

WHAT IS TEXAS?

COUNCIL DISCUSSES QUESTION

Caddo Indian Village, No. America, October 12, 1492

A council meeting of elders held here today has discussed the meaning of “Texas.” All have agreed on the principle of friendship, but not everyone agrees with what that means! Must we even be “friends” with our enemies, those with greater power, and those with different customs? Must we be friends with all?

What if a whole new race of people should appear? Must we be friends with them as well?

The council agreed that no such race can exist except in the heavens. The Land of Our Fathers will never change. They adjourned without reaching a final consensus.



Texas!

What is Texas to you? Write your answer below.

Did you say it is a state, your home, part of America? Yes, if you live in Texas, it is all of these. But it is more. Texas is people, land, homes, farms, cities, schools, and rivers. They are all part of Texas. What are some other parts of Texas?

So Texas is not just a space on a map or a name on your address!

Have you been outside of Texas? Have you been in any of these states? (Circle the ones that you have been in.)

- | | |
|-----------|------------|
| Arkansas | New Mexico |
| Louisiana | Oklahoma |

Look at a map of America. What is special about these states?

You are right if you said that they all touch Texas. They are our neighbor states.

What about these? (Circle any you’ve been in.)

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| Alaska | Hawaii |
| California | Maine |
| Florida | Washington |

Can you find them on your map? What is special about them?

They are far away from Texas. In fact, two of these states are so far away that they may not be on your map! Which two are they?

What do all of these states have in common? (Mark ‘X’ by the right answers.)

1. ___ They are part of America
2. ___ Everyone there is over 18 years old
3. ___ People there love their families and state
4. ___ They have a *history*
5. ___ They have jungles and glaciers

(See next page for answers)

History and News

Welcome to this first issue of “My Texas,” your newspaper of Texas history. In it you will read about events that took place many years ago, but often they will be presented as news. Headlines and shaded boxes like those at the top of this page are good examples.

Read the shaded box again. It is a make-believe article but it tells us something special about our past. In it we look at history as if it were news. We imagine how the native Texans might have thought about the meaning of our state’s name.

Most of the news articles in the issues that follow will tell about real events and real people, but they will not come from real newspapers.

If you marked 'X' on #1, #3, and #4, you are right. #2 is wrong because there are younger people in every state. Why is #5 wrong?

Texas is part of America

While we live in Texas and love Texas, we also live in and love America. We are Texans and Americans. We are proud of each.

In this newspaper you will especially learn about Texas. You will learn about her past and the people here first. You will also study the land and how it was discovered and explored. You will learn what it was like then and what has happened since. It is the story of our Texas *heritage*.

It is a tale of adventure filled with *heroes* and *villains*, good times and bad, success and failure. Sometimes we may wish we could change it, but we can't. But if we pay close attention, we can learn from it. Then maybe we can make the future better. Are you ready? Let's go.

NEW ROUTE TO INDIA FOUND

Barcelona, Spain, March 1493

After a perilous journey of over seven months, Admiral Christopher Columbus and his valiant crew have returned from their voyage of discovery. The admiral reports having reached some unknown islands that must surely lie near India, but he was unable to locate any recognizable site or place. He also reports meeting a strange race of people he has called Indians. A return voyage is planned on which he expects to confirm his findings.

Short way to India!

It was 2:00 in the morning of October 12, 1492, when a crewman on the ship, Pinta, sighted an island off the southeastern coast of what is now America. A cannon shot announced the discovery and soon Columbus landed, threw himself to his knees, and returned thanks to God. He named the island "San Salvador."

When Columbus returned and word of his discovery reached Spain, there was much excitement. He believed he had reached islands near Asia called the "Indies." He thought he was close to the country of India where Spain traded for things not available at home. He thought he was near India, but he was mistaken. Columbus had sailed west but had reached the farthest lands of the east!

Today the islands Columbus discovered are known as the "West Indies." He never did see the

mainland of America and he never did know he was still half way around the world from India!

Columbus returned three more times to look for India. Once he thought he was too far north so he sailed farther south. Finally he landed on the coast of South America. He thought it was Asia. He never did visit our North American mainland. He didn't understand the world or its size.

History and News (continued)

Look at the shaded box on page one again. What is the date?

What is special about this date?

This is what is sometimes called an "irony." You see, our imaginary Caddo Indian council was meeting to discuss "friendship" on the same day that Columbus arrived in the "new world."

As you continue reading you will learn more about early explorers in this new world. You will also learn about these people we call "Indians" and the America they lived in.

Understanding your world

For this lesson you need a globe. A globe is a model of the earth we live on. It is a *replica*, a likeness in small size. It is round like the earth is round. It has a map on it that shows where the land is and where the sea is. The sea is usually colored blue. The land is in many shapes and may have countries marked in different colors. The different land shapes are called *continents*. The seas between them are the oceans.

Look at your globe. Can you find America? Turn the globe and look at the top half until you find it. Do you see how America fits into the middle of a large continent? Now look above America to find Canada. Next look below America to find Mexico.

Look left of Canada and find the state of Alaska. Look in the ocean below Alaska and find Hawaii. Alaska and Hawaii are two of our United States. What separates Alaska from Hawaii?

Altogether, America, Canada, and Mexico form most of the continent of North America.

"North" is a direction. It means toward the top of the globe. "South" means toward the bottom of the globe. Since your globe probably tilts slightly, the top and bottom are really where the pole

Photo of a globe showing North and South America and the Atlantic Ocean.

In the picture, Texas is at the far upper left of the globe and Spain is at the far right.



sticks out that the globe spins on. Find the north pole and the south pole. Spin the globe slowly. The line made by the pole through the globe is the *axis*. The world, like your globe, spins on its axis. It makes one full turn each day.

Look at the thin line of land below Mexico. Today this is called “Central America.” Follow it down and to the right until you come to the country of Colombia. Colombia is on another continent called “South America.” Find a few other countries on this continent. Find Brazil, the biggest country in South America. Why do we call this continent “South America” and our own “North America?” Yes, because one is south and the other north.

