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STILL MORE STUDIES IN RIO GRANDE VALLEY HISTORY

Edited by

Milo Kearney
Anthony Knopp
Antonio Zavaleta

Illustrations by

Milo Kearney

Volume Twelve

The Texas Center for Border and Transnational Studies
The UT Brownsville Regional History Series
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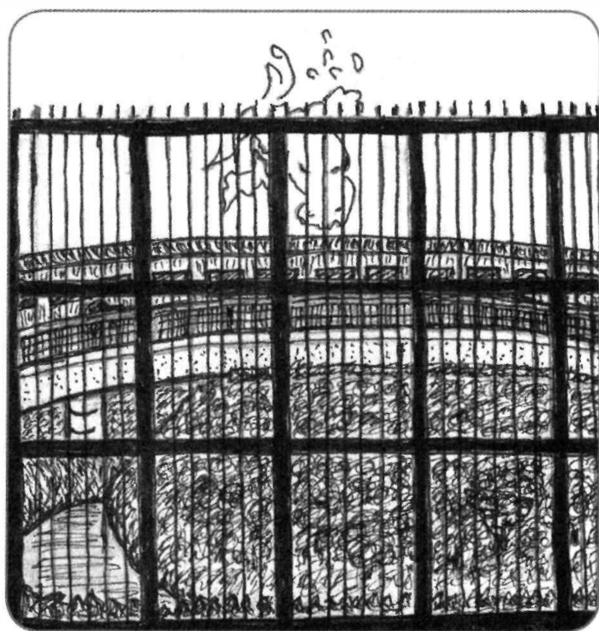

Volume Twelve

The Texas Center for Border and Transnational Studies
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Resaca

Between the wailing winds of ongoing legends,
the Resaca holds its own.
Reincarnated battlefields, strong with ambition,
fingers spread across South Texas
like the hand of God.

No longer visible to the naked eye of the beholder,
an empty Resaca remembers its own,
from the baked skin of native tongue to the wild ambitious fisherman
led here by the echoes of the people who came before
and the fish that got away.

Deep within the legend of the wailing woman
and the burial grounds of children,
Texas natives feel the pulse of the empty Resaca.
Home to native wildlife preserved for generations to follow
until we emptied their bellies with greed,
they stand dismembered, detached by roadways,
connected only by the memories of native bystanders

My grandfather Ramón built his boat to fish there.
With respect, honor, and pride,
he stoked the ashes that kept the fire going.
Sobreviviente son las resacas de mi gente, de mi tierra, de mi hogar.

– Josie Mixon

EARLY HISTORY

Matamoros before the Texas Revolution: Becoming Mexico's Pivotal Port City on the Northern Frontier

by

Craig H. Roell

How the port city of Matamoros, Tamaulipas, became "*La Gran Puerta de México*" ("The Great Gateway to Mexico"),[1] pivotal in Mexican economic and political strategy, and only later to rebels plotting independence in Texas in the 1830s, is a story rather unappreciated north of the Rio Grande.[2] Matamoros was the last, but became the most important, of the *Villas del Norte*, the "northern towns" established on the frontier of the Lower Río Bravo. The settlers of these river towns –Laredo, Revilla, Mier, Camargo, Reynosa, and, finally, Matamoros –saw themselves collectively as patriotic *norteños* (northerners)[3] and stalwart *fronterizos* (people of the frontier) who were intensely loyal to their locality, their *patria chica*.[4] These hardy people valued self-sufficiency, economic vitality, liberal principles, and local autonomy, which often put them at odds with centralist policies of the government in Mexico City. Their crucial waterway became symbolic of many things denoted in the names of the river that Spanish adventurers had called both "*Grande*" (great, large) and "*Bravo*" (wild, bold, fierce, angry). Comparisons with the other great rivers of North America and predictions about the Río Bravo's strategic and economic value became commonplace, with Matamoros commanding the gateway.

In the aftermath of Mexico's successful but economically devastating War of Independence from Spain (1810-1821), Matamoros quickly became a revenue-producing key for Mexico, crucial in the national vision, not just to reestablish a vibrant economy, but also to help make Mexico the economic colossus of the North American continent. Not only did Matamoros liberate the frontier from the central control of Mexico City and Vera Cruz, thus "forever altering center-periphery trade relations by reversing com-

mercial roles," as historian Juan Mora-Torres emphasized, but Matamoros also funneled some two-thirds of all goods imported to the regions north of Guadalajara and Querétaro.[5] Moreover, Matamoros would be the solution to keep Texas out of the hands of expansionist Americans by prospering northeastern Mexico, including Texas, with a lifestyle that patriotic and loyal *Norteños* and Tejanos, trustworthy Irish, and even Anglo colonists could relish. To this end, the commandant generals of the Eastern Internal Provinces, Manuel de Mier y Terán, Pedro Lemus, Vicente Filisola, and Martín Perfecto de Cos, located their headquarters in Matamoros as the most strategic point to supervise the political and military affairs in Texas, Coahuila, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas. Likewise, the government drew upon the considerable yields of Matamoros' maritime customs to pay and support the increasing numbers of troops needed to secure Texas against filibusters, rebels, and encroachment from the United States.[6]

The crucial significance of Matamoros as a port was clear even beyond Mexico. The U.S. consul in Matamoros, David Willard Smith, recognized Matamoros' advantages in an 1832 dispatch to Washington, D.C., asserting that the city had "a decided preponderance in a commercial and military point of view" to any other port on the Gulf of Mexico. (Notably, Smith was also one of many foreign merchants in the city.)[7] As David Woodman Jr. put it in his 1835 *Guide to Texas Emigrants*: "On the south bank of the Rio Grande, about forty miles above its mouth, is the city of Matamoras, formerly [named] Refugio. It is the commercial depot for an extensive and populous interior, and imports goods to the value of several millions of dollars annually, which are sent on pack mules to Monterey, Saltillo, Chihuahua, Durango, Zacetacas, San Louis Potosi, and many other minor inland towns. It contains from seven to nine thousand inhabitants, and is increasing with a rapidity that is altogether unexampled in Mexico."[8] In a word, Matamoros was *la puerta*, the gateway, to prosperity.

The great river generating this prosperity begins inauspiciously as a snow-fed stream in what is today southwestern Colorado,

some twelve thousand feet above sea level in the remote San Juan Mountains –a poetic happenstance in that Saint John the Apostle would also inspire the original naming of the settlement that would be established amid the beautiful estuaries near the river's mouth, *San Juan de los Esteros Hermosos*, later renamed Matamoros. Before finally emptying into the Gulf of Mexico, the grand river travels nearly 1,900 miles, making it the fourth longest in North America (and twentieth in the world). As early as 1598, Spaniards had dubbed the lower course of the river as "*Bravo.*" The sharp hairpin turns, which contributed both the river's historic wildness as well as the area's characteristic *resacas* (oxbow lakes), made it –in a phrase common among boatmen "exceedingly tortuous" to navigate, even though measuring about eighty yards in width and, varying according to the seasons, from seven to nine feet in depth for about one hundred miles from its mouth. While Matamoros was only about thirty-one miles (fifty kilometers) from the Gulf, to follow the anfractuous windings of the river nearly doubled that distance. Moreover, a sand bar at the entrance of the mouth added to navigational hazards, which only smaller vessels could usually negotiate. Nearby *Punta de Isabel* (Point Isabel) through Brazos de Santiago Pass offered a vital deeper water port for larger vessels; cargo was unloaded and then hauled overland 29 miles to Matamoros by mule packs or ox carts.[9] Celebration of Matamoros as regional center of trade lay in both actuality and potential. As one writer reflected in 1838, "its locality will, in spite of the sand bar at the entrance of the harbor, render it, in times to come, the principal sea port of the Mexican republic, and secure for it an extensive trade. ... Even, at this day, the commerce of Matamoros is considerable; coming next to that of Tampico and Vera Cruz. It will certainly, before long, surpass that of either of those two cities ..."[10]

The pioneering spirit that eventually created Matamoros was birthed in Spain's rivalry with other European powers for control of the Gulf of Mexico.[11] Indeed, Spaniards would refer to the vast area bounded by the Pánuco River at Tampico, the San Antonio

River, Matagorda Bay, and the Gulf as the crucial *Seno de México,* metaphorically translated as "the bosom of Mexico" –to be defended at all costs.[12] The French, with whom the Spanish were incessantly at war, proved the most significant threat in the Gulf. In 1706, rumors of a French shipwreck at Brazos de Santiago Pass, separating Brazos Island and Padre Island, only eight miles north of the mouth of the Río Bravo, brought an expedition under Cpt. Juan José de Hinojosa to investigate. Advancing into the area of present Matamoros, Hinojosa was so taken with the beauty of the many estuaries dotting the landscape, formed by the periodic flooding of the wild Río Bravo, that he dubbed the area *El Paraje de los Esteros Hermosos* (Place of Beautiful Estuaries) –fittingly Matamoros's maiden name. Moreover, he advocated Spanish settlement in the area to thwart further French designs. Although it took some time for his vision to become reality, Hinojosa would continue to play a pivotal role in the area's development. He would become captain and chief justice of Reynosa and a wealthy cattle baron, who begat the Lower Bravo Valley's most powerful ranching dynasty (the Hinojosa and Ballí families), and would be a founding father of Matamoros.[13]

Captain Hinojosa's enthusiastic recommendation to settle the lower Río Bravo did eventually bear fruit. José de Escandón y Helguera, under orders of the viceroy of Mexico, began this settlement process, which in turn would give him an estimable reputation as the "father of the Rio Grande Valley" and founding colonizer of Nuevo Santander –the vast area from the Pánuco River in Mexico to (originally) the San Antonio River in Texas, and named for Escandón's home province in Spain. For his success, Escandón would be made governor and captain general of Nuevo Santander in 1748; in the following year he would be titled Count of Sierra Gorda and Knight of the Order of Santiago by His Majesty Don Fernando VI, King of Spain. Launching seven expeditions, Escandón founded over twenty towns, each with a mission church, between 1747 and 1755. Escandón chose Capt. Blas María de la Garza Falcón to explore and colonize the Bajo

Bravo, the lower Río Bravo. Settlements established on the south bank include Camargo (1749), Reynosa (1749), Revilla (1750, later renamed Guerrero, now submerged in Lake Falcon), and Mier (1753); and on the north bank, Nuestra Señora de los Dolores Hacienda (1750) and Laredo (1755).[14]

In time, these settlements would be known as the *Villas del Norte*. Colonists, attracted by the promises of land ownership, a gainful ranching livelihood, payment of transportation costs, and tax exemptions for ten years, came from Nuevo León and Coahuila. Significantly, the colony of Nuevo Santander, having mission churches but no presidios, depended on the establishment of private ranches for accomplishing settlement –ironic in that, as historian Sandra L. Myers points out, "the ranch outlasted the mission and the presidio and became the only great Spanish institution to survive nearly intact into the modern age."[15] Moreover, even as early as 1757, the ranches of the *Villas del Norte*, although only 20 percent of Nuevo Santander's population, accounted for 60 percent of the *ganado mayor* (cattle, horses, mules) and 40 percent of the *ganado menor* (sheep and goats). By the end of the 18th century, the *Villas del Norte* together nearly equaled production of the haciendas and ranchos of Saltillo, the strategic economic and political hub of the northern provinces, and equaled Saltillo in tithe contributions.[16] Indeed, such ranching communities were a strategic form of colonization based on the relocation of entire extended families. This contrasts greatly with the military/missionary strategy behind the establishment of the Béxar (San Antonio) and La Bahía (Goliad) regions in Texas, where population grew as presidial soldiers (*presidiales*) intermarried into the local communities.

We should remember not only that at this time the Rio Grande was a much different river than today's and that the river did not divide, but was rather "merely an obstacle for ranchers with lands and cattle on both sides of its banks," who literally lived *con un pie en cada lado*, with a foot on each side of river.[17] While most settlers lived on the south bank of the river, lands obtained on the north side greatly expanded their ranching domains. Canoes provided

access to the opposite bank. While the work of ranching required the seasonal absence of men from their families, the women and children often remained in the towns, where schools, churches, and more protection against Indians were available. Wealthier ranchers could send herders to care for their cattle, sheep, and property. Jack Jackson, in his magisterial book *Los Mesteños*, adds, "The typical rancher [along the Rio Grande] either built a *casa fuerte* of stone or stayed in town, placing the ranch in the hands of a trusted *majordomo* –often a nephew, son-in-law, or other relative."[18] In the absence of presidios and royal soldiers, the stone *casa fuerte* "strong house" served as both home and fort against the harsh elements and Indian attack.

Matamoros, the last of the *Villas del Norte* to be established, likewise grew out of being a ranching headquarters.[19] In first exploring the area, Escandón had established a camp of operations near present Matamoros. Noting the plentiful wild Longhorn cattle, burros, deer, and especially the mustang horses (*caballada mesteña*), Escandón initially echoed Cpt. Juan José de Hinojosa's earlier enthusiasm, and recommended that the *Bajo Bravo* was wonderfully suitable for ranching and farming. Even though the nearest settlement, Reynosa, was some 60 miles up river, inspired ranchers, primarily from Camargo and Reynosa, began utilizing the attractive pasturelands at the Place of Beautiful Estuaries. As early as 1749, several ranches were established. One of these Camargo pioneers, Matiás de los Santos Coy, with his wife, Nicolasa de la Garza, christened his ranch *San Juan de los Esteros Hermosos*, connecting the beauty of the estuaries with the faithful strength of Saint John the Apostle. This ranch, which was located in what is today downtown Matamoros, approximately at 5th and Matamoros Streets, had to be abandoned, nevertheless, because of Indian attacks. Moreover, the violent overflows and serious flooding of the tempestuous Río Bravo –which gave the river its name and the area its distinctive estuaries –in addition to threat of hurricanes and the sweltering summer heat, caused even Escandón to rethink this area as inappropriate to Spanish settle-

ment. Nevertheless, the Bajo Bravo remained appealing to courageous and hardy norteño entrepreneurs for hunting and ranching livestock. Moreover, the proximity of the river to the coast offered plausible trade possibilities –legal or otherwise. In 1757, José Tienda de Cuervo, serving as the viceroy-appointed inspector of the colony of Nuevo Santander, visited the existing towns, placed the growing population at 8,993 colonists, and recommended additional missions and settlements, especially downriver. Moreover, Spain's Bourbon reforms (*reformas borbónicas*) of the mid-1760s promoted the collection of taxes through the privatization of land. Quickly, then, the incentive of private property intensified interest in the Bajo Bravo.

In 1765, José Miguel Ramírez took possession of grants north of the Río Bravo in what is now Brownsville's Amigoland Mall.[20] Others followed, notably José Salvador de la Garza and his wife María Gertrudis de la Garza Falcón, whose parents earlier had helped found Camargo. Garza was awarded 5,757 acres of land on the north bank of the river in what is now Starr County, Texas in 1767. Three years later, they moved livestock about a hundred miles downriver, in present Cameron County, literally just across the river from where Matamoros would be located. In 1772, Garza applied for a grant in this vicinity, which he called *Potrero del Espíritu Santo* (Pasture of the Holy Spirit), though the grant would not be made official until 1781.[21] The turning point for the immediate Matamoros vicinity on the south side of the river came in 1774, when twelve families from Camargo and one from Reynosa –*Las Trece Familias* (The Thirteen Families) –sought to settle the area and establish a town. Led by Camargo rancher Ignacio Anastacio de Ayala and accompanied by a multitude of vaqueros and servants, these entrepreneurial pioneers quite naturally chose the former home of Matiás de los Santos Coy as their new town site, appropriately naming the location *San Juan de los Esteros Hermosos*, thus honoring Santos Coy's earlier ranch as well as Saint John the Apostle. Under the authority of Captain Ayala, 113 *sitios de ganado mayor*[22] of land (500,364 acres) were granted

the pioneers from land owned by wealthy *hacendado* and Mexico City merchant Antonio de Urízar, as part of his grand hacienda, *La Sauteña*. Unfortunately, title disputes and lack of payment eventually forced Urízar to take the issue to court at Camargo, about 1781, but it was not until 1784, with the intervention of the political and military governor of Nuevo Santander, Don Diego de Lasaga, that the settlers finally resolved to settle and close the debt. Historian Oscar Rivera Saldaña asserts that this was the first agricultural conflict in entire colony of Nuevo Santander.[23]

Even so, the Spanish genesis of Matamoros as a place of ambitious expectations had now officially begun. These Thirteen Families, whose names would become foremost in the affairs and history of Matamoros and later in Brownsville –yet comparatively unappreciated in English-language histories –worked to establish their ranches and homes, using local Coahuiltecan Indians as ranch hands to herd cattle and horses, and to raise corn. As Américo Paredes emphasized, "If there was anything resembling a gentry among the rancheros of the Rio Grande country, it was families such as these."[24] Here are the names of these thirteen founding families (including both husbands and wives) and their colorful ranch names:[25]

- Don Juan José Cisneros, and doña María Antonia Villarreal; *Rancho Caja Pinta*;
- Don Juan Nepomuceno Cisneros Villarreal, and doña María Teresa Salinas; *Rancho La Canasta*;
- Don Miguel Chapa, and doña María Teresa Treviño; *Rancho San Juan* or *Chapeño;*
- Don Santiago Longoria, and doña María Hinojosa; *Rancho el Longoreño;*
- Capitán José Antonio de la Garza Falcón, and doña Josefa de Villarreal; *Rancho del Falconeño;*
- Don José Antonio de la Garza, and doña María Salome Sepúlveda; *Rancho del Tahuachal;*

- Don Luis Antonio García Rodríguez, and doña María Rosalía de la Garza; *Rancho de los Gachupines*;
- Don Ramón Longoria, and doña Josefa García; *Rancho Barranca y Capote*
- Don Marcelino Longoria, and doña Francisca de la Serna, also owners of *Rancho Barranca y Capote;*
- Don José de Hinojosa, and doña Antonia Benavides; *Rancho Palma;*
- Don Juan José Solís, and doña María Gertrudis Hinojosa; *Rancho del Solíseño;*
- Don Nicolás de Vela, and doña María García; *Rancho Santo Domingo y las Animas*;
- Don José Antonio Cavazos, and doña Gertrudis Cantú; also owners of *Rancho Santo Domingo y las Animas.*

In addition to laying out their new town and developing their ranches on both sides of the river, as had been done at Camargo and Reynosa, some sought to take advantage of the lucrative possibilities of the coastal trade –although still illegal at this point. On the north side of the river at the extreme southern end of Laguna Madre, a settlement, Brazos Santiago, was established on Brazos Island; by 1788 water sellers (*aguadors*) traveled here to obtain water and the location would soon become a summer retreat for ranching families moving into the area. In the mid-1770s, José Salvador de la Garza expanded domain to the pasturelands surrounding what would be called *Punta de Isabel* (Point Isabel) across the bay from Brazos Island; later a small community named *El Frontón de Santa Isabel* developed there (now Port Isabel, Texas). The Manzano family increased holdings on the south side near the mouth of the Río Bravo (*Boca del Río*); a settlement developed that would become the hamlet of Bagdad.[26] In time, *Punta de Isabel*, some twenty miles north of the river, would serve the future Matamoros as a much-needed deep-water port, offering also a strategic 360-degree unobstructed view of Laguna Madre Bay and the Gulf of Mexico; while Bagdad, five miles from the

Bravo's mouth, would offer an unloading station for boats unable or unwilling to negotiate the severe winding turns of the river to unload at Matamoros itself. Goods unloaded at either place would be transported overland to the Matamoros customs house. That was yet to come.

