

1)The Economy & the Cotton Revolution

Advanced



In the early 1800s, cotton was rapidly becoming a popular material for clothing. It was light weight, comfortable, and cheaper than other materials like wool. The invention of a machine called the **cotton gin** provided a quicker way to process cotton, making a lot of money for many.

People across the United States began flooding into southern states like Alabama and Mississippi hoping to get rich by growing cotton, often with the use of slave labor on plantations in the fertile soil of the American South.

Then, severe economic issues led to the financial **Panic of 1819** which caused many Americans to lose all their savings and go into debt. Many could no longer afford the cost of land in the

United States. For people hoping to buy land for their own cotton plantations, that was now out of the question. For some of these Americans, the large amount of fertile land in Spanish Texas seemed to hold a great deal of promise.

Meanwhile, the Tejanos living in Texas' fertile Coastal Plains had been witnessing the economic growth and development that cotton had brought the American South. For many Tejanos, the idea of bringing American cotton farmers to their state seemed like a potential opportunity to finally achieve the population and economic growth that they had been working toward for decades.

2) The Empresario System & "The Old 300"

Advanced



One of the Anglo-Americans who had been hit hard by the financial **Panic of 1819** was a man named **Moses Austin**. As a result of the economic crisis, Austin had lost his mining business and was completely broke.

Austin had lived and worked in Missouri when it was a territory of New Spain. He was familiar with the laws and society of New Spain, and he knew of the vast amounts of fertile land in Texas.

Initially wary of inviting Anglo-American immigrants to Texas, the government of Spain took some convincing. With the support and assistance of the Tejano leadership of Texas, Moses Austin finally received official approval from Spain to settle Anglo-Americans in Texas in

1821. Unfortunately, he got sick and died before he could carry out his plan.

That same year, Mexico won its independence from Spain. The Mexican government decided to continue with Austin's original plan. Moses' son, **Stephen F. Austin**, started to settle the first 300 Anglo-American families in Texas in 1821. These first families became known as "**the Old 300**."

Before Anglo colonization, the Tejano population of Texas was only about 4,000 people. Within four years, the Anglo-American settlers had nearly doubled that number. In these first years, the Tejano-Anglo partnership was proving successful at strengthening Mexico's position in Texas.

3) Political Challenges in Texas

Advanced



The Mexican **Federal Constitution of 1824** combined the states of Coahuila and Texas because of Texas' small population. The people of **Coahuila y Tejas** needed to work together to establish a state government that addressed the diverse needs of both Coahuilans and Texans.

This process was especially challenging for Tejanos and Anglos who lived far from Saltillo, the state capital, and had less representation in the state government

In 1827, the state government of Coahuila y Tejas officially passed the state's constitution. One part of the constitution made a law which would end slavery throughout the entire state over time.

This troubled some Tejanos and Anglos who believed that slavery was necessary to successful cotton farming. Without the work of the enslaved people, some feared Texas would stop growing and developing.

Unable to change this law due to Texas' weak position in the state government, some Anglo immigrants arriving in Texas continued to bring enslaved people into the state by using a loophole in the law that allowed the enslaved people to be considered "contract workers" rather than slaves.

While this loophole allowed slave holders to continue coming to Texas, it would also cause concern for the Mexican government officials when they eventually discovered what was going on.

4) Trouble in Texas: The Fredonian Rebellion

Advanced



Many Anglo-American empresarios and colonists who settled in Texas were law-abiding citizens of Mexico, even coming to view themselves as Anglo-Mexicans. With the support of the Tejano leadership, many Anglo settlers worked hard to help develop the state.

As more and more Anglos entered Texas, however, there were some who challenged Mexico's authority in the state. In 1826, an Anglo-American empresario named **Haden Edwards** settled in east Texas around Nacogdoches.

Over time, complaints about Edwards began pouring into Mexico City. Edwards had conflicts with many Tejanos who had already settled in the area. He also took over control of the Nacogdoches government.