Set your globe on a table. Look for a doorknob in the room. Imagine the doorknob is the sun. Turn the globe slowly so that America moves to your right. (This is toward the east.)

As you turn it, imagine you are standing on the globe like you are standing on the earth. Imagine looking for your doorknob-sun. Sometimes you will face toward it. Other times you will face away. Our earth is just like that and that is why we have day and night.

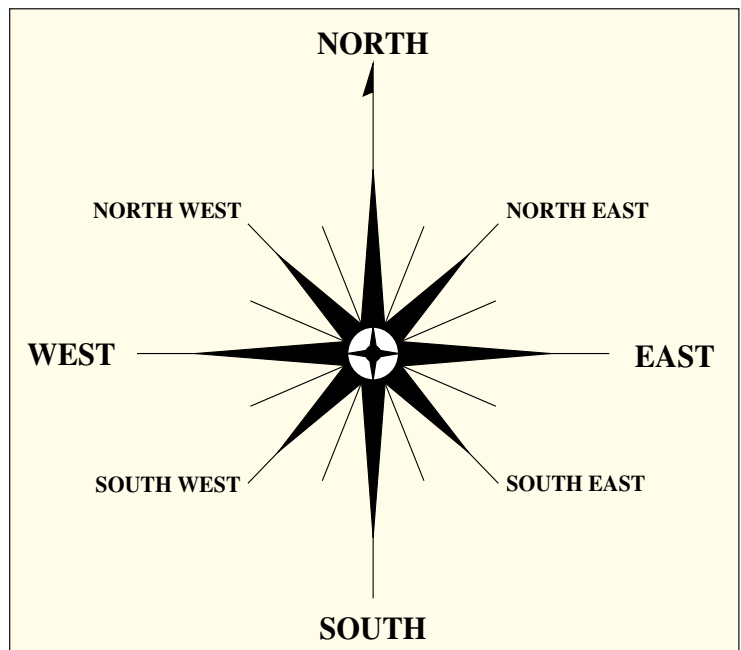
Look again at your globe. Canada is north of America. Mexico is south of America. But Mexico is north of Brazil. “Well,” you say, “Mexico is not straight north. Straight north of Brazil is an ocean.” Find its name. It is the Atlantic Ocean. America is left of the Atlantic Ocean. We call this direction “west.” The Atlantic Ocean is right of America. We call this direction “east.”

To tell directions we use four names: north, south, east, and west. These are called the “cardinal directions.” They are the four basic directions.

Sometimes we use them together for a direction in between. If we use two of them together, we always use the north or south name first.

We may even use three together. For example, the direction between north and northeast is called north-northeast. These directions are called the “16 points of the compass.” Look in the box below. Count them. You should find sixteen.

There are different ways to remember the four basic directions. Have you ever heard the phrase “Never Eat Soggy Waffles”? You can use this funny sentence to help remember your directions! The first letter of each word is the first letter in each direction while moving clockwise around the compass starting at the top. Can you come up with your own phrase for the directions?



Compass illustrating the 16 points.

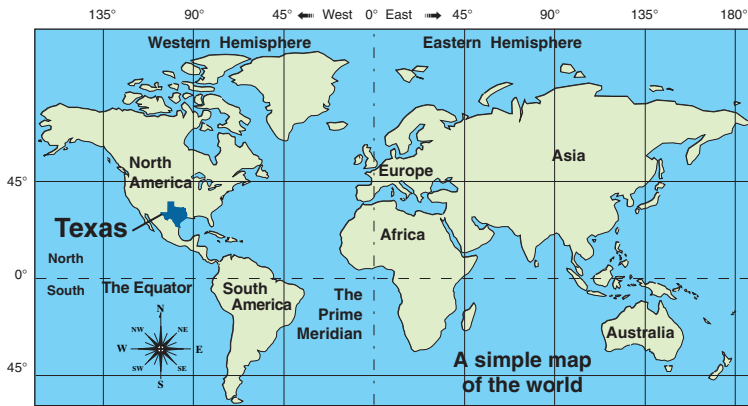
Where is Texas?

When Columbus arrived in the New World, he was at the western edge of that great ocean we call the Atlantic. West of the islands he explored is a large gulf. Today it is known as the Gulf of Mexico. It is kind of tucked up under our United States.

Locate the Gulf of Mexico on your globe. Now find Texas. What part of the gulf is it on? (Circle your answer.)

NE SW SE NW

Now look at where Texas is on the North American continent. (You may also locate it on the map on the next page.) What part is it in?



Did you say “The southern”? You may also say “the southwest” since it is also in the western part of the southern United States. (Note: We never say “westsouth”)

Columbus believed he could sail all the way around the world and arrive back in Spain. He thought he could get to India and China that way. But he didn't know it was so far and he didn't know North and South America were in the way! No one knew that but the people living there. Who were they?

But the Indians didn't know about the people in Spain! They were *isolated*. Neither people knew or understood the other.

This is still true today. That is, there are many people who do not know about others nearby. Are there people near you that you know nothing about?

Trade

So why was Columbus looking for a shorter route to India? The answer is “trade.” This word is important because trade is very important to us.

Many people lived in Europe. Some were farmers. Others worked in factories. There were fishermen, miners, lumbermen, and many other *trades*. Some countries raised lots of food, while other countries had lots of coal. People in one country needed what people in other countries had, so they would “trade” things they had for what they needed. Sometimes they *bartered*, but often they used gold or silver coins and *bullion*.

Still there were some things that couldn't be found anywhere in Europe. There were spices and tea from India and silk cloth from China. Caravans would go by land all the way to India and China to deliver goods from Spain and bring back goods from China.

On your globe, find China, far east of Spain. Imagine carrying goods all the way from China to Spain over land. What would be a better way?

But there was a problem! To sail from China to Spain you had to go all the way around Africa.

Today the Suez Canal goes between the Mediterranean and Red Seas. What difference do you suppose that makes?

Columbus' last voyage

In 1502 Columbus sailed along the coast of Central America in the area now known as Nicaragua and Costa Rica. He thought he had found Asia. He was still looking for China when a terrible storm struck. It almost destroyed his small ship. After the storm he took refuge in a harbor near what is now one end of the Panama Canal. This is as close as he ever came to China or the Pacific Ocean.