Meanwhile, José Salvador de la Garza established two ranches, *Espíritu Santo* and *El Tanque* (later known as *Rancho Viejo*) on his Potrero del Espíritu Santo. His grant, entitled in 1781, comprised 59½ leagues (284,416 acres) now in Cameron County, Texas, with its headquarters near present Brownsville. Today, ironically, Rancho Viejo is a resort community, boasting "stunning tropical waterways –or Resacas –and one of the finest golf courses in the Rio Grande Valley." Its marketing further confesses, "The old ranch is gone now, but the splendor is still here."[27] About 1777, Juan José de Hinojosa and his son-in-law, militia captain José María Ballí, established Rancho Santa María on the twelve-league La Feria grant in present Cameron County; by the 1790s it boasted a fairground (hence its name, *La Feria*) for fiestas, horse racing, and other sports. The modern city of La Feria, Texas, the nominal descendant of this ranching enterprise, is now part of the present Brownsville-Harlingen Metropolitan Statistical Area.

The renowned skills of vaqueros would thrive in this expanding and rich ranching culture, typically to the astonishment of visitors and outsiders. For one pertinent example, an American soldier at Matamoros, in 1846, recounted ranchero proficiency in breaking wild horses and the amazing use of the lasso, "an indispensable accompaniment to the mounted Mexican." Vaqueros "can throw over the horn of an ox, or head of a man or horse, either when stationary, or when running or dodging, with never failing skill; and not only so, but we often saw them throw it upon the feet of horses, when they were in rapid motion. How this was done, we could not understand; but still, we saw it done again and again." Vaqueros undoubtedly enjoyed this audience. "To satisfy our curiosity," the amazed American continued, "these rancheros would catch a running horse by a fore foot or a hind one, as we

wished, and never missed, although the animal might be going at full speed."[28] Likewise, the American expressed a great appreciation for Mexican ranchero attire, which effectively protected the wearer from the ever-present multitude of thorns, barbs, and prickles of the chaparral. "It is customary, in the country, for Mexicans, when riding, to have a kind of false pantaloons [*chaparreras*], which buckle round the waist and go over each leg: these are made of goat skin, and have the hair on; they are sufficiently stout to withstand the penetration of the thorns; they are called *armor de pelo* (covering of hair); and, when not used, hang to the saddle, in front of the leg." It was no wonder that men often associated this unforgiving landscape with the host of hell, calling it "the d-v-l-sh chapparal."[29]

In 1793, Father Manuel Julio de Silva and Father Francisco Puelles, Franciscan missionaries from the busy College of *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de Zacatecas*,[30] stopped at the ranching settlement established by the Thirteen Families, *San Juan de los Esteros Hermosos* –the future Matamoros –for several days to offer spiritual encouragement. (Father de Silva, who was commissary and prefect of the college's missions in Mexico and Texas, and Father Puelles had been investigating coastal Texas to establish a mission among the Karankawa Indians.[31]) Discovering that the ranching settlement on the Bravo had no religious services, Father de Silva founded a chapel (*la capilla*) and inaugurated rites. Moreover, the padres persuaded the pioneers to change the name of their settlement to *Nuestra Señora del Refugio de los Esteros* as more befittingly Catholic as well as honoring their beloved patron saint, the Mother of Jesus under the title of Our Lady of Refuge –an appellation widely popular among Franciscans serving Mexico and California –but fittingly in this place, her name denoting her refuge among the estuaries. The royal government officially elevated the community to *congregación*, in 1796, a legal status that recognized the concentration of scattered settlements or ranches into one community, as a strategic move to protect the Río Bravo from foreign invaders and add prestige to ensure the loyalty of its citizens.[32]

Even so, the new name, *Congregación de Nuestra Señora del Refugio de los Esteros*, was typically shortened to *Congregación del Refugio*. Residents simply called it "*El Refugio*." Yet the legacy of Fathers de Silva and Puelles remains a lasting one. Certainly, the faith of the settlers –of the women especially –was stirred by their tailored benefactor, Our Lady of Refuge of the Estuaries. She remains the patroness of the Diocese to this day, her image enthroned in the main altarpiece in the present magnificent cathedral.[33]

Spanish royal mercantilist law prohibited maritime trade except through the favored port at Veracruz, which made the potential for a port at *Congregación del Refugio* keenly attractive. But the Spanish government continued to reject petitions to establish a port here on the *Bravo*, prompting the predictable reaction of ever-increasing smuggling operations.[34] In fact, smuggling quickly became a respectable way of life via the coastal hamlets of Bagdad, near the mouth of the Río Bravo, and Punta de Isabel, across from Brazos de Santiago. As Matamoros historian José Raúl Canseco Botello recounts, Bagdad was first established to take advantage of the cooler coastal climate and grew in population to become a microcosm of what Matamoros was becoming. Alongside Spanish surnames were increasingly those of foreigners.[35] El Refugio itself would beckon European and American merchants, who along with the prominent families of the town were able to bypass trade restrictions because town officials were complicit in the growing clandestine trade. Ironically, the royal mercantile restrictions and apparent indifference to El Refugio's economic concerns were precisely what drove *refugenses* toward foreign trade, particularly into the economic orbit of New Orleans. Indeed, merchants commonly exploited the ongoing financial needs of the port's political and military authorities. Discounts for duties in return for monetary advances could result in merchants expecting to be free of customs obligations. A "regulated system of smuggling" is how one Englishman put it, in 1826.[36]

As early as 1800, the governor of Nuevo Santander, José Blanco, regulated Mustang excursions (*Correrías de Mesteñas*) and autho-

rized select ranchers among *refugenses* to catch horses from the "Wild Horse Desert" between the Río Bravo and the Río Nueces. Construction of what became Matamoros's distinctive Plaza de Armas and the house of municipal government (*el palacio municipal*) began in 1800 under the administration of alcalde José Cayetano Girón. In these early days, the plaza was a simple esplanade and the alcalde's residence only an adobe house with the area's signature roof of palm fronds. But, by 1805, Refugio had so prospered that its chapel was granted the title of Parish (*títulos de Curato*). Moreover, alcalde Vicente López de Herrera began construction of a larger governmental administration building and established a Joint Court of First Instance (*Juzgado Mixto de Primera Instancia*), which at that time was only the third in the entire great province of Nuevo Santander. Construction of earthworks, chain fencing and iron gates helped fortify the *Plaza de Armas*. The thirteen families of 1774 had become 100 families by 1800, and by 1810, the town numbered 2,000 inhabitants, increasingly attracting foreign merchants.[37]

While *Congregación del Refugio* formally remained under the jurisdiction first of Camargo and then of Reynosa until 1814, the village enjoyed limited autonomy as early as 1793, when Pedro López Prieto, a leading rancher who married the widow of the founder, Ignacio Anastacio de Ayala, was elected first alcalde, although there is disagreement among Mexican historians on this.[38] Over the years, others held this and additional governmental positions. For example, José María Ballí, an officer of the Militia of Provincial and Frontier Cavalry and a son of the prominent Ballí ranching family, was elected *justicia mayor* (chief justice) in 1804. His widow, Rosa Hinojosa de Ballí, who became the family matriarch and the first "cattle queen" of Texas, was a daughter of one of the founding Thirteen Families of Matamoros, Don José de Hinojosa and Doña Antonia Benavides. Doña Rosa was known as *La Patrona*, not only because of her vast employment of *vaqueros* and *peones*, but because she also 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 what are today Cameron, Hidalgo, Willacy, Kenedy, and Starr counties. Doña Rosa's oldest son and business partner, Padre José Nicolás Ballí, was a widely known Catholic missionary priest, ordained in Spain in 1795, and who conducted religious services in all the villas and haciendas in the *Bajo Bravo*, including Reynosa, Mier, Revilla, Camargo –but he particularly served El Refugio. Padre Ballí was himself a significant landowner in what is now South Texas, including *Rancho Santa Cruz de Buena Vista* on his *Isla de Santiago* grant, fittingly known today as Padre Island.[39]

Braving isolation, marauding Indian attacks, harsh geography, quirky climate, and wild animals, by the early 1800s, most of the vast area between the Río Bravo and Nueces had been allocated to pioneer ranchers through land grants. Their extensive cattle and Mustang herds roamed free and became wild, adding to those herds already characterizing what would be dubbed the "Wild Horse Desert." *Refugenses* Don Vicente López de Herrera, his three sons, and Don Gregorio Valentín Farías established *Barranco Blanco* ranch on the *La Bahía* Road at *Agua Dulce* Creek. Don Martín de León, an aristocratic *criollo* and future empresario and founder of a Mexican colony at Victoria, Texas, established a ranch between Chiltipin Creek and the Aransas River, and then a new ranch on east bank of the Nueces River near the site of present San Patricio.[40] These ranches would help bind the future Texas settlements at San Patricio, Refugio, Goliad, and Victoria to the orbit of Matamoros.

These enterprising rancheros notwithstanding, as historian Mary Jo Galindo has asserted, the Rio Grande communities and ranches, and the dangers of the frontier provided members of lower *casta* groups an opportunity for social advancement, "to move from a life as a wage laborer in a mine or hacienda to a life as a property owner and livestock raiser," including owning privileges "usually reserved for peninsulares or criollos, like owning property, carrying a weapon, and riding a horse ... regardless of their race or ethnic backgrounds." More than this, "mestizos and mu-

lattos who owned land and property, who dressed like *españoles*, spoke Spanish, and practiced Catholicism were either themselves regarded as Spanish in official records or their children became *españoles* when baptized."[41]

Local events do not happen in a vacuum. Amid the revolutionary Napoleonic Wars in Europe, Spain rose up against French domination, in 1808, and, with English help, defeated Napoleon in the Peninsular War. This *Guerra de la Independencia* was a key factor in shaping Spanish nationality and constitutionalism, resulting in the more liberal and democratic Constitution of Cádiz (1812). Accordingly, *Congregación del Refugio* won full autonomy in 1814, the same year that *refugenses* established and financed the first primary school (*Escuela de Primeras Letras*) for their children. Also by 1814, the number of ranchos numbered 28 –double the number since the settlement's founding. By 1820, a census conducted by Padre Ballí revealed that the growing village of Refugio had a population of 2,320 people including (using his categories) 52 *Indios*, 33 *Mestizos*, 746 *castas*, and 1,489 *Españoles*.[42] El Refugio attracted growth not just because of ranching and livestock, but also commerce and trade. At the time, however, the Spanish crown's mercantilist trade restrictions favored only Vera Cruz as the monopoly port, which made any maritime trade through Refugio illegal. Historian Armondo C. Alonzo concludes that Spanish policy so "severely limited the growth of internal and external trade" that the northeastern frontier provinces remained dependent on merchants in Saltillo, Zacatecas, and Mexico City. As a result, "many necessities were lacking," and "consumers paid dearly" for the goods they did receive.[43] Quite understandably, smuggling commercial goods –primarily from New Orleans –became common enough to be both lucrative and respectable. Ironically, it would link the future Matamoros to the United States economy and American filibustering, particularly during the Texas Revolution and the later attempts to establish an independent Republic of the Rio Grande.[44]

During the uprisings for Mexican independence (1810-1821), El Refugio, like the other Villas del Norte, remained publicly loyal. The elite *norteño* landowners, having benefited considerably from the generosity of the Spanish government, referred to themselves as "*buenos vasallos*" (good subjects). They controlled each town's political loyalties, which assured that only the most prominent (and therefore most trustworthy) community members (*vecinos más principales*) would be elected to the local *ayuntamiento*.[45] In historian Arturo Zárate Ruiz's apt analogy, unlike Texas, which was the rebellious teenager ("*adolescente Texas*"), Refugio, still just a child, remained more attached to the Spanish motherland ("*tan niña* ... Refugio *permanecería completamente apegada a su madre*").[46]

Nonetheless, in fighting against the independence uprisings, the royal governor of Nuevo Santander required sacrifice and donations from each community –money, cattle, horses, mules, sheep, goats, corn, salt, and wood, in addition to providing volunteers for the royal army, and housing and feeding soldiers. Over time, this became a severe economic strain, even unaffordable, according to protest by Refugio's alcalde. El Refugio seemed to bear the brunt of such demands. Not only had the insurrections disrupted local income from trade but also the government's demands exacerbated crop losses from drought and livestock loses from Indian attacks, which ironically had increased as royal soldiers on the frontier were removed to fight insurrectionists. As early as 1811, *refugenses* circulated a manifesto of discontent with the Spanish government. Moreover, they had to endure, in the pointed words of its *ayuntamiento* to the governor in 1814, "the excesses that some soldiers committed" in appropriating supplies, cattle, horses, other livestock, and even so-called "volunteers" as if their actions in such a desolate region would have no repercussions. But the government's response was only reprimand for not fulfilling their duty to king and country.[47]

So not surprisingly, *refugenses* committed small, individual, courageous acts of resistance in the form of noncompliance to the governor's demands, acts repeated among the other villas. There were

even pockets of rebel support throughout Nuevo Santander, especially as fomented by José Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara, future leader of the Gutiérrez-Magee Expedition, who was from Revilla upriver on the Bravo. Rebels even occupied Revilla, Camargo and Reynosa, in 1812. Moreover, in 1815, royal soldiers came to Refugio, which had become a base for insurgent operations, looking for José María Cavazos, leader of a large group of Carrizo Indians and others fighting for independence. In this, *refugenses* were subjected to a special tax to defray the costs. This was not an isolated incident.[48]

But Refugio's main concern was less with revolutionaries or governmental demands than attacks from Lipan and Comanche Indians as *refugenses* were laboring to transform the harsh frontier into a productive ranching economy.[49] Defending against Indians and building up the ranches required inter-cooperation among the frontier northern towns, families and friends, making local loyalties –*patria chica* –paramount out of necessity. Ironically, Refugio was burdened with internal disputes over land rights between the majority families originating from Camargo and the "upstarts" (*advenedizos*) from Reynosa. In this, the *camarguenses* not only controlled the local government but also found an ally in the Spanish crown. Historian Arturo Zárate-Ruiz posits that this feud even impaired Refugio's growth, albeit only temporarily.[50] Significantly, Father Ballí, maternal grandson of Refugio's original pioneer, Cpt. Juan José de Hinojosa, helped forge a peace among these factions, in part by beginning construction of the *Catedral de Nuestra Senora del Refugio* (Cathedral of Our Lady of Refuge) with contributions from area families. His effort was aided by severe flooding of the Río Bravo in 1814, which forced the move of the original chapel and the entire village plaza further south to its current site at 5th between Morelos and Gonzalez streets –the highest point in town.

Ballí's vision for a magnificent cathedral prompted him to entrust the work to Mateo Passement, a renowned architect and brick mason, based at that time in New Orleans –again underscoring Matamoros's vital connection with the Crescent City of the United

States. Father Ballí died in 1829, but his successors, Fathers Rafael Lira and José María Rodríguez, oversaw the completion of the building in July 1831.[51] The rising cathedral of *Nuestra Señora del Refugio* in the new location testified symbolically to the village's faith and resourcefulness. Its increasing wealth and trade would be officially recognized, under the new government of independent Mexico, as *Puerto* (sea port) with a custom's house, an elevated status as a *Villa* (town), and a new name to honor a hero of Mexican independence, Mariano Matamoros y Guridi.[52] The growing city quickly became symbolic of bountiful expectations.

