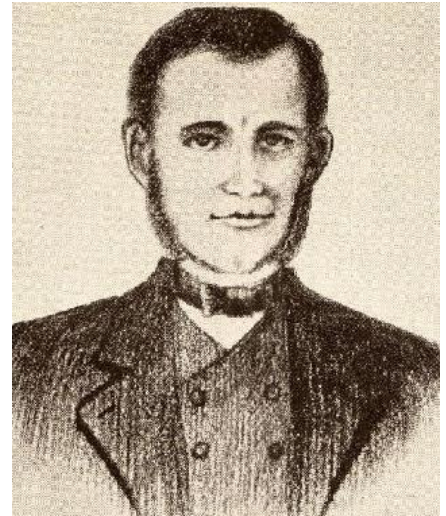


To the People of Texas AND All Americans in the World

William B. Travis was the commander of a small force of Texans and Tejanos at the Alamo Mission in San Antonio, Texas on February 23, 1836. Mexican troops, led by General Antonio López de Santa Anna had them surrounded. Fearing that his small group of men could not withstand an assault, Travis wrote an open letter seeking reinforcements and supplies from supporters.

The letter was initially entrusted to courier Albert Martin, who carried it to the town of Gonzales 70 miles away. Martin added several postscripts to encourage men to reinforce the Alamo and handed the letter to Launcelot Smithers. Smithers added his own postscript and delivered the letter to its intended destination, San Felipe de Austin, the political center of the Stephen F. Austin colony.

Publishers there printed more than 700 copies. The letter also appeared in two Texas newspapers and was eventually printed throughout the US. While it did not result in any direct aid for the garrison at the Alamo, it did much to motivate the Texian army and helped to rally support in America for the cause of independence for Texas. It also cemented Travis's status as a hero of the Texas Revolution.



To the People of Texas AND All Americans in the World:

Fellow citizens & compatriots—I am besieged, by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna—I have sustained a continual Bombardment & cannonade for 24 hours & have not lost a man. The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise, the garrison are to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken—I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, & 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 & everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid, with all dispatch—The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily & will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible & die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor & that of his country—Victory or Death.

William Barret Travis

Lt. Col. comdt

P.S. The Lord is on our side—When the enemy appeared in sight we had not three bushels of corn—We have since found in deserted houses 80 or 90 bushels & got into the walls 20 or 30 head of Beeves.

Travis

Postscript by Launcelot Smithers:

To All the Inhabitants of Texas:

In a few words there is 2000 Mexican soldiers in Bexar, and 150 Americans in the Alamo. Sesma* is at the head of them, and from best accounts that can be obtained, they intend to show no quarter. If every man cannot turn out to a man every man in the Alamo will be murdered.

They have not more than 8 or 10 days provisions. They say they will defend it or die on the ground. Provisions, ammunition and Men, or suffer your men to be murdered in the Fort. If you do not turn out Texas is gone. I left Bexar on the 23rd at 4 P.M. By order of W.V. Travis

L. Smithers

* General Joaquín Ramírez y Sesma commanded a brigade under Santa Anna.

Name _____

To the People of Texas All Americans in the World

Directions: After reading the introduction, letter from William B. Travis, and postscript, answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. Who is William B. Travis writing his letter to? Why do you think he addressed it in this way?
2. How does Travis describe his current situation?
3. What is he hoping to achieve with this letter?
4. What persuasive writing techniques does he use in the letter?
5. How do you think readers responded to the letter?
6. Why do you think Smithers added his postscript?
7. If you read this letter at the time and had the opportunity to write a quick response, what would you say? Write your response in the space below.