



The Anglo-American Texans



Stephen F. Austin,
The Father of Anglo Texas

Texas, in the short space of 15 years, 1821 to 1836, became Anglo American.

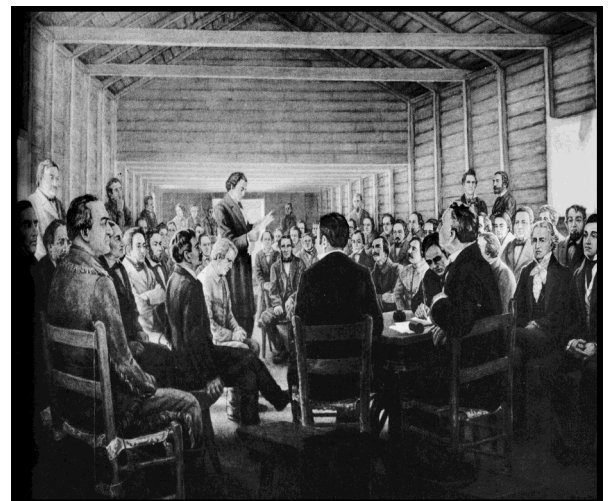
Certainly, this change came about because of military conquest, but only in part. The Texan victory at San Jacinto in April of 1836 was decisive not only for Texas but also for all of North America. Yet the battle was only a part of a settlement story.

In three centuries of rule, Spain had been able to place some 4,000 settlers in the Texas province. Largely for economic reasons, around 1821, Spain opened the land even to United States immigrants. Mexico, soon independent, sporadically followed the same option. Thus, more than 30,000 Anglo-Americans arrived by 1836, many legally, many illegally. The cultural revolution was largely over before military engagement.

The “Anglos” were not, and are not, a uniform group. The first folk called Anglo-Saxons shifted from northern central Europe into Britain more than 1400 years ago—creating new cultures and mixed races. Historically, they have carried many definitions. By the 18th century, they were largely English and Scottish and Welsh with liberal additions of Irish, Dutch, Danish, and

German. The “English” themselves were a highly mixed Nordic-Germanic-Celtic stock. And many United States census counts accepted as Anglo-American anyone who said they were Anglo—or Caucasian or white, in some decades. Some individuals who came to Texas with this widely varied background had been living in the United States just long enough for accurate lineage to have slipped from mind...and from importance. Many were from the southeastern part of the United States, and all could have been called “United Statesians.”

Some traits were fairly common. These Anglos came to Texas with more accumulated frontiering experience than most; they were intensely individualistic and had first-hand knowledge of revolution and the peculiar experiment of self-government; and they regarded land as an exploitable, nearly consumable commodity.



“The Reading of the Texas Declaration of Independence” By Fanny and Charles Normann

Although some Anglo-American individuals are known to have been in Spanish Texas with permission—Peter Davenport was a Nacogdoches merchant by 1794—few arrived before 1821. In 1820 Jane Wilkinson Long followed her revolutionary husband, Dr. John Long, to Bolivar Point. Left there during an agonizing winter while her husband failed in his filibustering efforts, she gave birth to a third daughter, the first Anglo child known to have been born in Texas. Jane Long became a permanent Texas resident.

And many Anglos came to Texas with the idea that, Spanish or Mexican or whatever, Texas (and most of North America) was destined to be Anglo (and within the United States). The tiny battle of San Jacinto is thus the confirmation of an Anglo-American Republic of Texas and the end of southern European rule in most of North America.

Not that the revolutionary story is one-sided in terms of provocation. In 1824 the young Mexican government adopted a new constitution, which pleased many Anglo-American settlers in the Mexican state of Coahuila y Tejas because of its similarities to the laws of their homeland. When Santa Anna abolished this constitution in his rise to absolute power, he directly incited revolution—not only among Anglos.

Thus, some of the Anglos involved in the insurrection later known as the Texas Revolution, 1835-1836, first fought as Mexican citizens against a hated tyrant. But the illegal government they set up was unquestionably revolutionary. The first Anglo colonial governor, Henry Smith, spoke strongly for independence, as did Robert McAlpin Williamson, who was quickly known as “the Patrick Henry of the Texas Revolution.” He was proud of the title.

