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Juan Seguin: A Teacher's Guide

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Juan Seguin in the Standards

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Texas §113.23.2.C (Texas History)

History. The student understands how individuals, events, and issues prior to the Texas Revolution shaped the history of Texas. The student is expected to: *identify the contributions* of significant individuals including Moses Austin, Stephen F. Austin, and **Juan Seguin** during the colonization of Texas;

National Standards, US 5- 12, Era 4, Standard 1A

Analyze the *relationship* of **Juan Seguin's** family with the Austin family, and *how this relationship contributed* to US relations with the Mexican government. *Discuss the significance* of **Juan Seguin's** role as mayor of San Antonio, and how **Seguin** was *able to contribute* to the causes of the American settlers in the Texas Revolution. Explain how the events leading, and after the Texas Revolution strained relations with the Mexican government, and Native Americans.

National Standards, US 5- 12, Era 4, Standard 3A

Identify reasons why the United States did not accept Texas into the Union prior to 1845. Compare and contrast the political structure of Texas before and after annexation by the United States.

National Standards, US 5- 12, Era 4, Standard 4A

Identify causes of how the Texas Revolution created racial and ethnic tension between the Americans, Mexicans, and Native Americans. Discuss the significance of the Alamo, and identify how the Alamo created new social, religious, and cultural reforms within Texas.

Biographical Summary

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From New York to California, Mexico to Madrid, no one will ever forget the memorable war cry “Remember the Alamo,” used by the Texans during the Texas Revolution. As these words are screamed over and over, visions of the Anglo defenders of the Alamo flash before our eyes, and their horrible death at the hands of Santa Anna and his “savage” soldiers tear at our hearts. These brave and heroic defenders gave the ultimate sacrifice to ensure that Texas settlers would be forever free of the barbaric rule of their Mexican “captors.” Unfortunately, the story of this event, and all of the participants, are not fully told within the history books or narratives.

Many Mexican citizens aided the Anglo settlers in their quest for a new state independent of Mexico, free from the rule of Santa Anna. Juan Abamillo, Juan Antonio Badillo, Carlos Espalier, and José María Esparza are just a few Mexican citizens who also gave their lives at the Alamo, for the Anglo cause, but who are not mentioned in the historical narrative of this major event. One Mexican in particular, Juan Seguin, holds a special place in the telling of the Alamo narrative. Seguin, as history tells us, was the Mexican courier who delivered the famous Travis Letter to Sam Houston.

In many historical narratives, the story of Juan Seguin, begins and ends when he delivers this letter to Houston. However, Juan Seguin did much more for the Anglo fight for independence before and after this event, and played a very instrumental part of the Texas Revolution. His story is far much more compelling than this miniscule account of his life, and deserves to be addressed. This is the story of one of many brave Mexicans who fought for the American settlers, and is not prominently portrayed in history alongside William Travis, James Fannin, Sam Houston, Davy Crockett, and others. Juan Seguin is truly a hero that needs to have his story told when the Texas Revolution is taught.

On October 27, 1807, Juan Seguin was born the eldest to Juan Jose Maria Erasmo de Jesus Seguin and Josefa Augustina Bercerra (Seguin), in San Fernando de Bexar, New Spain (now San Antonio, Texas). The Seguins were a prominent Mexican family, and responsible for coordinating the settlement of Americans into the Mexican territory of Tejas. Being appointed as a representative of the Mexican government, Erasmo Seguin was tasked to meet with Moses Austin to finalize the details of American settlement in the Mexican province of Tejas. In 1821 Moses Austin died, and his son Stephen Austin met with Erasmo Seguin. Wanting to carry out his fathers’ wishes, Stephen Austin worked closely with Erasmo Seguin, and their relationship flourished personally and professionally for the next fifteen years. This relationship formed between Seguin and Austin would have a profound influence on the life of young Juan Seguin in the years to come.

The relationship between Erasmo Seguin and Stephen Austin added to the experiences that Juan gained from earlier childhood events. Very early in his life Juan Seguin grew up during a time of dramatic change within the Spanish/Mexican society. In the time between 1811 and 1813 were numerous revolts in the Spanish territories attempted to overthrow the Spanish government. It was during these times of unrest that Juan learned how to deal with the pressures of continuous political and societal change. Jesus de la Teja notes, “Under such circumstances did Juan Seguin spend his childhood, learning the lessons of political action and

war in the swirl of ambiguous and shifting allegiances.”¹ After Mexico had gained their independence from Spain, and the influx of American settlers (after 1821), Juan Seguin became very active in the political realm that his father now occupied.

