



**THE TEJANO MONUMENT**  
A CAPITOL GROUNDS LEGACY SCULPTURE

**TEJANO MONUMENT: KEY FACTS**

- In 2001, the 77th Texas Legislature adopted HCR 38 authorizing the Tejano Monument on Texas capitol grounds to pay tribute to the contributions of Tejanos to the State of Texas.
- Tejano Monument, Inc. -- a private corporate board of Tejano business, education, and community leaders - used public and private funding to design, fund, and erect the Tejano Monument in 2012.
- The Tejano Monument was created by sculptor Armando Hinojosa of Laredo, Texas.
- TEJANO means TEXAN in Spanish because for 150 years, only Spanish was spoken in Texas. Tejanos are the founding pioneer settlers of Texas.

**TEJANO MONUMENT: PLAQUES**

***SPANISH TEJANOS (1519 - 1810)***

Tejanos are descended from the Spanish explorers and colonizers who settled Texas. They eventually took the name Tejano from the Spanish word Tejas, used by native American Indians who originally inhabited Texas. As early as 1519, Spaniards visited the Texas coast and a group led by Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca was the first to describe the native peoples of Texas and the geography of Texas between 1528 and 1534. The Texas Panhandle region was explored by Francisco Vásquez de Coronado in 1541, while the DeSoto-Moscoco expedition explored northeastern Texas the following year. Soon, Spaniards explored the coastal regions and established Texas as a province.

An attempt by France to establish a colony on the Texas coast in the 1680s, prompted Spain to send Captain Alonzo de León in search of the French settlement. On his expeditions into Texas in 1686-1690, De León founded the first Spanish mission in East Texas. These early expeditions named most of the major rivers in Texas and released many longhorn cattle which later became the foundation of the cattle industry in Texas. By 1718, a permanent community at San Antonio de Bexar had been established by soldier-settlers and Franciscan missionaries, later expanded by families from New Spain and the Canary Islands.

By the mid-1700s, Spanish settlements included the capital at Los Adaes (now Robeline, Louisiana), San Antonio and La Bahía (now Goliad). In the lower Rio Grande country, other settlers from the interior of Mexico and Spain, under the leadership of Jose de Escandón, founded a network of towns. Tejano ranchers provided thousands of longhorn cattle to Spanish soldiers and settlers and even drove cattle northeastward to aid the American Revolution. Tejano pioneers left a proud ranching legacy in Texas.

***TEJANOS UNDER THE MEXICAN FLAG (1810 - 1836)***

Tejanos developed their unique identity, and sought to control their own destiny in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Mexico. Following Father Miguel Hidalgo's call for rebellion against bad government on September 16, 1810, many Tejanos rallied in support of the Mexican war for independence. Tejanos and their Anglo allies first declared Texas independence on April 6, 1813, but suffered defeat at the Battle of Medina on August 18, 1813. It was the bloodiest battle ever fought on Texas soil. After Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821, Tejanos welcomed Anglo-American immigrants into Texas under the Republic of Mexico.

In 1824, the Mexican National Congress joined Texas to Coahuila as a combined state. Fearful that the arrangement would hurt Texas interests, Tejanos opposed this union. This view was shared by the new Anglo-American colonists, many of whom retained strong economic and political ties to the United States. After the Mexican Congress prohibited trade and immigration from the U.S., Anglo-Texans and Tejanos revolted and declared

Texas independence from Mexico. Two native Tejanos signed the Texas Declaration of Independence on March 2, 1836.

In his march to defeat the independence movement in Texas in 1836, Mexican General Antonio López de Santa Anna was opposed by many influential Tejano families, particularly the Seguín, Navarro, Ruiz, Benavides, Carvajal, and De León families. Many Tejanos fought bravely in the Texas Revolution, including the battles at San Antonio in 1835, the Alamo and San Jacinto.

### ***TEJANOS IN THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS (1836 - 1848)***

As citizens of the Republic of Texas, Tejanos kept their language, culture and traditions alive with a fierce determination despite many difficulties as Texans of Mexican heritage. The Republic of Texas had set the Rio Grande as its southern border, claiming the Mexican territories and settlements that had previously been part of the neighboring states of Tamaulipas, Coahuila, and Nuevo León. This increased the conflict with Mexico.

Despite the difficulties, Tejanos continued to serve in government and the military. Lorenzo de Zavala served as the first vice president of an interim government of the Republic of Texas. Tejanos served in both houses of the Congress of the Republic of Texas. Other Tejanos served in local government and as Texas Rangers. Tejanos also participated in the defense of Texas against Indian raiders and contributed to frontier settlements. They continued to be active participants in the ranching and agricultural economy of the Republic.

In 1845, the United States annexed Texas as its 28th state and re-asserted the claim to the Rio Grande as its border. This led to the U.S.- Mexican War of 1846-1848 and the United States victory over Mexico. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo incorporated all of Mexico north of the Rio Grande into the United States, including Texas. The treaty made Tejanos and other Mexican settlers into United States citizens.

### ***TEJANOS AND TEXAS IN THE U.S. (1848 - 1920)***

After 1848, when all of Texas became part of the United States, most Tejanos adjusted to the new American laws and to the new economy. At times, change came too fast for Tejanos resulting in injustice and violence and many experienced the loss of their lands. Many rebelled in an attempt to right those wrongs. Many others adapted, and some even prospered in the new political and economic system, particularly in South Texas. In the 1850s, Mexican Americans shared their ranching life and culture of vaqueros (the first cowboys) with Anglo settlers. While some of the original Tejano residents in cities such as Brownsville, Laredo and San Antonio became merchants and leaders in local political organizations, many Mexican Americans arriving from Mexico became laborers in the new economic system. Many of these new arrivals assumed identities as Tejanos. They participated in important national events, including the Civil War (1861-1865) in which Tejanos were recruited by the Union as well as the Confederacy. Many Tejanos fought honorably in the Spanish American War and in World War I.

### ***MEXICAN AMERICANS IN 20TH CENTURY AMERICA***

World War II ushered in a new era for Tejanos and Mexican-Americans of other states. Tejanos were among the first American soldiers to volunteer and to be recruited to serve in combat. They fought bravely, earning a disproportionately high number of combat decorations, including the Medal of Honor. Tejanos served in an integrated army with Mexican Americans from other states and returned to Texas after the war to press for economic, political, and social equality. Struggles in various civil rights organizations produced new opportunities that resulted in the rise of a new professional class and greater political participation for Tejanos. Immigration from Mexico in the late 20th century resulted in larger Mexican-American populations in the western and midwestern states while it also augmented the Tejano community in Texas.

By the end of the 20th Century, Tejanos had served in the cabinets of presidents of both political parties, held elective public office at the statewide level, and led public colleges and universities. Tejanos also made significant contributions in the worlds of business and sports. Traditional Mexican cultural identity remained strong in Tejano families and achieved public expression in music, literature, and the arts.

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