. Santa Anna planned to come to Lynch's Ferry, and Houston knew he must get here first, to place himself between the Mexican forces and the fleeing Texas settlers in the Runaway Scrape beyond the San Jacinto. So, on the 19th, Houston left the army's baggage and sick soldiers under guard and crossed his army to the south side of Buffalo Bayou and headed this direction. They marched almost all night, stopping only twice, briefly, to rest.

Houston dispatched two cavalry detachments before sunrise, one here to the ferry and the other toward New Washington, to reconnoiter Santa Anna's movements in that area. The first troops arrived at Lynch's not long after sunrise on the 20<sup>th</sup>, and captured a flatboat of provisions, which Santa Anna had sent up the river in advance of his arrival. Houston arrived here with the main force of his army about mid-morning and ordered camp to be set up along the bayou.

The second detachment arrived as the camp was being established. They had seen Santa Anna's forces preparing to leave New Washington and had skirmished briefly with a small cavalry troop north of that town.

Santa Anna burned New Washington and headed north, arriving here about 11:30 a.m. He immediately sought to draw the Texans into battle. The Texans were busy butchering some of the Widow McCormick's beeves when the Mexicans arrived. Santa Anna positioned the "Golden Standard," a 12-pound cannon, and his only artillery, along the east slope of the swale between here and the reflecting

pool, about 400 yards from the Texan camp, and began firing. Houston responded with the "Twin Sisters," which he had positioned in a point of timber on the high ground near where this road meets Hwy. 134.

Santa Anna then dispatched sharpshooters from his veteran Toluca Company to within rifle shot of the Texan camp, positioning them in a grove of trees near the lower end of the reflecting pool. After a brief exchange of rifle fire, a shower of grape and broken horseshoes from the "Twin Sisters" sent the infantrymen into retreat.

Sporadic artillery exchanges continued into the afternoon, as Santa Anna established his camp on the high ground overlooking the marshes along the San Jacinto River, about 3/4 mile from the Texan camp. Two men were wounded during the cannonade, one from each side. The Texan was the commander of the artillery, Colonel J. C. Neal.

When Santa Anna ordered the "Golden Standard" withdrawn from the field in later afternoon, Colonel Sidney Sherman petitioned Houston to let him attack the withdrawing artillery, in hopes of capturing the piece, but Houston declined. Finally, shortly before sundown, Houston let Sherman lead a cavalry troop to reconnoiter the Mexican camp. Sherman encountered a Mexican cavalry squad out to protect the slowing withdrawing artillery. A heated skirmish ensued in the area across this road, probably out in that brush and a little to the east.

The Texans fell back in confusion and disarray, and narrowly escaped disaster. Only one man was mortally wounded. The most notable aspect of this confrontation was the heroism of Private Mirabeau B. Lamar. He rescued several comrades, including Secretary of War Thomas J. Rusk, and 19-year-old Walter P. Lane, who 25 years later would become a Confederate General. For his exploits, Lamar was promoted to colonel and led the cavalry on the field the next day. When the two cavalry units returned to their respective camps, both armies retired for the night.

# **HISTORY STOP PROGRAM**

## **STOP #B**

### **Historical Information**

Welcome to the Texan camp.

The bulk of the Texas Army arrived here in the woods along Buffalo Bayou in the mid-morning of April 20, after a long, arduous all-night march from Harrisburg, which was about eleven miles to the west, just this side of downtown Houston.

The spring of 1836 had been uncommonly cold and wet, the rivers and creeks were in flood, and traveling even short distances on foot was extremely difficult. The morning of April 20th was cold and gray.

Houston ordered the camp established along the bayou. The camp stretched for about 500 yards among the woods. There was much more timber here then. On the right, down toward the battleship, was the camp of the 2nd Regiment of Volunteers, commanded by Colonel Sidney Sherman. To his right was Colonel Edward Burleson's 1st Regiment of Volunteers. Next in line, just to the left of the sundial, was Lt. Colonel Henry Millard's Regiment of Regulars. Regulars were recruited members of the Army, who wore some semblance of uniform, carried weapons issued by the Republic, and were supposed to be paid more than the volunteers. On the far right was the 61-man Cavalry Regiment, commanded at first by Sidney Sherman, then later by Colonel Mirabeau B. Lamar.

The Texas artillery, which consisted of two small six-pound cannons called the "Twin Sisters," and commanded by Lt. Colonel J. C. Neal, was positioned at the top of this rise, in a little neck of timber located over there near the entrance to this area of the park.

The cannon were sent to the Texan Army by the citizens of Cincinnati, Ohio, and they were received by Sam Houston less than two weeks before the battle. As a matter of fact, the army was so short of powder that neither cannon had been fired before they were brought to this battleground. The cannons over there near the sundial are not replicas but serve to represent the originals. The originals were lost after having been used in the Civil War. It is said that they were called the "Twin Sisters" after two young ladies on the Mississippi River steamboat by which the cannons were shipped to New Orleans. The shipping crate was labeled "hollow ware."

