

This lesson was made possible through a generous grant from Humanities Texas

## ► Haden Edwards and the Seeds of Conflict

**Introduction:** Explain to students that they will examine the document “Charges Against Haden Edwards” from the Texas General Land Office Archives to gain an understanding of how and why the Fredonian Rebellion became the first in a series of incidents between Anglo settlers and the Mexican government that led to the Texas Revolution. This lesson is intended to be one 90 minute block or two forty-five minute class periods.

### Objective

Students will interpret how the Fredonian Rebellion was a cause of the Texas Revolution by reading and analyzing a primary source document related to Haden Edwards and this conflict.

**TEKS 7.3** History. The student understands how individuals, events, and issues related to the Texas Revolution shaped the history of Texas.

**TEKS 7.3A** The student is expected to trace the development of events that led to the Texas Revolution, including the Fredonian Rebellion.

## Vocabulary

### Empresario

a person who had been granted the right to settle on land in exchange for recruiting and taking responsibility for new settlers (“land agent” in Spanish)

### Stipulated

demanding or specified, typically as part of a bargain

### Usurped

took illegally or by force

### Edict

an official order or proclamation issued by a person in authority

### Title

a legal document that is evidence of a right

### Despoiled

stole or removed a valuable possession

### Appropriated

took something for one’s personal use, usually without the owner’s permission

### Null and void

ineffective or worthless

### Expulsion

the act of forcing someone to leave a place

### Appertaining

concerning

## Resources

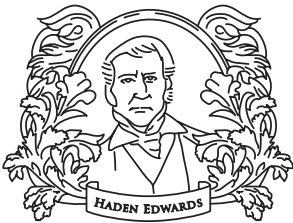


- 1 Charges Against Haden Edwards document
- 2 English transcription of “Charges Against Haden Edwards” cut into six parts
- 3 “Haden Edwards” excerpts Parts One and Two
- 4 “Countdown to Conflict” primary source document analysis resource
- 5 Simple props to use when reenacting scenes from the document



## Procedure

**Focus Activity:** Turn-and-Talk with a partner over the following discussion questions:  
“Have you ever known someone who overstepped their authority?”  
“How did you react to this situation?”



## Assessment

### Formative

Think-Pair-Share activity, group reenactments, whole class discussion

### Summative

“Countdown to Conflict” document analysis as Exit Ticket

## Instructional Process

- 1 Before introducing Haden Edwards with Part One of the background excerpt, let students know that he experienced the same thing that was posed to them in the focus activity. After reading this introduction, ask students to Think-Pair-Share by predicting what Haden Edwards will do after forfeiting his land to the Mexican government.
- 2 Show the original image (Spanish version) of the document “Charges Against Haden Edwards.” Ask students to describe what they see in this original document.
- 3 Take the transcribed version and cut it into the six sections that are divided by lines in that document. Place class into groups of six and give them one section of the document to read and discuss in their groups.
- 4 Once students complete their discussion, have them create a script of what this scene would look like if it were to be reenacted for the class.
- 5 Have groups perform their reenactments in sequential order. The reenactment should cover the key points of the part of the document that each group was assigned to read and discuss. Students may want to consider using simple props during their reenactment.
- 6 After each performance, ask the whole class to interpret what each reenactment addressed. Then, read aloud the original text of the section of the transcribed document that each group reenacted. Ask the class how close their personal interpretations of each reenactment were as compared to the original document.
- 7 Have students go back into their groups and complete the “Countdown to Conflict” primary source document analysis resource. As students complete this activity, ask each group to share their one prediction made in the last section of the document analysis resource.
- 8 Conclude this activity by reading Part Two of the Haden Edwards background excerpt. As a final assessment, have students complete an exit ticket addressing the question “Why was the Fredonian Rebellion a direct cause of the Texas Revolution?”



23 Aug. 1826

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Por cuanto del Expediente instruido contra el Ciudadano de los Estados Unidos del Norte Haden Edwards, empresario contratado con el Estado de este Estado p. Colonizar con retenciones familiares Atranjeras en tierras deshabitadas del Departam<sup>to</sup> de Tlaxca bajo las bases y condiciones q. se establecieron en las Capitulaciones firmadas en 15 de Abril de 1825, resultan plenamente justificadas las hechas siguientes.

1.<sup>o</sup> Haber usurpado la soberania del Estado en un Pragmatica publicada en Mexico a 25 de Octubre de 1825 en la q. faltando a la verdad el titulo Comandante Militar de aquella parte del territorio y casio a los poseedores de tierras la promulgacion de un titulo q. examinar su validacion, bajo la pena q. de no presentar dichos documentos serian vendidos las tierras al primer portor.