As early as 1795, Félix María Calleja, then commandant-general of the *Provincias Internas de Oriente* (Eastern Interior Provinces), had recommended to the Spanish crown opening a port on the Río Bravo. His later successor, Joaquín de Arredondo, commandant-general from 1813-1821, echoed the idea of liberating the northeast from the economic monopoly of Vera Cruz by establishing a port at El Refugio –an objective shared by the "Father of Mexican federalism" Miguel Ramos Arizpe. Archive sources indicate that there was a customs house at *Congregación de Refugio* as early as 1813.[53] But it was not until November 9, 1820 that Refugio alcalde Juan José Chapa received royal instructions by special mail: King Ferdinand VII of Spain had sanctioned the opening of a port to serve the area (*Puerto del Refugio*), to be located near the mouth of the Río Bravo. Through Bagdad, as this port came to be called, traders brought a variety of goods and groceries to Refugio. At the edge of El Refugio on the road to Bagdad, a market was soon located, which in time became Matamoros' famed *El Mercado* portrayed in photographs and postcards.[54] On November 22, 1821, in the final stage of Mexico's War of Independence from Spain, Pedro José García, then alcalde of El Refugio, received a special courier with orders to carry out a formal ceremony of taking the oath of independence in accordance with Agustín de Iturbide's Plan of Iguala. Reportedly, all the families attended with a great feast.[55]

Recognizing Refugio's commercial potential, in January 1824 Iturbide's new Empire government confirmed the previous royal authorization, declaring *Puerto del Refugio* as "essential for better communication and better trade" (*"indispensable para una mejor comunicación y un mejor comercio"*). Of course, this action legalized what had already become a very active smuggling trade, primarily with merchants in New Orleans. It followed then that a customs house was soon established, whose name, *Aduana Marítima y Fronteriza del Refugio,* recognized Refugio's growing legal importance in both maritime and frontier commerce. By November 1825, the supreme government's Universal Secretary of the Treasury (*Secretario Universal de Hacienda*) set the maritime tariff rate at a hefty 25 percent. In an effort to stimulate commerce on the river, the government also granted permission to several entrepreneurs to operate steamships on the river.[56]

Given the devastation that the war for independence cost the Mexican economy, the opening of Refugio's port made strategic economic sense. A contemporary estimate put losses at 70 million pesos for agriculture, 20 million pesos for mining, 11.8 million pesos for industry, and an enormous 786 million pesos for currency, mostly silver. To this must be added the collapse of the credit structure, which had already been severely weakened when the crown had earlier confiscated church wealth to prosecute the Napoleonic war in Europe, forcing church bodies to foreclose on loans totaling 44 million pesos –which in turn had fueled discontent toward independence. The economic chaos and credit collapse after independence forced Mexico's government and entrepreneurs to turn to foreign sources for credit and to seek promising streams of tax revenues such as El Refugio expectantly afforded.[57]

Iturbide's short-lived empire, itself, was challenged by those seeking to create a republic instead. Among them were Antonio López de Santa Anna and Guadalupe Victoria, who issued the *Plan de Casa Mata,* calling for Iturbide's overthrow. Iturbide's abdication, in 1823, led to the creation of a new federal-style government, in 1824. In this new republic of Mexico, the former Spanish

colony of Nuevo Santander became the constitutional free state (*estado libre*) of Tamaulipas.[58] So, it was in this context that, on January 28, 1826, Don Lucas Fernández, governor of the new Free and Sovereign State of Tamaulipas, authorized the decree passed by the state Constitutional Congress, which proclaimed that the former *Congregación del Refugio* be elevated in status to a *Villa* (town) and renamed Matamoros, to perpetuate the memory Mariano Matamoros, one of the exalted martyrs of the new nation. That year, the population reached 3,993, with the ranchos reporting 25,319 horses, 7,623 cattle, and 27,082 sheep and goats. The ranchos of Matamoros enjoyed a brisk and profitable business selling mules, cattle, working oxen, and especially horses – both wild and broken –to buyers in Tamaulipas, Nuevo León, and Texas. Moreover, Villa de Matamoros quickly became the long-awaited international maritime port and conduit of a voluminous trade –now legal –for the entire northeastern region of Mexico. Recognizing its commercial potential, merchants –Mexican as well as European and American –flocked to the town, which blossomed to as many as 10,000 residents between 1828 and 1830, skyrocketing to 16,372 by 1837, which was almost the combined populations of the other upriver towns. Matamoros' expected increase in trade was quickly reflected in tax monthly revenues through its customs house, which, in 1826, reached 51,000, and exceeded 100,000 pesos per month by 1832.[59]

One measure of the importance of this revenue was the increased military presence, as soldiers were stationed in Matamoros to protect the customs house, but also to protect the citizens from Comanche and Apache Indians, and even to protect against a feared Spanish invasion from 1827 to 1829.[60] These ever-increasing revenues became vital to the Mexican national government, trying to pay down the tremendous debts incurred from the war for independence, as well as the costs of running the new nation and paying the army on the northern frontier. The combined revenues from Tampico and Matamoros "completely financed the daily needs of the military in northeastern Mexico."[61]

The central point is this: Matamoros quickly became the revenue-producing key for Mexico long before it later attracted the plans of revolutionaries in Texas with the so-called Matamoros expeditions.[62] Indeed, Matamoros was crucial in the national vision, not just to establish a vibrant economy, but also to help make Mexico the economic colossus of the American continent. There was nothing carved in stone that the upstart United States to the north would assume this position. More than this, Matamoros would be the long-sought solution to keep Texas out of the hands of expansionist Americans by prospering northeastern Mexico, including Texas, with a lifestyle that patriotic and loyal *mexicanos* could relish. Even the U.S. consul in Matamoros, David Willard Smith, recognized this in an 1832 dispatch to Washington, asserting that the city had "a decided preponderance in a commercial and military point of view" to any other port on the Gulf of Mexico. (Notably, Smith was also a merchant in the city.)[63] In a word, Matamoros became *la puerta*, the gateway, to prosperity. Thus, Texas colonist and revolutionary soldier Creed Taylor's later observation that "Matamoros was an opulent city," "the port of entry for a vast territory embracing a quarter part of Old Mexico and all of New Mexico" and a "great maritime mart" with "Spanish hidalgos and Mexican dons revel[ing] in oriental splendor" was not the vain imaginings of Anglo Texan revolutionaries, but a reflection of Mexican expectations about the river city already in place.[64]

Matamoros' direct connection with New Orleans and American shipping brought a considerable array of imported consumer goods manufactured primarily in England, and, in descending order of quantity, the United States, France, Germany, Cuba, and Spain. The products were chiefly cottons, linens, and woolens, but even ceramics, silks, paper, ironware, and jewelry, at competitive prices. For example, English wares, especially mass-produced ceramics, became cheaper to buy than ceramics from Central Mexico. Exports through Matamoros included (in descending order of value) specie, hides, wool, horses, and mules.[65] Nevertheless, the law prohibited importation of various crops

and manufactured products in an attempt to encourage Mexican production. Not surprisingly, smuggling continued to be alluring both to Mexican traders as well as to immigrant European and American merchants attracted to settle in Matamoros, many of whom married into prominent Mexican families. Drawing upon their long-standing relationships with foreign merchants, particularly at New Orleans, *contrabandistas* (smugglers) imported clothing, shoes, liquor, tiles, corn, rice, flour, coffee, sugar, cotton, and tobacco, and exported hides and wool, but mostly silver bullion used to pay for smuggled imports. Although Mexicans did own, captain and crew, sea-going ships and riverboats –Mexican law decreed in 1828 that all ships transporting goods to Mexican ports to be Mexican owned –Americans and Europeans owned and manned most of the ships involved in the smuggling trade. On the other hand, Mexicans provided the preponderance of overland transport.[66]

The time-honored ox cart driver (*boyero*) and muleteer (*arriero*) were ubiquitous on the roads to Matamoros, given the city's centrality to the region's trade. (As a modern parallel, consider the innumerable trucks regularly seen on roads and highways today.) "We met these continually," commented one American in Matamoros in 1846, for "the whole internal commerce of Mexico is carried on by means of [them]."[67] All manner of goods, supplies, and necessities were transported to the Matamoros customs house from the city's three unloading docks –at the *Paso de la Anacuita* ferry crossing just north of the city (subsequently known as Fort Paredes), at Bagdad, near the river's mouth, and at the deep-water landing at *Punta de Isabel*, across from Brazos de Santiago. As the goods reached the customs house, a customary ritual took place. The merchant presented the official with his bill of merchandise (*manifiesto*) listing the goods that would be "manifested" at the customs house. Said one observer, the goods "are strictly examined, to see that they contain nothing but what is allowed to come into the country, for there are many articles [contraband] that are not admitted. –This examination, however, is slight, or entirely

omitted, if the merchant [who ordered the goods] gives to the [customs] collector, or *administrador*, a bribe." As another witness of the Mexican system noted, the inspection "is rarely carried on with rigid adherence to the rules; for an 'actuated sympathy' for the merchants, and a 'specific desire' to promote trade" caused the inspector "to open a few of such packages only, as will exhibit the least discrepancy with the manifest [bills of merchandise]." A custom prevailed "of dividing the legal duties into three equal parts: one for the officers –a second for the merchants –the other for the government." Next, the merchant concluded a bargain for transportation of the goods "at so much a *carga*, –that is, a mule load. The merchant then gave security that he would pay this amount within an agreed time, one to five months or longer, depending on the distance the goods would be taken.[68]

Finally, the goods were on their way to merchant houses of Matamoros and beyond. The heavily laden transports and patiently plodding animals populated the roads to Camargo, Reynosa, Laredo, and the other northern towns, and on to Monterey and Saltillo, to San Louis Potosí, Zacatecas, even to far-away Chihuahua and Durango, and across the Nueces River into Texas on the La Bahía Road. While Texas also received goods (legal and contraband) through a number of Texas ports (small ones like Copano and Linnville, but especially Galveston and Velasco), the land-bound northern Mexican states had few options other than Matamoros, Tampico, and Vera Cruz. One contemporary estimated that the port of Matamoros supplied "nearly half" of the goods brought into Chihuahua. Two, four, even six or more oxen pulled overloaded oxcarts while a full drove of pack mules could number even sixty animals! Additional customs duties had to be paid along the way in each town, if any goods were to be sold there; then, at the intended destination, an additional "internal duty" was assessed, as well as a "municipal duty" to the city or town. It is noteworthy that the *arrieros* and *boyeros* held an esteemed reputation for honesty and trust, for the whole interior system of commerce depended upon them; moreover, since most

of the merchants in Matamoros were mainly English, Americans, French, and Italians, the *arrieros* and *boyeros* had more interaction with foreigners than any other class of citizen.[69]

Understandably, the commandant generals of the Eastern Internal Provinces, Manuel de Mier y Terán, Pedro Lemus, Vicente Filisola, and Martín Perfecto de Cos, located their headquarters in Matamoros as the most strategic point to supervise the political and military affairs in Texas, Coahuila, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas. More and more merchants, shopkeepers, government officials, clerks, doctors, lawyers, teachers, craftsmen, and entertainers were drawn here, as were travelers and foreigners. It became increasingly common to hear English, French, Italian, German, and other languages spoken amid the native Spanish, as Matamoros nurtured its international and cosmopolitan character. As many as 300 foreigners were residents by the mid 1830s.[70]

Ranching, though still important in the cultural and economic life of Matamoros, now was a component of a much more elaborate economic society in which commerce and trade increasingly dominated. Moreover, the military became a constant presence, and, as military commanders repeatedly called upon *matamorenses* to furnish cattle and horses to their troops, grumbling increased, as did formal protests and passive disobedience, not unlike the colonial period during the war for independence. Not surprisingly, political views varied, though they tended toward federalist rather than centralist views. At least eight gazettes appeared, four becoming major newspapers vying for public opinion: *El Federalista de Matamoros*, *El Argos*, *La Brisa*, *El Restaurador*, and the ultra-liberal pro-Federalist *El Mercurio del Puerto de Matamoros* published by the colorful George ("Jorge") Fisher. The multi-lingual Fisher had served as customs collector, auctioneer, and official interpreter for the port of Matamoros, but authorities shut down his newspaper and expelled him for being part of a plot with José Antonio Mexía to occupy Tampico in hopes of instigating revolt against Santa Anna.[71]

As historian David Weber observed, having broken free of the grasp of Spanish colonial mercantilism, *norteños* –especially *matamorenses* –embraced American capitalism.[72] That vision was intoxicating; but it would have unanticipated and grave repercussions in Texas. Nevertheless, the main point again is this: long before revolutionaries in Texas saw economic gain or alliance in Matamoros, the city was already generating local, regional and national wealth. Moreover, the city had had become the region's commercial and military center, donning the mantel of headquarters for the Eastern Interior Provinces and was a major element in the government's strategy in preserving Texas for Mexico.

In their successive recommendations about developing Texas in order to preserve it from American encroachment, Mexican officials Manuel de Mier y Terán, Simón Tadeo Ortiz de Ayala, and Juan Nepomuceno Almonte each advocated that it was crucial to develop the coastal trade and improve economic ties of the northwestern frontier and Texas with the rest of the country, and in this, Matamoros played a key role. "Without searching for models abroad," Ortiz de Ayala asserted to his government in 1831, look to the "flowering of Tampico, Matamoros and Mazatlan." Free trade (*comercio libre*) interconnecting Matamoros, Galveston and Matagorda with other Mexican ports and the Atlantic was vital. He recognized particularly that the Río Bravo del Norte, "the largest in the Republic," if developed and promoted, would serve as a "bastion and ramparts against the savages," preserve the "integrity of the national territory," and be a conduit for trade and civilization. Matamoros, he stressed, was the obvious "key" (*capital*).[73]

Almonte prophesized, in 1835, that "Texas is soon destined to be the most flourishing section of this republic," but asked rhetorically, "If, then, the condition of Texas is so prosperous what prevents Mexicans from enjoying its prosperity?' Part of the answer was "to encourage sea trade between Texas and ports of the Gulf of Mexico." Like his predecessors, he recommended allowing "coastwise trade between the colonies in Texas and the ports at Matamoros, Tampico, and Veracruz. Only thus," he stressed, "will

we succeed in making the Texans build closer connections with the rest of the republic (which up to the present they ignore) and send their products to the interior ..."[74]

Opening trade would also reduce smuggling, which in turn would serve to increase the relevance and value of Matamoros as the "natural center" of the region's commerce. Almonte estimated that the mostly illegal trade into Texas, primarily coming through Galveston and Matagorda, "now exceeds 600 thousand pesos annually" and predicted it would reach a million pesos within a year. Significantly, he stressed, these goods "are not all consumed within the country; they penetrate through Tamaulipas and Nuevo León into the states of San Luis Potosi, Zacatecas, Durango, and Chihuahua." Such multiregional commerce should logically be funneled through Matamoros "because since the port of Matamoros is closer to the center, it should be more natural for imports to come through there. But," he continued, "since through Texas they pay no duties whatsoever, unless a merchant wishes in good faith to send some goods through customs at Goliad – the only one that exists at the present –it follows that they find it very convenient to introduce those goods through the aforesaid [Texas] ports."[75]

Given its centrality, Matamoros had additional value in intelligence gathering. Col. José María Diaz Noriega, who like Almonte was commissioned for a fact-finding mission by the Mexican government, was given secret instructions: "seek with the greatest prudence all news that he can regarding the conduct of the Anglo American consul at that port related to the affairs in Texas."[76] Of course, it cut the other way. Colonists in Texas, notably Tejanos and Irish in San Patricio, Refugio, and Victoria, had family, friends, and business contacts in Matamoros who regularly supplied them with information. This exchange became crucial as Santa Anna consolidated Centralist power, in 1834, and then sought to corral Federalist extremism on the northern frontier and to preserve Texas from American intrusion. In 1835-36, Matamoros played a key role in several conflicting schemes, vying either to preserve

Mexican sovereignty, sustain federalism, establish a new federalist Mexican state, create an independent Texas (then to be annexed to the United States), or even to establish a separate "republic of the Rio Grande." Such is the complexity of the Texas Revolution and the centrality of Matamoros in that tempestuous event. The expectations for Matamoros were high, for much was at stake.[77]

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Endnotes

1 Note to readers: Quotations throughout the text retain original spellings as found but without the intrusive [*sic*], which can be distracting.

2 "Matamoros: La Gran Puerta de México," <http://www.lagranpuertademexico.com/inicio.htm> [Accessed August 2, 2013]. For an extended treatment, see Craig H. Roell, *Matamoros and the Texas Revolution* (Denton: Texas State Historical Association, 2013).

3 In this context, I am using the term norteños specifically to mean the Spanish Mexican settlers in the Villas del Norte on the lower Río Bravo, as per Omar S. Valerio-Jiménez, "Neglected Citizens and Willing Traders: The Villas del Norte (Tamaulipas) in Mexico's Northern Borderlands, 1749–1846," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 18 (Summer 2002), 251-96; and Oscar J. Martínez, "The Mexican Northern Frontier, 1800-1821," *The Handbook of Hispanic Cultures: History*, edited by Alfredo Jiménez (Houston: University of Houston/Arte Público Press, 1994), 261-62.

4 David J. Weber, *The Mexican Frontier, 1821–1846: The American Southwest Under Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), 240, 284; Valerio-Jiménez, "Neglected Citizens and Willing Traders," 262.

5 Juan Mora-Torres, *The Making of the Mexican Border: The State, Capitalism, and Society in Nuevo León, 1848-1910* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), 30-31.

6 "*Sobre un decreto dado por el estado de Tamaulipas, Abril 7 de 1832,*" *Recopilacion de leyes, decretos, bandos, reglamentos, circulares y providencias: de los supremos poderes y otras autoridades de la Republica Mexicana* (México: Impr. J.M. Fernández de Lara, 1836), 56.

7 Leroy P. Graf, "The Economic History of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, 1820–1875." PhD diss. (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1942), 55; David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 16, 18.

8 Woodman wrote the guide on behalf of the Galveston Bay and Texas Land Company to entice settlers from both America and Europe to colonize the lands assigned

to empresarios Joseph Vehlein, David G. Burnet, and Lorenzo de Zavala. David Woodman, Jr., *Guide to Texas Emigrants* (Boston: M. Hawes, 1835), 129-30. <http://texashistory.unt.edu/data/TBDP/UNT/meta-pth-27723.tkl> [Accessed August 12, 2013].

9 Juan N. Almonte noted in his report on Texas in 1835 that San Patricio's empresario John "Juan" McCullen had proposed plans to the government to re-route the Río Bravo to Punta de Isabel to avoid the sand bar at the river's mouth, but nothing came of this ambitious enterprise. Juan N. Almonte, "Statistical Report on Texas," translated by Carlos E. Castañeda, *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* XXVIII (January 1925), 192.

10 *Ambrosio de Letinez, Or, The First Texian Novel Embracing a Description of the Countries Bordering on the Río Bravo, with Incidents of the War of Independence.* "By A. T. Myrthe" [Anthony Ganilh]. (New York: Charles Francis & Co., 1842), 81, 187. First published *as Mexico Versus Texas, A Descriptive Novel, Most of the Characters of which consist of living persons.* "By a Texian." (Philadelphia: N. Siegried, 1838).

11 See Manuel Humberto González Ramos, "Conquistas Fracasadas," *El Bravo* (H. Matamoros: 8 de marzo de 1998) Suplemento Dominical, 12; Arturo Zárate-Ruiz, *Matamoros: Éxitos y pretextos de identidad: su historia, territorio, cultura y comida* (Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas, México: Colegio de Tamaulipas, 2005), 15; Eugenio del Hoyo, *Historia del nuevo reino de león, 1577-1723* (Monterrey, México: Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores, 1972; reimpresión, Fondo Editorial Nuevo León, 2005), 14, 17; David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 34.

12 Eugenio del Hoyo, *Historia del nuevo reino de león*, 415. *Seno Mexicano* reference identified in Mary Margaret McAllen Amberson, James A. McAllen and Margaret H. McAllen, *I Would Rather Sleep in Texas: A History of the Lower Rio Grande Valley and the People of the Santa Anita Land Grant* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 2003), 1-2, 17.

13 Amberson, et al., *I Would Rather Sleep in Texas*, 25; Clemente Rendón de la Garza, *Vidas ilustres en la historia y la cultura de la Heroica Matamoros* (Monterrey, México: Grafo Print Editores, S.A., 2000), 87; Milo Kearney, Anthony K. Knopp, Antonio Zavaleta (eds.), *Additional Studies in Rio Grande Valley History* (Brownsville: University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College, 2008), 78-80; Homero Vera, "Hinojosa o Ynojosa Surname," *El Mesteno* 5 (Summer-Fall 2002), 16-17; Jack Jackson, *Los Mesteños: Spanish Ranching in Texas, 1721-1821* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1986; 2006), 446. The series of books edited by Kearney, Knopp, and Zavaleta offers an excellent window into the history and culture of the Rio Grande Valley.

14 Amberson, et al, *I Would Rather Sleep in Texas*, 14-15.

15 Sandra L. Myers, *The Ranch in Spanish Texas, 1691-1800* (El Paso: University of Texas at El Paso/Texas Western Press, 1969), p. 56, a point echoed in Joe

S. Graham, *El Rancho in South Texas: Continuity and Change from 1750* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1994).

