

**THE RUNAWAY SCRAPE:
A PIVOTAL EVENT IN THE
TEXAS REVOLUTIONARY ADVENTURE**

A Senior Honors Thesis

By

VALARI JEAN KUBOS

Submitted to the Office of Honors Programs
& Academic Scholarships
Texas A&M University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements of the

UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE
RESEARCH FELLOWS

April 2002

Group: History and Political Science

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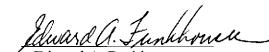
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ABSTRACT

The Runaway Scrape:
A Pivotal Event in the
Texas Revolutionary Adventure

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In accord with the constantly emerging study of women's history, the research and focus of this thesis centers on the contribution of pioneer women to nineteenth-century United States continental expansion and their role in defining a nation. Hardships, increased responsibilities, and shifting gender roles posed a significant challenge to women as they participated in migration West and South. Trials, triumphs, and tragedies overcome in pursuit of frontier settlement redefined, and reinforced, the social, cultural and territorial boundaries of America.

This thesis does not attempt to reconcile ongoing debates regarding the justice of continental expansion, nor does it seek to completely discredit the passionately embraced, though controversial, heroes of nineteenth-century America. Instead, this paper attempts to juxtapose the female frontier experience and the development of the modern United States territorial and social map. With particular focus on the *Runaway Scrape* (April, 1836) of the *Texas Revolution*, this thesis investigates the contribution of

Texas women, children, and elderly to the growth of a nation and its institutions. The research, namely personal correspondence, journal entries, newspaper accounts, military records, and scholarly secondary sources, shifts attention away from historically male dominated pioneer studies and focuses on the pioneer experience as a family affair. Though this paper does not refute the role of the male in accomplishing his goals of *Manifest Destiny*, it does provide ample evidence of a prominent role for women in determining the social, cultural, and geographical criterion of Texas and the United States.

This paper draws attention to specific events of the *Texas Revolution* that provide evidence of the struggle of pioneer women to the liberation and development of Texas. Their allegiance to Texas and the men who fought for its independence, along with their inadvertent actions, bought valuable time for reconnaissance efforts and provided the foundation for the outcome of the revolution and the communities of the generations that followed. Through the lives of eleven-year-old Dilue Rose Harris, the scrappy Noah Smithwick, and many previously unfamiliar pioneer women, the story of Texas independence and continental expansion comes to life through the *Runaway Scrape* of the *Texas Revolution*.

I would like to express special thanks to Dr. Sylvia Grider, Department of Anthropology at Texas A&M University, for the inspiration to tackle this project. Her enthusiasm for, and dedication to, Texas History provided the courage to follow this undertaking through to the end, despite the many obstacles. Her belief in the significance of my topic, as well as her confidence in my ability to do it justice, sustained me throughout.

To Dr. Walter Buenger, I express my appreciation for the wealth of patience in dealing with my unpredictable and atypical schedule. I apologize for inundating your e-mail account with curious messages and last-minute issues. I am grateful for the freedom you allowed me in pursuing this project and for your support at such a demanding crossroads in your career.

Lastly, I would be negligent to overlook the overwhelming support of a beautiful little family. To my husband, Dennis, and my precious son, Cameron, without whom none of my academic accomplishments would have been possible, I say thank you. Your never-ending support, belief in me, encouragement in this project, and tolerance of fast-food dinners, has led us to the brink of the realization of a dream-come-true. As I accept recognition for this project, awards, honors, and in May, a college degree, know that I will realize that the accolades belong to all of us. It is to you that I humbly dedicate this project.

NOMENCLATURE

Austin's Old Three Hundred	Name given to the families who participated in the January and June, 1821 colonization of Coahuila y Tejas under the direction of Moses and Stephen F. Austin. There were actually 297 members of the colony.
Coahuila y Tejas	Mexican name for the colony located north of the Rio Grande River, which changed names after the revolution to the Republic of Texas, and again to Texas upon joining the Union.
Criollos	Spanish colonial term for persons born in Mexico with Spanish parentage.
Empresarios	Immigrant Land Agents who negotiated contracts for land in the colony of Coahuila y Tejas. Agents obtained titles to the land from the Mexican government under the immigration laws of 1824 and 1825 and supervised the settlement of colonies.
Manifest Destiny	A name given to continental expansion by editor and democratic leader, John O'Sullivan in 1845. <i>".... the right of our manifest destiny to over spread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federalative development of self government entrusted to us. It is right such as that of the tree to the space of air and the earth suitable for the full expansion of its principle and destiny of growth."</i> *
Mission Espiritu Santo and Presidio de la Bahia	Spanish name for the mission and fort located in Goliad, Texas. Site of the capture and execution of approximately 300 of Colonel James Fannin's Texas soldiers.

* Alan Brinkley. *American History, A Survey Volume 2*. 9th edition. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995. P. 352.

- Runaway Scrape Phrase, coined by Texans, to represent the mass exodus of women, children, and elderly from their homes in fear for their lives. The original Runaway Scrape originated in Gonzales, Texas and its intended destination was the Louisiana border.
- San Antonio
de Béxar and
Mission San Antonio
de Valero Spanish title for the Catholic Mission and fortress in San Antonio. This mission known to Texas as the Alamo, was the sight of the largest battle of the Texas Revolution, March 6, 1836.
- Texas Revolution A phrase representing the October of 1835 to April of 1836 battle for Texas independence from Mexico.

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INTRODUCTION: FRONTIER WOMEN AND THE PIONEER EXPERIENCE

...Time has not erased the trails, deeply furrowed...
across the great plains. Old rutted trails your followers left
us a heritage priceless, through torturing pain, opening
fields, rich in their yielding, sowing the seed – and we
harvest the grain. Visioning this, our heads bent in
reverence, to the brave men and women of the western
frontier, who conquered the desert, the plains and the
valleys – Ah, dear to our hearts are those old pioneers ¹

Waves of migration across the frontier defined nineteenth-century America in much the same manner that urbanization and industrialization came to signify the twentieth. The promise of adventure, land, health, gold, and religious freedom attracted Americans to a place in space and time where new ideas flourished, old ideas thrived, and new lives began. In search of the perfect home, American pioneers set out, prior to the revolution for independence, to transform the “wild” into civilization. Taking with them middle-class ideals of society, culture, and institutions, pioneer families created new havens of culture and society on the Plains. Encroachment on alien lands, unfamiliar people, and unique ideologies promoted the materialization of a nation on the brink of globalization.

Manifest Destiny, a phrase coined by editor and democratic leader John O’Sullivan, did not become a fashionable catch phrase until the 1840s; however, the idea was born prior to the revolution. The growth of the population in the thirteen colonies, in addition to an erratic economy, contributed to American thirst for land and resources.

¹ Betty Warner. “Pioneer Trails.” In *Texas Roundup*, Herman F. Benthul and Clara Jo Bridges. Dallas: Noble and Noble Publishers, Inc., 1965, Pp. 306 – 307

Thomas Jefferson and John Quincy Adams, who believed in the agrarian way of life established by colonizers, joined visions of the inland growth of a democratic empire and command of the surrounding seas.² Beginning with the April 30, 1803 Louisiana Purchase and continuing through the acquisition of the Republic of Texas and the War with Mexico, the fervor to acquire new land intensified.

Expansion into the unsettled frontier offered opportunities for wealth, self-sufficiency, and self-advancement. Triggered by a high birth rate, immigration, and a longer life expectancy accomplished through improved farming techniques, approximately four million Americans migrated west and south between the years of 1820 and 1850. Affordable and plentiful farmland held promise for colonizers who suffered through the economic depression of 1818. According to the theories of Jefferson and James Madison, “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” originated in the right to pursue and obtain cheap and fertile lands.³ The demand for land extended the frontier line steadily west and south.

The great migration of colonizers consisted of more than just the men who sought to work the land. Entire families packed up their possessions and relocated in search of a better way of life. Though American Historians, in the past, have neglected to integrate pioneer women into a prominent role in their studies, this analysis seeks to achieve a broader focus on family life and encounter on the American frontier. The juxtaposition of the experiences of men and women in the pioneer adventure produces a keen

² William H. Goetzmann. *When the Eagle Screamed: The Romantic Horizon in American Expansionism 1800 – 1860*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000, Pp. 1 – 2

³ Frank Lawrence Owsley, Jr. and Gene A. Smith. *Filibusters and Expansionists: Jeffersonian Manifest Destiny 1800 – 1821*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, Pp. 28 – 30

awareness of the vital part each played in forming a nation, both culturally and physically. Together, they redefined and reinforced the territorial boundaries of the United States, as well as established the social and cultural standards of the American imagination and the American character.

The Migration of Pioneer Women West and South

...Her name won't be in history books, this woman of the land, her heart is where it wants to be, content with Heaven's plan. And in the corridors of time, her way is counted true; enduring hardships, strong as rock, she does what she must do. Born when wire had begun to stitch up prairie seams; when homesteads patched the Western Land - Quilts of hope-filled dreams... She toiled in cold and snow and wet, or heat that scorched her bones; no 'lectric lights to chase the dark, no plumbing in their home... She poured her spirit into work on land that gave--and took; she held no grudge and never cast a single backward look... 'My heart is where it wants to be, my land will see me through.' Though her name won't be in history books, and her range is less than grand; her heart is where it wants to be--This Woman of the Land.⁴

The rigidity of the overland crossing and the challenge of establishing communities on the vast frontier defied established gender roles, tested the resolve, and contested the bravery of pioneer women who migrated west and south. "The sturdy helpmate could fight Indians, kill the bear in the barn, make two pots of lye soap, and do a week's wash before dinnertime and still have the cabin neat, the children clean, and a good meal on the table when her husband came in from the fields... She was the

⁴ Gwen Petersen. "Woman of the Land." In *The Ranch Woman's Manual*. Aberdeen: North Plains Press, 1975

Madonna of the Prairies, the Brave Pioneer Mother, the Gentle Tamer...⁵ Months of hard living on the trails included learning such tasks as driving the wagon, herding cattle, hunting for food, and fighting for their lives. In addition to their traditional roles as caregivers and newfound roles as partners on the trail, women became scavengers for inadequate, life-sustaining resources on the prairie. "Even standard chores became unfamiliar and unfeminine. Meal preparation often included gathering buffalo dung for fuel," hardly a ladylike task.⁶ The hazards of the journey remained an ever-present danger as well. Personal accounts tell of accidents involving children who fell out of, under, and through wagons, babies who died of unfamiliar diseases, pregnant mothers who succumbed to the trail, and families who lost their lives to human and animal predators.⁷

Most devastating to the spirit of the pioneer woman was persistent separation anxiety suffered before, during, and after westward settlement. The constant struggle between love of one's former home and the desire for adventure, vast territory, improved health, wealth, and religious freedom threatened the women's determination to abandon everything for a better way of life. Pioneer women coped with isolation from home by recreating aspects of the household that she left behind. Weavings, sewing, meals, and songs reconstructed familiar facets of home and lessened the loneliness. In addition, female friendships, both on the trail and at their destinations, created a unique and sturdy

⁵ Sandra L. Myres. *Westering Women and the Frontier Experience 1800 – 1915*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982, p. 3

⁶ Julie Roy Jeffrey. *Frontier Women: "Civilizing" the West? 1840 – 1880*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1998, p. 54

⁷ *Ibid*, Pp. 55 – 57

bond that facilitated the growth of social and cultural institutions on the prairie.⁸ Pioneer women bravely dealt with isolation from home by packing up the skills learned as mom, wife, hero, and domesticator and taking them with her on the journey to new homes filled with promise.

