

Significant Empresarios *Advanced*

Unit 4: The Mexican National Era

Name:

Date:

Period:

Part I: The First Empresarios

When Moses Austin traveled to San Antonio in 1820 to ask permission to settle Anglo families in New Spain's northeastern frontier, it wasn't his actions alone that initiated the Empresario System in Texas. A Dutch immigrant who called himself the "Baron de Bastrop" helped Moses Austin get his proposal in front of Antonio Martínez, the Spanish governor of Texas. Without the help of a fellow immigrant to Texas, Moses Austin likely would not have been able to speak to the governor, who had initially turned Austin away.

After Moses Austin died, his son Stephen F. Austin also relied on others in his quest to continue his father's plan for settling Anglo-American families in Texas. Austin was able to build his colony primarily because of the help, support, and guidance he received from Spanish political leaders like governor Martínez and Tejanos like Erasmo Seguíñ. Seguíñ helped Austin locate the best land, served as an intermediary between Austin and the Mexican government, and advocated for Anglo colonization in Texas while serving as the Texas delegate to the Mexican Congress in 1824.

Stephen F. Austin settled the first 300 Anglo families in Texas with widespread support from Tejanos in the region. Austin became the most successful empresario, bringing approximately 10,000 new settlers into Texas by 1830. The partnership between Anglo leaders like Stephen F. Austin and Tejano leaders like Erasmo Seguíñ was a large part of what made the Empresario System in Texas so successful.

Consider, Respond, and Discuss

Stephen F. Austin is considered by many in American history to be the "Father of Texas." Why do you think some people have given him this nickname? Do you think it is accurate to call Austin "the Father of Texas?" Why or why not?

Part II: Other Significant Empresarios

<p>From 1824 to 1835 there were about thirty empresarios who acted as land agents bringing primarily Anglo families into Texas. Although none were as successful as Stephen F. Austin, there were some empresarios who still played a significant role in the development of Texas.</p> <p>An Anglo-American man named Green Dewitt received an empresario contract to colonize Texas in 1825. He established the city of Gonzales to the east of San Antonio and settled 166 families in that area.</p> <p>Despite his success settling those 166 families, Dewitt's contract had actually required him to settle 400 families by 1831. Having failed to meet this term, his contract was not renewed. Despite this fact, Dewitt played an important role in bringing Anglo settlers into Texas and establishing a city that still exists to this day. In fact, be on the lookout for the city of Gonzales during an incredibly significant event that will occur in our next unit!</p> <p>Though most empresarios were Anglo-Americans, a Mexican man named Martín De León received an empresario contract with a land grant just south of Dewitt's colony between the Lavaca and Guadalupe Rivers. He successfully settled 200 mostly Mexican families in the area and raised thousands of cattle as an experienced rancher. He and his wife Patricia also founded the city of Victoria in 1824.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How did other empresarios compare to Stephen F. Austin? 2. Explain Green Dewitt's significance as an empresario. Give examples from the reading to support your answer. 3. Explain Martín De León's significance as an empresario.
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In 1826, an Anglo-American empresario named Haden Edwards received a land grant to settle families near Nacogdoches in east Texas. Conflicts occurred almost immediately upon his arrival.

Edwards threatened to evict Tejanos who had been living in the region for generations when they couldn't provide proof of land ownership. He took control of the local government, placing his friends in positions of power.

Complaints about Edwards' actions had been pouring into Mexico City. As a result, the Mexican government revoked his contract. In response, Edwards and twelve of his friends took over a fort in the area, proclaiming the land free from Mexico and naming it the "Republic of Fredonia." Edwards believed other Anglos would join his rebellion against Mexico. This was not the case, however.

Edward's actions in the Fredonian Rebellion prompted a swift response from the Mexican government, who forcefully put down the rebellion with the help of Stephen F. Austin and his militia.

Despite the fact that most empresarios were hardworking, law-abiding people, Edward's actions raised a lot of concern for the Mexican government about the Empresario System in Texas – concerns that the Mexican government was eager to address.

4. How would you characterize Haden Edwards as an empresario? Give examples to support your answer.
5. How do you think other Anglo empresarios may have felt about the Fredonian Rebellion? Explain your answer.
6. What do you think is the primary significance of Haden Edwards' actions as an empresario

Part III: Review and Comprehension Questions

- The map to the right shows the location of the land grants of the three empresarios discussed in the reading and shows which cities are located within their borders. Write the letter that corresponds with the empresario who was granted the land in the correct blank below.

_____ Martín De León
 _____ Green Dewitt
 _____ Haden Edwards



- The following primary source material was taken from a letter from Green Dewitt to the Political Chief of Texas, Ramón Músquiz in 1829. Read the excerpt and answer the question that follows.

“ . . . a few days ago, the principal chief of the Tawaccanes, and the principal chief of the Wacoes, called upon the head Chief of the Comanches and solicited him to join them, the Wacoes and Tawaccanes in a general war against the Mexican and American settlements—Saying at the same time that the Mexicans had taken from them a Caveard and the Americans had killed some of their men, and therefore they had declared war against both; He further states that the Comanches entirely refused to Join in the warfare; saying that they were now at a perfect peace with the people of this country and wished to remain so . . . ”

According to Dewitt, describe the relationship between the tribes of American Indians listed in the passage and the Tejanos and Anglos living in the region.