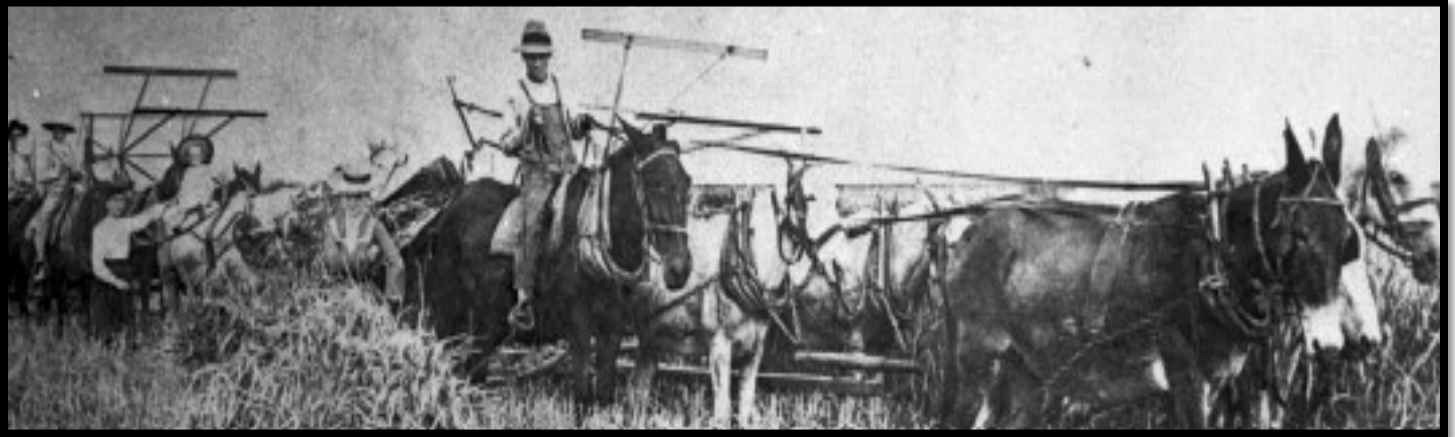


The Dutch Texans



Martin Koelemay harvesting rice, Pine Island Bayou, 1902

Except for a few troubled decades, the Dutch have had little reason to make Texas their home. Yet certain individuals, and one colonial effort, made huge differences to the state.

Probably the most influential was Phillip Hendrick Nering Bögel, the self-proclaimed Baron de Bastrop, who was directly responsible for Anglo-American settlement in the Mexican state. Arriving in Texas after 1795, the baron made friends easily and was soon a confidante of many Spanish, then Mexican, officials. Befriending both Moses Austin and Stephen F. Austin, Bastrop convinced the Mexican government to admit the first colony of Anglos.

Other Dutch individuals were similarly notable in the Texas story. David Levi Kokernot was a Dutch Jew born in Amsterdam but raised in New Orleans. Kokernot became a warrant officer in the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service and first saw Texas as a shipwreck survivor at the Sabine River.

Kokernot apparently liked the rather vacant land. By 1832 he had settled with his family at Anahuac and enthusiastically fought in the Texas Revolution. After the siege of Béxar, Kokernot became a friend of Sam Houston and carried out special and secret missions for the general. When the general became President Houston, Kokernot was given command of a ranger company.

In 1853 Kokernot moved, investing in west Texas. During the Civil War, he served first in Louisiana, then, at 60, as a home guard volunteer in Texas. Although a soldier all his life, after the Civil War he consolidated some of his western land holdings. These grew into a half-million-acre ranch in Jeff Davis, Pecos, and Brewster Counties.

Many Dutch coming to Texas were opposed to slavery, did not sympathize with the Civil War, or liked a good fight less than Kokernot. Few came; few stayed. But by the latter 19th century, Holland was overcrowded and in an economic depression.

In 1895 the Port Arthur Land Company was formed by Dutch investors. Some 66,000 acres of land in southeastern Texas were offered for sale at \$8 an acre. Advertisements in Holland showed the land as a paradise, but most of the favorable land in the area had been taken. What was for sale was low-lying marsh. Still, the land company did build the Orange Hotel, named for Holland's royal family and painted a bright orange color.

Immigrants came, most were grateful for the hotel, and many stayed.



Dutch settlers in Nederland photographed after the harvest.

The first was George Rienstra, who, in 1897, chose what he thought was the best available land. Joined by his sister, Fanny, and brother, Dan, he was soon raising rice. Others followed, and the settlement was named Nederland.

Even a few South Africans came to the colony. All African Boers (the Dutch farmers) did not find the continent profitable or politically calm. Some heard about Texas and tried their luck in a move. Gerritt Treway, after trying both Canada and South Africa, came to Texas's Nederland colony. Finding the place acceptable, Treway journeyed to Holland to marry Machteldje de Jong, and the two spent their honeymoon aboard ship bound for Texas.

William de Vries, a friend of Treway, came in 1911, worked for a time on the Galveston seawall, then moved to Nederland.

