



By Anna

WILLIAM B. TRAVIS

FREEDOM FIGHTER FOR TEXAS



ANNA

**SFA CHARTER SCHOOL
APRIL 1, 2004**

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WILLIAM B. TRAVIS: FREEDOM FIGHTER FOR TEXAS

INTRODUCTION

William Barret Travis was one of the early settlers of Texas. He would become a freedom fighter for Texas Independence and eventually give his life for Texas as commander at the Battle of the Alamo. This story is so famous that 17 movies have been made about it. The most recent movie about William B. Travis and The Alamo will be out April 9, 2004.



WILLIAM B. TRAVIS BEFORE THE ALAMO

You might be surprised to know that William B. Travis was not born in Texas. He was born in South Carolina on August 9, 1809. He was the oldest of eleven children. His ancestors landed in a famous place called Jamestown, Virginia in 1627. Those early relatives used the name "Travers." In 1817, Travis's family moved the family to Alabama.

When William B. Travis was a boy he worked on the family farm. Instead of going to a school, he was educated at home until he moved to Alabama where he was such a good student that he eventually helped the teacher teach the class. In fact, he married one of his students: Rosanna Cato. They had a son named Charles.

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WILLIAM B. TRAVIS AT THE ALAMO

When Mexico and Texas first went to war over who should own Texas, William B. Travis was one of the first to sign up to fight for Texas. He became a colonel of the cavalry and he helped to recruit men to fight. The governor asked him to find 100 men but he was only able to find 29. The governor was not upset; instead, he gave Travis 50 men to lead. Now Travis was really ready to fight for the statehood of Texas.

Things in Texas cooled down a bit when Stephen F. Austin was imprisoned in Mexico, because no one wanted him to be hurt. But once he was released, then clashes between Mexican forces and Texas forces occurred in Gonzales, Velasco, and Nacogdoches.

William Barret Travis

Patrick Wilson

The commander of the Alamo was initially reluctant to take the assignment. The former teacher from Alabama, however, earned the respect of his troops and is known for his letters that were written during the Alamo siege.



The governor told Travis in 1836 to go to the Alamo with about 30 men. At that time, the Alamo was called San Antonio de Valero Mission and it was located in San Antonio. He and his men prepared the fortress for the arrival of the Mexican commander Santa Anna and the Mexican army. They strengthened the walls, filled gaps, set up cannons, and stored provisions.

In total there were 150 Americans in the Alamo, but there were 2000 soldiers in the Mexican Army. So William B. Travis, now the commander of the Alamo, sent out letters to ask for reinforcements.

I have answered the demand with a cannon shot and our flag still waves proudly from the walls—I shall never surrender or retreat. Then I call on you in the

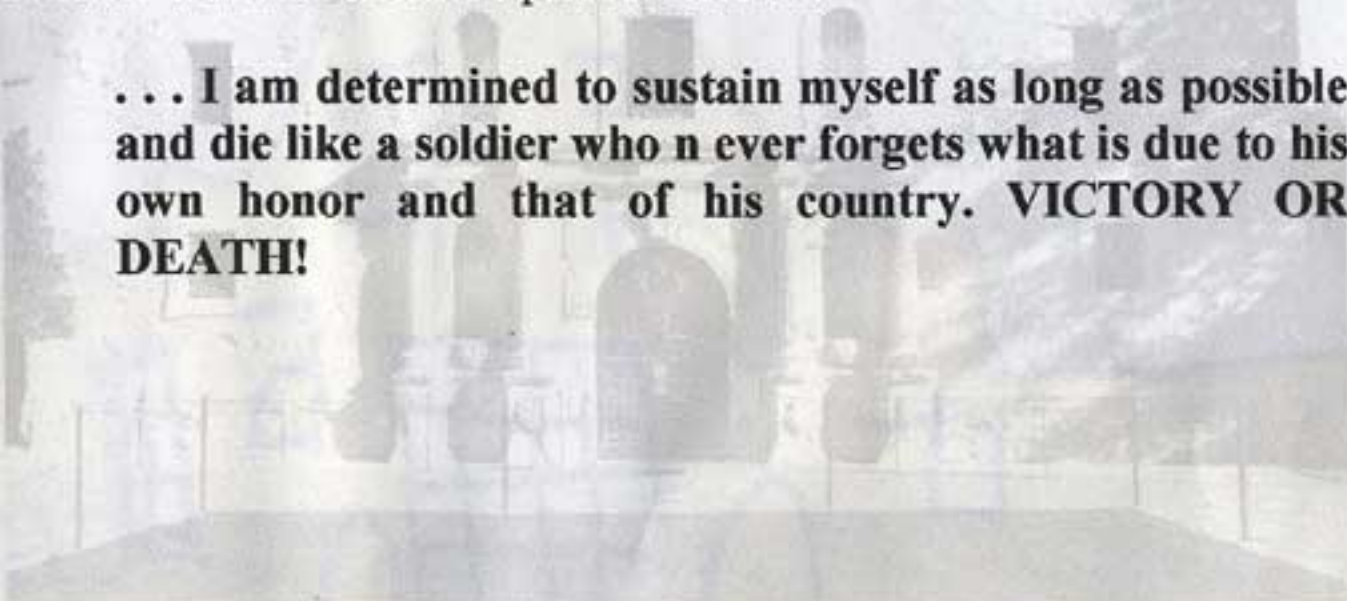
name of Liberty, of patriotism, and everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid, with all dispatch I will never surrender or retreat!

