

Meanwhile, back in Ohio, many of the Shawnees who remained joined Tecumseh and his brother, the Prophet, when they tried to organize all the Indian tribes to resist the Americans. The Indians were defeated in the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1812, and Tecumseh went to Canada with a number of his followers. There he joined the British and fought on their side during the war of 1812. He was killed in battle in 1813. Some of the Shawnees remained in Canada at Fort Malden at the mouth of the Detroit River in Ontario. The Prophet and Tecumseh's son were still living there in 1824, but they wanted to return to the United States. Eventually the Prophet returned to the Shawnee reservation in Ohio, and later moved to the Shawnee reservation in Kansas. Some of the Shawnees from Canada, however, journeyed to Mexico in 1824 and asked the Mexican government to be allowed to settle in Texas.

There were eleven Shawnees in this group that travelled from Canada to Mexico. According to their petition there were 270 families who wanted to come to Texas and settle. The Mexican officials received their petition favorably. One official said about them: "...this class of Indians give promise of being industrious, pacific and in another state of culture than those that have hostilized us. They are warriors and will serve as a check to the barbarous nations." At this time the Texas settlements were suffering from the depredations of the Kiowas and Comanches, as well as some of the Texas tribes--the Tahuayases, Tahuacanos, Wacos, and so forth. They readily gave permission to the Shawnees to settle along the Red River.

At this time there were already other Shawnees living with the Cherokees in the vicinity of the Neches, Angelina and upper Sabine Rivers. It is not clear at this point if the Shawnees from Canada went to live with them, or established a separate community. However it is reported that Big Jim, later one of the outstanding chiefs of the Absentee group, was born in Texas in 1834 on the Sabine River preserve. It is also reported that Big Jim was a grandson of Tecumseh. Both Big Jim and Tecumseh belonged to the Kishpogotha division of the Shawnees. Perhaps Tecumseh's son was one of the Shawnees from Canada who moved to Texas in the 1820's or early 1830's. Tecumseh's son reportedly lived with his uncle, the Prophet after the defeat of the Indians at Tippecanoe. Perhaps he left for Texas when the Prophet died in Kansas in 1832. Or perhaps he came to Texas a few years earlier with the group of Shawnees who had petitioned the Mexican government in 1824.

The Shawnees in Texas

By 1835 the Shawnees, Cherokees and other affiliated tribes were settled along the headwaters of the Sabine River. They owned a considerable amount of stock and cultivated the land and had nice homes. They were apparently content living in northern Texas under Mexican rule. The Mexicans let them alone to live as they pleased so long as they remained loyal to Mexico and stood against hostile Indians. White settlers in Texas lived a long way from the upper Sabine River country. There was plenty of game and in general the Indians prospered. In 1835, however, troubles began to pile up in Texas which resulted in the Texas Declaration of Independence and the founding of the Republic of Texas. The Indians, who had been loyal to Mexico, were caught up in the struggle between Texas and Mexico. Both sides wanted their loyalty, or at least their neutrality.

The Texas Revolution lasted from September, 1835 to April in 1836. There were several fights and skirmishes, and then the Battle of the Alamo took place in March of 1836 and the Mexicans under Santa Ana killed all of the Texans defending the Alamo. After this fight Texans rallied to the call of "Remember the Alamo". Soon the Texans under Sam Houston defeated the Mexicans at the Battle of San Jacinto on April 21, 1836. This was a crushing defeat for Santa Ana and Mexico. Texas had declared its independence in March, and after San Jacinto there was no question of its ability to handle its own affairs.