

## Stop 32 – The Battle of Concepcion

Many historians argue that the first real battle of the Texas Revolution began right here at Mission Concepcion. It was only a little over ten years since mission priests transferred mission lands, cattle, and tools to the converted Indians. Calls for Texas independence had echoed in “el norte,” as Texas was referred to, for decades. After a brief skirmish at Gonzales in October 1835, the Mexican army moved toward San Antonio de Bejar. Stephen F. Austin, the military leader of the local Texian force, sent legendary Jim Bowie and James Fannin to find a defensible position. They chose a site about 300 yards west of the gates of Mission Concepcion on the banks of the San Antonio River. The battle site looks very different today. Imagine it’s the fall of 1835. Heavy woods hug the steep embankment down to the river.

Hidden in the woods, the Texians were armed with long rifles. Their range was 200 yards. The Mexican army carried muskets with a range of only 70 yards. The Texians fired precise volleys, descended the bank to reload, and then rose again to fire yet another murderous volley. Bowie remarked that, (character voice of James Bowie) “The discharge from the enemy was one continued blaze of fire, whilst from our lines, was more slowly delivered, but with good aim and deadly effect.” The Mexican musket fire was so ineffective that some musket balls bounced off Texian soldiers and caused little more than a bruise.

In the end, some 60 Mexican fighters were killed. The Texians lost one man, Richard Andrews. There would be setbacks for the Texians, most notably at the Alamo, but the war moved swiftly and in March, 1836 Texas declared its Independence. On April 21, 1836, Sam Houston’s army intercepted Santa Anna near the banks of the San Jacinto River about 25 miles east of present day downtown Houston. Santa Anna was captured. His army virtually annihilated, and Texas became a republic.