

## Fourth Grade Lesson Plan: Tejanas in Early Texas

**Introduction:** Tejanas, who are Texas women of Spanish-Mexican origin, have been part of the history of Texas since 1700. Many of these women were mestizas. This means their ethnic heritage included Indians from Mexico and Texas, as well as Spanish people. Some of them also had African heritage.

**Objective:** This lesson plan introduces students to Tejanas' contributions to the early history of the state. At the end of the lesson, students will have gained an understanding about how Tejanas helped settle and develop the land in early Texas history. The lesson can be covered in three class periods.

### TEKS:

(b) Knowledge and skills.

(21) Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of sources, including electronic technology. The student is expected to:

(C) organize and interpret information in outlines, reports, databases, and visuals, including graphs, charts, timelines, and maps.

(22) Social studies skills. The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms. The student is expected to:

(D) create written and visual material such as journal entries, reports, graphic organizers, outlines, and bibliographies; and

(E) use standard grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation.

### Teachers' and Students' Materials:

1. Excerpt of *The Handbook of Texas Online* overview article on Mexican-American Women
2. "Las Tejanas: 1718 to 1836: When Did it Happen?" timeline game (student's copy and teacher's key—two sheets)
3. "Sentence Completion" on *The Handbook of Texas Online* Mexican-American Women article excerpt (student's copy and teacher's key—two sheets)
4. Copy of *The Handbook of Texas Online* article on María Gertrudis Pérez Cassiano, a notable Tejana of the early period
5. Copy of *The Handbook of Texas Online* article on Canary Islanders, the group from which Cassiano is descended
6. María Gertrudis Pérez Cassiano "Jeopardy" game (student's copy and teacher's key—two sheets)
7. "Early Tejanas: A Day in the Life Diary"
8. Copy of *The Handbook of Texas Online* article on Rosa María Hinojosa de Ballí and de Ballí fact and essay sheets

9. Copy of *The Handbook of Texas Online* biography of Patricia de la Garza De León and De León fact and essay sheets

## **Procedures**

### Day One

The teacher:

1. hands out and shares the excerpt of the Mexican-American Women overview article from *The Handbook of Texas Online*. The underlined sections serve as the teacher's key to the sentence completion assignment.
2. explains that both the terms Tejanas and Mexican-American women can be used to describe Texas women of Spanish-Mexican origin in Texas.
3. shows the students that they can locate information on Tejanas and on other Texas topics through the online edition of *The Handbook of Texas* at: <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/>.
4. distributes the student copy of the "When Did It Happen?" timeline game for students to complete; works with students, using her key (post on overhead projector or as a PowerPoint).
5. distributes the sentence completion sheet for students to complete.

Closing: The students report orally on what they learned about early Tejanas.

### Day Two

The teacher:

1. hands out and introduces *The Handbook of Texas Online* article on Maria Gertrudis Pérez Cassiano. The sections underlined are the teacher's key to the Cassiano "Jeopardy" game.
2. introduces *The Handbook of Texas Online* article on the Canary Islanders.
3. works with students to complete the Cassiano "Jeopardy" game, using the article on Cassiano as a guide.

Closing: The teacher hands out the "Early Tejanas: A Day in the Life Diary" sheet. The students write a one-page essay.

### Day Three

The teacher:

1. hands out and discusses either the biography of Rosa María Hinojosa de Balli or the biography of Patricia de la Garza De León.
2. hands out and reviews either the de Ballí or De León fact and essay sheets.
3. assigns students an essay, making sure they use the fact sheets or the biographies of either woman for writing.

Closing: The students share orally one thing they have learned about either of these Tejanas.