16 Patricia Osante, *Orígenes del Nuevo Santander, 1748–1772* (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1997), 143, 179; Valerio-Jiménez, "Neglected Citizens and Willing Traders," 252–55; Armando C. Alonzo, "A History of Ranching in Nuevo Santander's Villas del Norte, 1730s-1848," in *Coastal Encounters: The Transformation of the Gulf South in the Eighteenth Century,* edited by Richmond F. Brown (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 195, 208.

17 Beatriz de la Garza, *A Law for the Lion, A Tale of Crime and Injustice in the Borderlands* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 3; Mary Jo Galindo, "Con Un Pie En Cada Lado: Ethnicities and the Archaeology of Spanish Colonial Ranching Communities Along the Lower Río Grande Valley." PhD diss. (Austin: University of Texas, 2003): ix.

18 Jackson, *Los Mesteños,* 444; Florence Johnson Scott, *Historical Heritage of the Lower Rio Grande: A Historical Record of Spanish Exploration, Subjugation and Colonization of the Lower Rio Grande Valley and the Activities of José Escandon, Count of Sierra Gorda, together with the Development of Towns and Ranches under Spanish, Mexican, and Texas Sovereignties, 1747-1848* (San Antonio: Naylor, 1937), 70.

19 Matamoros' distinctive history is not generally available in English-language sources, with the exception of Milo Kearney and Anthony Knopp, *Boom and Bust: The Historical Cycles of Matamoros and Brownsville* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1991).

20 Zárate-Ruiz, *Matamoros,* 30.

21 Clotilde P. García, "Garza Falcón, María Gertrudis de la," *Handbook of Texas Online* <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fga92> [Accessed September 7, 2013]. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

22 Each *sitio de ganado mayor* (or simply *sitio*) equaled 5,000 *varas* x 5,000 *varas*, or a *legua* (league) squared, approximately 4,428 acres *–poco más o menos,* as was said, "a little more or less." C. Allan Jones, *Texas Roots: Agriculture and Rural Life before the Civil War* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2005), 46-47.

23 Zárate-Ruiz, *Matamoros,* 31; Óscar Rivera Saldaña, *Frontera Heróica. Tomo I. Colonización del Noreste de México. (1748–1821),* (H. Matamoros, Tamaulipas, México: Autor, 1994) 47–49. See also Octavio Herrera Pérez, "Del señoría a la posrevolucón: evolución histórica de una hacienda en el noreste de México; el caso de La Sauteña." *Historia mexicana* 43 (julio/sept. 1993), 5-49; Armando C. Alonzo, *Tejano Legacy: Rancheros and Settlers in South Texas, 1734-1900* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998), 55-58; and Armando C. Alonzo, "Ranching in Nuevo Santander's Villas de Norte," in *Coastal Encounters: The Transformation of the Gulf South in the Eighteenth Century,* edited by Richmond F. Brown (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 187-211.

24 Américo Paredes, *Folklore and Culture on the Texas-Mexican Border* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 250.

25 Alfonso Dávila Gómez, "Breve Historia de Matamoros" <http://blue.utb.edu/localhistory/events_matamoros.html> [Accessed August 17, 2013]; "Estado de Tamaulipas: Matamoros," *Enciclopedia de los Municipios de México* (México, D.F.: Secretaría de Gobernación: Centro Nacional de Desarrollo Municipal), http://www.e-local.gob.mx/wb2/ELOCAL/EMM_tamaulipas [Accessed August 17, 2013]. Each of these historic families can be traced in detail at Raul N. Longoria's Genealogy Database <http://www.raullongoria.net/Genealogy/FamilyTree/index.html> [Accessed August 17, 2013], a superb database of 12,773 individuals, with sources.

26 Zárate-Ruiz, *Matamoros*, 39. Official claim to the Point Isabel area was not made until 1828, when it was granted to Rafael García as part of the Potrero (Pasture) de Santa Isabel. Alicia A. Garza, "Port Isabel, Texas," *Handbook of Texas Online*, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hgp09> [Accessed September 07, 2013]. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

27 <http://www.ranchoviejotexas.com/About> [Accessed August 28, 2008].

28 George C. Furber, *The Twelve Months Volunteer: Or, Journal of a Private, in the Tennessee Regiment of Cavalry, in the Campaign, in Mexico, 1846-7* (Cincinnati: J.A. & U.P. James, 1848), 225.

29 Furber, *The Twelve Months Volunteer*, 165-66, 183-85, 296-97.

30 *Colegio apostólico de Propaganda Fide, de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de Zacatecas.*

31 Father de Silva's efforts resulted in establishing and then relocating Nuestra Señora del Refugio in 1793, the last of the Texas missions, which although failed in its outreach to the Karankawas, became the village of Refugio and headquarters of the Power and Hewetson Colony in Texas.

32 Carlos E. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, 1519-1936* (7 vols. Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones, 1936), V, 211; Grace Augusta Edman (trans.), "A Compilation of Royal Decrees Relating to Texas and Other Northern Provinces of New Spain, 1719-1799." M.A. Thesis (Austin: University of Texas, 1930), 499.

33 See Clemente Rendón de la Garza, *Bicentenario de Nuestra Señora del Refugio de los Esteros cathedral* (H. Matamoros. Tamaulipas, México: s.n., 1994). For the larger activities of the College of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de Zacatecas and Father de Silva, see Edward John Hickey, *The Society for the Propagation of the Faith: Its Foundation, Organization, and Success*. Studies in Church History Volume III (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1922).

34 Galindo, "Con Un Pie En Cada Lado," 309-10; Valerio-Jiménez, "Neglected Citizens and Willing Traders," 265-66.

35 José Raúl Canseco Botello, *Historia de Matamoros*, 2d ed. (H. Matamoros, Tamaulipas, México: Tipográficos de Litográfica Jardín, 1981), 70.

36 Valerio-Jiménez, "Neglected Citizens and Willing Traders," 267; George Francis Lyon, *Journal of a Residence and Tour in the Republic of Mexico in the Year 1826: With Some Account of the Mines of that Country* (London: John Murray, 1828), 36.

37 Carlos Eduardo Flores Montemayor, *Historia, lenguas y leyendas indígenas de Tamaulipas* (Victoria [México]: [Gobierno del Estado de Tamaulipas], Instituto Tamaulipeca para la Cultura y las Artes, 2003), 184; Canseco Botello, *Historía de Matamoros*, 113; Zárate-Ruiz, *Matamoros*, 34.

38 Andrés F. Cuellar asserts Ignacio Anastacio de Ayala was first alcalde in 1797, as does *Enciclopedia de los Municipios de México* (2005); but Clemente Rendón de la Garza maintains that it was a son, Callisto de Ayala, since the former had already died in 1783 or 1786. Oscar Rivera Saldaña contends, however, that the first alcalde was Pedro Lopez Prieto, elected after the congregation was established in 1793. Lopez, who became a ranching leader, married the widow of Ignacio Anastacio de Ayala. See Zárate-Ruiz, *Matamoros*, 33-34, who cites Andrés F. Cuéllar, *De Matamoros a México con sus gobernantes*, (H. Matamoros, Tamaulipas, México: Ediciones Archivo Histórico, 1996), 20; Clemente Rendón de la Garza, *Resumen Cronológico de Matamoros*, <http://matamoros.com.mx/resumen-cronologico-de-matamoros/> [Accessed August 24, 2013]; and Oscar Rivera, Saldaña, *Diccionario Biográfico de la Heróica Matamoros*, (H. Matamoros, Tamaulipas, México: Librería Española, 2001), 31, 553.

39 Clotilde P. García, "Hinojosa de Ballí, Rosa María," *Handbook of Texas Online* <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fhi50> [Accessed August 31, 2013]; Clotilde P. García, "Ballí, José Nicolás," *Handbook of Texas Online* <http://www.tsha-online.org/handbook/online/articles/fba50> [Accessed August 31, 2013), Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

40 See Craig H. Roell, "De León's Colony" *Handbook of Texas Online* <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ued01> [Accessed September 07, 2013]. Published by the Texas State Historical Association; Craig H. Roell, *Remember Goliad! A History of La Bahía* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1994); Ana Caroline Castillo Crimm, *De León, a Tejano Family History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004).

41 Galindo, "Con Un Pie En Cada Lado," 70, 80-81, 311.

42 Canseco Botello, *Historía de Matamoros*, 19

43 Alonzo, *Tejano Legacy*, 70.

44 See Edward L. Miller, *New Orleans and the Texas Revolution* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004).

45 Valerio-Jiménez, "Neglected Citizens and Willing Traders," 258-59.

46 Zárate-Ruiz, *Matamoros*, 35.

47 Valerio-Jiménez, "Neglected Citizens and Willing Traders," 272-73.

48 Ibid., 270-74.

49 Jean Louis Berlandier, *Indians of Texas in 1830*, trans. Patricia Reading LeClercq; edited by John C. Ewers (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press,

1969), quoted in Gerald Betty, *Comanche Society: Before the Reservation* (Texas A&M University Press, 2005), 61, 136.

50 Zárate-Ruiz, *Matamoros*, p. 38.

51 Rendón de la Garza, *Bicentenario de Nuestra Señora del Refugio de los Esteros catedral*, 26, 31, 32; Andrés F. Cuellar, *Cronología Histórica de Matamoros* (H. Matamoros, Tamaulipas, México: Archivo Histórico (Casamata), [200-?]), 12 (copy in author's possession); Stephen Fox, "Creole Influence Along the Border: Craftsmen from New Orleans left their mark in Brownsville and Matamoros," *Texas Architect* (July/August 2008), <http://www.texasarchitect.org/ta200801-essay.php?sess_id=41ef1e31979004e8f15329e0c76a171e> [Accessed August 16, 2008].

52 The name was also associated with Santiago Matamoros, Saint James as the "Moor Slayer," patron saint of the Spanish *Reconquista*, who was transferred to deal with the enemies of New Spain and later of Mexico. See Roell, *Matamoros and the Texas Revolution*, pp. 10-13.

53 Valerio-Jiménez, "Neglected Citizens and Willing Traders," 281n62.

54 El Mercado Juárez, the oldest market in the city, was formally built in 1835 and received its current name in 1873. It quickly became the central supplier for the city. A large fire destroyed it completely in 1968. The current building is on the Abasolo and 9th Streets with over 100 stores, the area's largest handicraft center and still boasts being "the largest site of interest of Matamoros" (*"el mayor sitio de interés de Matamoros"*). <http://www.visitingmexico.com.mx/tamaulipas/destino-tamaulipas-matamoros-turismo-cultural.php> [Accessed September 5, 2013].

55 Canseco Botello, *Historía de Matamoros*, 21.

56 Canseco Botello, *Historía de Matamoros*, 20-21; Zárate-Ruiz, *Matamoros*, 40; Pat Kelley, *River of Lost Dreams: Navigation on the Rio Grande* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 18-22.

57 José María Quirós, *Memoria de estatuto* (Veracruz, 1817), in Jaime E. Rodríguez O., *Down From Colonialism: Mexico's Nineteenth-Century Crisis* (Los Angeles: Chicano Studies Research Center Publications, University of California, 1983), at the Historical Text Archive, <http://historicaltextarchive.com/sections.php?op=viewarticle&artid=528> [Accessed August 17, 2013]; Valerio-Jiménez, "Neglected Citizens and Willing Traders," 281.

58 The name of Tamaulipas, as the official state website puts it, is the subject of "a very heated controversy among historians" (*es tema de una polémica muy acalorada entre los historiadores*). Taken from *tamaholipa*, a Huastec term, the prefix *tam-* signifies "place where," but scholars disagree on the meaning of *holipa*. "High mountains" or "high hills" is a common interpretation, dating to 1792 with Fray Vicente de Santa María's understanding of the native phrasing. A newer interpretation advocates that it means "place of much praying," with others suggesting "where the Lipan pray," the latter more controversial because it begs the question of northern Lipan ancestry (*descendientes de los norteños lipanes*). Still another view is "place of the Olives," a reference to the Olive Indians (*un grupo de indígenas olives*) brought "very far to the north"

in 1544 by the renowned evangelist, linguist, and chronicler, Fray Andrés de Olmos, to resettle in what he called "Tamaholipa," with "olipa" a distortion of Olive (*olipa, deformación de olive*). Gobierno de Tamaulipas, Historia, <http://www.tamaulipas.gob.mx/tamaulipas/historia/> [Accessed August 13, 2013]; Instituto Nacional Para el Federalismo y el Desarrollo Municipal, *Reseña Histórica de las Entidades Federativas* (México: Secretaría de Gobernación (SEGOB), Archivo General de la Nación, El Federalismo Mexicano, 1996), 34; del Hoyo, *Historia del nuevo reino de león*, 10.

59 Zárate-Ruiz, *Matamoros*, 40; Cuellar, *Cronología Histórica de Matamoros*, 11; Octavio Herrera, *Breve historia de Tamaulipas* (México: El Colegio de México, Fideicomiso de Historia de las Américas, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1999): 128; Alonzo, *Tejano Legacy*, 41, 78-79; Omar S. Valerio-Jiménez, *River of Hope: Forging Identity and Nation in the Rio Grande Borderlands* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 65-66.

60 Brantz Mayer, *Mexico As It Was and As It Is*, 3rd edition (Philadelphia: G. B. Zieber & company, 1847), 310, 318; "Commerce and Resources of Mexico," *The Merchants' Magazine and Commercial Review* 10 (January-June 1844), 128; Valerio-Jiménez, "Neglected Citizens and Willing Traders," 285, 287.

61 "*Sobre un decreto dado por el estado de Tamaulipas, Abril 7 de 1832,*" *Recopilacion de leyes, decretos, bandos, reglamentos, circulares y providencias: de los supremos poderes y otras autoridades de la Republica Mexicana* (México: Impr. J.M. Fernández de Lara, 1836), 56; Valerio-Jiménez, "Neglected Citizens and Willing Traders," 281; Omar Santiago Valerio-Jiménez, "Indios bárbaros, Divorcées, and Flocks of Vampires: Identity and Nation on the Rio Grande, 1749-1894." PhD diss. (Los Angeles: University of California, 2001), 167.

62 See Roell, *Matamoros and the Texas Revolution*; and Craig H. Roell, "The Matamoros Expedition of 1835-36," *Handbook of Texas Online* <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qdm01> [Accessed August 13, 2013). Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

63 Graf, "Economic History of the Lower Rio Grande Valley," 55; Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*, 16, 18.

64 Creed Taylor. *Tall Men with Long Rifles: the Glamorous Story of the Texas Revolution, as Told by Captain Creed Taylor, Who Fought in that Heroic Struggle from Gonzales to San Jacinto. Set Down and Written Out by James T. De Shields* (San Antonio, Tex., Naylor, 1935), 3. Taylor's colorful "recollections," first related to John Warren Hunter and then processed by De Shields, must be treated with caution. See Charles M. Yates, "In Search of Creed Taylor," Texian Legacy Association <http://www.texianlegacy.com/taylor.html> [Accessed August 26, 2013).

65 "Commerce and Resources of Mexico," 123; Galindo, "Con Un Pie En Cada Lado," 263.

66 Alonzo, *Tejano Legacy*, 67-73; Graf, "Economic History of the Lower Rio Grande Valley," 52-55, 110-11, 117; Weber, *The Mexican Frontier*, 151; Valerio-Jiménez, "Neglected Citizens and Willing Traders," 282-83.

67 Furber, *Twelve Month Volunteer*, 371n.

68 Ibid., 371n-375n; Josiah Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies: Or, The Journal of a Santa Fé Trader, During Eight Expeditions Across the Great Western Prairies, and a Residence of Nearly Nine Years in Northern Mexico*. 2 vols. (New York: H.G. Langley, 1844; 5th ed. Philadelphia: J.W. Moore, 1851), 1:112, 180-84.

69 Furber, *Twelve Month Volunteer*, 371n-375n; Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, II:162.

70 Valerio-Jiménez, *River of Hope*, 65-66.

71 Zárate-Ruiz, *Matamoros*, 44; Valerio-Jiménez, "Neglected Citizens and Willing Traders," 284-85, 287-88; Miller, *New Orleans and the Texas Revolution*, 91.

72 Weber, *The Mexican Frontier*, 146.

73 Simón Tadeo Ortiz de Ayala, *México considerado como nación independiente y libre, ó sean, Algunas indicaciones sobre los deberes más esenciales de los mexicanos* (Burdeos: Imprenta de Carlos Lawalle Sobrino, 1832), 374, 430, 594 <http://archive.org/details/mxico-considerado00orti> [Accessed August 31, 2013].

74 Juan N. Almonte, "Statistical Report on Texas," translated by Carlos E. Castañeda, *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* XXVIII (January 1925), 178, 179, 193.

75 Almonte, *Almonte's Texas*, 227.

76 Ibid., 54.

77 To continue this saga, see Roell, *Matamoros and the Texas Revolution*.

The Great Sequoyah Mystery
A Cover-up that Stretched from the Cumberland Mountains to the Rio Grande Delta (and into Mexico)

by

Don Clifford

In late 1842, a small group of self appointed emissaries set out from Cherokee Indian country and headed south for the river called by Spaniards and Mexicans the Rio Bravo del Norte. Ostensibly, they were seeking a legendary lost band of Cherokees who had emigrated to northern Mexico during the mid-1700's in order to preserve their tribal ways from the adverse cultural influences of the white man.

According to the prevailing literature, the leader of the group was an elderly man named Sequoyah. He is celebrated as an illiterate who invented the Cherokee alphabet – a 92 symbol syllabary that depicts the sounds of the language in readable form. Supposedly, the adaptation of the alphabet was so simple that any Cherokee who studied it became literate in the language within a very short time.

For many days, they traveled an old Indian trail from Fort Gibson, Arkansas, to San Antonio and onward south through the Wild Horse Desert. En route, the old man became sick, complaining of strange chest pains that radiated throughout his body. After a prolonged rest, the old man's health improved enough to continue the journey.[1]

In early 1843, the group arrived at the Rio Bravo (better known as the Rio Grande), crossed over near Mier,[2] worked their way down river and visited kinsmen at several *rancherías* on both sides of the river, including El Zacatal, Carrizales, El Capote, La Paloma, and Los Indios.[3]

The rigors of travel proved too much for the old man. In August of 1843, he died in a Mexican village named San Fernando. Thus it was that an unlettered man, who devoted his life for the betterment of his people, died during one last act of service while seeking to reunite his lost tribesmen. Or so we are led to believe.

