

Section

2

European Immigration to Texas

Main Ideas

1. In the 1840s people moved to Texas from Germany, France, Ireland, and other parts of Europe.
2. The legacy of immigrants can still be seen in the names, architecture, foods, and arts of the places they settled.

Key People

- Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels
- John O. Meusebach

Why It Matters Today

Thousands of immigrants came to the Republic of Texas. Use current events sources to learn about immigration trends today.



TEKS: 4A, 8A, 8B, 11A, 11B, 19B, 19C, 21A, 21B, 21C, 22D

myNotebook

Use the annotation tools in your eBook to take notes on the arrival and legacy of European immigrants to Texas.

The Story Continues

At about 10 p.m. in San Antonio, Théodore Gentilz and Auguste Fréteillère set out with anticipation. They were going to a fandango—a dance being held by the local residents. As they neared Military Plaza, they heard the sounds of a violin. They followed the music to an adobe house. There they entered a candlelit room filled with dancers and food. Newly arrived from France, Gentilz and Fréteillère had never seen such a dance.



Germans Settle in Central Texas

During the 1830s and 1840s a large number of European immigrants like Gentilz and Fréteillère moved to Texas. The largest group of European immigrants to Texas were the Germans, who had first come in the early 1830s. During the years of the Republic, the number of German immigrants grew as people left Germany looking for better economic opportunities in Texas.

In 1842 a group of German businesspeople formed the German Emigration Company, or *Adelsverein*. Its members hoped to make a profit by encouraging Germans to settle in Texas. After acquiring land in the Hill Country, the company sent **Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels** to Texas in 1844 followed by a group of peasants and craftspeople. Prince Carl wrote letters home about his mission.

TEXAS VOICES

“The eyes of all Germany, no, the eyes of all Europe are fixed on us and our undertaking: German princes, counts, and noblemen . . . are bringing new crowns to old glory while at the same time insuring immeasurable riches for their children and grandchildren.”

—Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels, quoted in
The Handbook of Texas

Once in Texas, Prince Carl established a port for incoming settlers. The port, which was called Karlshafen by the Germans, was later renamed Indianola. In March 1845 the prince and a group of settlers established New Braunfels along the Guadalupe and Comal Rivers.

When Prince Carl returned home two months later, Baron Otfried Hans Freiherr von Meusebach replaced him. In Texas, the baron changed his name to **John O. Meusebach**. He continued the work begun by Prince Carl, and New Braunfels grew and prospered.

By 1847 the German Emigration Company had sent more than 7,000 immigrants to Texas. Some stayed in established towns such as Houston and San Antonio, while other groups moved into the Hill Country. There they formed new settlements, including Fredericksburg, Boerne, and Comfort. These and other settlements extended the western frontier of Texas.

Before they left, Prince Carl instructed new immigrants headed to Texas to “stay together and remain faithful to German culture and habits.” One German settler wrote to his relatives back home asking them to bring reminders of German culture. “Be sure to bring all the sheet music that you can collect. . . . And do not fail to bring the complete works of Goethe [a German poet].” Even today many Texas Hill Country towns reflect their German heritage in their names, architecture, churches, food, and language.

Reading Check Analyzing Information Where did German immigrants settle, and how did they maintain their culture?

Analyzing Primary Sources

Identifying Points of View

Why does Prince Carl think his task of bringing immigrants to the Republic is so important?



Image Credit: ©Stephen Saks/Lonely Planet Images/Getty Images

Interpreting Visuals

Fredericksburg. German immigrants brought many of their cultural traditions to Texas. This building is a reconstruction of a church built in Fredericksburg in 1847 in an old German style. **What does this church suggest about the importance of their heritage to these settlers?**

Little Alsace in Texas

The architecture of Castroville was distinctly European. Buildings had steep thatched roofs. The roads were often narrow lanes. The European-style construction has led Castroville to be called the Little Alsace of Texas. Many of the town's unique buildings can still be seen today. **What impact did the immigrants in Castroville have on that region of Texas?**

★ Other European Immigrants

In 1840 Texas and France signed a treaty that encouraged French immigration. A few years later, Henri Castro brought one of the first groups of French settlers to Texas. Many of them were from the province of Alsace, a mostly German-speaking area in eastern France. Castro founded the town of Castroville in 1844 near the Medina River. By 1846 Castro had helped settle more than 2,000 colonists along the river, most of whom became farmers and ranchers. The cultural traditions of these French immigrants can still be found in the architecture, churches, and customs of Castroville and nearby towns with such French names as D'Hanis, Quihi, and Vandenburg.

Irish settlers had come to Texas long before it was a republic. During the 1820s several Irishmen had received *empresario* contracts. In fact one Irish *empresario*, James Hewetson, had accompanied Stephen F. Austin on his first trip to Texas in 1821. Many Irish immigrants fought with the Texas troops at the Alamo, Goliad, and San Jacinto. Irish settlers continued to come to Texas after the Revolution, seeking economic opportunity. Irish-born Texan William Kennedy encouraged this immigration in his 1841 book, *Texas: The Rise, Progress, and Prospects of the Republic of Texas*. By 1850 there were more than 1,400 Irish settlers throughout Texas.

Some Polish and Czech immigrants had also made their way to Texas, settling in South and Central Texas. During the Revolution, Polish immigrants had fought at Goliad and San Jacinto. Polish and Czech immigration later increased as economic and political conditions pushed many from their homelands. Like other immigrants, they left their mark on the local customs of the areas in which they lived.

Reading Check Summarizing Why did many Europeans come to the Republic?



Section 2 Review



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ONLINE QUIZ

1. Identify and explain

the significance of each of the following in Texas history:

- Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels
- John O. Meusebach

2. Locate on a map:

- New Braunfels
- Fredericksburg
- Castroville

3. Analyzing Information

Copy the table below. Use it to explain why immigrant groups came to the Republic and where they settled.

Immigrants	Why They Came	Where They Settled
German		
French		
Irish		
Polish		
Czech		

4. Finding the Main Idea

- In what ways did new immigrants maintain their culture?
- How did new immigrants from Europe influence life in the Republic?

5. Writing and Critical Thinking

myWriteSmart

Identifying Cause and Effect Explain how the settlement patterns of European immigrants affected the Republic.

Consider the following:

- locations of European settlements
- how this led to the development of the western frontier