



Martín de León: Tejano Empresario (Stars of Texas Series)

By 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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Editorial Review

Review

"A fascinating story of the Tejano empresario. The biography relates his successful colony, the founding of Victoria, and his family's suffering against anyone of Mexican descent after Texas Independence. The book's format has interesting items concerning Texas history in the margins plus a map of empresario colonies, a timeline of Martín's life, a glossary and further readings and websites. The book is a must for those interested in Texas history during the early 19th century."--Karen Turner, Region XIV ESC
(Karen Turner, Region XIV ESC)

About the Author

JUDY ALTER writes fiction and nonfiction for readers of all ages. In 2005, she received the Owen Wister Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Western Writers of America. Alter lives in Fort Worth, Texas.

PATRICK MESSERSMITH is a noted artist who resides in Dallas, Texas. He states, "as a native Texan, it's great to be a part of teaching the legacy of our state's heroes (who might not receive as much attention) to the younger generations."

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