The appearance of the Texan camp was not what one might expect of an army camp. The only tent mentioned in the historical records was that of Sam Houston, although there were probably a few others. The men slept on the cold, damp ground rolled in soiled blankets around 20-30 campfires.

Houston's army on the fields of San Jacinto numbered about 800 men and came from all parts of the United States and Europe. The majority were recent arrivals in Texas; less than 200 owned land in the newly declared Republic. Land was a major attraction for the newcomers, as they were to be paid in land for their services. Of course, some came for the adventure, others to fight for the principles of freedom and liberty.

Among those fighting for those ideals of democracy were a company of fifteen to twenty "Tejanos," Texas Mexicans who were as tired of Santa Anna's rule as the Anglos and fought for the Texan cause. Their captain was Juan Seguin. When the army was at Harrisburg, Houston had wanted to leave the

Tejano company to aid in guarding the sick for fear they might be mistaken for the enemy in a fight, but the Tejanos would not be left behind. Through their English-speaking spokesman, Jose Antonio Menchaca, they made it clear that they had as much right as the Anglos to die defending their land, if not more.

The appearance of the men themselves would have been considered deplorable by accepted military standards. A recruit who arrived with eight others on the morning of the 21st stated that "a more savage looking band could scarcely have been assembled." They were "unwashed and unshaven, their hair, beards and mustaches untrimmed and matted, and their clothes were in tatters and plastered with mud."

The Texans were armed with a broad variety of weapons. The regular infantry were the only men whose weapons were consistent, having been issued Model 1816 Harper's Ferry smoothbore flintlock muskets, with bayonets. None of the volunteer infantrymen had bayonets, although most were probably armed with knives of varying descriptions, including the Bowie knife. The rifles of the volunteers were described as being of "every shape and size." Some of the cavalrymen must have carried flintlock pistols and sabers as well.

Their food was poor and scarce, and seldom consisted of more than boiled beef. In fact, a number of the Widow McCormick's beeves were being butchered when Santa Anna arrived. The Mexican provisions captured at the ferry that morning was welcomed by all. The men had bread and coffee with their boiled beef for the first time in several days.

Sam Houston organized a contingency plan of retreat. Several barges, rafts, and flatboats, found floating in Buffalo Bayou, were gathered and moored along the banks adjacent to the camp. If retreat became necessary in the face of a full Mexican attack, at least some of his men could escape with their lives, avoiding sure death if captured. The bayou was not nearly as wide then, probably no more than 200-300 yards.

Let us shift our attention to the events in this camp on the 22nd, the day after the battle. The Texans buried their eight fallen comrades here in their camp. Their graves are right over there, marked by the obelisk. Houston dispatched search parties at dawn to look for Mexicans who had escaped the afternoon before, and especially Santa Anna.

A small party of Texans, led. by Sgt. James Sylvester, captured a soldier they thought was a private near Vince's Bridge, on the road to Harrisburg. As they were bringing him back into camp, they passed a group of captives, and some of them called out, "El Presidente! El Presidente!" They had in fact captured Santa Anna, the President of Mexico and self-styled Napoleon of the West.

Sylvester's party brought Santa Anna to Sam Houston, who lay wounded beneath a large oak tree, which stood on the edge of the bayou right over there beyond the sundial. A small monument marks the spot. Santa Anna agreed to cease hostilities, and wrote orders to his other commanders to withdraw from Texas. The war was over and independence won.

Had Santa Anna escaped, however, and rejoined his 4,000 man army west of the Brazos River, the war would have continued, and would have probably ended differently. The Texans probably would not have been so fortunate in a second battle with Santa Anna, and the Battle of San Jacinto might have been relegated to a footnote in a Mexican history book.

# HISTORY STOP PROGRAM

## STOP #C

### Historical Information

Welcome to **History Stop #C**. This is an ideal vantage point from which to survey the movements of the Texas Army as it prepared to attack on the afternoon of the 21st of April. But first let us talk about some of the events leading up to the attack.

The night of the 20th, after posting sentries, Sam Houston ordered his men to eat and rest, for they had had little sleep the previous night. Sam was worried, and he spent a sleepless night pondering his dilemma. His men were in an ugly mood. They were filled with frustrations and disgust. Many of them had been grumbling for days and weeks because their commander kept retreating, refusing to stand and fight the advancing Mexicans. On the 20th some of them had tasted battle, and all were straining at Houston's refusal to engage the enemy. They were brimming with vengeance for what Santa Anna had done at the Alamo and at Goliad. Some of the men had friends and relatives who had fallen at the hands of the dictator. Houston knew he could not hold them in check much longer.

The lack of discipline displayed in the near disastrous cavalry skirmish the previous afternoon bothered him deeply. His men were strong-willed individualists aching to fight. That they would fight, he could not doubt, but they were not properly trained, and they would be fighting an enemy superior in discipline and equipment. Houston knew that once unleashed in battle, they would be beyond his control.

Houston had stopped twice in his long retreat to train the men, but it was time mostly wasted, for men are obstinate when they are constantly wet and hungry. Rain, mud, and the lack of food hampered his training efforts severely.

