

Section

3

Texas Life

Main Ideas

1. Most people in the Republic of Texas lived on farms or ranches, though some lived in towns.
2. Games, literature, and art provided leisure activities.
3. Churches and schools were social centers.

Why It Matters Today

Education was a major concern for people in the Republic. Use current events sources to learn about education in the United States and other countries today.



TEKS: 4A, 9A, 19B, 19D, 21B, 22D

myNotebook

Use the annotation tools in your eBook to take notes on life in Texas during the period of the Republic.

Key Terms and People

- land speculators
- denominations
- circuit riders
- academies
- Théodore Gentilz

The Story Continues

Before making their journey to Texas, many immigrants read a book by David Woodman Jr. called *Guide to Texas Emigrants*. This handy guide had many tips. He advised settlers to bring a reliable rifle and a strong dog. Woodman offered one other important recommendation. “It would be best to carry tents . . . for covering, until the house is built.” Woodman also said it was important to bring farming tools, a wagon, and comfortable clothing.



Farming, Towns, and Transportation

Most Texans, whether long-time residents or new immigrants, were farmers and ranchers, although their farms varied widely in size. Some farms were large plantations, but most were small family farms. Small-scale farmers generally owned few or no slaves; they did most farm tasks on their own. Such tasks included clearing acres of land to build homes, planting crops, and creating pastures for animals. Texas farmers mostly grew food for their own needs, although they sometimes also produced a small cash crop—such as corn, cotton, wheat, rye, or oats—to sell for a profit.

Cattle ranchers in the Republic raised animals for their own use or to sell to other Texans. Ranchers supplied townspeople and farmers with food, hides, and other materials. A few ranchers, such as Taylor White, drove their cattle to New Orleans to sell them in markets there.

As it had been in the Mexican period, ranching was popular among the Tejano population of the Republic. Tejanos continued to own ranches in southern Texas, east and south of San Antonio. Some free African Americans, such as Robert Thompson of Montgomery County, also owned ranches.

Only in towns and cities did people have jobs that were not directly tied to farming or ranching. Small towns were home to blacksmiths, carpenters, tailors, and other artisans. Doctors, shopkeepers, silversmiths, cabinetmakers, and bankers operated in the largest towns. Towns like Houston and Galveston grew quickly as immigrants moved to them. Their founders had chosen locations that were beneficial for trade. Some towns farther inland such as Dallas also began to grow.

Other new towns, though, such as Carolina, Geneva, Pompei, and Rome, were less fortunate. These towns were founded by **land speculators**—people who bought large amounts of land in hopes of making profits. Speculators would sell small lots of the land at higher prices to new settlers at higher prices than they had paid themselves. However, their attempts to make money failed when they could not attract enough settlers to buy their land. In some cases, too, people were unable to pay for land they had agreed to buy. Cash was so rare in Texas that “not a man of them can pay me a dollar,” as one miserable speculator complained.

Travel during the Republic was difficult. Only a few roads connected towns in various parts of Texas. The government tried to build new roads but had limited success. Texas roads remained poor, particularly in bad weather. Travel by horseback or stagecoach was often uncomfortable and dangerous. One traveler described the road conditions. “I was obliged in the worst places to relieve the mule by getting off and leading for a mile at a time, with water to my knees and sometimes to my britches pockets.”

Because the roads were so bad, some rivers were used for transporting goods and people, especially once the steamboat was introduced to Texas. The first steamboat to enter a Texas river was the *Ariel*. Henry Austin, Stephen F. Austin’s cousin, had begun operating this boat on the lower Rio Grande in 1829. He traded with Mexican merchants and later took the *Ariel* up the Brazos River. By the 1840s, several steamboats traveled the Brazos, Colorado, and Trinity Rivers. These boats shipped cotton and other farm products from Texas farms and brought in needed goods to Texas settlers. Few Texas rivers were suited for steamboats, however. Floods, low water, and sandbars often prevented travel. The lack of a good transportation system slowed the growth of businesses and towns in the Republic.

Reading Check Finding the Main Idea How did geographic factors affect the economic development of Texas?

★Texas Cities★



Dallas

History: Dallas was founded by John Neely Bryan in November 1841. Bryan established a trading post that served the region’s growing population.

Population in 2012: 1,241,162 (estimate)

Relative location: On the Trinity River in north-central Texas

Region: Blackland Prairie

County: County seat of Dallas County

Special feature: The city is home to the Dallas Market Center, the largest wholesale trade complex in the world.

Origin of name: Dallas is named for George Mifflin Dallas, a U.S. politician. At the time Texas was annexed, he was the U.S. vice president.

Economy: Dallas is one of the nation’s leading financial and business centers. Many corporations moved their headquarters there after World War II, and Dallas benefited from the postwar economic boom. It soon became a major technology center.