2.<sup>o</sup> Haber despojado de sus propiedades a algunos vecinos y Colonos de aquella provincia q. darlos a otros.

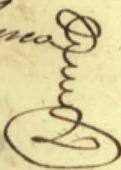
3.<sup>o</sup> Haber vendido terrenos de los q. estaban designados p. la Colonia contratada, y habera apropiado su importe, conyuden suer y denuo absoluto de aquellas tierras.


Por tanto declaro nulo y de ningun valor en efecto el Contrato celebrado con el mencionado Haden Edwards a 15 de Abril de 1825. y mando q. se sean recibidos los testimonios q. se parran en su poder. q. asi mismo todos los vecinos y Colonos q. hayan sido despojados q. d. sean inmediatamente restituidos a la posesion de lo q. en su justo titulo poseian.

y en consecuencia q. se cumpla en todas sus partes  
 con la ley reservada al Sup. mo. Cab. no. 3. de Junio  
 ultimo sobre q. sea aplicable al territorio de la N.  
 publica q. con otros muchos hechos sepando ante  
 satisfecho se lo q. judicialmente operatis de George  
 Torres q. una legua de tierra q. Cole vaudis.

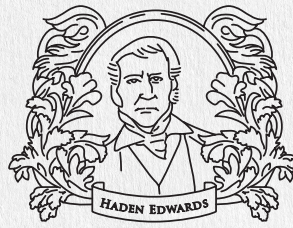
Los Colonos q. se hayan introducido al País co-  
 mo pertenecientes a la Comarca de Haden Edwards  
 eran admitidos pobladores siempre q. se usasen  
 en todo a las Leyes de la Nación y del Estado, y  
 q. concurren en ellos todas las circunstancias y  
 requisitos q. la Ley exige.

El Cefe del Departamento de Texas supondra el  
 cumplimiento exacto de esta reduccion, y la comu-  
 nicara q. en inteligencia a todos los empresarios  
 de Nuevas Colonias en su Departamento. Dado en  
 el Saltillo, a 23 de Agosto de 1826.

Victor Manuel  


Juan Antonietti  
 Auditor  


Al Cefe del Departa-  
 mento de Texas



## Translation

Haden Edwards, a citizen of the United States of the North, Empresario of a contract made with the Government of the State for the Colonization of Eight hundred foreign families on the uninhabited lands of the Department of Texas, upon the terms and conditions stipulated by the articles therein contained; the result is, that the following acts are fully established.

1. That he has insulted the dignity and usurped the authority of the State in his edict published in Nacogdoches on the 25th of October 1825, by falsely styling himself military Commander in that section of the territory and requiring the possessors of lands present their titles, in order to examine their validity, under the penalty in case they should refuse of having their lands sold to the highest bidder.

2. That he has despoiled several of the inhabitants and colonists of that frontier of their lands to give them to others.

3. That he has sold a part of those lands intended by the Government for his Colony, according to the contract, and has appropriated to himself the proceeds, believing himself to be absolute Lord and Master of those lands.

I, therefore declare the contract made with the above mentioned Haden Edwards, on the 15th of April, 1825,

to be null and void, and of no effect, and I hereby order that the certified copies of the same, which he has in his possession, be taken from him, and also that all the property legally held by any of the inhabitants or colonists, and of which they may have been despoiled by him, be restored to their possession, and that the secret order of the Supreme Government of 3rd of June last, relative to his expulsion from the Territory

of the Republic, in consequence of the aforesaid acts, be complied with in all its parts, he having first refunded the amount he improperly received from George Orr for a league of land, which he sold to him.

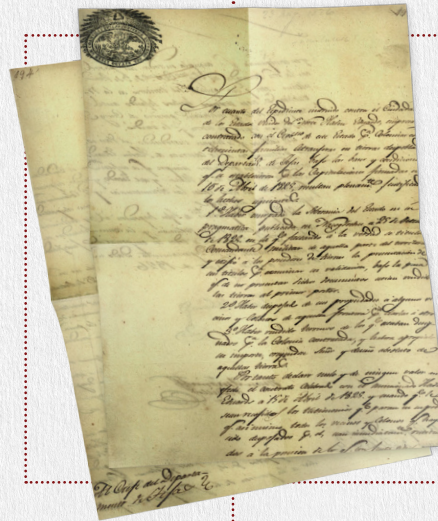
The Colonists who may have come into the country as appertaining to the contract of Haden Edwards will be admitted as settlers, provided, they subject themselves to the National and State laws, and possess the qualifications required by law.