Actually, also according to the prevailing literature, Sequoyah died on three different occasions. First, Traveler Bird, a direct descendant, claims that Texas soldiers killed his ancestor, Sequoyah/ George Guess, in June 1839, during a skirmish on the Brazos River. Grant Foreman, a respected chronicler of Cherokee folkway, and James Mooney, a noted anthropologist for the Bureau of American Ethnology, quoted from the *Cherokee Advocate* newspaper an elaborate description of the journey and the 1843 death in San Fernando. Traveler Bird claims further that another man who assumed the role of Sequoyah – George Guest – died of a bullet wound in 1844. Third was Thomas Maw whose portrait is said to be that of Sequoyah. His demise is unclear.[4]

So who was this elderly traveler to the Lower Rio Grande? And why was the *Cherokee Advocate* account so painstakingly detailed? More importantly, if this was a cover up to a conspiracy, what was involved and who stood to gain from it? The answers are not readily apparent but a time line of events helps to reveal some of the mystery.

During the mid-1750's, ancient secret written symbols were placed in use against the Anglo invasion of black robe missionaries who preached peace and brotherhood in one breath but who endorsed war and slavery in the next.[5] The symbols were kept secret only from whites and from misbegotten mixed bloods. In 1766, Sogwili (meaning "horse" in Cherokee) was born into the Anisahoni Clan and raised as a warrior-scribe of the Seven Clan Scribe Society. He learned and became adept in several versions of writing systems.[6] Also, he warred against the whites.[7]

When he was a young man of twenty, Sogwili captured and scalped a white man named George Guess in retaliation for the

murders of his father, mother, and sister. Since the doomed man had no further need for the name, Sogwili assumed it himself, in order to deal with the whites.[8]

In 1794, the Cherokee Nation fell, but Sogwili/George Guess refused to make peace and resisted U.S. government efforts to "civilize" himself and his people. In 1797, he led a group of Cherokee dissidents beyond the Red River into an area ruled by Spain. Within two years they were well established on the Brazos River.[9]

During several years of relative peace and comfort, Sogwili communicated with his clansmen in the Cumberlands via the secret syllabary. In 1806 he returned to the Cumberland Cherokee to tell them of lands to the West and of his peaceful settlement on the Brazos. 812 more emigrants followed his lead to the West.[10]

In the summer of 1816, tribal police captured Sogwili/George Guess during one of his return visits to the southeast. In October, a general council of mixed-blood Cherokee judges, tribal police, and warrior chiefs – the New Order of the Nation – tried him for witchcraft and denounced his syllabary as a work of the devil. He was charged, also, with encouraging emigration beyond the limits of the United States, to Spanish Texas. The council branded him and his wife on the forehead and back. They chopped off the fingers of both his hands between the first and second knuckles. Just before his brother Whitepath rescued the tormented couple, Sogwili's ears were "cropped" – the mark of a traitor to the Cherokee Nation.[11]

Up until the year 1821, the syllabary was concealed from the American public. However, word of an unusual writing system leaked out through missionary reports of a communication breakthrough for teaching the Gospel. This created a dilemma for the Cherokee Progressives under Principal Chief John Ross. Worried that the American public would someday find out about Sequoyah's torture and mutilation, the missionaries' revelation forced them to grudgingly acknowledge the existence of a well-defined writing system. But because the whites considered anything

of Indian origin as repugnant and savage, it was, therefore, necessary for Cherokee conspirators to establish a civilized credibility.[12]

The fake name of "Sequoyah" was created and became a symbol of intellectual achievement – fake because the word "sequoyah" has no meaning in the Cherokee language. It is derived from the Anglo inability to pronounce "Sogwiligigageihiyi," which was bastardized to "Soquee" or "Skeequoyah", meaning the Devil's Gang Place, a reference to the headquarters of the Scribe Society.[13]

The Progressives could not hide the fact that Sequoyah/George Guess developed the syllabary for use among the Cherokee, but they could obscure the disfigurement of a traitor by creating a front man to be Sequoyah. Thus came into being Sequoyah/George Gist, allegedly a half-breed (although Traveller Bird states that George Gist was no half-breed but a full-blood Cherokee), whose father Nathaniel Gist fought in the Revolutionary War against England.[14] The sound-alike name was enough to divert attention away from Sequoyah/George Guess[15] and at the same time to provide the needed infusion of white blood.[16]

Meanwhile, within the Cherokee Nation, Sequoyah's name became a resistance symbol for Cherokees opposed to the Progressive New Order of mixed-blood Cherokee leaders and "traitors" friendly toward Anglo-Christian civilization. The Progressives considered non-conforming Cherokees as savages and stumbling blocks to assimilation into the United States.

Out West, in 1822, Sequoyah/George Guess and other re-located Cherokees visited the Province of Texas. Governor Trespalacios in San Antonio, along with Baron de Bastrop, signed articles of agreement for a land grant. Before the agreement was ratified, Mexican Emperor Augustín de Iturbide was overthrown in 1823, and the grant became moot.[17] By this time, Sequoyah refused to travel to Mexico City with the others because the Spanish agreement simply imposed new laws on the Cherokee. According to Guess, the Spaniard was just another white man.[18]

Back East, the conspiracy gained momentum. In 1824, the Cherokee General Council voted to award a medal to Sequoyah/George Gist in recognition for his great gift of literacy. Four years later, Thomas Maw sat for a painting that was passed off as a likeness of Sequoyah/George Guess.[19]

By 1825, the flood of white American settlers into Texas brought new troubles to the Western Cherokees and other tribes. It was the same land-grabbing pattern that forced the removal of the Cherokee from the East. Seeking peace and noninterference, Sequoyah/George Guess and several families moved 200 miles further west and settled on lands that bordered the Comanche in what is now San Saba County, Texas.[20]

In 1829, a Cherokee circuit rider preaching the white man's proposal kidnapped Sequoyah's daughter, Gedi, who, with her mother, Eli, was visiting with clan relatives in the Cumberlands. Eli attempted to negotiate Gedi's release but, instead, Eli herself was captured and hanged, with the traitor's brand for all to see. George Guess, several hundred miles away, was unable to set up a rescue because the turmoil of the Mexican revolt against Spain had begun.[21]

In June 1831, Sequoyah/George Gist and sons arrived at a Cherokee settlement on the Colorado River looking for scribe Sequoyah/George Guess. Gist was the emissary of the Chief of the Western Settlement, who wanted Guess to teach his people to read and write the native syllabary. George Gist became an adept pupil.[22] This suggests that Guess tacitly accepted Gist as a Sequoyah alter ego.

By now, the Cherokee Progressives considered Sequoyah/George Guess to be an embarrassment and ordered his assassination. Gist warned Guess in time, and the assassins themselves were ambushed. Apparently, George Guess had "converted" George Gist to his way of thinking. Only then did Gist show the medal he had received from the General Council seven years earlier. [23]

For the next few years, the Cherokee people became embroiled in a series of catastrophic events. First, in 1835, came the forced removal to the Oklahoma Territory, resulting in the infamous Trail of Tears. A year later, Texas revolted against Mexico, and the resident Cherokee were pressured into the Mexican Army. In 1838, Texas President Mirabeau Lamar enacted his Indian removal/extermination policy.[24]

Apparently, Sequoyah/George Guess was not caught up in some of these events, because in February, 1839, he left the San Saba area to rescue a Cherokee emigrant group stranded on the west bank of the Mississippi River. The group included his daughter, Gedi, whom he had not seen for eleven years.[25] A company of Texas volunteers must have just missed him when, on February 15, they attacked a Comanche camp near the mouth of the San Saba River.[26]

But, alas, events did catch up to Sequoyah/George Guess. On June 9, almost home, while leading his daughter's emigrant party, he was killed in a skirmish with Texas soldiers on the Brazos River.[27] By July, the Texan war against the Cherokee was in full scale. A young John Salmon "R.I.P." Ford (a future mayor of Brownsville, Texas) tasted his first action against the Shawnee, some of whom were allies to the Cherokee.

Meanwhile, in Oklahoma, disputes between the Old Settlers and the New Progressives bordered on civil war. History records that Sequoyah (in all likelihood George Gist) greatly influenced the negotiations. The result was a document that declared the two factions as "one body politic, under the style and title of 'The Cherokee Nation'." On July 12, 1839, Sequoyah signed the document as President of the Western Cherokees.[28] Two years later, for reasons unknown, Sequoyah/George Gist was run out of the Cherokee Nation.[29]

The following passage suggests another phase in the cover up:

> "Sequoyah...*had become seized with a desire* (italics mine) to make linguistic investigations among the remote tribes, probably with a view of devising a universal Indian alphabet. His mind dwelt also on the old tradition of a lost band of Cherokee living somewhere toward the western mountains. In 1841 and 1842, with a few Cherokee companions and with his provisions loaded in an ox cart, he made several journeys into the West, received everywhere with kindness by even the wildest tribes. Disappointed in his philologic results, he started out in 1843 in quest of the lost Cherokee, who were believed to be somewhere in northern Mexico; but now an old man and worn out by his hardship, he sank under the effort and died – alone and unattended it is said – near the village of San Fernando, Mexico, in August of the same year. Rumors "... having come of his helpless condition, a party had been sent from the Nation to bring him back, but arrived too late to find him alive..."[30]

Again, with no explanation, Traveler Bird claims that, in 1844, Sequoyah/George Gist died from a bullet wound.[31] Had Gist become an embarrassment, also?

The March 6, 1845, edition of the *Cherokee Advocate*, a newspaper controlled by the Progressives, reported that Sequoyah was still alive and well and living with countrymen near Matamoros, Mexico.[32]

The following April 21, 1845, Chiefs Standing Rock and Standing Bowls returned from the "Spanish dominions" and certified that Sequoyah died in August of 1843. The statement was witnessed by Daniel G. Watson and trail guide Jesse Chisholm,[33] himself half Cherokee.[34] Were these historical persons a part of the conspiracy, also? Jesse Chisholm's involvement in the cover up is unknown. He was the best guide and trail blazer of his time. The old Brownsville-to-Abilene cattle trail would eventually be named after him.

News must have traveled slowly, because, a month later, a Chief Oonoleh organized a search expedition for Sequoyah, but was informed of his death by Jesse Chisholm. He was told that Standing Rock attended Sequoyah during his last sickness and had witnessed his death and burial.[35]

With Guess, Gist and Thomas (portrait sitter) Maw dead, the principle stumbling blocks to accommodation with the white man were gone. Relatives of the deceased were too weak financially and emotionally to continue any organized resistance against the New Order. Those who had fled were scattered and too far removed to cause further trouble.

While Indian and non-Indian alike freely acknowledge the Sequoyah/George Guess legacy to the Cherokee, the prevailing literature does not accept that he had used an ancient writing system against the white man's encroachment. Thus the myth prevails that the Cherokee learned the syllabary within a very short time, when in actuality, many Cherokees had been using the writing system all along.

Meanwhile, what about that journey to the Rio Grande? Did it actually take place? Probably, yes. Someone made the trip because the descriptions of locations along the route, especially of Mier, are too accurate to be false. Did an old man purported to be Sequoyah travel to the Lower Rio Grande Valley and later die in San Fernando? We may never know. From a conspiracy standpoint, San Fernando was a perfect place for dying. At least three communities with the same name were in existence - one in Coahuila just west of Presidio/Ojinaga; According to the internet website, *www.cherokeenationmexico.com*, the cave in which Sequoyah died and was buried was discovered in 2001. It is on private land near Zaragosa, Coahuila, Mexico. Zaragoza was previously named San Fernando.The second was about half way between Matamoras and the Rio Soto La Marina. The most likely third candidate is the tiny river crossing community on the

San Fernando Creek, about six miles northeast of today's Santa Gertrudis headquarters of the famous King Ranch.

Is a "Sequoyah" buried at a "San Fernando"? If so, who? If George Guess was killed on the Brazos in 1839, and George Gist died of a bullet wound in 1844, and Thomas Maw is presumed dead sometime after 1828, then who traveled throughout the Rio Grande Valley as Sequoyah and has lain dead and buried in San Fernando since 1843?

Endnotes

1 Grant Foreman, *Sequoyah*, Vol. 16 in the Civilization of the American Indian Series (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1938), pp 48-67.

2 Neither Foreman nor Mooney identify Mier as the place where the Sequoyah party first crossed the Rio Grande River. Foreman describes a conversation with a Mexican Army officer who brags that a short time before, some 300 Texans were defeated in battle and captured. This probably refers to the ill-conceived battle of Mier and the subsequent Black Bean incident.

3 Brownsville pioneer William Neale reports in W.W. Chatfield's *The Twin Cities of the Border* (1893), that, back in the 1830s, the Indians in the areas mentioned were "...thick as blackbirds." Neale also relates that, in 1828, a Cherokee chief had an agreement with the City of Matamoros that he would not make depredations against Mexican citizens. Supposedly, the chief took the city's money, anyway, and ambushed any Mexican found outside the city.

4 How Thomas Maw died is unclear, but his absence in the prevailing literature suggests that he, too, was assassinated. He was a minor chief, the son of Chief Hanging Maw, who fought with George Washington. Thomas Maw's name does not appear on any documents after 1838. Both he and "George Guess" are signers to the Proclamation of 1828, which deals with the removal of the Eastern Cherokee to the Arkansas Territory. Traveler Bird claims that a certain John Lowery signed Sequoyah's name to the treaty - signing another important Indian's name to a white man's paper was a common joke for the Western Cherokee. Did Lowery sign Maw's name as well?

5 Traveler Bird, *Tell Them They Lie: The Sequoyah Myth*, Los Angeles: Westernlore Press publishers, 1971), p. 24.

6 The Cherokee alphabet takes its place among other writing systems that existed long before Columbus set foot on San Salvador. The written forms of the Mobilian Trade Language and the graphic symbols on the Michigan Newberry Stone are but two examples.

7 Bird, p. 24.

8 Bird, pp. 45-46.

9 Bird pp87-89.

10 Bird, pp. 92-93.

11 Bird, pp. 13 and 104-106.

12 Bird, pp. 114-116.

13 Bird, p. 20.

14 James Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee and Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees, from the 19th and 17th Annual Reports Bureau of American Ethnolog.* reproduced by Charles and Randy Elder Booksellers, Publishers, Nashville Tennessee, p. 108; and Foreman, pp75-77.

15 Traveler Bird provides no explanation for the death of Sequoyah/George Gist.

16 Bird, p. 116.

17 Everett, pp. 25-29.

18 Bird, p. 124.

19 Bird, pp. 116-118.

20 Dianna Everett, *The Texas Cherokees, A People Between Two Fires, 1819-1840* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), pp. 29-40; and Bird, p. 125-129.

21 Bird, p. 134.

22 Bird, pp. 136-137.

23 Bird, p. 137.

24 W. W. Newcombe, Jr., *The Indians of Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961), p. 346; and Everett, pp.100-106.

25 Bird, p. 138.

26 Newcombe, p. 346.

27 Bird, p. 142.

28 Foreman, pp. 32-35.

29 Bird, p. 117, n.

30 Mooney, p. 147.

31 Bird, pp. 117, n.

32 Foreman, p. 70.

33 This is the same Jesse Chisholm after whom the Chisholm Trail is named.

34 Foreman, pp. 70-71.

35 Foreman, p. 71.

NINETEENTH CENTURY HISTORY FROM THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR

Immigration to South Texas, 1850-1900

by

Thomas Daniel Knight

When Texas entered the Union, on 29 December 1845, it possessed an already diverse past, including centuries of native habitation, Spanish settlements, French "incursions," American colonization, and worldwide interest in its quest for independence.[1] Discussing Texas in terms of the four primary cultural traditions of the United States, however, historian David Hackett Fischer, writing in 1989, largely dismissed this past by characterizing Texas culture as an extension of the Scotch-Irish borderlands culture he identified in his classic work *Albion's Seed*, attributing such features as the rugged individualism associated with the Lone Star state to the fierce independence exhibited by the Scotch-Irish borderland settlers on the American frontier. Fischer's approach ignores almost completely the contributions of Tejano and Mexican settlers who lived in the region prior to statehood and whose descendants continue to people much of the state today as well as the influence of settlers from other cultural traditions. More recently, historian Colin Woodward – writing in 2011 – describes the entire borderlands region stretching from Brownsville, Texas, to the Pacific coast as *El Norte*, an area extending roughly three hundred miles north and south of the present border between the United States and Mexico. While Woodward's approach is doubtless the more correct, it, too, runs the risk of glossing over the complex history of the state, especially the region that encompasses today's Lower Rio Grande Valley.[2]

This article discusses approximately two thousand settlers who arrived in the Rio Grande Valley between 1850 and 1900, arguing that they made significant and lasting contributions to the cultural life of the region and its inhabitants. While many of the settlers were transients – remaining in the region for only a few years – many others remained permanently, establishing families

still residing in South Texas today. This period of immigration peaked in the 1860s and 1870s, declining near the end of the century to reach its lowest ebb in fifty years. The 1850, 1860, and 1870 census statistics for Cameron, Hidalgo, and Starr Counties reveal that approximately 10% - 13% of the total population was born outside of Texas and Mexico, with a significant component having been born, not in the eastern United States, but in Europe instead. By 1880, this number had fallen to 6.47% and by 1900 to 2.15%.[3] The end of this first immigration boom would soon be followed by a second, but different, wave of immigration in the early 20th-century as large-scale agribusiness reached the Valley, bringing with it significant numbers of settlers from the Midwest and other parts of the United States. Citrus orchards and vegetable farms replaced the cattle ranches of the nineteenth-century, and figures like W. E. Stewart and John Shary came to dominate the economic life of the Valley. Historian Timothy Bowman has compared this twentieth-century boom to a modern day colonization, using post-colonial theory to analyze the legacy of these developments on the local population.[4] But for the purposes of this article, those developments lay in the future, building on the legacy of those individuals discussed here.

Cumulatively, the evidence from the 1850 to 1900 census reports for Cameron, Hidalgo, and Starr counties suggest that five different developments shaped immigration to the region during this period. The first was the formal organization and extension of state power into and throughout the newly acquired region after Texas independence and during the early years of statehood. The second was ancillary to the first – that is, the extension of state authority following statehood through the use of military power at Fort Brown and Fort Ringgold, as well as through other military encampments throughout the Valley. The third was the growth and development of urban centers at Brownsville in Cameron County and at Rio Grande City in Starr County and their economic ties to the ranching industry throughout the Valley's interior; as figures will suggest, the absence of a sizeable urban center in Hidalgo

County during the nineteenth-century contrasted significantly with Cameron and Starr Counties, leading to a less diverse (and numerically smaller) population overall, trends ironically reversed in the twentieth-century as Hidalgo County's growth eclipsed its neighboring counties after 1920. The fourth was the increasingly diverse religious life of the Valley, bringing with it ministers from locations throughout the United States and abroad; while the extension of religious power arguably can be seen as a buttress of state power, the separation of church and state in the United States, the plethora of religious groups that emerged in the nineteenth-century, and the social and cultural role of churches within the local community argue for its classification as an independent factor. And, finally, the fifth primary factor influencing immigration during the 1850 to 1900 period was the legacy of slavery in the eastern United States, a factor which brought significant numbers of free blacks, escaped slaves, and interracial couples into the Rio Grande Valley between 1850 and 1880.

