

1) The Economy & the Cotton Revolution

Grade Level



In the early 1800s, cotton became very popular for making clothes. It was light, comfortable, and cheaper than materials like wool. A new machine, the cotton gin, made it quicker to process cotton, helping many to earn large profits.

People from across the United States rushed to southern states like Alabama and Mississippi to get rich by growing cotton. Many of these people used slave labor on plantations in the South's fertile land. Cotton agriculture made a lot of money for Anglos in southern communities.

Then, major economic problems led to the **Panic of 1819**. This caused many Americans to lose their savings and go into debt. Buying land in the United States became too expensive for many people. For some Americans, the fertile land in Spanish Texas looked promising for growing cotton.

Meanwhile, the Tejanos in Texas' fertile Coastal Plains saw how cotton helped the economy grow in the American South. They thought inviting American cotton farmers to Texas could finally help increase the Texas population and boost their economy.

2) The Empresario System & "The Old 300"

Grade Level



Moses Austin was an Anglo-American who lost his business during the financial **Panic of 1819**. He had lived in Missouri when it was still part of New Spain. He knew the culture and laws of New Spain, and he knew of Texas's rich land.

In 1820, he traveled to **San Antonio** to ask the Spanish government if Anglo-Americans could have permission to move to Texas. He proposed they could farm the land and help the economy. In return, he asked for large areas of Texas land at little cost.

Spain was unsure about letting Anglo-Americans settle, but eventually agreed because Tejano leaders in Texas supported the idea. Moses

Austin got approval in 1821, but he died before he could carry out the plan.

That same year, Mexico became independent from Spain. Fortunately, Mexico agreed to continue with Austin's plan. Moses's son, Stephen F. Austin, began settling 300 Anglo-American families in Texas. These first families are known as "**the Old 300**."

Before these settlements, there were only about 4,000 Tejano people in Texas. Within four years, the number of settlers doubled. This cooperation between Tejanos and Anglo-Americans helped make Texas stronger for Mexico.

3) Political Challenges in Texas

Grade Level



In 1824, the **Mexican Federalist Constitution** joined Coahuila and Texas into one state because Texas didn't have enough people to be its own state yet.

The people of **Coahuila y Tejas** needed to work together to create a government that helped both Coahuila and Texas. This was hard for Anglos and Tejanos in Texas because they lived far from the state capital, Saltillo in Coahuila.

Additionally, Anglos and Tejanos had little say in the state government because of Texas' small population. In 1827, the government of Coahuila y Tejas passed a state constitution. It included a law to slowly end slavery in the state.

Ending slavery in the state worried some people in Texas who thought they needed slavery for cotton farming to succeed. They feared Texas would stop growing without the enslaved people's work.

Anglos and Tejanos could not change the law because Texas was too weak in the state government. Some Anglos kept bringing enslaved people to Texas anyway, calling them contract workers to avoid the slavery ban.

This loophole let Anglo immigrants continue coming to Texas for cotton farming, but it worried Mexican officials when they eventually found out.

4) Trouble in Texas: The Fredonian Rebellion

Grade Level



Many Anglo Americans who moved to Texas wanted to be good citizens of Mexico. They worked hard, followed the laws, and even started to think of themselves as Anglo-Mexicans. They got support from Tejano leaders and worked to help make Texas better.

As more Anglos came to Texas, however, some began to challenge Mexico's authority. In 1826, one Anglo-American empresario named **Haden Edwards** arrived in East Texas near Nacogdoches. Soon, complaints about him reached Mexico City.

Edwards had problems with many Tejanos who already lived in the area. He also took control of the local government.

The biggest issue happened in December of 1826. Edwards and some men took over a nearby

fort and declared Texas independent of Mexico, calling it the 'Republic of Fredonia.'

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

Even though the rebellion was short-lived, it still worried the Mexican government. Were there other Anglos like Haden Edwards who planned to rebel against Mexico? The government needed to find out what was happening in Texas.

5) The Mier y Terán Report

Grade Level



After Haden Edwards' failed **Fredonian Rebellion**, Mexico sent a man named **Manuel de Mier y Terán** to investigate the Anglo colonies in Texas.

Terán discovered many things that troubled him about Anglos in Texas. First, he reported to Mexico that there were a lot more Anglos in Texas than Tejanos. Also, many Anglos continued to bring enslaved people, even though the state law prohibited it. Additionally, there weren't many Mexican officials in Texas, so Anglos could break the law easily if they wanted.

Terán warned the Mexican government that if more Anglos came to Texas, there could be trouble, and Mexico might lose Texas. He suggested stopping Anglo immigration to Texas.

Mexico was worried by Terán's report. As a result, the Mexican government passed the **Law of April 6, 1830**. This law did many things to restrict or limit Anglo immigration.

The Law of April 6, 1830 added new taxes on items from America and built military forts in the state to enforce the laws. It cancelled the unfulfilled Anglo empresario contracts and prohibited new Americans from moving into Texas. It also prohibited Anglos from bringing enslaved people into Texas as "contract workers."

Many Anglos and Tejanos were unhappy because they thought the law would hurt Texas' growth. They wanted Mexico to repeal, or get rid of, the law.

6) Growing Challenges to the Empresario System

Grade Level



After Haden Edward's **Fredonian Rebellion**, the **Mier y Terán Report**, and the **Law of April 6, 1830**, Texas continued to face more problems.

Many Anglos and Tejanos were unhappy about the Law of April 6, 1830 and worried about Texas's future. The Anglo population was divided. Some wanted to work with the Mexican government to solve the problems in Texas.

Other Anglos thought it could be better to fight Mexico for Texas' independence. Growing tension in this group of Anglos led to some conflicts between Anglos and the Mexican military at new forts in the state.

Many Anglos and Tejanos in Texas thought that Texas could solve a lot of its problems if it were allowed to become its own state. In 1833, **Stephen**

F. Austin went to Mexico City to ask the government for permission for statehood for Texas.

The government denied Austin's request for statehood. Frustrated, Austin told the Texans to start making their own state government anyway. When Mexico City learned this, they arrested Austin for treason.

Meanwhile, growing conflicts between centralists and federalists had led to a civil war in Mexico. Texas Anglos and Tejanos had to decide: should they also rebel? Should they fight Mexico? And if so, what would they be fighting for?

7) Political Challenges in Mexico

Grade Level



When Mexico became independent in 1821, a centralist leader named **Augustín de Iturbide** took control. People did not like his strict rule and rebelled against his government. As a result, he was removed from power.

Afterward, the Federalists gained power and passed the **Federal Constitution of 1824**. This gave people the ability to control their own state governments and pass laws that were best for their states.

However, Mexico still faced many problems. The economy was very weak, and there were conflicts between centralists and federalists, causing political turmoil.

In 1829, Spain invaded Mexico attempting to reconquer its former colony. Mexico defeated Spain in the end, but the country was really

struggling. Some thought federalism was not working, so centralists started to gain more and more support again.

Then, a federalist named **Antonio López de Santa Anna** became president. He shocked many people across Mexico by joining a Centralist revolt in 1835. This revolt removed the **Federalist Constitution of 1824** and created a Centralist government instead. Many states in Mexico felt angry and betrayed, so they openly rebelled. Mexico was now in a civil war.

The Tejanos and Anglos in Texas were unsure about what to do as they were caught in the middle of this fight. Should they join the fight against centralists? Should they fight for Texas independence? Should they work with the centralist government? They had to decide what would be best for Texas