

**TEXAS SCHOOL BOOKS SHOULD INCLUDE DETAILS OF THE AMERICAN
REVOLUTIONARY WAR AND THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO AND
FOLLOWING THE WAR, SO THAT OUR CHILDREN HAVE A BETTER
UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR RIGHTS AND DUTIES AS CITIZENS; AND SO
THAT ALL STUDENTS RECOGNIZE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF OUR
HISPANIC ANCESTORS TO THE WAR¹.**

by

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National Society Sons of the American Revolution

Sons of the American Revolution

1. The Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) is the leading male lineage society that perpetuates the ideals, principles and liberties established by the founding fathers during the American Revolution. As a patriotic, historical, and educational organization, we seek to maintain and expand the knowledge and meaning of patriotism, promote respect for our national symbols, and the value of our American citizenship. Through these efforts we hope all Americans come to have a better understanding of their rights and duties as expressed in the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights.
2. The SAR was organized on April 30, 1889, which was the 100th anniversary of President George Washington taking his oath of office as the first President of the United States. We were chartered by the US Congress on June 9, 1906. Our charter was signed by US President Teddy Roosevelt, who, along with 16 other U.S. Presidents, was a member of the SAR. We have SAR organizations in every state and in England, France, Canada, Switzerland, Mexico, and the Netherlands. In May 2010 we will charter an SAR society in Spain, where King Juan Carlos and other members of the royal family are already members.
3. The SAR is very interested in the youth of our nation. Annually, we sponsor in the schools an oration and an essay contest on a subject relating to the American Revolutionary War; sponsor a poster contest for younger children on the war; and reward outstanding American History teachers. We recognize outstanding Boy Scouts and work with the Children of the American Revolution (CAR). Each year we provide hundreds of medals and awards to outstanding citizens and recognize policemen, firemen, EMS technicians and present a few medals for heroism.
4. The SAR works with the History Channel to provide our members as lecturers in our schools across the nation. We do this to insure that our youth understand that the rights we enjoy today are because of the service and sacrifice of our founding fathers.
5. We provide assistance to American History Teachers by providing them with a DVD containing information about each battle in the war; information about the political and military leaders during the war, and how the US Constitution came about. This DVD includes lesson plans, suggested outside reading, practice and final exams, quizzes, and other useful information.

¹ Prepared as testimony before the Texas Education Agency public hearing in Austin, TX on Jan. 13, 2009.

6. In an attempt to educate the public, we have developed and distribute to radio stations around the country a CD entitled “Keyholes to History”, which provides a one minute look at the American Revolutionary War for each week of the year. We are currently working on a similar video program for television stations.

Educational Problems

1. Currently, the teaching of history in Texas, as in many states, begins with post Reconstruction. We now cover some of the American Revolutionary War as part of the “Government” section.
2. “History” is now presented as part of “Social Studies” rather than as “History”.
3. Hispanic children feel disenfranchised, in part because they are not taught about the contribution of Spain during the American Revolutionary War. With such knowledge, they will be given a “seat at the table”.
4. If our students don’t have a good grasp of the founding of our nation, they cannot be expected to understand the principles embodied in our Constitution and Bill of Rights. (“Those who do not learn their history are doomed to repeat it”.)

Suggested Curriculum

1. All children should be taught about the history leading up to the American Revolution:

- A. Powers of the King of England in the 18th century.
- B. Abuses of power directed at the colonists, e.g. “Taxation without representation”, and quartering troops in private homes.
 - i) Boston Tea Party
 - ii) Committees of Safety
 - iii) Organization of Minutemen
- C. Origins of the *U.S. Constitution* and *Bill of Rights*:
 - i) Philosophers of ancient Greece and the early Roman government.
 - ii) How Charlemagne restored civilization from the “Dark Ages”, created a working government, and codified existing and conflicting laws.
 - iii) Development of English Common Law.
 - iv) That the *Magna Charta* in 1215 was the first official document that stated the king’s powers were not absolute.
 - v) That the *Mayflower Compact* was the first attempt to establish a democratic government.
 - vi) That the writings of 18th century philosophers John Locke, Charles Montesquieu, and Jean Rousseau, were included in the Constitution and Bill of Rights.
- D. That the colonists stood up to the king for moral reasons, and that the American Revolutionary War was fought for liberty and justice.