Upon arrival at their destinations, frontier women faced new trials, in addition to the challenges mastered on the trail. Both physically and mentally exhausted, women settled into crudely primitive homes and took on more manly chores such as planting, harvesting, ranching, milking cows, and establishing trade outlets with neighboring Indians. The Native American, seen as the threatening and savage “other,” was oftentimes no match for the scrappy and resourceful pioneer woman.⁹ Out West, women expected to form new lives without the fear of becoming masculine because of differing obligations and men had little choice but to support their new activities. Men and women, in this new sphere, helped one another. The constant restructuring of traditional social and cultural boundaries did not cease with the trade-off of physical labor. Pioneer women, in addition to their newfound roles as workmen, took on the tasks of establishing schools, churches, and cultural institutions intended to “tame” the American frontier.

Unsettled lands to the north of Mexico and west of the colonies pitted the opposing traditions of African Americans, Chinese, Hispanics, Native Americans, and elite East Coast settlers who sought to establish communities on the frontier. As conflicting and ambivalent as were the roles of gender on the frontier, the rival standards of the racial edge provided even more of a challenge. In competition for resources and

⁸ Sandra L. Myres, p. 136

⁹ Julie Roy Jeffrey, Pp. 36 – 43

rights to the land, the establishment of kinship proved to be a daunting task. Preconceived notions of “other” cultures very slowly altered through life on the frontier.¹⁰ From California to Texas, the clash of religious ideologies, the pursuit of fortune, and the subtle influence of pioneer women set off a series of encounters that repeatedly resulted in bloodshed and the displacement of native or established cultures. Pioneer efforts to civilize and socialize the frontier resulted in the forced removal of Indian tribes from native lands, displaced Chinese Americans from posts in railroads and domestic service, ensnared African Americans in the pioneer experience, and defeated Hispanic sovereignty through the revolution in Texas.

Nowhere in the North American hemisphere would the tension and clash of cultures be more apparent and severe than in the region of Texas. Key to the contest between French, Spanish, Mexican, and American desire for the sparsely populated territory was the need for fertile land, the presence of a versatile topography, significant geography, untapped resources, and the potential for regional dominance. The desire for wealth, religious freedom, and the subtle influence of women provided the driving force behind the men who fought for control of the region. Trapped amid the battle between Mexican, Anglo American, and Native American cultures, Texas women's lives altered even more dramatically than their counterparts to the west. Only through close examination of the forces driving cultures to battle so diligently for land can the reader fully comprehend the compounded difficulties of gender and rivalry on the racial frontier.

¹⁰ Sandra L. Myres, pp. 37 – 40

Initial Settlement and the Population of Texas:

From Spanish Outpost to Mexican Colony

... We conceive it a duty we owe as well as to ourselves as to our posterity, to seize the moment which now offers itself, of shaking off the yoke of European domination, and of laboring in the cause of the independence of Mexico; taking the authority into our own hands, forming laws, and of placing the government of our country upon a sure and firm basis, and by these means assure a rank among the nations of the world.¹¹

Spanish, Mexicans, and Native Americans had long governed the southernmost frontier; however, the early 1800s brought with them the birth of a new era in Texas. Spanish, Mexican, and *Criollo* families, consisting of army officers, farmers, blacksmiths, and carpenters were sent by the Spanish government to settle Texas and defend the territory against U.S. encroachment. Catholic Franciscan priests remained at *San Antonio de Béxar*, nearby *Mission Espiritu Santo*, and East Texas outposts, holdovers from earlier missions to evangelize hostile Indians in Texas. Together, approximately 5,000 colonizers began the slow process of “civilizing” Texas. By 1811, army officers, Mexican loyalists, and many Mexican pioneers launched an aggressive campaign to win independence from Spain.¹² Leaders of the battle for Mexico’s independence were confronted with an enormous challenge. While organizing their strategy for sovereignty,

¹¹ José Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara. “Constitution of the State of Texas.” Manuscript copy sent to William Shafer, Special Agent of the United States. In *Documents of Texas History*. 2nd edition, Ernest Wallace, David M. Vigness, and George B. Ward. Austin: State House Press, 1994, p. 40

¹² General Vicente Filisola. *Memoirs for the History of the War in Texas*, Vol. 2. Wallace Woolsey, transla. Austin: Eakin Press, 1985, Pp. 15 – 19

Mexican loyalists contended with hostile Comanches, fought to keep newly established colonizers out of harm's way, and maintained the effort to keep Anglo pioneers at bay.

Mexico's independence from Spain was attained through a succession of battles that grew out of political, economical, and demographic issues in Spain, Mexico, and Texas. Set off by the Spanish crown's 1804 order to confiscate church assets in Mexico and Texas in order to pay mounting war debts incurred fighting the French, tensions boiled and hostilities toward King Ferdinand VII fervently escalated. Crop failure in 1809 and widespread famine in 1810 sealed the fate of Spanish authority in Mexico. The repression of the most basic of human rights, the lack of available farm supplies, demand for repayment of loans to the church, and the denial of public employment threatened the survival of the colonists. Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla initiated the rebellion that eventually led to sovereignty for Mexico on September 10, 1810, from the front steps of his parish church in Delores, Mexico. Though his plot to rid the colony of Spanish royalty resulted in his and several comrades' assassination, local revolts and guerilla activities sustained Father Hidalgo's struggle.¹³

Mindful of the 1805 attempt by the United States to claim Texas as part of the Louisiana Purchase that extended to the Rio Grande River, Lieutenant Colonel Don José Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara approached Americans in pursuit of aid and cooperation. In March of 1811, Gutiérrez met early resistance from U. S. government officials who questioned his authority. Gutiérrez, upon his release, retreated to Nacogdoches where he regrouped and organized approximately 500 men, volunteers from the states of Kentucky,

¹³ Ibid, Pp. 16 – 17

Tennessee, Mississippi, and Louisiana.¹⁴ Initial alliance between Mexican loyalists and Anglo pioneers, which came to pass with the need for support, soon generated an influx of land-thirsty Americans to the Mexican frontier.

The zealous Gutiérrez issued a Declaration of Independence to William Shafer, Special Agent of the United States, on April 6, 1813. In his statement, he pledged that ties to tyranny had to be broken to maintain order and reestablish rule in the colony.¹⁵ His forces embodied only a small fraction of the local factions that upheld Father Hidalgo's mission. Passionate splinter parties, such as Gutiérrez's, were bolstered by rebellion in Spain. Negotiations between Spanish royal officer, Agustín de Iturbide, and Mexican loyalist, Vicente Guerrero, came out of the extended years of struggle and sacrifice. The consequence of their meeting, on August 24, 1821, was a compromise that guaranteed Mexican independence, equality of Spanish and *Criollo* citizens, and the preservation of the Catholic Church.¹⁶ Mexican pioneers enjoyed little opportunity for celebration as politics, economics, fortification, and new order beckoned immediate attention.

On the brink of destruction and downfall from decades of fighting, Mexico encountered a tumultuous beginning to her sought-after independence. Currency barely circulated, ranches and family farms scarcely produced, citizens faced massive unemployment rates, and vital areas experienced depopulation as workers sought to sustain themselves elsewhere. In addition, issues of class and authority held over from

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ José Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara, p. 40

¹⁶ David J. Weber. *The Mexican Frontier, 1821-1846: The American Southwest Under Mexico*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1982, Pp. 6 – 10

colonial days. Constantly at odds, the church hierarchy, landed gentry, military officials, and unproven politicians vied for governmental jurisdiction.¹⁷ Mexican pioneers, short on allies and long on obstacles to reconcile, were challenged by many of the same problems that greeted Anglo pioneers on the dawn of their independence. With new ideals of society, culture, and institutions, Mexico resorted to unconventional measures to bring order to the Republic of Mexico. Cheap land and the promise of a new beginning beckoned to settlers.

Still vulnerable to encroachment from the north and Indian hostilities, the newly united provinces of *Coahuila y Tejas*, containing the northern portion of present day Mexico and all of pre-Revolutionary Texas, presented specific issues to the infant country. Mass population of a sparsely settled colony appeared to be Mexico's only viable option for getting its largest northern province firmly under control; however, Mexico itself lacked potential colonizers to gain the desired foothold. Given the idea by Spanish rulers who granted Spanish subject and Louisiana resident, Moses Austin, a significant land grant in January of 1821, the Mexican government established the National Colonization Law of August 18, 1824. In its approved form, the law became the State Colonization Law of March 24, 1825. The decrees, revised versions of the Imperial Colonization Law of January 1823, encouraged colonization and stipulated the peopling of *Coahuila y Tejas*.¹⁸ Under the new law, foreigners were drawn to Texas with the promise of significant portions of cheap land free from taxes and duties. Ranging in price from 30 to 200 per grant by the end of colonization, each family received

¹⁷ Ibid, Pp. 14 – 16

¹⁸ Ibid, Pp. 160 – 165

approximately 4,428 acres of land. Minimal requirements of the Anglo pioneers called for allegiance to the Mexican government and a profession of faith to the Catholic religion. Marriage to Mexican women held the promise of additional land. Immigrant agents, *empresarios*, negotiated land contracts with the Mexican government that were then doled out to Anglo pioneers.¹⁹

The influx of settlers brought in by enticing land offers and the lack of serious commitment to liberal colonization demands caused the Mexican government to reevaluate its immigration policy. General Mier y Terán's Law of April 6, 1830 truncated further immigration and voided the contracts of *empresarios* not in compliance with previous laws. Under a growing economy based on cotton production and trade, Mexican and Anglo Texans disagreed over access to Gulf of Mexico ports and the utilization of slave labor. No longer guaranteed rights under the Law of April 6, settlers began to express dissatisfaction.

