

The Spanish-American War

In 1895, Cubans revolted against Spain. Many Americans supported their fight for independence. When the U.S. battleship *Maine* exploded in Havana Harbor in 1898, some Americans blamed Spain. Newspapers called for war, crying “Remember the *Maine*” In April 1898, the U.S. government declared war on Spain. Some 10,000 Texans, many still of school age, showed up at recruiting stations volunteering to fight. Soldiers from all over the country learned about weapons and conducted drills on Texas army bases. Texas was an ideal training ground for the war because its hot weather and terrain were similar to those of Cuba.

When Lieutenant Colonel **Theodore Roosevelt** came to Texas to recruit troops, both cowboys and college students joined his 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry. The outfit, known as the **Rough Riders**, trained in San Antonio. Roosevelt was proud of his recruits, particularly the Texans.

The Rough Riders were the first U.S. troops to land in Cuba. They became famous for helping to defeat Spanish troops in the **Battle of San Juan Hill**. Other U.S. forces fought in Cuba, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico. U.S. forces defeated Spain and gained control of these islands. With its victory in the Spanish-American War, the United States expanded its role in world affairs. As a result, Texas continued to be a major training ground for U.S. troops.

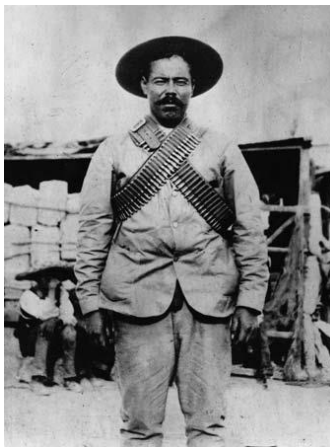


The Spanish-American War. During the conflict Texas soldiers fought alongside “buffalo soldiers” from the 9th and 10th Calvaries.

The Mexican Revolution

Closer to home for Texans was the conflict that erupted in Mexico as rebels overthrew President Porfirio Diaz. Although he was initially an elected leader, Diaz had since ruled as a dictator for many years. Democratic reformers like Francisco Madero were commonly arrested. After getting out of jail in 1910, Madero headed to San Antonio to organize an overthrow of Diaz. Madero joined with other rebels, including **Francisco “Pancho” Villa**, and attacked Mexican forces. At times the fighting was close to the Texas border. The Mexican Revolution forced Diaz to leave office in May 1911. Madero then became president. However, the fighting continued. The violence increased after General Victoriano Huerta had Madero assassinated. For the next several years, various forces fought for control. While Emiliano Zapata led forces in southern Mexico, Villa led forces in the north. The former governor of Coahuila, Venustiano Carranza, also led a force against Huerta. During the revolution, more than 1.5 million Mexicans were killed, and many more lost their homes and land. Many became **refugees** – people forced to leave their homeland because of war or persecution. Thousands of these refugees came to Texas, settling in the Valley and San Antonio.

Fearing that the violence would spill over the border, U.S. leaders closely watched the events in Mexico. Some worried that the war would hurt the American businesses that had invested some \$1 billion in Mexico. In April 1914 President Woodrow Wilson sent U.S. Marines to seize Veracruz, Mexico’s main port. Wilson hoped to prevent the arrival of a German ship loaded with guns and ammunition for Huerta. After negotiations, Huerta left office and Carranza became president. But civil war broke out again, and violence continued in Mexico until the 1920s.



Pancho Villa

Border Troubles

Pancho Villa was angered by U.S. recognition of his rival, Carranza, as president. In 1916 Villa's forces stopped a train headed south from El Paso and shot 18 American passengers. In March, Villa's forces raided Columbus, New Mexico, leaving 17 of its citizens dead. In response to these raids, Wilson sent General **John J. "Black Jack" Pershing** and some 15,000 U.S. troops from Fort Bliss into northern Mexico to find Villa. The U.S. troops searched the rough landscape but failed to capture Villa. Pershing returned home in 1917.

The Mexican Revolution also led to conflicts in South Texas. Many people from the Midwestern United States had recently moved to the region to start their own farms and ranches. Clashes broke out with many Mexican American families who had lived on the land for generations.

Inspired by the Mexican Revolution, some Mexican Americans began to talk about rebelling against Texas. The radicals drafted a document called the **Plan de San Diego**. The plan called for Mexican Americans to take control of south Texas and declare it independent. From 1915 to 1917, supporters of the rebellion raided the property of many new residents in the Rio Grande valley. They killed 21 people and caused millions of dollars in property damage. Some angry citizens and Texas Rangers killed 300 Mexicans and Mexican Americans in revenge. The conflicts on the border led to greater distrust between Mexican Americans and other Texans.



John J. "Black Jack" Pershing

Texans and World War I

While the Mexican Revolution was being fought, World War I erupted in Europe in 1914. The Allied Powers – Great Britain, France, and Russia – battled the Central Powers. These were Germany and its allies – Austria-Hungary and Turkey. Most Americans wanted to remain **neutral** – not aligned with either side in a conflict – but this was difficult. IN 1915, German submarines sank the British passenger ship *Lusitania*, killing 1,198 passengers, including 128 Americans. The German government also tried to ally itself with Mexico, promising to help it regain territory lost to the United States – including Texas. These actions greatly angered most Americans.

The United States declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917. More than 2 million Americans, including nearly 20,000 Texans, went to fight. Before going to Europe, many U.S. soldiers trained in Texas. The army sent them to Camp MacArthur in Waco, Camp Logan in Houston, and Camp Travis in San Antonio. Military pilots trained at Hicks Field in Fort Worth and at Kelly Field in San Antonio. Katherine and Marjorie Stinson owned the Stinson School of Flying in San Antonio, where some pilots were trained.

Once they arrived in Europe, soldiers spent weeks living in trenches, often ankle-deep in mud. These long shoulder-deep holes were dug in the ground to protect soldiers from bullets and artillery shells. Soldiers also faced German machine guns, artillery, and poison gas. In October 1918 one U.S. company was stopped by heavy machine-gun fire. Using hand grenades captured from the enemy, Texan Samuel M. Sampler attacked the German trenches. Sampler was one of four Texans to win the Congressional Medal of Honor in World War I.

Other Texans played important roles in President Wilson's government. Edward M. House of Austin was a close adviser to the president. Albert Sidney Burluson and Thomas Watt Gregory served as the postmaster general of the United States and the U.S. attorney general., respectively. President Wilson also asked Jesse Jones of Houston to serve as the director of general military relief for the American Red Cross.

Back home, Texans showed their support for the war effort. They bought Liberty bonds, which the U.S. government issued to pay for the war. Texans also observed meatless Mondays and wheatless Wednesdays, so that more food would be available for soldiers. Texans stepped up agricultural production. Farmers borrowed money for more land and equipment, which led to a farming boom. Texas oil and lumber production also boomed to meet military needs. Businesses near military bases provided goods and services to troops stationed there. As the Texas economy expanded during the war, the state reached almost full employment. Women took on more responsibilities, working in the fields as well as in businesses.

Because the war was with Germany, some



Texans accused German Americans of being unpatriotic and of not supporting the United States. These feelings ran high. Even the name of the popular German food sauerkraut was changed to "liberty cabbage." The war ended when Germany surrendered in November 1918. Texas soldiers came home, and the nation returned to a peacetime economy.