Los Tejanos: 
Mexican Texans in the Revolution

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In 1835, more than 4,000 Tejanos lived in Texas. They resided chiefly in four settlements: Nacogdoches, Victoria, Bexar, and Goliad. The Texas Revolution of 1835–1836 divided Mexican Texans and brought them substantial hardship. Some Tejanos remained neutral while others supported Mexico. Many Tejanos, however, actively aided the Texian cause, including such men as Juan Seguin, Victor Loupy, and Plácido Benavides. In this selection, Dr. Lack examines the Tejano role in the Texas Revolution.

The experience of Tejanos in the Texas Revolution, while distinctive from that of any other group, was not characterized by uniformity. Numbering over 4,000 on the eve of the conflict, "Los Tejanos: Mexican Texans in the Revolution" reprinted from The Texas Revolutionary Experience: A Political and Social History, 1835–1836 by Paul D. Lack by permission of Texas A&M University Press. Copyright © 1992 by Paul D. Lack.
the Texas Mexican population resided mostly in four communities. Except in Nacogdoches, with a Tejano population of over 600, they found themselves engulfed by the war. The approximately 450 De León colonists from in and around Victoria felt the effects less severely at first than did the 1,600 in the Béxar area and the 1,350 in the Goliad region, where the people suffered from living in the war zone. Essentially, the Tejano experience centered around problems of military occupation, with the victorious side changing four times in less than a year. Almost any behavior, even that designed to protect themselves from the ravages of war, made the Tejanos seem like traitors from the perspective of one army, if not both, which in any case ravaged the people’s food and other resources.

From October, 1835, until the end of March, 1836, the war took place in the Tejano homeland. The conflict not only ended the physical distance between Anglo and Mexican Texans but threw the two peoples together in an atmosphere of extreme tension. Initially, though they had not themselves begun the hostilities, Tejanos volunteered for the Texas side in substantial numbers, but enthusiasm for the war soon declined, and for significant reasons. The bitter experiences of living in occupied territory caused disillusionment. Political factors also led to growing doubts, as the cause changed from federalism within the Mexican nation, which many Tejanos supported, to independence, which left them in a minority status. These influences evolved in different ways, depending on circumstances unique to each community.

Tejanos serving in the Texas cause came mostly from the town of San Antonio de Béxar in the fall of 1835. Names and numbers of volunteers cannot be determined with precision because of the absence of muster rolls for them for this period, but several sources indicate substantial recruitment early in the war. Years later San Antonio citizens claimed that 160 Tejanos had participated in the siege, service for which, as local resident Sam J. Smith wrote in 1874, “they got no pay or credit.” Juan Seguín, who commanded one of the native companies, identified the origins and numbers of the Tejano recruits of 1835: his company of thirty-seven men had entered at Salado Creek in October; Salvador Flores and Manuel Leal together raised forty-one volunteers from area ranches; fourteen (mostly Bexareños) deserted from Cos’s forces in the city. Plácido Benavides brought a company of twenty-eight from Victoria, and an additional Tejano detachment of about twenty from the forces at Goliad later arrived along with a similar number of isolated enlistments from there.

From a variety of other sources, most especially bounty and donation grant records, the names of ninety-one Tejanos who served in the fall of 1835 have been ascertained. Biographical information on these men reveals the following profile: most were young, the average age being 27.5 (25 when measured by the median figure), about four to six years younger, in fact, than the Anglo volunteers of this period. Nevertheless, a majority of them had already married. Native-born Texans (85 percent) naturally dominated the ranks, and the few who had come north to settle from Mexico had done so seven to fifteen years earlier. The place of residence of these volunteers becomes even more difficult to establish; however, Bexareños clearly outnumbered any other group. Only fifteen of those who saw service in 1835 can be identified as from outside of the Béxar municipality, and the census records suggest that town residents were twice as numerous as those from the ranches. As Seguín recalled, his company was the largest, and it “was made up of men from this city [San Antonio].”
Bexareño soldiers made contributions commensurate with their numbers. From his initial meeting with General Austin at Camp Salado on October 22, Captain Seguín energetically executed a number of varied responsibilities. Recruitment continued up to the storming of the city on December 5, but the unit became active from its inception. As the commander in chief wrote on November 24, the company of “native Mexicans . . . was very efficient in the cause.” On the fourteenth of that month Austin dispatched a unit under Salvador Flores on an “important” mission away from the scene of the siege. Primarily sent to scout for centralist reinforcements south of the Nueces River, its orders also involved capturing horses and burning the grasslands to inhibit enemy movement. The Tejanos seemed especially adept in this kind of service, no doubt because of their knowledge of the countryside. Austin praised them for capturing expresses directed to the centralist forces in Béxar, but he also made it clear that “Cap. Seguin and his men were at all times ready and willing to go on any service they were ordered. They uniformly acquitted themselves to their credit as patriots and soldiers.”

This service included participation in battle. Seguín’s men saw action with Bowie at missions San José and Concepción in November, and Tejanos answered the call for volunteers to storm the city on December 5. Antonio Cruz, of the Béxar company, so distinguished himself in the fighting at the Veramendi house as to attract commendation by no less of an anti-Mexican than Travis. Nonsoldiers also got into the action as the conflict came literally into their homes. Among these María Jesuza de García stood out, because, in the words of an act subsequently passed by the Texas Congress, she “was wounded and permanently disabled in rendering extraordinary services to the army of Texas at San Antonio.” García had attempted to carry water to the Texans on December 5 in spite of the heavy Mexican barrage. These acts of individual valor gained particular recognition, but one veteran of the campaign extended the plaudits to the community as a whole. “Our army owe[s] many thanks to the brave inhabitants” of the city, he wrote on Christmas day, for they “ranked themselves on the side of liberty, and fought bravely with the Texan forces. Were all the Mexicans such ardent lovers of liberty, as the citizens of San Antonio, we should not now be left to fight our battles alone.”

