Texas Historical Commission

Washington-on-the-Brazos
A Texas Convention
Grade 7

Virtual Field Trip
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Objectives

- Identify the key grievances given by the people of Texas that lead to the formation of government in the independent Republic of Texas
  - How do they compare to the grievances of the American Revolution?
  - How do they relate to the Mexican complaints against Texas?
  - How did these grievances lead to the formation of government in the Republic?
- Identify the key persons at the Convention of 1836

Social Studies TEKS

4th Grade: 4.3A, 4.13A
7th Grade: 7.1 B, 7.2 D, 7.3C

Resources

- Activity 1: 59 for Freedom activity resources
- Activity 2: Declaration and Constitution Causes and Effects activity resources
- Extension Activity: Order of Business activity resources
- Resource Images: Historical images for display/distribution
Vocabulary

**constitution** (kahn stih TOO shun) noun; plural noun: constitutions
- singular proper noun: constitution; noun: the Constitution
- a body of fundamental principles or established precedents according to which a state or other organization is acknowledged to be governed
- the basic written set of principles and precedents of federal government in the US, which came into operation in 1789 and has since been modified by twenty-seven amendments
- the forming or establishing of something

**convention** (kuhn VEN shun) noun; plural noun: conventions
- a large meeting or conference, especially of members of a political party or a particular profession
- (in the US) an assembly of the delegates of a political party to select candidates for office
- a body set up by agreement to deal with a particular issue
- “the convention is a UN body responsible for the regulation of sea dumping”

**declaration** (dek luh RAY shun) noun; plural noun: declarations
- a formal or explicit statement or announcement
- “They issued a declaration at the close of the talks”
- the formal announcement of the beginning of a state or condition
- “the declaration of war”
- a written public announcement of intentions or of the terms of an agreement

**delegate** (DEL ih get) noun; plural noun: delegates
- a person sent or authorized to represent others, in particular an elected representative sent to a conference
- a member of a committee

**grievance** (GREE vuhs) noun; plural noun: grievances
- a real or imagined wrong or other cause for complaint or protest, especially unfair treatment
- “failure to redress genuine grievances”
- an official statement of a complaint over something believed to be wrong or unfair
- “three pilots have filed grievances against the company”
- a feeling of resentment over something believed to be wrong or unfair

**interim** (IN ter im) noun; plural noun: interims
- the intervening time
- “in the interim I’ll just keep my fingers crossed”
- adjective: interim: in or for the intervening period; provisional or temporary
- “an interim arrangement”
Historical Context
Texas became Mexican territory in 1821 and the new settlers brought by Stephen F. Austin and others were considered Mexican citizens. The distance between the settlements and Mexico (proper), plus the increasing number of settlers moving into the territory caused tension. The settlers had little influence in their government and limited exposure to Mexican culture. By the time of the Convention of 1836, fighting had already broken out in some areas. The causes of some of this fighting were listed as grievances in the Texas Declaration of Independence.

Grievances
Mexican grievances against Texas settlers:
- Number of settlers coming in (particularly Americans)
- Fear that growing American influence might cause (parts of) Texas to break away or join US
- The import of slaves
- Settlers not acclimating/adapting to Mexican culture – i.e. little to no knowledge of Catholic Faith or Spanish Language
- Accusations of disloyalty to the Mexican government
- Skirmishes between settlers and Mexican authorities/ army due to unrest

Texas settler grievances against Mexico:
- Slavery not allowed
- Attempts to stop immigration from US
- High taxes
- Lack of representation in the Mexican government
- Little chance of trial by jury of peers
- Failure to build promised roads and schools

Delegates
- Of the 61 men elected to represent the major communities/municipalities of Texas, only 59 signed the declaration. These included some of the most noted names in Texas history including Maverick, Houston, Rusk, and Seguin.
- Only two were native to Texas (born within the boundaries of modern Texas). Others came from other countries or territories. Many were American, one was Canadian, one was born and raised in the Yucatan. There were also delegates originally from England, Ireland and Scotland.
- The two native signers were Antonio Navarro and Francisco Ruiz of San Antonio.
- Most had been in Texas for less than five years. George Childress had only been in the territory for approximately eight weeks.