**Mexican-American Women** The history of Mexican-American women is connected to the Indian women of the Americas, who often married the Spaniards who first conquered the region in the 1500s and settled permanently in the 1700s. The Spanish government initiated its policy of *unidad doméstica* to foster settlement in the northern frontier. Along with their families, who were farmers, artisans, and soldiers, mestizo and mulatto women undertook an arduous journey north to colonize the area. A mestizo population also grew up in the Spanish missions and presidios. In one mission were 237 women. In the missions, women prepared food, dried meats, and made candles, soap, and clothing. They were also healers in an environment of rampant disease. The 1778 census revealed that 45 percent of the population (outside of Indian communities) was female. Women also helped found and colonize the pueblos of San Antonio, La Bahía, Nacogdoches, and Laredo. In the 1820s Patricia de la Garza De León accompanied her husband, empresario Martín De León, to settle Victoria, and established a school and church. In pueblos a few women and girls were shepherds, laundresses, cooks, tailors, peddlers, animal skinners, vendors, and servants. Daily life was demanding but simple; women's lives revolved around the home, where they grew and prepared food, made and washed clothes, and raised children. Between 1810 and 1820, María Gertrudis Pérez Cassiano, at that time the wife of Spanish governor Manuel Antonio Cordero y Bustamante, conducted official affairs when her husband was away.

Under Spanish law women had community property rights, and they owned, inherited, administered, bought, and sold property. Spain and Mexico made more than sixty land grants to women. In 1798 Rosa María Hinojosa de Ballí owned a third of the lower Rio Grande Valley. Some Mexican-American women were ranchers, while others were businesswomen or servants. In 1770 widow María Ana Cubelo owned 300 head of cattle, the second largest herd in Bexar. On the ranches, women made home altars and helped sustain their culture through home visits. During the Mexican War of Independence loyalist troops on occasion forced Mexican women to cook. During the Texas Revolution Texans also forced women to cook and do other labor. Mexican women accompanied Gen. Antonio López de Santa Anna's march to suppress the Texas revolution. In 1836, Francita Alavez saved many of James W. Fannin's captured soldiers. Andrea Castañón Villanueva received a pension from the state because of her stay inside the Alamo.

(Excerpted and adapted by Teresa Palomo Acosta from article by Cynthia E. Orozco, *The Handbook of Texas Online*)

*unidad doméstica*=domestic unity

## Las Tejanas: 1716 to 1836 “When Did It Happen?” Timeline Game

Working with your teacher, write the correct word on the timeline dates, using words underlined in each item below:

Doña María Robaina **Betancour** helps found San Antonio de Béxar, today known as San Antonio, as part of the Canary Islanders group. She becomes a rich woman.

Doña Patricia de la Garza **De León** and her husband, Martín De León, colonize Victoria. She helps establish a school and a church there.

Tejanas are successful **ranchers**, selling land and cattle and supervising their workers. Poor Tejanas work as cooks, gardeners, healers, and as other types of laborers.

Rosa María Hinojosa **de Ballí** owns 642,755 acres, one-third of the present-day Lower Rio Grande Valley. Some have called her Texas’s first “Cattle Queen.”

María Jesusa **de García** is wounded and permanently disabled when she tries to carry water to the army of Texas in San Antonio.

Tejanas help establish **Goliad** (also known as La Bahía).

Tejanas help establish **Laredo**.

Spanish-Mexican women (**Tejanas**) enter present-day Texas as members of families coming to establish permanent settlements.

Andrea Castañón Villanueva (Madame **Candelaria**) nurses James Bowie at the Alamo. Fifty years later, she received a state pension of \$12 a month for helping him.

Spain and Mexico award approximately sixty **land grants** to Tejanas, making them property owners.

**Angelina**, member of the Caddo Indian Nation, serves as a guide and translator for the Spanish and French explorers. Angelina is an important Indian ancestor of Tejanas.