The most troubling incident occurred in December of 1826, when he and some of his men took over a nearby fort. They declared Texas independent of Mexico and renamed it "**the Republic of Fredonia.**"

With the help of **Stephen F. Austin**, the Mexican government quickly ended the **Fredonian Rebellion**, and Edwards and his men fled back to the United States.

Although the Fredonian Rebellion ended almost as soon as it began, it still raised a lot of concerns for the Mexican government. Were there other Anglo empresarios like Haden Edwards who wanted to rebel against Mexico? The Mexican government needed to learn just what exactly was going on in Texas.

5) The Mier y Terán Report

Advanced



Following Haden Edwards' unsuccessful Fredonian Rebellion, the Mexican government sent a general named Manuel Mier y Terán to investigate the Anglo colonies in Texas.

Terán reported to Mexico that the Anglo population in Texas outnumbered the Tejano population ten to one. He reported that many Anglos had continued to bring enslaved people into the state, going against the laws of the state constitution.

Furthermore, there were so few Mexican officials in the state that it was easy for Anglos not to follow the laws if they chose.

Terán warned the Mexican government that if Anglo-Americans were allowed to keep entering Texas, there could be problems. He believed that

Mexico could even lose Texas. Terán suggested prohibiting future Anglo colonization.

Terán's report worried Mexico. As a result, they passed the **Law of April 6, 1830**, to restrict Anglo colonization in Texas. The law implemented new taxes, established military forts throughout the region, cancelled unfulfilled empresario contracts, and outlawed all future American immigration into the state.

Many Anglos and Tejanos were deeply upset by these restrictions. They believed stopping Anglo immigration into Texas would hurt Texas' growth and development. If Mexico didn't **repeal**, or get rid of, the law, many Tejanos and Anglos believed that the future of Texas was in danger.

6) Growing Challenges to the Empresario System

Advanced



Following Haden Edward's **Fredonian Rebellion**, the **Mier y Terán Report**, and the restrictions of the **Law of April 6, 1830**, the Empresario System in Texas continued to face challenges.

Many Anglos and Tejanos were deeply upset by the provisions of the Law of April 6, 1830, and feared for the future of their state. Divisions began to grow among the Anglo population over how to address their concerns.

Many believed it was best to try to work with the Mexican government to determine a solution.

Others wanted to rebel against the government in the hopes of gaining independence for Texas. Growing tension even led to conflicts between some Anglos and the Mexican military at the new forts in the region.

In 1833, **Stephen F. Austin** traveled to Mexico City hoping to convince the government to allow Texas to become its own state separate from Coahuila. Under the federalist system, this would allow the people of Texas to have more control over what happened in their state.

Austin's request was denied. Frustrated, he encouraged the Texans to begin the work of creating their own state government anyway. When the government of Mexico City found out, they arrested and imprisoned him for treason.

When a civil war broke out between federalists and centralists in Mexico, Texas Anglos and Tejanos were faced with a serious question: should they follow in the footsteps of other states in rebellion? Should they fight against Mexico? And if so, what exactly would they be fighting for?

7) Political Challenges in Mexico

Advanced



When Mexico first gained independence, its government came under the control of a centralist leader named **Augustín de Iturbide**. Dissatisfied with his controlling leadership, people rebelled against his rule, and he was removed from his position.

Federalists then gained more power in the country. Congress passed the **Federal Constitution of 1824** with a lot of support from the Mexican people who would now have power to run their own state governments.

Mexico continued to face many struggles, however. The economy was incredibly weak. Conflicts between federalists and centralists created political instability throughout the country. Spain threatened to attack and reconquer Mexico, and even came

close to achieving this goal in 1829 when Spanish troops invaded the country.

It appeared to some that federalism was not working, so centralists began to regain support in the government.

When a federalist named **Antonio López de Santa Anna** was elected president, he surprised many by joining a centralist revolt in 1835 that got rid of the Federal Constitution of 1824 and established a centralist government in its place. Feeling betrayed and angry, some states in Mexico openly rebelled. Mexico was now in the middle of a civil war.

The Tejano and Anglo people of Texas were caught in the middle of this rebellion. Many in Texas were uncertain of Texas' future in Mexico and unable to agree on what to do next.