Today, the Panama Canal allows ships to sail from ocean to ocean without the long trip around South America.

Balboa discovers the Pacific Ocean

In September 1513, Vasco Núñez de Balboa led a party to the crest of the Central American mountains. He was a farmer, merchant, explorer who had come to what is now Panama. For the first time, Europeans sighted the Pacific Ocean.

Balboa sent three scouts to find the shore. One was the first European to ever actually enter the sea. On September 29, Balboa claimed the whole sea and all the lands it touched for Spain.

The Pacific is the biggest ocean on earth. It forms all of the western boundary of America. When Balboa discovered it, he had no idea how big it actually is.

REACTION TIME

1. What is the world?
2. What really happens when the sun “rises”?
3. How is “history” like “news”?
4. Why did Columbus think he was in India?
5. Why is trade important to you?

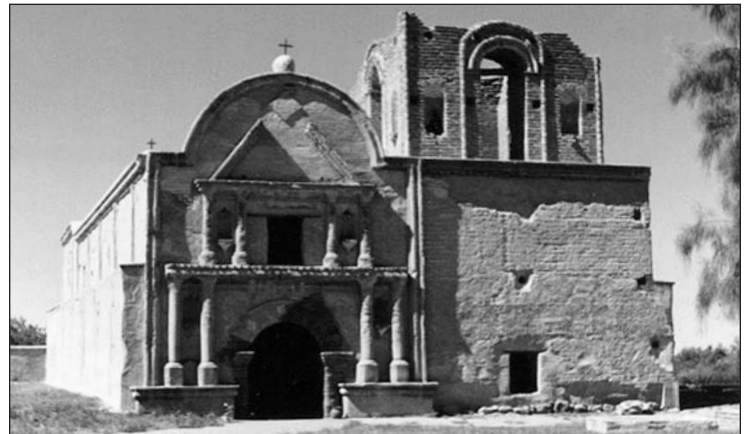
ANSWER BOX
Did you say FSE?

NEW MISSION DEDICATED

NAMED SAN ANTONIO DE VALERO

San Antonio, Texas, May 1, 1718

Father Antonio Olivares today dedicated the new mission at this beautiful site on the San Antonio River. A presidio is also planned for a site nearby. It is reported that padre Olivares and the Governor of Coahuila, Martin de Alarcón, have been sent to establish a number of new missions in Texas.



The Tumacacori Mission was founded by Fr. Kino in 1691, but the building shown here dates from 1800. It is at Tumacacori National Park, Arizona.

The second mission wave

When the king of Spain heard that La Salle had claimed Louisiana and part of Texas for France, he was worried. Mexican silver had become very important to Spain. The king was afraid that France might attack Mexico to get the silver. He wondered how he could stop them.



Texas was right between French Louisiana and Spanish Mexico.

The king decided to establish a new chain of missions between Louisiana and Mexico. It would serve as what we call a “buffer zone.” These missions would strengthen Spain’s claim to Texas.

Each mission would also have a presidio. A presidio was a place to house soldiers. The soldiers would protect the mission. The mission would serve and care for the soldiers. The mission would also try to make friends and teach the Indians.

The soldiers would protect the padres and the friendly Indians. The presidio would be a place for local government. Then Spain could slowly take control of Texas.

It seemed like a good plan. It is called “The second mission wave.”

The founding of San Antonio

A leader in the second mission wave was Governor Martín de Alarcón of Coahuila. At this time, much of Texas was part of this Mexican state.

Alarcón brought herds of cattle, a caravan of supplies, and a number of families. With him came Father Olivares. They chose a spot on the San Antonio River as the site of their new mission.

The chapel of the mission he started was later known as “The Alamo!” (We will study the Alamo in issue #16.) The pueblo he started became today’s great city of San Antonio.

After Mission San Antonio de Valero had been dedicated, Gov. Alarcón went to the ruins of La Salle’s Fort St. Louis. He was still concerned that France might attack Mexico from Louisiana. He decided that more missions and presidios were needed. He would return to Mexico and prepare for yet another mission wave.

Presidios guard the missions

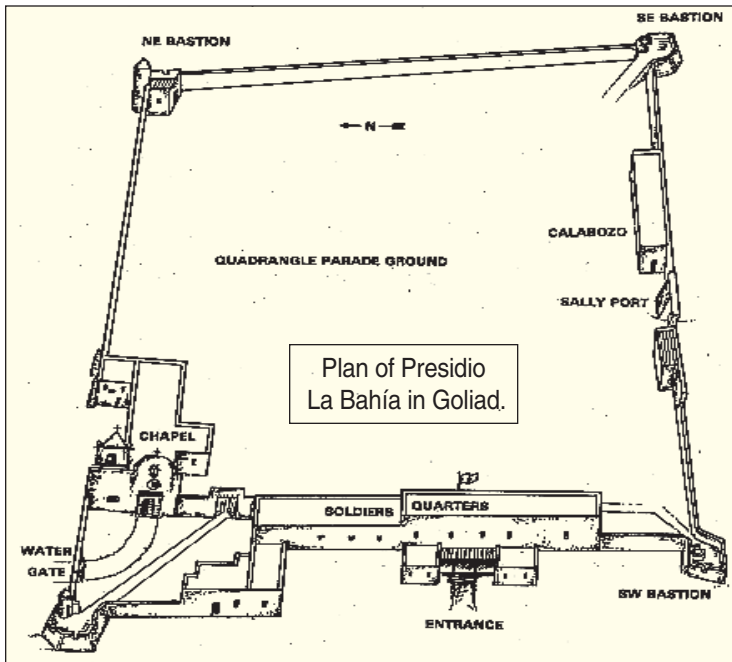
This is a bastion at Presidio La Bahía in Goliad. It is like the ones at the mission too. From here soldiers could look out at people who might climb the wall. Why was this important?

Photo by Travis Witt.



Presidios were Spanish army camps. Many were built as forts with very strong walls to protect the soldiers inside. Often the walls were made of logs standing on end.

