

## Section

# 3

## Cities and Trade

### Main Ideas

1. During the Mexican period, Texas had a few large settlements, mostly inhabited by Tejanos.
2. In cities, people took part in business and trade.

### Why It Matters Today

Settlers in early Texas traded a great deal with the United States. Use current events sources to find information about trade in the United States or Texas today.

### Key Terms and People

- William Goyens
- barter
- sawmills
- exports
- imports

## The Story Continues

Juan Seguín was only 22 when he was elected to the city council, or *ayuntamiento*, of San Antonio. The son of Erasmo Seguín, a former *alcalde* of the city and a friend of Stephen F. Austin, Juan Seguín was a member of one of the most prominent families in San Antonio. As a city council member, he would now help make the decisions that would shape the future of the city and people of his hometown.



TEKS: 9A, 9B, 15A,  
19D, 21A, 21B, 21G,  
22C, 22D

### myNotebook

Use the annotation tools in your eBook to take notes on life and economic activities in cities during the Mexican period.



## Life in Texas Cities

Unlike Juan Seguín, most Texans during the Mexican period lived on isolated farms or in small communities. There were, however, a few larger settlements in Texas as well. Towns such as San Antonio, Goliad, and Nacogdoches were each home to more than 1,000 people, mostly Tejanos. As you might expect, life in these towns was very different from life in rural areas.

Because of their larger populations, towns needed a more structured government than small communities did. That government was the *ayuntamiento*, or city council. The constitution of Coahuila y Texas laid out the powers and responsibilities of these councils. They had to establish police forces and maintain roads. They were also responsible for providing food inspection, sanitation, and health care for their towns. All these services were paid for through taxes charged to the townspeople. One member of the *ayuntamiento* served as the *alcalde*.



### Interpreting Visuals

**San Antonio.** The Plaza de las Islas, named for the city's early Canary Islander residents, was at the heart of San Antonio. The cathedral near the plaza was the city's spiritual center. **Based on this image, how was life in San Antonio in the 1800s different from life there today?**

The oldest civil settlement in Texas, San Antonio was also the largest at the beginning of the Mexican period. In 1820 it was home to about 2,000 people. Most residents of San Antonio made their living farming or ranching in the fields around the city. Others ran stores or other businesses to support the ranchers and farmers. A number of businesses were owned or managed by women, often widows.

Though it was the largest town in Texas, San Antonio remained very much a frontier settlement. The streets were unpaved and muddy after rainfall. The canals that carried water through the town were open and subject to pollution. As in all cities and towns of the period, outbreaks of disease were common. There were very few stone buildings, and most people lived in either adobe houses or jacales. Many residents kept small garden plots, with which they supplemented the food available from area farms and ranches.

During the Mexican period, the population of San Antonio did not grow much. In Nacogdoches, the situation was exactly the opposite. After the Mexican Revolution, Nacogdoches had been almost abandoned. However, over the following 10 years, the population steadily increased. By 1835 nearly 1,000 people lived there. It included a mixture of Tejanos, Anglo settlers, and slaves. Most people lived in small, rough log cabins. Like most Texans of the time, they farmed for a living.

San Antonio and Nacogdoches were both established towns by the time Mexico became independent. New cities developed during this period, though, as Anglo settlement increased. For example, San Felipe, in Austin's colony, was larger than San Antonio by 1835.

**Reading Check Contrasting** How were Texas cities in the early 1800s different from cities today?

## ★ Business, Trade, and Transportation

Unlike small settlements, Texas towns were home to crafters and merchants. By offering their services to other townspeople, blacksmiths, carpenters, and merchants could make a living in towns. For example, **William Goyens** of Nacogdoches became wealthy by running a blacksmithing shop and other businesses. Because few people had much money, though, most business was conducted through **barter**, or trade.

Blacksmiths such as Goyens made items needed by farmers and others. These include plows, tools, and other items. Similarly, carpenters made wagons and other items. Other business owners made their livings refining products for others. A few Texans, for example, ran **sawmills**, which cut wood into usable pieces.

Texas business and trade increased during the Mexican period. However, poor transportation systems made travel and trade difficult. The roads that linked towns were little more than trails. Bumpy and dusty in dry weather, the roads became muddy, impassable swamps when it rained. Transporting goods by river was not much better. Many rivers were shallow and full of sandbars. Small boats and rafts could navigate them, but large boats had difficulties.

Some trade was carried out by ship through ports on the Gulf of Mexico. One of the busiest ports was Galveston. In the early 1830s Brazoria and Matagorda became important ports as well.

Despite obstacles in transportation, by the 1830s Texas was producing about \$500,000 worth of **exports**, or items to be sold in other places. These included cattle, corn, cotton, furs, horses, pork, and salt. In return, Texas required many **imports**, or items bought from other regions. Texas imports included manufactured and luxury products.

**Reading Check Analyzing Information** What kinds of businesses could be found in Texas towns?



### BIOGRAPHY

#### William Goyens

(1794–1856) A free African American of mixed black and white ancestry, William Goyens became a wealthy business owner in Nacogdoches. He was a blacksmith, wagon maker, and innkeeper. Goyens spoke English, Spanish, Cherokee, and Comanche. As a result, he served as a diplomat, assisting in negotiations with the Cherokees. **What contributions did Goyens make to Texas?**



## Section 3 Review



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ONLINE QUIZ

### 1. Define and explain:

- barter
- sawmills
- exports
- imports

### 2. Identify and explain

the significance:

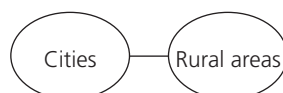
- William Goyens

### 3. Locate on a map:

- San Antonio
- Nacogdoches

### 4. Analyzing Information

Copy the graphic organizer below. Use it to compare and contrast life in cities and rural areas during the Mexican period.



### 5. Finding the Main Idea

- a. What were the largest settlements in Texas in the period, and who lived there?
- b. How did transportation in early Texas affect business and trade?

### 6. Writing and Critical Thinking

myWriteSmart

**Evaluating** Study the image on the facing page. Based on this image, write a description of what life was like for residents of San Antonio in the early 1800s.

Consider the following:

- the buildings seen in the image
- what actions are taking place in the image