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Anglo-American Settlement in Texas Digital History ID 541

Author: Stephen F. Austin

Date: 1823

Annotation: Anglo-American settlement of Texas began with the encouragement of the Spanish government. In 1820, Moses Austin, a bankrupt fifty-nine-year-old Missourian, asked Spanish authorities for a large Texas land tract that he would promote and sell to Anglo-American pioneers. The following year, the Spanish government gave him permission to settle in Texas.

A reason Spain welcomed the Anglos was to provide a buffer against illegal settlers from the United States, who were creating problems in east Texas. Perhaps 3,000 Anglo-Americans had illegally settled in Texas before the grant was made to Austin. Spain also wanted to develop the land; only 3,500 Mexicans inhabited Texas, which was then part of the larger Mexican state of Coahuila y Tejas.

Moses Austin soon died, but his son Stephen carried on his dream of colonizing Texas. By 1824, he persuaded the new government of Mexico that immigration from the north was the best way to develop the region. In 1825, Mexico gave land agents 67,000 acres of land for every two hundred families that they brought to Texas. To obtain land grants, the immigrants agreed to become Mexican citizens, obey Mexican laws, learn Spanish, and become Catholics. By 1830, there were sixteen thousand Anglo-Americans in Texas. In the selection here, Stephen F. Austin advertises for his countrymen to settle in Texas.

Document: The title to your land is indisputable--the original grant for this settlement was made by the Spanish government before the Revolution...and the whole was approved and confirmed by the Sovereign Congress of the Mexican Nation....

I wish the settlers to remember that the Roman Catholic is the religion of this nation. I have taken measures to have Father Miness formerly of Nachitoches, appointed our Curate, he is a good man and acquainted with the Americans--and we must all be particular on this subject and respect the Catholic religion with all that attention due to its sacredness and to the laws of the land....

The settlers have now nothing to fear, there is no longer any cause for uneasiness, they must not be discouraged at any little depredations of Indians, they must remember that American blood flows in their veins, and that they must not dishonor that noble blood by yielding to trifling difficulties. I shall adopt every possible means for their security and defense.... Let every man do his duty, and we have nothing to fear....

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