

Section

3

The Spanish Return to Texas

Main Ideas

1. In response to a perceived threat from the French, the Spanish resettled in East Texas in the early 1700s.
2. The Spanish built several missions, a presidio, and the region's first civil settlement near what is now San Antonio.

Why It Matters Today

The Spanish tried to protect their hold on Texas by barring foreign trade in the region. Use current events sources to learn more about free trade issues or a trade dispute between nations today.

Key Terms and People

- Francisco Hidalgo
- Louis Juchereau de St. Denis
- Domingo Ramón
- Antonio Margil de Jesús
- Martín de Alarcón
- El Camino Real



TEKS: 1B, 2C, 9A,
21A, 21B, 21C, 22D

myNotebook

Use the annotation tools in your eBook to take notes on the return of Spanish missionaries and settlers to Texas.

The Story Continues

Father Francisco Hidalgo was a patient but persistent man. Since becoming a Franciscan at the age of 15, he had longed to become a missionary, travel, and spread the Catholic faith. After arriving in New Spain, the young priest heard many stories about Texas. He became determined to go there to teach Texas Indians about Catholicism. Delay after delay prevented Father Hidalgo from reaching them. But he knew that his chance would come.



Back to East Texas

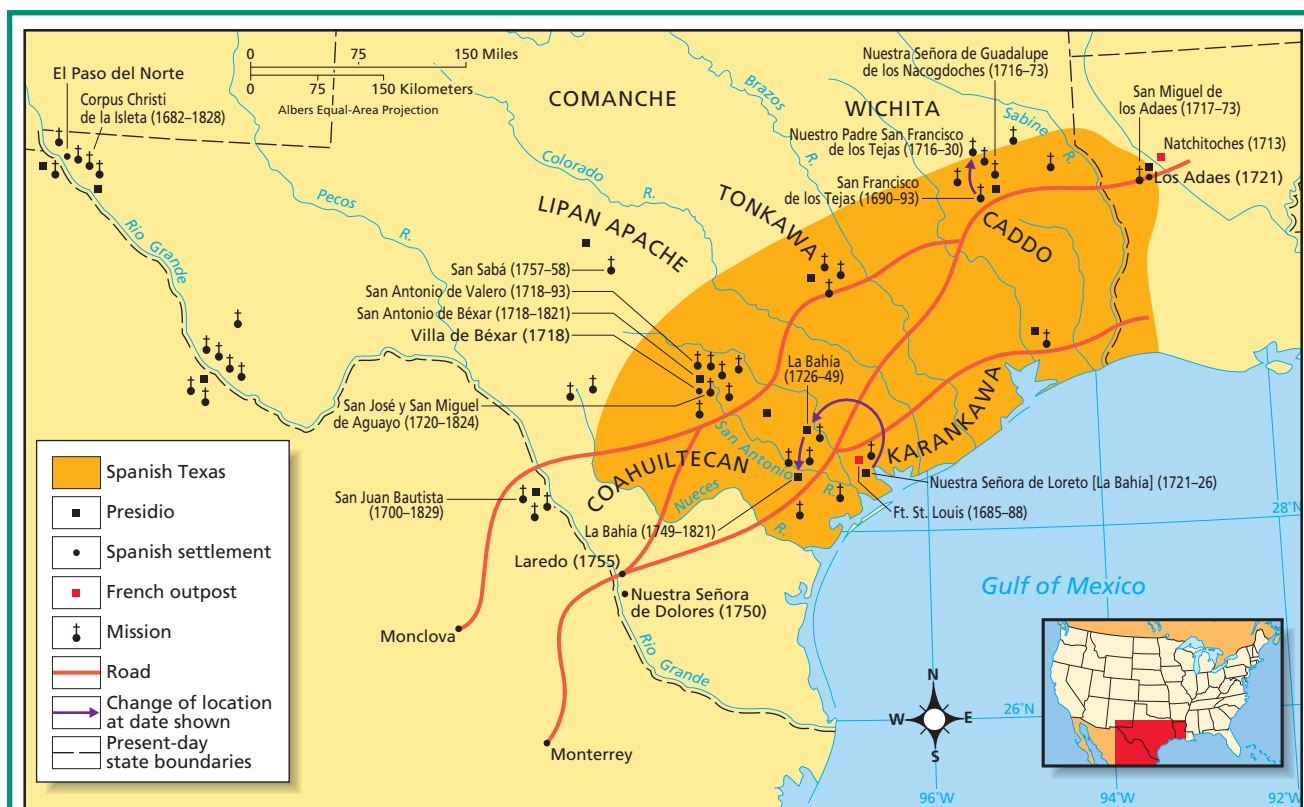
After the failure of San Francisco de los Tejas, the Spanish largely ignored East Texas for more than 20 years. Several missionaries were not happy with that policy. Among them was the Franciscan Father **Francisco Hidalgo** (ee-DAHL-goh). Years before, he had served at San Francisco de los Tejas. After it was abandoned, Father Hidalgo helped found the San Juan Bautista mission along the Rio Grande, but he was not content there. He wanted to return to East Texas and work with local American Indians. He repeatedly asked Spanish officials to reestablish the Tejas mission, but they refused.

