



## SECTION



# Spanish Expansion in Texas

## Why It Matters Now

Spanish control in Texas would forever change the lives of Native Americans.

### TERMS & NAMES

Nuevo Santander, Count José de Escandón, **expansion**, San Sabá, Marqués de Rubí, **alliance**

### OBJECTIVES

1. Explain why Spanish colonization was easier in some areas than in others.
2. Summarize the relationship between Spain and native groups to the north and west of Spanish Texas.
3. Analyze Spain's choices regarding its Texas colonies.

### MAIN IDEA

Now that France was no longer a threat, Spain could establish more missions and settlements in Texas. However, Native American groups challenged the Spaniards' claim to the land in the north and west. Spain needed fewer, stronger colonies to protect its claim.

## A REAL-LIFE STORY

In 1749 a new Spanish province was created in the south. Nuevo Santander was Spain's name for this region, located south of the province of Texas. Count José de Escandón, military commander and governor of the new province, was sent to establish settlements in the area. Just six years later, Escandón had completed his work with great success.



José de Escandón

*The 20 settlements founded are in select areas, . . . and so well ordered that they form a chain capable of dominating all the land and of helping one another in the attacks that can occur, this capital of Santander being in the middle, and the strong-hold which I have built there . . . I can affirm that the foundations found in this great work are such that, through natural conditions, . . . it should raise itself in a few years to one of the most beautiful and richest provinces of New Spain.*

José de Escandón, report to the viceroy of New Spain



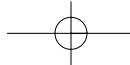
Spanish halberd (combination spear and battle axe)

## Northward Expansion Fails

In 1745 Tonkawas living along the San Gabriel River in Central Texas asked Spanish officials to send missionaries and soldiers. The Tonkawas were not eager to settle into mission life, but they needed Spanish protection. Repeated raids by neighboring Comanche groups had left the Tonkawas desperate.

Spain saw this as an opportunity to help the Tonkawas and expand its northern boundaries. As part of its **expansion**, Spain established three missions in Central Texas over the next few years. Mission San Francisco Xavier de Horcasitas (ha•vee•YER de or•ca•SEE•tahs) was built in 1748,

**expansion** *a process of enlarging the boundaries of a territory*



and Missions San Ildefonso and Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria were built in 1749. By 1751 the Spaniards had also built a presidio, San Francisco Xavier. The three new missions and new presidio were usually called simply San Xavier.

Although San Xavier was a major new settlement, it was not successful. The priests in the missions began having disagreements with the commander of the presidio. A drought hit the Tonkawas hard, as did disease. To make matters worse, those Tonkawas who survived refused to help with the day-to-day work at the missions. Finally, an attack by the Apaches all but destroyed San Xavier. In the end, Spain was forced to abandon the settlement. By 1757 the missions had been relocated to the Guadalupe and San Saba Rivers.

## Expanding Spain's Control

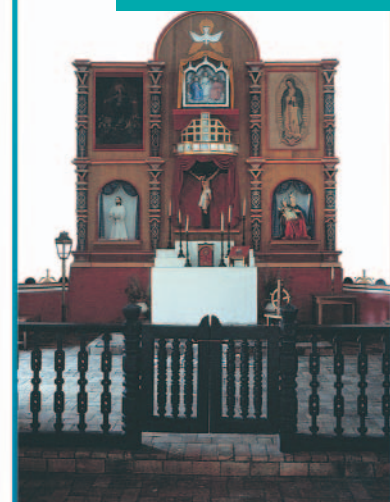
In the mid-1700s the Spaniards began their last expansion program in Texas. Their two goals were to run the French traders out of East Texas and to secure Spain's claim on South Texas by establishing settlements.

Although France was no longer threatening to take over Spanish lands, French traders were becoming a problem in East Texas. To keep them away from the Sabine and Trinity Rivers, Spain built Presidio de San Agustín de Ahumada (ah•oo•MAH•dah) and Mission Nuestra Señora de la Luz del Orcoquisac (or•koh•kee•SAHK) in 1756 near the mouth of the Trinity River. Near the mission, Spain also built a settlement called El Orcoquisac. The settlement was not successful. The Orcoquizas and Bidais refused to accept mission life. In 1767 a hurricane destroyed the community, and the Spaniards abandoned the site.

Spain's expansion effort in South Texas was led by Count José de Escandón. In 1748 he set out with 3,000 settlers, soldiers, and priests to settle the lands between the Rio Grande and the Nueces River. In this area, Escandón established 15 missions. He also moved the La Bahía mission and presidio from the Guadalupe River to the present-day site of Goliad. By 1755 Escandón had placed almost 6,000 people in over



### To Architecture



Missions in Texas were constructed using a unique blend of European, Mexican, and South American architecture. Most missions contained a bell tower and a long hallway that was crossed at one end by a smaller hallway to form a cross.

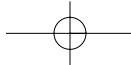
Many of the best-known missions were built of simple materials, resulting in a plain outward appearance. To make up for their dull exteriors, most missions were beautifully decorated on the inside. Iron, copper, and silver from Mexico were used to craft decorative fixtures. Many chapels contained frescoes, or paintings made on freshly spread moist plaster. ● **How do you think mission-style architecture developed?**



*Spanish chalice used in Catholic religious services*



- ▲ Spain controlled a large part of what is now the state of Texas.
- Why was Texas such a key area for Spain to develop?