Unfortunately for the United States of Mexico, the Law of April 6 proved to be too little, too late. Stephen F. Austin and Green De Witt's colonies were filled to capacity, other colonies were bustling with settlers, and squatters lived by their own set of rules in the eastern portion of the province.²⁰ (see Illustration 1, page 12 for location, sizes, and number of colonies in Coahuila y Tejas, 1824 – 1835. This diagram provides a clear picture of the force with which American pioneers flooded Texas.) Mexican and Texas families contended for economic, political, and cultural control of the resource

¹⁹ Walter Lord. *A Time to Stand: The Epic of the Alamo*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961, p. 22

²⁰ David J. Weber, Pp. 170 – 189

rich, yet undeveloped land. The brewing conflict, which began with Moses and Stephen F. Austin's *Old Three Hundred*, reeked havoc on the Texas frontier and highlighted the affects of social, cultural, racial, and gender discord in the pioneer adventure.

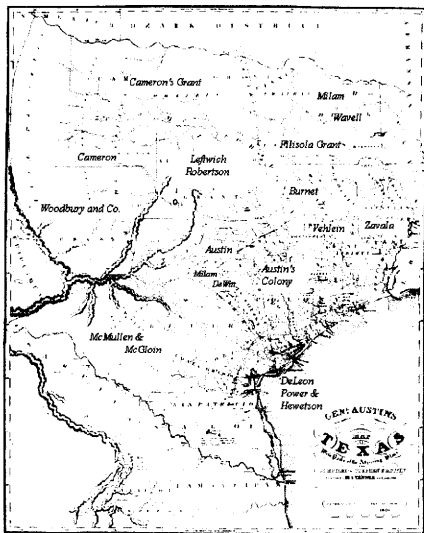


Illustration 1 - Coshuals y Tejas Colonies, 1821 - 1835

Copied with permission of Texas State Land Office,
public use file, GLO map #2116.

American Pioneer Invasion of Coahuila y Tejas

... Well, we was mounted and set out for Texas. We traveled on about one hundred miles, and our cattle got sick and commenced dying, and we had to stop driving them. I do not remember any more that took place until we got to the Colorado River...but there was no house there then nor nothing but a wilderness... Your pa built a house in one week. [He] cleared about six acres. But as [he] had made a good many rails, the Indians thought it would be a good way to make a pen out of those rails and catch our horses. All we had but Tormentor [the horse] was gone, and he would have been gone, but Mr. Rabb put a chain around his neck every night and locked him to the house with a padlock.²¹

While the story of *Austin's Old Three Hundred* has oft been told in middle school history books across the state, it is one that bears repeating in the context of this analysis. The colony, along with the others established in the Mexican territory from 1821 – 1830, is not only vital to the shape of our present day map, but also to the social, racial, and gender conflicts that remained long after the last shots of the *Texas Revolution* were fired. Austin's selective choice of colonists for his camp and the preferential distribution of land to married men, set up a system of race and class ranking not unlike the one Mexican loyalists sought to discard with independence from Spain. Rather than approach Texas with hopes of a fresh start, as history books frequently report, Austin's colonizers brought with them the social and cultural constructs from which they escaped, including

²¹ Mary Crownover Rabb. "Mary Crownover Rabb." In *Texas Tears and Texas Sunshine: Voices of Frontier Women*, Jo Ella Powell Exley ed. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1985, Pp. 7 – 9

the practice of slavery.²² What greeted the late arrivals was an antebellum Texas that more closely resembled the slave states of the Deep South, than the promise land. The harsh and hostile environment, unfamiliar and uncertain Mexican administration, and the all too familiar restrictions that greeted pioneers upon their arrival on the frontier produced precarious conditions in *Coahuila y Tejas*.

Lands chosen by Austin's elite colonist were of the highest quality and were located along the rich, fertile river bottoms of the Brazos, Colorado, and San Bernard rivers (see Illustration 1 for the location of Austin's colonies). By 1824 and 1825, when the largest number of settlers arrived in Texas, prime property was already developed or labors to improve the land well underway. River bottomland along the Brazos was promptly settled from the Gulf of Mexico to present day Brazos County.²³ Additionally, some *empresarios* did not or were not granted the opportunity to inspect the grants of land that they speculated to gullible colonizers.²⁴ These issues, in addition to the social and racial conflicts among the varied groups competing for dominance in Texas, created a unique and troublesome environment for settling the Texas frontier.

Though the prospect of livelihood continued to call settlers to the remaining land, little else could have foretold the onslaught of pioneers who declared themselves "Gone To Texas." Diaries, journal entries, personal letters, and oral histories of the Anglo families who migrated to Texas hold endless tales of the misery and doom that greeted

²² Stephen F. Austin. "Record of Moses Austin and Family." *The Austin Papers*. In *The Annual Report of the American Historical Association*. Washington: General Printing Office. Microfilm SL4 U.S. Documents

²³ Lester G. Bugbee. "The Old Three Hundred: A List of Settlers in Austin's First Colony." In *Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, Volume 1* (1897 October). Microform v. 1/40, reel 1.

²⁴ Edward Albert Lukes. *The DeWitt Colony of Texas, 1825 - 1836*. Ann Arbor: Loyola University of Chicago Microfilms, 1971, p. 58

the new arrivals. Accounts of marauding Indians, suspicious speculators, barren soil, sweltering sun, and vicious mosquitoes fill volumes of Texas History manuscripts, in addition to the same hardships and deprivations that challenged western pioneers. Noah Smithwick, a nomadic frontiersman known for calling matters as he saw them, simply summed up the future for Texas, "The outlook was a gloomy one to me." The only prospect was the abundant ground itself, which held little fascination for the wanderer.²⁵ The land, what was left for claiming, was the single asset that bound together Anglo pioneers from all parts of the continent who fled from adverse and inadequate conditions.²⁶

Pioneer Women in Coahuila y Tejas

...The colonists, consisting of a dozen families, were living huddled together for security against the Karankawas... The rude log cabins have been so often described as the abode of the pioneer as to require no repetition here; suffice it to say that save as a partial protection against rain and sun they were absolutely devoid of comfort. Game was plenty year round, so there was no need of starving. Men talked hopefully of the future; children reveled in the novelty of the present; but women – ah, there was where the situation bore heaviest. As one old lady remarked, Texas was "A heaven for men and dogs, but a hell for women and oxen."²⁷

²⁵ Noah Smithwick. *The Evolution of a State or Recollections of Old Texas Days*. Austin, University of Texas Press, 1983. p. 9

²⁶ Julia Lee Sinks. *Chronicles of Fayette County: The Reminiscences of Julia Lee Sinks*. Walter P. Freytag, ed. Whitehead & Whitehead, 1975, p. 3

²⁷ Noah Smithwick, Pp. 4 - 5

The untamed Texas frontier consisted of far more than the popular, and heroic characters with whom most readers are familiar. The bear fighting Davy Crockett, who so bravely gave his life at the Alamo, and the resourceful Sam Houston, who commanded the final battle for Texas independence, are only single contributors to the unique tale that resulted in autonomy. "It was children, family men, wives, and mothers who played the vital role in settling the Western frontier, in Texas as well as elsewhere."²⁸ All of these characters' efforts, concurrently, formed the foundation for a civilized and domesticated society that began to emerge and vie for legitimacy on the Texas frontier in the 1820s to 1830s.

As did their westward settling sisters, Texas pioneer women dutifully followed their husbands into the distant land of the South. Some reports, including the many lists of *Austin's Old Three Hundred*, claim that even single women made the trek to *Coahuila y Tejas*.²⁹ Moreover, as western pioneer woman, Texas female emotions regarding her journey South "ranged from eager expectation at beginning anew, through sober resignation at the necessity of accompanying husbands, to abject grief at leaving friends and family." Those who made the journey were sometimes more skilled in the manly tasks of pioneering than her counterparts and were, therefore, better equipped to make the transition to the southern frontier. Those without the necessary skills encountered further difficulties in establishing the pioneer home.³⁰ Women who were able assisted in

²⁸ Sylvia A. Grider. "Family Past Times: Texas Frontier Families." In *The Texas Humanist* (1985 March – April). Available at http://www.humanities-interactive.org/texas/annexation/family_past_times.htm, Pp. 1 - 2

²⁹ Lester Bugbee.

³⁰ Fane Downs. "'Tryels and Trubbles': Women in Early Ninetcent-Century Texas. In *Southern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 90. (1986 July), p. 36

building the crude log cabins that dotted the Texas prairie and signaled the arrival of the colonizers. “Our absolute need gave birth to invention and energy, however, and all hands – men, women, and children – went to work with a will to make our new quarters as comfortable as possible.”³¹ Insufficient and unprepared pioneer women whiled away endless empty hours talking and thinking of home and the desperation, loneliness, and unfamiliarity of brutal prairie life.

Early nineteenth-century women of the colonies found little use of the ladylike skills for which they were trained back home. Sewing and weaving abilities accomplished little on the prairie because there were no spinning wheels or looms, nor thread to spin, in order to recreate the handmade treasures that reminded pioneer women of the homes they left behind. Likewise, there was little house to keep, merely simple meals to prepare, no jersey cattle for dairy farming, few seeds for planting and little knowledge of what to grow in the unfamiliar climate. Least of all, the newly established colonies had no libraries, no books, nor informative newspapers. As evidence and lack of numerous primary sources suggest, few of the colonizers could read and write. Newcomers, busied by the numerous tasks at hand, initially had little time to spare for building churches and schools.³² Concerns of pioneer women were much more basic than those of her western counterpart and usually centered around tending to, “and bearing more babies either to bury or look after.”³³ Sustenance and survival were the pillars of early life on the southern prairie.

³¹ John Holland Jenkins. *Recollections of Early Texas: The Memoirs of John Holland Jenkins*. John Holmes Jenkins III, ed. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997, p. 6

³² Noah Smithwick., p. 5

³³ Sylvia A. Grider, Pp 1 - 2

Despite the outlook, which appeared so bleak, the women of these frontier families managed to leave behind volumes of diaries and personal correspondence that paints a far different picture of life in frontier Texas. As their survival and testimonials indicate, the harsh and demanding environment provided a sense of satisfaction and exhilaration that amply made up for the lack of amenities.³⁴ Sheer joy came from the most fundamental tasks that managed to produce a length of thread for mending clothes, a much needed tool for refining the rudimentary home, or the preparation of a meal that provided more than venison.

