

## Section

# 2

## The Austins Come to Texas

### Main Ideas

1. Moses Austin made plans to establish a colony in Texas but died before he could accomplish them.
2. Stephen F. Austin continued his father's plan and brought the first Anglo settlers to Texas.
3. Austin's colony faced many challenges in the first few years of its existence.

### Why It Matters Today

During the 1820s Anglo settlers came to Texas hoping to improve their lives. Use current events sources to find information about reasons for immigration to Texas today.

### Key Terms and People

- Moses Austin
- Stephen F. Austin
- Baron de Bastrop
- Erasmo Seguín
- cotton gins
- militia

## The Story Continues

Moses Austin was ruined. He had moved to Spanish Missouri after his lead mines in Virginia failed. He had found success in Missouri, befriending many Spanish officials. When Missouri became part of the United States, Austin's success had continued. He had even become a part owner of the Bank of St. Louis. But in 1819, his luck changed. An economic crisis created a depression. Many banks failed, including the Bank of St. Louis. Austin lost his entire fortune. What was he to do?



**TEKS:** 1B, 2D, 2E, 2F, 8A, 8B, 9A, 11A, 18A, 21A, 21B, 21C, 22D

### myNotebook

Use the annotation tools in your eBook to take notes on the lives and achievements of Moses and Stephen F. Austin.



### Moses Austin's Texas Dream

Though he was broke, **Moses Austin** was not defeated. He had profited once by moving to a Spanish land—Missouri—and perhaps such a move could work again. Austin soon developed a plan to establish a colony of American families in Texas. By charging them fees, he could regain his wealth. Hopeful again, Austin set out for Texas.

On his way to Texas, Austin visited his son **Stephen F. Austin** in Arkansas Territory. The younger Austin had doubts about his father's plans, but Moses remained determined. He set out for Texas with a slave named Richmond. The two crossed into East Texas in November 1820.



## BIOGRAPHY

### Moses Austin

(1761–1821) Moses Austin was born in Connecticut. In his twenties he entered the lead-mining business in Virginia. After a few years of success, Austin's business ventures failed. In 1798, Austin moved his family to Missouri, which was then a part of Spanish Louisiana. There he created the area's first lead industry. His business expanded, amassing him a fortune of \$190,000. When he went to Texas in 1820, however, most of this fortune was gone. Austin was the first person to get permission to bring Anglo settlers into Texas.

**How did Moses Austin shape Texas history?**

Reaching San Antonio in December, Austin met with Spanish governor Antonio María Martínez. The governor, however, did not trust U.S. citizens. He ordered Austin out of the city. However, a chance encounter changed the situation. In the city, Austin met the **Baron de Bastrop**, a Dutch businessman. Although he called himself a baron, Bastrop had not been born noble. Born Philip Hendrik Nering Bögel, he had fled the Netherlands in 1793 after being accused of theft. While on the run, he adopted his fake title and settled in San Antonio. There he became a successful businessman and a respected statesman.

Austin told Bastrop about his colonization plan, and Bastrop decided to help him. Together, the two men met with Martínez. They pointed out that Austin's colony would improve the Texas economy. His presence would also help protect the area from attacks by American Indians or U.S. soldiers. They also noted that Austin had become a Spanish citizen in Missouri and would be loyal to New Spain. Convinced, Martínez agreed to propose the plan to his superiors.

Satisfied, Austin returned to Missouri to await news. In the spring of 1821, he learned that Spanish officials had agreed to his plan. Austin had their permission to settle 300 Catholic families from Louisiana in Texas. Before he could act on his plans, however, Moses Austin became ill and died. The fate of his colony now lay in the hands of his son.

**Reading Check Summarizing** Why did Moses Austin want to create a colony in Texas, and why was that colony never established?



## Stephen F. Austin Takes Over

Stephen F. Austin was 27 years old when he learned of his father's death. Austin became determined to carry out his father's plan to bring U.S. settlers to Texas. He traveled to San Antonio de Béxar in August 1821. **Erasmio Seguín**, a rancher and the alcalde of the town, led Austin to Governor Martínez. The Baron de Bastrop was on hand to translate. Martínez offered to support Austin's efforts to fulfill his father's plans. But in the time since Moses Austin had received his contract, Mexico had won independence from Spanish rule. Consequently, Austin needed a new contract from the Mexican government. Martínez agreed to help him get approval for that contract from officials in Mexico City.