The colony only enjoyed moderate progress until 1901 when the discovery of oil, then the largest known field in the western United States, gave the colony a sound economic future.

The pattern of settlement was typical. And Nederland exists today, between Port Arthur and Beaumont.



Nelly Reinstra in 1903, before she married Klaas Koelemay



The Baron de Bastrop

The most controversial of Dutch immigrants, Philip Hendrik Nering Bögel, was possibly the most influential and perhaps the first. He left his homeland, wife, and children, having allegedly embezzled the results of his work as a tax collector. A reward of a thousand gold ducats was offered to anyone who would bring him back. He changed his identity.

In Spanish Louisiana by 1795, he had enough money to introduce himself as Felipe Enrique Neri, Baron de Bastrop, to the highest aristocratic circle and was soon engaged in a series of land deals in Louisiana and the United States. He made more than one fortune but lost them all.

About 1806, nearly broke but with a good change of clothes and the requisite languages, he traveled to San Antonio, established a freighting business, and—by conversation and appearance alone—was soon made second alcalde (chief city executive and judge) of the city. He presented himself as a loyal Spanish subject who had

opposed the sale of the Louisiana territory by France to the United States. France had ceded the lands west of the Mississippi to Spain in 1762, but by 1800 King Charles of Spain had been forced to give the lands to Napoleon Bonaparte and France. Napoleon, needing money and tired of New World involvement, sold the land to the U.S. This, Spain thought was a bad move. And in such a place, just who was Spanish was sometimes in doubt.

The Baron de Bastrop's story was believed and, within only months, his advice was sought as far as Mexico City concerning the dangerous United Statesians. Yet the baron seems to have been responsible for Anglo settlement in Spanish and Mexican Texas.

Twenty years before his arrival in Texas, Bögel had shared the hospitality of a roadhouse in then-Spanish Missouri with a lead miner named Moses Austin. And in San Antonio de Béxar, in 1820, he recognized Austin, who had just been rejected in his request to bring in settlers. In fact, Austin had been ordered out of Texas.

The baron asked Austin to stay with him for several days, under the pretext of sickness, while the request was reworded. Austin, like Bastrop, quickly became a loyal Spanish citizen who was outraged at the transfer of the Louisiana territory. Austin, like Bastrop, only desired to live under Spanish rule but, a bit unlike the baron, wanted to bring in several hundred like-minded and loyal Spanish citizens.

This time, permission was granted. After all, the baron had used nearly the same line.

Even after the death of Moses and a change of governments—Stephen F. Austin had taken over his father's work, and New Spain and the provinces had become Mexico—the baron continued to help. He was influential in the agreement's renewal.

After the establishment of Austin's colony, Bastrop was named commissioner of colonization for the colony. He helped issue land titles and became Austin's confidante. Further, he was elected to the Legislature of Coahuila y Tejas and served until his death in 1827. The self-appointed baron never made much money in Texas, but he became an Anglo friend. If Stephen F. Austin is the "father of Anglo Texas," the Dutch con man Bögel is certainly the godfather.

At Bastrop's death, legislative members paid for his funeral. His will left land claims to his wife and children in Holland; years later, these records finally revealed his true identity.



The Dutch 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.*

Economic Push Factors	Economic Pull Factors	WORD BANK
		Lost Job
		Wages
		Available Work
		Higher
		Low Pay

Dutch Settlers in Texas

Dutch immigration from Holland, or the Netherlands, to North America has been continuous since the early 17th century.

The first successful Dutch colony in Texas was founded in 1895 and called the Port Arthur Land Company. Approximately fifty families moved to this colony and started the town of Nederland east of Houston.

The Dutch came for many reasons. With the potato crop failure of 1895, farm families were starving, and many left Holland. Others left just for the adventure or to avoid the required military service. Still others wanted cheap land and a chance to improve their lives.

The settlers, with their history of cheese making and dairy farming, quickly went into raising dairy cattle as well as farming rice. Just a couple of years later, however, oil was discovered at Spindletop, and a plant to process the oil was built one mile south of Nederland. When their rice crop was wiped out in the depression of 1907, the oil processing companies provided work and helped the Nederland Dutch prosper. Today, the oil industry continues to play an important role in the economics of that part of Texas

What European country did the Dutch come from?

Where did the first Dutch immigrants settle?

How did the oil industry affect the lives of early Dutch immigrants?

Digging Deeper

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

During the Civil War, why did few Dutch immigrants come to Texas?

What was the Port Arthur Land Company?

The advertisements for the Port Arthur Land Company that reached Holland did not accurately portray what Texas would be like when they arrived. In the space provided draw 2 pictures: one to illustrate how the advertisements may have depicted Texas, and one to illustrate what the Dutch actually experienced when they arrived.

Advertisement

Reality

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Read about the Baron de Bastrop. How did he shape the history of Texas?

Geography Skills

Use your textbook to find the locations mentioned as significant to the Dutch experience in Texas, and label them on the map below



- Port Arthur
- Nederland
- Spindletop
- Galveston

Summarize What You Learned

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