By the 1880s and 1890s, Cameron, Hidalgo, and Starr Counties had been fully incorporated into the administrative system of both the state of Texas and the United States of America. The number of non-Texans coming into the region as officeholders declined significantly as native-born Texans, in many cases the offspring of earlier immigrants, took over these offices. While significant, the military presence also declined near the end of the century, with native Texans playing an increasingly significant role in the soldier population. While older immigrants remained active in both Brownsville and Rio Grande City, neither city drew as many immigrants later in the century as they had in the "boom town" atmosphere of the 1850s and 1860s. As with the maturation of the administrative and mercantile sectors of the Valley, the Valley's religious institutions likewise drew increasingly from the local population for leadership. And, finally, while the African-American population remained present after the 1870s and 1880s, postwar changes following emancipation produced opportunities

that drew African-American settlers in different directions near the end of the century.

In the pages that follow, each of these five groups will be discussed separately. At its conclusion, the essay returns to the subject of cultural formation and to the significant role that family development played in transmitting culture and identity across generations. As historians have long noted, individuals may possess multiple, and sometimes conflicting, identities simultaneously. Historian Linda Colley writes that identities "are not like hats"; individuals "can and do put on several" simultaneously.[5] The net result of the immigration statistics presented here suggests that approximately ten percent of the Rio Grande Valley's population in the later nineteenth-century came from outside the region. Immigrants, many of them foreign born, married other immigrants, producing complicated family structures that defy easy categorization or self-identification. Almost as soon as immigrants arrived in the region, they, too, began intermarrying with the Tejano and Mexican population throughout the region. Since many of these individuals intermarried with the local Mexican-American population, the actual number of individuals who took part in this complicated web of family connections was far greater than the number of immigrants itself. By the end of the century, although immigration statistics suggest that only approximately 2% of the region's population was born outside of Texas or Mexico, the statistics mask the fact that a significant number of Valley families possessed unique family heritage, combining Tejano and Mexican ancestry with English, French, Irish, German, or African ancestry or with family ties reaching back to the British colonial period in the eastern United States. This evidence suggests that neither Fischer's model nor Woodward's model is entirely correct; the nineteenth-century Rio Grande Valley was a vibrant and culturally diverse region, in many ways conforming to the idea of America as a "melting pot" of cultures.[6]

A. State Power.

Historians studying immigrant often discuss migration trends in terms of "push" and "pull." Certain factors acted to "push" migrants from their homelands, while other factors worked to "pull" them in particular directions. The 1850 census for the Rio Grande Valley reveals 651 individuals born outside of Texas but inside the United States of America and another 480 born outside the United States, chiefly in Ireland (118), Germany (103), England (87), France (67), Spain (45), and Scotland (12). The Irish potato famine and political instability associated with the wave of European revolutions in the late 1840s had no doubt acted to push many European migrants from their native lands, while the Texas Revolution of 1835-1836, the U.S. annexation of Texas in 1845, and the Mexican-American War from 1846 to 1848 had created a worldwide interest in the region. Moreover, in 1849, "Gold Fever" had gripped the nation, with hundreds of migrants making their way to California by sea, sailing through the Gulf of Mexico to Panama and then traveling overland to boats that would take them to the California gold fields. For fifteen years prior to 1850, then, events in Texas had been a constant focus of international concern; moreover, ports at Matamoros, in Mexico, and later at Brownsville and Corpus Christi, in Texas, provided easy access to migrants traveling by sea from New Orleans and Mobile.

While all of these factors united to put Texas in the forefront of national news during the late 1840s, the specific mechanics of state and nation-building created opportunities that drew many migrants to the region. Cameron and Starr Counties were formed in 1848 from Nueces County, and Hidalgo County was created in 1852 from Cameron County. (The original counties were much larger than they are today. Zapata County was formed in 1858 from Starr and Webb Counties. Willacy and Brooks Counties were created in 1911 from Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, and Zapata, and Kenedy in 1921 from Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy.) Until the end of the nineteenth-century, century, these three vast coun-

ties contained all the land stretching from the Rio Grande River northward to Falfurias and northeast to near Kingsville.

Incorporation into the state of Texas meant the creation of a number of administrative offices – sheriffs, county judges, justices of the peace, surveyors, and tax assessors, among others. At the national level, the area's location along the border between the United States and Mexico, as well as along the Gulf of Mexico, meant that a number of customs officials were required to collect customs revenues and to patrol international commerce coming through the port of Brownsville – established in 1848 – as well as across the border from Mexico, while a series of district courts protected federal interests in the area.

These lucrative offices might have gone to leaders of the well-established local Tejano communities, but by and large they seem to have gone to enterprising settlers new to the region but hungry for land and wealth or to have passed through patronage networks outside the state as rewards to individuals for services rendered in the past. The 1850 Cameron County census showed that Robert B. Kingsbury – a native of New York – served as U.S. revenue officer with a personal estate valued at $2,500; Kingsbury would serve in the Texas legislature from 1853 to 1855, serve as "first judge" of Cameron County during the 1860s, and remain active in regional politics into the Reconstruction era.[7] A 32-year old Georgian named E. D. Cottman was living in Brownsville in 1850, where he served as Justice of the Peace and owned an estate worth $3,000. James A. Wilkinson, a 42-year old North Carolinian, served as Chief Justice of Webb County in 1850; he owned an estate valued at $5,000.[8] A 25-year-old Tennessean named William Davis served as local sheriff, and, by 1860, a 35-year old Georgian, also named Davis, was serving as district judge.[9] In Starr County, a young Tennessean named James I. Nix arrived in the region during the 1850s, serving, in the 1860s and 1870s, as clerk of the district court, clerk of the county court, postmaster, and, eventually, county judge. William Stalworth, a South Carolinian, served as Deputy Collector of Customs.[10] In Hidalgo

County, Frank Ketchum, Albert Dean, and Thomas Handy – enumerated in 1870 as Inspectors of Customs – were natives of New York, Virginia, and Wisconsin, while the county surveyor hailed from Ohio.[11] Leonard Pierce, appointed U.S. Consul to Mexico after a succession of earlier offices, settled in Brownsville after his consulate; both Pierce and his wife came from Maine.[12] John L. Haynes, who came from Virginia by way of Tennessee and married a cousin of former President Martin Van Buren in Rio Grande City, rose through the political ranks. Haynes came to the region during the Mexican War after working as a newspaper editor in Mississippi. He worked as a merchant, in the late 1840s, and then served as Starr County clerk. Success there led to four years in the state legislature, a stint as quartermaster of state troops, a federal appointment by Ulysses S. Grant as Collector of Internal Revenue for the Third District, and a long tenure as Collector of Customs at Brownsville.[13]

These examples represent a few of the many evidenced in census reports from 1850 to 1900, although by the 1870s and 1880s a younger generation of native Texans – many of them the offspring of these earlier settlers – were coming to power in local communities throughout the region. But the examples cited illustrate another facet of immigration to the region, namely that no single region dominated. According to the 1850 census, there were more New York natives (107) living in the Rio Grande Valley in that year than natives of any other state, although Pennsylvania (62), Louisiana (49), Virginia (45), and Maryland (36) ranked next. As the following section will suggest, however, not all of these migrants intended to remain permanently in the region.

B. Military Power.

A second source of immigration to the Rio Grande Valley during the nineteenth-century was Fort Brown and Fort Ringgold, as well as temporary military encampments throughout the region. Fort Brown, originally called Fort Texas, was established in 1846 when General Zachary Taylor and United States military forces

arrived in the Rio Grande Valley, on March 26. Jacob Brown, a Major in the U.S. Army originally from Massachusetts, was mortally wounded on 6 May 1846, and the fortification – as well as the town which sprang up around it – was named in his honor. Fort Ringgold, established in 1848, was originally situated on thirty-three acres leased from Henry Clay Davis, founder of Rio Grande City; for ninety-six years, the fort would serve as a military outpost standing guard over both the Rio Grande itself as well as Rio Grande City.[14]

Although the forts served to buttress state power, they deserve independent treatment for several reasons. Since the seventeenth-century, Anglo-American political discourse had reserved a special place for "standing armies," and many political theorists argued that a citizen militia was more effective at protecting the rights of individuals than a permanent standing army, which could be used by unscrupulous tyrants not to protect but to oppress the people. Thus, military power, while it buttresses state power, differs qualitatively from the other from the system of courts, taxation, revenue enforcement, and land survey and distribution previously discussed. Many early political theorists saw a permanent standing army as parasitical, existing for its own benefit, and nineteenth-century theorists of the ilk of Thomas Jefferson warned of the dangers posed by such an institution.[15]

While the function and structure of military power distinguishes itself from other forms of state authority, the social, cultural, and economic roles served by the military fortifications also distinguish it. For instance, the telegraph office located in the post house at Fort Ringgold was the region's first telegraph office, linking the frontier outpost with Austin, Washington, and trans-Atlantic locations. The forts also played important roles in the local economies, bolstering economic growth through federal appropriations and employing local citizens in constructing, cleaning, and supplying the fortifications. In addition, the forts provided protection against smugglers, rustlers, and disgruntled figures bent on rebellion. This protection stimulated local economic growth through

protecting material property and capital investment, leading to the expansion of both Brownsville and Rio Grande City. By contrast, Hidalgo County – which had no such permanent military installation, although forces did encamp there (as evidenced by the 1860 census, which included a Cavalry Camp near what was then called Edinburg, the present-day Hidalgo) – lagged behind the other two counties in terms of the size and diversity of the local population for most of the nineteenth-century.[16] (The most prominent visitor to the Fort Ringgold in the nineteenth-century was probably Robert E. Lee, then a Colonel in the U.S. Army, who was assigned to the fort in 1856 and 1860. Jefferson Davis may also have been there at one point.[17])

Although the populations of both fortifications were largely transient, some soldiers brought their wives and children, while others married into the local population and remained in the area after their military service ended. The 1860 enumeration for the Fort Brown Garrison revealed approximately 291 individuals living at the fort. Most were men, and almost all were born outside Texas or Mexico. A significant number reported that they were born in Germany, Ireland, and England, suggesting that military service may have provided a speedy route to political and social legitimatization for new immigrants in the nineteenth century.[18]

Some soldiers brought their families with them, like Scotland native First Sergeant R. M. Hall, whose wife Cecilia was born in Ohio; the Halls had one child, a daughter Adelia, who had been born at the fortification.[19] Charlotte Moreno and Charles Bell, both natives of Mexico, worked as servants for Second Lieutenant L. M. Langdon and his wife Kate, natives of New York and Kentucky.[20] The enumeration of Louis Legna, a 21-year old private soldier born in Germany, however, showed that some soldiers chose to put down local roots; Legna's 18-year old wife Julia, a laundress, had been born in Mexico, and the couple had a one year old son Louis C. Legna, who had also been born at the fortification.[21] Likewise, at Fort Ringgold in 1870, 30-year-old Fred Ellott, a gunsmith born in Germany, was enumerated with wife

Sanfarita, a 23-year-old native of Mexico, and their infant daughter, a Texas native.[22]

Forts Ringgold and Brown drew hundreds of military men from other parts of the United States, including many who were foreign born, to the Rio Grande Valley during the nineteenth-century. Many stayed for only short periods, while others formed ties with the local population and remained in the area. The soldiers and members of their households who accompanied them to the Valley added to the region's diversity, bolstering the economic and cultural life of both Brownsville and Rio Grande City. Although their numbers may have declined during the later nineteenth-century, with more native Texans becoming part of the military population, both fortifications remained important parts of the region into the twentieth century: Fort Brown was decommissioned in 1946; Fort Ringgold closed temporarily between 1906 and 1917 before shutting permanently in 1944.[23]

C. Economic Power.

Within years of its establishment, in 1848, Brownsville quickly grew to become the economic center of the Valley, a major port for sea trade as well as a conduit for trade with Mexico. Although the city itself was not formally established until 1848, a small settlement had begun to take shape in the same location by about 1836, serving as a satellite for the older and larger city of Matamoros – beginning, at the earliest, in 1765, south of the Rio Grande in Tamaulipas.[24] By 1860, Brownsville could boast a large urban population with three different city wards; as the county seat for Cameron County, it was not only an economic center but an administrative one as well.[25] In Hidalgo County, the small community of Edinburg – on the location of present day Hidalgo, and different from the modern city of Edinburg, which was not established until 1908 – served a similar function, but it failed to grow to the extent that Rio Grande City – established in Starr County in 1847 – did.[26]

Amplified by the presence of Fort Ringgold, and serving as an important conduit for trade with Mexico, Rio Grande City became a bustling interior town. Located one hundred miles from Brownsville to the southeast and Laredo to the northwest, Rio Grande City, the smallest of these three locations, became the leading interior city because of its strategic placement. Prior to the establishment of the town, the site had been part of the Carnestolendas Ranch, which had been settled, in 1762, by José Antonio de la Garza Falcón. Like Brownsville – which grew up on ranch land north of Matamoros, Rio Grande City took shape on ranch land north of Camargo, a much older town in northern Tamaulipas. Town founder and Kentucky native Henry Clay Davis had married Maria Hilaria de la Garza, whose family had been part of the original colony led by José de Escandón in the 1760s.[27]

Although formed on ranch land settled by the original Tejano families, both Brownsville and Rio Grande City, in the early years, were dominated by settlers from outside the region, despite the fact that the majority of the local population was ethnically Tejano or Mexican. Comparing reported property valuations for Brownsville's wealthy Ward 1 in 1860, the majority of wealth – both real and personal – lay in the hands of newcomers. Altogether, those born outside of Texas or Mexico – whether in the United States or Europe – owned $218,000 in real estate and $141,900 in personal property, worth a combined total of $359,900. This property was owned by twenty-nine individuals, with the largest single valuation being the $50,000 real estate and $50,000 personal property owned by steamboat captain Mifflin Kenedy. The second largest property valuation was the $20,000 worth of real estate and $40,000 worth of personal property owned by New York native Richard King, another legendary South Texas figure. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the smallest property valuation was the $100 worth of personal estate owned by a cart driver named Hewit, who had been born in England. In contrast, the ward's residents born in Texas and Mexico reported $12,700 in

real estate and $17,350 in person property for a combined total of $30,050. This amount – approximately 1/12 of the estate value held by those born outside the region – was owned by 65 individuals. The largest single holding belonged to 74-year-old A. Salazar, a brick maker with real estate valued at $4,000 and personal property valued at $1,000. Most property owners reported estate valuations of $100-$200, usually personal property without real estate, while the smallest single valuation (other than the many individuals who owned nothing) was the $50 worth of personal property reported by 30-year old Francisco Cantu, a farm laborer born in Texas.[28]

The configuration for Rio Grande City was similar. There, twenty-seven property owners not born in Texas or Mexico owned $80,800 worth of real estate and $85,400 worth of personal property, worth a combined $166,200. In a marked contrast with Brownsville's Ward 1, there were one hundred property owners born in Mexico and Texas, and, altogether, these individuals owned real estate valued at $14,660 and personal property valued at $13,550, for a combined total of $28,210. While the value of property controlled by non-Texans was not as great as that in Brownsville's Ward 1, it was significantly – 5.89 times – greater than that controlled by those born in Texas or Mexico. The evidence suggests, however, almost twice as many property owners born in Texas or Mexico in Rio Grande City – out of a population about half the size of Brownsville's Ward 1. The key to understanding this contrast may lie in part in the different economic configurations of the two cities. Brownsville, larger and more cosmopolitan, had a flourishing import-and-export trade that led to a greater number of merchants and specialized business owners and financiers; there, the local population worked primarily in low wage domestic jobs, while an individual like the brick maker Salazar – whose business no doubt throve as a result of the building boom in the new city – could accrue a small fortune. Rio Grande City, however, remained more closely linked with the ranching trade. While there were several merchants, the wealthiest local figures included Samuel Stewart

– a stock dealer born in "America" with $8,000 worth of personal property and Peter Dowd, an Irish-born stock raiser with $10,000 worth of real estate and $1,000 worth of personal property, in addition to town founder Henry Clay Davis, a "planter" with real estate valued at $30,000 and personal property valued at $2,000. Occupations among the local population included many domestic positions but also a significant number of herders, blacksmiths, carpenters, and practitioners of other more lucrative small-scale trades. Significantly, while much of the wealth of property owners born in Texas and Mexico in Brownsville had consisted primarily of personal property, in Rio Grande City the distribution was more equitable, with ninety-six of one hundred property owners owning both real estate and personal property and most property owners owned real estate valued at more than $100. More research would be necessary to reach a firm conclusion as to why this was, but one possibility – again linked to the qualitative difference between Rio Grande City and Brownsville – may have been that more land remained in the hands of descendants of the original Tejano colonists in the Rio Grande City area than it did in Brownsville.[29]

In both locations, however, outsiders – non-Texans – controlled the bulk of the area's financial resources. Rio Grande City's non-native property owners included merchants born in England, Kentucky, New York, Maryland, Maine, and France, a tailor born in Maryland, a teamster born in New York, butchers born in France and Spain, and planters born in Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. Brownsville's property-owning population included a lawyer born in Connecticut, a blacksmith born in Germany, a printer born in Virginia, a farmer born in Denmark, a clerk born in France, a steamboat captain born in Pennsylvania, a milliner born in Switzerland, a druggist born in Ireland, a laundress born in South Carolina, a policeman born in Russia, a gardener born in France, a hotel keeper born in Italy, a doctor born in Rhode Island, a school teacher born in South Carolina, a barber born

in Jamaica, and merchants born in Maryland, Tennessee, Spain, France, Turkey, and Poland.[30]

Throughout the nineteenth century, both Brownsville and Rio Grande City boasted diverse populations, including individuals born throughout the United States and across Europe. Brownsville – larger and wealthier – was also more economically diverse, including a variety of occupations and services not available in Rio Grande City, although Rio Grande City's strategic location and the attached military fortification brought an important cultural dynamic to the mid-Valley. The chart at the end of this article (Figure 3) documents the birthplaces of individuals living in Cameron, Starr, and Hidalgo Counties between 1850 and 1860; although rural areas also included individuals from outside Texas, the overwhelming majority of newcomers were concentrated in urban areas, partially explaining why more rural and less populated Hidalgo County lagged behind the other two in terms of its immigrant population during the nineteenth-century. One final example from the mid-nineteenth-century will suffice. Excluding individuals born in Texas and Mexico, just one census page from Brownsville's Ward 1 in 1860 included individuals born in Maine, Connecticut, New York, Maryland, Virginia, South Carolina, Florida, Louisiana, England, Germany, Ireland, and Switzerland. Such diversity, so closely concentrated geographically, would be difficult to locate today.