María Gertrudis **Pérez** marries Manuel Antonio Cordero y Bustamante, the Spanish governor of Texas. She runs affairs of state in his absence and is called La Brigaviella (Brigadier-General) for reviewing the military troops.

|       |         |      |       |      |      |
|-------|---------|------|-------|------|------|
|       |         |      |       |      |      |
| 1716  | 1716-21 | 1731 | 1749  | 1755 | 1798 |
|       |         |      |       |      |      |
| 1800s | 1814    | 1824 | 1830s | 1835 | 1836 |

## Las Tejanas: 1716 to 1836 “When Did It Happen”? Timeline Game

### Teacher’s Key

- 1716-1721: **Angelina**, member of the Caddo Indian Nation, serves as a guide and translator for the Spanish and French explorers. Angelina is an important Indian ancestor of Tejanas.
- 1716: Spanish-Mexican women (**Tejanas**) enter present-day Texas as members of families coming to establish permanent settlements.
- 1731: Doña María Robaina **Betancour** helps found San Antonio de Béxar, today known as San Antonio, as part of the Canary Islanders group. She becomes a rich woman.
- 1749: Tejanas help establish **Goliad** (also known as La Bahía).
- 1755: Tejanas help establish **Laredo**.
- 1798: Rosa María Hinojosa **de Ballí** owns 642,755 acres, one-third of the present-day Lower Rio Grande Valley. Some have called her Texas’s first “Cattle Queen.”
- 1800s: Tejanas are successful **ranchers**, selling land and cattle and supervising their workers. Poor Tejanas work as cooks, gardeners, healers, and as other types of laborers.
- 1814: María Gertrudis **Pérez** marries Manuel Antonio Cordero y Bustamante, the Spanish governor of Texas. She runs affairs of state in his absence and is called La Brigaviella (Brigadier-General) for reviewing the military troops.
- 1824: Doña Patricia de la Garza **De León** and her husband, Martín De León, colonize Victoria. She helps establish a school and a church there.
- 1830s: Spain and Mexico award approximately sixty **land grants** to Tejanas, making them property owners.
- 1835: María Jesusa **de García** is wounded and permanently disabled when she tries to carry water to the army of Texas in San Antonio.
- 1836: Andrea Castañon Villanueva (Madame **Candelaria**) nurses James Bowie at the Alamo. Fifty years later, she received a state pension of \$12 a month for helping him.

**Sentence Completion (based on excerpt of article “Mexican-American Women”)**

**Student’s Copy**

*Complete the sentences from the phrases at the bottom of this page. Use the article on Mexican-American women that your teacher shared with you to check your work.*

1. The history of Mexican-American women is connected to \_\_\_\_\_, who often married the Spaniards who first conquered the region in the 1500s and settled permanently in the 1700s.
2. Along with their families, who were farmers, artisans, and soldiers, mestizo and mulatto women \_\_\_\_\_ north to colonize the area now known as Texas.
3. In the missions, women \_\_\_\_\_.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ a few women and girls were shepherds, laundresses, cooks, tailors, peddlers, animal skinners, vendors, and servants.
5. Under Spanish law women had \_\_\_\_\_, and they owned, inherited, administered, bought, and sold property.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ made more than sixty land grants to women.
7. In 1798, \_\_\_\_\_ owned a third of the lower Rio Grande Valley. Some Mexican-American women were ranchers, while others were businesswomen or servants.
8. In 1836, \_\_\_\_\_ received a pension from the state because of her stay inside the Alamo.

Andrea Castañón Villanueva

the Indian women of the Americas

prepared food, dried meats, and made candles, soap, and clothing

Spain and Mexico

community property rights

Rosa María Hinojosa de Ballí

undertook an arduous journey

In pueblos

**Sentence Completion (based on excerpt of article “Mexican-American Women”)**

**Teacher’s Copy**

1. The history of Mexican-American women is connected to the Indian women of the Americas, who often married the Spaniards who first conquered the region in the 1500s and settled permanently in the 1700s.
2. Along with their families, who were farmers, artisans, and soldiers, mestizo and mulatto women undertook an arduous journey north to colonize the area now known as Texas.
3. In the missions, women prepared food, dried meats, and made candles, soap, and clothing.
4. In pueblos a few women and girls were shepherds, laundresses, cooks, tailors, peddlers, animal skimmers, vendors, and servants.
5. Under Spanish law women had community property rights, and they owned, inherited, administered, bought, and sold property.
6. Spain and Mexico made more than sixty land grants to women.
7. In 1798, Rosa María Hinojosa de Ballí owned a third of the lower Rio Grande Valley. Some Mexican-American women were ranchers, while others were businesswomen or servants.
8. In 1836, Andrea Castañón Villanueva received a pension from the state because of her stay inside the Alamo.