That a sizable force of Bexareños turned out for the Texas cause came as no great surprise to the leaders of the rebellion, for the city had acquired a reputation of opposition to the military-centralist party. The more remarkable feature of the high level of volunteering was that those from town found sufficient opportunity to participate despite a form of martial law imposed by General Cos. On October 15, a full week before the Texas army arrived at Salado Creek near the town, he ordered Political Chief Angel Navarro to devise and administer a passport system. Essentially, this edict forbid anyone from leaving without a pass from either Cos or Navarro. The civil authority complied, periodically supplying a list of persons who had been given exit permits, but the commander expressed dissatisfaction with enforcement. The system had been in place but a few days when local resident Zeferino Ruiz boldly left town with no pass and even more brazenly returned with a note from one of the rebel leaders. According to further correspondence from Cos, only “a few inhabitants among this population have heeded the policy”; therefore, he informed Navarro, beginning November 18 and “without exception” anyone caught violating the passport rule would be sentenced to forced labor. This level of noncompliance occurred in the face of a strong night patrol, staffed by both infantry and cavalry.
The Texas forces expected to benefit from the enemy’s problems in controlling the town population. Before the army had even arrived one observer predicted that the number of Cos’s troops required “to keep down the citizens” would be a significant advantage. In fact, several residents managed to leave town to join the Texas cause. Austin indicated that these included both “deserter-s” from the Mexican army and “inhabitants who have connected with us.” Movement between Béxar and the rebel lines seems to have occurred almost constantly. Macedonio Arocha, one of the recruits, recalled later that he went back and forth at night from town to Seguin’s company several times, to visit his family and to obtain extra provisions. Friendly Bexareños even helped the Texas artillery overcome its ammunition shortage by returning used cannon balls. Perhaps most importantly, the people of the city provided information on the centralist army and through intermediaries like rancher José María Solmas sent out confidential communications.

Those who left the town brought complaints about the military rule of General Cos. According to reports made to Bowie and Fannin at Espada mission on October 22, “a large number of the citizens of Bexar and of this place, are now laying out, to prevent being forced to perform the most servile duties.” Erasmo Seguin “and others of the most respectable citizens” were reputedly to be made “to sweep the public square, and in case Cos whipped us, to make their Ladies, grind tortias for his soldiers.” The general eventually forced the elder Seguin to walk to his son’s ranch, leaving behind the remainder of the family to endure the Texas barrage for the rest of the siege. Cos also impressed mules and drivers and perhaps other property, and he reportedly razed houses on the outskirts of town to provide a more favorable field of fire in case of a rebel assault.

Hearing these reports, the Texas leaders came to expect more support from the Bexareños. Following a month of loosely conducted siege warfare, Austin issued a “Proclamation to the Inhabitants of Bexar” that amounted to an invitation for them somehow to make peace. This document enumerated an eight-point set of terms, half of which concerned capitulation and withdrawal, matters more appropriately directed to Cos or his superiors. Remaining provisions promised fair representation for Béxar and a kind of amnesty: “No Citizen will be persecuted nor molested in any way in either their persons or property on account of their political opinions.” Finally, Austin indicated that all who sought the protection of his plan should present themselves to the army of Texas. After this pronouncement the besieging forces increasingly considered the remaining residents to be enemies and suspected those who moved back and forth between the town and the Texan lines as potential spies rather than useful informants. Naturally, this changing opinion led to increased tensions between Béxar civilians and the Texans.

Relations also worsened because of the army’s growing demands for supplies. Actually, from the date of their arrival in October the Texas forces had but a meager commissary and little cash with which to make purchases. Even officers who attempted to respect private property had difficulty in establishing ownership of the corn, beans, and beef they needed; further they could not always determine the genuine needs of the local population, some of whom they suspected of intending to withhold from the Texans in order to sell to the centralists in town.
As late as November 16 Austin had to explain to Antonio de la Garza why he would not be permitted to transport his maize and beans to the plaza while it remained in enemy hands. The commander assured his correspondent that war’s end would bring restoration of civil authority and payment for properties confiscated from patriotic citizens (not enemies).

Soon after their arrival in the neighborhood it became obvious that, lacking the money with which to make purchases, the Texans would resort to impressment. Responding to queries regarding dealings with the recalcitrant mayordomo of Espada mission, Austin ordered Bowie and Fannin to use persuasion, give certificates of credit, and keep an accurate accounting: “In the event this arrangement will not satisfy him there is no resource left but to follow the Law of necessity, and take what you want.” However oppressive this policy might have been in these matters Austin showed more patience and restraint than did most other members of the army. One of the first assignments given Seguin was contracting with area ranch owners for corn and beans to be paid for in bank bills or on public credit. On November 17 Austin ordered Quartermaster Patrick C. Jack to organize a food-gathering expedition. This officer received authority to take charge of all wagons and oxen, employ loyal teamsters, and oversee the harvesting of the grain. Austin also attempted to prevent soldiers from killing beef and to exempt certain fields from being ravaged by the army.

Despite these efforts, the Texas commander obviously knew that much property had been taken without attention to any form of payment. A week after his resignation Austin reminded the provisional government of its responsibility “to ascertain the amount of property thus [by compulsion] made use of, and to provide for a Just compensation.” Nevertheless, over four years later Josefa Jiménez still had not settled the account for the corn “that during the storming of Bexar was taken from her by the volunteer army of Texas,” as her claim read. These contributions burdened both poor and affluent. In 1840 a congressional resolution awarded Erasmo Seguin $3,004 for the oxen, mules, corn, beans, beef, and other supplies he had furnished in 1835.

Had it not been for the moderating presence of Austin the impact of the war on the Tejano population of Béxar might well have been far worse. Many other officers like Fannin favored a more concerted scorched earth policy. On November 5 the general wrote his thoughts on military strategy to the Consultation. While he agreed basically that circumstances of war had undercut the middle ground, Austin opposed “laying waste the country round Bexar. I think [that] too hard on the inhabitants who are our friends.” For some time this issue was a source of internal disaffection in the Texas army, but the general continued to order his subordinates to discriminate between friend and foe in raiding area ranches.

These divisions on treatment of civilians still existed among the soldiers as they stormed the city and battled house-to-house between December 5 and 10. Consequently, one unit shot a boy who tried to escape from a captured dwelling and arrested three women and a priest. Another company stormed a stone house and shot inside until it heard the “screams of women & children” and then paroled the men who laid down their arms, allowing all of them to flee to an area away from the fighting. In making peace General Edward Burleson agreed to restore
private property “to its proper owners,” to protect the citizens of Béxar “in their persons,” and not to molest civilian or soldier “on account of his political opinions hitherto expressed.”

The question of the war’s impact on civilian life in Béxar had not greatly distracted either of the armies as they pursued the laws of necessity and confiscated, consumed, or destroyed property. The people of Béxar endured a battle that literally reached into their homes. The Texas tactics of turning houses into strongholds involved forced entries, tearing holes out of walls and ceilings, and reinforcing doors and windows with dirt and furniture. These methods left the city marked by heaps of ruins. Further, the siege created shortages for civilians trapped in the town; even those in farming areas controlled by Texans found that the army used up staples at an alarming rate. At the time of arrival in the outskirts of Béxar no less qualified an observer than West Point-trained Fannin described the provisions as virtually inexhaustible. Yet, less than a month later he reported to Austin, “We have nearly consumed all the corn &c near here.” These shortages translated into privation for Tejano civilians. Their sacrifices of liberty and property were substantial if only because the armies were large and more stationary than at any other time in the war.