Austin spent the next few months exploring the land east of San Antonio. He was seeking a good location for his colony. In the end, he picked the rich farmland in the area of the Brazos and Colorado River valleys—some 11 million acres on the Gulf Coast Plain. A colony there would have a mild climate, fertile soil, water, and plenty of timber for building. Wild game was also plentiful. In addition, the site was near the coast, where settlers and supplies could arrive by ship. In his journal, Austin described his chosen location.

## TEXAS VOICES

"The Prairie comes to the river . . . and affords a most beautiful situation for a Town or settlement. The bluff is about 60 feet high—The country back of this place and below for about 15 miles (as far as we went) is as good in every respect as man could wish for, Land all first rate, plenty of timber, fine water—beautifully rolling."

—Stephen F. Austin, quoted in *Stephen F. Austin: Empresario of Texas*, by Gregg Cantrell

With a location chosen, Austin returned to the United States to prepare. From Louisiana he sent a report to Governor Martínez. It specified the colony's proposed location, which include land along the Gulf for a port.

Austin's plan detailed how he initially intended to distribute land to his colonists, although these terms later changed. Each household would receive 640 acres of land. Those who provided valuable services or items, such as **cotton gins**—devices that separate cotton fibers from seeds—would receive extra land. Where possible, each land grant would lie on a river to provide water for farming and transportation. Settlers would pay Austin a fee of 12.5 cents per acre for his services.

Austin's proposed terms were very attractive to people in the United States, where land cost at least \$1.25 an acre. In addition, U.S. law required settlers to buy at least 80 acres and to pay the full price in cash. Few people had the \$100 in cash needed to buy this much land. Austin, however, would accept goods as payment or allow settlers to pay the fees over time. Austin advertised for settlers in New Orleans, and applications poured in from eager men and women.



## BIOGRAPHY

### Stephen F. Austin

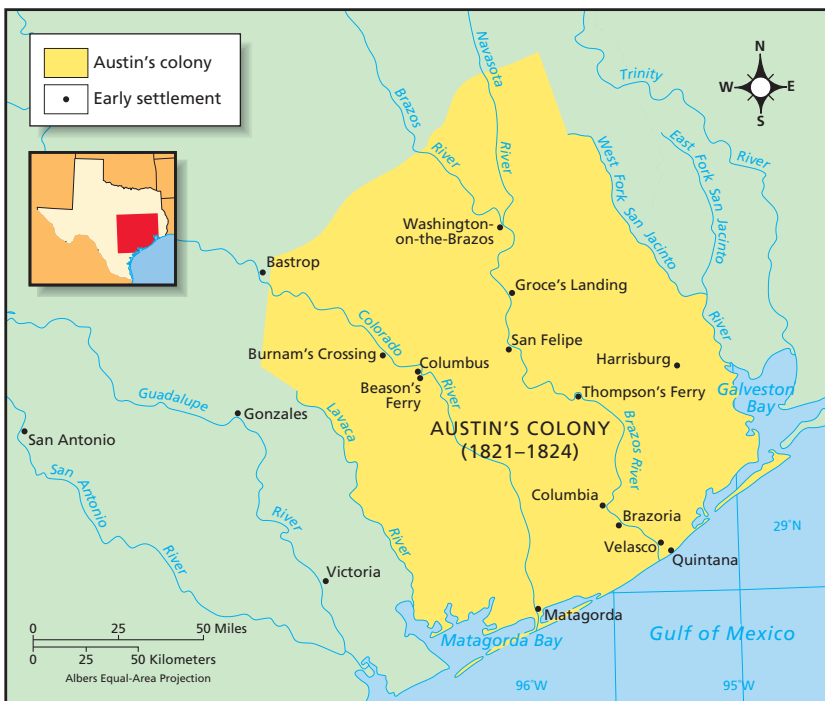
(1793–1836) Stephen F. Austin was studying law in New Orleans when he decided to help with his father's Texas colony. The younger Austin was an energetic, intelligent, patient man. Soft-spoken, cultured, and soon fluent in Spanish, he was equally at ease with frontier settlers and Mexican officials. He was devoted to his colonists and served as their adviser, banker, diplomat, and judge. His efforts brought prosperity to many and earned him the title the Father of Texas. **What qualities and experiences helped Austin become an important Texas leader?**

## Austin's Colony

**Interpreting Maps** Stephen F. Austin established his colony on the Gulf Coast Plain.

**1. Physical System** What physical factors might have influenced Austin's choice for the location of his colony?

**2. Evaluating** What advantages do you think rivers provided to early settlements?







### Interpreting Visuals

**Colonial life.** Settlers in Austin's colonies built log cabins and planted crops. **What kinds of physical features might affect where and how people in the colonies lived?**

Austin was careful in selecting settlers. He believed his colony's success depended upon having hardworking, law-abiding people. All settlers also had to become Mexican citizens and convert to Catholicism.