Houston had Santa Anna where he wanted him, however – isolated from his main army with a force nearly equal to his own. He could not let him get away, nor could he wait much longer, for Mexican reinforcements might arrive any time.

Sure enough, at 9:00 on the morning of the 21st, Santa Anna's brother-in-law, General Martin Perfecto de Cos, arrived with about 500 troops. The situation suddenly became critical. A small party under Sgt. Erastus "Deaf" Smith was sent to destroy Vince's Bridge on the main road to Harrisburg, over which Cos and Houston himself had crossed. Supposedly, Houston told Smith to hurry back, or he would miss the fighting.

Smith led his party of six mounted men rapidly to the bridge, about eight miles distant. It spanned Vince's Bayou, about a mile south of Buffalo Bayou, about three miles this side of Harrisburg. They used axes to cut the main supports and burned the remainder. This action would make further reinforcement of Santa Anna difficult and would cut off the retreat of either army. After insuring that the bridge would be destroyed, Smith headed back here.

Meanwhile, at noon, Houston called his first and only council of war with his officers. He listened to their pleas for attack, and their counsel about when to attack. But the men left the meeting disappointed, for nothing had been decided. Houston kept his thoughts to himself.

Finally, at 3:00, Houston ordered his army to parade and he inspected the men. He polled his officers about their readiness to fight. At 4:00 he formed the battle lines.

Colonel Sherman's volunteer infantry formed over there to right; Colonel Lamar's cavalry gathered on the far left; and here in the center were Houston and the main force of Colonel Burleson's volunteer infantry, Lt. Colonel Millard's regular infantry, and the "Twin Sisters," now commanded by Lt. Colonel George W. Hockley, who replaced the wounded J. C. Neal.

The Mexican camp was about 3/4 mile to the east, about 400 yards beyond the monument. The day had warmed, and the sun was at the Texan's backs as they slowly began their march toward the Mexican line.

Sherman's infantry proceeded along the edge of the marshes. Of course, that levee along the far side of the reflecting pool was not there then. He kept his regiment to the low ground to the left of the monument until they were almost upon the Mexican camp.

Lamar's cavalry circled around to the south, where the trees and brush are at the edge of the park, and attacked Santa Anna's cavalry camp from that side.

The main body of the army, with Houston in the lead and dragging the "Twin Sisters" through the mud, went straight forward, passing through the swale in front of us and keeping to the low-ground over and to the right of the reflecting pool. They emerged on high ground just this side and to the right of the monument, and continued for about another 100 yards before being detected, 200-300 yards short of the Mexican line.

By the way, Deaf Smith and his party returned from Vince's Bridge just in time to participate in the battle.

# HISTORY STOP PROGRAM

## STOP #D

### Historical Information

Welcome to Santa Anna's camp.

Santa Anna, with his force of about 1,000 men, established his camp across this rise during the afternoon of April 20, while his single piece of artillery, the "Golden Standard," was firing on the Texas camp from a position about a half-mile to the west, beyond the monument.

Once Santa Anna realized that he faced a force nearly equal to his own, and that his enemy had somehow obtained two artillery pieces, he ordered breastworks erected in front of the camp. The breastworks were located along where the tree line is now, about a hundred yards to the west, and were made up of pack saddles, trunks, and other baggage carried by the army. When the "Golden Standard" was withdrawn from the field in late afternoon, it was positioned in the center of the makeshift barricades.

The camp sprawled across this high ground and back to the north and east toward the marshes and south for 200-300 yards. There were many tents and the camp formation was surely orderly and in keeping with strict military procedures.

Santa Anna's men were a mixture of professional companies of veterans from Guadalajara, Toluca, Aldama, Guerrero, and Matamoros, and peasant conscripts from those areas of Mexico through which the army had passed. They were reasonably well-equipped, well-disciplined, and orderly. Their dress uniforms were of the classic Napoleonic style – blue and red with white leather accoutrements and white and gold trim. They also wore a white cotton fatigue uniform, in which they are so often, and improperly, portrayed.

The Mexican "soldado's" weaponry was the standard .75 caliber English flintlock musket equipped with a bayonet, commonly called the "Brown Bess." Models of this weapon had been produced by the English and sold to nations worldwide since the 1760's, and were the primary weapon on both sides of the American Revolution. Their effective range with reasonable accuracy was probably no more than fifty yards, and less than most of the weapons carried by their adversaries on this field. The infantrymen also carried sabers, but only the cavalrymen would have been armed with pistols.

Santa Anna's troops were consistently better fed than the Texans. Provisions were confiscated in every little town before it was put to the torch. Santa Anna himself is reputed to have lived sumptuously in the field.

When his army settled down for the night on the 20th, Santa Anna, like Houston, was faced with a dilemma. He surely realized the predicament into which he had gotten himself. Through his relentless pursuit of the "land thieves," as he called the Texans, he had isolated himself from his main forces. And he had lost his normal overwhelming superiority of numbers; the enemy across the way was nearly equal to his own forces. He had sent for reinforcements, but would they arrive before the wild-eyed American mob attacked? Santa Anna obviously anticipated that Houston would attack at first light, because he posted an extensive watch and had his troops rest in battle formation with their weapons at hand.

