

NARRATIVE TEXTS

English Texans

Texans of English origin seem to be the least colony-minded people in the state. One reason is that the English are simply part of the “Anglo” majority that has formed Texas since the mid-1830s. English settlers are often invisible. No settlement areas 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 (most of the latter never saw Texas) put more than \$25 million into 20 million acres of land.

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, by drilling water wells, building fences, and bringing in stock, initiated plains ranching. Numerous settlers of all ethnic groups and origins came as workers, ranchers, and farmers to the plains. 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.

The largest number of English immigrants 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



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