In 1824, being just sixteen years of age, Juan’s responsibilities grew within the Seguin household. With his father away on business, Juan became the “head of the household,” and Juan gained new experiences that would later help him during the Texas Revolution and in his own tenure as mayor of San Antonio. Teja states “Juan matured quickly in this environment. During this time his father served as Texas deputy to the Constituent Congress, Juan handled the postmaster’s duties, helped his mother tend to the fields, and to some degree acted as intermediary between Erasmo and Austin.”² Being taught tough lessons from war, politics, and the growing numbers of American settlers, Juan would soon be ready to go and forge an identity of his own. Ten years later, in 1834, the life of Juan Seguin would forever be changed.

At the age of twenty-two Juan was elected as a *regidore* (judge) of San Antonio. In this capacity Juan performed many tasks within the community, and his skills as a politician were noticed by key members of the Mexican political structure. Expressing the skills that Juan possessed during his time as *regidore*, Ramon Musquiz, the political chief of Bexar, sent a letter to Austin noting that Juan had the talent to be an effective administrator, but needed more practice in order to become an effective administrator. This vote of confidence for Juan and his ability to carry out his duties of the office, led Juan to be a prime candidate for future political offices. In the elections of 1833 he was elected to the position of secretary of the electoral assembly, and would later hold the position as president of the electoral assembly. With these positions under his belt, Juan was on his way to a place of prominence in the political and revolutionary scene.

Late in 1832, the tensions between the American settlers living in the Mexican territory of Tejas, and the national government came to a standoff. The Americans, unhappy with the new laws and treatment by the Mexican government, expressed their concerns to the Mexican state and national governments. One effect that this had was that, the *ayuntamiento* (head political administrator) of Bexar, who was a supporter of the American settlers, petitioned the Mexican government on behalf of the American settlers. In early 1833 the American settlers sent a letter to the *ayuntamiento* and expressed that if nothing was done by the national congress, the American settlers would declare Texas a separate state on their own. This event proved to be pivotal in the political career of Juan because, right before the *ayuntamiento* was to take office in 1834, the *ayuntamiento* resigned his office. Juan, the *alcalde* (mayor) elect of Bexar, was named as political chief until a replacement could be named by the governor. Shortly after taking the position, Juan learned that Austin, the American official sent to Mexico City to negotiate with the Mexican government, had been arrested. Seguin was torn between how to handle the situation. Should Juan urge the release of the long time family friend or side with the Mexican government? Seguin did not have to make a decision because; Austin acknowledged the actions taken by the Mexican government to be acceptable. For the time

¹ Jesus F. de la Teja in Juan Seguin, *A Revolution Remembered: The Memoirs and Selected Correspondence of Juan N. Seguin*, ed. Jesus F. de la Teja (Austin: State House Press, 1991), 15.

² Teja, in Seguin, *A Revolution Remembered*, 16.

being, Juan did not have to make known which side he belonged to, but that time to decide was soon coming.

In late 1833 Santa Anna, with the support of the American settlers, Santa Anna overthrew then President Bustamante and gained control over Mexico. In 1834 as political chief of Bexar, Juan learned that Santa Anna had changed his allegiance to the centralist party. The centralists believed in the establishment of a strong central government, and a weak state government. Prior to this change, Santa Anna was a federalist, which believed in strong state governments, in which states had the right to “pick and choose” the laws they wanted to follow, and would govern as they saw fit. American settlers fearing, the worst, took actions (political and military) to protest this new change in political direction. Juan moved from Bexar, knowing that the Mexican Army was coming to quell the unrest in the area, and was commissioned into the Federal Army of Texas (FAT) to help stop the advancement of the Mexican Army. In his capacity as a commissioned officer of the FAT, one of Juan’s first duties was to help retake San Antonio from the Mexican Army. Teja states, “There is considerable evidence that at least part of Juan’s company, probably including Juan himself, took part in the storming of San Antonio, which began on December 5.”³ After the retaking of San Antonio, Juan was chosen as judge of the San Antonio area, and retained his commission within the Texas Army. This fact indicates that Juan was a major player in the beginning stages of the Texas Revolution, and his presence and actions would continue throughout the American settlers struggle for independence.