You may visit Presidio La Bahía at Goliad and see the stone walls that protected it. In issue #9 you will see a picture of Presidio San Sabá (near Menard) and the log walls around it.



There was a chapel inside each presidio for the soldiers. There were also living quarters, offices, an *arsenal*, and a jail, in Spanish, a *calabozo*.

There was usually a large door called a “sally port.” It was like a *gangplank*. It could be opened suddenly so that many soldiers could rush out at once. They used the sally port to attack Indians outside the presidio walls.

What would happen if there were only a small door for the soldiers to pass through to fight the Indians?

French frontier villages also appeared. Most were in the Mississippi River basin.

This is the French mission church at Los Adaes, Louisiana.



The “Chicken War”

The second mission wave ended because a flock of chickens got loose! Well, it was almost that way.

France declared war on Spain in Europe. The Spaniards in Mexico didn’t know about it, but the French in Louisiana did.

In 1719 the French decided to take over the Spanish mission at Los Adaes. They found very few Spaniards there. They put them in prison. But while the French soldiers were robbing the mission, flocks of chickens got loose. They made a big noise. (Can you picture chickens running every which way and soldiers trying to catch them?)

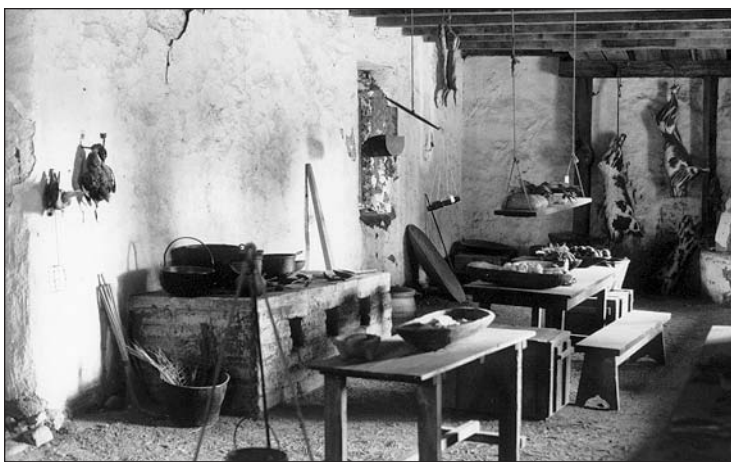
One of the Spanish prisoners escaped. He ran west to the mission near Dolores Presidio on the Neches River. He told a big lie. He said a whole army of French soldiers had attacked. It was really only about seven men!

The mission padres were very frightened. They rushed to the presidio. They told Captain Ramón, the commander, what happened, and the lie grew bigger! The captain thought he was going to be attacked by a whole army. He took all of his men and the padres back to San Antonio. Later, when everyone found out what really happened, it was a big joke. It made the Spanish army look very silly. So a few years later they would come back.

The third mission wave

This time they were going to do it right. They would build more missions, more presidios and bring many more soldiers. But it would still not be enough. Their old enemies, the Comanche and the Apache Indians could not be overcome. The third wave was little more successful than the first two.

Only at San Antonio was there a really strong Spanish presence. Even there, few Indians became good friends of the Spaniards.



Life in a mission centered around worship, study, and basic living needs. The interior of many missions looked much like this. There may have been two ovens, one outside and one inside. Furnishings were very simple.

Mission life in Texas

Here is the plan of a typical mission. It is called “Espiritu Santo.” It was also called “La Bahía” because it was started at a bay on the gulf but later moved. Today it is a state park at Goliad.

Some parts of the mission are listed below the drawing. You can see that the whole mission was enclosed by a stone wall. At two opposite corners

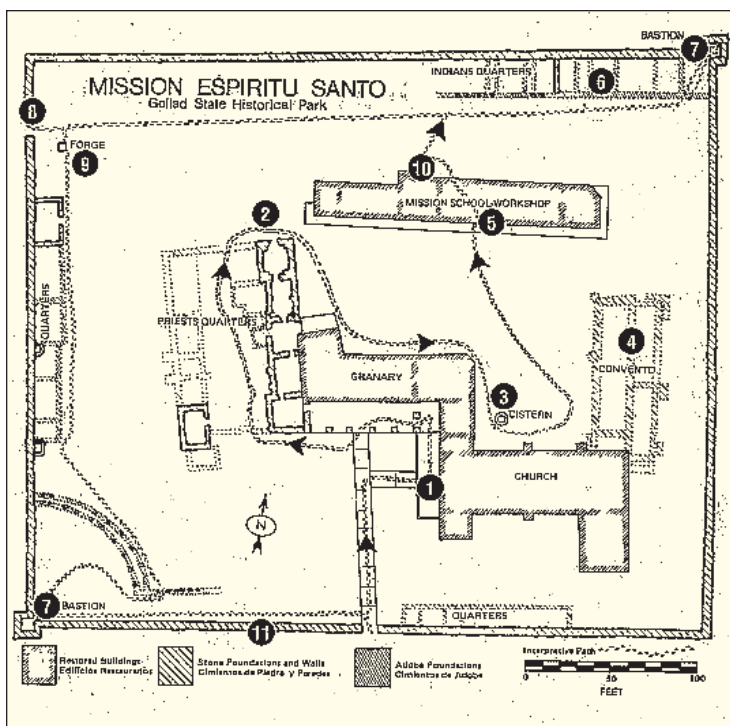


Illustration of Mission Espiritu Santa (La Bahía) at Goliad

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (1) Church entrance | (7) Lookout bastion |
| (2) Padre living quarters | (8) Lime kiln |
| (3) Well for water | (9) Forge |
| (4) Living quarters for nuns | (10) Worker's living quarters |
| (5) Workshops | (11) Stone walls |
| (6) Indian living quarters | |

(7) were bastions. These were covered places where guards could look down outside the wall. From small windows in the bastions they could shoot at anyone who tried to climb the wall. (We'll see this in detail in a later issue.)

