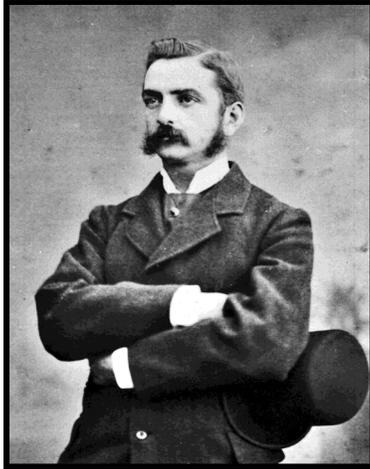


The English Texans



English architect Alfred Giles (c. 1875), designer of many buildings around Texas and Mexico

Texans of English origin seem to be the least colony-minded people in the state. One reason is that the English are part of the “Anglo” majority that has formed Texas since the mid-1830s. English settlers are often invisible.

Some of the early English were not so invisible to the Spanish. John Hamilton visited the mouth of the Trinity River as a horse buyer about 1774 and purchased stolen livestock...an activity not overly welcomed by the Spanish. Yet, in 1792, John

Culbert, a silversmith, was allowed to live in San Antonio. His skills were valuable.

Even if native English were few, English products were not. Suppliers of manufactured goods to the world in the 19th century, the English manufactured, for example, the famous third model “Brown Bess,” or East India musket. In .75 calibre, it was a powerful if short-range weapon. This was the most common firearm of the 1836 Texas Revolution, used by both sides.

English individuals did involve themselves in various empresario and colonization schemes. All grandiosely planned, all ineffective. John Charles Beales's Rio Grande Colony attracted a few families before it disbanded in the 1836 revolution. The Peters colony, chartered by the Republic of Texas in 1841, resulted in only light English settlement over an area now constituting 26 North Texas counties.

The Colony of Kent was perhaps the most interesting English effort. A commercial venture of the Universal Emigration and Colonization Company of London, this colony was imagined as a socialistic, profit-making community. The founding company convinced more than 30 families to leave Liverpool, England, for Central Texas. Kent was founded during the cold January of 1851. Backers of the venture claimed Kent would become the “first city” of Texas, but the colonists were ill-informed about frontier hardships, were not farmers, and were not given sufficient backing for the first year. Soon, they had scattered for other areas where life would be easier.

A Walk Across Texas

Perhaps the first English in Texas were David Ingram, Richard Twide, and Richard Browne, seamen who were put ashore on the Mexican coast in 1568 by Captain John Hawkins. Hawkins, in league with the future Sir Francis Drake, had lost a disastrous naval battle with the Spanish.

The survivors of the sunken ships, crowded onto Hawkins' remaining *Minion*, elected not to perish by starvation on a doubtful return to England, but to be set ashore. Walking south, they could at least find the comforts of a Spanish prison.

Once ashore, three seaman decided to walk north. This they apparently did, turning east across Texas' coastal plain to enjoy an eventual Atlantic rescue by a French ship.

David Ingram wrote a short account of the journey which appeared in print in 1589, a fairly accurate description of the Gulf of Mexico coastal areas. “The Countrey is good,” Ingram declares, “having great plaines, as large & as fayre in many places as may be seene, being as plaine as a board: And then great & huge woods of sundry kind of trees...plants & bushes, bark that biteth like Pepper...with the fruitful Palme tree & a great plenty of other swete trees to this Ingram unknowen.”

The account seems to accurately reflect many things Ingram could have seen—peoples, buffalo, birds and animals, palm wine and grapes, tornados and local religions, musical instruments and weapons of war.

However, among Ingram's sightings appear elephants, what appear to be javelinas “twice as big as an Horse,” gold nuggets “as big as a man's fist,” and rubies “4 inches long and two inches broad.” During his visit Ingram also claimed to have exorcised a devil, one Colluchio, who was fond of appearing “in the likenesse of a blacke Dogge.”

Twenty years later, like many an explorer, Ingram obviously allowed imagination to lace his words with greater wonders. His account—after an initial printing in Hakluyt's *The Principall Navigations, Voiages and Discoveries of the English nation...*—was discredited for a while, later accepted as being accurate in places, and then ignored. Still, for English readers—setting aside the jewels, elephants, and devils—Ingram's words gave a first, good description of the land that would become Texas.

No entire settlement area became distinctly English. Individuals came, however, and settled all over the state. Some quickly became prominent.

The most obvious English influence before the 20th century was investment and land ownership in the Texas Panhandle. In the decade after 1880, English ranchers and investors put more than \$25 million into 20 million acres of land. Most of the investors never visited Texas, but the effort was significant. In today's dollars, the equivalent of over \$500 million was spent.