In 1836 upon learning of the arrival of Santa Anna and his soldiers, Juan and other Mexican citizens took refuge, in the Alamo with William Travis and other American settlers. Faced with being destroyed by the larger Mexican Army, William Travis dispatched Juan with a letter to request more troops for the defense of the Alamo. Unfortunately, by the time Juan reached Sam Houston with the letter, the defenders of the Alamo were killed. Knowing that the Alamo had fallen, Juan turned his focus into aiding Houston in a military manner. He assembled more troops, and part of his men were responsible for protecting the evacuation of settlers near the San Antonio river, while another part of his troops protected the rear of the larger force of Sam Houston. Juan Seguin and his men participated at the battle of San Jacinto, and received accolades and praise from Houston himself. A letter written in October 1, 1837 to the Louisiana governor by Houston on Juan Seguin notes “The Colonel commanded the only Mexican company who fought in the cause of Texas at the Battle of San Jacinto. His chivalrous and estimable conduct in the battle won for him my warmest regard and esteem.”⁴ Juan would continue his service to Houston and the new state of Texas by overseeing the retreat of Santa Anna’s Army back to Mexico, via the Rio Grande, and was the only individual to return to the Alamo and bury the ashes of the dead in a proper military ceremony.

After the Texas Revolution, Juan Seguin continued to be a visible and prominent figure in the establishment of the new state of Texas. He was elected as to the Texas Senate, and became mayor of San Antonio. With the growing numbers of American settlers now entering into Texas in the 1840s, Juan was experiencing increasing resentment from the American

³ Teja, in Seguin, *A Revolution Remembered*, 25.

⁴ Houston to Erasmo, in *The Writings of Sam Houston*, ed. Amelia Williams and Eugene Barker, 10 vols, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1938- 1943), 4: 125.

people. Juan was accused of being a Mexican sympathizer, and helping the Mexican government to regain control of Texas. In May 1842 with vicious accusations and attempts to discredit him, Juan made his way into Mexico. In a letter written to Erasmo Seguin, Juan's father, in July 1842 Houston defended Juan by stating, "I pray, Sir, that you will not suppose for one moment, that I will denounce Colonel Juan N. Seguin, without a most perfect understanding of the circumstances of his absence. I rely upon his honor, his worth, and his chivalry."⁵ During his time in Mexico, Houston corresponded with Juan Seguin for an unspecified period of time.

Upon his arrival in Mexico, Seguin was faced with the ultimatum to either join the Mexican Army, and assist them in the retaking of Texas, or go to jail. Juan chose the former and his "employment" in the Mexican Army added credibility to what the opponents of Seguin believed. After six years of exile, Juan returned to Texas (after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo) and continued to become a political figure, although there was much resentment towards him. Still wanting to contribute to the advancement of Texas, Juan Seguin won the Bexar County justice election in 1852, and his last "official" political act was in 1858 helping establish the Democratic Party in Bexar County. After this point in his life little else is known, except that Juan and his wife moved to Nuevo Laredo with his son (who at the time was mayor). This is where Juan spent the remainder of his life.

Juan Seguin died in 1890, and was buried in Mexico. In 1976 Juan Seguin's remains were moved and buried in a special ceremony in Seguin, Texas (formerly known as Walnut Springs). At this ceremony Juan Seguin was recognized and given the full rights afforded him by his selfless and dedicated service to the American settlers, and now Texas citizens.

⁵ Houston to Erasmo, in *The Writings of Sam Houston*, 4: 125.

Interpretations Over Time

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Scholarly literature on the life of Juan Seguin and his many accomplishments for Texas has been non-existent, and what has been written about Seguin is, if at best, a watered down version of the truth. To understand and “find” Seguin in the historical narratives of the Texas Revolution, we must explore how and when these accounts of the Texas Revolution (especially the Alamo) were introduced to the public. Examining the symbolism of the Alamo will help us understand how the narratives were told, and eventually lead to the retelling of the Alamo story, and ultimately the life of Juan Seguin. Visiting or seeing the Alamo brings to life the story of Anglo (American) defenders who sacrificed their lives to savage Mexicans, and has become the cornerstone of the entire narrative of the Texas Revolution. The Alamo brings with it another implied story, that due to the heroics and efforts of Anglos, Mexican citizens in Texas were now afforded a better life, and it was the Anglos who suffered the most during this time (loss of American lives). But were the Anglos the only ones who fought and paid a price in the liberation of Texas? For years past the story of the Texas Revolution has revolved, and evolved, into this great story of how the Americans came and saved the day and only due to the great American virtue (liberty for all) could victory over the Mexican government have ever been possible. Unfortunately this story could be far from the truth.

