

Texas History

Spanish Colonial and Mexican National Eras

Content Module

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Note: Arrows have been placed throughout the module to indicate areas where students should interact with the module.



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Spanish Colonial (late 1600s to early 1800s) and Mexican National (1821-1836) Era

➡ ***On the map below, circle Spain, Mexico, and the area we call Texas today.***



Source: <https://lccn.loc.gov/78692118>

➡ ***Read the summary of this era of Texas History below and highlight or underline 3 key words that stand out and help to explain the summary.***

Spain gave up the search for gold during the Spanish Colonial period and turned their focus to establishing presidios and missions, as well as converting native inhabitants to Catholicism. Spain established missions throughout present-day Texas and laid claim to much of the land in Central America, and Mexico in North America. Some missions established during this era still exist today as churches or museums like the famous Alamo.

When Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821, they began to recruit settlers from the United States under the empresario system to help populate the vast land in present-day Texas. American settlers promised to learn Spanish, become Catholic, and develop the land they settled. They also enjoyed a Federal Constitution similar to the United States Constitution. As leadership changed, so did the immigration laws and Americans' willingness to follow them. Conflict began during the Mexican National Era in the mid-1830s as the American immigrants began to rebel against the Mexican government.

➡ ***Take the highlighted/underlined keywords and create a one sentence statement summarizing the Spanish Colonial and Mexican National period.***

Spanish Colonial and Mexican National Era Vocabulary

➡ Draw It Out! The following chart contains ten important vocabulary words from the Spanish Colonial and Mexican National Eras. As you read the terms and their meanings in the chart below, create a picture or symbol for each word in the third column to help you remember that word as you read about the Age of Contact.

Vocabulary Term	Definition	Draw It Out!
Ceded	to give control of (something) to another person, group, government, etc.	
Empresario system	A person who had been granted the right to settle on land in exchange for recruiting and taking responsibility for people settling the eastern areas of Texas.	
Filibuster	A Spanish term meaning pirate. These were people who came to settle illegally in Texas or to steal wild mustangs (horses).	
land grant	A land grant is a gift of land made by a government as an incentive, means of enabling works, or as a reward for services to an individual especially in return for military service.	
Martial law	control of an area by military forces rather than by the police.	

Spanish Colonial and Mexican National Era Vocabulary

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Vocabulary Term	Definition	Draw It Out!
Mestizos	a man of mixed race, especially one having Spanish and indigenous descent.	
Naturalized	to allow (someone who was born in a different country) to become a new citizen.	
Neutral	not connected with either side involved in a war, contest, etc.	
Presidio	these were military forts or settlements established by the Spanish in areas they controlled.	
Rebel	a person who opposes or fights against a government.	

Texas History Timeline

 As you read through this module, you will be asked to record events on this timeline. In some cases you will be asked to simply record the name of the event, in others you will be asked to write something about the event.



Mapping Texas History

As you read through this module, you will be asked to record events on this map.



<https://lcn.loc.gov/78692118>

Establishing Spanish and French Settlements in Texas

➡ ***As you read about the following events, you will be asked to label information on the timeline and/or map in this packet.***

Land Claims Cause Conflicts Between Spain and France

In the late 1600s and early 1700s France and Spain competed for land in the New World. After France established a trading post near the mouth of the Mississippi, more French colonists and supplies arrived. Eventually, both France and Spain established multiple missions along the Texas and Louisiana border. When France and Spain went to war again in 1719, **the French drove the Spanish out of East Texas**. To re-establish Spanish claims in Texas, the Governor of Coahuila and Texas led 500 men, 2,800 horses, 4,800 cattle, and 6,400 sheep and goats to East Texas. They established 10 missions and 4 presidios, or forts, to guard the missions. Their main purpose was to negotiate peace with the French. This was the beginning of Spanish ranching in East Texas. The French never again attempted to take over East Texas.