Julia Lee Sinks, whose family settled in the Colorado River community of present day Fayette County in the 1840s, shares such a notably optimistic account of survival in *Coahuila y Tejas*. Though her own family was late in arriving to the territory, her 1876 efforts to compile first-hand accounts of the settlement of the Colorado River colony reveal a community of settlers, from a variety of conditions, who worked together for daily survival. She tells of pioneers from all walks of life that fled from adverse conditions, “who accepted with joy a freedom from conventionality, and were aided by culture to comprehend with greater depth of feeling the exhilarating effect of wide expanse of verdure and pleasant night winds.”³⁵ Sinks account is verified by the March – May 1831 report of a New York Land Scrip who visited *Coahuila y Tejas* to claim land that he inherited. The New Yorker expressed surprise and gratitude for the crude, yet friendly homes that offered him shelter during his visit. Colonizers welcomed the worldly companionship and presented to him a sense of satisfaction and unity in the most

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Julia Lee Sinks, Pp. 1 - 4

improbable environments.³⁶ Out of the socialization of different elements emerged an early Texas hospitality and character that, real or imagined, persists to the present day.

Almost certainly, one of the most well known female “characters” (in every sense of the word) of early *Coahuila y Tejas* settlement was Mary Crowover Rabb who made the journey south with her family in 1823 (see photo – Illustration 2). Rabb, one of the original members of *Austin’s Old Three Hundred*, settled first along the Colorado River a few miles from present day La Grange. Mary’s personal memoirs do not suggest the sense of dismay that many pioneer women experienced in their migration to the colonies. Quite the opposite, her tales are most entertaining, lively, and masterfully conveyed. Her hilarious, though informative accounts, are somewhat difficult to decipher as they are written in what could be labeled prairie speak; nonetheless, her ability to tell a Texas yarn renders the effort more than worthy.



Illustration 2 – Mary Crowover Rabb, arrived in Coahuila y Tejas with her family in 1823. Photo courtesy Barker Center for American History, Austin, Texas

³⁶ “A Visit to Texas: Being the Journal of a Traveler, (1834 New York).” In *Documents in Texas History*, Pp. 69 - 70

Rabb's almost neurotic fear of alligators and Indians leads the reader to question her resolve to live out life in Texas. For example, one of the compelling reasons given for the family's continual relocation back and forth from the Colorado to Brazos River bottoms is the indecision of which concern presented greater frustration, pillaging Indians or ravishing mosquitoes.³⁷ One of the first women to own a spinning wheel in the colonies, Mary learned to pass the time and fear of invaders or predators by spending hours at the homemade wheel. According to her personal account, the whirring of the wheel drowned out suspicious noises and passed the time spent in unbearable loneliness. More than once, Rabb relays the sincere concern that alligators are going to emerge from the river and proceed to eat her children. Equally amusing, though telling, is her nightly practice of removing specific boards in the floor of her home to allow the farm pigs inside to hide from thieving Indians. Ironically, Mary's journal reveals that her fear of the Indians must have been significantly less than her fear of predators. Early one morning, after discovering missing corn from the family crib, Mary gathered her family and proceeded to tract the suspected Indians and demand compensation for her missing corn, hardly the actions of a meek and fearful woman.³⁸

Though her continued existence in the colonies appeared unlikely, Mary Rabb lived out her life in various locations in Central Texas. The wife of a prominent citizen and founding Methodist minister, Rabb led a fulfilling and eventful life in the state.

³⁷ Mary Crownover Rabb. *Rabb Family Papers*. In the Barker Center for American History. Austin: University of Texas

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Floods, war, the births of several children, the death of one child, and the threat of fearsome intruders, did little to quell the efforts of the Rabb pioneer spirit. Contributions to Rutgersville (modern day Southwestern) College, efforts to build a formidable cattle empire, and volunteer service for the country marked a mere few of the social and cultural offerings provided by one of the earliest pioneer families to arrive on the frontier.³⁹ In spite of unfavorable conditions, Mary lived to the age of seventy-seven, an extremely unusual age by pioneer standards.

Like Mary Rabb, Mary Austin Holley, noted reporter and cousin of Stephen F. Austin, contributes a wealth of knowledge and insight into the early Anglo pioneer life in *Coahuila y Tejas*. Holley's accounts, though equally compelling, are from a different perspective of the intellectual and distinguished. Her reports, compiled while on visit to the colonies in 1835, reveal the troublesome inconvenience for a teacher, by profession, in the lack of towns and scarce population. Aside from the inconveniences, Holley writes that the complaints against living in Texas were not the fault of the country, but that of the infancy of its development. She provides ample evidence in the willingness of colonizers to work together and to share the fruits of their labor. While she reports that social gatherings were rare due to the travel time incurred in congregation, she, like Julia Sinks, notes the gaiety of the people from various backgrounds. The deprivations, she asserts, became the source of pleasure as families worked together to settle the frontier. "They discovered in themselves the powers, they did not suspect themselves of

³⁹ *Ibid.*

possessing. Equally surprised and delighted at the discovery, they apply to their labours with all that energy and spirit, which new hope and conscious strength, inspire."⁴⁰ At the basis of this unified effort were the women and families of the colonies. Undoubtedly, it is of the women whom Holley speaks as she refers to the unknown power and its discovery.

Mary Austin Holley, though never a permanent resident of the colonies, compiled the earliest published account of the revolution in Texas.⁴¹ Her love for the territory and concern for her cousin inspired the works that provided the most immediate and thorough view of the families who migrated to early Texas. Still used as a reliable and remarkable source of primary information, Holley's works captured the spirit, the character, and the environment of colonial, revolutionary, and post war Texas through the eyes and emotions of a woman.

As the firsthand experiences of pioneer women in *Coahuila y Texas* repeatedly revealed, the pioneer woman was responsible for the organization and safeguarding of the most basic social, cultural, and economic networks in the colonies. These networks provided for the evolution of a civilized and domesticated society.⁴² Civilized and domesticated society, in turn, created the fabric that held together the community that built the state. United by a common bond to conquer the frontier, women worked together, whether near or far, to accomplish the only goal that would insure their

⁴⁰ Mrs. Mary Austin Holley. *Texas*. Lexington: J. Clarke, 1836. Microform film B 1549, reel 24, no. 1207

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Sylvia A. Grider, p. 1 - 5

livelihood and that of their families within the colonies. Though the efforts of women and families provide a far less exhilarating story than that of the revolutionary heroes, they nevertheless remain an integral ingredient in taming the wild land. Unlike their male counterparts who battled for political and territorial rights to the region, women fought to establish the homes, schools, and churches that provided the structural foundations for the institutions that represent a developed community. Their effort, action, and resolve in early *Coahuila y Tejas* set a trend for future events that would save their lives and help to reshape the modern United States map.

**THE BATTLE FOR TEXAS INDEPENDENCE:
EXPLOSION OF IDEALS**

...I am besieged, by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna – I have sustained continual Bombardment and cannonade for 24 hours and have not lost a man – The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise, the garrison are to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken – I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, & our flag still waves proudly from the walls – I shall never surrender or retreat.⁴³

The content of this analysis focuses on the contribution of women amidst the social, cultural, and economic contradictions of revolutionary Texas and its intent is not to recapitulate the entire series of events leading up to the battle for Texas independence. Instead, this section is devoted to the particular events of the *Texas Revolution* that precluded and triggered the *Runaway Scrape*, the precise incident that featured the efforts of pioneer women in Texas. The confines of this project, as well as the expertise of its author, leave little room for more than a brief discussion of the constantly emerging particulars of the war. While it is necessary to present the information for clarity, it is also crucial to recognize that numerous scholarly efforts provide much greater detail and analysis of the actual battle for Texas independence.

A general overview of the war provides evidence that as colonies matured and developed, tensions between Anglo colonizers and the Mexican government gave way to the inevitable aggression that took place on the Texas frontier in the years 1835 and 1836.

⁴³ William Barrett Travis. "Travis Letter of February 24, 1836." In *Documents of Texas History*, p. 96

The seeds of conflict, firmly planted by contradictory cultures, tradition, language, religion, and values, produced an explosion that would forever change the face of the North American map.⁴⁴ Additionally, political uncertainty, Mexican contemptuousness, and disagreement over the practice of slavery created an atmosphere of discord among the settlers and the leaders who brought them to *Coahuila y Tejas*.⁴⁵ Negotiations started and restarted, constitutions were written and rewritten, and laws were violated and ignored during the years prior to Texas independence, none of which brought resolve before war.

Initial events that marked the beginning of hostilities between the Mexican government and Anglo settlers occurred in the town of Anahuac in 1832, and again in 1835. Both of the skirmishes in the port town erupted over disagreements regarding the Mexican government's attempt to collect a national tariff. Temporarily quelled by the fulfillment of William Barrett Travis's promise to march on Anahuac and disarm the Mexican army who diligently guarded the ports, the disturbances did not produce a mass rally around the cause for revolution.⁴⁶ In fact, Travis was forced by Austin to apologize for his actions so as not to further jeopardize the fragile state of affairs with Mexico. Austin's later attempts to negotiate an agreeable set of guidelines with Mexican officials not only failed to materialize, his efforts landed the father of Texas in a prison in Mexico City accused of plotting the overthrow of the Mexican government.⁴⁷ On May 10, 1834,

⁴⁴ Wallace O. Chariton. *100 Days in Texas: The Alamo Letters*. Plano: Wordware Publishing, Inc., 1990, p.3

⁴⁵ Paul D. Lack. *Texas Revolutionary Experience: A Political and Social History: 1835 - 1836*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1992, Pp. 7 - 8

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 24 - 26

⁴⁷ Walter Lord, 34 - 35

Austin gave his consent and his advise in a letter to James F. Perry to proceed with the convention at Washington-on-the-Brazos and with the design of the declaration for Texas independence.⁴⁸

Under rapidly increasing tensions between the Mexican government and Anglo settlers, the first shot of the *Texas Revolution* was fired at Gonzales in September of 1835. Domingo de Ugartechea, Mexican official at the garrison of Green DeWitt's colony, was ordered to retrieve the cannon that lobbed the first volley. A gift from the Mexican political chief in San Antonio, the cannon was intended to aid in the protection of the colonists against Indian attacks (see Illustration 3).⁴⁹ DeWitt volunteers claim that the Mexican official arrived carrying an ox cart and demanding the return of the cannon to Mexico. Ordered by General José Urrea, Ugartechea was sent to Texas to enforce laws and reestablish order in the disobedient colony.⁵⁰ Having arrived with over 100 men to seize the cannon, the Mexican soldier was furious when refused by the Texans. On October 2, colonists set about mounting the cannon on wheels, loaded it with scrap iron, and rolled it to the nearby Guadalupe River with a symbolic flag attached that stated simply, "Come and Take It."⁵¹ There, along the river, the DeWitt colonists fired the first of the *Texas Revolution*. Ironically, Urrea noted, prior to the event the potential ramifications of the skirmish in his diary. "Let the fact remain buried in the inscrutable

⁴⁸ Stephen F. Austin. "Letter to James F. Perry." *The Austin Papers*.

