
Timeline

1821 – Mexico wins independence from Spain.

The early 1800's saw a series of independence movements sweep across Central and South America, the overwhelming majority of them against Spanish rule. Mexico was the second of those to win its independence from Spain.

1823 – Mexico offers free land in Texas under the Colonization Laws

In 1820, the Spanish begin the process of opening up Texas to immigration. However, they only granted one empresario contract before losing the area to Mexico a year later. That contract was made with American Moses Austin, but he died shortly after signing it. His son, Stephen Austin ("Father of Texas") was allowed by the new Mexican government to take over his father's contract. Mexico went on to pass its own Colonization Laws to greatly advance immigration in Texas.

1824 – Mexico writes its first constitution

This constitution was modeled heavily after the U.S. Constitution, as were all democratic constitutions.

1830 – Mexico bans immigration from the United States into Texas (The Law of April 6)

Mexico had decided it had let in enough immigrants. Mexico realized that by not actively assimilating them, the immigrants maintained their own culture, fearing these new immigrants would replace Mexicans.

1834 – Mexico repeals the ban on American immigration

After 4 years, Mexico reversed its ban on immigration from the United States. This is the price of not having a stable government. You end up without consistent policies or even a consistent national philosophy.

1834 – Stephen Austin is jailed for expressing his belief that Texas should be its own Mexican state.

Texas petitioned the Mexican government to be made into a state separate from the state of Coahuila. After months of inaction by the Mexican government, and revolution raging throughout the country, Austin wrote a letter to the Texas government expressing his opinion that Texas could not wait any longer and should organize itself as a state. When the Mexican government learned of this opinion, Austin was put into solitary confinement without trial for a year.

1835 – The government of Mexico is overthrown from within by General Santa Anna.

Soon after being elected president of Mexico, Santa Anna consolidated power to the central government. His new dictatorship was formed under "Siete Leyes" (The Seven Laws). This new constitution did all the things you would expect from a dictatorship. In addition to what we will discuss in Part 4, it also restricted voting to only the aristocracy, assigned military bosses (caudillos) loyal to Santa Anna to govern states as military districts, doubled the term of the president, and changed Santa Anna's official title to "His Most Serene Highness".

1835 – Texas War of Independence Begins (Oct.)

After violently suppressing revolt in Zacatecas, Santa Anna turned his sights to Texas. A detachment of Mexican troops showed up to the town of Gonzales to remove a canon given to them for protection against Indian attacks. The people of Gonzales responded by drawing a picture of the canon on a flag with the words made famous 2000 years earlier by King Leonidas of Sparta: "Come and take it." Gonzales won the skirmish that followed this act of defiance.

1836 – 6 months later, the battle of San Jacinto ends the war (April)

General Santa Anna is captured. He signs a treaty making the Rio Grande the southern border of Texas.

1845 – The United States annexes Texas (Dec.)

9 years after Texas became an independent nation in North America, the U.S. Congress votes to annex Texas and the people of Texas vote overwhelmingly to accept.

1846 – The Mexican-American war begins