➡ ***Add the bolded words in the reading above to the timeline on page 5 and explain the effect of this event on Texas history.***

Establishing Spanish Missions and Settlements in Texas

The Spanish Colonial Administration established missions in Texas to spread the Catholic faith. **The first permanent mission in Texas was Corpus Christi de la Isleta**. The mission was founded in 1680 near present-day El Paso. The purpose of the missions was to convert American Indians to the Catholic religion. Ten years later, Father Damian Massanet established two missions in East Texas among the Caddo. One of the most famous missions in Texas History was founded in 1718. **Mission San Antonio de Valero**, is best known as the Alamo. Continuing through the mid to late 1700s, Spain established a total of thirty-five missions throughout Texas. Spain eventually abandoned the mission system due to hostile Indians, the distance from the royal government and the expense of running them. Several missions remain as churches today. Others have become museums and historical markers.

➡ ***Label both of these missions and their dates on the timeline and then locate both of these on the map, label and draw a symbol to explain both missions on the map.***



Establishing Spanish and French Settlements in Texas

➡ *As you read about the following events, you will be asked to label information on the timeline and/or map in this packet.*

Marquis de Rubi Report

From 1744-1748, France fought against Great Britain in the English colonies in America. This war was called the French and Indian War. As a result of this war, France ceded, or gave, all of their North American territory to Spain to prevent the English from claiming it. The increase in the land Spain claimed made it difficult to defend and develop it. The Spanish king needed information about Spain's new American lands. In 1766, he sent Marquis de Rubi to inspect all of the missions in Texas and report his findings. Rubi made three key recommendations:

- First, not all the presidios were needed because there was no longer a French threat.
- Second, move East Texas settlers to San Antonio and strengthen its defenses.
- Third, establish friendlier relations with the Comanches, Kiowas, and Wichitas.

➡ *Label the report on the timeline and explain how the report might have impacted settlers in Texas.*

The Role of Filibusters in Mexican Independence

Americans with a desire to settle in the west initially worked with Spain to settle in the Louisiana Territory. France gained back the land in 1800 and eventually sold the territory to the United States in 1803, extending the United States to the Texas border. As more Americans dreamed of settling west and gaining independence from Spain, men, who the Spanish called Filibusters, (Spanish for pirate) began to come across the border into Texas to settle illegally and or steal wild mustangs in order to make a profit.

In the mid-1790s, Philip Nolan, a filibuster from Ireland, arrived in Texas. He came from Louisiana to capture Mustang horses and then sell them to pay off debts. Spain denied him entrance into Tejas, or what is now present-day Texas. However, he went anyway and settled with heavily armed men. When Nolan resisted arrest, he was killed. He is known for being one of the first American adventurers who wanted to free Texas from Spain. Many more began to come and stir up trouble for the Spanish government.

➡ *Label the word filibuster in the appropriate spot on the timeline and define the term as it relates to Texas history.*

Establishing Spanish and French Settlements in Texas

➡ *As you read about the following events, you will be asked to label information on the timeline and/or map in this packet.*

Long Expedition

James Long, a military adventurer or filibuster, was upset with the United States over the Adams-Onís Treaty. The Treaty did not include Texas in the territory negotiated with Spain. Long had already raised \$500,000 and a military to settle in Texas. He decided to lead 120 men to Nacogdoches to establish a government. Long put himself in charge and declared Texas independent of Spain. More settlers came to Nacogdoches, but due to limited resources, they began to spread out from the original settlement. The Spanish governor sent 500 men to arrest Long. They quickly drove the Americans out of Nacogdoches. Long escaped to New Orleans. In 1820, he returned to Galveston Island with his wife. Spanish troops later captured him in South Texas trying to seize forts. He was killed by a guard after spending six months in prison in Mexico.

➡ *Draw a symbol near Nacogdoches to indicate Long declaring independence.*

Neutral Ground Agreement

In 1800, Spain returned the Louisiana Territory to France. In 1803, Napoleon sold it to the United States for \$15 million dollars. To settle the boundary dispute between Spain and the United States after the sale, the two countries agreed to a neutral strip of ground along the borders of Texas and Louisiana. Neither country was to settle in the Neutral Ground, although many from both sides did. The border between Texas and Louisiana was finalized in the Adams-Onís Treaty in 1821.