Even Anglos who had ties with the Spanish and Mexican governments and peoples were swayed. Erastus Smith, married into a local family and with no argument against Mexico, changed sides. He had been stopped by Mexican soldiers and not allowed to rejoin his family in San Antonio. James Bowie had been in Texas since 1828 and, like Smith, had married locally. Yet, after the loss of his wife, Ursula Veramendi, to cholera, he changed sides.

But most Anglo-American Texans on the side of independence, called Texians (and for a short while, Texicans), were newcomers. Only ten of the 59 delegates to the Convention of 1836 who signed the Declaration of Independence had been in Texas longer than six years. All but seven had been born in the United States.



Jane Long, the Mother of Texas



Social gathering, c. 1890

Stephen F. Austin

Stephen F. Austin, often called “the father of Anglo-American Texas” is a symbol of both Anglo resourcefulness and Anglo stereotype.

Austin took over the job of bringing in the first coherent group of Anglo settlers to Mexican Texas after the death of his father Moses. Remarks in Stephen’s letters hint at this motive.

In Texas he seemed, at first, to be on the side of a peaceful solution to the settlers’ troubles and most willing to be a citizen of Mexico in a Mexican state. After a number of events, including his imprisonment in Mexico on insurrectionist charges, he opted for revolution.

But even before coming to Texas, a couple of years before his father stated the project, Stephen had an Anglo North America on is mind. Speaking at a July 4, 1818, Independence Day celebration in Potosi, Missouri, then part of the Louisiana Territory, the young man revealed some early thoughts on Spanish Texas.

He was most direct. For closing remarks, he claimed the “same spirit that for a time blazed forth in France... the same spirit that unsheathed the sword of Washington... will also flash across the Gulph of Mexico... [to] rescue Spanish America from the dominion of tyranny.”

He may have had in mind the Mexican revolution, which was foundering at the time. But like many Anglos, he was probably thinking of something else. Stephen F. Austin brought more to Texas than a hope for a new life or settlers— he brought an Anglo Independence Day.

Two of the signers were born in Mexico (as Spanish citizens in San Antonio de Béxar). One each was born in Scotland, Ireland, and England; one in Yucatán, Mexico; and one was French Canadian. But the other 52 were born in the United States and their parentage—however mixed—was northern European in heritage. They were Anglos.

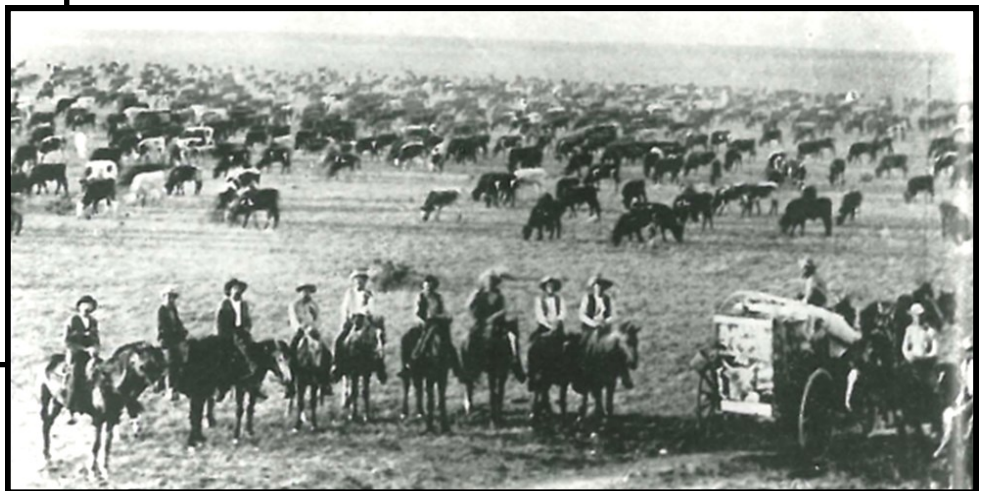
In the wake of revolution, and during the United States-Mexican War that followed ten years later, many Mexican families departed or were driven south to what was left of Mexico. Even the architecture of the most significant Spanish town in Texas, San Antonio, changed to Anglo design. Little more than mission walls, dusty acequias, and the ghosts of the plazas remained.

