

Herman Ehrenberg was a Prussian immigrant to the United States who in October 1835 joined the New Orleans Greys, two companies of volunteers recruited in New Orleans, Louisiana following the city's adoption of a resolution to support Texas in their struggles against Mexico's Centralist regime. The Greys were recruited shortly before the Tampico Blues, the volunteers who took part in the ill-fated Tampico Expedition. Ehrenberg fought in the Battle of Bexar and the Battle of Coleta Creek and was among the survivors of the Goliad Massacre. In this passage taken from one of the accounts he wrote following the Texas Revolution, Ehrenberg recalls receiving dispatches with news of the Tampico Expedition.

Der Freiheitskampf in Texas im Jahre 1836

It was toward the latter part of February that dispatches arrived from the government and from New Orleans newspapers that told us of the defeat of the Blues who had sailed to Tampico.

General [José Antonio] Mexia, who during the battle of the individual [Mexican] states of 1833, had fought against the destroyer of the Constitution of 1824 [by leading an uprising against forces of Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna], had been forced due to Santa Anna's numerical superiority to clear the field and, with the loss of the battle, to flee from Mexico. Living in exile in New Orleans since that time, he was hoping that Mexico's lucky star would rise again some day and he determined in that event to draw anew the sword for his unfortunate fatherland. but he wouldn't have to wait long for such an opportunity.

Santa Anna personally gave him the opportunity, in that he pardoned General Mexia and sent him thirty thousand dollars with which to purchase arms and other war supplies in the States for the campaign in Texas. Mexia was to return with these to his home. 'Tis true, Mexia bought arms, but not to deliver them to Santa Anna and become a traitor to his country; but, on the contrary, to use them to equip several new companies that were gathering in New Orleans. With these he sailed on two schooners to Tampico. His purpose was to once again raise the tri-colored

flag from there for the restoration of the Constitution of 1824, and from Tampico to act in conjunction with the Texans. He was influenced in coming to this decision by several Mexican army officers who were in secret correspondence with him and who promised him on their word of honor to go over to him with the troops under their command immediately on his arrival.

After the Blues had drawn down the sails outside of the well-known, dangerous Tampico sand bank, they waited for a small boat that was just coming down the stream from the town to tow over the foaming banks the unknown schooners, which it took for freighters. Soon they became in charge of the boat and directed the pilot to take the ships upstream and to cast anchor immediately in front of the city.

But they had barely gone half way when the schooners suddenly struck fast as the pilot either unknowingly or intentionally had driven out of the channel and on to the sand bank.

Just opposite lay a little fort that commanded the river from which the boat was now coming to examine the schooners. The officers and men of it were immediately taken prisoners; and since everything was now revealed, an immediate storming of the fort was undertaken, which capitulated in barely a quarter of an hour.

All of Tampico was alarmed over the attack of the men who were believed to be Texans; and as Mexia and his troops, completely fatigued, arrived at the city during the night, everything had been prepared to confront them.

The battle continued until the dawn of day. The garrison had concentrated in a single position, and if Mexia's enticers had kept their word, Tampico would have fallen. Being either low or cowardly, they forgot their promises, and instead of going over to join the attackers, they opened fire on the attackers. After sunrise the attackers were on their way back to the little fort

to return to Texas or New Orleans. But many were missing, and in another article in the *New Orleans Bulletin* we read where twenty-nine men of the Blues were shot on Santa Anna's order during the early part of February. They had lost their way on land in the countryside or in the streets, and in this manner fell into the hands of the enemy. Two Kentuckians, when they saw that they were going to be shot, jumped forward against the soldiers and fought a desperate fight. but it was in vain. And although they wounded several, they were finally overpowered and, though heavily wounded, shot.

This was the prelude to the tragedy that was enacted on the western prairie during the next spring, when the Mexicans revealed the true color of their character.

Taken from: Herman Ehrenberg. *Der Freiheitskampf in Texas im Jahre 1836*. Translated by Petter Mollenhauer in *Ehrenberg: Goliad Survivor, Old West Explorer*, Natalie Ornish, Dallas: Texas Heritage Press, 1997.