

0. ANGLOS COLONIZE MEXICO - Story Preface

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Stephen Austin created this hand-colored manuscript map when he visited Texas between 1821-22. The original is now an American Treasure at the Library of Congress. Curators at the Library provide this [description of the famous map](#): "Texas, the sparsely settled northeastern frontier of Mexico, was inadequately mapped when Stephen Austin visited there in 1821-1822 to locate and confirm a colonization grant originally made to his father. As a result of his travels, he prepared a manuscript map showing settlements in eastern Texas, annotated to show vegetation—prairie land in yellow and wood land in green—making it one of the earliest examples of American thematic mapping."

Ever since [Montezuma II](#) superstitiously believed that [invading Spaniards](#) were descendants of the god [Quetzalcoatl](#), leading to the [defeat](#) of the [Aztec Empire](#) by [Hernando Cortez](#) in 1521, Spain had controlled Mexico.

Exactly 300 years later, an American - [Stephen Austin](#) - sought, and received, permission to colonize a portion of Mexico called "[Coahuila y Tejas](#)."

The idea to colonize Mexican territory did not originate with [Austin](#). His father, [Moses](#), had come upon hard economic times in the United States, following the [Panic of 1819](#). It was Moses who petitioned the Spanish authorities in Mexico to allow him, and 300 additional Anglo families (called "[The Old Three Hundred](#)"), to begin anew on Mexican land.

The [plan](#) would benefit both the Spaniards (who hoped for economic growth and protection from hostile Indians) and the colonists (who could inexpensively purchase large tracts of land). Moses, unhappily, contracted pneumonia and died in June of 1821, before colonization began.

On his deathbed, he told Maria, his wife, to have his son Stephen take charge of resettlement efforts.

Keeping the commitment he made to his father, Stephen Austin ultimately [settled](#) about 1,000 families in the Texas territory. Mexican law [allowed](#) each family to buy 4,428 acres of pasture land and 177 acres of farm land. The average cost was about four cents an acre!

Most of the early settlers were Protestants from the American South. They planned to raise corn, cotton and cattle in the same manner they'd employed before emigrating to Mexico - with slaves on farms and plantations.

There was a brewing problem, however. Although certain exceptions were made for the Texas territory, Catholic Mexico had anti-slavery laws.

A showdown with Santa Anna, who ultimately banished slavery even in Texas, was not far off.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/ANGLOS-COLONIZE-MEXICO-Alamo-The>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

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Montezuma II

Image online, courtesy Library of Congress.

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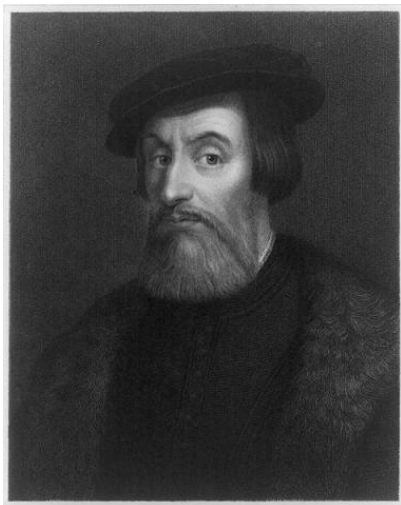


Quetzalcoatl

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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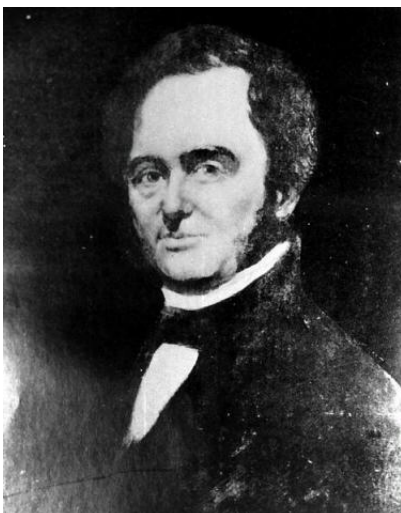


Hernando Cortez

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress. LC-USZ62-3351.

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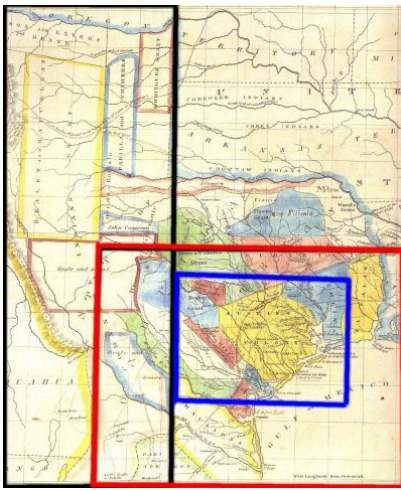


Moses Austin

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Texas Territories

Image online, courtesy [Texas A & M University](#).

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