The people of the Goliad area also experienced the traumas of military rule in the fall of 1835. The size and character of the occupation differed from that of Béxar in that the Texans triumphed there very early in the war, on October 9, and held the post with a garrison that seldom exceeded one hundred men. However, commander Dimitt asserted absolute control over both resources and the civil authorities, resulting in a form of domination at least equal to that suffered by the Bexareños. By late in the year, as Texas forces gathered in and around Goliad for a projected assault against Matamoros, the Tejanos of this region had to endure the pressure of a large, hostile army in their midst. In early spring, 1836, centralist troops arrived and added the hardships of battle to the sufferings of the people.

Not all these problems could have been predicted. The entire region acquired a reputation for lukewarmness toward the Texas cause; yet, Tejanos from both Victoria and Goliad volunteered initially in support of the rebellion. When Texans from Matagorda arrived at the de León colony on their way to conquer the Mexican fortress, Alcalde Juan Antonio Padilla, who considered it “disgraceful to live under the military yoke,” joined the expedition. He brought into the ranks other prominent Victorians, including the empresario’s son Silvestre de León and son-in-law Plácido Benavides. Austin described Padilla as “a true friend to Texas and to Liberty.” Miguel Galán, from Goliad, volunteered on October 10, the day after the fort capitulated, to be joined soon by Paulino de la Garza, Agustín Bernal, and some of the men who had been serving in the Mexican garrison. Controversy soon developed, as Col. Benjamin Fort Smith wrote to his friend Austin, over what to do with “the Mexican Volunteers.” “We know Not as yet how far they may be relied upon,” he opined. Dimitt resolved the issue by sending Padilla “with a Small detachment of creole troops” under Benavides to Béxar for Austin to deal with personally. This company of about thirty men remained for the duration of the siege and participated with distinction in some of the fiercest fighting in December.

What Dimitt apparently intended, and clearly achieved, amounted to a purging of Mexicans from his force. Although rancher Miguel Aldrete remained affiliated with this unit, even signing
the controversial declaration of December 22, and men like Tomás Amador served the Texans as a messenger. Anglo and Irish colonists dominated the Goliad command for the remainder of 1835. Lacking the potentially moderating influence of “native” troops, the Texans became an army of occupation pitted against the people of the region. Perhaps the commander did not believe that he needed a Tejano perspective because, as one veteran later wrote, Dimit “had a Mexican wife and was, for all practical purposes, a Mexican.” Undoubtedly, the people of Goliad would not have concurred in this conclusion.

Even though a sizable body of centralist supplies fell into Texas hands with the capitulation of the fort, Dimit immediately began to impress the property of local citizens. On October 10 he seized “into the public service” $120 worth of beef belonging to C. [J.] E. Vasquez. A few days later Domingo Falcón and A. Vizors forcibly surrendered some of their cattle to the Texas army, and other residents of the vicinity furnished twenty horses for the use of the soldiers. Through the month of November the people continued to make more forced contributions—animals, corn, wagon wheels, a rifle, a string of ponies, even a crowbar—nothing seemed to escape the army’s clutches. Dimit’s grasp reached one hundred miles north to the ranch of Erasmo Seguin, who lost five hundred dollars worth of mules to impressment.

The garrison’s most insatiable need seemed not to be food but transportation. In order to move Irish colonists out of the war zone and send provisions to Béxar, Dimit seized both carts and teamsters. On November 13 Alcalde Galán enumerated the sufferings of the Goliad residents in a letter to Austin: “[The soldiers are] breaking into houses, ravaging the corn without the consent of property owners, killing cows randomly without making an effort to know who they belong to, impressing servants without the consent of their masters, and then letting them loose without supervision . . . [or] paying them for their labor.” The commander also made the people work on fortifying the plaza and perform other forms of manual labor.

The citizens of Goliad responded in several ways. As Dimit himself explained, “immediately after the place was taken,” they began to seek refuge in the countryside. Some fled from the section altogether. On October 25 he continued to affect surprise at this reaction, claiming “I have done, and have said, every thing which I could do, or say, to pacify and inspire them with confidence.” Dimit attributed the people’s conduct to awe of the military display earlier made by the centralists. Other observers assigned responsibility to the policies of the Texas military in general and its local leader in particular. John J. Linn complained to Austin of the many “acts of tireney” of Dimit, “a great enimey of the Mexicans.” All but twenty had left town; “the people are afraid to come [back] as they do not want to be made hewers of wood and Drawers of water.”

Having left their homes in search of security, in early November the Tejanos sought to rectify their situation through politics. Many enthusiastically welcomed the arrival of Governor Viesca, who came with an armed guard on November 11 in his flight from the centralists; as a legally constituted federalist leader, he must have seemed a potential deliverer. But Dimit’s refusal to receive the governor “in an official capacity” incited what the Texas officer called “insubordination, . . . discontent, and . . . a spirit of opposition, both in and out of the fort.” Tejanos held a public meeting on the twelfth and protested military usurpation of democratically elected civil
authority. All but one of the thirty-two who signed this document were Tejanos, but they gained some support among soldiers.

Dimitt promptly declared martial law. His order proclaimed: "All persons manifesting an opposition dangerous to the cause espoused by the People of Texas—All who oppose, or threaten to oppose, the observance of order, of discipline, and subordination, or who endeavour to excite discontent wither in the Fortress, or within the Town, will be regarded as public enemies, arrested as such, and dealt with accordingly." Specifically, no one could arrive or leave without reporting and obtaining a passport. This policy brought on an additional set of protests, mostly directed to Austin and seeking replacement of the Goliad commander. Thomas G. Western, who had as the post's adjutant opposed Dimitt on the Viesca matter, explained that the inhabitants had not only "flown to the country for Security . . . [but also] prepared hiding places to which to escape at the very sound of the name Dimitt." The alcalde catalogued the various infringements on popular liberty and pointed out the irony of these being committed in the name of the liberal cause. Austin promptly ordered Dimitt's ouster and informed Galán that the replacement would respect civil authority; however, the Goliad garrison kept Dimitt in power. A public meeting at Texana renewed the Tejanos' request for protection by the provisional government, but by then their fate more than ever rested with the increasingly powerful and antagonistic Texas army. Many area Tejanos continued to hide.

