

Immigration to Texas in the 18th Century: The Journey of María Jesusita Curbelo-Delgado Smith's Canary Island Ancestors



Subject and Grade Texas, American, or World History, and English Language Arts and Reading, 7th. (Can be adapted for grades 8th, 10th, or 11th.)

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Time duration Two 45-minute class periods or one block period.

Overview Working cooperatively, students will analyze maps tracing the immigration route of María's ancestors from the Canary Islands to San Antonio, Texas in the 1730s. They will then use their research to write a comparison/contrast essay examining travel in the 18th century and that of today.

TEKS *History, Grade 7*

1(A) identify the major eras in Texas history

2(C) identify important individuals, events, and issues related to European colonization of Texas

2(E) identify the contributions of significant individuals during the Mexican settlement of Texas

4(C) identify individuals, events, and issues during early Texas statehood

18(B) describe how people from various racial, ethnic, and religious groups attempt to maintain their cultural heritage while adapting to the larger Texas culture

20(A) differentiate between, locate, and use valid primary and secondary sources to acquire information about Texas

22(C) create written, oral, and visual presentations of social studies information.

(23) Use problem-solving and decision-making skills, working independently and with others.

English Language Arts and Reading, Grade 7

1(B) follow and give complex oral instructions to perform specific tasks, answer questions, or solve problems

5(B) generate questions about text before, during, and after reading to deepen understanding and gain information

5(H) synthesize information to create new understanding

6(B) write responses that demonstrate understanding of texts, including comparing sources within and across genres

6(C) use text evidence to support an appropriate response

10(B) (i) organizing with purposeful structure, including an introduction, transitions, coherence within and across paragraphs, and a conclusion; (ii) developing an engaging idea reflecting depth of thought with specific facts, details, and examples

11(B) compose informational texts, including multi-paragraph essays that convey information about a

topic, using a clear controlling idea or thesis statement and genre characteristics and craft

12(D) identify and gather relevant information from a variety of sources

Materials

1. Access to the Internet and *John William and María Jesusa Curbelo-Delgado Smith House* exhibit on Texas Beyond History:

www.texasbeyondhistory.net/smithhouse/index.html

2. Student computers

3. Computer-connected projector

4. Student handout: graphic organizer

5. Image sheet

6. Teachers Instructions

Background information for teachers

When the San Antonio Independent School district needed to build a new administration building, they had to hire archeologists to investigate the building site and confirm that construction would not damage any important archeological materials (this in compliance with the Antiquities Code of Texas as administered by the Texas Historical Commission). Archeological research indicated that one or more of the building foundations identified during the investigation was the site of a home lived in by the family of famous Texan, John William Smith (who was notably the last messenger from the Alamo in 1836), and his wife, Maria Jesusita Curbelo-Delgado Smith. By the time of her marriage to Smith, in 1830, María's family had lived in San Antonio for almost 100 years, and Maria represented the sixth generation there. Her Canary

Islander ancestors created a proud culture in San Antonio, Texas that exists to this day.

During the Spanish Colonial Era (1690-1820), Spain made numerous attempts to settle and control Texas. In 1729, Spanish King Philip V offered land and titles of nobility to families from the Canary Islands who would move to Texas, form a civil government, and settle Texas by living among the Texas Indians. These early Texans left their homes, crossed the Atlantic Ocean, and walked hundreds of miles to settle in San Antonio, Texas. During their year-long journey, they exhibited motivation, courage, and perseverance and endured countless hardships along the way.

**Activities and
procedures**

Day 1

Step 1: Project the image of María Jesusita Curbelo-Delgado for students to see. Ask students to make observations about María, e.g., how old she looks, when this photo might have been taken. Ask students to explain their answers.

Step 2: Explain that María Jesusita Curbelo-Delgado was the descendent of immigrants who came to Texas in the 18th century. They voluntarily traveled all the way from the Canary Islands (part of Spain, off the coast of Africa) to settle in San Antonio, Texas. Using a computer and projector, open www.googlemaps.com and find the Canary Islands on the map. Zoom out on the map until the United States is also visible. Ask students if any of them have ever traveled across an ocean to another country and if so, how did they travel?

Step 3: Ask students to brainstorm some personal characteristics people would need to undertake an

immigration journey at any point in time (e.g., bravery, strength, determination, curiosity, etc.). Explain that the Canary Islanders whose ancestors made this 18th century journey are very proud of their immigration history and have formed an organization to preserve their group's history (cida-sa.org). Explain that today students will look at some maps to explore the journey María's immigrant ancestors made from the Canary Islands to San Antonio. Have students choose a partner to work with.

Step 4: Graphic Organizer: Distribute one copy of the graphic organizer (Comparing and Contrasting: Travel from the Canary Islands to San Antonio, Texas 18th Century and Today) to each student. Project an image of the graphic organizer and read through it with students. Explain that some of the information on the organizer will be filled in as a class, and some by students and their partners working together.

Step 5: Work with students to find a map application that allows measuring of travel time and travel distance between two points on a map. Google Maps (google.com/maps) is a good one.

Step 6: Transportation: Ask students how they think the immigrants traveled to North America. Show the image of an 18th century sailing ship and discuss what traveling on such a vessel must have been like, pros and cons. Have students fill in the first part of Transportation (18th Century) on their graphic organizer. Display the image of the map from Veracruz, Mexico to San Antonio, Texas. Ask students how these immigrants must have traveled from Veracruz, Mexico to San Antonio when there were no cars, buses, trains, or planes available. Answer: Explain that they had some horses, mules, and cattle, but mostly, they walked. Have them fill that in on the

second part of Transportation (18th Century) on their graphic organizer.