Some Indians lived in small rooms along the back wall. More lived outside of the wall where they could raise food. Food was stored in the granary. The padres lived next to the granary. There was a covered walk to the church.

On the other side of the church was a *convent*. This was where the *nuns* lived. They assisted the padres in worship and taught the Indians.

The classrooms and workshops were between the convent and the Indian's living quarters. This is where the Indians studied reading and writing. They also learned Spanish and were taught from the Bible.

Trade on the Red River

From J-4 to P-5 on your resource map (issue #5) you can see part of the northern boundary of Texas. The Red River runs along it. Then it flows south through Louisiana to the Gulf. Who owned Louisiana?



The Red River was a good route for fur traders. Wichita Indians had villages there. This is the Red River near Spanish Fort. It is spring and the river is very wide.

French traders from Louisiana traveled farther and farther up this broad river. They traded guns, ammunition, tools, whiskey, cloth, and other goods for furs.

The Taovayas Indians lived there. (They are also often called “Wichitas.”) They had a large village at the bottom of L-4 on your resource map. Today it is a tiny town called Spanish Fort.

The French traders went up and down the Red River bringing goods back and forth to and from the Indians.

Geology & geography

These two words are often confused. Like most English words, they come from another language. These words come from Greek. “Geo” refers to our earth. (We call this a “word root.”)



The “strata” of our earth is often visible along cuts made for our highways. Each layer is a record of what happened at the time it was formed.

Look at the car in this photo along Interstate 10 to see the depth of the cut.

To keep these words straight, you might think of them this way: A graph is a kind of picture. (Like a “photo-graph.”) A log is a kind of record. (Like a “log-book.”) So geology is like a record of our earth while geography is like a picture of it.

When we study the record of our mountains, their structure, age, and how they came to be; we study geology. When we study where they are, how they appear, and how they relate to each other; we study geography.

Why is geology important?

Among the subjects studied in geology is the composition of the earth. This includes studying the rocks and minerals they contain.

If you are looking for silver, you need to know the kinds of rocks that may contain it. The same is true if you are looking for gold or oil or copper.

It is also true that you may not be looking for anything in particular. But you should know when a rock you find is valuable. So you need to know about many different kinds of rocks. Otherwise you could step on a gold mine and not know it!

Understanding rocks and where to look for the most valuable ones requires the study of geology, but we won't do that now! In our next issue, however, we will study the geography of Texas.

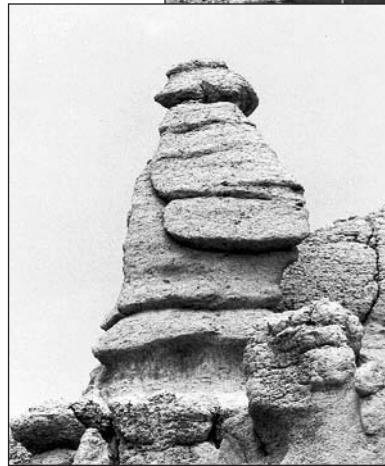
Rock art!

Names on our land

Distinctive kinds of geography are called “land features.” Mountains and rivers are examples. Some have funny names that tell what the feature looks like.

For example there is Owl Rock in Arizona. It looks just like an owl. There is the Mad River in California. It rushes out of the mountains like it is crazy (mad is another way to say crazy).

Here are two pictures of Texas land features. Think up your own name for each one.



Above

Left

REACTION TIME

1. How were the “mission waves” similar to ocean waves?
2. Why were presidios important to missions?
3. Why were missions important to presidios?
4. What was the purpose of a bastion?
5. How did Indians benefit from the missions and presidios?
6. Why weren't the missions more successful?
7. Why is it important to understand the geography of Texas?

TEXAS TOO BIG FOR ONE ISSUE! OUR DISCUSSION OF THE GEOGRAPHY OF TEXAS CONTINUES

Piney Woods

Inland from the gulf in east Texas the weather is also warm and moist but not so swampy as it is in the Big Thicket. It is a very good area for growing things. Here there are large forests of pine trees.

West of the Piney Woods where there is less rain, the pine trees do not grow. Instead there are many oak, gum, ash, and elm trees. This area is called the Post Oak Belt.

Do you live in the Piney Woods?



Jack County has a mixture of open prairie and the tangled forest of the cross timbers

forest. In early days even the Indians did not like to go through the “Cross Timbers.”

The biggest part of the Cross Timbers is west of the Grand Prairie, but there is also a smaller eastern portion that partly divides the Grand and Blackland Prairies described below.

Prairies

Another name often used for parts of a plain is “prairie.” This is usually an area of grassland, mostly flat or gently rolling. The Blackland Prairie of northeast Texas is named for its fertile black soil.

The Grand Prairie to the west of the blacklands is less fertile, with stony soil and limestone outcroppings.

Cross Timbers

In the middle of north Texas there is another kind of forest. The trees are not as big, but they grow so close together that their branches cross each other. It is almost impossible to go through this



The plains of Texas are very flat and often very dry. This photo was taken in the Panhandle.

Great Plain

This is the name of America’s biggest plain. It is so big that it goes all the way to Canada! The farther you go from the sea on this great plain, the higher it gets. Still it is very flat.

High Plains

Where the great plain is higher, we may call it the “high plain.” That’s easy, isn’t it? In the panhandle of Texas, there is a special part of this high plain. It is called the “staked plain.”

Llano Estacado

This is the Spanish name that means “staked plain.” Some people say it was named for stakes

This picture shows caprock in Caprock State Park in the Panhandle, near Silverton. It forms the top of the formation in the center. It is on the Llano Estacado.

The cliffs form because the rock is so hard it resists “weathering.”



the explorers used to mark their trail. Others say it is for the way it looked to the explorers as they came to it. Along the edge of this plain there are cliffs. From the distance the cliffs look a little like the staked walls of a fort.

Caprock

The stone that makes up the ground on top of the staked plain is harder than the stone underneath. As rain water runs off of the ground it wears grooves in the land. Slowly it wears through the harder rock. Then it wears the softer rock more quickly. Canyons are formed. Palo Duro Canyon is one of these.



