

Name _____

Date _____

Recollections of An Early Female Pioneer

Below you will find an excerpt from letters written by Mary Austin Holley in 1831 during a visit to Stephen F. Austin's Colony in Texas. Read the first-hand account of items needed for life in early Texas and answer the questions below.

“House-keepers should bring with them all in-dispensable articles for household use, together with as much common clothing (other clothing is not wanted) for themselves and their children... Ladies in particular, should remember, that in a new country, they cannot get things made at any moment, as in an old one, and that they will be sufficiently busy... trade, by barter, is much practiced, and you buy provisions, with coffee, calico, tea-kettles, and saucepans, instead of cash...

Those who must have a feather-bed, had better bring it, for it would take too long to make one... Everybody should bring pillows and bed linen. Mattresses... are made of the moss, which hangs on almost every tree... The moss is prepared, by burying it in the earth, until it is partially rotted. It is then washed very clean, dried and picked, when it is fit for use. These mattresses should be made very thick; and those who like a warmer bed in winter, can put some layers of wool, well carded, upon the moss, taking care to keep this side up.

Every emigrant should bring musqueto bards... made of a thin species of muslin, manufactured for the purpose. Furniture such as chairs and bureaus, can be brought in separate pieces and put together, cheaper and better, after arrival, than they can be purchased here, if purchased at all. But it must be recollected, that very few articles of this sort, are required, where houses are small... A few well selected standard books, must not be forgotten.”

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Questions

- 1. Why should families bring their own clothing to Texas?**
- 2. List two household items you can use to buy provisions.**
- 3. Why should people bring a feather bed with them to Texas?**
- 4. What can be used as stuffing in mattresses?**
- 5. What can be added to mattresses to make them warmer in the winter?**
- 6. What should every person coming to Texas bring with them?**
- 7. Why should people bring little furniture with them to Texas?**
- 8. What must you not forget to bring to Texas?**