⁴⁹ "'Come and Take It' Cannon Was One with a Purpose in the Beginning." (1997 October 3). *The Gonzales Inquirer*, p. 3

⁵⁰ General José Urrea. "Diary of the Military Operations of the Division Which Under the Command of General José Urrea Campaigned in Texas." In *Mexican Side of the Texas Revolution [1836]*, 2nd edition. Austin: Graphic Ideas Incorporated, 1970, p. 343

⁵¹ "'Come and Take It," p. 3.

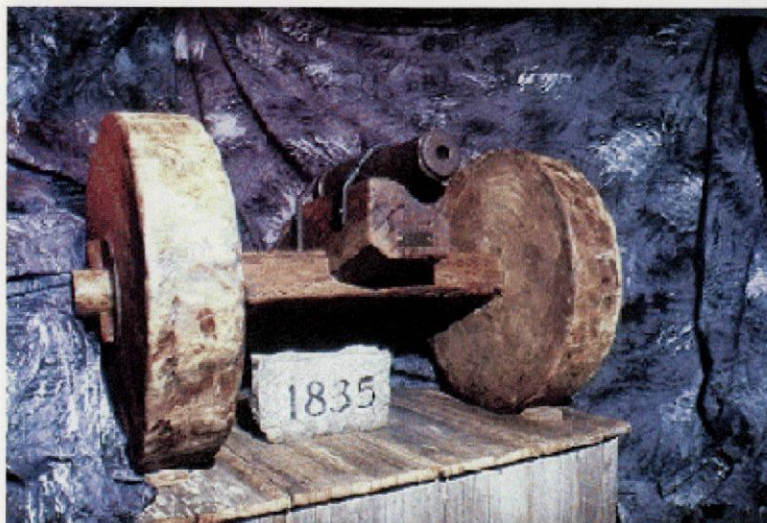


Illustration 3 – Photo of the “Come and Take It” Cannon
Reported to have fired the first shot of the Texas Revolution.
*Photo courtesy of the Gonzales Memorial Museum and
Amphitheater.*

designs of fate as evidence of the unexampled perfidy displayed by the colonists and settlers and as testimony of ill-requited Mexican generosity.”⁵²

On March 2nd of 1836, in a move all too familiar the Mexican government, 58 delegates of the colonies of Texas voted unanimously for the passage of the Texas Declaration of Independence. Declaring the inability of Mexico “to protect the lives, liberty and property of the people, from which its legitimate powers are derived, and for the advancement of whose happiness it was instituted; and so far from being a guarantee for their inestimable and inalienable rights, becomes an instrument in the hands of evil rulers for their suppression.”⁵³ Charging that the Mexican government had evolved from a limited federal republic to a military dictatorship and claiming that their protests against such measures were unheard and unheralded, the Texians justified their drastic measures.

⁵² General José Urrea, p. 331

⁵³ “Texas Declaration of Independence (1836 March 2).” In *Documents of Texas History*, p. 98

After launching accusations, within the document, concerning everything from political corruption to frailty, the delegates of the convention formally declared Texas independence.⁵⁴

Concurrent with the declaration, Major General Sam Houston was appointed leader of the armed forces. He departed from the convention early and immediately began to assemble volunteer soldiers and plan for the subsequent battle for autonomy. In a proclamation to the pioneers of Texas, Houston declared,

... War is raging on the frontiers. Bexar is besieged by two thousand of the enemy under the command of General Sesma. Reinforcements are on the march to unite with the besieging army. By the last report, our force in Bexar was only one hundred and fifty men. The citizens of Texas must rally to the aid of our army or it will perish... The enemy must be driven from our soil... *Independence is declared*; it must be maintained... The services of all men are forthwith required in the field. P. S. It is rumored that the enemy are on their march to Gonzales, and that they have entered the colonies. The fate of Bexar is unknown. The country must and shall be defended. The patriots of Texas are *appealed to in behalf of their bleeding country*.⁵⁵

Bound for Gonzales, Houston rallied men along the way. He would soon learn that his efforts were too late to save the soldiers at Bexar. In a letter to James W. Fannin that appeared in a Nashville newspaper, Houston condemned Santa Anna's cruelty to the soldiers of the Alamo. "Colonel Travis had only 150 effective men out of his whole force of 187. After the fort was carried seven men surrendered and called for General

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, Pp 98 - 99

⁵⁵ "Proclamation Concerning the Enemy's Occupation of Bexar," (1836 March 2). In *The Writings of Sam Houston, 1836, Vol. 1, 1813 - 1836*. Amelia W. Williams and Eugene C. Barker, eds. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1938, Pp. 360 - 361

Santa Anna for quarters. *They were murdered by his orders!!!* Colonel Bowie was sick in bed and also *murdered*.⁵⁶

Well documented and widely debated, the fall of the Alamo on March 6th of 1836 marks a profoundly significant day in the history of Texas. Shrouded in mystery, mystic, and wonder, the events of that day produced the folklore and legend that have continued to uphold the character, attitude, and arrogance of “native” Texans well into the twenty-first-century. The deaths of all but a few of the brave and courageous inhabitants of the Alamo came to represent all that is bravery, courage, and that mighty Texas temperament. So many mythical and massive heroes were born on that day who left little room in the hearts, minds, and textbooks of future generations of Texans for the unsung, unknown, and un-male.

As an interesting side note to this analysis, an experiment was performed at a local junior high school that challenged the depth of knowledge of a group of seventh grade Texas History students concerning their favorite subject, the Alamo. When asked to name at least one male Anglo Texas hero who participated the battle at Bexar, every student burst with pride over the ability to provide a correct answer. When asked the same question, replacing “male Anglo” with African American, Anglo female, or Hispanic female, not one student (other than my own child who has lived with this project for a year) could muster an answer aside from the well known Susanna Dickinson. Though not intended or performed in such a manner as to embarrass the teacher or the students, this experiment held no surprises in its end result. While recent

⁵⁶ Sam Houston. “Letter to Fannin,” (1836 March 11). In *REPUBLICAN Extra*. Nashville, (1836 April 7).

discoveries and scholarly publications reveal a wealth of new information regarding early Texas History, there remains a load of work to be completed. Seemingly as insurmountable as the battle of the Alamo is the challenge to deflate those mythical heroes ever so slightly enough as to provide room for the families whose heritage runs deep in such a diverse state.

Likewise, little effort is necessary to conjure up images of the horror that consumed colonizers after the fall of the Alamo into the hands of the reportedly brutal General Antonio López de Santa Anna. Outnumbered nearly two to one, all of the Alamo soldiers were either killed in battle or brutally murdered.⁵⁷ By the admission of his own men, Santa Anna took few prisoners. “When [the soldier] presented the prisoners, he was severely reprimanded for not killing them on the spot, after which he turned his back upon Castrillón [major general in the Mexican army and trusted companion of Santa Anna] while the soldiers stepped out of their ranks and set upon the prisoners until they were all killed.”⁵⁸ Santa Anna, himself, alluded to the widely reported merciless burning of the bodies on Saint Patrick’s square.⁵⁹ The heroes were fallen, the Alamo empty, and only a few women and a slave escaped the bloodbath.

The subsequent massacre at Goliad of March 27, 1836, further contributed to the widespread panic throughout the colonies and generated thoughts of impending doom and the pursuit of a lost cause. Colonel James W. Fannin and his troops suffered a fate

⁵⁷ “Letter to Stephen F. Austin from James F. Perry,” (1836 April 8). *The Austin Papers*.

⁵⁸ Ramon Martínez Caro. “A True Account of the First Texas Campaign and the Events Subsequent to the Battle of San Jacinto.” In *Mexican Side of the Texas Revolution [1836]*, 2nd edition. Austin: Graphic Ideas Incorporated, 1970, p. 106

⁵⁹ Antonio López de Santa Anna. “The General-in-Chief of the Army of Operations of the Mexican Republic to the Inhabitants of Texas.” (1836 March 7). In *100 Days in Texas: The Alamo Letters*, p. 345

no less tragic or brutal than that of their fellow soldiers at the Alamo, yet his story, like that of the women and families is less well known and certainly less celebrated than that of the heroes of the Alamo. Fannin had been warned by Houston to abandon his post at Goliad and informed of the approach of the Mexican army. Insistent on awaiting the return of his men who had marched to San Patricio February 27 – March 2 in order to assist Frank Johnson at Victoria, Fannin waited too late and sealed the fate of his soldiers. Under orders from Santa Anna, General Urrea captured Fannin and some 300 men, held them in the chapel at *La Bahia*, and later marched them out to the banks of the Guadalupe River where they were shot, execution style.⁶⁰

The events at the Alamo and Goliad were paramount to the ultimate success of the campaign for Texas independence. "Remember the Alamo," and "Remember Goliad" became popular rallying cries for soldiers who sought to avenge the deaths of their brothers and neighbors.⁶¹ Yet, a multitude of smaller actions, including those undertaken by the families of Texian soldiers played a significant role as well in the change in course of the battle for Texas independence. Susanna Dickinson, widow of fallen Alamo hero Almeron Dickinson, her daughter, and Travis's slave, Joe, arrived in the town of Gonzales with the news of the fall of the Alamo on March 13, 1836. Hispanic perspectives tell of Mexican nationals, Andres Barcena and Anselmo Bergara, who attempted to share the word of the Alamo soldiers' demise; however, distrustful of their

⁶⁰ Henry S. Foote. "The Goliad Campaign and Massacre, March 1836." In *Documents in Texas History*, Pp. 106 -110

⁶¹ Noah Smithwick, Pp. 91 - 93

news, Sam Houston had the informants arrested and jailed in Gonzales.⁶² Dickinson soon verified the reports as she delivered the same news to Deaf Smith, a volunteer in Sam Houston's army. Her reports included the fate of the "Immortal 32" soldiers and eight other volunteers from Gonzales, all among the dead in San Antonio. Smith and company, in turn, shared the news with Houston and the citizens and remaining soldiers of Gonzales. The Mexican army advanced to Cibolo Creek, merely a few days journey afoot from Gonzales.⁶³ Panic ensued as Houston ordered his ragtag army of volunteers to retreat to the Colorado River.

Having learned the fate of Colonel Fannin and his men on March 25, 1836, Houston recognized the need for further retreat and field training. Forced to give the order to pull back and abandon the wishes of his men to stand and fight on the Colorado River,⁶⁴ Houston risked losing what was left of a severely reduced army to dissention and disarray. Taking full blame for the disasters that appeared to loom in the future, he assured Thomas J. Rusk, Secretary of War, that his efforts would provide the best opportunity to garner assistance from the United States.⁶⁵ At the same time, President David G. Burnet prepared for a retreat of the government to the small town of Harrisburg, just outside of present day Houston. With both the government and the army on the run, the fall of the battle for Texas independence appeared to be immanent.