The Palo Duro Canyon was carved by the Red River as it flows through the Panhandle region.

Along the top of the canyons, the harder rock marks the edge of the cliffs. This is called “caprock.” It is like a cap on the cliff.

The Red River Valley

The north border of Texas is on the Red River. This is another big river like the Rio Grande. It also takes water from the Rocky Mountains to the gulf.

Edwards Plateau

From the Staked Plain southward, there is another plain. We call it a plateau. It is higher than the coastal plain and lower than the staked plain. It is like a very wide step in between. As the wind and rain have worn the land on this plateau, its edges have become hilly. We call it the “Hill Country.”



This part of the Texas Hill Country is in Hays County.

Hill Country

At the edge of the Edwards Plateau, there is a part of Texas where the wind and rain over many ages have made canyons and the ground is very hilly. It is along the Balcones Escarpment. It is very pretty.

Balcones Escarpment

The Great Plain of America joins the coastal plain of Texas. Once they were just about the same. But the ground slowly rose.

As the land moved, it broke apart and made a big crack. We call it a fault. It broke and shook in terrible earthquakes. This happened a very long time ago.

We call the line along the crack it made the “Balcones Escarpment.” It runs across Texas at a curved angle. (See the topography map.) When the crack was made, it left hollow places. One of these is called “Wonder Cave.” It is at San Marcos. You can go in that cave and see the crack!

Which side of this crack do you live on? _____

In Wonder Cave (San Marcos) you can see the crack in the earth we call the Balcones Escarpment. The fault runs up and down. Look at the two rocks in the middle. The rocks on the right was once even with those at left.



The Aquifer

The top of the Edwards Plateau is mostly flat. Rain that falls there makes lakes. Much of it seeps into cracks in the ground. Under the ground it runs through these cracks and into caves. It is like a huge underground water tank. We call it an aquifer.

Slowly it flows toward the sea. When

it comes to the Balcones Escarpment, some of it comes out and makes rivers. Aquarena Springs at San Marcos is such a place. It makes the San Marcos River. The Guadalupe River also comes from the Edwards Aquifer. Wells also bring water from the aquifer to supply towns in this area. Does your water come from the Edwards Aquifer?

(You may have to ask your teacher.) _____

Caves

Wonder Cave on the Balcones Escarpment is one kind of cave. But there is another kind in Texas.

Ages ago much of Texas was covered by a huge sea. Sea shells, fish, plants, and even some kinds of animals were in the sea. When they died there, their bones sank to the bottom. Over the ages their bones became limestone. It is a very soft kind of stone.



Can you see the “natural bridge” in this picture? This is another kind of geologic formation. It is at the Natural Bridge Cave near San Antonio. Photo by James Sumner.



The San Marcos River bubbles up from springs in the city of San Marcos.

This beautiful formation is called The Queen’s Throne. It is in “The Cave With No Name” in Borne, TX.

Photo: Peggy Hollin



When water runs through cracks in the rocks under Texas, it may run into the limestone. Then it dissolves some of the stone and makes caves. The limestone caves can be very pretty. The water makes all kinds of pretty shapes, almost like statues.

There are many of these caves under Texas!

Have you been in a limestone cave? _____



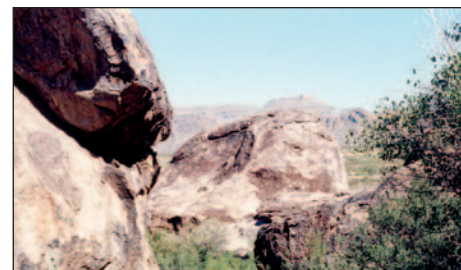
The dry salt lakes of west Texas are also called “flats.” Unlike Monahans Dunes, they are actually shallow lake bottoms where falling rain collects and is evaporated.

Deserts

Much of west Texas is very dry. When rain does fall, it carries just a bit of rocky soil to flat lake bottoms. There the water evaporates, leaving a layer of salty sand. These are often called “salt lakes” though they are usually dry. They may also be called “dry lakes” or “salt flats.”

There are even places where the wind has blown the sand into dunes. It is almost like the Sahara Desert of Africa! Maybe you have seen pictures of this desert.

The Hueco Tanks, east of El Paso, provided water and shelter for travelers and became a stopping point for wagons. Rain water collected in natural pools among the rocks.



Monahans, Texas, is a town in such a desert. There is a state park there where you can climb the sand dunes! It is a lot of fun but it is harder to climb in the sand than you might think.

Have you been to Monahans Dunes? _____

Trans-Pecos

The Pecos River runs through the Texas desert area from New Mexico to the Rio Grande River. It runs along the western edge of the Edwards Plateau. Most Texas mountains are west of the Pecos River. The word “trans” means “across.” So “Trans Pecos” means across the Pecos. Of course, if you are in Trans-Pecos Texas, across the Pecos would be Texas east of the Pecos!

Rio Grande River

This is the most famous river of Texas. It flows from the Rocky Mountains through El Paso, all the way to the Gulf of Mexico! At El Paso it becomes America’s southern border. Today dams on this river store water for farming. In what was a desert we now grow vegetables!



The Rio Grande flows through the Santa Elena Canyon in the Big Bend region.

Big Bend

Look back at the topography map in 8A. See where the Rio Grande makes a big bend. The big bend in the river is where it goes around the Chisos Mountains. High up in these mountains are beautiful valleys, tall trees, rivers, and lakes.

Even though this is in a very dry area of Texas, it is very green here. There are also many deer and other wild animals. Why do you think this is true?



These dunes are at Monahans Sandhills State Park near Monahans. Photo: Wing-Chi Poon



There are beautiful mountain valleys with forests, lakes, and deer in the Chisos Mountains of Big Bend National Park.

REACTION TIME

1. Why did Spain begin to actively colonize south Texas?
2. List the major kinds of geography in Texas and describe each one.
3. Draw a simple geographic map of your community as best you can. Include any land features you know of and add their names.
4. What are the biggest geographic differences between east Texas and west Texas?
5. What effects did geography have on settlements in Texas.
6. Where do you think Texas is coolest in the summer?
7. Where would it be easiest to raise cattle?