These inherited tensions, combined with newer aggravations, poisoned Tejano-military relations during that period. Considerable underground support existed for the centralists, and the U.S. volunteers and other troops who swelled in numbers between December and February held militantly anti-Mexican attitudes. Fannin reported from the fort in February that "no aid need be expected from Mexicans." Recruits from the United States likewise expressed skepticism about Tejano trustworthiness. As one wrote, the citizens of La Bahía "professed to be hearty in the cause of the revolution" but actually fled from town in order to hedge their fate. This perceived vacillation, which the people attributed to a desire to escape the unruly behavior of the Texas troops, led the soldier to doubt both words and deeds of support. He did admit that "the absconded citizens of Goliad . . . received us kindly, and treated us with hospitality, professed the warmest hospitality to our cause, and denied having any communication with the Mexican army."

Residents of this region provided several kinds of service to Texas. Juan A. Zambrano went to Matamoros as a spy for Austin and fell prisoner to Urrea. Plácido Benavides, shortly after leading a company in the storming of Béxar, likewise set out on an intelligence-gathering mission to centralist-held territory near the Rio Grande. In early February he returned with news of an impending invasion, information that Fannin ignored, to his later grief. Other Tejanos made less spectacular contributions. Miguel Benítez, also a veteran of the siege, along with other drivers carried ammunition and other stores from the coast. Victor Loupy probably filled as many roles as any Texan in the Revolution. He volunteered for the army at Goliad on October 9 and subsequently acted as soldier, interpreter, and contractor, supplying Fannin's troops with more than four hundred head of cattle. The centralists captured and imprisoned him; after the Revolution a Texas secretary of war endorsed Loupy's application for back pay with a commendation for his "long and meritorious service."
One mercantile enterprise involving Tejanos from this region resulted in a substantial loss of property. José María Carbajal and his brother-in-law Fernando de León, of Victoria, chartered the *Hannah Elizabeth* in November to carry arms and other goods from New Orleans to the Texas forces. The vessel and proprietors fell prey to a centralist ship operating near the coast in December; their goods ended up in the hands of a group of Matagordans who had commissioned a coastal raider that recaptured the *Hannah*. Despite their vigorous protest, the Victorinos received none of the proceeds from the auction of the salvaged supplies. Nevertheless, Acting Governor Robinson appointed de León as aide-de-camp to organize the militia of Victoria, “believing that you are willing to serve your country in any way that you can be useful.”

The Tejano masses lost their property in the conflict not through business dealings but by the continuing impressment policies of the Texas army. Once again in early 1836 as in the previous year the most sought-after of their possessions were draft animals. To some extent earlier and then especially during the attempted retreat in March, A. C. Horton and other press gangs rounded up every yoke of oxen, team of mules, or stray horse they could find. Leg-weary infantrymen also attempted spur-of-the-moment appropriations from Tejano corrals, but they sometimes found the mounts too wild to be handled.

Most of the people of La Bahía stayed in their rural sanctuaries. Troops new to the town found little but “empty streets,” as one wrote. “All of the inhabitants had kept indoors, and only a few aged Mexicans deigned to look at us from the small air-holes which form the windows of their cabins.” For Tejanos even flight to ranches no longer provided protection from the more numerous and disorderly recruits who conducted frequent forays in search of provisions and enemies.

When hostilities came to this region in February and March, more Tejanos fought on for the invaders than for Fannin. The wonder is that any sided with Texas at all, given the state of military-civilian relations. About ten Mexican Texans saw action in the Nueces River area, of whom two were killed and the others captured. As the action came closer to Refugio, Tejano participation on the side of the Revolution dwindled, although Mariano Carbajal and one other perished at Goliad. Either from simple charity or in support of the Texas cause, several Tejanas aided the few soldiers who had managed to escape the fate of Fannin and his men. These acts of mercy included tips about the locations of Urrea’s soldiers as well as provisions of food and clothing.

Whether they welcomed the invasion or opposed it, the coming of the war into their homeland devastated the lives of many Tejanos. Some who considered themselves noncombatants died in the guerrilla-like fighting around Refugio from March 11–13. They also lost equipment, horses, cattle, and other property; especially devastated were those who resided in the town, which rebel forces under William Ward burned on March 13. That same fate befell La Bahía, as Fannin set it ablaze just before beginning his tardy retreat. Santa Anna later used the fact that the Texas brand of warfare had “reduced [the Tejanos] to the most dreadful situation” to justify the vengeful treatment of Urrea’s captives. At Victoria, which of all the Mexican-dominated communities of this area had shown the greatest loyalty to the Texas cause, the authorities had
reserved twenty yoke of oxen to assist civilian evacuation in case of a centralist victory. Fannin impressed these at the last minute, depriving the people of the means of flight. Ironically, the Texas army later used their failures to evacuate as evidence of Tory sentiment.

However harsh his policies toward the enemy, Urrea promised not “to molest the inhabitants of the country who remained at their homes and took no part in the war.” Yet, according to an official who carried this message, “the general would depend on the citizens for much subsistence.” This included a measure of cooperation as well as material support. Urrea forced the principal leaders of Victoria to report and perform certain duties. Fernando de León had to turn over hidden contraband goods. His brother-in-law Manuel Escalera served under compulsion as a courier for Urrea.

In this period between December and April, 1836, the community of Béxar had as before lent more voluntary support to the Texas cause than had the areas to the south. Still, many of the problems experienced by Goliad also characterized the situation in the departmental capital. In the fall hostilities had been more intense and thus destruction greater in Béxar, and the people continued to supply an army of occupation after the surrender of Cos. For the entire period from December to April this community continued to feel in innumerable ways the burden of war.

Like other Texans, a majority of the Tejano soldiers returned to civilian life as soon after the December 5 victory over the centralists as possible, and most of those who served in 1835 did not join the army again in the spring of 1836. Instead, Anglo and Tejano veterans alike looked first to the care of their families in the belief that those who had not yet gone to war should do so. Though few at the time saw this retirement as anything but natural, some critics subsequently cited it as evidence of a lack of patriotic zeal. A substantial number of Bexareños in fact remained militarily active, albeit in a somewhat irregular fashion. Captain Seguín led a body of cavalry which tracked the movement of Cos’s forces to scout their threatened return from south of the Rio Grande. Company commander Salvador Flores and a few others risked themselves in “spy” work north of that river to detect centralist troop movement, but throughout most of early 1836 the military authorities did not actually seek Tejano participation.