⁶² Timothy M. Matovina. *The Alamo Remembered: Tejano Accounts and Perspectives*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995, Pp. 17 - 18

⁶³ Walter Lord, Pp. 180 - 182

⁶⁴ Sam Houston. "Letter to Richard R. Royal," (1836 March 24) In *The Writings of Sam Houston, 1813 - 1863*, p. 384

⁶⁵ "Letter to Thomas J. Rusk," (1836 March 29). *Ibid*, Pp. 384 - 385

THE TEXAS PIONEER WOMAN'S STRUGGLE

The Runaway Scrape

...Euphemia came up from the creek bottom, she was surprised to see a crowd milling beneath the oaks and in the field before the house... Now the road was filled with travelers, mostly women and children all headed for the great oak...Oxen now pulled wagons filled with furniture, bedding, and children... Soon a strange crowd of women came, faces white and hard as chalk, some staggering along, calling their grief to the wind. "They're all dead. Colonel Travis, Bowie, the volunteers from Gonzales, every last one." ...Houston said, "I suggest the women and children make a run for the United States. Santa Anna won't follow them across the border." Euphemia understood the grown-ups were preparing to flee.⁶⁶

The panic running rampant through the army quickly spread to the general population as well. Colossal fear triggered a well known, yet seldom celebrated event that came to be known by Texans as the *Runaway Scrape*. Some sources claim that Houston's orders to retreat to the Brazos were the source of horror among the citizens of Gonzales and the rest of Texas, others cling to the horror stories told by the eyewitnesses of the Alamo. With few options and less time to consider them, Houston arranged an impromptu meeting of his army along Peach Creek, just east of Gonzales.⁶⁷ (Illustration 4 shows a photograph of the Sam Houston Oak tree, location Houston chose for the meeting with soldiers and citizens.) The day's rest and relaxation appeared to have calmed the excitement of the army, but not of the grief stricken widow, Dickinson.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Janice Woods Windle. *True Women*. New York: Ivy Books, 193, Pp. 10 – 17

⁶⁷ "Braches Home and 'Sam Houston Oak' Offers Up Texana at its Best." *The Gonzales Inquirer*, (3 October 2000), p. 11

⁶⁸ William Physick Zuber. *My Eighty Years in Texas*. Austin: University of Texas Press, p. 55

Having evacuated the town, Sam Houston ordered the town of Gonzales burned to the ground to appease the fears of the citizens and Mrs. Dickinson.



Illustration 4: Sam Houston Oak Tree – located on the McClure-Braches Ranch, Gonzales, Texas. Reported site of the gathering of Sam Houston's army and the families of the Runaway Scrape.
Photo Courtesy Kay and Lawson Cook.

Teams of families joined together, having packed little more than the clothes on their backs, and set out for safety in the United States, just across the Louisiana border.

...Houses were standing open the beds unmade, the breakfast things still on the tables, pans of milk moulding in the dairies. There were cribs full of corn, smoke houses full of bacon, yards full of chickens that ran after us for food, nests of eggs in every fence corner, young corn and garden truck rejoicing in the rain, cattle cropping the luxuriant grass, hogs, fat and lazy, wallowing in the mud, all abandoned.⁶⁹

The caravan out of Gonzales consisted of mostly women, children, and the elderly and ill, which followed Houston in his retreat as far as the Brazos River. From there the families

⁶⁹ Noah Smithwick, p. 90

branched off in the direction of the Sabine River, while the army fell back to Groce's Plantation in Waller County to regroup and carry out maneuvers.⁷⁰ One Galveston merchant, who greeted families as they crossed the Sabine, noted that people were fleeing in every direction. According to his estimation, at least one-half of the population of Texas had left their homes for safety.⁷¹ No more certain of their future than their families in the United States, soldiers, Texas citizens, and worried relatives remained anxious for an end to the hostilities.

...What mean those shrieks, so wild and shrill that burst upon my startled ear? 'Tis the cry of women mad with grief. And children filled with fear They weep for husbands, fathers and brothers dear, who no lie cold in death, slain by a relentless foe. Gonzales town is full of woe, men with faces drawn and white are moving to and fro beneath the pale moonlight. Wild Rumors fill the air of troops advancing on the town victorious from the fight. Where, oh where, can help be found? God of the helpless, we call on Thee from off this consecrated ground where the first gun was fired in freedom's holy cause; by love of liberty inspired, Help, oh Help Thou me Lift up thy head, thou stricken one, God has heard thy prayer, God has sent thy favorite son, Sam Houston, and his Texans bold have come to thy relief. With tears of joy they welcomed him, with words of hope he quells their fears, with pitying eyes beholds their grief and bids them dry their tears. Who rides so furious and so fast upon the river road? A courier under ship and spur, horse quivering 'neath the load now draws near. "Fly for your lives" he cried, "Santa Anna's army in on the march to burn Gonzales town." The news spread far and wide. Houston, majestic in his strength, calls forth in trumpet tones, "Attention, men At length the hour has come for action, we must burn the town - to defend it, we have not strength." But that torch lit a spark in each breast that burned with steadfast flame, to avenge our dead and never rest till Texas was free and the name of Santa Anna covered with shame.⁷²

⁷⁰ William Physik Zuber, Pp. 55 - 71

⁷¹ William F. Gray. *Diary of Colonel William Fairfax Gray: From Virginia to Texas, 1835 - 1836*. Dallas: De Golyer Library and William P. Clements Center for Southwestern Studies, Southern Methodist University, 1997.

⁷² "The Burning of Gonzales Town - 1836." *The Gonzales Enquirer*, (2000 October 3), p.3

News reports circulated about the country giving accounts of the gruesome tales that were born at the Alamo, based on the description given by Dickinson's widow. The April 13th edition of the *New Orleans Bee* ran a letter beseeching information from Houston regarding the fate of his family in Texas. Startled by the stories and curious as to their validity, the unnamed male writer expressed concern for the women and children who were "on the banks of the river, destitute of provisions; having to leave their homes without an opportunity of bringing with them but little more than their clothes."⁷³ Stories grew in horror and numbers as they passed from one frightened Texan to another and deeper into the United States. Families, near and far, grasped for every piece of news, regardless how large, small, true, or fictitious, as they waited anxiously for word from loved ones and debated the direction of their own uncertain lives.

Whether the mass exodus of Texans for the Louisiana border was caused by exaggerated rumors or the actions of brutal Mexican soldiers remains open for debate; however, evidence reveals that colonizers mimicked the dissent and fears of the Texas army in their flight. According to participants in the *Runaway Scrape* and Houston's military records, some men deserted from his army in order to join their families and ensure their protection. Concern for dwindling army continued to plague Houston and his fellow leaders, but while the event caused embarrassment, deserters were not labeled cowards for leaving to look after their loved ones.⁷⁴ Families braved the elements and horrendous weather, together, in their quest for the Sabine River and presumed safety.

⁷³ Adelaide Wilson Saunders. "Latest from Texas, Correspondence of the Bee." *The New Orleans Bee*, (1836 April 13).

⁷⁴ Paul D. Lack, Pp 222 - 224

Though they dealt with dissention among the women and children as in Houston's army, the *Runaway Scrape* women held together for what they believed was their only chance to live. In fact, the event was looked upon in hindsight as a noble act of patriotism.⁷⁵

...The Runaway Scrape, the Texans called their flight, with some sort of embarrassed jollity in later years. At the time it was simply terrifying – a pell-mell rush of women, children, officials, speculators, everybody. But through it all, a small group of women stood out with unruffled grace and dignity. These were the Alamo widows.⁷⁶

The *Runaway Scrape* (see Illustration 5 – portrait of the event), whether perceived as a patriotic display or as a shameful and humiliating adventure, influenced the outcome



Illustration 5 - Portrait of the Runaway Scrape on display at the San Jacinto Monument and Museum.

Photo courtesy Virtual Field Trip Network, Texas Education Agency.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Walter Lord, p. 184

of the revolution profoundly. The helpless women, children, elderly and ill who contributed to the event appeared to be of little value to the seemingly insurmountable cause; however, evidence reveals quite the opposite. The desertion of a vast portion of Texas sent a clear message to the Mexican army that Texans were vulnerable and on the run. Sudden departure from homes signaled a hurried and panicked escape. Unfinished meals on tables told of the expediency of the families' flight. Weekly wash flying in the breeze greeted Santa Anna and his army. Unaffected belongings spoke nothing of their owners return. The emptiness of the most populated segment of the colonies attested to the fears of both citizen and soldier.

Greeted by an unexpected, but welcome surprise, the Mexican army gained confidence in their military prowess and arrogance in the prospect of their victory. Army accounts showed confidence of a Mexican stronghold reaching across the entire coastline to Brazoria. Evidence showed that the rapid and concerted marches of troops caused disarray among the enemy. Reports attest to the conviction that the Texian army had all but surrendered. In his *Manifiesto*, Santa Anna arrogantly notes that in order to stop desertion, Sam Houston was forced to tell his army that the Mexican general had returned to Mexico and no longer posed a threat to Texas.⁷⁷ While the validity of his statement and the source of the information remain in question, the overconfidence that it produced is apparent. Combined with the verifiable information that Houston's army had declined

⁷⁷ Antonio López de Santa Anna. "Manifiesto Which General Antonio López de Santa Anna Addresses to His Fellow Citizens Relative to His Operations During the Texas Campaign and His Capture of 10 May 1837." In *The Mexican Side of the Texas Revolution*, Pp. 21 - 23

to less than 800 men, Santa Anna predicted immediate and certain victory for the Republic of Mexico.⁷⁸

Faces of the Scrape and Their Mark on Texas History

As diverse as the land they ran across to safety, the many women who participated in the *Runaway Scrape* came from quite different backgrounds, cultures, and social ranks. They came from near, just across the Louisiana border, and far, the outer limits of New York, in support of families, in search of religious freedom, and in pursuit of a dream. Thrust together by necessity and enormous fear, these women who knew little of one another, knew plenty of the forces driving them to flee. Widows, orphans and grieving siblings understood well the fear, pain, confusion, and uncertainty that defied social, cultural, and economical boundaries. Bound by devotion to the families that brought them to the colonies, pioneer women of Texas united under one cause – safety and love of life.

