

Through conflict and negotiations, the United States acquired Florida and Texas.

Florida

SS.8.A.4.1, SS.8.A.4.2, SS.8.A.4.17, SS.8.A.4.18, LA.8.1.6.2, LA.8.1.6.3

How did Florida become a state?

When Spain transferred Florida to the United States on July 17, 1821, Florida became an American territory. Under the terms of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, Florida had an appointed territorial governor, a territorial legislature, and a nonvoting delegate to the United States Congress.

Tallahassee became the territorial capital in 1824. The capital was located about midway between St. Augustine and Pensacola, Florida's major cities at that time. Not counting Native Americans, fewer than 8,000 people lived in the territory, including enslaved people. Later, as news of the area's fertile land spread, thousands of new settlers streamed into Florida.

Many planters from Virginia, Georgia, and the Carolinas had worn out their soil with years of heavy use. They left their old plantations for new land in Florida. Here, the planters **established** cotton and tobacco plantations, especially in northern Florida and the narrow strip in the northwest called the Panhandle. In addition, small farms and cattle ranches dotted the region of central Florida. The leading planters of northern Florida played a major role in the government and politics of the area.

The Territory Grows

In 1837 the census for the territory of Florida reported that 48,000 people lived there. Enslaved people made up about one-half of Florida's population. Officials organized a vote to determine if Floridians wanted to form a state. Only white men over 21 years of age voted in this election. These voters chose to seek statehood. Now Floridians had to draw up a state constitution and submit it to the U.S. Congress.

Florida voters chose 56 people to attend the constitutional convention in St. Joseph, a small port city on the Gulf Coast. The first constitution provided for a governor elected for four years and an elected General Assembly, or legislature. The constitution also allowed slavery and called for a system of public schools. The delegates approved the constitution on January 11, 1839. Florida then sent the document to the U.S. Congress for final approval, or ratification.

Florida's desire to enter the Union as a slave state caused some difficulty. Congress had long struggled to maintain an equal balance between slave and free states. As a result, it would take six years for Congress to act on Florida's wish. Congress had to wait until another territory was ready to become a free state.

Statehood for Florida

Iowa finally emerged as a free state candidate. With the question of slavery **removed**, President John Tyler signed the Florida statehood bill. Florida became the twenty-seventh state in the United States on March 3, 1845. The next year, Iowa became a free state. Thus, the balance between the slave and free states in the nation remained the same in Congress.

Determining Cause and Effect What caused the population of Florida to grow?

Florida CONNECTION

A Growing Population

By 1850 the population of the young state of Florida numbered nearly 88,000. Included in the total were about 39,000 enslaved people and 1,000 free African Americans. The three largest counties were Leon, with 11,442 people, Gadsden, with 8,784, and Jefferson, with 7,718. Although Florida was growing, its population ranked low among the Southern states. Alabama, for example, had 8 times as many people as Florida did; Georgia had 11 times as many. Today, of course, Florida has 18 million residents, more than all but three states in the nation.

Texas

SS.8.A.4.1, LA.8.1.6.1

How did Texas become a state?

In 1821 Mexico won independence from Spain. Mexico controlled the land that is now Texas. At the time, the non-Native American population of Texas was about 3,000. Most of these people were **Tejanos** (tay • HAH • nohs), or Mexicans who claimed Texas as their home. Wishing to increase settlement, Mexico offered vast tracts of land to people who would agree to bring families to settle there—as

citizens of Mexico. Stephen F. Austin brought 300 American families to settle in Texas. Austin's success made him a leader among the American settlers.

At first, Mexico encouraged Americans to settle in Texas. Before long, Americans greatly outnumbered Tejanos. Tensions with Mexico developed when Americans refused to follow Mexico's rules. These included learning Spanish and becoming Catholic. Many Americans also had enslaved African Americans, which Mexico threatened to ban. In 1830 Mexico issued a **decree**, or official order, closing its borders to further immigration. American settlers, led by Austin and Sam Houston, tried to make peace with Mexican leaders. These efforts failed. Texans—including Americans and Tejanos—began planning to break away from Mexico.