For entertainment, Texans gathered at local dances.

CONNECTING TO

The Arts

Théodore Gentilz

Théodore Gentilz was born in Paris in 1819 and moved to Texas with Henri Castro. There Gentilz traveled the countryside looking for subjects to paint. He journeyed far into West Texas, to the Gulf Coast, and even into Mexico. He enjoyed painting people and scenes that reflected the early settlement of Texas. **Look online to find examples of Gentilz's paintings. How might his work help historians learn about early Texas history?**

★ Leisure, Literature, and Art

Life in Texas was not all work. Texans also enjoyed a number of leisure activities. Some activities combined fun with work, such as building houses for newcomers, participating in log-splitting contests, hunting, and fishing. Other activities were all fun, such as songfests. These celebrations featured popular tunes of the day, including “Yankee Doodle.” Dances were one of the most popular pastimes, whether small rural affairs or elaborate plantation balls. Many Texans also enjoyed concerts, horse races, and the theater.

Some citizens enjoyed literature and art, although both were scarce in frontier Texas. Most books published in the Republic dealt with Texas history or travel in Texas. Authors on these subjects included Mary Austin Holley and William Kennedy. Some Texans also wrote poetry, including President Mirabeau B. Lamar. The most common publications in the Republic were newspapers. In 1836 Texas had only one weekly newspaper, but by 1840 more than a dozen were being published.

Artists, including portrait painters Charles Kneass and Jefferson Wright, also lived in Texas. Many of the Republic’s artists were new immigrants. For example, French painter and surveyor **Théodore Gentilz** came to Texas with Henri Castro. Gentilz is known for his scenes of Texas life. Some sculptors also worked in the Republic.

Reading Check Analyzing Information How did Texans spend their leisure time?

★ Churches and Schools

In the towns and countryside, Texans established many churches. After Texas independence, Roman Catholicism was no longer the official state religion. Many Protestant **denominations**—organized religious groups with similar beliefs—soon built churches in the Republic. The Methodist Church was the largest denomination, followed by the Baptist Church. Presbyterians and Episcopalians were also active in Texas. Catholicism remained the dominant religion in Galveston, San Antonio, and Tejano communities along the Rio Grande. Most Czech and Polish immigrants also belonged to the Catholic Church. Jews from central and eastern Europe lived in communities across Texas. Jewish immigrants established synagogues, or Jewish houses of worship, in Galveston, Houston, and San Antonio.

Churches and temples served as the religious and social centers of most Texas communities. In addition to sermons and Sunday school, many churches sponsored revival meetings, picnics, and bazaars. **Circuit riders**, or traveling preachers, typically served regions on the frontier. They traveled to their areas on a regular basis to preach and to provide religious support to the settlers.

Churches also ran most of the Republic's schools. Rutgersville College was founded by the Methodist Church in 1840. Baylor University, the oldest college in Texas still in operation, was founded by Baptists in 1845. Although President Mirabeau B. Lamar wanted Texas to establish a system of public education, funds were scarce. Houston was the only town in the Republic to establish a public school, which operated off and on throughout the 1840s. Several towns, however, did build private **academies**—schools that offered classes at the high school level.

Reading Check Summarizing How did churches contribute to Texas communities during the years of the Republic?



Daily Life

Texas Schoolrooms

The typical classroom in early rural Texas was very different from today's schoolrooms. Most school buildings were one-room log cabins that lacked floors or windows. One teacher wrote to her father about her schoolroom, "As to furniture no hermit's cell was ever more simply furnished." Books were few, but students learned chemistry, geography, grammar, history, and philosophy. Some students learned to read using Bibles. For Texas children, school days were long, beginning early in the morning and ending at sunset. **Why does the teacher compare her schoolroom to a "hermit's cell"?**



Section 3 Review



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ONLINE QUIZ

1. Define and explain:

- land speculators
- denominations
- circuit riders
- academies

2. Identify and explain

the significance of the following in Texas history:

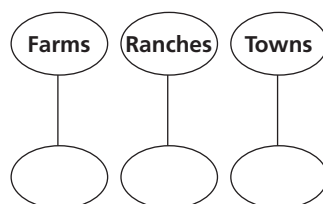
- Théodore Gentilz

3. Locate on a map:

- Dallas

4. Summarizing

Copy the graphic organizer below. Use it to show how people made a living in Texas.



5. Finding the Main Idea

- a. How did churches and schools contribute to life in the Republic?
- b. What type of leisure activities and arts did Texans enjoy during the years of the Republic?

6. Writing and Critical Thinking

myWriteSmart

Summarizing Write a summary explaining how geographic factors affected the economic development of Texas.

Consider the following:

- the state of the roads and rivers
- the importance of transportation