



Sam Houston, Santa Ana, and the Alamo

In March 1836, the convention that declared Texas independence appointed Sam Houston, a former governor of Tennessee, as commander-in-chief of all Texas military forces. Commanding the Mexican army that marched in Texas in January of that year was General Antonio López de Santa Anna, a Mexican military hero who had become president of Mexico two years earlier. As president, Santa Anna had at first supported the Mexican Constitution of 1824, which resembled the United States Constitution. But in 1835 he overturned that Constitution and took most of Mexico's political power into his own hands. At the Battle of the Alamo, at the same time that Sam Houston was being chosen to command Texas forces, Santa Anna's army stormed the ancient Spanish mission and killed all its defenders. Six weeks later Houston's army decisively defeated the Mexican army at the Battle of San Jacinto, taking Santa Anna prisoner.