

The Woll Invasion



Tensions between Mexico and Texas did not end with Santa Anna's defeat at San Jacinto in 1836. In fact, there were a number of skirmishes between the newly formed Republic of Texas and its neighbor to the south. On September 11, 1842, during a time when the District Court was in session in San Antonio, there were rumors of a large invading force moving towards the town. Scouts were unable to confirm the reports and most chose to dismiss them. They were to be proven wrong.

A Mexican invading force led by General Adrian Woll, a French soldier of fortune, descended upon the town of San Antonio. After a two-hour skirmish, the invaders captured sixty-two citizens... most of them high officials or highly respected men who had business before the district court. These non-combatants were taken as prisoners of war to Perote Prison (originally the Castle of San Carlos built in the 1770s) outside of Mexico City. It took them three months to make that overland trek.

Santa Anna apparently had several goals to justify his actions: "to disrupt civil proceedings and the progress of government in Texas; to demonstrate the strength of Mexico's forces; to assert Mexican sovereignty; to chastise the Texans; and ultimately to redeem himself and regain the Texas that was lost in the battle of San Jacinto."

The US government was able to secure the release of some of the prisoners the following year but most remained in

captivity until 1844. Unfortunately, my first cousin (six times removed), John Casey Trapnell, succumbed to pneumonia while incarcerated there and died in the confines of Perote Prison.

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