In 1835 the conflict grew violent. Mexican General Antonio López de Santa Anna took an army into Texas to punish the rebels. In December of that year, the Texans captured the city of San Antonio from a larger Mexican force. Santa Anna was enraged. His army reached San Antonio in late February 1836. There it found a small Texan force **barricaded**, or blocked off, inside a mission building called the Alamo.

The Alamo

The Texans had only about 180 soldiers to take on Santa Anna's army of several thousand. The Texans did have brave leaders, however, including folk hero Davy Crockett, commander William B. Travis, and a tough Texan named Jim Bowie.

For 13 long days, through several attacks, the defenders of the Alamo kept Santa Anna's army at bay with rifle fire. On March 6, 1836, Mexican cannon fire smashed the Alamo's walls.

The Mexican army was too large to hold back. They entered the fortress, killing all the defenders, including Travis, Crockett, Bowie, and a number of Tejanos. Only a few women and children and some servants survived to tell of the battle.

The Alamo defenders had been defeated, but they had bought the Texans time to gather troops and supplies. They had also provided the Texans with a rallying cry: "Remember the Alamo!"

Texas Declares Its Independence

During the siege at the Alamo, Texan leaders met at the town of Washington-on-the-Brazos. Among them were a number of Tejanos, who were also unhappy with Mexican rule. On March 2, 1836—four days before the fall of the Alamo—they declared independence from Mexico. They then established the Republic of Texas.

Texan leaders set up a temporary government. This government named Sam Houston commander in chief of the Texan forces. Houston gathered an army of about 900 at San Jacinto (san juh • SIHN • toh), near the site of presentday Houston. Santa Anna camped nearby with an army of more than 1,300. On April 21, the Texans launched a surprise attack, shouting, "Remember the Alamo!" They killed more than 600 soldiers and captured about 700 more—including Santa Anna. On May 14, 1836, Santa Anna signed a treaty that recognized the independence of Texas.

The Lone Star Republic

In September 1836, Texans elected Sam Houston as their president. Mirabeau Lamar, who had fought at the Battle of San Jacinto, served as vice president. Houston sent a delegation to Washington, D.C., to ask the United States to **annex**, or take control of, Texas.

Andrew Jackson, however, refused their request. The addition of another slave state would upset the balance of slave and free states in Congress. For the moment, Texas would remain an independent country.

Texas Becomes a State

Many Texans wanted to join the United States. Southerners favored Texas annexation, but Northerners opposed admitting another slave state to the Union. President Martin Van Buren did not want to inflame the slavery issue or risk war with Mexico. He put off the question of annexing Texas. John Tyler, who became president in 1841, supported Texas annexation. The Senate remained divided over the slavery issue and failed to ratify the annexation treaty.

The situation changed with the 1844 presidential campaign. Manifest Destiny was a popular idea at the time. The South wanted Texas. The North favored gaining all of Oregon. Candidate James K. Polk supported both actions. After Polk won, Congress passed a resolution to annex Texas. In 1845 Texas joined the Union.

Identifying Central Issues Why did it take a long time for the United States to annex Texas?

LESSON 2 REVIEW

Review Vocabulary

1. Explain the significance of the following terms in Texas history.

- a. Tejano
- b. annex
- c. decree
- d. barricade

LA.8.1.6.1

Answer the Guiding Questions

2. Explaining What factor explained Florida's six-year wait to have its request for statehood approved?

SS.8.A.4.2

3. Specifying Why was the Battle of San Jacinto important?

SS.8.A.4.1

4. Making Connections How did the battle at the Alamo help the cause of Texas independence?

SS.8.A.4.10

5. PERSUASIVE WRITING Imagine you live in 1840 and are trying to encourage American settlement in Florida. Write an advertisement that might attract settlers to this land.

SS.8.A.4.17