Convention
- The convention was intended to last three months but lasted only 17 days and was operated using the rules of parliamentary procedure found in “Robert’s Rules of Order.”
- The convention was opened on March 1st by George Childress. The election of officers and the appointment of committees began. Richard Ellis was named president of the convention. Committees were formed to write the Declaration of Independence, discuss finances, organize the Texas military, and draft the constitution.
Declaration of Independence

- George Childress, credited as primary author, presented the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration was adopted by the 2/3 majority shortly before 2 p.m. on the afternoon of March 2, 1836.
- The Texas declaration borrows heavily from other historical documents including the American Declaration of Independence, the Mexican Declaration of Independence, and documents as old as the Magna Carta. This can be seen in the changes in word choice, tone and vocabulary in the Texas Declaration. Though initially written in English, the declaration, constitution, and many other early documents would be printed in both English and Spanish.
- Interim government was appointed to see Texas through the remainder of the revolution or until true elections could be held. Government officers included David G Burnett (president), Lorenzo de Zavalla (vice president), Sam Houston (commander of Army), and Robert Potter (secretary of Navy).
- As a constitutional republic, Texas would be a nation where the chief executive and representatives are democratically elected by the people, and the rules are set down in a written constitution which limits the power of each officeholder.

Activity 1: 59 for Freedom and Who Am I?
To introduce the activity, review the Grievances/Who Am I?, 59 Signers, transcription of the Texas Declaration of Independence and learner worksheet activity resources. Preview each resource for any challenges. Share responses when completed.

Answer Key: Grievances
1. Any of the listed grievances – slavery, taxes, trial by jury, etc.
2. The signing of the Texas Declaration of Independence, forming/drafting a Constitution, and naming/forming a (Interim) government
3. George Childress
4. March 2, 1836
5. 61 were elected; 59 would sign the Declaration
6. Two Native Texans (Antonio Navarro and Francisco Ruiz); Other delegates came from the United States, England, Canada, Ireland, Scotland, Mexico (Yucatan)
7. The declaration and constitution were printed in both English and Spanish for the benefit of the majority of Texas

Answer Key: Who Am I?
1. Sam Houston
2. George Childress
3. Santa Anna
4. Lorenzo de Zavalla
5. David G. Burnett
6. Samuel Maverick
Activity 2: Declaration and Constitution Causes and Effects

In addition to declaring independence at the General Convention in 1836, the delegates also established a written constitution for the new nation of Texas. A constitution is the written set of laws or rules by which a country will be run. They set up how laws will be written, who will write them, who will enforce them, how leaders will be chosen, etc. In this activity, learners consider the causes and effects of the Texian separation from Mexico by analyzing the Texas Declaration of Independence and the Republic Constitution. Preview the Causes and Effects activity resources for any challenges. Share responses when completed.

Answer Key
1. (Effects) The Republic of Texas would be a constitutional unitary republic with representatives and leaders elected by the people.
2. (Causes) Leaders stayed in power too long and didn’t answer to the people.
3. (Causes) Santa Anna disbanded the legislatures and used the military to make laws.
4. (Effects) The Republic of Texas set up a system of courts where people were judged by jury of their peers.
5. (Causes) Santa Anna commanded the army which attacked the citizens of Texas.
6. (Effects) The Republic of Texas allowed any white person to come to Texas and become a citizen after living there 6 months.
7. (Causes) It was illegal to own slaves in Mexico

Extension Activity: Order of Business

On March 1st, the gathered delegates opened the Convention of 1836 and began an election of officers and committee members. On March 2nd, a declaration complete with grievances was presented. Using Robert’s Rules of Order, delegates decided whether they liked the declaration, whether any changes should be introduced, and if there were enough votes to pass it.

