



## A Letter from Prison

Stephen F. Austin's efforts to present Mexican officials with the resolutions of the Convention of 1833 led to his arrest. He was taken to Mexico City and kept in prison throughout most of 1834. During this time Austin wrote several letters asking for help. The following excerpt, written May 10, 1834, is taken from a letter to his brother-in-law, James F. Perry.

**DIRECTIONS: Understanding Primary Sources** Read the following passage and answer the questions below. As you read, think about

- why Austin was unable to receive letters or have visitors.
- what crime Austin had committed.

I arrived here . . . on the 13 Feby [February]—on that day I was locked up in one of the dungeons of this vast building *incomunicado*, that is[,] I was not allowed to speak to, or communicate with any person whatever except the officer of the guard. I remained in this situation untill yesterday when I was permitted to communicate with persons outside, receive books, writing materials, visits etc and to mix with the other prisoners—there are about 60 of them, all officers except two clergymen (Padres) and all men of good families . . . confined for political opinions in the revolution of the past year [Santa Anna's taking power]. . . .

My room is about 16 feet by 13—very high ceiling—two doors, one flush with the outside surface of the wall, the other near the inside surface and within the wall which is about 3 feet thick of large hewn stone . . . both [doors] were always locked and bolted untill yesterday—no windows—a very small skylight in the roof which barely afforded light to read on very clear days when the sun was high. . . .

I have received no personal ill treatment from any of the officers or guards who have had charge of me since my first arrest up to this day. I received such provisions as I needed them through the guard—they were handed in at the hole in the inside door.

SOURCE: E. Wallace and D. Vigness, ed., *Documents of Texas History*

### INVESTIGATING THE PRIMARY SOURCE

1. How many people were being kept in the prison? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How was Austin treated by prison guards? \_\_\_\_\_  
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**★ Activity ★** **DIRECTIONS: Drawing Conclusions** On a separate sheet of paper, describe the type of prisoners that were in jail with Austin. Include portraits of what the prisoners may have looked like.





# Connecting History and Literature

In 1832, Texans wrote the Turtle Bayou Resolutions. In this document, they stated their concerns. They were worried about the situation with the government of Mexico. Read the passages from this document below. Then answer the questions that follow.

The colonists of Texas have long been convinced of the [high-handed] and unconstitutional [actions] of the administration of Bustamante; as [shown]

First: By their repeated violations of the constitution and laws and the total disregard of the civil and political rights of the people.

Second: By their [putting] . . . among us, in the time of peace, military posts, the officers of which . . . have committed various acts [showing] opposition to the . . . [people's] enjoyment of civil liberty. . . .

Seventh: By imprisonment of our citizens without lawful cause; and claiming the right of trying [those] citizens by a military court for [a crime] of a character [that should be recognized] by the civil authority alone.

Resolved: That we view with . . . the deepest regret, the manner in which the government of the Republic of Mexico is administered by the present [ruler]. The repeated violation of the constitution; the total disregard of the laws; the [weakening] of the civil power, are grievances of such character as to arouse the feelings of every freeman, and [force] him to resistance.

1. What was the first objection to Bustamante's rule?

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2. Why did the Texans object to the government setting up military posts?

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3. **Analyzing** How important were the actions of Mexican soldiers in angering the Texans? Explain your answer.

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4. **Identifying Points of View** Read the last section again. How do you think a member of the Mexican government might view what the Texans said there? Why?

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