During the month of December Tejanos of the town and the surrounding area still lived under military rule, as General Ed Burleson’s successor, Francis W. Johnson, made no attempt to reestablish civil authority. The masses of people, though “greatly impoverished” in Neill’s words, had to share their provisions with the military. Much of the burden of feeding the army of occupation still rested on area farmers. One such group living near San José mission resisted impressment of six wagon loads of corn with such “piteful pleas” that the press gang leader consulted his superiors about returning the grain. Eventually, he decided that the farmers had been deceitful in claiming that this “was their only food until the next harvest” because they had actually intended to sell part of their holdings in town. The profit motive and dislike of Americans, not “dread of famine kept them from sharing their surplus with us.” It seems not to have occurred to him that the impressed corn comprised the people’s only asset in acquiring other goods from town because most of the farmers received certificates of credit, not negotiable currency, for the commodities taken by Seguín, Johnson, and other officers in December and January.
By contrast to what he considered the grim behavior of the rural people, Herman Ehrenberg perceived a more light-hearted spirit in town. Residents who had fled during the siege returned soon after the peace of December 11 so that “bustle and animation again filled the streets, where Texans and Mexicans walked about their business without fear or resentment.” Most of the native people seemed content to pursue their traditional pleasures and welcomed as “guests” the American volunteers who made up the bulk of the local garrison. Without the displays of protest that had occurred at the mission, merchants like Francisco A. Ruiz and José A. Navarro sold on credit a variety of supplies ranging from beef, corn, and other food to horses, mules, and cooking utensils. Nevertheless, the burden of having supplied armies since October had exhausted the area economy by January. Neill reported that even the ubiquitous cattle had come into short supply, and he received authorization to employ vaqueros at twenty dollars per month to drive in beef from the range. This promise of employment on credit hardly improved the economy. According to the acting governor, “the unfortunate inhabitants [were] reduced by the war, from opulence and ease, to penury and want.”

This material suffering did not lead to overwhelming disaffection by the people, as seen by a consensus of the military leaders stationed in Béxar. Only Travis seemed to fear Tejano treachery. In contrast, Neill wrote emphatically to Houston on January 14, “I can say to you with Confidence, that we can rely on great aid from the citizens of this town, in case of an attack.” He cited the voluntary contribution of supplies by Gaspar Flores and Luciano Navarro as evidence of this genuine support. Within the next two weeks Bowie and G. B. Jameson confirmed Neill’s assessment, with the latter giving praise to Seguin and others of “the most wealthy and influential citizens.” This account also noted the problem of “loose [military] discipline” that led to soldier-civilian tensions.

Neill had restored civil authority when he became head of the post at the end of 1835, but disorder associated with the struggle to succeed him threatened to undo the amicable relations he had created. The elevation of Bowie over Travis in this contest in February, as the latter wrote, made “everything topsy turvy.” Bowie began interfering with private property, preventing citizens from carting their goods to the country, and in effect he abrogated civil government by releasing prisoners from jail. This act brought on conflict. Judge Seguin angrily resigned in protest, and Bowie retaliated by calling an armed parade of the Alamo troops, all of whom acted in what the post adjutant described as “a rumultously and disorderly manner,” attributable to the drunkenness of the Texas forces.

Part of these tensions grew out of the awareness of many Bexareños of the impending centralist invasion and their reaction to this threat. As the above episode revealed, a large number of citizens had been fleeing the town since mid-January. Knowledge of centralist plans did not indicate treason; rather, the local population simply took seriously the reports of those who had been dispatched to the Laredo area to gather intelligence. The Texas commanders also had access to this information but refused to retreat from the Alamo fortress.

When Santa Anna’s men began arriving on February 22, they found the town reduced in population but not entirely abandoned. Some of the people stayed at home in support of the invading force, but more often they had hopes of maintaining an undeclared neutrality. In
part this waning of support for Texas may have been the result of the growing tensions between civilians and the Texas army; however, the most significant influence on local Tejano behavior was the failure of the military to prevent the centralist reoccupation. Like many Anglo colonists, Bexareños who supported the cause often chose to provide for the welfare of their families first before joining or enrolling in the service. In fact, when the ranks of the Alamo defenders are defined to include all those who served under Neill in early February as well as Travis and Bowie later in the month, the number of Tejanos becomes nineteen rather than the three cited by Travis. Mostly from Béxar, this Tejano contingent of defenders ranked next to Gonzales in number of recruits and represented nearly twenty percent of the Texans who served in the army at San Antonio in the first two months of 1836. Many of the Bexareños received discharges from commander Neill and left to help evacuate their families, or like Seguín became messengers in one of the many last-ditch efforts to bring reinforcements to the fortress. Some, as historian Walter Lord suggests, may also have chosen to retire from what obviously had become a losing cause. The list of those who braved the assault in the Alamo should also include four or five Bexareñas and nine dependent children who had accompanied their husband-father-protectors into the fort.

Generally, Santa Anna seemed determined to demonstrate restraint in his relations with the local population. A few Béxar homeowners had to quarter Mexican officers, and the Mexican president eventually confiscated and auctioned property belonging to “colonists” in the town, but his army apparently paid for more commodities than did the impressment-prone Texans, who once again had herded local cattle and seized corn and other property in their hasty flight into the fortress. Townspeople had considerable freedom of movement, some even managing to wander into and out of the fort after the siege had begun. In battle, too, most of the destruction of local property emanated from the Texans—Travis’s men burned many houses in La Villita in an attempt to reduce the cover of the attackers.

The day after the final assault the victorious general ordered Bexareños to return home where they would be protected in their domestic life. Actually, they did not easily or quickly resume normal routines. Alcalde Francisco Antonio Ruiz led a delegation of citizens forced to identify corpses, cart off Mexican bodies for burial, and prepare the funeral pyre for the defenders. Other leaders, including political chief Ramón Múquiz, established hospitals and attended the wounded before and after the battle. For the next two months civilians and soldiers suffered from scarcity of food and high prices. Nevertheless, the people endured these sufferings and still managed to display courtesy and kindheartedness, according to an American physician stationed there in April and May.

A large number of Béxar residents fled before the invading force came onto the scene. Having placed their families in some rural sanctuary or on the road to the east and presumed safety, many of the men rallied to one of the military units forming in the vicinity of the Colorado River. Seguin, after failing to stir movement from Fannin, went to the neighborhood of Gonzales and organized some of these recruits into a company. Houston used this command as a rear guard during the long retreat and proposed similar duty for it at San Jacinto. At the insistence of its leader and men like Antonio Menchaca the Tejano company engaged in the battle as part of
the left wing of the Texas army and behaved with suitable gallantry. Most estimates give the number in this unit at twenty-two to twenty-four (Seguín’s recollection placed the figure at forty-six, including those who served in the rear baggage detail); adding those from Nacogdoches and other parts of Texas, thirty-two Tejanos can be identified by name as having served at this decisive battle. Most of them were young, averaging but twenty-five years in age, and 60 percent were single, characteristics that reflected the fact that family men had been diverted from service by the need to provide for their dependents. Thirteen others besides Seguín had also served in the Béxar siege of the previous fall. Far more Bexareños had turned out for the Texas cause in the spring of 1836 than served in the battle of San Jacinto. Among those who gathered at Gonzales in early March, General Houston sent a company of twenty-five to forty under the command of Salvador Flores to defend families that had remained on their farms. Another body of about thirty soldiers escorted civilians from Béxar to Nacogdoches.

