



## Galveston's First Settlements

On September 12, 1816, naval Officer Luis Aury landed on Galveston Island carrying orders from the Mexican revolutionary government to establish a privateer base aimed at crippling Spanish naval commerce. Spanish adventurer Javier Mina arrived on the island in November in command of 200 men to lead a revolutionary expedition into the interior Mexico. Mina beseeches Aury to join the operation but Aury declines, as he intends to lead an invasion of Texas. However, Mina eventually persuades Aury to join his forces and they abandon Galveston on March 27 with seven ships carrying over 300 men.

Following the departure of Aury and Mina, privateers Jean and Pierre Lafitte arrived on the island later that same year. The brothers had been authorized by the revolutionary government of Venezuela to prey on Spanish cargo vessels and moved their base of operations from Baratavia Bay to Galveston. By the end of the year, Campeche, as they pirates called the colony, had approximately 1,000 inhabitants.

In 1820, Lafitte and his men seized an American trading ship in Matagorda Bay. The US navy quickly dispatched a Lieutenant Kerney to break up the pirate operation. Lafitte was persuaded to abandon his establishment on Galveston, although he continued his depredations against Spain for many years. He died at the port town of Sisal on the Yucatan Peninsula in 1826.