Throughout history, the narrative of the Texas Revolution, and especially the Alamo, has been told through the storyline that over a hundred brave Americans defended the Alamo to impede the progress of vicious Santa Anna and his Mexican Army. This would allow Sam Houston and the other Americans time to formulate a plan and muster troops to bring an end to American suffering at the hands of Mexico in Texas. Among these brave defenders was an all-star cast of great Americans (Jim Bowie, Davy Crockett, and William Travis). The other defenders consisted of lesser known Americans, but they were Americans nonetheless. Nowhere though does it mention the fact that there were Mexican citizens, and defenders from other nations and nationalities. According to Robert Flores “there were only thirteen native born Texans in the group, and eleven of them were of Mexican descent. Of those remaining, forty-one of them were born in Europe, two were Jews, two were African American, and the remainder were Americans from other states in the U.S.”⁶ So the question must be asked as to why only the Alamo narrative only highlights the “big three,” and everyone else is left out? To answer this question we must take a look at how the influence of the battle, and how the Alamo itself has dictated how the narrative is to be told.

Suzanne Bost notes that prior to 1890 “the abandoned Spanish mission—originally a sign of Spanish Catholic colonial expansion in the Northern Mexico territories—became, after the battle in 1836, a marker of loss, a great tomb, a place of horror to many . . . where the floor was shoe deep in the blood of friend and foe.”⁷ In 1892 Adina De Zavala (granddaughter of Lorenzo De Zavala First Vice President of the Republic of Texas) wanted to commemorate the defenders of the Alamo, by establishing the Alamo as a shrine for those who had fallen. De

⁶ Robert Flores, “The Alamo: Myth, Public History, and the Politics of Inclusion,” *Radical History Review* 77 (2000): 7.

⁷ Suzanne Bost, “Women and Chile at the Alamo,” *Neplanta: Views from the South* 4.3 (2003): 7.

Zavala felt too much emphasis had been given to the bloodshed at the Alamo, while neglecting the purpose that motivated defenders. Suzanne Bost notes that “Employing the Christian rhetoric of sacrifice helped De Zavala to resignify the Alamo as a source of pride rather than a marker of devastation.”⁸ The Alamo, although an important site of Texas history, even decades after the revolution, was still not considered a landmark or historical site. Bost notes that De Zavala declared, “Let us save our landmarks and sacred battlefields and buildings as reminders and monuments. . . . All that are left to remind us of the sublime sacrifice of the men of the Alamo.”⁹ By taking this approach in honoring all of the defenders of the Alamo, De Zavala’s idea would include the memory of those Mexican citizens that lost their lives alongside the Americans. Unfortunately, De Zavala’s original plan did not unfold the way in which she had planned, and a new historical meaning of the Alamo would arrive that would change how the Alamo narrative would be written into history.

In 1893 De Zavala and her organization, De Zavala Daughters, dedicated to preserving the memory and historic sites of Texas, merged with a newly formed group the Daughters of the Republic of Texas (DRT). The DRT was another women’s organization whose mission was to preserve the memory of the pioneers of Texas (first three hundred families), and the soldiers who had fought and died in helping liberate Texas. The two groups officially purchased the Alamo in 1906, and set about to turn the Alamo into a monument to honor the fallen heroes. However, the plans of De Zavala and the DRT on how and what the monument would become differed tremendously. De Zavala wanted to restore the Alamo back to its original purpose as a church and historical battleground. On the other hand, the DRT wanted to restore the Alamo, but the restoration would turn the Alamo into a more pleasant tourist attraction, and focus on monetary gains rather than historical value. Clara Driscoll, who was the largest monetary contributor to the DRT cause, backed the DRT decision. In 1908, De Zavala locked herself into the Alamo for three days, but to no avail. Due to the fact that members of the DRT (Anglo women) contributed more money to the Alamo project, De Zavala was finally removed. Bost notes “the Driscoll/De Zavala ‘battle’—shifted the axis of Alamo memory to nationalism and ethnicity.”¹⁰ De Zavala’s name was also erased from all records identifying her as a member in the restoration of the Alamo, and along with her erasure from the records was the memories of those Mexicans who had helped the Americans win their fight for independence with Mexico.