Robert’s Rules of Order laid out the rules for parliamentary procedure, which is the method by which many formal or government type meetings were organized and run. These rules have specific ways to elect officers, what order things should be done in, and how to introduce ideas or debates. This allows a chance for everyone to be heard. The Convention of 1836 used these rules to organize both the meeting and the debate and voting process. An idea was adopted when a quorum or 2/3 majority voted in favor of it.

In this activity, learners first organize a meeting agenda to discover the process. They then apply the process to a discussion and debate on Texas’ grievances against Mexico to determine a vote for or against independence.
**Materials:**
- Cards/Paper with a meeting component on each card
  - Call to Order
  - Pledges
  - Roll Call
  - Reading/Approval of the Minutes
  - Correspondence
  - Reports from Officers
  - Reports from Committees
  - Unfinished/Old Business
  - New Business
  - Announcements
  - Adjournment
- Grievances of the People of Texas Against Mexico 1836 resource

**Part 1: Organize an Agenda**
- Have learners choose a president who will decide who can speak in the discussion and who will call for votes in part 2 of the activity. The president may be a teacher or a learner.
- Have learners choose a secretary who will be responsible for keeping track of votes in part 2 of the activity. The secretary can participate in both the discussion and the voting.
- Arrange the cards out of sequence. Have each learner take a card.
- Have learners work as a group to put the meeting agenda item cards in order from start to finish. Participants may talk to each other.
- After the group believes they have the correct agenda order, share responses. Explain what items may be out of order and why.
- Possible follow-up discussion questions may include:
  - How did the group decide the order of business?
  - Was it difficult to determine the order of business?
  - How does an agenda help a group conduct business?
  - How might a business agenda be set-up differently?

**Part 2: Convention Discussion and Vote**
Display or distribute the **Grievances activity resource** for reference. Explain that, like the delegates at the convention in 1836, the group will use the meeting agenda they created in part 1 to discuss each grievance and vote yea or nay on whether that grievance should influence the vote for Texas’ independence.
- After reading a grievance, the President calls on individuals who have raised hands to state whether they think that grievance means Texas should be independent. The president asks for any others to give their opinion. (A teacher may assign certain students to be “in favor of” or “opposed to” to stimulate debate.)
• When the debate is done, or if there is no debate, move straight to a vote.
• To vote on each grievance, the President says, “All those in favor of this grievance say AYE!” The secretary records the number of AYE votes. Then the President says, “All those opposed to this grievance say NAY!” The secretary records the number of NAY votes. If there are more ayes, the grievance passes. If there are more nays, it fails. If nine (9) or more grievances get overall aye votes, the President can call for a vote on independence at that time. If nine (9) or more grievances get nays, the vote for Texas’ independence has failed.

Supplemental Information

Declaration of Independence

★ Because of the quick turnaround, it is often said that Childress “had the declaration in his saddle bags.” We do not know where the document was actually created. It may have been written in Tennessee, during the trip to Texas, or in the days before arriving at the convention.

★ As the convention went on, messengers, observers and delegates came and went. Some asked to leave to do a job or task assigned by the convention, and others left to help with the evacuation of settlements and fighting. On the day the Alamo fell, March 6th, two letters from William B. Travis arrived to the delegation that could have derailed the efforts to form a government and threatened the ongoing war efforts. In one letter, Travis admitted that he was outnumbered, out supplied, and sheltering civilians at the Alamo. The Mexican Army had raised the red flag, indicating that no quarter would be given. The convention considered abandoning their work at that point and sending aid to the Alamo, but Sam Houston argued that if Texas was to have any hope or sympathy, it must begin with a legitimate government. The second letter, addressed to delegate Jessie Grimes, included a threat from Travis that if the convention did not declare independence, then Travis and every man fighting under him would lay down arms in full surrender. Despite the letters, the delegates chose to stay and work on the declaration. However, Sam Houston gathered troops from Washington and marched out later that day, unaware that the Alamo had already fallen.