Pioneer women of the *Runaway Scrape*, shared much more than simply a love for family and lust for life while on the trail. Together, they endured physical and natural hardships that rivaled any tests overcome thus far on the journey to settle the Texas frontier. Some of the most horrendous weather to strike the area, since the opening of the colonies, arrived at precisely the time those families, with loaded wagons, as many

⁷⁸ Ibid.

possessions as they could carry, and many frightened children, were heading for the border. "That spring of 1836 was the wettest I ever knew. First, after crossing the Brazos, we had to raft across two or three bayous, and all along we worked to our knees in mud and water. It was pitiful and distressing to behold the extremity of the families, as sometimes a team would bog down, and women with their babes in their arms, surrounded by little children, had to wade almost waist deep in places."⁷⁹ First hand accounts report that, at a time when expediency was urgent, conditions caused travel time to bog down to as little as four miles in a day.

Severe illness, brought on by the horrific weather, ravaged the exhausted bodies of babies, children, elderly, and already ill. While records are scarcely available that attest to the exact number lost on the trail, many families tell in their journals of the loss of life in addition to the hardships and circumstances of the journey. Measles, whooping cough, and numerous other unknown contagious diseases spread quickly in such favorable conditions.⁸⁰ Little time or effort was available for nursing the ill and many succumbed and were buried there on the trail.

Despite the certain difficulty and uncertain outcome, Texas pioneer women such as Mrs. Lucinda Gorham actively chose to participate in the struggle. She, and numerous other family members from present day Fayette County, voted to join the *Runaway Scrape* caravan that traveled through their area. Downpours and illness were just a few of the troubles facing this band of travelers. Gorham's account reveals a Comanche

⁷⁹ John Holland Jenkins, Pp. 43 – 44.

⁸⁰ Dilue Rose Harris. "Dilue Rose Harris." In *Texas Tears and Texas Sunshine: Voices of Frontier Women*. Jo Ella Powell Exley, ed., p. 58

attack in which the Indians came out of the creek bottom and surrounded the group. Left with few choices, men with guns and women, with the largest sticks they could find, determined to “make a show, and took our stand.”⁸¹ In the face of bad weather, Indian attacks, and dissention, most of the families survived the journey. The men in this particular band broke off from the women and children to join Sam Houston at Groce’s Plantation. Though several women and family members, unable to endure the entire trip, stopped off in Washington County. Many were reported to have continued along the trail all the way to the Louisiana border.⁸² Gorham’s description of the *Runaway Scrape* as it neared the border reflects the determination in the many families who suffered on the trail. The worn out carriages, huge numbers of ox and mule wagons, animals loaded with bedding and provisions, paint an appropriate picture of the horrendous conditions of the notorious event.⁸³

Broken-down wagons and household treasures littered the path of the fleeing families. Kate Scurry Terrell notes in her diary that any kind of vehicle in any sort of repair was “piled with bedding and babies, the women driving, or following on foot or on horseback as they could.”⁸⁴ Terrell relates a story similar to that of Noah Smithwick in that she tells of the families who left breakfast on the tables to join in the rush. According to her version, an unwritten law stated that smokehouses were to be left open for the hungry that passed along the trails. Ripe with testaments of cooperation and unity, Terrell’s diary documents the efforts of women who tried to keep a newborn baby and

⁸¹ Julia Lee Sinks, Pp. 49 - 51

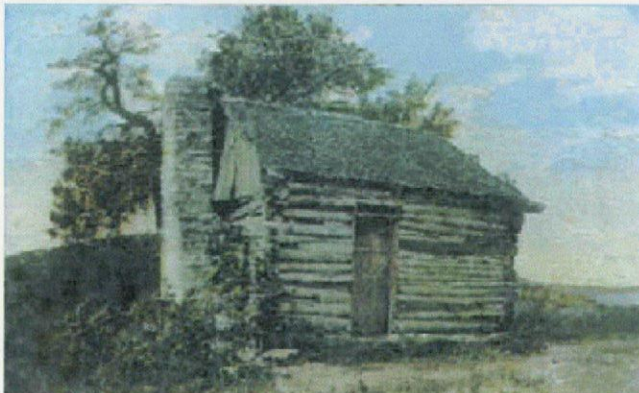
⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

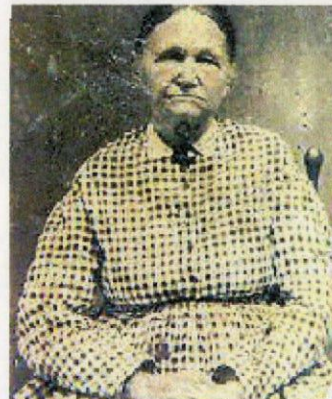
⁸⁴ Kate Scurry Terrell. “The Runaway Scrape.” In *A Comprehensive History of Texas 1685 to 1897, Vol. 2*. Dudley G. Wooten, ed. Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1898, p. 659

her mother dry by holding blankets above them as they walked along in the pouring weather. Children patiently waited in a wagon, stuck in mire to the axles, while rescuers doubled back to save them. Terrell's band of female soldiers traveled as far as Buffalo Bayou on the outskirts of Houston before they halted from total exhaustion. Just one day after their arrival on April 20, 1836, shouts of, "Hallelujah Hallelujah " could be heard in the distance, the battle had come to an end.⁸⁵

Mary Ann Kent (Illustration 6 – shown in this photo, next to a portrait of her



MARY ANN'S CABIN



MARY ANN KENT, BYAS,

Illustration 6 - Mary Ann Kent Byas, known as the orphan of the Alamo, was the daughter of Alamo soldier Andrew Kent Jackson. *Photo courtesy Stan Delk.*

cabin) was a mere child of twelve years old when she braved the brutal conditions and uncertainty of the *Runaway Scrape*. Having lost her father in the battle of the Alamo, she needed no prodding to join the families headed east to safety. A native of the present day San Antonio area Mary Ann is reported to have witnessed the arrival of the Mexican troops first-hand. Near victims of the burning and looting that took place in their path,

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, Pp. 669 - 671

Mary Ann, her mother, and brother are said to have narrowly escaped rebel bands of Santa Anna's army. Despite the horror she reportedly witnessed from her home, Mary Ann and her family returned to the area to rebuild their pre-war cabin (Illustration 6 – portrait). Though no mansion by modern standards, life on the prairie must have suited Mary Ann just as the simpler life pleased the early pioneers.⁸⁶

Touted by the *San Antonio Express* as “an orphan of the Alamo,” Mary Ann outlived three husbands and remained on her ranch until the day she passed away. Shortly before her death, a full version of the following article appeared in the November 5, 1916 *Express*.

... On the broad reaches of the upper Guadalupe while the age-old cypress trees whispered strange tales of other days, she spent her declining years. The little cabin stands hard by the road, the door was never locked, and the stranger was ever welcome. Many who have gone that way have carried with them on the long journey kind memories of the aged widow's hospitality. Grandma Morriss continued to live in her little log house until a few years ago, when failing eyesight compelled her to give up her home. Since, she has lived with her son, Riley Byas, whose home is near the old place, where she can still hear the storm winds tearing at the rugged breasts of the mountains and the Guadalupe in time of flood, as it thunders against its rockbound shores. So has lived, and still lives, one of the last – perhaps the last – child of a Hero of the Alamo.⁸⁷

As the oldest known orphan of the Alamo, Mary Ann continued to fight for and with the land that she knew and, obviously, loved to her death.

Sarah Standifer (see photo – Illustration 7) and her family migrated to *Coahuila* y

⁸⁶ “Mary Ann Kent Byas.” Fannin Family Papers.

⁸⁷ “An Orphan of the Alamo.” *The San Antonio Express*. (1916 November 16)



Illustration 7 - Sarah Standifer, moved to Austin's Colony in 1827. Participated in the Runaway Scrape, gave birth to and lost one child while on the trail.

Photo courtesy Mary Ann Danielle.

Tejas from Lincoln County, Missouri in or around 1827. Settlers of the Austin colony like the famed Rabb family, the Standifers set about planting and farming land along the east side of the Colorado River, close to present day Bastrop. Sarah married Anglo pioneer, John Littleton, in 1835. With the outbreak of the *Texas Revolution*, John joined other Mina (Bastrop County) volunteers to fight for the revolutionary cause.⁸⁸ A participant in the same *Runaway Scrape* trail picked up by Lucinda Gorham, the full-term pregnant Sarah elected to join the caravan. While on the Runaway Scrape, she gave birth to and lost her first child. A sad victim of the hardships of the trail, Sarah's family claimed she never fully recovered from the affects of burying that baby.⁸⁹

After the Revolution, John received a prime patch of land in central Texas for his service as a rear guard for Sam Houston's army. By the end of the reign of the Republic

⁸⁸ Annie Doom Pickrell. "Sarah Standifer." In *Pioneer Women in Texas*. Austin: The L. E. Steck Company, 1929, Pp. 276 - 281

⁸⁹ "Standifer Family History." Contributed to by Mrs. S. J. Smith and in possession of Mary Ann Danielle.

of Texas, Sarah and John had established Young's Settlement or Perryville. Sarah gave birth to a total of fourteen children, eleven of whom lived. One of the children, at the age of ten, was stolen by a friendly Indian, but brought back after only a few days. Sarah and John Littleton built a home just above settlement, at the headwaters of little Sandy Creek. Their new home was the first in the area to be built with completely sawed lumber.⁹⁰

Sarah was a plainspoken woman and, like most of the pioneer type in Texas, had very little education. What she did have was a quick mind and an eye for detail, no doubt, valuable skills for both life on the frontier and the hardships of the *Runaway Scrape*. Never accustomed to privilege, Sarah was well equipped for the pioneer life. Mrs. S. J. Smith, Sarah Standifer's biographer, portrayed her best in the following passage.

...Most things worthwhile in this world come from a tiny thing we call a seed. When seeds are gathered together and sown in a suitable soil, something worthwhile is almost sure to happen. When that something worthwhile has really happened, we are likely to look back proudly to that little bunch of seeds. If any human being connected in any little way with our own line of folks happens to possess just claim that he be numbered with any one bunch of seeds, we are likely to become a bit puffed up over the connection. Today, Texas, with her three million people looks proudly back to the illustrious three hundred pioneers, and many of her people, following the instinct to puff up, state with the pardonable pride that her forebears were among the people thus numbered.⁹¹

The Winters family moved to Texas from Tennessee in 1834, after the Law of April 6, 1830 tightened restrictions on pioneer immigration. Susan Winters Crane (see

⁹⁰ Annie Doom Pickrell. *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 276

Illustration 8) moved with her family to her first log cabin in Texas under Mexican rule. Susan and her family lived a true pioneer life, existing on mostly wild foods, such as

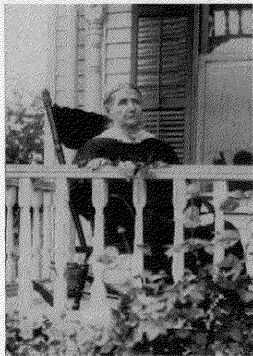


Illustration 8 – Susan Winters Crane, participant in the Runaway Scrape and resident of Walker/Montgomery County. *Photo courtesy Lori Richmann and Renee Smelley.*

grapes, venison, and honey. Like Mary Rabb, Susan learned how to spin cotton on an old homemade wheel. When the revolution began, Susan's father and three brothers joined Sam Houston's army. Three of her brothers fought at the Battle of San Jacinto, while her father and younger brother hauled supplies for the soldiers. She got to know Sam Houston well and participated in the Runaway Scrape "on the night the stars fell."⁹²

Susan married Green B. Crane in 1844 and relocated to Lavaca County, near present day Moulton. There she raised ten surviving children and was a member of the Church of Christ for over sixty years. Susan lived in Texas for 85 years and witnessed

⁹² Renee Smelley. "Mrs. Susan B. Crane." Available online at <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~yarbrough/files/susanwinters.htm>, p. 1

the rise and fall of four different flags over the state. Her death notice includes the statement that, “with her passing, a connecting link of pioneer days has been removed.”⁹³ While Susan B. Winters Crane’s story remains a work in progress, both in the context of this project and in its entirety, her contribution and participation in the *Runaway Scrape* is noteworthy. Like the others who ran with her, Susan’s path left an indelible mark on Texas History.