But only 32 brave men from Gonzales joined the men at the Alamo. The rest did not make it there in time.

Just before the sun came up on March 6, 1836, the Mexicans went to battle with the men at the Alamo. Within a few hours (maybe even as little as 90 minutes) all the men fighting for Texas were dead. William B. Travis died from a single bullet to the head. The Mexican soldiers burned his body and the bodies of the others at the Alamo.

If you go to San Antonio to the Alamo, if you listen very quietly, you can still hear William B. Travis's plea for freedom:

... I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible and die like a soldier who n ever forgets what is due to his own honor and that of his country. VICTORY OR DEATH!



Santa Anna

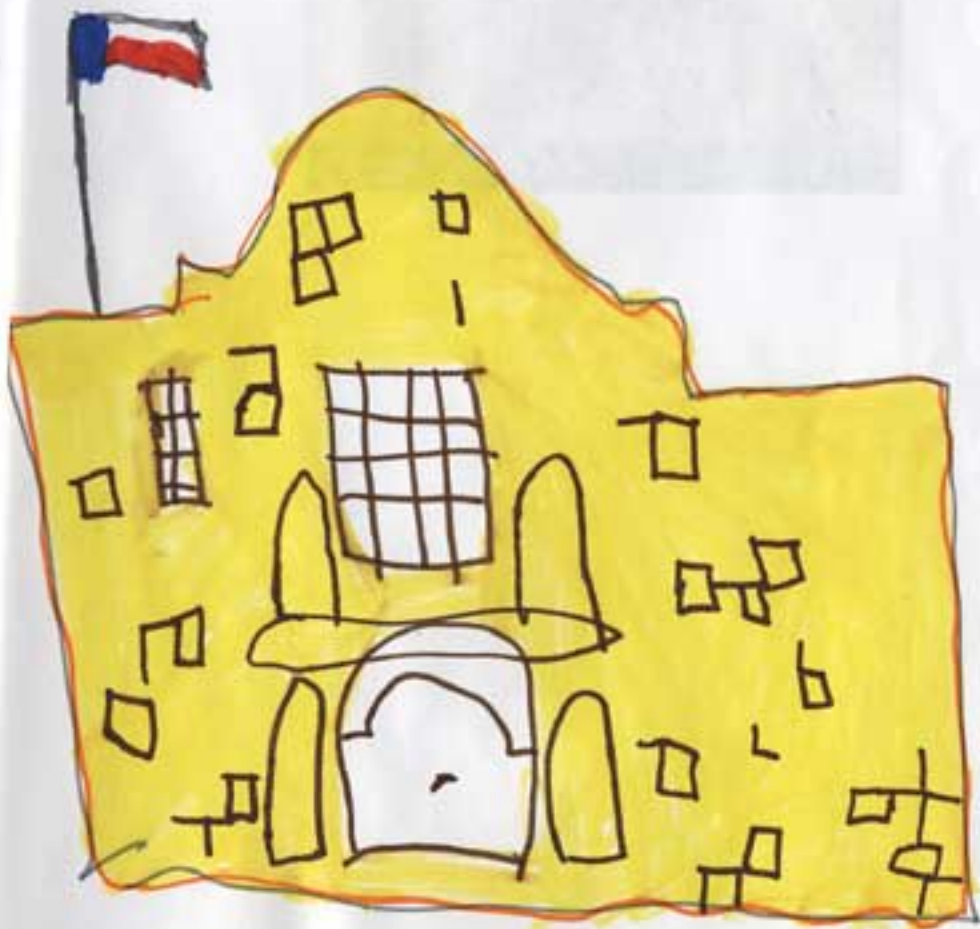
Emilio Echevarría



The Mexican general called himself the "Napoleon of the West." Traditionally vilified, he led the assault on the Alamo, only to meet his Waterloo at San Jacinto. He

died in poverty in Mexico City on June 21, 1876

The Alamo



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