



Student Name:
Class Period:
Date:

Meet the Originals

Texas Originals is a radio series about people who made an impact on Texas. You can hear it online and on radio stations around the state. Read or listen to the episode on Martín De León. Then, answer questions about it.

Martín De León 1765–1834

Empresario Martín De León founded the city of Victoria and played a key role in settling the Texas Coastal Bend.

De León was born in 1765 to an aristocratic family in Burgos, Mexico. After serving as a soldier, De León married and planned to settle his new family in Texas. In 1801, the couple began building a ranch along the Nueces River near present-day San Patricio.

When Mexico began issuing empresario contracts to attract settlers, De León saw an opportunity to ensure that his children could establish ranches of their own. In 1824, he founded a colony centered on the new city of Victoria. De León oversaw the only empresario grant to attract large numbers of settlers from Mexico rather than the United States.

As tensions rose between Anglo American colonists and the Mexican government, De León forged a neutral path—although he and his family supported local control in Texas affairs.

De León died in the cholera epidemic of 1834, two years before the Republic of Texas was established. Though his family had sided with the victorious rebels, Anglos in the new republic made life difficult for their former Tejano allies. The De León family fled into exile in Louisiana, returning to the city they founded only after Texas's annexation to the United States in 1845.

Check for Understanding: Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on Martín De León. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. What was different about the people that settled in Martín De León's colony when compared to other Texas settlers?
2. How was De León's family treated in the new Republic of Texas?

Going Further: Write or discuss your answer to the question below, supporting your answer with evidence from the episode or additional information you have learned in class.

3. **Taking a Position.** Why do you think De León did not take a position at the beginning of conflict between Anglo American colonists and Mexico?