➡ *Label the neutral ground on the map*

Mexico fights to become independent from Spain

➔ *As you read each of the following events, identify the cause and effect of each.*

 *Circle the cause and*

 *Draw a box around the effect.*

Grito de Dolores

Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla began a ten-year long fight for Mexican Independence from Spain by issuing the Grito de Dolores. The **1810 “Cry of Dolores”** was a declaration of war. Hidalgo’s declaration included a call to Indians and mestizos, persons of mixed Indian and Spanish ancestry, to fight with him for independence from Spain. Hidalgo and his followers left Dolores and went on to free several cities. After fleeing to Texas, Hidalgo was captured, found guilty of treason and killed. Jose Maria Morelos took up the cause, but he was captured in 1815 and also killed. The Spanish, thinking the rebellion was over, pardoned everyone else involved. However, the rebellion continued in small groups.

Gutierrez-Magee Expedition

Mexico was in turmoil with skirmishes between royalists loyal to Spain and rebels who wanted an independent Mexican nation. One of the rebels, Bernardo Gutierrez de Lara, traveled to Washington, D.C., to get support from the United States in the fight against the Spanish royalists. President James Madison agreed to allow Gutierrez to form a volunteer army if he could find anyone interested in joining. He found volunteers in Louisiana, including Lt. Augustus W. Magee, who later became co-leader of the expedition. The **1812-1813 expedition** was successful because it captured Nacogdoches and Goliad from the Spanish.

Mexico fights to become independent from Spain

➔ *As you read each of the following events, identify the cause and effect of each.*

 *Circle the cause and*

 *Draw a box around the effect.*

Battle of Medina

Spanish forces, led by Joaquin de Arredondo, fought the bloodiest battle on Texas soil. They fought against the rebel forces of the Gutierrez-Magee Expedition in August of 1813. The Spanish defeated the rebels near the Medina River, south of San Antonio. Most of the rebel troops were killed, including colonists in San Antonio who helped the rebels. This battle ended the Gutierrez-Magee Expedition. Spain established martial law in nearby San Antonio and took control of the region.

Mexico Gains Independence

The Mexican War of Independence ended after ten years of fighting. **Mexico gained its independence** in 1821. The Treaty of Cordoba ended the war and put Agustin de Iturbide in charge. The Treaty of Cordoba included the Plan of Iguala. This plan included three guarantees:

- immediate independence from Spain
- equal rights for Creoles and Spanish
- the Catholic Church would still be the official religion

Spanish and Mexican officials signed the Treaty of Cordoba on August 24, 1821, giving Mexico its freedom from Spanish rule. Iturbide became the leader of Mexico for a short time until Santa Anna took over.

Settlers Come to Texas

Populating Mexican Texas

In 1821, **Moses Austin**, was the first man to be granted permission to bring Anglo-American settlers from the United States into Texas. This occurred the same year Mexico gained independence from Spain. Austin's plan was to bring 300 Catholic families to settle on land granted to him along the Brazos River. Settlers were eager to come to Texas because land was inexpensive. For many farmers who had lost their land in the United States it was a chance to start over. Unfortunately, Moses Austin died of pneumonia in June of 1821. His son, **Stephen F. Austin**, took over the land grant, and families began moving later that year. Once Mexico gained its independence from Spain, the new Mexican government did not recognize the contract. Stephen F. Austin had to renegotiate the terms in Mexico City with Iturbide, the new Mexican leader. This resulted in the **Colonization Law of 1823**.