Santa Anna's men knew their predicament, as well. They had penetrated deeply into an alien territory. They had been on the march for months, and had lost many comrades to the elements during the winter. The weather had been horrible; the rains of the cold spring had worn on their stamina and their spirits. Santa Anna's army was 1000 miles from home, demoralized, nearing total exhaustion, and now they faced an enemy bent on avenging the deeds of their commander-in-chief. When the order came for them to sleep with their weapons in battle formation, something they had not done on this campaign, surely fear and uncertainty seeped into the ranks. It is doubtful that few, if any, slept more than fitfully that night.

When the dawn passed without an attack, Santa Anna undoubtedly relaxed a little, rejoicing in the fact that Houston again had refused to engage him in open battle. This would give him more time for reinforcements to arrive.

At 9:00 on the morning of the 21st, Santa Anna's prayers were answered. His brother-in-law, General Martin Perfecto de Cos arrived with 500 troops. They were not the "crack" veterans he had asked for, but with this increase in numbers, he apparently felt even more confident that Houston would not attack, and that the field would be his for the taking.

The arrival of Cos' reinforcements seemed to break the tension in the Mexican camp. The new troops established their camp on unoccupied ground to the north, toward the marshes, and immediately retired for much-needed sleep. The remainder of the army stacked their arms and relaxed. Neither Santa Anna nor any of his subordinate officers, some of them excellent military tacticians, saw fit to keep sentries posted. This oversight proved fatal.

The atmosphere in this camp late that afternoon was relaxed, seemingly comfortable and confident in the two-to-one numerical superiority they enjoyed. Most of the new troops in Cos' camp were still asleep, those that weren't resting were busying themselves with cooking and eating. Throughout the remainder of the camp soldiers were relaxing; several games of "monte," a card game, were being played. Santa Anna was in his tent.

This brings us to the most famous, or notorious, controversy about the events of April 21, 1836. That Santa Anna was in his tent is an uncontested fact. Just what he was doing in his tent is the core of the controversy. He later claimed he was asleep. But the story soon spread that he was having a rendezvous with a woman, Emily Morgan, a slave on the plantation of James Morgan at Morgan's Point, near New Washington, which the army had burned two days before. Emily Morgan, whether real or fictitious, became known as "The Yellow Rose of Texas."

No record or mention of the presence of a woman on the battlefield exists. Santa Anna's own officers, who later castigated his actions, never mentioned this allegation. The only evidence, and very weak at that, is a cryptic statement written by one of the Texans present: "Our victory was aided by Santa Anna's voluptuousness." One can read what he or she wants into that statement, with its very strange choice of a word -- at least with respect to its modern meanings.

Whether the "Yellow Rose" was real or fictitious will never be settled. But when someone cried out that the Texans were attacking, it was already too late for Santa Anna -- no matter if she was in his tent or not.

# HISTORY STOP PROGRAM

## STOP #E

### Historical Information

Welcome to the Battle of San Jacinto.

We are standing about in the center of the line of Mexican breastworks of packsaddles, trunks, and other baggage. It was along this line that the Texans made their final assault at 4:30 in the afternoon of April 1836.

If you have been to the history stop in the Mexican camp, you know that they were totally unprepared for battle that afternoon. They had not even posted sentries, so were taken completely by surprise when the Texans attacked.

The Texans' main force, under Sam Houston, camped up over the edge of that rise, just to the left of the monument, and advanced to within 200-300 yards of this spot before being detected. When they saw that they had been detected, they charged forward in double-quick time. The loaded "Twin Sisters" were fired. According to tradition, the little Texan band of fifes and a drummer struck up the tune of "Will You Come to the Bower?" a popular song of the day.

Somewhere along the charging line, someone cried out, "Remember the Alamo! Remember La Bahia!" The rallying yell was picked up and spread along the line. Later Mexican accounts of this battle mentioned how the screaming of the Texans terrified the troops.

Let us pause briefly to mention the differences in battle tactics employed by the two armies. The Mexicans were trained in the traditional European fashion, with ranks of riflemen kneeling and firing, then stepping back to reload in orderly fashion – in an almost gentlemanly manner. The Texans, on the other hand, were more of a guerilla-type force, charging and firing at will, then pausing to reload before charging again – a most ungentlemanly way to conduct a proper battle. The comparison can be made between this battle and the Battle of New Orleans in 1814, and with several pitched battles during the American Revolution. On this battlefield, the Mexican army never had the chance to form its defensive ranks.

Back to the battle. The Texans held their fire until they were within about sixty yards of this line, about where that second tree is located. Some of the Mexican troops rallied quickly to the line. The "Golden Standard" fired the first volley of the two it would fire during the battle.

Over to the right, Colonel Sherman's volunteer infantry swarmed up out of the marshes and struck hard and quick at the camp of General Coso's recently arrived reinforcements. Most were still sleeping when the attack began. Some of their rifles were never unstacked, as the Texans poured through that part of the camp, meeting little resistance.