ALAMO FALLS!!

TERRIBLE MASSACRE

San Antonio, Texas, March 6, 1836

The Alamo has fallen with the loss of all who had fought to save Texas. General Santa Anna's brutality will not be forgotten. More details to follow.

High price of victory

While Sam Houston was celebrating Christmas at Washington-on-the-Brazos, Bowie and his small army left for Goliad. Fannin and his were still nearby. Then Houston got a Christmas present he did not want! He learned Grant and Johnson and 200 followers were well on their way to Mexico. They had decided to go ahead with their threatened attack.

Houston had no choice but to act. He ordered Fannin to take supplies to Refugio where he would meet him later. Then Houston left to overtake Grant and Johnson. On January 14, 1836, they met at Goliad. Johnson had taken total control. Houston reasoned with the men, but they all wanted to invade Mexico. That's when Houston learned Santa Anna was almost at San Antonio.

Since Bowie was also at Goliad, Houston sent him with a few men to San Antonio to remove the cannons they had there and "blow up the Alamo." Then they were to return. Houston would gather his army in order to engage Santa Anna.

To do so, he needed Johnson's support. He also needed Fannin, his men, and the supplies at Refugio. He went to Refugio on January 20, but there was no Fannin and there were no supplies.

Instead he got a message from the Council. Fannin had been made commander-in-chief to replace Houston and was on his way to invade Mexico. With him were the remaining soldiers and all the supplies.

Houston felt he had no choice. He knew there was disaster ahead. He no longer had command. He decided to leave. He lectured Johnson, Grant,



The Alamo was officially founded as the San Antonio de Valero Mission and this site chosen in 1724. The chapel cornerstone was laid in 1744.

and their men on the foolishness of what they were doing. Then he told of his intention to present his views at the next convention planned for March. He resolved to set Texas free.

Houston went back to San Felipe first, then returned to his friends, the Cherokee Indians. With him was William Goyens, a South Carolina slave who had fled to Texas in 1821. He knew that if the Indians joined with Santa Anna, there was no hope for Texas. So with Goyens' help he made a treaty with them.

Back at San Antonio, Bowie and Colonel Travis decided there was not enough time to abandon the Alamo. Instead they pledged to stand firm against Santa Anna and his army. Then on February 8, Davy Crockett and 13 Tennessee volunteers arrived. Fifteen days later, Santa Anna's forces attacked the Alamo.

For a Texan, this can be an especially important issue. As you read think about the Texas you live in today. Think about people like these who fought at the Alamo, at Goliad, at San Jacinto, and at all the other battle sites. Without them, you would not be a Texan.

A frantic appeal for help went out from the Alamo to the Convention gathering at Washington. Col. Travis wrote of the Mexican attack: "I shall never surrender or retreat." He signed it "Victory or death."

Remember the Alamo!

Battle #6:

What took place in the 13 days from February 23 to March 6, 1836 is one of the best known events in American history. It is also one of the greatest stories of heroism, faith, and sacrifice ever played out by man.

Santa Anna had over 5000 men. At their strongest, the defenders had 187. That is at least 27 Mexicans for each Texan! At the end, all of the defenders were dead, but for each one, eight of Santa Anna's soldiers died, about 1500 in all.

The siege began with a demand that the Texans surrender. Travis responded with a cannon shot at the Mexicans. Then the pounding began. For ten days Mexican cannons fired and columns of troops attacked, yet the defenders held. Not until the last day, March 6, was one wall breached.

On the third attempt of that dismal gray day Santa Anna's men ended the Battle of the Alamo. Each defender, fighting hand to hand, died in a ring of his fallen enemy.

SCOPE OF TRAGEDY REVEALED

San Antonio, Texas, March 8, 1836

The eyewitness account of Mrs. Almaron Dickinson confirms our worst fears. Not only were all brave Texan defenders of the Alamo slain in the conquest or afterward, but their bodies have been ruthlessly burned. Mrs. Dickinson and a few others were spared in order that they might tell others of the Mexican victory and consequences of revolution.

Santa Anna's victorious men were so angered by their losses and the courage of the defenders that again and again they speared the lifeless Texan bodies with their bayonets. Then, at Santa Anna's orders, the bodies were stacked in a pile and burned. It was the final act of an army gone mad.

While no defender survived, a few who did not fight in the battle were allowed to live. This

included Susanna Dickinson, wife of Almaron Dickinson, a defender. She was freed by Santa Anna and told to go to the Texans at Washington-on-the-Brazos and tell them the same fate awaited all who refused to give up.

Some think of the Alamo as a battle between America and Mexico. That is very wrong. It was a battle fought by Texans from many nations and cultures. The Alamo was a battle over the rights of all Texans to enjoy the freedoms we all believe in today. It is important to understand this.



On the map above, follow the last five battle sites of the Texas revolution as you read the text.

Independence declared

As the Battle of the Alamo began, many Texans were gathering for the convention of 1836. It was to be held at Washington-on-the-Brazos, about 150 miles east of the Alamo.

Most of the delegates had come to Texas from southern states including nine from Virginia. But others had come from Mexico, Europe, and northern states in America.

As the Convention was about to begin, they realized Sam Houston was not there. Many looked to Houston for leadership. They wondered where he was.

Then the message from Travis arrived. The terrible situation at the Alamo became known. There was a rush of citizens eager to go to the aid of Travis and his defenders of the Alamo when Sam Houston returned. He had been with his friends,



In this little house at Washington-on-the-Brazos, the Texas Declaration of Independence was signed on March 2 while the Alamo was still under attack.

the Cherokees. His arrival stopped those who were about to leave for San Antonio.

Houston knew it was too late for the Alamo. There was something else that had to be done. Upon it could depend the future of Texas. It was to form a government and declare their independence. Only then might they ask U.S. aid.

While the Alamo battle was raging, the Council drafted and approved a declaration of independence. Then, on March 4, 1836, Sam Houston was again named official Commander-in-chief of the Texas army. David G. Burnet was elected the first President of the Republic. A complete slate of officers was elected to govern with him.

