The Story Continues

Several Texas settlers had braved long distances and hard travel to reach San Felipe de Austin. Some had been delayed by the fighting in Gonzales, Goliad, and San Antonio. Others were delayed by the confusion that surrounded events. Still, they had an important mission. As delegates to the Consultation, they would debate the future of Texas.

Debating Independence

While Austin and Burleson were besieging San Antonio, another group of Texans was taking part in a convention that would have equally great consequences. Known as the Consultation, its purpose was to discuss Texans’ plans for dealing with Mexico. Scheduled to begin in mid-October, the opening was delayed by the outbreak of battles in Texas.

Finally, on November 4, 1835, the Consultation began. No delegates from the fighting areas were present. Immediately disagreements arose. Pro-war delegates argued that Texas should declare independence from Mexico. The pro-peace group wanted to remain loyal to Mexico. Many Tejanos were torn, worried about their future in an independent Texas.

Three days after meeting, the Consultation issued the Declaration of November 7, 1835. In this document, they justified the fighting that had already taken place against Mexico. The Texans were not rebelling, they argued, but only fighting to defend their rights under the Constitution of 1824. As long as Mexico denied these rights, they continued, the Texan were justified in creating their own government.
The Consultation then created a **provisional** or temporary, government. It elected **Henry Smith** governor and James Robinson lieutenant governor. Governor Smith was a member of the pro-war group and had been active in Texas politics since 1827. To help run the government, the Consultation created the General Council. In addition, the delegates chose three commissioners to travel to the United States: Stephen F. Austin, William H. Wharton, and Branch T. Archer. Their goals were to recruit volunteers for the army and to raise money.

The delegates next turned to military matters. They established a professional army, modeled after the U.S. Army, with **Sam Houston** as its commander-in-chief. Houston was an experienced soldier and politician. He had served in the U.S. Congress and as governor of Tennessee. But as commander of the Texas army, Houston faced several problems. At that time, Texas forces were entirely made up of volunteers, not professional soldiers. As volunteers, they did not answer to Houston. And because the Consultation did not give him money, Houston could not pay professional soldiers. He was a commander with no army.

In addition to an army, the General Council authorized the creation of a navy. It was to protect the Texas coast and guard ships traveling from New Orleans and other eastern ports. The four-ship navy allowed supplies to reach Texas forces. It also kept Mexico from resupplying Santa Anna’s army by sea. For example, in March 1836, the Mexican schooner *Pelicano* was seized with 300 barrels of gunpowder on board. The council also licensed private vessels to attack enemy ships on behalf of the government.

**Reading Check**  **Finding the Main Idea** What were the major outcomes of the Consultation?
The Provisional Government

It was not long before conflict broke out among members of the provisional government. One such conflict dealt with military strategy. Some Texans in favor of independence wanted to attack Matamoros, a city across the Rio Grande. They hoped that doing so would stir federalists in other parts of northern Mexico to join the protest against Santa Anna’s government. Francis Johnson and James Grant organized an army of volunteer troops for this campaign. Neither Sam Houston nor Governor Smith supported the plan. They did not think that Texas had enough resources—either money or people—to support so risky a plan. The General Council sided with Johnson and Grant. After a great deal of debate and arguments over strategy, they left for Matamoros, hoping to gather additional volunteers along the way.

Meanwhile, Houston and William Goyens of Nacogdoches went to East Texas to negotiate a peace treaty with the Cherokees. The two were well suited for the task. Houston had lived with the Cherokees in Tennessee and Oklahoma as a young man. Goyens had served as a diplomat to the Cherokees of East Texas for many years. Because of their efforts, the Cherokees agreed not to side with Mexico in the revolution.

Other efforts of the provisional government were less successful. Texas did not have clear goals or good leadership, and several conflicts emerged between members of the General Council. Disagreements also arose between Smith, who wanted immediate independence for Texas, and the council members of the pro-peace group. Despite protests from Smith, in December 1835 the General Council scheduled a new convention for March 1, 1836, to solve the government’s problems.

Reading Check  Drawing Inferences and Conclusions  What caused the problems faced by the provisional government?

Section 2 Review

1. Define and explain:
   - provisional

2. Identify and explain
   the significance of each of the following in Texas history:
   - Consultation
   - Declaration of November 7, 1835
   - Henry Smith
   - Sam Houston

3. Identifying Cause and Effect
   Copy the graphic organizer below. Use it to show why the Consultation met and what it hoped to accomplish.

4. Finding the Main Idea
   a. What type of government did the delegates establish?
   b. How did the structure of the provisional government create problems?

5. Writing and Critical Thinking  Supporting a Point of View  Imagine that you are a delegate. Write a letter supporting either the pro-war group’s drive for independence or the peace group’s position to stay part of Mexico.
   Consider the following:
   - arguments of the pro-war group
   - arguments of the peace group