Over on the left, Colonel Lamar's cavalry surprised that of Santa Anna's and routed them, scattering unmounted horses through the camp, adding to the general confusion.

Here in the center, the fighting was soon hand-to-hand here along the line of breastworks. Houston directed the fighting from his horse out in front of the line. He had two horses shot from beneath him; the second time he himself was wounded with a rifle ball in his right ankle. That marker at the end of this road commemorates his having been wounded, but is not likely to be the spot where it happened, for it is 90 yards away, beyond the effective range of the Mexican rifles. He mounted again to direct the battle.

The "Golden Standard" was captured, loaded with its third charge, but unfired. It was located about where that cannon is situated. That is not the original cannon, nor is it a replica. The breastworks were soon breached, and Burleson's volunteers and Millard's regulars entered the Mexican camp. Organized resistance lasted 18 minutes.

As soon as it was apparent that the Texans would breach the lines and overwhelm the camp, the dispirited Mexican soldiers began to flee in all directions, many dropping their weapons, if they had picked them up to begin with.

Over to the northeast, near the marshes on the backside of the camp, the final resistance was met. Colonel Juan Almonte, Santa Anna's aide, valiantly managed to rally a sizable group of fleeing soldiers and organize them to hold their ground and fight. But these efforts were short-lived, as the Texans quickly overwhelmed them.

The soldiers fled into the marshes to the north, into the mire of Boggy Bayou, just behind the camp, just beyond that restroom facility, and to the open prairie to the south, leading to the New Washington and Harrisburg roads.

Sometime early in the battle, Santa Anna emerged from his tent, and, according to the later accounts of his subordinates, stood wringing his hands, unable to give orders or establish enough authority to mount a defense or a counterattack. When he realized that all was lost, he mounted a nearby horse and fled toward the prairie and the road to the Brazos River and the remainder of his army. Had he not been captured the next day, this battle might not have meant much.

This is generally where the junior high and high school textbooks end the story of the Battle of San Jacinto, with the end of the "6 minutes of glory." But there is more, and it could be called, appropriately, the "90 minutes of gore."

As the Texans routed the camp, as we have said, many Mexican soldiers fled, filled with terror, toward the marshy terrain behind and to the north of the camp. Many of the Texans, filled with vengeance for the execution of so many of their number at the Alamo and Goliad, continued killing. Using their fired rifles as clubs until they broke at the breach, then picking up Mexican rifles, with bayonets, they continued the slaughter with blind hatred.

Some Mexican soldiers, stumbling through the quagmire of the marshes in an attempt to get to the river and swim to safety, were shot and stabbed. Some fell, begged for mercy, crying "Me no Alamo! Me no Goliad!" The pleas went unheeded. The shallow water along the San Jacinto soon ran crimson.

Houston and numerous other officers and men tried in vain to stop the senseless slaughter. Houston wanted to regroup his forces; he feared that more reinforcements would arrive at any time. This battle was won, he was afraid of another.

Finally, an hour and a half later, just before sundown, the killing stopped. The captured Mexican soldiers were grouped and put under guard. The few Texans with medical training began to treat the wounded – first the Texans, then the Mexicans. A makeshift hospital was set up across Buffalo Bayou, at Lorenzo de Zavala's plantation. All throughout the night the air was pierced by the screams of the wounded and the dying.

The final casualty count was: 630 Mexican soldiers killed, about 200 wounded, and just under 700 captured. The Texans had eight killed and thirty wounded. The bloody Battle of San Jacinto was finally over.

## HISTORY STOP PROGRAM

### Anticipated Questions and Answers

Most of the questions asked by the public will deal with people and events covered more extensively at other stops. Answer these as briefly as possible and direct the person to the history stop which covers his question in detail. Familiarize yourself with all information.

There will be, however, questions not covered in the briefing material. The following are a few which might be anticipated, along with sufficient information to give an answer.

1. **What happened to Sam Houston after the battle?** He left the battleground on May 5, turning his command over to Thomas J. Rusk. He sailed to Galveston, then to New Orleans for medical treatment. His wound finally healed and he returned to Texas in August. He was elected President of the Republic, and was inaugurated at Columbia in October.
2. **How old was Sam Houston?** He was born in Virginia on March 2, 1793, so he was 43 years old. He died at Huntsville, on July 26, 1863, at age 70.
3. **What happened to Santa Anna?** He was taken to Velasco where he signed a treaty. Then he was sent to Washington, D.C., where he met with American officials, then returned to New Orleans, where he boarded a ship and went back to Mexico.
4. **How old was Santa Anna?** He was born February 21, 1794 in Vera Cruz, and was 42 years old at the time of the battle. He died in Mexico City, on June 22, 1876, at the age of 82.
5. **What happened to the prisoners?** The government could not afford to feed the prisoners, so they were farmed out to farmers and ranchers in the area as laborers. Most eventually returned to Mexico, but some stayed and became Texas citizens.
6. **When was the monument built?** The monument and reflecting pool were completed in 1939. Refer other questions about the park to the park brochure.
7. **What happened to the bodies of the dead Mexican soldiers?** The bodies remained lying on the battleground for the rest of the spring and most of the summer. The Widow McCormick and others complained to the government, but nothing was done, officially. Finally, folks in the neighborhood gathered the remains and buried them in a common grave at an unknown location.