The Political Chief of the Department of Bexar, will require this resolution to be strictly complied with, and he will communicate it to all the Empresarios of the new Colonies in his Department for their information. Given at the Town of Saltillo this 23rd August 1826.

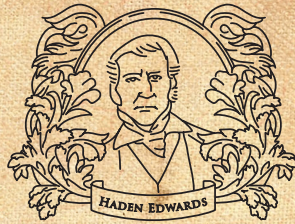
(Signed) Victor Blanco

(Signed) Juan Antonio Padilla Secty

To the Hon. the Political Chief  
of the Department of Texas.



**Haden Edwards**  
and the Seeds of Conflict



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**PART ONE**

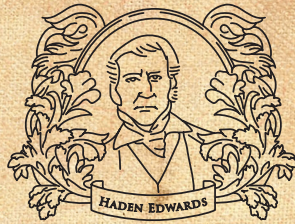
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**L**earning about Moses Austin's land activities in Texas, Virginian Haden Edwards shifted his interest to Texas. He traveled to Mexico City early in the 1820s to join Stephen F. Austin, Robert Leftwich, and others in lobbying successive Mexican governments for permission to colonize Texas. Because of Edwards' wealth, he supported Austin financially since Austin had already established a relationship with authorities. Edwards received permission to settle up to 800 families around Nacogdoches in East Texas.

Like all empresarios, Edwards had to honor previous grants in the area from Spanish or Mexican governments. Unfortunately for Edwards, only his area had a significant number of such grants and the grantees had no way to prove their claims because all records were in Mexico. Because many of the previous settlers in the area could not produce a title to their lands, Edwards ordered that he would regard all the land grants null and void. His actions caused heated protests and resulted in conflict with the Mexican government. In late in 1825, the Mexican government forced Edwards to forfeit his lands. By his testimony, Edwards had invested \$50,000 in his Texas venture and did not want to lose it.

**Think-Pair-Share:** Predict what Haden Edwards is going to do after forfeiting his land grant to the Mexican government.

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**PART TWO**

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**A**s a result of losing his land to the Mexican government, Haden Edwards led something called the Fredonian Rebellion in 1826, in which he proclaimed his grant area independent of Mexico as the Republic of Fredonia. It lasted only until the arrival of Mexican troops, less than a year.

Edwards fled to Louisiana, but returned to Nacogdoches even before the revolution in 1836. Family descendants lived there for many decades.

The Fredonian Rebellion alarmed Mexican nationalists about the ultimate goals of their new Anglo residents, prompting efforts to stop further immigration—and, ultimately, the Texas Revolution.

**EXIT TICKET:** Why was the Fredonian Rebellion a direct cause of the Texas Revolution?

## GROUP

# 1

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## GROUP

# 2

❶ That he has insulted the dignity and usurped the authority of the State in his edict published in Nacogdoches on the 25th of October 1825, by falsely styling himself military Commander in that section of the territory and requiring the possessors of lands to present their titles, in order to examine their validity, under the penalty in case they should refuse of having their lands sold to the highest bidder.

## GROUP

# 3

❷ That he has despoiled several of the inhabitants and colonists of that frontier of their lands to give them to others

## GROUP

# 4

❸ That he has sold a part of those lands intended by the Government for his Colony, according to contract, and has appropriated to himself the proceeds, believing himself to be absolute Lord and Master of those lands.

## GROUP

# 5

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## GROUP

# 6

The Colonists who may have come into the country as appertaining to the contract of Haden Edwards will be admitted as settlers, provided, they subject themselves to the National and State laws, and possess the qualifications required by law. The Political Chief of the Department of Bexar, will require this resolution to be strictly complied with, and he will communicate it to all the Empresarios of the new Colonies in his Department for their information.

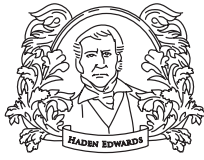
Given at the Town of Saltillo this 23rd August 1826.

(Signed) Victor Blanco

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To The Hon. the Political Chief





# Haden Edwards and the Seeds of Conflict

## Countdown to Conflict

**5** important facts from the reading

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**4** words that convey Mexican feelings and attitudes

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**3** clues that this is a legal document

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**2** questions left unanswered by the document

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**1** prediction

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