★ The physical draft of the declaration that Childress presented to the convention was unsignable. It was nine pages of bad handwriting, spelling, and grammar. It was recopied before signing began.

★ Only 41 delegates were in attendance at the convention at the time the declaration was presented. The remaining 18 delegates eventually made their way into Washington and signed the document, but some were so late that the declaration had already been sent to the printer in San Felipe, Texas.

★ The Texas declaration borrows heavily from other historical documents including the American declaration, the Mexican declaration, and even documents as old as the Magna Carta. This influence can be seen in the changes in word choice, tone, and vocabulary in the Texas declaration.
Of the six signed, handwritten copies and the 1,000 printed copies, only one handwritten copy and eleven printed copies survive today. The Texas Declaration of Independence is considered a rarer document than the American declaration written and signed over fifty years earlier.

**Washington, Texas and Independence Hall**

★ Washington, Texas was established in 1836 and had an approximate population of 120. At the time of the convention, Washington lacked proper accommodation for all delegates, settlers, militia, etc. Both the town hotel and tavern were filled to capacity, private buildings were rented out, townspeople hosted some of the visitors, while others slept in and under wagons.

★ Colonel William Fairfax Gray wrote this description of the town: “Left Washington at 10 o’clock. Glad to get out of so disgusting of a place. It is laid out in the woods; about a dozen wretched cabins or shanties constitute the city; not one decent house in it and only one well defined street, which consists of an opening cut out of the woods. The stumps still standing. A rare place to hold a national convention. They will have to leave it promptly to avoid starvation.”

★ Crowding in Washington increased significantly during the Runaway Scrape (March-April, 1836). The local ferry, Robinson’s, is reported to have had a three to four day wait to cross the Brazos River at the height of activity.

★ Independence Hall, where the delegates met, was an unfinished store front. Delegates borrowed furniture and brought most of the supplies for the meeting. The doors and windows were nothing but open holes. Delegates draped burlap over the doors and stretched muslin over the windows. With no stoves or fireplace, the building had no heat source. In the early hours of March 1, 1836, a “blue norther” blew in with wind-driven rain, sleet, snow, and daily highs of 33-34° F. As a result of the bad weather, the town’s dirt roads became “a sea of mud.”
The people of Texas came from many different countries and backgrounds. This diversity helped shape the culture of Texas and the Republic’s founding documents. Use the document resources to find answers to these questions.

**Texas Grievances Against Mexico**

1. There are many reasons that Texans sought independence from Mexico. Several are listed in the Declaration of Independence. Write two of these.

2. What were the three major accomplishments of the Convention of 1836?

3. The man who is credited as the primary author of the declaration was also the man who presented it to the convention. What is his name?

4. On what day was the Texas Declaration of Independence adopted?

5. How many delegates were elected to come to the Convention? How many signed the declaration?

6. How many delegates were born in or were native to Texas? Then list three other countries that delegates came from.

7. What language or languages were the declaration and constitution printed in?
Who Am I?

1. I was a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence and served as Commander of the Texas Army in the war for Independence. I led the Texans’ charge at the Battle of San Jacinto. I also served two terms as President of the Republic.

2. Often credited as the primary author, I was the Chairman of the Committee that wrote the Texas Declaration of Independence. I presented the document to the other delegates at the convention.

3. I was the President of Mexico. Many of my policies pushed Texas towards Independence. I won the Battle of the Alamo but lost at the Battle of San Jacinto.

4. I was named ad-interim Vice-President of the new Republic of Texas. I was appointed to this position unanimously. I was one of four non-Anglos to sign the Declaration.

5. I was named the ad-interim President of the new Republic of Texas. I was not an elected delegate.

6. I was a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence, but my name is most famously remembered as a word that means “rebel” or “non-conformist.” My signature was one of the larger ones on the Declaration.
In addition to declaring independence at the General Convention in 1836, the delegates also established a written constitution for the new nation of Texas. A constitution is the written set of laws or rules by which a country will be run, including how laws will be written, who will write them, who will enforce them, and how leaders will be chosen.

