

Primary Source Extension Activity

Document A

Excerpts of a letter from Stephen F. Austin to B. J. Thompson, one of the Fredonian Rebels.
December 24, 1826

“Sir,

“...I have heard with the greatest astonishment that you have taken an active part in the commotions in that part of the country. My friend I hope you will not take my frankness amiss when I say that you have committed an error, you have by that rash act injured your own standing with the Government and made the words of your enemies true, and you have jeopardized the prospects of this whole country ... and cast a stain on the hitherto high character of Americans...”

“I will befriend you all so far as I can, consistent with my duty to the [Government] but I am a Mexican Citizen and officer, and I will sacrifice my life before I will violate my duty and oath of office.”

“...Write me as soon as possible and write frankly what you intend to do and what is the state of things in that country for we have many rumors here—and rumors that I hope are false, altho they come very direct from travelers who are daily passing—but I am unwilling to believe that you have all run mad.”

- American Historical Association, and Eugene C. Barker. “Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1919: The Austin Papers in Two Volumes,” Volume 1, Part 2, pp. 423-429. Washington D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1924

Primary Source Extension Activity

Document B

Excerpts of General Manuel Mier y Terán's report to the Mexican government.
Nacogdoches, Texas, June, 1828

“As one covers the distance from [San Antonio de] Bejar to this town, he will note that Mexican influence . . . [decreases] until on arriving at this place he will see that it is almost nothing. And indeed, [from where] could such influence come? Hardly from superior numbers in population, since the ratio of Mexicans to foreigners is one to ten.”

“The wealthy Americans of Louisiana and other western states are anxious to secure land in Texas for speculation, but they are restrained by the laws prohibiting slavery. If these laws should be repealed . . . God forbid . . . in a few years Texas would be a powerful state which could compete in productions and wealth with Louisiana. The repeal of these laws is a point toward which the colonists are directing their efforts. They have already succeeded in getting from the Congress of Coahuila a law . . . that will recognize contracts made with servants before coming to this country. . . This law . . . is going to be interpreted as equivalent to permission to introduce slaves.”

“. . . There is a most evident uniformity of opinion on one point, namely the separation of Texas from Coahuila and its organization into a territory of the federal government.”

“ The whole population here is a mixture of strange and incoherent parts: . . . numerous tribes of Indians, now at peace, but armed and at any moment ready for war; colonists of another people . . . among these foreigners are fugitives from justice, honest laborers . . . and criminals. . . I am warning you to take timely measures. Texas could throw the whole nation into revolution.”

- Texas State Historical Association. The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Volume 16, July 1912 - April, 1913, periodical, 1913; Austin, Texas.
(<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph101058/>; accessed January 21, 2025), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Texas State Historical Association.

Primary Source Extension Activity

Document C

Excerpts of Article 11 of the Announcement of the Law of April 6, 1830

Published by the Mexican Congress, authored by Jose M. Tornel

November 5, 1830

“I consider it my duty to caution [the citizens of the United States] by publishing the 11th article of the Law of April 6, 1830, which is as follows:”

“Art. 11: In virtue of the authority which has been reserved by the General Congress to itself, by Art. 7th of the law of the 18th of August of 1824, all foreigners whose country is bounding on [Texas] and Territory of the federation shall be prohibited from settling within the [Texas], in consequence of which all the contracts that have not taken effect, and are opposed to this law, shall be suspended.”

“Wherefore, I declare, in the name of the Mexican Government, that whatever contract shall have been made in violation of the said law, will be null and void, it being understood that colonization in the State of Coahuila and Texas, and the territory of New Mexico, by citizens of the United States has been prohibited.”

- [Transcript of announcement concerning the Mexican law of April 6, 1830 made by José M. Tornel, November 5, 1830], text, November 5, 1830; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph216703/>; University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History.

Primary Source Extension Activity

Document D

Excerpts from the Turtle Bayou Resolutions, written by the Anglo colonists who had taken part in the disturbances at Fort Anahuac.

Addressed to Mexican Colonel José Antonio Mexia, June 13, 1832.

"Sir,

"Having understood that the causes which impelled us to take up arms have been misrepresented or misunderstood, we therefore make you the following representation. The Colonists of Texas have long since been convinced of the arbitrary, and unconstitutional measures, of the administration of [president] Bustamente, as evidenced"

"First, by their repeated violations of the constitution, laws, and their total disregard of the civil and political rights of the people."

"By their fixing and establishing among us, in time of peace, military posts, the object of which totally disregarding the local civil authorities of the state..."

"By the military commandant of Anahuac, advising and procuring servants to exit the Service of their masters – offering them protection, causing them to labour for his individual benefit by force and refusing to compensate master or Servant..."

"Such...are the causes which impelled us to take up our arms, and the following declarations are legitimate offspring of our deliberations and form the basis of all the acts."

"At a large and respectable meeting of the citizens residents of the Jurisdiction of Austin & Liberty held at Turtle Bayou near Anahuac..."

- Address to Colonel José Antonio Mexia, June 13, 1832. Mirabeau B. Lamar Papers #157, Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.
<https://www.tsl.texas.gov/treasures/republic/turtle/turtle-1.html>

Primary Source Extension Activity

Document E

Excerpts from a newspaper article written by R. M. Williamson regarding Mexico's response to the Anglo requests presented as a result of the Conventions of 1832 and 1833.

Published in The Texas Republican newspaper of Brazoria, Texas.

Saturday, July 5, 1834

“Address of the Alcalde of the Municipality of Austin, to the Ayuntamiento, and the Memorial of that body to the General Congress of the United Mexican States.”

“The information then, in relation to the state question, is contained in a very narrow compass. Our constitution has been rejected. Our application refused. We still continue our unnatural connexion with Coahuila. Our fondest hopes, our most cherished anticipations have been blighted. Our earnest entreaties have been disregarded. . .”

“The grievances of which we complain find no sympathizing friend, in the Government, would receive no redress, from the congress of the nation; - In a word, we have been told that the happiness, prosperity, security and safety of the people of Texas form no part of the policy of the government.”

“They have arrested and now detain our agent Stephen F. Austin on a charge that should lie against the whole people of Texas. They detain him because he has espoused our cause, and spoke our sentiments. The project of a state government for Texas was not Austin's; It was the project of the people.”

“. . . Let us then speak plain to the government on this subject . . . the people of Texas once harmonized in the great [goal] of a state government.”

- The Texas Republican. (Brazoria, Tex.) Vol. 1, No. 1, Ed. 1, Saturday, July 5, 1834, newspaper, July 5, 1834, Brazoria, Texas. (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth80246/>; accessed January 16, 2025), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History.