### COMANCHE WARRIORS

The Comanches were skilled warriors who were both feared and respected by Spaniards. Before Spanish explorers arrived in Texas, the Comanches had fought on foot and had often been defeated by the Apaches. After the Spaniards introduced horses to the Americas, however, Comanche warriors developed outstanding riding skills. This advantage was increased when they obtained firearms from the Spaniards. With these two new resources, the Comanches became one of the deadliest forces on the plains. Many considered them undefeatable.

20 towns throughout Nuevo Santander. One of these towns, built on the north bank of the Rio Grande, was Laredo.

Much of the land in Nuevo Santander was granted to Spanish ranchers who lived south of the Rio Grande. Many of these people came north of the river and established profitable *ranchos*, or ranches, in what is now the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas. The families of some of these early ranchers still live and ranch in South Texas today.

## Spain Encounters Trouble in the West

Unsuccessful at northward expansion, Spain now looked toward the northwest. Would it be able to bring the vast prairies of West Texas under Spanish control? In 1757 Colonel Diego Ortiz Parilla (pah•REE•yah) and Father Alonso Giraldo de Terreros (hee•RAHL•doh deh teh•REH•rohs) took steps to find out. Near present-day Menard, they established Presidio San Luis de las Amarillas (ah•mah•REE•yahs) and Mission San Sabá de la Santa Cruz, known as San Sabá.

To survive in West Texas, the Spaniards would have to establish peaceful relationships with the native groups in that region. They hoped this goodwill would begin with the Lipan Apaches. The Lipans had requested a mission to protect them from their enemies, the Comanches and the Wichitas. In return, the Lipans had promised to adopt mission life.

Once the San Sabá mission was built, however, the Lipans would visit only briefly—usually to accept food and gifts from the priests. Then they would leave to hunt buffalo. When they returned, they often stole horses or other property. The Spaniards were not able to convert the Lipans to Christianity.

In March of 1758, after learning about the protection arrangement between the Lipan Apaches and the Spaniards, some 2,000 Comanches arrived at San Sabá. Claiming that they had come in peace, the Comanches were allowed inside—a deadly mistake. Inside the mission, the priests rushed to greet the chiefs with gifts, but the Comanches opened fire. They burned the buildings and killed eight of the Spaniards at the mission, including Father Terreros.

### TEXAS VOICES

[I was] filled with amazement and fear when I saw nothing but Indians on every hand, armed with guns and arrayed in the most horrible attire. Besides the paint on their faces, red and black, they were adorned with the pelts and tails of wild beasts, wrapped around them or hanging down from their heads, as well as deer horns. Some were disguised as various kinds of animals, and some wore feather headdresses. All were armed with muskets, swords, and lances, and I noticed also that they had brought with them some youths armed with bows and arrows.

Friar Miguel de Molina, report on the San Sabá attack

Determined to drive out the Spanish invaders, Comanche warriors struck the settlement again the next year. This time, they killed 20 soldiers and stole more than 700 head of cattle, horses, and mules.



◀ In 1758 the Comanches attacked Mission San Sabá de la Cruz.

● **Why do you think the Comanches were hostile toward the Spaniards?**

## Spaniards Seek Revenge

The attack at San Sabá left Spain shocked and angry. Native Texans had destroyed one of its missions. To avoid appearing weak to other native groups, the Spaniards decided they must seek revenge against the Comanches.

In 1759 Colonel Ortiz Parilla led over 500 Spanish soldiers and native allies to attack and punish the Comanches. The two sides met on October 7, when Parilla's men fought with a force of Comanches and Wichitas near San Sabá. Despite the Spaniards' confidence and advanced weapons, Parilla and his men were defeated. Realizing that the Comanches could not be conquered, Parilla abandoned Mission San Sabá permanently.

Missionary activities for the Lipan Apaches were moved south to Mission San Lorenzo de la Santa Cruz and Mission Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria del Cañón (kah•NYOHN). These two missions were established in 1762. The Lipans were still not interested in adopting mission life, and the Spaniards' patience grew thin. In 1769 the Spanish government abandoned both missions. Presidio San Luis de las Amarillas was maintained for another ten years before it was abandoned in 1770.

## More Problems Arise

For the most part, Spain's attempts to expand north and west of San Antonio were a failure. Missionary efforts on the San Gabriel and San Saba Rivers were a disaster, and the Spaniards had been humiliated by native groups in the north. Spain's only successes were the relocation of La Bahía to Goliad and the founding of Nuevo Santander.

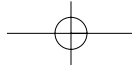
Other events blocked Spanish expansion in Texas. After the French and Indian War, which ended in 1763, Spain acquired all of French Louisiana west of the Mississippi. This new territory was so large that Spain could neither develop it nor defend it. Before long, settlers from the United States would begin invading Spanish territory.

## Rubí Inspects Spanish Territory

In 1764 King Carlos III of Spain realized changes would be necessary to maintain control of Spain's northern frontier. First, however, he



▲ This is what is left of Presidio San Luis de las Amarillas, whose soldiers protected Mission San Sabá. ● **Why do you think the Spaniards could not defeat the Comanches?**



### LOCATION

Coahuila and Nuevo Santander were provinces of northern Mexico that extended into what is now Texas. Today, Nuevo Santander is called Tamaulipas (ta•mao•LEE•pahs). Both it and Coahuila are Mexican states. They do not extend as far north as they once did. ● **Why did King Carlos III send the Marqués de Rubí to report on the Spanish border provinces?**



would need to take stock of the situation. The king commissioned a Spanish officer, the Marqués de Rubí, to inspect Spanish claims. Rubí started in New Mexico, crossed Sonora, and moved eastward to Coahuila and Texas. He made a quick tour of all major settlements in Texas as far east as Los Adaes.

Rubí inspected all of Spain's northern frontier—from California to Texas—in less than two years. His report had a great effect on Texas. Rubí recommended that all Spanish settlements in East Texas be moved to San Antonio. The French were no longer a threat, he reasoned, so the East Texas missions and presidios were no longer needed.

These settlements were not Spain's only weak points in Texas, in Rubí's eyes. He also saw no reason to maintain missions or presidios in West Texas. Like the East Texas missions, these western outposts were too small and isolated. They would not have the resources to convert Native Texans or develop a stable economy. On the other hand, San Antonio and La Bahía were successful. For these reasons, Rubí recommended that the capital of the province be moved from Los Adaes to San Antonio.

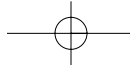
### TEXAS VOICES

The villa of San Antonio will remain as our most advanced frontier in the province of Texas. . . . [It is necessary] to keep this villa in a respectable state of defense until its security can be affirmed by a growth of its population and by those settlements that spring up in its vicinity owing to this same protection.

Marqués de Rubí, report on Texas

- *Ox Cart Returning from Town*, a painting by French artist Theodore Gentilz, shows the way many settlers traveled in early Texas. ● **What might this painting suggest about the lives of early settlers in Texas?**





Finally, Rubí recommended a change in Spain's policies regarding the northern native peoples. He believed that the Lipan Apaches were the real threat to Spanish authority in Texas. Therefore, it would be wise to form an **alliance** with their enemies, the Comanches and Wichitas. With these groups' help, Spain could wipe out the Lipan Apaches in Texas.

**alliance** *an association between people to advance their common interests*

## Spain Makes Changes

In 1772 King Carlos III adopted all of the Marqués de Rubí's recommendations, but they were not easy to carry out. The abandonment of the East Texas missions was particularly upsetting to Spanish settlers in that region. However, by 1779 a group of settlers led by Gil Ybarbo (HEEL ee•BAR•boh) had returned to East Texas and founded a community at Nacogdoches. In time, the settlement grew into the second most prosperous town in Spanish Texas.

In the western part of Texas, troubles with the Lipan Apaches continued. To set Rubí's plan into action, the Spaniards turned to a French army officer and part-time trader named Athanase de Mézières (ah•tha•NASS de meh•ZYER). He was friendly with many of the northern native groups. He set in motion a plan that led the Comanches to declare war on the Lipan Apaches in 1779. Just one year later, Lipan Apache leaders came to the Spaniards seeking a peace agreement. There was an uneasy peace on the Spanish frontier in the years that followed, with only a few setbacks.



▲ Mission Corpus Christi de la Isleta, near present-day El Paso, remained one of the few missions in West Texas.  
● **Why were there so few missions between San Antonio de Béxar and Mission Corpus Christi de la Isleta?**

### SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT

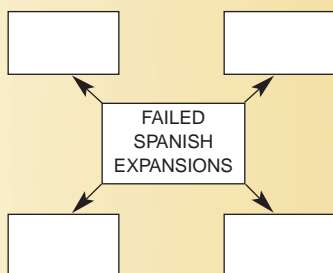
#### Terms & Names

**Identify:**

- Nuevo Santander
- Count José de Escandón
- expansion
- San Sabá
- Marqués de Rubí
- alliance

#### Organizing Information

Use a cluster diagram like the one shown to explain where Spain attempted to expand its boundaries in Texas and why Spanish expansion failed.



#### Critical Thinking

1. Why do you think Spanish expansion in Nuevo Santander was more successful than in other areas?
2. Describe the relationship between Spain and the Apaches, and also between Spain and the Comanches. How did these relationships affect Spanish expansion?
3. The Marqués de Rubí concluded that the colonies in East Texas should

be abandoned. Do you think he was right? Why or why not?

#### A Real-Life Story

Review *A Real-Life Story* on page 130. Escandón's task was to get Spanish colonists to settle north of the Rio Grande. Research how the Rio Grande Valley of Texas maintains its cultural heritage today. Compile your information into an oral report.

Go to [www.celebratingtexas.com](http://www.celebratingtexas.com) to research the Activity topic.

### ACTIVITY

#### Culture

Divide your class into two groups: Native Texans of East Texas and Native Texans of West Texas. Research your group's relationship to the Spaniards. As a class, discuss what you learned.