D. Religious Power.

Karl Marx called religion the "opium of the masses." Marx's definition speaks to the ability of religion to allow individuals to find meaning in everyday life, thus making their lives easier to bear. Marx's point, of course, was derisive: religion pacifies the masses, keeping them away from the revolution Marx so craved. But it speaks to a larger point: religious beliefs often shape personal choices, and for many of those we are considering, they may have played a role in the decision to migrate.[31] Hence, some individuals may have chosen to move to South Texas in part because of

religious reasons, while others brought their religion with them as a source of comfort and hope.

Prior to the independence of Texas, the official religion for those living in the Spanish province of Tejas had been Catholicism. The Mexican requirements that new American settlers free their slaves and convert to Catholicism were two grievances of settlers who arrived in Texas during the Mexican period. The first settlers to reach the Rio Grande Valley from central Mexico in the 1740s brought the Catholic faith with them, and, by the time Texas was admitted to the United States, Catholicism was well established throughout the region.[32]

South Texas had originally been part of the Diocese of Guadalajara, established in 1548 and later of the Dioceses of Linares (1777) and Monterrey (1792). During the Mexican War of Independence, the Texas Revolution, and the Mexican American War, religious life throughout the Valley was largely disrupted, but itinerant priests traveled throughout the region ministering to Catholics on both sides of the Rio Grande River. After 1840, the Prefecture Apostolic of Texas placed South Texas under American administration, and the lower Rio Grande Valley became part of the Diocese of Galveston until the formation of the Vicariate Apostolic of Brownsville 1874, which included all territory between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande (which was later to be divided into the Diocese of Corpus Christi and the Diocese of Brownsville).[33]

Outside large northeastern cities – Boston, New York, Philadelphia – the majority of Americans were Protestant during the 1840s and 1850s, and immigrants arriving from Catholic regions of Europe often clashed with the local population during this period of extreme nativism. Protestant reformers throughout the northeast, for instance, lamented the derisive effects of Catholic Irish and German immigration to the United States, citing among other factors the lack of temperance associated with these new immigrant

groups that was thought to contribute to a host of social ills during the nineteenth-century.[34]

The large number of immigrants born in France, Spain, Ireland, and Germany evidenced on census reports for the Rio Grande Valley between 1850 and 1880 may, in part, reflect a preference for living among fellow Catholics. Census reports indicate that more Irish immigrants found their way to the Rio Grande Valley than any other single group: 115 enumerated in 1850, 286 in 1860, 315 in 1870, and 195 in 1880. Germany was second: 103 in 1850, 159 in 1860, 207 in 1870, and 160 in 1880. France (67 in 1850, 69 in 1860, 112 in 1870, and 86 in 1880) ranked next, followed by England (87 in 1850, 48 in 1860, 68 in 1870, and 58 in 1880) and then Spain (45 in 1850, 28 in 1860, 78 in 1870, and 73 in 1880). France, Spain, and Ireland were overwhelmingly Catholic nations during the nineteenth-century. Germany is a more complicated instance, since certain regions embraced the teachings of Martin Luther and other Protestant reformers while other regions remained firmly Catholic. Since census reports often enumerated the region from which German immigrants came – Bavaria, or Hamburg, for instance – one may draw the conclusion that many of the German immigrants to South Texas came from heavily Catholic regions of Germany, a fact supported by the apparent absence on census reports of Protestant German clergymen during the nineteenth-century. The case of England is more complicated to understand in terms of religion; Catholics had been driven underground during the Protestant Reformation, and they largely remained a disfranchised and oppressed minority in England afterwards. Just how many English immigrants to the Rio Grande Valley were Catholic and how many were Protestant is unclear, although likely members of both groups made their way to the area during the nineteenth-century.

Census reports document the presence of religious figures – both Catholic and Protestant – throughout the region during the nineteenth-century. In terms of Catholicism within the Valley, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate played an important role in

ministering to an estimated 40,000 Catholics throughout the Rio Grande Valley in the middle nineteenth-century. The order arrived in 1849, two years after the Diocese of Galveston was established. The Oblates began a horseback ministry to more than one hundred ranches and communities throughout the Valley. When the Vicariate Apostolic of Brownsville was established 1874, Brownsville's Immaculate Conception Church, which had been built by the Oblates in 1859, became the cathedral, and Dominic Manucy (1823-1885), a Florida native who had spent a quarter of a century with the Diocese of Mobile in Alabama, became the first vicar apostolic of Brownsville.[35]

Census records indicate that in Brownsville's first ward in 1860 was a Catholic School headed by Sister Mary St. Clair, Principal and teacher, a thirty-year-old nun born in France. The Oblates of Mary Immaculate were a French-speaking order, and the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament had come to the Valley from Lyons, France, in 1853.[36] Of the fourteen nuns enumerated at the school in 1860, ten were born in France, three in Ireland, and one in Mexico. A hurricane, in 1867, destroyed the convent and school, but these were quickly rebuilt.[37] The 1870 census for Ward 1 in Brownsville also showed the "Convent," including fifteen teachers, six servants, and sixteen students. Birthplaces of teachers included New York (1), Mexico (3), France (8), and Ireland (3). Birthplaces for students and convent workers, who may have been under holy orders themselves, included Germany, Switzerland, France, Mexico, and Texas.[38] By 1880, the Convent of the Incarnate Word contained twenty-three nuns and thirty-one students, natives of Texas, Mexico, Cuba, and New York. Most of the nuns were born in Ireland or France, although several also came from New York, Ohio, Mexico, and Texas.[39] By 1900, there were twenty-seven nuns, four novices, and twenty-seven students, all natives of Texas, Mexico, or Spain. Most of the nuns and novices were natives of Texas or Mexico, but six were natives of Ireland and two of France. Many of the nuns had long association with the convent and school; Sister Stanislaus, a 66-year old

native of France, then Mother Superior, had been naturalized as a U.S. citizen, in 1855, at the age of twenty-one. She had been enumerated at the convent as a twenty-one-year-old English teacher in 1860.[40]

The second Bishop of the Vicariate Apostolic of Brownsville, Peter Verdaguer (1835-1911), a native of Catalonia in Spain, moved the episcopal residence from Brownsville to Laredo after being consecrated as bishop in 1890. By this time, immigration had brought large numbers of Protestants into the lower Rio Grande Valley as well as large numbers of Irish, German, and French Catholics, while the upper Valley remained more heavily Catholic in religious orientation and closer to the Spanish heritage of early Valley settlers that Verdaguer shared himself. Verdaguer travelled throughout the Valley, attending to his duties, actually dying near Mercedes in 1911 while en route to a confirmation ceremony there.[41] During his pastorate, he was responsible for raising the total number of priests in the vicariate from ten to thirty-two. After Verdaguer moved the see to Laredo, the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament continued their activities in Brownsville into the twentieth-century, eventually spreading throughout Texas and beyond.[42] They were joined in their labors by the Sisters of Mercy – originally from New Orleans – who located at Refugio in 1875 and by the Ursuline sisters, who arrived at Laredo by way of New Orleans in 1868. The La Lomita Mission, operated by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate south of present-day Mission in Hidalgo County, became an important site for spreading the Catholic faith in the region between Brownsville and Roma. René Guyard, a French merchant based in Reynosa, bequeathed the property on which the mission was constructed to the Oblates in 1861. The Oblates had already been using a small chapel in the area, and they eventually constructed a new mission on the property that ministered to nearly seventy ranches located in Hidalgo County.[43]

Although most Valley residents remained Catholic, the large influx of immigrants from the eastern United States brought a sizeable

minority of Protestants into the region. Prior to Texas independence in 1837, the Protestant faith of many American settlers had been a source of contention between the Americans residing in Texas and the Mexican government, although the Mexican government had officially given Texas settlers religious freedom in 1834 in an effort to stave off would-be incendiaries. Independence in 1837, and then annexation to the United States in 1845, permanently secured the religious beliefs of American settlers who had moved to Texas, but organized Protestant denominations developed only slowly in the Valley.

Two early Protestant ministers who reached the Rio Grande Valley were Hiram Chamberlain (1797-1866) and Nehemiah Cravens (1807-1890). Chamberlain had been born at Monktown, Vermont, and educated at Middlebury College, Princeton Theological Seminary, and Andover Theological Seminary. He was ordained a Presbyterian minister in 1825 and became a founder of the American Home Missionary Society. Chamberlain's ministerial career took him first to Missouri, then to Tennessee, and finally to Texas. Of a missionary bent, Chamberlain dedicated himself "to wake up the attention of Protestants to the errors and evils of Roman Catholicism." He established the First Presbyterian Church of Brownsville, reportedly the first Protestant Church organized in the Rio Grande Valley, on 23 February 1850. Chamberlain ministered in Brownsville for nearly two decades and was eulogized as "an exemplary and zealous Christian, public spirited and patriotic citizen, good husband and kind father." In a region in which Protestants were a minority and in which there was considerable diversity among the group, Chamberlain was remembered for "benevolence and charity [that] knew no sects or creeds." Chamberlain had married first in Vermont, in 1827; his third wife, Connecticut-native Adelia Griswold, married him in Missouri, in 1842, and accompanied him to the Rio Grande Valley, where four of their children were born. Ministers and their families were often the best-educated individuals in the local neighborhood, and so teaching was frequently associated with the

ministry; census reports indicate that Chamberlain, former editor of the Presbyterian newspaper *Herald of Religious Liberty*, and his children – including his daughter Henrietta, born in Vermont, in 1827, and future wife of Richard King – worked in this capacity as well. In 1854, Chamberlain combined his efforts with those of New Hampshire native Melinda Rankin (a New England Congregationalist and later one of the first Protestant missionaries to work in Mexico), and the two opened Rio Grande Female Institute in 1854.[44]

While Chamberlain led the Presbyterian faith into the lower Rio Grande Valley, Nehemiah Adair Cravens (1807-1890) performed a similar function for Methodists. Cravens was enumerated in Brownsville, in 1850, with his family; like Chamberlain, he had only recently arrived there. During the Second Great Awakening of the early nineteenth-century, itinerant Methodist clergymen had ministered to small congregations spread over great geographical distances. Cravens followed this tradition. Born in Hartford, Kentucky, in 1807, "at the age of eighteen he joined the Methodist itineracy" and was ordained in 1825 in Russellville, Kentucky. Cravens was a circuit-riding minister until 1841, when he relocated to Alabama and practiced medicine for four years. In 1847, he was "readmitted to the traveling connection," serving a district in central Alabama between 1847 and 1850. Then, in 1850, he transferred to the Texas Conference and was sent as a missionary to Brownsville, where rode a circuit throughout the Valley until he was transferred to Galveston in 1852. Fellow Methodists noted of his period in the Rio Grande Valley that Cravens "held aloft the banners of our advancing Zion in this important and difficult post with heroic devotion." After leaving the Valley, Craven later ministered in Louisiana and Tennessee before returning to Texas, where he died at Waco in 1890.[45]

Although the Presbyterians and Methodists had effectively established congregations in Brownsville by 1850, the Baptists were less successful in their efforts. Georgia-born Baptist minister Noah Turner Byars (1803-1888) expressed an interest in the area

during the Texas Revolution, but Baptist ministers were slow to arrive in the region.[46] Repeatedly throughout the nineteenth-century, Baptist officials opined the lack of organization throughout the region, and not until 1918 was the first known Baptist minister ordained in the Rio Grande Valley. Nevertheless, early settlers brought their Baptist faith with them, even if they lacked regular ministers to lead them. The Baptist State Convention noted, as early as 1851, that South Texas was a "most inviting missionary field" and that it had received "urgent calls for aid" from Baptists there. The convention in 1851 raised $823.67 for missions throughout the state, but it continued to note the "destitution" of the mission field in south Texas for the next two years. The convention noted, in 1854, that Brownsville, "where there were Baptists, [was] without preaching." A similar call went out in 1868, and not until 1880 was the Rio Grande Baptist Association – which was based in Frio, Texas, and focused on the upper Valley – established.[47] Reverend William D. Powell (1854-1934) noted, in 1882, that, within the past five years, he had "held the first meeting on the banks of the Rio Grande, where a soul was converted under Baptist preaching" and that he was the first Baptist minister from Texas to enter Mexico.[48] Although Powell's record is impressive, including the nearly twenty years he went on to spend as a Baptist missionary at Saltillo in Mexico, it also demonstrates that the Baptists were comparatively late in relation to the Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Methodists in evangelizing the lower Rio Grande Valley. Baptist historian Benjamin F. Riley, writing in the early twentieth-century, noted that "it was a time when no fixed methods of evangelization could be established." Riley blamed the constant "inflow and perpetual shift of a restless population" which worked together to "put affairs quite beyond the reach of even the wisest administration." Despite the best efforts, the "plans of one year had to be modified or completely upset" in order to continue evangelization in this constantly changing environment.[49]

Cumulatively, the evidence suggests that the long history of Catholicism in the lower Rio Grande Valley may have attracted

Catholic settlers from Europe and elsewhere throughout the United States to the region. Ties between Catholics in France, Ireland, and Spain and the lower Rio Grande Valley seem to have been especially strong during the second half of the nineteenth-century, when there were an estimated 40,000 Catholics living in the lower Rio Grande Valley.

On the other hand, Protestant settlers from throughout the United States brought a host of Protestant denominations to the Valley during the nineteenth-century. Ministers and missionaries followed these early settlers, working to provide pastoral care for believers and to evangelize non-believers. Many were particularly concerned to convert Catholics throughout the region, and liberalization of Mexican laws about religious conformity, in 1857, attracted many of them, like Melinda Rankin and William Powell, to carry their work across the border. Individuals like Hiram Chamberlain of Vermont, Melinda Rankin of New Hampshire, Nehemiah Cravens of Georgia, and William Powell of Mississippi illustrate the ways in which individuals traveled great distances to pursue missionary opportunities in the Rio Grande Valley. Their formal institutional ties to agencies such as the American Home Missionary Society, the American and Foreign Christian Union, the Methodist "itinerancy," and the Texas State Baptist Convention in turn served to link the activities of Christians throughout the Rio Grande Valley with their fellow believers elsewhere in the United States and abroad. Just as economic opportunities drew settlers to the Valley, the need for evangelization – expressed through media such as the *American Baptist Yearbook* – drew clergy to serve them as well.[50]

E. Freedom.

Two requirements imposed by the Mexican government upon early settlers in Texas had caused particular objection. One was that settlers convert to Catholicism. The other was that they abandon slavery, since slavery was not permitted in Mexico. This requirement constituted a particular source of discord, although early set-

tlers resorted in the short run to a system of indentured servitude characterized by 99-year indentures that maintained slavery in fact if not in name. When Texas entered the Union, in 1845, it did so as a slave state, and the ensuing battle over the future of slavery in the former Mexican territory added to the United States through the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, in 1848, helped to fuel the coming of the American Civil War.[51]

Despite such pro-slavery associations within the state at large, the lower Rio Grande Valley – as a conduit to Mexico through Brownsville, Reynosa, and Carmargo – served in the 1840s and 1850s to attract escaped slaves hoping to secure their freedom by crossing into Mexican territory rather than attempting the long, arduous journey north to Canada. It seems also to have attracted free people of color and interracial couples before the Civil War, despite the fact that many Anglo settlers and Mexican-Americans throughout the region ultimately supported the Confederacy in the Civil War.[52]

The presence of escaped slaves is difficult to document in census records, but post-war enumerations suggest that some of these slaves who had escaped to Mexico returned to the United States after the war ended.[53] While the evidence is partial, a group of families enumerated in Cameron County, in 1870, suggests that these families had lived in Mexico from the late 1840s until after the end of the American Civil War. They were certainly of African-American origin, probably Native American also; whether they went to Mexico as escapees or as free people hoping to maintain their freedom is unclear, but they seem to have remained there for nearly two decades. The 1870 Brownsville census enumerated the family of Friday Bowleg, age 46, "black," born in Florida.[54] Bowleg's wife, Mary, age 44, "black," was also born in Florida. Bowleg's daughters – Nancy, age 14, and Fiby, age 11 – were both born in Mexico. Aleck Bowleg – probably Friday's brother – was enumerated next door, in HH 1135/1125 – age 40 and a Florida native. Bowleg's wife Flora was born in Florida, but their six-year-old son, Pancho, was born in Mexico. All were shown as black.