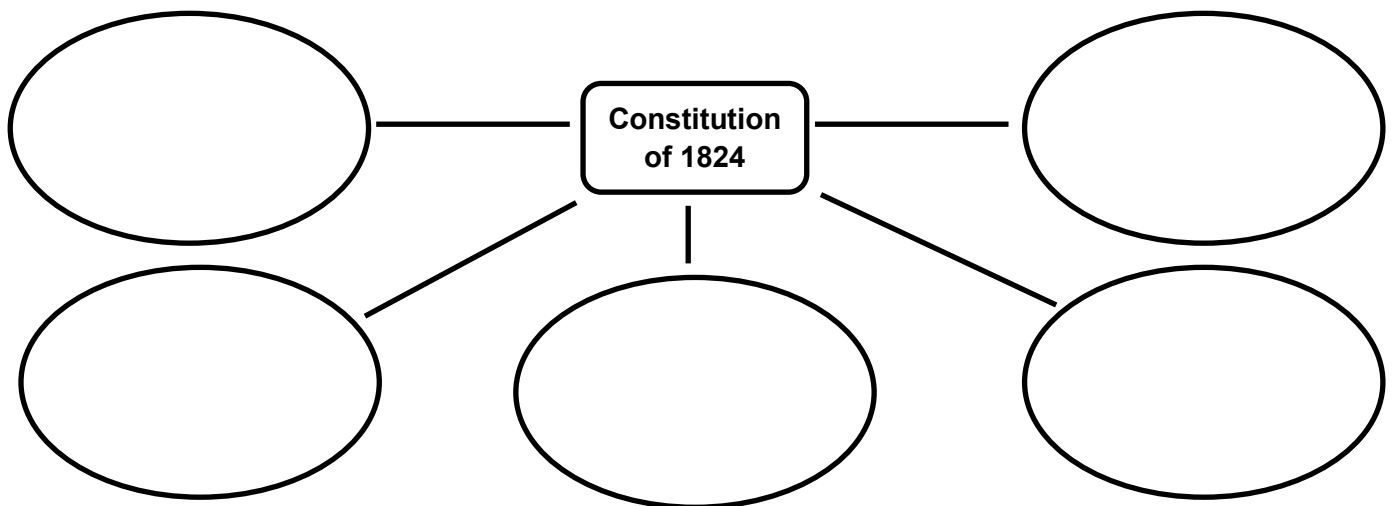
➡ *Identify two reasons why people wanted to populate Mexican Texas.*

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Mexican Federal Constitution of 1824

The **Mexican Federal Constitution of 1824** was Mexico's first set of laws after gaining independence from Spain. The new constitution was a combination of the U.S. Constitution and the Spanish Constitution of 1812. It created a republican form of government that united nineteen states and five territories. It established a two-house congress and a supreme court. Voters elected a president and vice-president to serve four year terms. Catholicism became the official religion. The Constitution created the new state of Coahuila y Texas by combining the province of Texas with the state of Coahuila because neither had enough population to become a state on their own.

➡ *Review the reading on the Constitution of 1824 and fill in the circles below with information that describes provisions of the document.*



Settlers Come to Texas

➡ *As you read about the following events, you will be asked to label information on the timeline and/or map in this packet.*

State Colonization Law of 1825

The **State Colonization Law of 1825** allowed Mexicans and Americans who could pay a small fee under empresario contracts to move to Texas. Under the contracts, settlers agreed to establish farms and ranches, pledge allegiance to the federal and state constitutions, and be Catholic. American immigrants then became naturalized citizens of Mexico and had to follow Mexico's laws.

➡ *Label the law on the timeline and draw a picture that represents what the settlers agreed to under the empresario contracts.*

Empresarios

Empresarios were businessmen who gained land grants from Mexico and sold portions of that land to incoming settlers. Their recruitment led to Anglo population growth in Texas. Mexico issued forty-one empresario contracts between 1821 and 1835. Several empresarios, including **Stephen F. Austin, Green Dewitt, and Martin De Leon**, were extremely successful. As the Anglo population in Mexico increased, the immigrants did not adhere to all of the agreements in the State Colonization Law. Many did not become Catholic or follow all of the Mexican laws. These actions led to conflict between American immigrants and the Mexican government.

Generally, immigrants who moved to Texas for a new life came from the American South. Texas was similar geographically and economically to their previous locations. Immigrants would put a G.T.T. sign on their door, which communicated to others they had "Gone to Texas." They settled mainly in central and eastern regions of the state. Outlaws also arrived in Texas during this time period. They moved because they were trying to escape punishment in the United States.