A new nation had been born, but it was not yet won. Four more battles remained.

Remember Goliad!

During these bitter days, James Fannin was at Goliad. He had once started for the Alamo to aid Travis, but had changed his mind. Instead he and his men were now in Goliad's old Spanish fort, the Presidio de La Bahía.

Houston went to Gonzales and assembled an army of almost 400 men. Then he sent orders to Fannin to take his men to Victoria. He had his men set fire to the town of Gonzales and took them east to the Colorado River. There, near Columbus, they camped for a week. Houston was trying to gather and train his small army in east Texas before confronting Santa Anna and his huge force of men.

While this was all going on, Johnson and Grant stubbornly continued their move toward Mexico.

Johnson was in San Patricio and Grant was at Agua Dulce Creek as the Alamo battle began.

Battles #7 & 8:

On February 27, while the Alamo battle raged, Mexican cavalry under José Urrea defeated Johnson. Then on March 2, four days before the fall of the Alamo, Grant was defeated. The effort of Johnson and Grant to invade Mexico was over. Grant died in battle.

UNDERSTANDING SAM HOUSTON

While the defenders were falling at the Alamo, Houston refused to send help. Instead he directed the preparation of the Declaration of Independence and Texas Constitution at Washington-on-the-Brazos. Many thought he was afraid to fight. Is that why Houston worked the way he did?

No, Houston was a very different kind of person than many of the heroes we have studied. Houston was cautious and thoughtful. He did not act in anger or emotion. Instead, he acted with careful reason.

Now Houston's army was the only one left. What do you think he did? (Circle your choice.)

1. Immediately attacked Santa Anna.
2. Surrendered to Santa Anna.
3. Watched Santa Anna while he prepared his next move.
4. Looked for another general to take over.

Battles 6, 7, and 8 were going on about the same time. We say they were: _____

Battle #9:

At Goliad, Fannin learned the fate of Grant and Johnson, but he stayed there one day too long. As he was leaving, his men were surrounded by soldiers under Gen. Urrea. At Coletto Creek, after a one day battle, Fannin and about 400 of his men were taken prisoner. Urrea brought them back to the presidio chapel at La Bahía.

The prisoners thought they were safe. Then, on orders from Santa Anna, they were taken into a field nearby and shot. Wounded Texans in the chapel were taken into the courtyard and killed there. Officers were killed last. All bodies were thrown into a common grave.

Texas had now suffered its fourth major defeat in two weeks. Independence had been declared, but was there any hope left?

SURVIVORS REPORT MASSACRE

Washington-on-the-Brazos, Texas, March 28, 1836

Dr. J.H. Barnard reports from Goliad that General Urrea of Santa Anna's Mexican army mercilessly murdered the prisoners taken during the recent battle at Coleto. About 50 have survived. Some were helped by a woman they called "The Angel of Goliad." The cry is going out, "Remember the Alamo, Remember Goliad."

Houston was near Columbus when he heard of Fannin's defeat. Now only his small army was left to face the Mexican army. The soldiers wanted to attack Santa Anna and his men. They were ready and eager to fight. They also needed to win a battle again!. Many of their friends had died at the Alamo and Goliad. They hated Santa Anna. They wanted to get even.

Hatred is like a bad disease. It can make you feel sick. You may have a fever. You may not reason well. If you hate someone enough you may do foolish things and hurt others around you. That's just the way hatred is.

Sam Houston understood hatred. He knew that his small army could not beat Santa Anna if it did foolish things. It certainly could not beat him in a headlong rush to fight. Houston needed a plan. He wanted to prepare for Santa Anna. He knew that hatred would not bring victory to Texas. It would take planning, training, and a steady hand.

HOUSTON'S COURAGE IN DOUBT

Brazos Bottoms, Texas, March 31, 1836

There is open dissension in the ranks of soldiers and leaders alike as General Houston continues to flee the advancing Mexican army. Many believe he plans an escape to Louisiana rather than face the enemy in open battle.

The Runaway Scrape

As Houston was leading his army away from Santa Anna, large numbers of Texan settlers packed their belongings to flee east. They wanted to reach Louisiana before Santa Anna caught up with them. They feared the same fate as the men at the Alamo. Today we call this the "Runaway Scrape," but it was more a runaway dash! They dropped everything and fled leaving only the strongest and most dedicated to fight on.

Many of Houston's soldiers also fled. They could not understand why Houston seemed not to want to fight. They grumbled and complained.

To make it even worse, the weather was very cold and rainy. Living conditions were very bad. But the bad weather also slowed Santa Anna and gave Houston more time to prepare.

Santa Anna left San Antonio and drove east to look for the Texan army. When he didn't find it, he decided to capture the Texas government instead, but it was also running. By now it had reached Harrisburg. (This little town is now the city of Houston!) If Santa Anna could capture the Texas government, he was sure the war would be won.

Houston was northwest of Santa Anna. (You will see this on a map in our next issue.) Close to Harrisburg there was a fork in the road. To the left was the road to the Sabine River and freedom. To the right was the road to Harrisburg.

Houston's men watched. They thought he might turn left. If he did so, they were going to take command. They were tired of running. They thought Houston was afraid to face Santa Anna.

When he came to the fork, which way do you think Houston turned?

Santa Anna arrived at Harrisburg looking for the Texas government. He was too late so he set fire to the town and proceeded east.

Houston had a scout named "Deaf Smith" watching Santa Anna's movements and where he camped. He reported this to Houston who moved his army near the ruins of Harrisburg soon after Santa Anna left. It was now April 18, 1836.

Battle #10:

The final battle of the revolution was at hand.

REACTION TIME

1. What are three of the most tragic things about the Battle of the Alamo?
2. If you had been a Texan at this time, what would you have done and why?
3. What was so unusual about Sam Houston's response to the battle?
4. Why did Santa Anna send Susanna Dickinson to tell Houston what happened at the Alamo?
5. What mistake did James Fannin make?
6. Was the decision of Johnson and Grant to attack Urrea's army a mistake? Why?
7. Why didn't Houston attack Santa Anna sooner?