The DRT takeover introduced new concepts into how the Alamo would be remembered, and the narratives written. First, the DRT allowed American businesses to turn the Alamo into a lucrative tourist attraction. They sold souvenirs, memorabilia, and other objects that kept alive, and in many cases perpetuated, the status of the Americans that had died. This advancement of Travis, Crockett, and Bowie gallantly dying at the hands of the Mexican savages, sealed the fate for any side of the Mexican narrative being told. Bost states: “The tourist site is not designed to honor Mexicans: it reflects the realization of Anglo-American Manifest Destiny and a national/ethnic binary. Nationalist myopia filters out Mexican agency and Anglo-Mexican cooperation.”¹¹ Second, the DRT claimed that the Alamo was a battle that was fought between

⁸ Bost, “Women and Chile at the Alamo,” 7.

⁹ Bost, “Women and Chile at the Alamo,” 8.

¹⁰ Bost, “Women and Chile at the Alamo,” 10.

¹¹ Bost, “Women and Chile at the Alamo,” 12.

two distinctive entities: Americans versus Mexicans. This narrative presented by the DRT is far from the truth. Flores notes “the public version of this event provided by the DRT claims that this was a battle between Texans and Mexicans.”¹² As noted earlier this statement is totally incorrect, and there were mixed ethnicities and races that were defending the Alamo.

Between the periods of 1880-1920s a racial, social, and ethnic division within Texas started to form. Mexicans were starting to be displaced from their lands, and more Americans were starting to migrate into Texas from other states. These Americans, predominately farmers, were lured to Texas with the promise of cheap land and cheap Mexican labor. This shift of landownership removed many Mexicans from their properties, and subjugated them to a lower status on the social and economic ladder. This transformation within Texas (the inferiority assigned to Mexicans) was enhanced with the interpretation of the symbol of the Alamo. Flores notes “the Alamo, I offer, served as a key symbolic formulation, or Master Symbol, that legitimates the exploitation and displacement of Mexicans during this period...the Alamo emerges as a site of public history and culture in the midst of the Texas Modern as a means of justifying the deep social and racial cleavages of the moment.”¹³ However, these claims and narratives made by the DRT remained in place and uncontested (even in the history narratives) until the 1960s.

Over the past few decades, and the emergence of more Tejano historians, the story of the Alamo has come under close criticism. The myth that Tejanos were not a major part of the Texas Revolution (especially the Alamo), or shared the same beliefs as the American settlers are simply not true at all. In 1986 notable Tejano historian Gilberto Hinojosa was a strong advocate of introducing Tejanos into the master narratives of the Alamo and Texas Revolution. Since 1986 with the increased use of technology, more websites and written narratives have included, and documented the role of Mexicans during the Texas Revolution. These new insights have changed the story from one in which the Anglos were the oppressed and eventually become the true heroes, into one that incorporates the significant roles that Mexican played in helping independence become reality. No longer are Mexicans portrayed as maids, servants and messengers, but Mexicans now have identity, agency, voice, and importance.

Due to the fact that scholars are advocating the rethinking and retelling of the Alamo and the Texas Revolution, Juan Seguin’s story is used as the vehicle to bring the Mexican perspective to the Texas Revolution. Textbooks such as McDougal Littell’s, *Celebrating Texas, Honoring the Past, Building the Future*, which is used in the public school systems today, do not make mention of the Mexicans that were present at the Alamo or who participated in the Texas Revolution (only Santa Anna). Movies such as Disney’s *Davey Crockett* and John Wayne’s *The Alamo* depicted only the Americans as the true defenders, and Mexicans are left in the shadows. Even Juan Seguin is only portrayed as a messenger, and not even a good one, and the rest of his story goes unnoticed in many historical narratives. Although he was not the only Mexican that participated, Seguin was commissioned by the Texas Army, was present at the Alamo, buried the ashes of the Alamo dead, and helped defeat Santa Anna at San Jacinto. His story, bravery, and dedication to the cause can be well documented through the letters praising

¹² Flores, “The Alamo: Myth, Public History, and the Politics of Inclusion,” 10.