1. the Indian women of the Americas
2. undertook an arduous journey
3. prepared food, dried meats, and made candles, soap, and clothing
4. In pueblos
5. community property rights
6. Spain and Mexico
7. Rosa María Hinojosa de Ballí
8. Andrea Castañón Villanueva

Review with students the fact that some names in Spanish have accent marks and or a tilde (´).

Review with students the fact that “land grants” resulted in making women property owners.

**Cassiano, María Gertrudis Pérez** (1790-1832). María Gertrudis Pérez Cassiano, a descendant of the Canary Islanders, daughter of Juan Ignacio Pérez and Clemencia Hernández, was born on January 2, 1790, in the Pérez homestead in Villa de San Fernando, Royal Presidio of San Antonio de Béxar. Her father, a lieutenant colonel in the Spanish army, was later interim governor of Texas. In 1804 the family paid 800 pesos for the Spanish Governor's Palace and made it their home; it was in the family's possession for over a hundred years. The palace, a center of "military and social activity" during María's youth, later became run-down. In the late 1920s, under the leadership of Adina De Zavala, it was acquired by the city of San Antonio and restored as a museum. In 1813, Col. Manuel Antonio Cordero y Bustamante requested permission from the viceroy to marry María and was granted the favor on January 1, 1814. With her marriage to Cordero, María became known as La Brigaviella ("the Brigadier-General") and was permitted to carry out her husband's duties, including reviewing the troops, in his absence. Her apparent ease in handling his duties may have come from the fact that she was considered an equal to men in some business dealings, such as the inheritance, administration, buying, and selling of property. Upon her father's death, María inherited the Pérez homestead. After Cordero's death in 1823, she married a wealthy Italian, José Cassiano, on April 12, 1826. With him she had a son. María died of dropsy and was buried in San Fernando de Béxar on September 29, 1832. In her will she refused to leave any money for "pious works," allegedly to ensure that her assets would not fall into the hands of the Mexican government. Nonetheless, her husband donated a small amount of money shortly after her death to public charities and school funds. In his correspondence transmitting these funds, Cassiano noted that it would have been his late wife's desire to see that some of her wealth be used in the public interest.

By Teresa Palomo Acosta, *The Handbook of Texas Online*:  
<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/CC/fcadh.html>

**Canary Islanders.** On February 14, 1719, the Marqués de San Miguel de Aguayo made a report to the king of Spain proposing that 400 families be transported from the Canary Islands, Galicia, or Havana to populate the province of Texas. His plan was approved, and notice was given the Canary Islanders to furnish 200 families; the Council of the Indies suggested that 400 families should be sent from the Canaries to Texas by way of Havana and Veracruz. By June 1730, twenty-five families had reached Cuba and ten families had been sent on to Veracruz before orders from Spain to stop the movement arrived. Under the leadership of Juan Leal Goraz, the group marched overland to the presidio of San Antonio de Béxar, where they arrived on March 9, 1731. The party had increased by marriages on the way to fifteen families, a total of fifty-six persons. They joined a military community that had been in existence since 1718. The immigrants formed the nucleus of the villa of San Fernando de Béxar, the first regularly organized civil government in Texas. Several of the old families of San Antonio trace their descent from the Canary Island colonists. María Rosa Padrón was the first baby born of Canary Islander descent in San Antonio.

*The Handbook of Texas Online*: <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/CC/poc1.html>

### Cassiano “Jeopardy” Game

1. Teacher: In advance, copy and cut out game “Answers” pieces in the first table below for all your students.
2. Hand out and review with students *The Handbook of Texas Online* article on María Gertrudis Pérez Cassiano. Point out specific information: date of birth, ancestors, etc.
3. Use the second table as the game board. Have students place the correct answers on top of items in the Jeopardy game board.