Whichever destination they decided on, the fleeing civilians confronted substantial risks. Siege veteran Agustín Bernal took his family forty miles from town to the ranch of Tía Calvilla on the San Antonio River. He “was obliged to remain at that place,” as he recalled years later, “to protect his wife and young child against the Indians and some parties of Mexican outlaws.” Some of the women and children set off to the east with neither protectors nor adequate equipment. The Tejana wife of Erastus (Deaf) Smith loaded her two sets of twins and personal possessions in a bulky cart but had no draft animals. She borrowed a team from her fellow refugees on her one-leg-at-a-time journey. The more affluent Seguín family attempted to save three thousand sheep and a herd of cattle by driving them past the Colorado River, in the common but mistaken notion that Texas forces would stop Santa Anna’s advance at that point. Slowed by their possessions and by the snarl of other families on the miserable roads, most of the Seguín animals fell to the pursuing division of General Joaquín Ramírez y Sesma. The family members managed to get away to San Augustine and then to Nacogdoches, but without their assets they had to sell personal property, including even clothing, just to avoid starving. Illness as well as poverty beset the Seguins during their brief stay in east Texas.

Their experience may have been particularly unpleasant because they entered an isolated and suspect Tejano community in Nacogdoches, where the Revolution engaged the Hispanic people politically—invariably in opposition—but not militarily and had less impact socially than elsewhere. Leaders of the Texas cause had attempted at the outset “to try and Raise the Maxacans” as a group, in the words of George A. Nixon, but repeatedly failed. Tejano militiamen did agree to serve as a home guard unit; however, this same official later wrote, “they Seeme Not to under Stand the Busi[-]ness.” This ruse of feigned ignorance allowed the masses to stay at home, but individuals made contributions to the war effort. In early November the Nacogdoches vigilance committee head informed Thomas J. Rusk that “the most wealthy” of the Tejanos have “furnished horses and money for the equipment” of a company of U.S. volunteers that came through town on the way to Béxar. These contributors included Miguel Cortines, “one of the few Mexicans whose energies have been used in our cause,” Rusk later wrote. The supplies included a horse and four rifles valued at $210. In December Bernard Pantallion provided nearly one thousand eight hundred pounds of beef and pork to another of these companies, and others gave horses or worked as cooks, couriers, or servants.
Although the Tejanos of east Texas refused to form into a single body and march to the front as a unit, individually they did join the army, Anglo-American criticisms notwithstanding. Most of this volunteering occurred in fall of 1835, before the cause had become independence, when at least six “natives” from the region served in the siege of Béxar. Squite Cruse enlisted at Jasper on October 14; the remainder were from Nacogdoches. They came from a variety of personal circumstances, some of them being young and single, while Esteban Mora, forty-eight years old, had a wife and four children living at home. Juan José Ybarbo, another married man in his forties, received an honorable discharge that testified also to his bravery and his financial contributions to the Texas forces. Casimiro Garcia fell prisoner to General Cos during the siege while serving in Rusk’s company.

Despite these examples of individual participation, the Tejanos as a whole remained a separate community in Nacogdoches. When newcomer William F. Gray arrived there in early February, he observed that “there is no social intercourse between them [Anglo Americans] and the Mexicans.” The latter impressed him as “a quiet, orderly, and cheerful people, . . . unthrifty and unambitious,” though some seemed atypically “intelligent and respectable.” His own experience indicated a less than absolute segregation, in that Anglos frequented the Tejano gambling houses, but a high degree of separation clearly characterized both political and social behavior.

Anglo-Tejano tensions continued well beyond the battle of San Jacinto. In June military authorities still considered the issue of drafting Nacogdoches Tejanos, and the local vigilance group discussed using force to make them join the revolutionary cause. At the end of the month Houston wrote to the head of that committee urging him “not to adopt any harsh measures towards the Mexicans in the neighborhood of Nacogdoches. Treat them kindly and pass them as tho’ there was no difficulty or differences of opinion. *By no means* treat them with *violence.*” Though the General’s advice apparently forestalled an immediate conflict, his argument rested on a flimsy public relations reasoning: “The world would damn our cause if we shed blood at home” before defeating the invader decisively. Thus, the future boded ill for the Tejanos as a group, and individually they began to suffer loss of liberty even during the summer of 1836. Local Mexicans found themselves detained illegally by private citizens, and the courts sentenced a Tejano to a whipping and a term of forced labor for a six-dollar fraud case.

Residents of the other Tejano communities continued to face the problems of living in occupied Texas during the entire summer of 1836. Though centralist armies retreated to the Rio Grande in May, all of the west remained an insecure area for several months. Many Tories evacuated southward with the army as it left Béxar on May 25. “The remaining citizens,” as a U.S. soldier-physician there reported in his journal, “seem to be much relieved at the departure of the troops, with which they have been oppressed for three months. Some of them broke out into transports that made them out quite ludicrously. . . . Navarro was seen capering about the streets like a boy in perfect ecstasy of glee. He said that now he should recover his health; that nothing but the impure air occasioned by the residence of the Mexican troops had made him sick.” Unfortunately, this celebration proved to be premature both for Navarro,
who died two weeks later, and for the community as a whole, which continued to experience the difficulties of wartime occupation. Worries about reinvasion kept refugees in east Texas or in their rural hideaways, leaving the town depopulated. Some of the people of the municipality faced dire enough conditions that they set out to plunder the retreating army of Vicente Filisola as it retreated beyond the Nueces. Seguin arrived in Béxar in early June with such a small company that he felt insecure from a potential attack by Tories and from marauding Indians who threatened to rob, murder, and otherwise ravage the entire area.