Analyze the Texas Declaration of Independence and the Republic Constitution to fill in the missing causes of Texian separation from Mexico and the effects those had on creating a new republic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAUSES of Texian Separation from Mexico</th>
<th>EFFECTS on the New Republic</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Santa Anna changed the Mexican government from a democratic republic to central military despotism.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2. A President would be elected and serve a 3-year term (except for the first President, who could serve only two terms) and could not succeed himself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3. The Republic of Texas would have a Senate and a House of Representatives to make laws.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Santa Anna threw people in dungeons without giving them the chance to defend themselves in court.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>5. The President could not lead the army or navy without approval of Congress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Santa Anna restricted who could immigrate to Texas and demanded people speak Spanish and practice Catholicism before they could be a citizen.</td>
<td>6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>7. Slavery would be legal and it would be illegal to free slaves in Texas without the consent of Congress.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity Resource: Grievances of the People of Texas Against Mexico Listed in the Texas Declaration of 1836

★ Individual rights are inherent in men
  • You have certain natural rights that no authority can give or take away. The right to life and freedom come from nature. They were not given by Santa Anna. Therefore, it was wrong for him to take them away from the people.

★ Government derives from the governed
  • The voice or will of the people should steer or direct government. The people of Mexico elected a president, NOT a dictator.

★ Deprivation of trial by jury
  • The people of Texas were not allowed to have a trial by a jury of their peers/community.

★ Suppression of civil power to military power
  • The Mexican military personnel in Texas were the authority over local matters.

★ Suspension of legislatures
  • The legislative bodies of Texas and Coahuila were suspended to help Santa Anna secure his power and influence.

★ Military invasion and armed action
  • The Mexican military grew its presence in Texas. Armed conflict with individuals and militia groups occurred with increasing frequency.

★ Repeated petitions have been ignored
  • Efforts to effect compromise or change in Texas and to achieve Mexican statehood were either denied or ignored.

★ Central military despotism
  • Santa Anna would overthrow the democratically elected government and establish a tyrannical government.

★ Lack of separate state government
  • Texas was denied an individual government and allowed minimal representation or influence in the ruling government of the day.
★ Lack of system of public education
• Settlers had been promised the establishment of a school system for the new communities of Texas, none had been created.

★ Unlawful and piratical confiscation of property
• Mexican authorities would seize personal and merchant property for almost any reason.

★ Lack of freedom of religion
• Mexico was a Catholic nation and expected all its citizens to join the church. Many Texas settlers were of other religious backgrounds and did not want to convert.

★ Confiscation of arms
• Fearing that the people of Texas would use their arms (muskets, rifles, cannons, etc.) against the Mexican military, the government ordered the confiscation of weapons. The settlers claimed they needed weapons for hunting and protection.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Birth &amp; Death Date</th>
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UNANIMOUS

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE,

BY THE

DELEGATES OF THE PEOPLE OF TEXAS,

IN GENERAL CONVENTION,

AT THE TOWN OF WASHINGTON,

ON THE SECOND DAY OF MAY, 1836.

...
Activity Resource: Republic Constitution

On March 3, 1836, only one day after the adoption of the Texas Declaration of Independence, the Convention meeting at Washington—on—the—Brazos began work of a constitution for the new nation. The delegates attending the Convention labored under tremendous pressure; Santa Anna and his armies, after crushing Texan forces at the Alamo, were marching eastward. At midnight of March 16, after only two weeks of deliberation, the delegates approved a Constitution for the Republic of Texas. Then, in the early morning hours, they organized a provisional government for the Republic. Their immediate work accomplished, the members of the Convention hastily disbanded; reports had arrived claiming that Mexican cavalry had crossed the Colorado River at Bastrop, only sixty miles away.

