

Ft. St. Louis Research Notes Answer Key

1. Who was the first French explorer in Texas?

Answer: Robert Cavelier, sieur de La Salle

2. When did the French arrive in Texas?

Answer: January, 1685

3. Why was the French expedition here?

Answer: La Salle and his expedition had come to establish a colony near the mouth of the Mississippi River. They wanted to provide a warm-water port to serve the fur trade and a base for invading Mexico. France and Spain were then at war, and La Salle, with the backing of his king, intended to challenge Spain's domination of the Gulf of Mexico

4. In which modern Texas county was Ft. St. Louis built?

Answer: Victoria County

5. Why was Ft. St. Louis not really a fort?

Answer: It had no fence or earth built up around it, and had no cannonballs for its 8 cannons.

6. List three problems the inhabitants of Ft. St. Louis had:

Possible Answers: disease, malnutrition, getting lost, lack of shelter and building materials, attacks by Karankawa Indians and wild animals, LaSalle's poor leadership

7. What eventually happened to La Salle?

Answer: While traveling north to seek help for Ft. St. Louis, he was killed by his own men.

8. What eventually happened to the Ft. St. Louis inhabitants?

Answer: Most were killed by disease, starvation, and Indian attacks. Seven of La Salle's men went to Canada, while others stayed in Texas. Twenty remaining colonists at Fort St. Louis survived until late 1688 or early 1689 when the Karankawa Indians attacked them. All were killed except five French children who were taken captive.

9. Which group of European explorers later built a settlement on the Ft. St. Louis site?

Answer: Spanish

10. How did Ft. St. Louis affect the future history of exploration and settlement in Texas?

Answer: When Spanish explorers discovered the French effort to establish a foothold in Texas, they realized that unless they built more settlements in Texas themselves, the French might take over the area from them. This fear of a French takeover caused them to establish Spanish missions and settlements throughout much of Texas.