

Answers Chapter 7 Come and Take It

1. The military ruler stationed at Nacogdoches, Col. Piedras, did not want any escapades like the one that just happened at Anahuac, so he demanded that the inhabitants surrender their weapons to him.
2. Overtly, he was there to meet with Indians. Secretly, he had the task of reporting the condition of Texas and her inhabitants to President Jackson, which was accomplished by a letter.
3. a separate (Mexican) state government and repeal of the immigration restriction.
4. colonists living on the empresarios' land grants and adventurers and outlaws who flocked to the towns
5. They were afraid (they also had some reason to be, having seen the massacre of 1813)
6. He wrote to the ayuntamiento of San Antonio, requesting him to ask the other ayunamientos of Texas to go ahead and organize a local government independent of Coahuila, even without the consent of the general (federal) government. This was viewed as seditious.
7. Napoleon
8. Zacatecas refused to surrender their arms after Santa Anna had dismantled the federal government system and installed his own men as military rulers.
9. The news that the troops which had massacred the people of Zacatecas were coming to Texas to put down the revolutionaries.
10. General Cos, Santa Anna's brother-in-law, arrested the Governor of Coahuila-Texas, dissolved the state government, and became military ruler of the region.
11. Austin called for a "consultation" (convention) to establish a new state government.
12. a drawing of a cannon with the words, "Come and Take It" (located in the Central Library, 6th floor, on the wall)
13. There was no quorum, the delegates could not conduct business (many had gone with Austin to fight in the army)

14. Lorenzo de Zavala was a well-educated Mexican government official who had protested Santa Anna's treatment of Zacatecas. His properties were confiscated, and de Zavala fled with his family to Texas.

15. Their rifles could shoot farther than the Mexican muskets (partly because of inferior gunpowder)

Discussion/Essay

1. Jim Bowie was friendly and warm-hearted, a natural leader who had some weaknesses, such as gambling. Chapter 5 includes his near escape on a sandbar in Louisiana, where he was attacked by two men, disemboweling them both with the famous "Bowie" knife, but almost dying from a gunshot wound himself. He also was part of a small group attacked by Indians near San Saba, where many Indians were killed but the Texans survived with few casualties. He was also a main figure in the battle of Nacogdoches, and helped lead the volunteers at the battle of Concepcion. The student should include at least one of the first two narrow scrapes and at least one of the two battles. The tragedy is the death of his wife, children, and in-laws by cholera.

2. Houston wrote Jackson that Texans were determined to have their own separate state government, and that the vast majority would be in favor of the acquisition of Texas by the United States [it is disputed by historians as to how Houston knew this second fact or if he just made it up to further his own purposes, but after San Jacinto, when Houston was elected President, there was a question on the ballot regarding the possible acquisition of Texas by the United States, and the overwhelming majority of the voters favored it at that time, so Houston's statement, however determined, must have had truth in it.] Houston believed that Texas would soon form a separate (Mexican) state government, and he also believed that Texas would not remain as part of Mexico, but that a transfer of Texas to some power (the U.S.?) was inevitable. Why he believed this is a difficult question debated by historians, and so there is no "right" answer. Some say that he was merely parroting the views of the "War Party," and there may be a little truth to that, since he knew the Whartons from Tennessee. But Houston was a very intelligent man, who had not come to Texas totally ignorant, and had the opportunity to speak with men, such as Bowie, who knew the country and people. You might want to ask the students whether they think that Houston's stated ambitions (becoming president of a "two-horse" republic) affected his views of the situation. So basically, any sensible view regarding the second part of this question can be counted "correct."

3. Only the law-abiding obeyed the law of 1830; outlaws and adventurers had been coming in illegally already, and they continued to come.

4. Santa Anna's "example" did produce fear in Texas [this will be seen more in later chapters], but it was a fear coupled with a righteous indignation. This undoubtedly made Texans more willing to fight; this can be supported by the example of the attack of the

fort at Anahuac immediately after it was discovered that the troops used at Zacatecas were coming to Texas.

5. There are several lines of reasoning which may be used, but the most important and crucial one is the rule of law. The colonists knew of the constitution of 1824, and being raised in the U.S., believed that the constitution served as a “higher law” that could not be set aside. They believed John Knox’ statement that the law of the land is superior to the will of the prince. Santa Anna had set aside the law of the land. In their eyes, he had no authority to rule. [By contrast, the Mexicans in other states were not raised with such a principle and so were more easily cowed into submission.] Many Texans saw themselves as fighting for the constitution of 1824, or the principle of liberty in general.

Another related line of reasoning would be that the request for the cannon of Gonzales, meant to confirm and secure martial law, put these Texans back in the Middle Ages, as powerless serfs. Again, because of their tradition of representative, republican government, which principles were fought for just a few years past, these Texans could not submit to what they regarded as tyranny. An argument along either of these related lines of reasoning could be considered correct.

The students may also bring up side points, such as a general disdain that Americans had for Mexicans and their religion[I have not included the derogatory comments which are sprinkled throughout the literature, just as I have tended to omit swearing], or the boisterous audacity of some which overrode careful reasoning. But these are not ways to justify the Texas Revolution, they are observations which may help to explain the rashness or “egregious foolhardiness,” as Smithwick later put it, of the volunteers.

6. The answer to this is basically found in Noah Smithwick’s description of the army. The student needs to include the optimistic to the point of foolish attitude recorded by Smithwick, and the motley assortment of personnel and equipment. Specific details are not very important for the purpose of the essay.