Step 7: Travel Time: Explain that according to historic records, 56 immigrants, including María's ancestors, left the Canary Islands, headed for San Antonio, Texas on March 15, 1730. Have them fill in that date on their graphic organizer in the Travel Time (18th Century) section. Refer again to the map from Veracruz, Mexico to San Antonio, Texas and have students fill in the correct dates in the Travel Time (18th Century) section. Ask students what the most efficient way to travel from the Canary Islands to San Antonio, Texas would be today (answer: airplane). Have students fill in today's date in the Travel Time (Today) section. On their computers, have students determine the travel time between Canary Islands and San Antonio and fill it in on their graphic organizer. Note: Travel time would have been around 15 hours, but answers may vary slightly, due to differences in websites used by students.

Step 8: Travel Distance: On their computers, have students determine the distance the Canary Islanders had to travel from point to point. Note: Travel distances will be approximate, as measurement applications vary and measure in straight lines.

Step 9: Working with their partners, have students use all the information on their graphic organizers to help them imagine the best and worst parts of this trip in both time periods. Have them fill in their imagined answers on the organizer. Ask for several volunteers to share their answers.

Step 10/Lesson Summary: Ask students what elements of world travel have changed the most since María's ancestors left the Canary Islands in 1730. Point out that in the 18th century, taking a voyage

across the ocean meant saying goodbye to loved ones, potentially forever.

Day 2

Step 1: Have students get with their partners and take out the graphic organizers they completed yesterday. Have them read over the information they gathered, then ask if anyone would prefer to have made the journey in the 18th century, rather than today. Have them explain their answers. Point out that María Jesusita Curbelo Delgado is a direct descendant of the people who made this trip, as are many who still live in San Antonio today.

Step 2: Explain that students will use the information on their graphic organizers to write an essay comparing and contrasting immigration travel in the 18th century to travel today. Go over the procedures for writing a comparison/contrast essay with students. If needed, use online instructions for writing a comparison/contrast essay.

Extension Activities

1. Ask students to imagine they are going to interview María Jesusita Curbelo Smith's ancestor, Juan Curbelo, who immigrated to Texas in 1730. Have them create 10 questions they would ask him.
2. Have students create a historical marker for María Jesusita Curbelo Smith. Directions at: thc.texas.gov/public/upload/texas-historical-markers-lesson-plan.pdf

Assessment

1. Completed graphic organizers: Comparing and Contrasting: Travel from the Canary Islands to San Antonio, Texas: 18th Century and Today
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2. Completed comparison/contrast essays on immigration travel

Modifications For students with specific learning needs or IEPs, have step-by-step instructions for the computer available and allow more time for project completion, if necessary.

Related Websites

- Letter from King Philip V of Spain regarding immigration of Canary Islanders to San Antonio, Texas: <https://cida-sa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/REAL-CEDULA-02141729-from-Philip-V-Translated.pdf>
- Canary Islands Descendants Association: <https://cida-sa.org/>
- Institute of Texan Cultures, The Canary Island Texans: https://texancultures.utsa.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/TOA_Canary_Islanders_Combined2019-1.pdf
- Texas State Historical Association, Canary Islanders: <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/canary-islanders>
- A Texas Historical Marker honoring the Canary Islanders was erected on San Antonio's Main Plaza in 1971. Find it by searching "Canary Islanders" on atlas.thc.texas.gov/.

**Comparing and Contrasting:
Immigration from the Canary Islands to San Antonio, Texas
*Travel in the 18th Century and Today***

When Maria Jesusita Delgado’s ancestors immigrated to San Antonio, Texas (New Spain) from the Canary Islands in the 18th century, their journey was very different from what it would be today. Research their trip in the 1700s as well as how people travel between the two places today. Fill the table below with the information you find. Then use this information to write an essay about travel in the two eras.

What Are We Examining?	18th Century	Today
Transportation	Canary Islands to Veracruz, Mexico: Veracruz to San Antonio, Texas:	Canary Islands to San Antonio, Texas:
Travel Time	Date left Canary Islands: Date arrived in Veracruz, Mexico: Date arrived in San Antonio, Texas: Total Travel Time:	Date left Canary Islands (today's date): Date arrived San Antonio, Texas:
Distance Traveled	Miles from Canary Islands to Veracruz, Mexico: Miles from Veracruz to San Antonio, Texas: Total miles traveled:	Miles from Canary Islands to San Antonio, Texas: Total miles traveled:
What do you think would have been the best thing about this trip?	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____
What do you think would have been the worst thing about this trip?	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____



Maria Jesusita Curbelo Smith

Image credit: From *With the Makers of San Antonio: Genealogies of the Early Latin, Anglo-American, and German Families with Occasional Biographies* (Vol. 4) by Frederick Charles Chabot. Graphic Arts, 1937, pages 158-159.



A ship very much like this one carried the Canarians across the Atlantic.

Image credit: Public Domain image of Santísima Trinidad y Nuestra Señora del Rosario.

Map of Route taken
by Canary Islanders from
Veracruz to San Antonio.



Image credit: Map courtesy of the Canary Islands Descendants Association.