Unwilling to give up, Father Hidalgo eventually looked elsewhere for help. He wrote a letter asking the French governor of Louisiana to help build missions in East Texas. Sending that letter was a daring move because, as you have seen, France and Spain were longtime enemies.

The French in Louisiana had been looking for an opportunity to trade with Spanish colonists in Mexico. However, Spain would not allow it. When the governor of Louisiana received Hidalgo's letter, he saw a chance. In 1713 he sent explorer **Louis Juchereau de St. Denis** (luh-wee zhew-shuh-roh duh-sand-uh-nee) to Texas. St. Denis's stated mission was to find Father Hidalgo. At the same time, the governor wanted him to make contact with the Spanish in hopes of later trade.

St. Denis headed north first. In 1713 he built a trading post near the Red River that grew into the town of Natchitoches, Louisiana. He then traveled southwest into Texas. Eventually he reached the presidio near the San Juan Bautista mission where Father Hidalgo lived.

As a French citizen in Spanish territory, St. Denis was arrested. However, the presidio commander, Diego Ramón, treated him well. The Frenchman enjoyed his stay at the mission, even courting Ramón's granddaughter. Eventually, though, Ramón sent St. Denis to Mexico City to meet the viceroy.



Texas Under Spanish Rule, c. 1750

Interpreting Maps During the 1600s and 1700s Spain established missions, presidios, and other settlements in Texas.

Places and Regions In what areas of present-day Texas were most of the Spanish settlements located?

★Texas Cities★



San Antonio

History: Martín de Alarcón, a Spanish official, founded a mission and presidio on the site of the city in 1718. The mission later became known as the Alamo. It became the site of an important battle in the Texas Revolution.

Population in 2012: 1,382,951 (estimate)

Relative Location: South-central Texas on the San Antonio River

Region: South Texas Plains

County: County seat of Bexar County

Special feature: San Antonio, with its historical Spanish architecture and winding River Walk, is a popular tourist destination.

Origin of name: San Antonio is named for the Portuguese-born Italian saint, Anthony of Padua.

Economy: The economy of San Antonio depends on public and private operations. Military establishments such as Fort Sam Houston, tourism, and medical research play important roles in the city's economy.



The information St. Denis gave to the viceroy convinced the Spanish that the French wanted to move into Texas. To protect their claim to the region, the Spanish decided to build new missions in East Texas. These missions were to be located near French territory. This would allow soldiers stationed at the missions to monitor French activity. Father Hidalgo was one of the priests chosen to set up the missions.

The expedition to establish the new missions was led by **Domingo Ramón**, son of the commander at San Juan Bautista. Although he was a Frenchman, St. Denis was hired as the expedition's guide. In addition, the expedition included Spanish priests, soldiers, and civilians. Some of the soldiers also brought their wives. These women were probably the first female Spanish settlers in Texas. Besides necessary supplies, the Spanish also brought gifts for the Tejas who lived in the region.

In late June 1716 the settlers arrived in East Texas, where the Tejas warmly received them. A priest described their first meeting.

TEXAS VOICES

"About eight o'clock in the morning thirty-four Indians arrived. . . We went to greet and embrace them, our hearts overflowing with joy. . . [We] served chocolate to them. . . This day was most pleasing to us, holding out, as it did, such great prospects of attaining our end and achieving the purpose so much desired."

— Isidro Félix de Espinosa, quoted in *Documents of Texas History*

The Spaniards soon built a mission called Nuestro Padre San Francisco de los Tejas near the site of the original mission. Father Hidalgo was placed in charge.

With Father Hidalgo settled at his mission, the religious leadership of the expedition fell to another Franciscan, Father **Antonio Margil de Jesús**. Assisted by St. Denis and the Tejas, the Spanish under Margil established more missions in Texas. You can see the locations of these missions on the map on the previous page. One was located on the future site of Nacogdoches. Another, San Miguel de los Adaes, was located in present-day Louisiana. Others were spread over a wide area. To protect the missions, Captain Ramón built a presidio on the Neches River. The distance between the presidio and the missions, however, meant that it would be difficult for Ramón's soldiers to fully protect the missionaries. A few soldiers were stationed at each mission to provide security.

Although the Tejas had welcomed the Spanish into their territory, they showed little interest in the Spaniards' religion. Nevertheless the Spanish remained at the missions. They continued working to bring Spanish culture to the people of the area. As you will see in the next section, however, their efforts were soon cut short.

Reading Check Analyzing Information How did the Spanish reestablish their control over East Texas?