➡ *Mark the time frame of the Empresario contracts on the timeline and then draw a graph indicating how the empresarios impacted Anglo population in Texas.*

Settling Texas

- ➡ As you read the following journal entries, complete the following steps:**
- 1. Highlight the reasons why this person would have been settling in Texas.**
 - 2. Identify if the settler was a Spanish, Mexican, or Anglo settler.**

March 9, 1731

New Spain

What an exciting day today! We have finally arrived at the Presidio of San Antonio de Bexar. There are about 55 of us, arriving from the Canary Islands to settle in this new land. We are ready to begin plowing and planting but know we need to stay near the presidio for protection. There are other people that have been living close by that seem quite dangerous! The nearby river is called the San Antonio River. It provides much needed water for the crops we will be planting soon. We shall call our town Villa de San Fernando, in honor of our Spanish prince, Don Fernando. After all, it is because of our wonderful Spanish king we have made this difficult journey. He has financed our voyage and settlement. We are representatives of our country, and by making our homes here, we make sure Spain's claims to this land are recognized. Our king says that France wants to take this land from us. We must not let that happen.

September 24, 1822

Coahuila, Mexico

It has been over a year that the Treaty of Cordoba was signed, and we gained our independence from Spain. Our new country, Mexico, still has much work to do. The native people who lived here before us are hostile, and we fear for our safety. We need more settlers! I hear that government officials are working to move more settlers here so that we can gain control over this wild land. The Comanches and other groups make raids and are quite fierce! I hope our new Mexican government will allow people from the United States to continue to settle here. I know that Spain had given permission for a man named Moses Austin to bring settlers from the United States into our land. I've been hearing that he died and that the Mexican authorities are negotiating with his son Stephen to continue to bring more settlers.

August 31, 1825

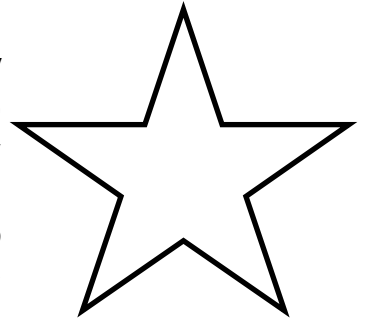
Brazos River Valley

I am so thankful we have found a place to live in this new territory called Texas! The Mexican government is allowing us to settle here through contracts with empresarios. All we have to do is pay a small fee, create farms or ranches, and pledge allegiance to Mexico. Oh, and one small other thing, we are supposed to be Catholic. We can then become naturalized Mexican citizens. I feel a little pain that I'm leaving my country, the United States of America, but I owe so much money! I cannot pay it, and here, I'm safe from those trying to collect it or arrest me. When we left our home in Tennessee, we just left the letters GTT on our door so our friends and family would not worry. We are building a whole new life!

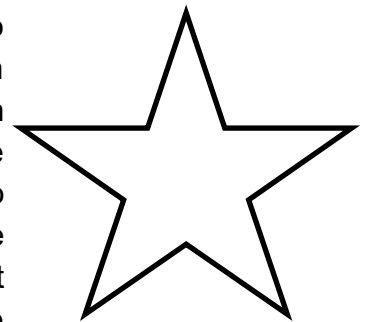
Significant People And Their Contributions

➡ *As you read about the following individuals, highlight their contributions. Once you have completed reading, review your highlights and select one or two words that explain their contributions and record it on the star.*

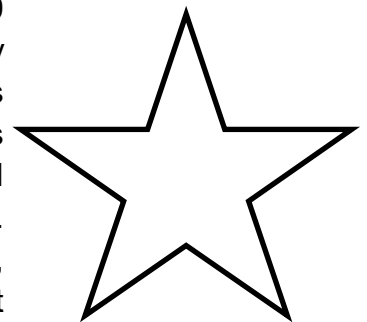
Antonio Margil de Jesus was an early Roman Catholic missionary to Texas. After serving in Mexico and Central America, he traveled into Spanish Texas where he established several missions in East Texas by 1717. These missions had to be abandoned in 1719 when tensions rose between the French and the Spanish. Fray Margil and his settlers fled to San Antonio. There he founded the mission of San Jose y San Miguel de Aguayo, which became the most successful of all the Texas missions. Known for his piety and disciplined life, Fray Margil was often seen barefoot and wearing simple clothing.



