**CLASS SET DO NOT WRITE ON!!!**

**THE SIEGE OF THE ALAMO**

**Background: Texans in San Antonio were unprepared for the arrival of the Mexican army. Despite the extremely bad conditions that winter Santa Anna marched his army towards San Antonio from interior Mexico. He arrived with 1,500 troops with more reinforcements arriving throughout the siege. William Travis, acting as a temporary leader, was inside the mission with a little less than 200 men. With the use of accounts from Mexican and Texan soldiers, leaders, and civilians historians that been able to piece together what they believe happened at the Alamo. Below are some primary and secondary sources that should help you create your version of the story.**

**Document #1: William Barret Travis (Commander of the Alamo), February 24, 1836**

“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.

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.”

**Document #2: William Barret Travis, February 25, 1836 to Sam Houston**

“On the 23rd of February the enemy in large force entered the city of Bexar, which could not be prevented, as I had not sufficient force to occupy both positions. Col. Batres, the Adjutant-Major of the President-General Santa Anna, demanded a surrender at discretion, calling us foreign rebels. I answered them with a cannon shot upon which the enemy commenced a bombardment with a five-inch howitzer, which together with a heavy cannonade, has been kept up incessantly ever since. I instantly sent express to Col. Fannin, at Goliad, and to the people of Gonzales and San Felipe. Today at 10 o'clock A.M. some two or three hundred Mexicans crossed the river below and came up under cover of the houses until they arrived within point blank shot, when we opened a heavy discharge of grape and canister on them, together with a well directed fire from small arms which forced them to halt and take shelter in the houses about 90 or 100 yards from our batteries. The action continued to rage about two hours, when the enemy retreated in confusion, dragging off many of their dead and wounded.

During the action the enemy kept up a constant bombardment and discharge of balls, grape and canister. We knew from actual observation that many of the enemy were wounded-while we, on our part, have not lost a man. Two or three of our men have been slightly scratched by pieces of rock, but have not been disabled. I take great pleasure in stating that both officers and men conducted themselves with firmness and bravery. Lieutenant Simmons of cavalry acting as infantry, and Captains Carey, Dickinson and Blair of the artillery, rendered essential service, and Charles Despallier and Robert Brown gallantly sallied out and set fire to houses which afforded the enemy shelter, in the face of the enemy fire. Indeed, the whole of the men who were brought into action conducted themselves with such undaunted heroism that it would be injustice to discriminate. The Hon. David Crockett was seen at all points, animating the men to do their duty. Our numbers are few and the enemy still continues to approximate his works to ours. I have every reason to apprehend an attack from his whole force very soon; but I shall hold out to the last extremity, hoping to secure reinforcements in a day or two. Do hasten on aid to me as rapidly as possible, as from the superior number of the enemy, it will be impossible for us to keep them out much longer. If they overpower us, we fall a sacrifice at the shrine of our country, and we hope posterity and our country will do our memory justice. Give me help, oh my country! Victory or Death!”

**Document #3: Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, February 27, 1836**

“On the 23rd of this month I occupied this city, after some forced marches from Rio Grande, with General D. Joaquin y Sesma's division composed of the permanent battalions of Matamoros [sic] and Jimenez, the active battalion of San Luis Potose [sic], the regiment of Dolores, and eight pieces of artillery.

With the speed in which this meritorious division executed its marches in eighty leagues of road, it was believed that the rebel settlers would not have known of our proximity until we should have been within rifleshot of them; as it was they only had time to hurriedly entrench themselves in Fort Alamo, which they had well fortified, and with a sufficient food supply. My objective had been to surprise them early in the morning of the day before, but a heavy rain prevented it.

Notwithstanding their artillery fire, which they began immediately from the indicated fort, the national troops took possession of this city with the utmost order, which the traitors shall never again occupy; on our part we lost a corporal and a scout, dead, and eight wounded.

When I was quartering the corps of the division a bearer of the flag of truce presented himself with a paper, the original which I am enclosing for your Excellency, and becoming indignant of its contents I ordered an aide, who was the nearest to me to answer it, as it is expressed by the copy that is also enclosed.

Fifty rifles, of the rebel traitors of the North, have fallen in our possession, and several other things, which I shall have delivered to the general commissary of the army as soon as it arrives, so that these forces may be equipped; and the rest will be sold and the proceeds used for the general expense of the army.