Not until the Mexican Revolution, 80 years later, did immigration from Mexico again reshape the South and Central Texas population.

Thus, Anglo-American individuals literally became the significant majority culture of the Republic and the State of Texas. This culture established English (in several dialects) as the language in use, the major economic patterns, many social customs, dominant forms of settlement and land use, and most laws and forms of political organization.

Many of the images of Texas—cotton, corn, cattle, and oil—were largely developed by, if not brought by, Anglos. Naturally, the Anglos learned from the range cattle operations of the Spanish; they absorbed Spanish language terms; they altered European law to fit the land; they used worldwide, and former, talents to exploit Texas’s natural oil; and they did not raise cotton in Texas before the natives or the Spanish but did raise it on their own terms. In an economic sense, they improved on all.

Over the course of their story, Anglos became the stereotypical Texans in the world’s eyes. Fortunately or unfortunately, stereotypes contain both falsehood and truth.



Herd with cowboys and chuck wagon, Abilene, 1911



Cotton gin at Yancey, c. 1914





Oil boomtown Desdemona, known as Hogtown, c. 1920

TEXANS ONE AND ALL: THE ANGLO-AMERICAN TEXANS

NAME: _____ DATE: _____ PERIOD: _____

The “push-pull” theory says that people migrate because things in their lives *push* them to leave, and things in a new place *pull* them.
Instructions: Decide what economic factors push and pull people. Complete the graphic organizer below using the word bank.

 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; min-height: 150px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Economic Push Factors</p> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; min-height: 150px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Economic Pull Factors</p> </div> 	<div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 10px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">WORD BANK</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>Lost Job</td> <td>Higher Wages</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Available Work</td> <td>Low Pay</td> </tr> </table> </div>	Lost Job	Higher Wages	Available Work	Low Pay
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Anglo-American Settlers in Texas

The Anglo-Americans were people who moved from the United States to Texas. They spoke English. Their parents or ancestors had come from northern Europe to America.

Most of the Anglo-Americans did not come to Texas in large groups. Often families came alone. Many families traveled in covered wagons. Some of them tacked signs which said “G.T.T. – Gone to Texas” to the doors of the cabins they left.

Early Anglo-American settlers in Texas had to “make do” with what they had or found around them. Many of them had spent all of their money to buy land and pay for their journey. They did not have money to buy houses, food, or clothes.

They built their homes with what they could find: trees, stones, river can, sod or mud. They got their food by hunting and picking berries and nuts. The children learned to spin and weave to help make cloth from cotton and wool. Almost everything was handmade. The settlers became very good at creating tools and toys, clothes and new kinds of food from what they had. They used everything. Scraps of cloth were made into quilts. Scraps of food were fed to animals. “Waste not, want not,” they said.

How did the first Anglo-Americans come to Texas?

Why did early Anglo-American settlers in Texas have to “made-do”?

What does the saying “waste not, want not” mean and how did Anglo-American Texans practice that?

Digging Deeper

Using *Texans One and All: The Anglo-American Texans*, answer the following questions about why Anglo-American immigrants moved to Texas and what their life was like in the state.

Who Were Anglo-American Texans?
What ethnic groups were considered “Anglos”?

The picture below depicts Anglo-American settlers building a log cabin on the Texas frontier. Use the reading and what you see in the picture to answer the following questions.



Many Anglos that settled in Texas had experience living on the frontier. What in the picture might support that claim?

The reading says that Anglos “regarded land as an exploitable, nearly consumable commodity.” What does that mean, and what evidence do you see of that belief in this picture?

Stephen F. Austin

Stephen F. Austin is often called “the father of Anglo-American Texas” because he is a symbol of both Anglo resourcefulness and Anglo stereotype.

What role did Stephen F. Austin play in bringing Anglo-Americans to Texas?

Combining Cultures

What impact did Anglo-American Texans have on the state after the United States-Mexican War?

What images associated with Texas were developed by Anglo-American Texans?

How did Anglo-American Texans adopt and change Spanish influences?

Summarize What You Learned

Write 2 sentences to summarize what you learned about Anglo-American Texans and economic push and pull factors.