These various forces of disorder meant that the Bexareños would live under military rule for the remainder of the year, and army measures were often harsh. Initially, at least, the commander operated from a vision of restraint. Rusk specifically ordered Col. James Smith, head of a force dispatched to relieve Seguin at Béxar on June 8, that “you will be careful on going to San Antonio to prevent any unnecessary interruption to the citizens there. Such conduct as entering their homes and taking their property you will certainly forbid [as] improper” in that the people who remained in town had demonstrated friendship toward the Texas cause. Unfortunately, according to reports that reached Mexico that summer, the soldiers did exactly what the General had forbidden. Perhaps in response to this treatment, several townspeople joined those who had earlier given themselves over to centralist protection. This resumed flight renewed army fears of Toryism. Further, some of the people evidently drove their cattle southward with them, thus exacerbating fears of a reinvasion force being fed by Texas beef. Army-civilian relations had become a vicious cycle.

When Seguin departed the town on June 21, he ordered the people of the region to herd their animals eastward, out of potential enemy use, as evidence of loyalty to Texas. Their subsequent conduct failed to satisfy the military leaders. A month later Rusk wrote, “I wish in a few days to give Bejar a shake.” This general’s earlier goal of a civilian-army accord had largely vanished by August. Residents protested about their treatment, but Rusk could only express “eternal regret . . . that the distress of War should fall upon families of women and children.” He promised that “in no case will they be injured by our Troops.” His letter to Miguel Arciniega held out little hope for relief: “Bejar being the frontier however must be for some time the Theatre of War and as such will be exposed to many hardships & inconvenience.” At the end of August he ordered Col. Francisco Ruiz to visit the town and use his knowledge to ferret out disloyal persons. To the friends of Texas the general offered scant relief: personal protection and promises to pay for the articles they furnished to the army. Property that the military claimed to be public would be repossessed from private hands; those who drove off their cattle toward the Rio Grande would be treated as enemies. Even in the early fall a harsh regimen continued to dominate the community. On September 17 Seguin received orders to recruit a full brigade and a militia force to replace the small regular company previously stationed in the town. His instructions allowed use of military justice to preserve order “provided that sever[e] punishment does not extend to loss of life or limb.”

Refugees hiding in the east fared hardly better than the Bexareños remaining closer to home. Seguin and Antonio Menchaca did not gain leave to retrieve their families from Nacogdoches until mid-July. The effects of a fever epidemic still lingered a month later when they set out
for home on what proved a traumatic journey. For much of the time only Menchaca felt well enough either to lead the wagon train or attend to the sick. They arrived home to find the town still largely deserted and, "to crown their misfortunes," as Seguin recalled years later, "their fields laid waste, and their cattle destroyed or dispersed." His own ranch had been "despoiled" either "by the retreating enemy, [or] had been wasted by our own army; ruin and misery met me on my return."

The devastation may have seemed like a sudden transformation to the refugees, but it had in fact begun months earlier and affected all property owners whether they stayed home or fled. Seguin should not have been much surprised, for he had issued receipts for goods offered to or impressed by the army from other affluent Tejanos like the Navarros and José Antonio de la Garza. Life and property continued to be in danger as late as mid-October 1836 when a raiding party from Mexico entered San Antonio in search of plunder and perhaps revenge. Seguin, then a Colonel, still offered the local population little in the way of security other than the lame advice of driving their cattle out of the war zone. Those who clung to their homes in contravention of this policy were even regarded as "pretended friends" of Texas by the leading newspaper of the Republic.

In the communities of Victoria, Goliad, and Refugio, the people experienced problems similar to those of the Bexareños but made worse by several factors. When the centralists troops arrived in the spring of 1836, most of the Mexican residents had stayed at home and made their peace with the new order. Since Urrea sought to win support from the local population and left but a small force of occupation behind as he marched east, the inhabitants lived under a relatively light-handed rule through the late spring. In contrast to the situation in Béxar, few of the natives celebrated the retreat of the centralist army in the second half of May. The withdrawal occurred in two phases, first by the division under Filisola, followed closely by that of Urrea.

These generals agreed that the retreat left the people in desperate position but launched into a protracted debate about who should be held responsible. Urrea blamed Filisola for ordering the evacuation and leaving the locals behind in a state of such depravity that no army could possibly subsist there, much less offer protection. Filisola claimed that he had attempted to prepare Goliad as a base for operations, a policy that Urrea had undermined by spreading panic as he passed through on the road to Matamoros. Further, the latter general allegedly had impressed so many draft animals and carts that the people had no means of fulfilling his advice to accompany the centralist army in retreat. However vigorously they debated the matter of blame, the two leaders agreed that many Tejanos had fled with the Mexican army and that those who stayed behind had been left defenseless to cope with a mean-spirited, vengeful Texas force. Neither general bothered to record popular responses, but one other officer did. The people, he wrote in his diary, expressed surprise at being compelled to abandon their property and retreat with the army: "The residents of Goliad, who had suffered much, became quite angry with us and insulted us, saying that we were fleeing as cowards from a handful of adventurers."

Many of the area Tejanos remained on their homelands, either because they lacked the means to flee, chose to resist, or felt themselves safe because they had never voluntarily supported the
centralist cause. However, their previous loyalties counted for little in the summer of 1836. The doomsayers had been right; the Texas army arrived on the scene in a vindictive mood, already disposed to hate Mexicans. Their attitude worsened with the discovery of the grisly remains of the victims of the Goliad massacre.

Poor discipline added to the indiscriminate nature of army policies, as did the weakness of the commissary, which forced commanders to rely on local provisions. Limited in power at first by its small numbers, the army soon grew from four hundred to two thousand. An advanced unit under Col. Sidney Sherman camped near Victoria on May 23, looking for provisions and spies among the citizens, thus setting the tone for subsequent army policies. Rusk arrived there before the end of the month and extended the military influence to Goliad and San Patricio by sending out companies to forage for more supplies and probe for traitors. The commander of one such expedition reported on May 30 that he had found few arms and no documentary evidence to implicate the inhabitants of the ranches he had raided. Nevertheless, he impressed horses and intended to arrest enough family heads to serve as “examples” but not so many as to leave the women entirely defenseless.

His and other groups of soldiers continued these forays in the next few days, reaching all the way to the Nueces River. On June 2 Captains H. Teal and H. W. Karnes reported an adverse response to these activities. Some “Mexicans citizens . . . stated that they was at there Ranch and some of our scouts came up and took them prisoner with some others and rob[ed] of there guns and there horses,” threatening to remove them to Victoria. The officers protested these attacks for undermining support among the inhabitants, who had responded by fleeing with their cattle. The “rascooly” civilians had used army outrages to convince many of the “old settlers” that “they wood all be killed and they think that you are after them as hard as you can march.”