Born in Spain, **Francisco Hidalgo** dedicated his life and work to missions among the Indians in East Texas. Ordained as a Franciscan priest, he came to the New World in 1683. Working at first in the villages around Saltillo, Mexico, Father Hidalgo came to Texas in 1691. He stayed at San Francisco de los Tejas until it had to be abandoned in 1693 and became even more determined to do mission work with the Caddo Indians. In 1711 he attempted to reestablish missions in the East Texas/Louisiana area when he sent a letter to the French governor asking for permission. That prompted the French to send St. Denis to East Texas and led to the permanent occupation of the area in 1716 by Europeans. After serving in several missions in East Texas, he returned to San Antonio de Valero Mission where he asked to be allowed to work with the Apache Indians. When that request was denied, he returned to San Juan Bautista and died there at the age of sixty-seven.



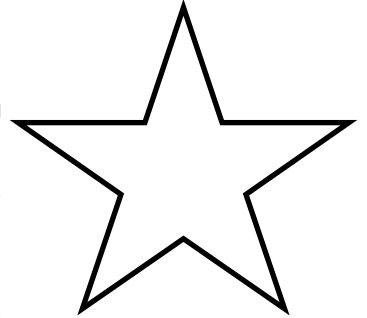
The news of LaSalle's French settlement on the Texas coast in 1685 prompted a series of Spanish expeditions whose purpose was to seek out and remove the French intruders and establish Spanish missions. Captain Alonso de León, accompanied by **Fray Damián Massanet** and other priests, led these expeditions. They established the first mission in the province of Texas in a village of the Nabadache Indians. For the next 40 years, the Spanish struggled to make the mission successful. Fray Damián Massanet remained to help when reinforcements and supplies arrived in August after the summer drought of 1691. More droughts brought trouble to the native tribes. Father Massanet learned of a planned Indian attack when he received a personal warning on October 6, 1693. This prompted the Spanish to burn the mission and retreat to Monclova, Mexico. Spain never again had a successful attempt to colonize East Texas.



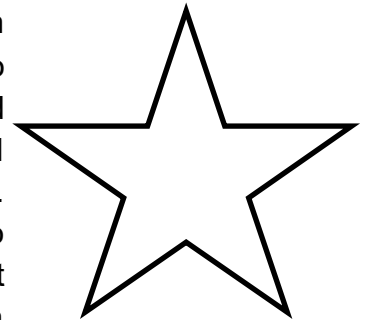
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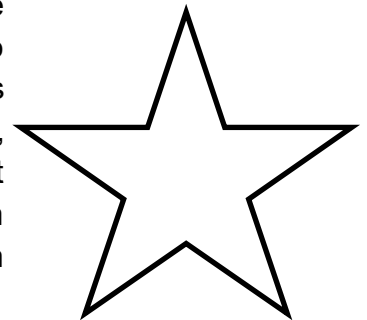
José Gutiérrez de Lara was born in Mexico on August 20, 1774. There he became a merchant, blacksmith, and property owner. He then became an ardent supporter of Mexican Independence from Spain. When the revolution between Mexico and Spain broke out, he was sent to the Rio Grande to recruit soldiers and solicit aid from the United States. He left for Washington, D.C., with letters of introduction from John Sibley. He was received by Secretary of State James Monroe who listened to his plans for establishment of a republican government in Texas and for using Texas as a base to plan the liberation of Mexico from Spain. However, the U.S. did not send aid because it did not want to harm relations with the Spanish. He served as a provincial governor after Mexico was freed from Spain and was later honored for his work in achieving Mexican Independence. He died in 1841.