Immediately after the “adjournment” of the Convention at Washington—on—the—Brazos, two delegates, Robert Hamilton and George C. Childress, left Texas for Washington, D.C. as plenipotentiaries from the Republic of Texas to the United States. With them, they took the official and perhaps only copy of the Texas Constitution. Upon their arrival in the capital in mid—May, the two men naturally had the Constitution, along with the Declaration of Independence, printed to adequately present the Texas cause to the administration in Washington. The “original” handwritten copy of the Constitution was lost; it has never been relocated. Thus, copies of the Constitution printed in Washington in May 1836, upon the authorization of Hamilton and Childress, became, for a brief period, the only copies of the Constitution of the Republic of Texas. From these copies, various newspapers across the United States printed the Texas Constitution for their readers. The Constitution was not printed in Texas until August 1836, when President David G. Burnet authorized the TELEGRAPH AND TEXAS REGISTER, of San Felipe, to print 250 copies.

The Constitution of the Republic of Texas was not a very original document. The framers, who were primarily from Southern states, borrowed heavily from the American, as well as home—state constitutions. But, “It was not a time for experimenting; they did not have time for much deliberation.” However, the Constitution worked. It remained in effect, without amendment, until Texas became an American state. The strictly administrative and governmental features of the document closely resembled the American Constitution; governmental responsibilities were divided between the traditional three branches of government, with powers and functions similar to those of the American government.

The Republic of Texas Constitution, however, did contain several unique provisions. For instance, because of the dislike of the Mexican system where Presidents spent most of their time with the army, the framers included an article which forbid the President to lead the Texan armies without ineligible for the presidency or membership in Congress. Also, the Constitution provided for slavery, and prohibited free Negroes from residing in Texas without the consent of Congress.

On display is a copy of the Constitution printed under the authorization of Hamilton and Childress, May 1836, in Washington, D.C.—“first printing of the Constitution of the Republic of Texas.”
When a government has ceased to protect the lives, liberty and property of the people, from whom its legitimate powers are derived, and for the advancement of whose happiness it was instituted, and so far from being a guarantee for the enjoyment of those inestimable and inalienable rights, becomes an instrument in the hands of evil rulers for their oppression.

When the Federal Republican Constitution of their country, which they have sworn to support, no longer has a substantial existence, and the whole nature of their government has been forcibly changed, without their consent, from a restricted federative republic, composed of sovereign states, to a consolidated central military despotism, in which every interest is disregarded but that of the army and the priesthood, both the eternal enemies of civil liberty, the ever ready minions of power, and the usual instruments of tyrants.

When, long after the spirit of the constitution has departed, moderation is at length so far lost by those in power, that even the semblance of freedom is removed, and the forms themselves of the constitution discontinued, and so far from their petitions and remonstrances being regarded, the agents who bear them are thrown into dungeons, and mercenary armies sent forth to force a new government upon them at the point of the bayonet.

When, in consequence of such acts of malfeasance and abdication on the part of the government, anarchy prevails, and civil society is dissolved into its original elements. In such a crisis, the first law of nature, the right of self-preservation, the inherent and inalienable rights of the people to appeal to first principles, and take their political affairs into their own hands in extreme cases, enjoins it as a right towards themselves, and a sacred obligation to their posterity, to abolish such government, and create another in its stead, calculated to rescue them from impending dangers, and to secure their future welfare and happiness.

Nations, as well as individuals, are amenable for their acts to the public opinion of mankind. A statement of a part of our grievances is therefore submitted to an impartial world, in justification of the hazardous but unavoidable step now taken, of severing our political connection with the Mexican people, and assuming an independent attitude among the nations of the earth.

The Mexican government, by its colonization laws, invited and induced the Anglo-American population of Texas to colonize its wilderness under the pledged faith of a written constitution, that they should continue to enjoy that constitutional liberty and republican government to which they had been habituated in the land of their birth, the United States of America.
In this expectation they have been cruelly disappointed, inasmuch as the Mexican nation has acquiesced in the late changes made in the government by General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, who having overturned the constitution of his country, now offers us the cruel alternative, either to abandon our homes, acquired by so many privations, or submit to the most intolerable of all tyranny, the combined despotism of the sword and the priesthood.