With plans in place, Austin went to New Orleans to arrange for the colony's finances. While there, he formed a partnership with Joseph H. Hawkins, a friend and lawyer. Hawkins provided Austin with financial support and a ship. His backing secured, Austin set out for his colony.

**Reading Check Analyzing Information** How did Stephen F. Austin attract potential settlers for his Texas colony?

## ★ Early Settlement of Austin's Colony

The first settlers to Austin's colony arrived in 1821. Andrew Robinson and his family were perhaps the first to reach the colony. They camped west of the Brazos River. Soon afterward, Joseph Kuykendall established the first settlement on the Colorado River. Other early settlers included Austin's friend Josiah Bell and younger brother, James Brown Austin.

By March 1822 some 150 people had settled along the Brazos and Colorado Rivers. Austin tried to help the colonists adjust to the hardships of life in the Texas wilderness. Food and supplies were scarce because of difficulties in transporting goods to the area. Disheartened, some colonists left and made their way back to the United States.

However, an even greater problem faced the colony. Moses Austin had made his settlement contract with the Spanish government, which no longer ruled Mexico. Austin needed the support of the new Mexican government in order to start his colony. Austin headed to Mexico City to convince government leaders to approve his colony. He left Josiah Bell in charge and set out in March 1822. More than a year would pass before

he saw Texas again. The journey was more than 1,000 miles through rugged and dangerous land. At one point some 50 Comanches captured Austin's group, but the party was released unharmed. At another point, Austin dressed as a beggar to fool robbers.

Once in Mexico City, Austin found officials struggling to organize a new government. As a result, they had little time to deal with Texas matters. Austin, however, was determined to wait as long as it took. Between meetings with officials, he studied Spanish to become fluent.

Austin's patience eventually paid off. In January 1823 the Mexican government passed the Imperial Colonization Law. Under this law, Austin's land grant was secure and he could continue to bring in settlers from the United States. Families of farmers in the colony would receive 177 acres, and ranching families would receive 4,428 acres. Single men would receive one-third of these amounts. To get the greatest possible amount of land, most settlers in Austin's colony claimed to be both farmers and ranchers. In addition, settlers were exempt, or free, from paying taxes for six years. Austin himself would receive about 100,000 acres once he had settled 300 families in the colony.

As the colony's leader, Austin was charged with forming a local government and acting as judge. He was also empowered to form a **militia**, or army made up of citizens who serve when necessary.

Austin's determination and willingness to work with Mexican officials won him success. In the end, his colony was the only one ever to operate under the Imperial Colonization Law. The ruler who had issued it, Agustín de Iturbide, gave up power, and the new government had its own plans for colonization. However, they allowed Austin to maintain his colony under the old law. In April 1823 Austin headed back to Texas.

**Reading Check Identifying Cause and Effect** Why did Stephen F. Austin travel to Mexico, and what was the outcome of his trip?



Stephen F. Austin created this map of his colony in 1833.



## Section 2 Review



hmhsocialstudies.com

ONLINE QUIZ

### 1. Define and explain:

- cotton gins
- militia

### 2. Identify and explain

the significance of each of the following in Texas history:

- Moses Austin
- Stephen F. Austin
- Erasmo Seguín

### 3. Summarizing

Copy the graphic organizer below. Use it to describe Stephen F. Austin's colony.

Austin's Colony	
Location	
Size	
Final Land Terms	
Date of Start of Settlement	
Date of Final Approval	

### 4. Finding the Main Idea

- Why did Moses Austin want to establish a colony in Texas, and why did his plans fail?
- What personality traits helped Stephen F. Austin win approval for his colony?

### 5. Writing and Critical Thinking

myWriteSmart

**Sequencing** Write a paragraph describing in order the steps Stephen F. Austin took to carry out his father's colonization contract. Consider the following:

- Austin's travels in Texas
- Austin's trip to Mexico City