

# Significant Empresarios *Grade Level*

## *Unit 4: The Mexican National Era*

Name:

Date:

Period:

### Part I: The First Empresarios

Moses Austin traveled to San Antonio in 1820 to get permission to bring Anglo families to settle in Texas. He was successful, but he didn't do it alone. A Dutch immigrant who called himself the "Baron de Bastrop" helped Moses get a meeting with Antonio Martínez, the Spanish governor of Texas. At first, the governor refused to meet with Moses, but with Bastrop's help, Austin was able to gain Martínez's support for his plan.

After Moses Austin died, his son, Stephen F. Austin, continued the work his father had started. Stephen was successful, and like his father, he didn't achieve that success alone. Stephen had help from Spanish leaders like Governor Martínez and Tejanos like Erasmo Seguín. Seguín helped Stephen find the best land and acted on behalf of Austin with the Mexican government. Seguín also worked to gain federal support for the Empresario System in Texas as the Texas delegate to the Mexican Congress of 1824.

Stephen F. Austin was able to settle the first 300 Anglo families in Texas with a lot of support from Tejanos. He became the most successful empresario, bringing about 10,000 settlers to Texas by 1830. The Empresario System was incredibly successful mostly due to teamwork between Anglos like Stephen F. Austin and Tejanos like Erasmo Seguín.

### 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?

I think some people may consider Stephen F. Austin "The Father of Texas" because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

I think the nickname is / is not / is partially accurate because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

## Part II: Other Significant Empresarios

Between 1824 and 1835, about thirty empresarios helped settle Anglo families in Texas. None of them were as successful as Stephen F. Austin, but many still played important roles in developing Texas.

One significant empresario was an Anglo-American named Green Dewitt. Dewitt received a contract to settle in Texas in 1825. He founded the city of Gonzales, east of San Antonio, and settled 166 families there.

Settling 166 families was a great achievement, however his contract had actually required him to settle 400 families total. Since he didn't fulfill this requirement by 1831, his contract was not renewed.

Despite not fulfilling his contract, Dewitt still played a significant role in bringing Anglo settlers to Texas and establishing Gonzales, a city that still exists today. In fact, watch for Gonzales in a major event coming up in our next unit!

While most empresarios were Anglo-Americans, a Mexican man named Martín De León received a contract to settle south of Dewitt's colony. He successfully settled 200 mostly Mexican families in the area and raised thousands of cattle as an experienced rancher. He and his wife Patricia founded the city of Victoria in 1824.

In 1826, an Anglo empresario named Haden Edwards received a contract to

1. How did other empresarios compare to Stephen F. Austin?
  - a. Many others experienced the same level of success as Austin.
  - b. Austin prevented other empresarios from becoming as successful as he was.
  - c. Others were important, but not as successful as Austin.
  - d. All answers are correct.
2. Which answer best demonstrates Green Dewitt's significance as an empresario?
  - a. Dewitt brought new settlers to Texas and established the city of Gonzales.
  - b. Dewitt had been required to settle 400 families in Texas.
  - c. Dewitt failed to fulfill his contract, so it was not renewed.
  - d. Dewitt was an Anglo-American empresario who settled in Texas.
3. Which answer best demonstrates Martín De León's significance as an empresario?
  - a. De León settled south of Green Dewitt's colony along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico.
  - b. De León received an empresario contract to settle 200 families in Texas.
  - c. De León was an Anglo-American empresario who settled in Texas.
  - d. De León settled many Mexican families in Texas and founded the city of Victoria.

settle families near Nacogdoches in east Texas. While most empresarios followed the laws, Edwards was different.

Conflicts began almost immediately when Edwards threatened to remove Tejanos from the area because they didn't have paperwork to prove they owned their land. Edwards also took over the local government, putting his friends in charge.

People had been sending complaints about Edwards to the Mexican government. As a result, Mexico revoked his contract. In response, he and twelve of his friends seized a fort, declaring the land free from Mexico. He claimed the land was his and named it the "Republic of Fredonia." He thought other Anglos would join his rebellion, but none did.

The Mexican government acted quickly to stop the Fredonian Rebellion. They sent the military to put an end to the rebellion with Stephen F. Austin's help. Edwards and most of his men fled back to the United States. The Fredonian Rebellion had failed.

Although most empresarios worked hard and followed the laws of Mexico and Texas, Edwards' actions made the Mexican government very concerned. Many Mexican government leaders wanted to find out exactly what was going on in Texas. Some were worried that inviting Anglo empresarios to Texas may have been a bad idea.

4. How was Haden Edwards different from many other Anglo empresarios in Texas? Give examples to support your answer.
  - a. Edwards was one of the only empresarios who followed the law and supported the Mexican government
  - b. Most empresarios followed the laws of Mexico but Edwards caused a lot of problems.
  - c. Edwards worked closely with the Mexican government to bring the most families to Texas.
  - d. Most empresarios supported Edwards' rebellion but they weren't brave enough to rebel themselves.
  
5. What do you think is the primary significance of Haden Edwards' actions as an empresario?
  - a. His actions inspired other empresarios to rebel against the Mexican government.
  - b. His actions caused the Mexican government to question the empresario system in Texas.
  - c. His actions successfully gained the land of Fredonia for Anglo settlers.
  - d. His actions angered Stephen F. Austin, who kicked him out of Texas.

## Part III: Review and Comprehension Questions

1. The map to the right shows the location of the land grants of the three empresarios discussed in the reading. It also 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



2. 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 Wacoës, called upon the head Chief of the Comanches and solicited him to join them, the Wacoës 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, what was the relationship between the tribes of American Indians listed in the passage and the Tejanos and Anglos living in the region.

- Dewitt believed that most American Indians in Texas were completely satisfied with the Anglo and Tejano residents of the state.
- Dewitt believed that some of the tribes were angry with the Anglo and Tejano residents of Texas and wanted to go to war against them.
- Dewitt believed that forming a peaceful alliance with most of the Texas Indian tribes would be easy to achieve and beneficial to all.
- Dewitt believed that the Anglo and Tejano residents needed to declare immediate war on all of the tribes of Texas.