It has sacrificed our welfare to the state of Coahuila, by which our interests have been continually depressed through a jealous and partial course of legislation, carried on at a far distant seat of government, by a hostile majority, in an unknown tongue, and this too, notwithstanding we have petitioned in the humblest terms for the establishment of a separate state government, and have, in accordance with the provisions of the national constitution, presented to the general Congress a republican constitution, which was, without just cause, contumaciously rejected.

It incarcerated in a dungeon, for a long time, one of our citizens, for no other cause but a zealous endeavor to procure the acceptance of our constitution, and the establishment of a state government.

It has failed and refused to secure, on a firm basis, the right of trial by jury, that palladium of civil liberty, and only safe guarantee for the life, liberty, and property of the citizen.

It has failed to establish any public system of education, although possessed of almost boundless resources, (the public domain,) and although it is an axiom in political science, that unless a people are educated and enlightened, it is idle to expect the continuance of civil liberty, or the capacity for self-government.

It has suffered the military commandants, stationed among us, to exercise arbitrary acts of oppression and tyranny, thus trampling upon the most sacred rights of the citizens, and rendering the military superior to the civil power.

It has dissolved, by force of arms, the state Congress of Coahuila and Texas, and obliged our representatives to fly for their lives from the seat of government, thus depriving us of the fundamental political right of representation.

It has demanded the surrender of a number of our citizens and ordered military detachments to seize and carry them into the Interior for trial, in contempt of the civil authorities, and in defiance of the laws and the constitution.
It has made piratical attacks upon our commerce, by commissioning foreign desperadoes, and authorizing them to seize our vessels, and convey the property of our citizens to far distant ports for confiscation.

It denies us the right of worshipping the Almighty according to the dictates of our own conscience, by the support of a national religion, calculated to promote the temporal interest of its human functionaries, rather than the glory of the true and living God.

It has demanded us to deliver up our arms, which are essential to our defense, the rightful property of freemen, and formidable only to tyrannical governments.

It has invaded our country both by sea and by land, with intent to lay waste our territory, and drive us from our homes; and has now a large mercenary army advancing, to carry on against us a war of extermination.

It has, through its emissaries, incited the merciless savage, with the tomahawk and scalping knife, to massacre the inhabitants of our defenseless frontiers.

It hath been, during the whole time of our connection with it, the contemptible sport and victim of successive military revolutions, and hath continually exhibited every characteristic of a weak, corrupt, and tyrannical government.

These, and other grievances, were patiently borne by the people of Texas, until they reached that point at which forbearance ceases to be a virtue. We then took up arms in defense of the national constitution. We appealed to our Mexican brethren for assistance. Our appeal has been made in vain. Though months have elapsed, no sympathetic response has yet been heard from the Interior. We are, therefore, forced to the melancholy conclusion, that the Mexican people have acquiesced in the destruction of their liberty, and the substitution therefore of a military government; that they are unfit to be free, and incapable of self-government.

The necessity of self-preservation, therefore, now decrees our eternal political separation.

We, therefore, the delegates with plenary powers of the people of Texas, in solemn convention assembled, appealing to a candid world for the necessities of our condition, do hereby resolve and declare, that our political connection with the Mexican nation has forever ended, and that the people of Texas do now constitute a free, Sovereign, and independent republic, and are fully invested with all the rights and attributes which properly belong to independent nations; and, conscious of the rectitude of our intentions, we fearlessly and confidently commit the issue to the decision of the Supreme arbiter of the destinies of nations.

-END-
Resource Image: Reading of the Texas Declaration of Independence

“Reading of the Texas Declaration of Independence” Painting - Courtesy of Artie Fultz Davis Estate; artist: Charles and Fanny Norman, June 1936
Resource Image: Independence Hall Replica, Washington-on-the-Brazos