¹³ Flores, “The Alamo: Myth, Public History, and the Politics of Inclusion,” 11.

him and his service by none other than Sam Houston himself. It is unfortunate that the contributions of other Mexicans during this time period were not as well documented, but hopefully further research will be conducted and will bring to life other Mexican participants, and the true story of the Alamo can be told.

Recommendations for Teachers

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Lesson Plans

[Alamo Lesson Plans](#) (Young Texas Reader)

This site provides a tremendous amount of information on books, websites, and lesson plans to use within the classroom. The information accessed here can be used with students of all races and ethnicities.

[Battle of the Alamo](#) (Discovery Education)

This site provides links that can access multiple sites and programs about Juan Seguin and Texas history.

Places to Visit

Seguin Texas, Heritage Museum

Located in Seguin, Texas, this museum examines the rich diversity of Texas, and allows the students examine Juan Seguin and Mexican citizens who participated in the Alamo and Texas Revolution.

[Convention and Visitors Bureau](#) (Seguin, Texas)

This website allows the user to quickly reference historical landmarks and sites within Seguin, Texas.

Websites

[Seguin Descendants Historical Preservation](#)

The information on this website is provided by the descendants of Juan Seguin. It is a wonderful site that not only talks about Juan Seguin, but also examines the history of historic Spanish and Mexican sites within Texas.

<http://www.seguinfamilyhistory.com/>

[The Handbook of Texas Online](#)

This site provides the user with quick reference to Juan Seguin, and provides links to that can access more sites about Texas history.

[Hispanic Texian Patriots in the Struggle for Independence](#) (Sons of Dewitt Colony, Texas)

This website documents, examines, and lists the Hispanic participants of the Texas Revolution and the Alamo.

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Primary Source Materials

Houston, Sam. "Houston to Erasmo." *In The Writings of Sam Houston*. Edited by Amelia Williams and Eugene Barker. 8 vols. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1938- 1943. 4:125.

This collection of writings, examines the thoughts and letters of Sam Houston prior to and during his time as leader of the Texas Army. These letters also provide insight into the courage and participation of Juan Seguin, and his family's, contributions to the American settlers before, during, and after the Texas Revolution, as seen by Sam Houston.

Juan, Seguin. *A Revolution Remembered: The Memoirs and Selected Correspondence of Juan N. Seguin*. Edited by Jesus F. de la Teja. Austin: State House Press, 1991.

The first part of the book explores the life of the Juan Seguin's family and their participation in the political and social world of Mexican rule. It allows the reader to take a look at the role of the Seguin family in the colonization of Texas, and how Juan Seguin came to be a figure in the Texas Revolution. The second part of the book provides letters written by Juan Seguin, and his thoughts, to members of the Texas Army during the Texas Revolution.

Full-length Biographies

Jackson, Jack. *Tejano Exile: The True Story of Juan N. Seguin and the Texas-Mexicans after San Jacinto*. San Francisco: Last Gasp, 1980.

This short biography explores the life of Juan Seguin before and after the battle at San Jacinto.

Article- or Chapter-length Biographical Sketches

Schmal, John. "[The Texas Revolution: Tejano Patriots.](#)" *Houston Institute for Culture* (June 21, 2009).

This article explores the contributions of the many Hispanics who participated during the Texas Revolution. The article also provides further information on websites and resources to access in order to examine Hispanic contributions during this period further.

Seguin Texas Convention and Visitors Bureau. "[Biography of Juan Seguin.](#)" Seguin Texas.

This article outlines a brief description on the life of Juan Seguin's contributions, accomplishments, and dedication to Texas before and after the Texas Revolution.

Juvenile Biographies

Kerr, Rita. *Juan Seguin Hero of Texas*. Austin: Eakin Press, 1985.

This online book is designed for students in grades 4 to 6 to understand the life of Juan Seguin. This book is an account of the life of Juan Seguin from early childhood through his contributions as a member of the Texas Army, fighting during the Texas Revolution.

[Full text of this book available online.](#)

About the Author

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Charlie Harris is a native of Brooklyn, New York, and moved to El Paso, Texas in 2002. Upon his retirement from the United States Army in February, 2004, Charlie attended the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), where he graduated in 2006 Magna Cum Laude, with a bachelor's degree in Multidisciplinary Studies. In December, 2008, Charlie graduated from UTEP with a master of education degree, with a concentration in history.

Charlie currently teaches math, history, science, language arts, and reading in the Socorro Independent School District.