★ The San Antonio Settlements

The Spanish were determined to firmly establish settlements in East Texas. Officials knew that the first mission failed partly because of its distant location. It was more than 500 miles from the nearest Spanish settlements. Getting supplies to the mission had been difficult. The journey was long and dangerous, with the threat of raids by Texas Indians. Desperate Spanish settlers sometimes even turned to nearby French settlements for supplies. Because of these problems and the experiences of earlier Texas missions, the Spanish decided to set up an outpost between the East Texas missions and the Rio Grande.

Spanish officials wanted to make communication and travel between East Texas and Mexico easier. To accomplish that goal, they decided to build a mission-presidio outpost along the San Antonio River. In 1718 **Martín de Alarcón**, the governor of Texas, led a group of colonists to the area. Near the river, they built a mission called San Antonio de Valero. It was a simple structure made of branches, mud, and straw. The group then moved about a mile away and built a presidio named San Antonio de Béxar (BEH-har).

The San Antonio River area was a good location for a settlement. Winters were usually mild. Summers were hot but not very humid—unlike those in East Texas. Cottonwood trees dotted the landscape. One Spaniard called it “the most beautiful part of New Spain.”

Over the next few years, the Spaniards built several more missions along the San Antonio River. In 1720 Antonio Margil de Jesús, who had supervised earlier missions in Texas, established San José y San Miguel de Aguayo. By 1721, more than 200 Indians lived in the mission. Over time, it would become the finest mission in Texas. A two-story stone building became the priests’ residence. In the 1780s, an elaborately decorated church was built as well. As the years passed, the mission added a sugar mill, where workers made delicious brown sugar cones.

KEY DATE 1718

Martín de Alarcón establishes a mission and a presidio at the site of present-day San Antonio.



Image Credit: © North Wind Picture Archives (b)

Interpreting Visuals

San Antonio. The San Antonio has long been important to life in the city of San Antonio, as this image from the 1800s shows. **Based on the art, how do people in San Antonio use the river?**

BIOGRAPHY

Martín de Alarcón

(in office 1705–1708 and 1716–1719) Martín de Alarcón arrived in the Americas sometime before 1691. He later became the governor of Spanish Texas. After founding San Antonio, Alarcón set out on a dangerous trip to supply the missions in East Texas. He distributed supplies and talked with the French. Shortly after his journey to East Texas, Alarcón returned to Mexico. **How did Alarcón contribute to Spanish settlement in Texas?**

Many Indian groups, including the Coahuiltecan, lived and worked at the San Antonio missions. The missions soon became ranching centers, with many cattle roaming the area's pastures. They came to be the most successful missions in Texas.

Spanish officials did not want to have only soldiers and priests living in San Antonio. They wanted to establish a civil presence in the area. Alarcón had tried to establish a town in 1718, but he could not convince settlers to move there. In 1731, however, the Spanish developed a new plan. They recruited 15 families of Canary Islanders to move into a town near the San Antonio presidio. The town, San Fernando de Béxar, had the first organized civil government in Texas. Together, the missions, presidio, and town along the San Antonio River officially came to be known as San Antonio de Béxar. It was more commonly called Béxar or San Antonio.

In time, San Antonio became an important stop on the Texas part of **El Camino Real** (kah-MEE-noh reh-AHL), or royal road. This long road led from the East Texas missions south to Mexico City. It was the major route for travel into Texas. Some segments of the road had begun as trails linking American Indian settlements. Others were built or improved by the Spanish.

Despite its importance, El Camino Real was a rough road. Its path crossed several rivers that could cause problems for careless travelers. Nevertheless, the road was important. It linked Texas to Mexico and helped increase Spanish settlement in Texas, particularly in San Antonio.

Reading Check Identifying Cause and Effect Why were the San Antonio settlements established?



Section 3 Review



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ONLINE QUIZ

1. Identify and explain

the significance of each of the following in Texas history:

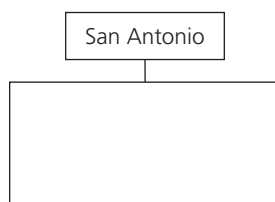
- Francisco Hidalgo
- Louis Juchereau de St. Denis
- Domingo Ramón
- Antonio Margil de Jesús
- Martín de Alarcón
- El Camino Real

2. Locate on a Texas map:

- San Antonio

3. Categorizing

Copy the graphic organizer below. Use it to identify the steps the Spanish took to settle San Antonio.



4. Finding the Main Idea

- Why did St. Denis go to Texas, and how did the Spanish respond?
- What did the Spanish hope to achieve in East Texas?
- Look at the map. Where were presidios located in relation to missions?

5. Writing and Critical Thinking

myWriteSmart

Identifying Cause and Effect Write a short story about why and how the Spanish founded the first mission and presidio in San Antonio in 1718.

Consider the following:

- the location of San Antonio
- the events surrounding the founding