

READER THEATER: TEXAS REVOLUTION

Part I

Narrator: Americans saw a future in Texas.

U.S. #1..... “A most delicious country; fertile, bountiful prairies covered with grass and flowers; vast meadows and most delightful champaign country; dry, pure, elastic air; springs of sweet waters; clear and rapid streams; no swamps; abundance of buffalo, horses, and deer.” (U.S. senator in 1829, quoting companions of La Salle in 1685)

U.S. #2..... “I have traveled near five hundred miles across Texas...and I have no hesitancy in pronouncing it the finest country to its extent upon the globe. For the greater portion of it is richer and more healthy, in my opinion, than West Tennessee...It is probable that I may make Texas my abiding place.” (Sam Houston)

U.S. #1.....”Every friend to the western country, every man who wishes to see gold and silver abundant in his country, every man who wishes to see liberty continue her march to the Pacific Ocean, must wish success to the adventurers in Texas. Success will attend them.” (1819 article in the Clarion and Tennessee State Gazette)

Narrator: However, the Americans and Mexican viewed each other with mistrust.

U.S. #2..... “Now the Mexicans are no better than Indians, and I see no reason why we should not go on in the same course now and take their land...They are a people incapable of self-government.” (Houston, New York speech in 1848)

Mex. #1..... “How strange are these people from the North! The Americans from the North...eat only salted meat, bread made by themselves out of corn meal, coffee, and home-made cheeses. To these the greater part of those who live in the village add strong liquor, for they are in general, in my opinion, lazy people of vicious character.” (Tejano)

U.S. #1..... “The people {Mexicans} are bigoted and superstitious to an extreme, and indolence [laziness] appears to be the general word of the day. To be candid the majority of the people of the whole nation as far as I have seen want nothing but tails to be more brutes than the apes.” (Austin during first visit to Mexico City in 1822-23)

Mex. #2..... “They follow no laws unless they find it convenient to what they want anyway” (Jose Sanchez)

U.S. #2... “Mexico is involved in a civil war. The Government is essentially despotic [rule by one] and must be so for years to come. The rulers have not honesty, and the people have not intelligence.” (Houston letter to Andrew Jackson, Feb. 13, 1833)

Mex. #1..... “Let us be honest with ourselves, Sir, the foreign empresarios (Anglo-American land agents) are nothing more than money-changing speculators caring for their own well being and hesitating not in their unbecoming methods.” (town council of La Bahia)

Stop...answer questions

1. What did the Americans like about Texas?
2. How did the Americans view the Mexicans?
3. How did the Mexicans view the Americans?

Part II

Narrator: The Americans feel they should possess the lands of Mexico.

U.S. #1..... “As surely as tomorrow’s sun will rise and pursue its bright course along the firmament of heaven.....so must the Anglo-Saxon race pervade the whole southern extremity of this continent and the people whom God has placed here in this land, spread, prevail and pervade throughout the whole rich empire of this great hemisphere.”

Mex #1..... “The Anglo-Americans have never failed, whenever possible, to inflict damages upon our country...It is an indisputable fact that Americans long to acquire possessions...”

U.S. #2... “there is an instinct in the American people which impels them onward, which will lead them to pervade this continent, to develop its resources, to civilize its people and receive the rich bounties of the creating power of divine Providence.....The Americans regard this continent as their birth-right.” (Houston, 1848)

Mex #2... “The imagination of the Anglo-Americans is stimulated by their own vanity, and in their dreams of grandeur, they look upon us as pygmies, objects deserving of their pity....”

U.S. #1... “Now the Mexicans are no better than Indians, and I see no reason why we should not go on in the same course now and take their land. But these countries will be benefited by our occupation..... We are the majority, and it must be done for the sake of humanity.”

Mex #1... “All nations seem to have approached their natural limits, but the United States continue to sail rapidly on their course, without halting, towards a goal which the human eye cannot discern. We, the Mexicans, cannot afford to stand by as idle spectators...”

U.S. #2... “In 25 years Mexico has undergone 25 different revolutions. They are a people incapable of self-government. We are now in this war, engaged in giving peace, security and happiness to this oppressed people.” (Houston’s speech in New York, 1848)

Mex #2..... “Our honor...the self-respect of the nation, that can be preserved only by the defense of her rights with dignity and determination, our very political existence are at stake. Mexico cannot give up her territory...”

Mex. #1... “It is impossible for us to give up more than 200 leagues of coastline, depriving ourselves of our most extensive facilities for the construction of shipyards, the shortest and most advantageous commercial routes, the most fertile lands of the republic, and the best resources of the nation...The loss of Texas would reduce the value of our lands...the loss of Texas will inevitably result in the loss of New Mexico and the Californias. Little by little our territory will be absorbed, until only an insignificant part is left us.”
(General Jose Maria Tornel, Secretary of War, in 1837)

Stop.....Answer questions

1. Why did the Americans feel they had a right to own Texas?
2. Why will the Mexicans fight to preserve their land?

Part III

Narrator: The Americans complained about the Mexican government.....

U.S.#1.... “The Mexican government has failed and refused to secure..... guarantee for the life, liberty, and property of the citizen.” (Declaration of Independence for Texas)

Mex #1..... “It is astonishing that those who, disregarding Mexican law, have opened a vast market of human flesh [slavery] in Texas should dare to acclaim the sacred name of liberty.” (Gen. Jose Tornel, 1837)

U.S.#2..... “The Mexican government...has failed and refused to secure on a firm basis the right of trial by jury.” (Declaration of Independence)

Mex #2..... “Trial by jury was established for Texas...the Texans had the audacity to assert that we had exercised the unheard-of tyranny of not permitting them to resort to trial by jury.” (Gen. Jose Tornel, 1837)

U.S.#1..... “The Mexican government... has dissolved by force of arms the state Congress of Texas, ...thus depriving us of the fundamental political right of representation.” (Declaration of Independence)

Mex #1..... “It is astonishing that those who have lived entirely without restraint should now clamor for their rights. They have not respected a single one of the laws that govern any well-regulated society.” (Gen. Jose Tornel, 1837)
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U.S.#2..... “The Mexican government...denies us the right of worshipping the Almighty according to the dictates of our own consciences.” (Declaration of Independence)

Mex #2..... “The prohibition against the erection of places of worship and the practice of other cults than the Roman Catholic was the law of the land at the time when the colonists came and they agreed to conform to it. Why didn't they stay in their own country to raise temples in the....west?” (Gen. Jose Tornel, 1837)
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U.S.#1..... “The Mexican government...has invaded our country, both by sea and land, with intent to lay waste our territory and drive us from our homes.” (Declaration of Independence)

Mex #1..... “It is incomprehensible that they should sponsor a war...against the country that gave them lands, good homes, generous laws, and the blessings of their own civilization.” (Gen. Jose Tornel, 1837)

Part 3: Answer questions

1. What do you think are the Americans top two arguments against the Mexican government?
2. What do you think are the Mexican's top two arguments against the Americans?
3. What kind of compromise or treaty could the Mexicans and Americans have reached?

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