

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Today in Texas History

By Bandera Spirits of Texas

On this day in 1758, some 2,000 Comanches and allied North Texas Indians descended on Mission Santa Cruz de San Sabá, on the San Saba River near the present site of Menard.

The mission had been established the previous year to Christianize the eastern Apaches. The attackers killed two priests, Fray Alonso Giraldo de Terreros and Fray José de Santiesteban Aberín, and six others, then looted and set fire to the log stockade.

In late summer 1759 Col. Diego Ortiz Parrilla, commander of the nearby Presidio San Luis de las Amarillas, undertook a military campaign to punish the Norteños but suffered an ignominious defeat near the site of present-day Spanish Fort. With French firearms and Spanish horses, the northern tribes now constituted a stronger force than the Spaniards themselves could muster.

The attack on the mission marked the beginning of warfare in Texas between the Comanches and the European invaders and signaled retreat for the Spanish frontier.

In 1762, Mexican mining magnate Pedro Romero de Terreros, who had financed the ill-fated mission with the stipulation that his cousin Alonso de Terreros be placed in charge, commissioned a huge painting to honor the memory of his martyred cousin.

The Destruction of Mission San Sabá in the Province of Texas and the Martyrdom of the Fathers Alonso Giraldo de Terreros, Joseph Santiesteban now hangs in the Instituto Nacional de Antropología y Historia in Mexico City.