Eleven-year-old Dilue Rose Harris’s story of her adventure with the *Runaway Scrape* continues to be the mostly widely read and best-known tale of all the accounts. Her father’s meticulously kept journal was later edited to include the then teenager’s outlook on the historical event. Like Mary Rabb’s diary of early pioneer settlement, the end result is a document filled with, not only pertinent information, but entertaining, humorous and lively stories, as well. The Harris family migrated to Texas from Missouri in 1825 and settled first, at Harrisburg, and later near present day Sugarland, Texas.⁹⁴ Quite possibly the family with the shortest journey to endure, the Harris tale is long on drama and hardships.

Harris, unlike the other *Runaway Scrape* participants, reports that the event began in February; however, it is possible that the date was mistaken, as she also documents the receipt of the news regarding the fall of the Alamo in February.⁹⁵ Regardless of the dates, Harris’s tale of the frenzy remains the same. Foremost in the young girl’s mind was the fact that every family in her community was preparing to leave for the United

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ “Dilue Rose Harris,” in *Texas Tears and Texas Sunshine: Voices of Frontier Women*. Jo Ella Powell Exley, ed., p. 53

⁹⁵ Dilue Rose Harris. “The Reminiscences of Mrs. Dilue Harris.” In *Documents of Texas History*. 2nd edition, p. 110

States.⁹⁶ Though her neighbors carried on in a whirl, Harris reported her father's firm belief that Sam Houston would "whip the Mexicans before they reached the Colorado River."⁹⁷ The Harris's hopes were buoyed by the erroneous news that Fannin was on his way to San Antonio with reinforcements and ten thousand volunteers marched with Sam Houston.

An estimated 5000 people waiting to cross the San Jacinto at the Lynchburg ferry greeted the Harris family in Harrisburg, a testament to the intensity of the panic among Texans.⁹⁸ "Everyone was trying to cross first and it was almost a riot."⁹⁹ After a three-day wait, the family encountered further delay at the Trinity where the ferryboat bogged down in the muddy and swollen river. It was there they received the news of the fate of Fannin and his men. No longer was the Harris outlook so optimistic. Five days after crossing the Trinity, Dilue reported the loss of her little sister and the poor condition of her mother who was forced to bury the child on the trail.¹⁰⁰

During a three-week stay in the town of Liberty, a cannon shot was heard in the distance. "Turn back Turn back The Texas army has whipped the Mexican army and the Mexican army are prisoners. No danger No danger Turn back "¹⁰¹ Like the Battle of San Jacinto, the *Runaway Scrape* ended on April 21, 1836. This particular news took time to travel throughout the colonies. Fear of more false alarms caused concern among

⁹⁶ Dilue Rose Harris. "Dilue Rose Harris." In *Texas Tears and Texas Sunshine*, p. 55

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 56

⁹⁹ Dilue Rose Harris. In *Documents in Texas History*, p. 111

¹⁰⁰ Dilue Rose Harris. In *Texas Tears and Texas Sunshine*, Pp 58 - 59

¹⁰¹ Dilue Rose Harris. In *Documents in Texas History*, p. 112

the travelers.¹⁰² The Harris family, one of the first to receive confirmation of the victory, wasted no time in heading for home. Unlike the original journey across the swollen rivers, Dilue reported only the loss of her sunbonnet as a casualty of the return trip home.¹⁰³

Amazingly, despite hardships, tragedies, loss of home and family members, all of the participants in this study and all that surfaced in the research for this project returned to their homes in the newly independent Republic of Texas. According to countless reports, Texans hurried home with the same haste with which they departed, eager to plant late crops in newly independent soil.¹⁰⁴ "By the middle of May our neighbors that we had parted from came home. They had got to the Sabine River before they heard of the Battle of San Jacinto."¹⁰⁵ Corn, cotton, cabins, and children quickly replaced burned out homes, overgrown fields, and immense fear.

¹⁰² John Holland Jenkins, p. 44

¹⁰³ Dilue Rose Harris. In *Texas Tears and Texas Sunshine*, Pp. 59 - 61

¹⁰⁴ John Holland Jenkins, p. 45

¹⁰⁵ Dilue Rose Harris. In *Texas Tears and Texas Sunshine*, p. 65

CONCLUSION

...The men of Texas deserved much credit, but more was due the women. Armed men facing a foe could not but be brave; but the women, with their little children around them, without means of defence or power to resist, faced danger and death with unflinching courage.¹⁰⁶

Far from the completely lawless and utterly unruly society that remains a popular notion of early Texas, this state, like those to the north, east, and west, was built on the institutions that constitute "civilized" society. The drinking, gambling, horseracing, and brawling, no doubt, earned their status in Texas History, but their contribution to the social, cultural, and economic framework of the state is small. Far greater are the foundations put in place by the women and families who returned from the *Runaway Scrape*. Evidence reveals that they immediately went to work on establishing churches, schools, and social organizations in a society that possessed but few amenities.¹⁰⁷ The persistence and perseverance of pioneer women in Texas sustained them on the *Runaway Scrape* and encouraged them upon their return. As in the case of Mary Rabb, member of one of the first Methodist churches in the state, persistence paid off in the slow, but substantial establishment of the basic social units that provided the foundations for the institutions that eventually conquered the Texas frontier.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Thomas J. Rusk. "War Department, Headquarters Army of Texas, San Jacinto River, April 22, 1836. To His Excellency David G. Burnet, President of Texas." In *To The People*, microform film B 1549 reel 2 no. 131.

¹⁰⁷ Fane Downs, p. 41 - 45

¹⁰⁸ Sylvia A. Grider, p. 5

Though some scholars suggest that selfishness and an independent desire to protect one's own drove the families of the *Runaway Scrape* to push so hard for safety, respect, adoration, and concern for the institution of family inspired the independent desire.¹⁰⁹ Family was the binding force that gave women the will to stick together and to persist while some men threatened to abandon the cause. The determination to survive, under the most relentless conditions, facilitated the survival of Texas pioneer women, both on the frontier and on the *Runaway Scrape*. The fortitude that held women together on the western frontier and through Texas tragedy solidified the most basic unit of society, the family. Out of the nurturing guidance of pioneer women, and through the solidification of the family, emerged the citizen with the ability, desire, and principles necessary to build the social, political, and economical establishments that created a desirable state.

Regrettably, in Texas, as throughout the world, the social, political, and economic ideals of one culture had to defeat another equally rich in order to achieve its institutional goals. Noticeably absent from the archives and family owned memorabilia regarding the *Runaway Scrape* are the eyewitness accounts and journal entries of Mexican and African American women who would have participated in the monumental event. While it can only be assumed that these women joined in the event in some manner, verification never materialized within the scope of this project. What is known is that members of *Austin's Old Three Hundred* did bring slaves with them to Texas. The family papers of Jared Groce, founder of Groce Plantation in Waller County, account for numerous slaves

¹⁰⁹ Paul D. Lack, p. 227

before, during, and after the revolution.¹¹⁰ The absence of literacy accounts for the lack of African American primary documents of the era; however, it is surprising to find insufficient oral accounts among a culture so rich in oral tradition. The same can be said for the Mexican women of revolutionary Texas. While accounts of Mexican marriages to Texian soldiers are plentiful, documentation and oral tradition of the period is lacking. This obstacle to understanding the full perspective of the *Runaway Scrape*, and its contribution to the family unit in Texas, is one that merits further exploration. Anglo pioneer women added a significant piece to the pioneer puzzle; however, ample opportunities for further research linger and a thorough appreciation for the pivotal event remains deficient without testimonies from all represented women.

The *Runaway Scrape* added to the valiant and heroic military battles that are such a huge part of the myth of Texas. Though the two events stand apart in the quest for Texas independence as separate events with different connotations, they join together in the incidence of affecting the present day United States map and in the social and cultural institutions that define America. One incident invokes embarrassment, while the other induces long-lasting pride and idealism in a vast and significant state. The two seemingly opposite episodes in Texas History coalesce into one monumental Texas adventure. The evolution of a state and a nation is obvious in the growth of its people – Mexican and Texan, male and female, elderly and youthful, determined and proud.

¹¹⁰ Mildred Williams Abshier, Ed. D. "Period of the Republic." In *A History of Waller County, Texas*. Waco: Waller County Historical Survey Committee, 1973, Pp. 57 - 60

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Valari Kubos was born in Houston, Texas on August 18, 1963. She spent her childhood years growing up on a racehorse ranch in Tomball, Texas. Valari attended high school in Houston. As a third generation graduate of inner city, Sam Houston High, Valari received numerous honors in academics, acting, and band performance. After high school, she entered the oil and gas industry where she maintained a career throughout the volatile “boom to bust” cycle of the 1980s. In 1988, Valari met and married the most wonderful man in the world, Dennis Kubos, and gave birth a year later to the world’s most brilliant and terrific son, Cameron. The Kubos family started a small laminate countertop business in September of 1992 and moved to Waller, Texas to be closer to family. Fate and the lagging job market landed Valari back in college at the University of Saint Thomas in Houston, where she intended to pursue a teaching degree. In the fall of 1999, Valari transferred to Texas A&M University. In May of 2002, she will graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in History and numerous honors. Valari’s dreams and goals have grown along with her accomplishments at A&M. In August of 2002, she will enter the University of Houston Law School with the intent to practice law. Valari realizes that, as one dream comes true and opens the way for another, no dream would have been possible without the undying love and support of her beautiful little family. Though the degree may display only one name in print, it belongs to all three.