#### Answers

|                               |                               |  |                         |   |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|-------------------------|---|
| What is January 2, 1790?      | Who are the Canary Islanders? | What is the Spanish Governor’s Palace? | Who is Adina De Zavala? | What is “Brigadier-General” (“La Brigaviella”)? |
| What is reviewing the troops? | What is January 1, 1814?      | Who is José Cassiano?                  | What is Dropsy?         | What is 800 Pesos?                              |

#### Jeopardy Game Board

|  |   |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| Tejana who helped preserve the Spanish Governor’s Palace | The title María held when she was married to Spanish governor | The group from which María was descended | Name of home where Spanish governor lived | Money that María’s family paid for the Spanish Governor’s Palace |
| One duty María had as wife of Spanish governor           | The illness that caused María’s death                         | María’s second husband                   | Date María married Spanish governor       | María born on this date  |



**Hinojosa de Ballí, Rosa María** (1752-1803). Rosa María Hinojosa de Ballí, a rancher known as La Patrona and the first "cattle queen" of Texas, was born in 1752 in what is now Tamaulipas, Mexico. She was the sixth of the nine children of Capt. Juan José de Hinojosa and María Antonia Inés Ballí de Benavides, Spanish aristocrats whose status as Primitive Settlers gave them priority rights to extensive land grants and public offices. The family moved to Reynosa in 1767, after Hinojosa was appointed alcalde, and joined the elite group of wealthy families who controlled the jurisdiction. Rosa María was educated in Reynosa, probably by the parish priest. She married José María Ballí, a captain of the militia; one of their three sons was José Nicolás Ballí, missionary developer of Padre Island.

Captain Ballí and his father-in-law applied jointly for a large land grant in the La Feria tract, but both men had died by the time the grant was approved in 1790. Ballí's will specified that Rosa María was to inherit his share of twelve leagues (55,000 acres). When Doña Rosa took over the estate it was heavily encumbered with debts; by the time of her death thirteen years later, she had doubled the property and made extensive improvements to La Feria grant. Skillfully and deliberately, she built up her landholdings. In the name of her brother Vicente she financed an application for thirty-five leagues of land in Las Mesteñas tract. When the grant was approved, Vicente transferred title of twelve leagues to her, and she named the property Ojo del Agua. The city of Harlingen is situated on it today. She applied in the name of her son Juan José for seventy-two leagues in the San Salvador del Tule grant and bought Las Casteñas tract from the original grantees for her son José María. She made a joint application with her son Padre Nicolás, who eventually became her business associate, for eleven leagues of what is now Padre Island. When reapplication was required in 1800, Doña Rosa withdrew her name in favor of her grandson.

She oversaw her lands from her La Feria ranch headquarters, La Florida, in what is now Cameron County. She amassed large herds of cattle, horses, sheep, and goats, and her ranches were territorial landmarks. Doña Rosa was perhaps the most influential woman of her time and place. She took full advantage of the opportunities that only widows could enjoy in Spanish society. Devoutly Catholic, she built and maintained a family chapel and endowed churches in Reynosa, Camargo, and Matamoros. At the time of her death in Reynosa in 1803, she owned more than a million acres of land in the lower Rio Grande valley, and her holdings extended into the territories of present-day Hidalgo, Cameron, Willacy, Starr, and Kenedy counties.

By Clotilde P. García, *The Handbook of Texas Online*:  
<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/HH/fhi50.html>

## Rosa María Hinojosa de Ballí Fact Sheet

Born: 1752 in what is now Tamaulipas, Mexico

Father: Juan José de Hinojosa

Mother: María Antonia Inés Ballí de Benavides

Education: Privately tutored by parish priest in Reynosa

Married: José Mará Ballí, captain of the militia

Children: Juan José, José María, and José Nicolás

José Nicolás was a missionary and developed Padre Island, which was originally called Isla de Santiago.