From the moment of my arrival I have been busy hostilizing the enemy in its position, so much so that they are not even allowed to raise their heads over the walls, preparing everything for the assault which will take place when at least the first brigade arrives, which is even now sixty leagues away. Up to now they act stubbornly, counting on the strong position which they hold, and hoping for much aid from their colonies and from the United States of the North, but they shall soon find out their mistake.”

**Document #4: William Barret Travis, March 3, 1836 to the Convention in Washington on the Brazos**

“From the twenty-fifth to the present date the enemy have kept up a bombardment from two howitzers, one a five and a half inch, and the other an eight inch,-and a heavy cannonade from two long nine-pounders, mounted on a battery on the opposite side of the river, at a distance of four hundred yards from our wall. During this period the enemy have been busily employed in encircling us in with entrenched encampments on all sides, at the following distances, to wit: In Bexar, four hundred yards west; in Lavallita, three hundred yards south; on the ditch, eight hundred yards northeast, and at the old mill, eight hundred yards north. Notwithstanding all this, a company of thirty-two men from Gonzales, made their way in to us on the morning of the first inst. at three o'clock, and Colonel J.B. Bonham (a courier from Gonzales) got in this morning at eleven o'clock without molestation. I have fortified this place, so that the walls are generally proof against cannon balls; and I shall continue to entrench on the inside, and strengthen the walls by throwing up dirt. At least two hundred shells have fallen inside of our works without having injured a single man from any cause, and we have killed many of the enemy. The spirits of my men are still high although they have had much to depress them. We have contended for ten days against an enemy whose numbers are variously estimated from fifteen hundred to six thousand men, with General Ramirez-Sesma and Colonel Batres, the aid-de-camp of Santa Anna, at their head. A report was circulated that Santa Anna himself was with the enemy, but I think it was false. A reinforcement of about one thousand men is now entering Bexar from the west and I think it more than probable that Santa Anna is now in town, from the rejoicing we hear.

Col. Fannin is said to be on the march to this place with reinforcements, but I fear it is not true, as I have repeatedly sent to him for aid without receiving any. Colonel Bonham, my special messenger, arrived at La Bahia fourteen days ago, with a request for aid, and on the arrival of the enemy in Bexar, ten days ago, I sent an express to Colonel F., which arrived at Goliad on the next day, urging him to send us reinforcements; none have yet arrived. I look to the colonies alone for aid; unless it arrives soon, I shall have to fight the enemy on his own terms. I will, however, do the best I can under the circumstances; and I feel confident that the determined valor and desperate courage, heretofore exhibited by my men, will not fail them in the last struggle; and although they may be sacrificed to the vengeance of a Gothic enemy, the victory will cost the enemy so dear, that it will be worse for him than defeat. I hope your honorable body will hasten on reinforcements, ammunitions and provisions to our aid so soon as possible. We have provisions for twenty days for the men we have. Our supply of ammunition is limited. At least five hundred pounds of cannon powder, and two hundred rounds of six, nine, twelve, and eighteen pound balls, ten kegs of rifle powder and a supply of lead should be sent to this place without delay, under a sufficient guard.

If these things are promptly sent and large reinforcements are hastened to this frontier, this neighborhood will be the great and decisive ground. The power of Santa Anna is to be met here or in the colonies; we had better meet them here than to suffer a war of devastation to rage in our settlements. A blood red banner waves from the church of Bejar, and in the camp above us, in token that the war is one of vengeance against rebels; they have declared us as such; demanded that we should surrender at discretion, or that his garrison should be put to the sword. Their threats have no influence on me or my men, but to make all fight with desperation and that high-souled courage that characterizes the patriot, who is willing to die in defence [sic] of his country's liberty and his own honor.

The citizens of this municipality are all our enemies, except those who have joined us heretofore. We have three Mexicans now in the fort; those who have not joined us in this extremity, should be declared public enemies, and their property should aid in paying the expenses of the war.

The bearer of this will give your honorable body a statement more in detail, should he escape through the enemy's lines.

God and Texas-Victory or Death.

PS The enemy's troops are still arriving, and the reinforcements will probably amount to two or three thousand.”