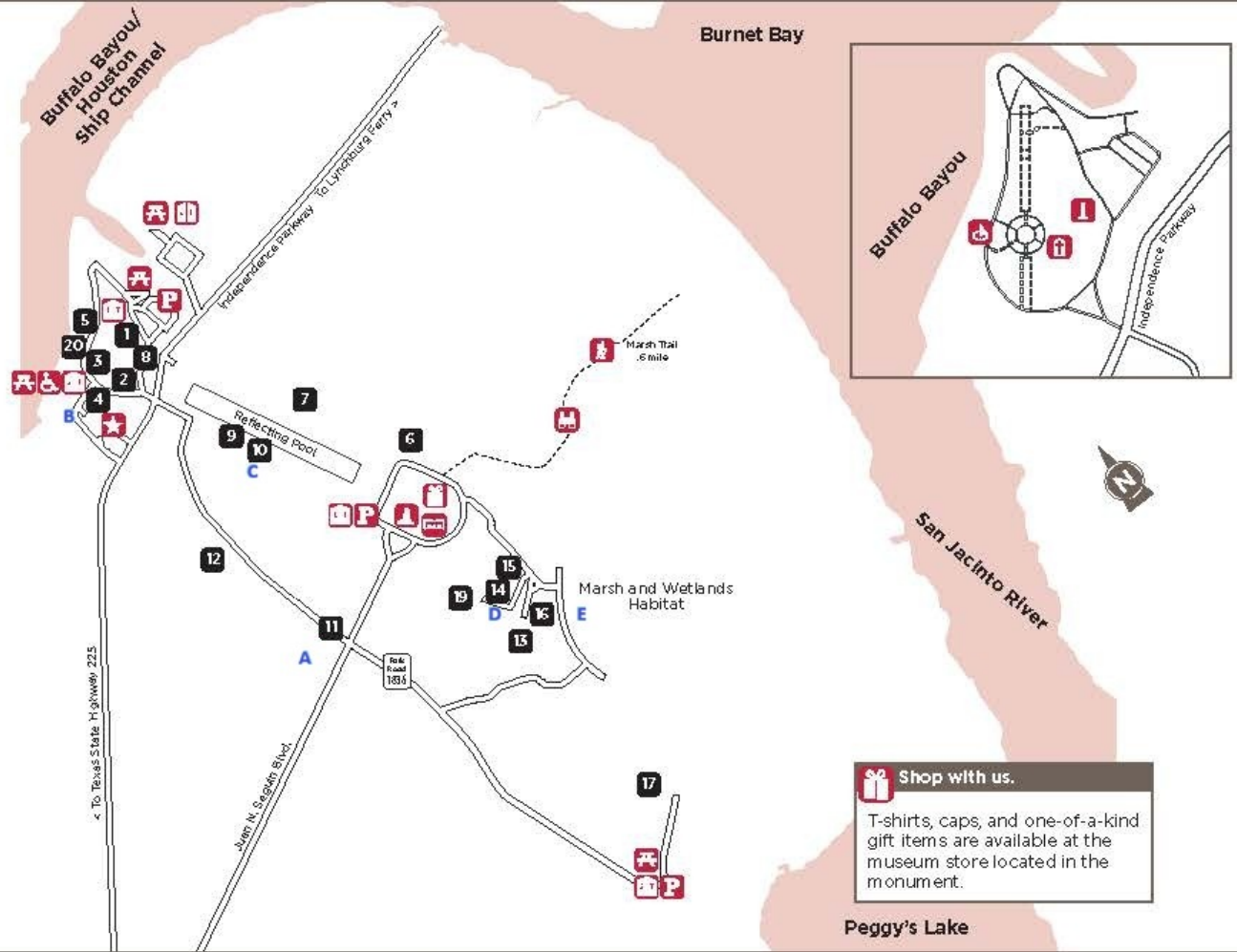
There may be questions about the discrepancies between what we say and the information on the 20 granite markers located around the park. If so, just tell them that those were placed there in the 1930's, and that more recent research has proven some of them to be incorrect.

Please keep notes on questions you are unable to answer, and one of our staff will try to come up with the answer, in case it might be asked again.

# SAN JACINTO BATTLEGROUND STATE HISTORIC SITE

You can help us protect your historic site while having a safe and fun visit at the same time.

- **Stay on the trails:** By doing so you not only protect yourself, but you also reduce impacts on wildlife, vegetation, and soil compaction.
- **Leave it where it lies:** Removal of artifacts, relics, and wildlife is prohibited. By leaving it in place, we ensure that the legacy of those who lived here before us remains unaltered for future generations.
- **Let everyone enjoy the wildflowers:** Picking flowers and other vegetation is prohibited. Every flower picked means fewer flowers the following year.
- **Stay hydrated:** Plan ahead and carry water with you. A water fountain is available at the monument.
- **Pet etiquette:** Please keep your pets on a leash and clean up after them.
- **Real Places Telling Real Stories:** Take advantage of the opportunities to explore Texas history at San Felipe de Austin, Fairharp Inn, Acton, French Legation, Washington-on-the-Brazos, the Star of the Republic Museum, and Fannin Battleground state historic sites.
- **Take home something special:** Shop our museum store located in the monument for t-shirts, caps, books, and one-of-a-kind gift items.
- **Join us:** Become a volunteer at one of our state historic sites and help preserve Texas history for future generations.