Died: 1803



### **Achievements:**

One of earliest ranchers in Texas

Called Texas's First Cattle Queen

Nicknamed: La Patrona (the Patroness) for service to her community

Land Held: Owned approximately one million acres of ranch land in the lower Rio Grande Valley

Amassed large herds of cattle, horses, sheep, and goats

Helped support the community through her charity and her dedication to the welfare of the people

### **Challenges:**

Death of her husband left her with large debts

Running a large ranch

Carving out a role as a one of the first female ranchers in Texas



Padre Island, which was part of Rosa María Hinojosa de Ballí family holdings



**De León, Patricia de la Garza (1775-1849).** Patricia de la Garza De León, early settler, who with her husband, empresario Martín De León, developed the city of Victoria, was born in Soto la Marina, Nuevo Santander (now Tamaulipas), Mexico, in 1775. Her father, Felipe de la Garza, served as commandant for the Spanish government. In 1795 Patricia and Martín were married, and they started a ranch near Cruillas, Nuevo Santander. Between 1798 and 1818 Doña De León gave birth to ten children. In 1805 the De Leóns moved to the east bank of the Aransas River, north of Corpus Christi. They moved several more times before 1824, when they were granted land by the newly independent Mexican government. Using money they had earned from the sale of livestock and the \$9,800 Patricia inherited from her father, they established a colony on the bank of the Guadalupe River in Southwest Texas. Martín named the settlement Guadalupe Victoria in honor of the first president of Mexico; it was the only predominantly Mexican colony in Texas.

Life in frontier Texas was very different from the life Patricia had lived in Mexico. She was forty-seven years old when she settled in Victoria, where she lived in a house of hand-hewn logs with a dirt floor. Although her new home was simple, she placed fine furniture in it and kept servants. While Martín worked to bring financial success to the community, Patricia attempted to transplant to Texas some of the cultural traditions of Spain and Mexico. She saw that a school was established immediately after she arrived in Victoria. She also helped found a church, Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, to which she donated money and furnishings. As the family's wealth increased she imported fine furniture and clothes and sent her children and grandchildren to Europe and Mexico to be educated. She and her daughters became known for their excellent embroidery skills and fine clothing. The De León home was described as among the most beautifully furnished in the area, and it became the center for community gatherings. Shortly before her death Madame De León donated the original homestead to the Catholic Church as the site for a new church building.

After Martín died of cholera in 1833, Patricia managed the family's property and continued to work for the community. She and her family supported the idea of an independent Texas and smuggled arms and ammunition from New Orleans to the Texans. Despite their support of the Texans, however, the De Leóns were victims of the anti-Mexican sentiment that swept through Texas after the Texas Revolution. Her youngest son was murdered by cattle thieves. The family fled to Louisiana, where they lived in poverty, and then to Soto la Marina. In 1837 Patricia sold 25,000 acres of Victoria County land on Garcitas Creek for \$10,000. When she returned to Texas in 1844 she found her possessions scattered among newcomers, and she no longer held an influential position in the town. She resumed her work with the church and until her death lived as an ordinary parishioner. She died at Victoria in 1849, after devoting much time to the church her husband founded. Her homesite, donated to the parish at her death, is the site of the present St. Mary's Catholic Church, to which she also contributed altar vessels, including a gold monstrance. The state of Texas recognized the contributions of the De Leóns by dedicating historical grave markers to them in Evergreen Cemetery, Victoria, on April 8, 1972.

By Paula Stewart, *The Handbook of Texas Online*:

<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/DD/fde66.html>

## Patricia de la Garza De León Fact Sheet

Born: 1775 in Soto la Marina, Nuevo Santander (in what is now Tamaulipas), Mexico

Father: Felipe de la Garza

Mother: Name Unknown

Married: Martín De León in 1795

Children: 10 sons and daughters born between 1798 and 1818

Died: 1849



### **Achievements:**

Founded the City of Victoria, Texas, with Martín De León, her husband

Brought cultural traditions of Spain and Mexico to Texas

Helped establish a school in Victoria

Managed family property

Supported Texas Independence from Mexico

### **Challenges:**

Creating a family life on the Texas frontier

Death of her husband, Martín De León, from Cholera

Murder of youngest son

Loss of her family's land in Texas due to discrimination against Tejanos after the Texas Revolution

