Background Information

Differences Between Houston and Lamar

During the Córdova Rebellion, President Houston remained in Nacogdoches, writing letters of reassurance to his friend Chief Bowles, and issuing orders to Rusk. Houston trusted the Cherokee and hoped to keep the peace. Rusk disagreed and disobeyed Houston's orders. He chose to send reports to Vice President Mirabeau B. Lamar, who also believed the Cherokee could not be trusted.

Because the Texas Constitution stated that the president could not serve consecutive terms, Houston could not seek reelection when his term expired in 1838. He hoped to find a candidate who could carry on with his policies, especially regarding Native Americans.

However, Mirabeau Lamar had already decided to run for president. As vice president, Lamar had opposed many of Houston's policies. In particular, Lamar disagreed with Houston's handling of the Native peoples in Texas. Unlike President Houston, Lamar believed that Native Americans had no integrity and there was no possibility of peaceful negotiation or co-existence. Lamar appealed to many white Texans, who were tired of Sam Houston's peace efforts. As president, Houston had achieved little cooperation with the Texas Congress, which ratified almost none of his treaties.

In his campaign he focused on the former president's inability to end attacks by Native Americans. Lamar also criticized Houston's inability to gain recognition of Texas's independence in Europe or by Mexico. Lamar won the election, and became the next President of the Republic of Texas. In contrast with President Houston, Congress cooperated with Lamar, and passed his frontier defense bills authorizing over a million dollars to pay for troops, military roads, and forts.