## LEGEND

- Headquarters
- San Jacinto Monument
- Amphitheater
- Museum Store
- Restrooms
- Wheelchair Accessible
- Picnic Area
- Nature Trail
- Hiking Trail
- Parking
- Brigham Monument
- De Zavala Cemetery
- Sundial Plaza

**San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site**  
3523 Independence Parkway S.  
La Porte, TX 77571  
281-479-2431

**San Jacinto Museum**  
1 Monument Circle  
La Porte, TX 77571  
281-479-2421

Discover the history of revolution and independence at

## THE STORED SITES OF TEXAS



### Main points of visitor interest

In March 1836, 19-year-old James Washington Winters joined General Houston's forces near the San Bernard River. He fought at the Battle of San Jacinto the following month. In 1901, 65 years later, Winters, accompanied by members of the San Jacinto Chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, returned to the battlefield to identify key locations from that decisive battle. The spots were marked, first with temporary iron crosses, then in 1912 with large granite markers.

Today, these markers are a window into the past, a testimony to what Houston's soldiers thought about the battle.

They are not a perfect account. If they are a window, the glass is wavy and warped. Modern archeology disagrees with the precise location of several of the events, most notably the site of Mexican Colonel Juan Almonte's surrender (marker 17). Others were moved during the construction of the San Jacinto Memorial Monument (markers 6 and 10) and as the landscape changed (marker 20). They represent the memory and experience of the battle, but only of one man on one side.

Despite these limitations, however, the markers are a unique first-hand account of the Battle of San Jacinto. Follow them across the battlefield and see the battle through the eyes of the Texans who fought here.

- 1. Site Twin Sisters April 20, 1836, Cannon Presented by Citizens of Cincinnati to Republic of Texas.** These two cannons, which fired six-pound cannonballs, were the only Texian artillery at the Battle of San Jacinto. They were named in honor of the twin daughters of Dr. Charles Rice, a passenger on the ship that brought the cannons to Texas.
- 2. Burleson's Camp.** The bulk of Houston's fighting force was two regiments of volunteer soldiers, many of whom were recent emigrants from the United States. The First Regiment Texas Volunteers, eight companies under the command of Colonel Edward Burleson, formed the core of the infantry on April 21.
- 3. Millard's Camp.** In addition to the volunteer regiments, the Texian army also had two companies of regulars under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Henry Millard.
- 4. Lamar's Camp.** Colonel Mirabeau Lamar joined the army as a private in mid-April but was promoted to colonel and given command of the cavalry on the morning of April 21.
- 5. Sherman's Camp.** Colonel Sidney Sherman commanded the Second Regiment Texian Volunteers, including James Washington Winters. Winters remembered Houston telling his camp he would "lead you into the fight, and if you whip them every one of you shall be a captain."
- 6. Sherman's Advance: Left Wing of Infantry, April 21, 1836.** The Second Regiment fired the first shots on the 21st. Sherman and his men encountered Mexican troops near the marsh as they approached the Mexican camp and opened fire. Many of Sherman's soldiers only had time to fire once before they reached the Mexican camp.



Mexican Colonel Juan Almonte

- 7. Burleson's Advance, Infantry, April 21, 1836.** Sherman's troops attacked before the First Regiment was in position, leaving them exposed to Mexican troops who now realized they were under attack. Burleson's men began firing as they crossed the small ridge separating the two camps.
- 8. Advance under General Rusk, April 21, 1836.** Thomas Rusk, the Secretary of War, marched out with Sherman's troops, but doubled back to give Houston a status report once the battle began.
- 9. Millard's Advance: Infantry, April 21, 1836.** The army's six-piece band marched with the regulars. Once the infantry was under attack, they began playing "Will You Come to the Bowyer," a popular tune but an unusual choice for a marching song. It was likely chosen because it was the only song all the musicians knew.
- 10. Hockley's Advance: Artillery, April 21, 1836.** Following behind the infantry, the cannon crew started firing when they were approximately 200 yards from the Mexican camp and continued until the Texian infantry reached the breastworks, the chest-high barrier in front of the Mexican camp.
- 11. Mexican Position, April 20, 1836.** Both armies reached San Jacinto on the morning of April 20. Winters recalled, "We no sooner got settled in our positions than the Mexicans opened fire on us with their artillery. There was more or less skirmishing all day." The Mexican troops withdrew by mid-afternoon with neither side having done much damage.
- 12. Cavalry Skirmish with Mexican Forces, April 20, 1836.** Under Sherman's command, the two sides clashed for a second time late in the afternoon. Sherman called for volunteers to capture the Mexican artillery. The attempt was not successful. Facing the superior Mexican cavalry, Sherman's men only barely made it back to camp.