The Capitol Freehold Land and Investment Company, incorporated in London, was the largest Panhandle investor. This company initially stocked and operated the three-million-acre XIT ranch, the land which had underwritten the construction costs of the present state capitol building.

Thus, the English solidly established plains ranching in Texas. The investment paid for ranch headquarters and barns, water wells and fences, and importing stock. Numerous settlers of all ethnic groups and origins came as workers, ranchers, and farmers. Most of these ventures did not, however, prove magnificently profitable, at least for the investors. English investment fever cooled by the turn of the century; some of the ranches still exist.



Heneage Finch, Seventh Earl of Aylesford, 1883

Many "native" Texans expected the English who came to Texas to be stereotypical characters. Some were. Heneage Finch, Seventh Earl of Aylesford, arrived in Big Spring in 1883 after leaving England to escape a disastrous divorce scandal. Setting himself up as a small rancher, he bought the local hotel in order that he or his guests would always have a room when needed; he bought a local butcher shop so meat would

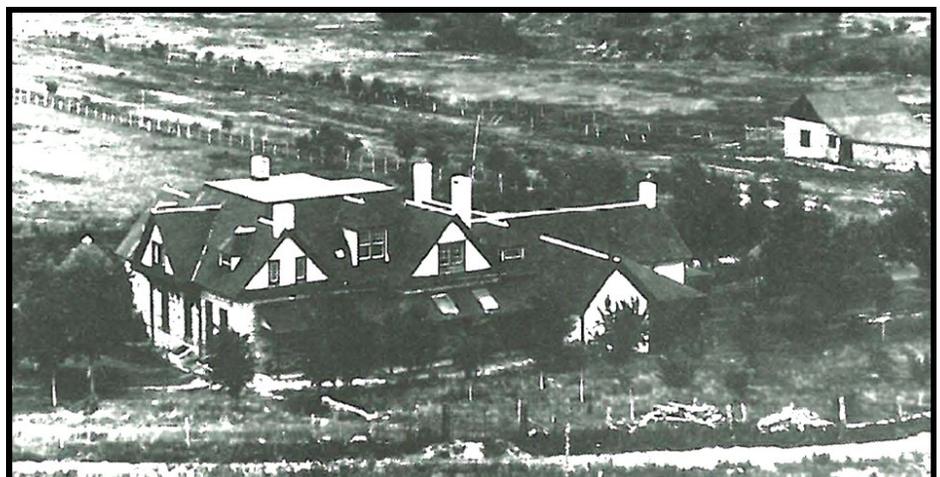


William Anson (far left) and friends playing polo in Valera

always be cut to his liking; and he bought a saloon to ensure a ready supply of whisky, a half gallon a day. Or so it is said.

William Anson, a more typical younger son who could inherit little or nothing under British law, came to Tom Green County in 1902. He was able to purchase a working ranch and turn it into a quarter-horse operation by supplying mounts to the British army. Anson introduced polo to Texas, became a citizen, and served as a captain in World War I.

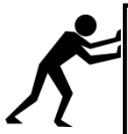
English immigrants still make Texas their home. The largest number of English to enter Texas, more or less at the same time, came in mid-20th century at the end of World War II. They were the brides of U.S. soldiers returning to their home state.



English-owned JA Ranch Headquarters, 1907

NAME: _____ DATE: _____ PERIOD: _____

The “push-pull” theory says that people migrate because things in their lives *push* them to leave, and things in a new place *pull* them.
Instructions: Decide what economic factors push and pull people. Complete the graphic organizer below using the word bank.



Economic Push Factors

Economic Pull Factors



WORD BANK

Lost Job

Higher Wages

Available Work

Low Pay

English Settlers in Texas

In the 1600s and 1700s, the English began to colonize the Gulf Coast area. Between 1628 and 1642, 58,000 immigrants came to America from Great Britain, and by the end of the 1700s, 60% of all Americans were of English birth or descent.

Unfortunately, English colonizers were not very successful in Texas. Many of the early English settlers who came to Texas returned to England because they did not like the wild and rough conditions. Those who did stay left their mark. They gave us apple pie and many childhood games such as leap frog, tag, jump rope and pitching horseshoes.

The English in Texas were responsible for helping the arts and literature get started. English actors and musicians brought a bit of culture to the West with traveling theater and musical programs.

English Common Law formed the basis for much of Texas’s legal system and replaced many of the Spanish laws. From William Travis, who began as a lawyer in Austin’s Colony, to Judge Roy Bean, who represented “the law west of the Pecos,” lawyers in Texas adapted English Laws.

Why were early English settlers not successful in Texas?

How did the English influence the arts in Texas?

How did the English influence laws in Texas?

