

The Second Flying Company of the Alamo de Parras

In 1803, a company of 100 Spanish soldiers came to Texas to be part of the garrison at the presidio of San Antonio de Bexar. They were trained to fight from horseback with lances. Before coming to Texas they were stationed in a town called Alamo de Parras. The town was named for two plants that grew there grapevines (parras) and cottonwood trees (alamos). They were known as the Second Flying Company of the Alamo de Parras. They were called a flying company because they were supposed to be able to move quickly over long distances in order to protect their assigned areas. Their original job was to protect the silver mines from the Apaches. They were transferred to Texas to help protect it from possible invasion by the United States.

The soldiers brought their families with them and soon became an important part of the community. They provided added protection from Indians and cattle thieves. The soldiers quarters available in San Antonio were in such poor condition that the commander decided that they would move into the mission San Antonio de Valero which had been partially abandoned. The rooms where the missionaries had stayed became barracks for unmarried soldiers, and the courtyard became a corral. Married soldiers made homes near the mission. About 200 people lived at the mission. Over time they made the mission stronger. They made the walls higher and stronger and added a protected gate in the southern wall. After a while, people started calling the mission "The Alamo" because that was the name of the company of soldiers who lived there.

In 1830, the Alamo de Parras company was ordered to move to a new location further east on the road towards Nacogdoches. By this time, Texas was under Mexican rule and the government was not providing enough supplies to the troops. Just before leaving San Antonio, Lt. Colonel José Francisco Ruiz made a list of the supplies he had for his soldiers. It was a huge spreadsheet with each item listed separately for each soldier. At the end, he created a summary of all of the supplies. Take a look at this primary source: