



Martin de Leon: Tejano Empresario (Stars of Texas Series)

Dr. Judy Alter PhD

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Don Martín de León was the only Tejano empresario to settle a colony in Texas, in the days before statehood. Other empresarios, such as Moses Austin and Sterling C. Robertson, were Anglos who had been drawn to Texas by the lure of land. De León established his colony in southeast Texas, near the Gulf Coast, and founded the city of Victoria. He and his four sons governed the colony.

Though Don Martín died in 1833, his sons actively supported the Texas fight for independence by giving money and goods to the Texas Volunteers. But the family suffered from a general prejudice against people of Mexican descent—they lost their land and livestock and had to leave Texas. They returned in the late 1840s, but they no longer had the immense holdings of land and cattle that Don Martín had accumulated.

In 1972, the de León family was honored with Texas state historical markers on family graves in Evergreen Cemetery in Victoria. Finally, Martín de León and his family are recognized for their loyalty to Texas, their support of the Texas Revolution, and their contributions to the Republic of Texas.

Martín de León is the fourth title in The Stars of Texas Series, aimed at fourth graders studying for the Texas history section of the TAKS test. The other three books in the series, *Henrietta King: Rancher and Philanthropist*, *Mirabeau B. Lamar: Second President of Texas*, and *Miriam "Ma" Ferguson: First Woman Governor of Texas* have been chosen for the Accelerated Reader program, and *Henrietta King* was a Spur Award finalist. Free workbooks for all Stars of Texas Series books are available on-line.

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