Many of these arrests, insults, and property confiscations resulted from the excesses of soldiers acting outside of army control. Several observers shared this conclusion. John J. Linn’s account of the outrages against area Tejanos attributed them to soldiers, especially new recruits from the United States, who operated from a “creed [of] the total extermination of the Mexican race and the appropriation of their property to the individual use of the exterminators.” He praised the commander for attempting to control these attacks against civilians and for offering “asylum” to Fernando de León. This head of the Victoria family that had lent so much support to the Texas cause suffered a bushwhacking while at army headquarters. A veteran of this period concurred in absolving Rusk of blame for these disgraceful attacks against the persons and property of the De Leones; he attributed the outrages to adventurers who excused their plundering by false allegations of their victims’ unfriendliness. Yet, this account made it clear that the general had failed either to obtain a return of stolen goods or to control the band of army outlaws.

Further, army leaders also seized civilian property in large quantities. Wealthier ranchers and merchants turned over not only cattle but also wagons, mules, oxen, rum, salt, and tobacco. The quartermaster, other officers, and even the commander himself issued some receipts for these goods, but much of what they took went undocumented and thus uncompensated.
María Antonio de la Garza, of Victoria, surrendered around sixty head of cattle to the Texas army and received no certificate of impressment for over a year. Luckily, she managed to gain Rusk's endorsement of her claim, with an inscription that revealed much about the process. She had, in fact, "placed her cattle at the disposition of the army and many of them were used," wrote the general, "what number or quality I am unable to say."

Rusk's policy may have been haphazard at first, but it soon became purposeful: throughout the western frontier the people would be removed and their land despoiled of its most valuable property, cattle. This strategy would provision the Texas army, deny support to a threatened enemy reinvansion, and remedy the irritant of civilian-military conflict. Tejanos, who comprised virtually all the people of this broad region, would suffer loss of their possessions, livelihood, and liberty so that the Revolution might be furthered. The Tory behavior of the area hardly served to excuse this oppressive policy, since a majority of that persuasion had already fled with the centralist forces or in response to attacks by the army of occupation in early summer. Most who remained and suffered from this forced evacuation had been loyal to the Texas Revolution. As in Béxar, Rusk's strategy was not implemented in a coherent fashion, but the army did compel substantial numbers to leave their homes.

On June 19 Rusk informed the secretary of war of the issuance of orders "to all the Families Mexicans and all to fall back at once and clear the Country." He offered residents of the entire region between the Guadalupe and Nueces rivers a grim choice—to flee either to Mexico or to a part of Texas out of the war zone, driving out their herds or surrendering them to the control of the army. In actuality, the Tejanos could not protect their properties because they lacked means or opportunity to remove possessions and must leave lands and homes to the mercy of the military. Feigning ignorance of the policy did not provide an effective shield. "Some of the Mexican families," in Rusk's words, "are pretending that they have no orders to remove," but he handled this ploy by reiterating his policy and sending cavalry units to enforce it. He paid particular attention to forcing the evacuation of the leading family of Victoria, the De Leones, by boarding them under guard onto vessels routed to New Orleans. The ranks of evacuees included Benavides, whose revolutionary service had most recently included fighting against Urrea, and José María Carbajal, also a staunch and early supporter of the federalist cause. The army loaded about eighty members of this extended family on the Durango at Matagorda Bay on June 26, bringing a large measure of success to Rusk's orders to "dispose of the Families."

He intended to make a complete evacuation of all the Tejano-dominated areas, but enforcement became less rigorous away from Victoria. Carlos de la Garza gave no response to the soldiers who brought the removal orders to his ranch near Refugio and thus led his people into successful resistance. This act capped his thorough and consistent opposition to the Texas cause. In spite of this glaring exception, Rusk's otherwise ruthless policy allowed him to police the region more successfully for the remainder of the summer. Into the fall Texas authorities continued to issue orders to drive the livestock belonging to unfriendly citizens out of the valleys of the San Antonio and Nueces rivers.

The ravages of the war and immediate postwar period left a permanent mark on the entire area. For years the De Leones remained in exile in Louisiana while their Anglo neighbors or
newcomers to the area piled up legal claims to Tejano property. Expatriates Benavides and Carbajal never resettled in Texas; others in the family came back only after much of the land had been taken over by others and the cattle had been long-since lost. Poverty dogged this once-powerful clan both during and after their exile. The population centers of the region also underwent transformation. Victoria became what one historian has described as “a wild Anglo-American town, dominated by an army and many newcomers that distrusted and hated the Mexicans.” Goliad and Refugio were largely destroyed during the fighting of the spring of 1836. Some of the Tejano residents were killed in the war, and many more became exiles south of the Rio Grande or exiles from their native land under the unrelenting pressure of the Texas army of occupation. Though exceptional ones like Carlos de la Garza remained to keep the Tejano heritage alive, the area as a whole suffered large-scale depopulation.

Many Tejanos attempted to save their birthrights and perform their patriotic duties by volunteering for military service in the summer of 1836. Near the end of the year the Telegraph and Texas Register reported that “Col. Seguin, the untiring friend of Texas,” commanded a force of about eighty “Americans” in the regular army and two hundred “Mexican citizen volunteers.” Not nearly that number received the bounty grants due for service for the period May to December, 1836. Of those who did, about 40 percent had participated in earlier campaigns and tended to be young (in the mid-twenties, on the average) and single (62 percent). Virtually all of these veterans had followed Seguin into the army from the Béxar municipality. The Tejanos who joined for the first time in this period possessed as a group much less uniformity. Though the largest number volunteered in the Company “B” Cavalry of Bexareños led by Seguin’s lieutenant, Manuel Flores, many served in one of the other units, usually some kind of mounted rangers, formed at various times and places in the summer and fall of 1836. Next to Béxar, Nacogdoches yielded the largest number; the region from Victoria to San Patricio, at that time being largely depopulated by Rusk, produced scarcely any soldiers. In personal characteristics these first-time volunteers showed more variety—they were older by an average of five years, some being in their fifties, and were more likely to be married than were the earlier Tejano recruits. These attributes suggest a powerful and broad compulsion to demonstrate loyalty to Texas during this time of growing ethnic tensions.

Service of various kinds may have helped to advance the cause of the Tejanos individually or even as a community, as in the case of Béxar, but as a whole Texas policy toward citizens of Mexican descent had become capricious by the summer of 1836. Their problems steamed mostly from living in a year-long war zone where they suffered from military policies of harsh material exploitation and ruthless denial of liberty. Well before the end of summer sweeping anti-Mexican prejudice had largely triumphed over restraint. Army-enforced deportations and property confiscations had become indiscriminate under General Rusk, with the burden falling as heavily on the patriotic Bexareños and Victorians as on the defiant Tories of Refugio. For Tejanos the Revolution established a tradition of trouble and portended a future of overwhelming governmental discrimination and societal prejudice.