**Document #5: William Barret Travis, March 3, 1836**

“I am still here, in fine spirits and well to do, with 145 men. I have held this place 10 days against a force variously estimated from 1,500 to 6,000, and shall continue to hold it till I get relief from my countrymen, or I will perish in its defense. We have had a shower of bombs and cannon balls continually falling among us the whole time, yet none of us has fallen. We have been miraculously preserved. You have no doubt seen my official report of the action of the 25th ult. in which we repulsed the enemy with considerable loss; on the night of the 25th they made another attempt to charge us in the rear of the fort, but we received them gallantly by a discharge of grape shot and musketry, and they took to their scrapers immediately. They are now encamped in entrenchment on all sides of us.

All our couriers have gotten out without being caught and a company of 32 men from Gonzales got in two nights ago, and Colonel Bonham got in today by coming between the powder house and the enemy's upper encampment. . . . Let the Convention go on and make a declaration of independence, and we will then understand, and the world will understand, what we are fighting for. If independence is not declared, I shall lay down my arms, and so will the men under my command. But under the flag of independence, we are ready to peril our lives a hundred times a day, and to drive away the monster who is fighting us under a blood-red flag, threatening to murder all prisoners and make Texas a waste desert. I shall have to fight the enemy on his own terms, yet I am ready to do it, and if my countrymen do not rally to my relief, I am determined to perish in the defense of this place, and my bones shall reproach my country for her neglect. With 500 men more, I will drive Sesma beyond the Rio Grande, and I will visit vengeance on the enemy of Texas whether invaders or resident Mexican enemies. All the citizens of this place that have not joined us are with the enemy fighting against us. Let the government declare them public enemies, otherwise she is acting a suicidal part. I shall treat them as such unless I have superior orders to the contrary. My respects to all friends, confusion to all enemies. God bless you.”

**Document #6: Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, March 6, 1836**

“Victory belongs to the army, which at this very moment, 8 o'clock A.M., achieved a complete and glorious triumph that will render its memory imperishable.

As I had stated in my report to Your Excellency of the taking of this city, on the 27th of last month, I awaited the arrival of the 1st Brigade of Infantry to commence active operations against the Fortress of the Alamo. However, the whole Brigade having been delayed beyond my expectation, I ordered that three of its Battalions, viz: the Engineers-Aldama and Toluca-should force their march to join me. These troops, together with the Battalions of Matamoros, Jimenes, and San Luis Potosi, brought the force at my disposal, recruits excluded, up to 1400 Infantry. This force, divided into four columns of attack and a reserve, commenced the attack at 5 o'clock A.M. They met with a stubborn resistance, the combat lasting more than one hour and a half, and the reserve having to be brought into action.

The scene offered by this engagement was extraordinary. The men fought individually, vying with each other in heroism. Twenty-one pieces of artillery, used by the enemy with most perfect accuracy, the brisk fire of musketry, which illuminated the interior of the Fortress and its walls and ditches-could not check our dauntless soldiers, who are entitled to the consideration of the Supreme Government and to the gratitude of the nation.   
The Fortress is now in our power, with its artillery, stores, &c. More than 600 corpses of foreigners were buried in the ditches and entrenchments, and a great many who had escaped the bayonet of the infantry, fell in the vicinity under the sabres of the cavalry. I can assure Your Excellency that few are those who bore to their associates the tidings of their disaster.

Among the corpses are those of Bowie and Travis, who styled themselves Colonels, and also that of Crockett, and several leading men, who had entered the Fortress with dispatches from their Convention. We lost 70 men killed and 300 wounded, among whom are 25 officers. The cause for which they fell renders their loss less painful, as it is the duty of the Mexican soldier to die for the defense of the rights of the nation; and all of us were ready for any sacrifice to promote this fond object; nor will we, hereafter, suffer any foreigners, whatever their origin may be, to insult our country and to pollute its soils.

I shall, in due time, send to Your Excellency a circumstantial report of this glorious triumph. Now I have only time to congratulate the nation and the President, ad interim, to whom I request you to submit this report.

The bearer takes with him one of the flags of the enemy's Battalions, captured today. The inspection of it will show plainly the true intentions of the treacherous colonists, and of their abettors, who came from parts of the United States of the North. God and Liberty!”

**Document #7: “Dawn at the Alamo” – 1905**



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