- E. Students should learn about the hardships and privations of the soldiers of the Continental Line as well as the citizen soldier militiamen.
 - i) George Washington had his army camp in harsh winter weather at Valley Forge, rather than quarter his troops in the homes of colonists – as the British Army did in Philadelphia.
 - ii) That those signing the Declaration of Independence would have been treated as traitors had the colonists been unsuccessful.
 - iii) That France and Spain were allies of the colonists, and each provided money, arms, ammunition, military supplies and soldiers to aid in the conflict.
- F. That the American Revolutionary War was part of a much larger global conflict between England, France, Spain and Portugal.
 - i) The Spanish and French navies kept the British navy busy around the world with conflicts in the Mediterranean (Gibraltar and Minorca), South Atlantic (Falkland Islands), Central America (Honduras and Guatemala), Far East (Philippines), and India. This prevented the English from reinforcing their military in the colonies.
 - ii) Most texts cover only the history of the 13 colonies during the War. Spain provided clandestine logistical support (money, arms, ammunition and supplies) through New Orleans from 1775 until it declared war against England in May 1778. General George Rogers Clark, commander of the Western Frontier, was based at Ft. Nelson, which is now Louisville, KY. In his memoirs, he stated that had it not been for the assistance of Spain up the Mississippi River, he would not have been successful. [And Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Michigan would now be a part of Canada.]
 - iii) Once Spain declared war against England, Spanish troops fought the British in Baton Rouge and Manchac, LA; Mobile, AL; Natchez, MI, St. Louis, MO, and Pensacola, FL. They defeated the British navy in the Bahamas. Not only did Spain remove the English from the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, which opened a lifeline for supplies, but also devastated their military might on the Gulf coast. But for the Spanish, tens of thousands of the British army would have been available to fight the colonists.

2. Texas children should be taught:

- A. That Texas was part of “New Spain” during the American Revolutionary War.
- B. That there are Spanish land grants in Texas going back to 1515 – before the first English colonists settled in Jamestowne, VA in 1607.
- C. That Spain was an ally of the colonists in the American Revolutionary War.
- D. That Hispanic residents of Texas participated in the American Revolutionary War.
 - i) Ranchers along the San Antonio River provided Texas long horn cattle, bulls, horses, mules and feed to General Bernardo Galvez, Governor of

Louisiana. The steers were to feed his Spanish army so they could fight the English.

- ii) Hispanic Vaqueros from south-central Texas drove those cattle to Louisiana
- iii) Every resident of New Spain was requested by King Carlos, III to donate two Pesos for the war effort against the British. Indians, Negroes and those of half-breed were requested to donate only one Peso. This royal request was viewed by those in Texas as a royal decree, and records reveal that substantially all Texas residents provided the “donativo”.
- iv) Many Texans escorted the silver bullion and weapons destined for the colonists from Mexico City along the Royal Road through Texas to Louisiana.
- v) Most male residents of New Spain were required to serve in the Militia. Although these militia men may not have seen direct military action against the British, they served by guarding their presideo, and standing ready to fight the English and their Indian allies.

- E. That the fathers and/or grandfathers of over 100 of those who died at the Alamo, were patriots in the American Revolutionary War.

3. Texas Hispanic students should be made aware that their ancestors played an important part in the independence of our nation.

Summary

Without a good foundation about the events leading up to the American Revolution; the hardships endured by our founding fathers during the war; and the discussions leading up to the enactment of the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights, our youth cannot be expected to understand their duties as citizens, and will not appreciate the rights afforded them under the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights.