

GALLERY OF TEXAS HISTORY

SETTLING TEXAS

Pre-Visit Activities

1. Use a map that shows the location of the land grants made by the Mexican government to show the main areas of the settlement of early Texas. Choose an *empresario* and research information about his land grant. The information should include location, number of settlers, origin of settlers and origin of *empresario*. (The University of Texas has maps online: www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/texas.html)
2. Find out what was happening in the United States in the 1820s. This will show some of the reasons people chose to leave the United States, giving up their citizenship, to move to a foreign country. Make a list of these reasons. (Check out websites – you might include: www.gonetotexas.com)
3. Write an editorial for a newspaper about coming to Texas. Take either the position of encouraging people to move or discouraging them from leaving their homes. Be sure to give reasons and details in the editorial.
4. Make a covered wagon out of a shoebox and fill it with items (or pictures of items) your family would have needed to bring to Texas. Be creative and realistic, remembering that there were no stores in the early days and people had to be very self-sufficient.

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Post-Visit Activities

1. Find a list of the members of "The Old Three Hundred" (the first group of colonists who came with Stephen Austin) who settled in Fort Bend County. Research information about them and the location of their land grant. Write a news report telling about the families and their impact on the county. Survey the students in the classroom to discover if any of them are descendants of the "Old Three Hundred. (Go to the General Land Office website for land grant information: www.glo.state.tx.us/archives.html / go to www.bchm.org/Austin/panel13.html for a list of the Old Three Hundred)
2. Take a survey among friends and family members to determine if they know why First Colony Mall and the surrounding neighborhoods were named. (The reason is that this was the location of the first colony settled by the people who came to Texas with Stephen F. Austin.) Graph the results and write words problems for the graph.
3. Create a timeline of the life of Stephen F. Austin, Erastus "Deaf" Smith, Jane Long or Mirabeau Lamar. Illustrate the timeline and present it to the class.
4. Imagine how children settling in Texas might have felt. Write a diary with several entries to share your feelings. Include pictures of what your new home might have been like.
5. Design a poster advertising a trip on "The Lively," the boat that brought Austin's first settlers to the coast of Texas.
6. Research information on Fort Bend County today, as well as the other counties that were settled by early people in Texas. Present the information in a travel brochure on the counties.