**13. Mexican Breastworks: Cavalry Engagement Under Lamar, April 21, 1836.** Lamar's cavalry rode in advance of the army, approaching the Mexican camp from the right to draw their attention away from the exposed infantry.

**14. Mexican Cannon.** The Mexican camp was defended by a single nine- or twelve-pound cannon called El Volcán. During the battle, Mexican cannoniers only managed to fire three times before a shot from one of the Twin Sisters destroyed the water bucket and the crew fled. El Volcán is commonly referred to as the Golden Standard in modern accounts of the battle.

**15. Mexican Breastworks.** The night before the battle, General Santa Anna ordered his men to build a breastwork to protect their camp. Winters described it as "composed of baggage, saddle bags and brush in all about four or five feet high." The breastwork provided cover for the Mexican riflemen, but was useless once Texian soldiers reached the camp.

**16. Santa Anna's Camp.** On the evening of April 20, the Mexican army made their camp with the marsh and Peggy's Lake to their back and open prairie in front of them. Several of Santa Anna's officers questioned the wisdom of this location, concerns that proved well founded when panicked Mexican soldiers accidentally fled into the marsh and became trapped during their retreat.

**17. Almonte Captured and Greatest Carnage of Battle Occurred.** Once the Mexican camp was overrun, Texians continued to hunt down and kill the fleeing Mexican soldier's. Winters remembered, "The Mexican infantry near the lake would jump in, but the minute they would raise their heads they were plucked off by our men." Colonel Juan Almonte realized the only hope for survival was to surrender as a group, and so gathered a group of 200 men near Peggy's Lake and ordered them to surrender to a small Texian scouting party. Archeologists have located the actual site of Almonte's surrender roughly a mile south of here.

**18. Site of Vinco's Bridge.** Nearly Pasadena (Not on battleground.) Before the battle, Houston sent a group of scouts led by Deaf Smith to destroy Vinco's Bridge, eight miles west of the battleground on the only direct wagon road to Harrisburg, preventing any escape. This is the only one of the markers not located on the battleground.

**19. Houston Wounded and Horse Killed Under Him in Battle.** Riding before his troops, James Winters recalled, "Houston had two horses killed from under him, and was on his third one before he passed the Mexican's [breastworks]." The shot that killed his second horse also struck Houston, shattering his left ankle.

**20. Surrender Tree.** General Santa Anna escaped the battle, but was captured the next day and brought before an injured General Houston, who was resting under a live oak tree. In exchange for his life, Santa Anna ordered the remainder of his army to leave Texas, effectively ending the Texas Revolution. The Surrender Tree was washed into the Ship Channel in 1924 and the original marker was later replaced.



Visit any of our state historic sites



storiedsites.com

## GPS Data

Mounument #	Mounument name	Latitude	Longitude	Elev
1	Site Twin Sisters April 20, 1836.	29.753816	-95.089966	0.63
2	Burleson's Camp.	29.753798	-95.090266	1.64
3	Millard's Camp	29.753025	-95.090273	3.94
4 (Point B)	Lamar's Camp	29.752675	-95.090124	3
5	Sherman's Camp	29.754622	-95.090255	-4.37
6	Sherman's Advance:	29.751231	-95.080913	4.43
7	Burleson's Advance	29.752734	-95.085851	-3.26
8	Advance under General Rusk	29.753277	-95.089081	1.59
9	Millard's Advance	29.751603	-95.087654	0.15
10 (Point C)	Hockley's Advance	29.752035	-95.087047	-5.05
11 (Point A)	Mexican Position, April 20	29.746463	-95.083079	6.38
12	Calvary Skirmish, April 20	29.749034	-95.086613	7.14
13	Mexican Breastworks	29.746363	-95.077793	3.69
14 (Point D)	Mexican Cannon	29.747194	-95.077792	4.6
15	Mexican Breastworks	29.747876	-95.077312	6.9
16 (Point E)	Santa Anna's Camp	29.747134	-95.07736	3.23
17	Almonte Captured	29.742644	-95.073108	-1.87
18	Site of Vince's Bridge (Offsite)	29.719378	-95.220103	-4.94
19	Houston Wounded	29.747375	-95.078788	6.16
20	Surrender Tree	29.753569	-95.09089	-1.08
	North ferry Landing	29.764784	-95.079025	-2.25
	Mounument Entrance	29.749944	-95.080942	5.06
	Capture Site	29.724519	-95.212857	9.34

## **SAN JACINTO BATTLEFIELD AWARD**

To qualify for this award, units must meet the following requirements:

1. Hike the area covered by the map.
2. Participate in the reading at each of the five (5) reading stops.
3. Submit the completed report form and fees (see below).

Upon qualification, units may purchase one San Jacinto Battlefield patch for each participant meeting the above requirements.

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## **SAN JACINTO BATTLEFIELD AWARD ORDER FORM**

(<https://scoutingevent.com/576-PatchOrder>)

Feedback is a gift. Scan Below to file your Hiking report. Thank you

