

# Two Trustworthy Texans

Read about one of the two trustworthy people below. Then answer the questions.

## William Goyens

His story has become legend, and accounts vary on the life of William Goyens, a Texan who lived from 1794 to 1856. Although he lived at a time when slavery was still legal, William Goyens, an African American, was free and owned extensive property. Some of his white neighbors claimed he had no right to own this property and tried to take it away. At least twice in his life he was accused of being an escaped slave, but he argued his case in court and kept his freedom and property. It is said that he was a millionaire.

Some stories say he was illiterate, but we know Goyens was a successful businessman and respected citizen of the community. He was a blacksmith, gunsmith, and wagon maker. He owned an inn and operated a freight service. Goyens served in politics and as a trusted advisor of Sam Houston. At this time, Texas was attempting to attain independence from Mexico. William Goyens spoke English, Spanish, and Cherokee. This made him valuable as a trusted translator and negotiator for all parties. He is credited with keeping the Cherokee and Comanche people from siding with the Mexicans during the negotiations. In 1840 when blacks were banned from Texas, the influential citizens of his hometown convinced the Texas Congress to let him stay. Texas honors William Goyens as a great Texan.

1. How do you know William Goyens was honest and had a good reputation?
2. What evidence was there that he was trusted?
3. How did he build community capital (built-up trust in his community)?
4. What quality do you (or someone in your family) share with William Goyens? Explain.

## Mary Maverick

Mary Maverick (1818-1898) was a Texas pioneer during the Republic of Texas. Her written observations of daily life give us detailed information about the development of Texas, family life, and interactions with the Comanches. She continued to write through the Civil War period. Mary and her husband moved to Texas when Texas was still considered part of Mexico. Her family grew over the years as they moved around and observed battles with Mexicans and the Comanches. Mary was bright and curious and saw the value of writing about what she observed for the sake of history. She wrote one of the only eye-witness accounts of the Council House Fight in 1840.

Mary was an educated woman from Alabama who moved to Texas when she was twenty years old. She had ten children over twenty-one years, but four of them died. She raised her family in an unsettled time, but when they grew up, she became active in civic life, donating her time to her church, ladies aid society, and historical preservation. When she was sixty, she published her diaries so others could read the accounts of pioneer life in Texas. Her memoirs are often quoted in Texas history books.

1. How did Mary Maverick show that she was reliable and loyal to her family and country?
2. What evidence was there that she was trusted?
3. How did she build community capital (built-up trust in her community)?
4. What quality do you (or someone in your family) share with Mary Maverick? Explain.

*Drawing by Mary  
Maverick of the Alamo*