Moses Austin was born in Connecticut and became the first American to establish a settlement west of the Mississippi. Moses first moved to Virginia and opened a dry goods store with his brother. He then married into a family in the growing iron industry and became involved in lead production. When the Virginia businesses failed, he moved to Missouri. The Panic of 1819 wiped out Moses' fortune, and in 1820, he proposed to the Spanish Governor of Texas that he bring 300 families to Texas. At first, the plan was rejected, but finally he was given permission to settle in Texas. He returned to Missouri to get his settlers, but died before his dream could be realized. However, his son, Stephen F. Austin, followed through on Moses' plan and brought the first Anglo families to Texas.



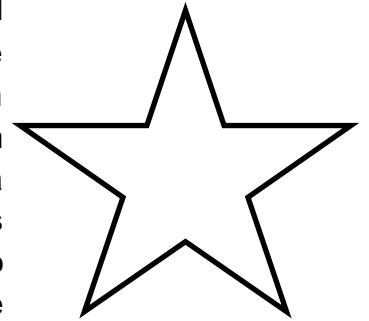
Stephen F. Austin is considered the "Father of Texas." His father, Moses, had received a grant to settle in Texas, but after he died, Stephen continued with the plans for a colony. He recruited families in 1821, and within four years, he brought nearly three hundred families to his colony. When Mexico achieved independence from Spain, Austin was at first pleased with Santa Anna's leadership. However, as Santa Anna assumed more and more control and limited the freedom of Texans, Austin went to Mexico to discuss the matter. There he was imprisoned for treason. When he was released, he went back to Texas to support independence. In 1836, Texas gained its independence from Mexico and became an independent nation. Austin lost a bid to become the first President of Texas to Sam Houston, and instead he became Secretary of State. Austin died in December, 1836 from pneumonia soon after his election.



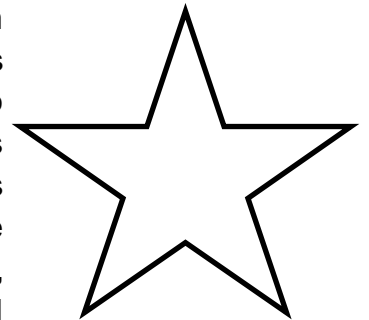
Significant People And Their Contributions

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Martín De León was born to a wealthy family. He was a rancher and important Empresario in Texas. When he decided to settle in Texas, he petitioned the Spanish government for the right to establish a colony in 1807 but was denied. However, after Mexico won its independence from Spain, the Mexican government finally approved his petition to form a colony in 1824. He established his colony and founded the town which is today the city of Victoria. He often was at odds with Green DeWitt who had been given another colonial grant nearby. Today the site of his home in Victoria is a registered Texas landmark. He opposed Santa Anna but died in 1833 before the battle for Texas independence.



Erasmó Seguin, a descendant of a Frenchman who settled in Mexico, was born in San Antonio. Always a civic leader, he helped found the first public school in San Antonio in 1812. In 1821, Seguin was one of the men who met Stephen F. Austin to let him know his petition to be the heir of his father's grant for a colony in Texas had been accepted. He later served as a representative from Texas to the 1824 Constitutional Convention after Mexico had won its independence from Spain. After being expelled from his office as postmaster by Mexican authorities, he recruited men and provided the Texan army with food and horses during the revolution. Early in 1836, Seguin sent spies to the Nueces to watch for Santa Anna, and attempted to provide food and cattle during the "Runaway Scrape." After the revolution, he returned to his ranch to farm and raise cattle until his death in 1857.



Green DeWitt was born in Kentucky. He later became an Empresario in Texas when he was awarded a grant in 1825. He was allowed to bring 400 colonists to settle at Gonzales on the Guadalupe River. Because of the success of his settlement, DeWitt is considered the second most influential Empresario after Stephen F. Austin. He was often at odds with Martin De León as his colonial grant was nearby. He made peace with all of the Indians in the area except for the Comanche. He spent most of his own money on the colony and suffered greatly when the Mexican government tried to limit the number of colonists coming into Texas. DeWitt did not live to see the battle of Gonzales, which traditionally is considered the first skirmish of the Texas Revolution. However, his wife and daughter, Naomi, cut up Naomi's wedding dress to make the "Come and Take It" banner that his fellow colonists adopted as their battle flag.