Joseph Coon and Julin Bowleg, both in their twenties and born in Arkansas, were enumerated in adjacent households, suggesting that the family had passed through Arkansas en route to Mexico before settling in Texas in the late 1860s.[55] Several nearby families seem to have had connections to the Bowlegs, suggesting the presence of an extensive kinship network in Brownsville's third precinct.[56] Older family members were born in Washington, D.C., Florida, Mississippi, and Arkansas; Lucia and Vayo Lorenz, age 13 and 10, "black," who seem to have been grandchildren of 62-year old Hannah Bowleg – were born in Mexico, while 1-year-old Maria was born in Texas. Fanny Johnson, age 35, born in Florida, was probably Hannah Bowleg's daughter; her husband, Richard, was born in Louisiana, while their oldest two children, born in 1850 and 1851, were natives of Arkansas. Daniel Johnson, age 15, and his five younger siblings all indicated that they were born in Mexico between 1855 and 1869. The census recorded all family members as "black," suggesting that they reached Mexico in the early 1850s. Although the family is not shown as mulatto, it is possible that they were mixed race, of Seminole ancestry, and had passed through Arkansas after having been forced out of Florida during the relocations of the 1830s and 1840s. *Los Mascogos*, native Americans of mixed race Seminole, African, and sometimes European, ancestry located in northern Mexico in the middle nineteenth-century.[57] The possibility is further strengthened by the presence of Petro Johnson, age 22, "black," an Arkansas native, in the 1870 Hidalgo Co., Texas Census. Although shown as "black," Johnson's occupation is listed as "Herder 'Seminole'," suggesting an identification with the native American group.[58]

In addition to individuals like the Bowlegs and Johnsons, who lived in Mexico prior to the Civil War, many free blacks seem to have migrated to the lower Rio Grande Valley prior to the Civil War. The 1850 slave schedule for the Rio Grande Valley – consisting of less than one page – documented the presence of 53 slaves, shown variously as "black" and "mulatto," belonging to twenty different individuals. The largest single holding was six slaves

owned by the same individual.[59] Considering the vast geographical distance covered by the three counties then in existence – from Laredo to Brownsville, and extending nearly one hundred miles into the interior – this amounted to an extremely low rate of slave ownership relative to both the geographical area covered as well as to the total population of the region (.62% of the total population). The ability to live in a region in which slavery was so little a part of the local economy, and in which they stood little chance of re-enslavement, may have attracted free blacks to the region.[60]

The 1850 census for the Rio Grande Valley documented more than a dozen free blacks living there. Phillip T. Niblett, a 38-year old cook born in England, was enumerated in Brownsville. Godfrey Seasman, 42, "free-born," a native of Virginia, who worked as "Cook & Seaman," was also living in the household, which included three Mexican laborers, all living with the family of Pablo and Trinidad Morales and their two young children. Robert Instant, a 24-year-old black musician from Alabama, was head of a household that included his wife Eliza, two children, and 22-year-old William Johnson, a blacksmith. The other family members were all shown as "mulatto," and all five gave their birthplaces as "Alabama Free Born." James Taylor, a 26-year-old barber born in Washington, D.C., "free born," was living in a boarding house that included individuals from throughout the United States and half a dozen European nations; he was the only African American enumerated with the group (the most notable member of whom was Mifflin Kenedy, a 32-year-old Pennsylvanian Steam Boatman), however. Similar individuals from Kentucky, New York, Maryland, and Connecticut were also shown, along with Martha Stanley, "liberated," a Virginia native and her two free-born daughters, born in Texas. Other individuals from Maryland, Georgia, and Virginia indicated that they were "set free 1840," "free by will 1840," and "set free 1845." This precise attention to detail in the last three instances suggests the precarious position these people occupied, even in the lower Valley, prior to the abolition of slavery fifteen years later. Further, the location of most of

these individuals within a few adjacent households, usually concentrated into groups of two or more, suggests a sense of common awareness and an understanding that ease of contact and communication might safeguard their personal safety.[61]

A striking feature of the African-American community in South Texas is the visibility of mixed-race unions, as evidenced by the 1850-1870 census reports. Martha Stanley's household, in 1850, included two mixed race children; since Stanley's partner was not enumerated with the family, his origins and the circumstances of their union are obscure. Other evidence suggests, however, the presence in the lower Valley of interracial unions that would have been prohibited elsewhere in the country. One large group of African-American and mulatto families to settle early in Valley was a group of related families from Georgia and Alabama. At the center of this group seem to have been Nathaniel Jackson and his family.[62] The 1860 Hidalgo County, Texas, Census, showed Jackson as a 60-year old male born in Georgia.[63] Jackson's race is not indicated, a sign that he was regarded as Caucasian by the census taker. Living with him, apparently as his wife, was Matilda Hicks, age 59, a mulatto house servant born in Georgia. Three mulatto children, aged between twenty and thirty, all born in Alabama, were shown in the household. Next door was a mulatto household headed by Emily Jackson, 35, Alabama, a housekeeper, which included seven mulatto children aged between nineteen and two, all born in Alabama.[64] Louis Hicks and wife Vicey, both shown as black, aged 58 and 40 and born respectively in Georgia and South Carolina, appear in an adjacent household.[65] Four adjacent households contained members of the Jackson family.[66] Martin Jackson and Brant Jackson and their four children were all shown as mulatto; their wives, Beckey and Vicey, both natives of Alabama, were shown as Indian, suggesting a possible connection to the black Seminoles. Richard Roland, age 25, and Abraham Rutledge, age 38, both Alabama natives, were shown with no racial notation, an indication that, like Nathaniel Jackson, they were white. Their spouses and children were all shown as

mulatto. Interestingly, in every case in which a marriage between a white man and a mulatto woman seems to have taken place, the women in the household – Matilda Hicks, Emily Jackson, Matilda Jackson, and Nancy Jackson – were all shown by their maiden names. No other households, regardless of enumerated race, are shown in this way, an indication of the unusual status held by these families. Presumably, these couples would have married in Alabama, where such a marriage would have been invalid; the census may reflect an understanding that their unions stood on a different legal footing than those around them who were legally married. The enumerated birthplaces for children in the households suggest that the family moved to Texas about 1857.[67]

While Martin and Brant Jackson were shown as farm laborers, Nathaniel Jackson, Richard Roland, and Abraham Rutledge were all shown as farmers, with a combined total of real estate valued at $2,000 and personal property valued at $2,200 – an indication of some affluence and comfort. The family went on to establish the Jackson ranch, east of present-day Edinburg, in the San Juan area, amassing more than 5,000 acres of land located in Porciones 71 and 72 at its peak.

Nathaniel Jackson's family – originally Quakers from Ireland, a background that may have influenced his thinking about equality – had moved from Greene County, Georgia, to Clarke County, Alabama, in the early nineteenth-century. Nathaniel apparently never legally married in Alabama, but Alabama census reports from Wilcox County indicate that he owned as many as twenty-two slaves (probably including the individuals shown as free in 1860) at the time of the 1850 census. While the parameters of the relationship are unclear, Nathaniel seems to have had a longstanding relationship, and perhaps an informal marriage, with Matilda Hicks, a slave reputedly of African, Native American, and French origins. After traveling to Texas, Jackson freed – perhaps informally – family members and is said to have aided other runaways from Alabama en route to Mexico. Bringing their Methodist faith with them, the family established Jackson Methodist Church,

which later became one of the Valley's earliest Spanish-language Protestant churches.

Nathaniel Jackson's descendants remain throughout the Valley today, many having held prominent positions in the local community. Son-in-law Abraham Rutledge (1819-1897) later served as Hidalgo County commissioner (1866), district clerk (1869), and county clerk (1872). During reconstruction, Rutledge – who ironically served in the Confederate Army under Captain William D. Thomas as part of the Texas Partisan Rangers – legally married Nancy Jackson in Hidalgo County, on 27 March 1872.[68]

Census reports between 1860 and 1900 document the presence of a large mixed race community in Hidalgo and Cameron Counties, many of whom had ties to the Jackson family.[69] John Webber (1794-1882), a Vermont native, settled in Texas prior to 1850; like Nathaniel Jackson, he amassed a substantial estate, valued at $2,000 in 1870. He had a longstanding union with Sylvia Hector, born about 1813 in Louisiana, a slave who had once belonged to a man named Morgan Cryer.[70] The 1870 Hidalgo census (HH 10/10) showed Sylvia as "black," Webber as "white," and the ten other members of their household as "mulatto." Several of Webber's descendants married into the Jackson and Singleterry families between 1850 and 1900.[71]

Cameron County census reports document the presence of other mulatto families that had come to the area from the southeastern United States, some of whom may have had links to the Jackson family in Hidalgo.[72] Wilson Hart, like Nathaniel Jackson and John Webber, seems to have had a longstanding relationship with an African-American woman. Hart was forty-five and a native of North Carolina; Patsy Thompson, shown as "black," was twenty-eight and a native of Texas. They were shown in Cameron County, in 1860, with five mulatto children. Hart was not as wealthy as Jackson or Webber, but he was shown as a farmer with $500 worth of property.[73] By 1860, the census also suggests that at least some of these families had already begun forging links to the local

community. Juan Rios, a native of Mexico, was shown as head of household with Eliza Moore, a mulatto born in Virginia, and four mulatto children in Brownsville in 1860. Celina Bell, a free black laundress, born about 1800, was shown nearby; Victor Harlander, a 42-year-old merchant born in France with $20,000 worth of property, headed the household, which included his wife Mary, a 33-year-old mulatto born in Florida, and their daughter Celestina, born about 1854 in Texas. Cornelia Cristobal, born, about 1852, in Alabama, was enumerated with her husband, Rango, a native of Mexico, and her daughter, Petra, in 1870; all were shown as mulattoes. Dawson Wardle, born about 1838 in Alabama, had apparently formed a relationship with Eulalia Villarreal, born about 1843 in Mexico; Wardle was shown as mulatto while Villarreal and her infant son were shown as white.[74]

Local census reports suggest most of these black and mulatto families had come to the Rio Grande Valley from the deep southern states of the "Cotton Kingdom," although the origins of some were more exotic. Chaunce Polite, enumerated in Cameron County in 1870, indicated that he had been born in Africa.[75] Robert Gardner, a 35-year-old laborer living in Brownsville with his Mexican wife Luciana and their infant daughter, in 1860, reported that he had been born in the Grand Cayman Islands.[76] Barber Edward Welster had been born in Jamaica; Welster had apparently lived first in Mexico, where his five-year-old son Gregorio was born.[77] N. Bouquet, an 80-year-old widow, shown as a "mulatto," reported that she had been born in Cuba, while her 38-year-old daughter gave Florida as her birthplace.[78]

Interestingly, naming practices exhibited by the African-American and mixed-race individuals enumerated in the lower Rio Grande Valley suggest a range of possible influences. Friday Bowley's parents, for instance, apparently subscribed to the African cultural tradition of naming children for the day of the week on which they were born.[79] Members of the Jackson family seem to have used traditional European-American names which suggest a close affinity to family connections. Others may have chosen to "re-invent"

themselves in a new postwar setting, as may have been the case with George Washington, a 65-year-old black laborer enumerated in Cameron County, in 1870, or Henry Clay, a 35-year-old black farmer, born in Tennessee, who was living near the Webbers and Jacksons in 1870.[80]

By 1880, there were at least 220 individuals identified in the lower Rio Grande Valley census reports as "black" (63 in Cameron, 13 in Hidalgo, and 144 in Starr) and 212 as "mulatto" (52 in Cameron, 92 in Hidalgo, and 68 in Starr). These individuals and their ancestors had come to the Valley from Africa, the Caribbean, and elsewhere in the United States. Some combined European and Native American ancestry with their African roots. Some had come to the Valley as slaves, some as runaways from slavery, some as free people of color before emancipation, and some as freedmen after emancipation. They represent an important element of the cultural diversity of the lower valley in the nineteenth century.

Mixture: New People, New Cultures.

As the previous section suggests, soon after settlers began arriving in the lower Rio Grande Valley, they began intermarrying with the local Mexican-American population. Samuel Smith, a black man born in Maryland, was enumerated in Starr County, in 1860, with his young wife Dolores, a native of Mexico.[81] Families like the Jacksons and Rutledges also intermarried into the local population at the same time as they retained connections with each other. After the death of his first wife, Martin Jackson married Espiridonia Carrillo (1865-1960), by whom he had nine children. Abraham Rutledge's offspring intermarried with Hispanic families like the Garcias and Canos, as well as with Anglo families like the Powers and Boxes. (When Louis Rutledge died in 1930, eulogized as the oldest "white" resident of the Valley, none of his fifteen children bore Hispanic surnames, but all had Hispanic ancestry through the lineage of their mother Angelina Cano (1866-1936), a native of Mexico.)[82]

Families like the Smiths, Jacksons, and Rutledges were not the only ones to establish local connections. Families coming from throughout the United States and Europe intermarried with Tejano and Mexican families, many shortly after they reached the region.

Given the enormous variety among the settlers who came to the Rio Grande Valley between 1840 and 1880, individuals from many different European nations also married into Mexican American families throughout the Valley. Louis Renaud (1817-1882), a stock raiser born in France, married Carmelita Longoria Levrier of Matamoros in 1851. Their children – half French, half Mexican – intermarried into the Flores, Garcia, Perez, Gomez, Salazar, and Correa families of Cameron and Willacy Counties. Similarly, Prussian Adolphus Glaevecke (1818-1900) – whose estate was valued at $45,000 in 1870 – arrived at the mouth of the Rio Grande by way of New York and New Orleans in 1836; soon after arriving, he married Maria Concepcion Tijerina (1818-1872) and reared a large family.[83] Likewise, three members of the Campeoni family – who arrived from Rovigno, D'Istria, Italy, near mid-century and Anglicized their name to Champion – married daughters of Francisco Solis and Anastacia Rivas of Cameron County.[84] Thomas Copeman, an English laborer, and A. Landolt, a Swiss merchant with an estate worth $5,500 in 1860, both married Mexican women.[85] Vincenzo Scott – a mariner born about 1783 in Italy – married Mariana Domiana Vasquez, a native of Mexico.[86] Similar marriages occurred between immigrants from Ireland, Poland, and Russia and Mexican women.[87]

Perhaps the most notable example of this pattern was the marriage of John McAllen, a native of Ireland, to Salome Balli. McAllen's origins are obscure, but he seems to have come to the United States in the post-famine migrations of the 1840s in poor economic circumstances. Marriage into the Ballís – one of the great landowning families of the lower Rio Grande Valley – gave McAllen extensive connections with elite Tejano families in the region as well as partial control of land and other property that Balli

brought to the marriage. The McAllens were enumerated variously in Cameron and Hidalgo Counties, with some reports indicating that McAllen was born in Scotland and others in Ireland. By 1870, McAllen – born about 1826 – had amassed an estate valued at $20,300/$21,600, and the McAllens had two sons, Juan, age 15, and Santiago, age 8.[88]

McAllen was by no means the only early settler to profit financially from marriage into a prominent Valley family. Henry Clay Davis (1814-1866), founder of Rio Grande City, owed much of his financial success to his 1847 marriage with Maria Hilaria de la Garza, granddaughter of Francisco de la Garza Martinez. Similarly, Mifflin Kenedy (1818-1895) – of Pennsylvania Quaker stock – came to South Texas during the Mexican War, afterwards partnering with Richard King, Charles Stillman, and James O'Donnell in a steamboat business based in Brownsville. Kenedy married Petra Vela de Vidal, widow of Luis Vidal and daughter of Gregorio Vela. Property and connections that came to Kenedy through marriage into the Vela family greatly augmented his fortunes.[89]

Throughout the valley, individuals of many different economic and cultural backgrounds intermarried with local Mexican American families. In Cameron County, Peter Bland Chamberlain (1848-1882) and William Chapman Chamberlain (1850-1932), sons of pioneering Presbyterian minister Hiram Chamberlain, married into the Rodriguez and Pizaña families, eventually settling in Nueces County near their sister, Henrietta Chamberlain (1832-1925), who had married Captain Richard King (1825-1885). King, a New York native and business partner of Mifflin Kenedy, founded the King Ranch. Alpheus Ratcliffe – a physician and merchant born in Maine whose name was Hispanicized as Rafael Alfrido – married Maria Trinidad Trevino de los Santos Cantu and alternated between Matamoros, Brownsville, and Laredo.[90] In Hidalgo County, Union Army veteran Thomas Handy (1843-1927), who worked as Inspector of Customs in 1870,[91] married Maria Angelita Cavazos soon after he arrived from Wisconsin; their son George Washington Handy (1874-1943) in turn mar-

ried into the Hernandez and De Leon families. In Starr County, County Clerk and Confederate Veteran James I. Nix, a Tennessee native, married Santos Garcia; their daughter Elodia married John Samuel Monroe, Starr County surveyor, whose parents had migrated to the region from Alabama. The Nix and Monroe families became leading Starr County residents; their family connections to the Garcia family no doubt aided them in local business and politics, but descendants recalled that the children in the family were forbidden to speak Spanish inside the family home.[92]

In addition to cases like these, census records document dozens of other marriages that took place, between 1850 and 1870, between newcomers to the Valley and Mexican American families in the region. Some unions may have had financial benefits; for others, property and status were apparently not considerations. Examples of such marriages – mostly among laborers without substantial property – can be seen in the Tippett, Campbell, Perine, Barton, Rhodes, Turner, Conner, White, Thompson, and Johnson families, involving men from Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, Tennessee, Illinois, Florida, and Ohio. All married women born in Mexico.[93]

Although the typical pattern was for settlers from outside the region to marry Mexican women, occasionally the reverse occurred. Mexican merchant Francisco Gonzi married a young woman from Tennessee.[94] Ygnacio Botella, born about 1813 in Mexico, married a young woman from Indiana, while Spanish merchant Jose Bircasa married into a family from Alabama.[95] Mexican waterman Pedro Hernandez married a German woman, while Italian hotel keeper C. Angelina married a woman from Alabama.[96]

Ethnic blending in the valley extended to other groups as well. Dr. Augustus Watson of Cameron County, a native of Ireland, married a woman from Virginia.[97] French butcher Jacques Larret married into an Irish family.[98] Spanish school teacher J. Roca married a woman born in the Bahamas and settled in Louisiana before moving to Texas.[99] Louis T. Jamison, a merchant born in

Virginia, married an English woman, while Massachusetts native and steamboat captain Artemis Brown married a German.[100] The parents of James Klahn, enumerated aged 20 in Brownsville, in 1860, had been born in Denmark and Ireland.[101] French merchant Isidor Natus married a German woman.[102] Rhode Island Dr. A. Jones married a woman from Scotland, while the wife of French butcher Nicholas Chamo reported that she was born in Germany.[103]

Conclusion

In the second half of the nineteenth-century, approximately ten percent of lower Rio Grande Valley inhabitants had come to the region from elsewhere in the United States, from the Caribbean, or from Europe – and, in a few cases, Africa or South America.[104] Hundreds of individuals from a multitude of ethnic, economic, religious, and cultural backgrounds came to the region. Most came for economic gain, whether in the form of a profitable political office or the prospect of wealth through trade, commerce, or ranching. Others came, many for short periods, as soldiers stationed at fortifications along the border; some of these individuals brought their families with them, sometimes remaining in the area. Religious considerations brought individuals like Sister Stanislaus, Reverend Hiram Chamberlain, and missionary and teacher Melinda Rankin to the Valley. The desire to prosper in a free society brought others, like members of the Nathaniel Jackson family or Friday Bowleg and his relatives, who shared African and probably Native American ancestry also.

Within a generation of arriving in the Valley, many of these families forged links with one another, and many established family connections with the local Mexican-American population as well. Despite earlier generations stretching deeply into colonial New York and New England, for instance, by the time that Thomas Handy died in 1927, many of his descendants were three-quarters or more Mexican American. The descendants of Nathaniel Jackson and Matilda Hicks, by the end of the century, combined

English, Irish, French, Native American, African, and Mexican ancestry.

Although census reports suggest that nearly ten percent of the Valley's population in the later nineteenth century originated outside the region, examples like the Handy and Jackson families suggest that, by the turn of the century, a significant portion of Valley residents had ties by kinship or marriage to such individuals. To return to the original formulation concerning identity and culture, then, what does this mean for understanding the cultural heritage of the Valley? Historian David Hackett Fischer, in his classic work *Albion's Seed*, discusses a wide range of cultural "folkways" that may shape life in a given area, including such things as methods of food preparation, styles of dress, ideas about political authority, systems of kinship, styles of religious worship, ideas about sexuality, patterns of speech, and naming patterns, among many others. Historians like Arnoldo De Leon have suggested a system of "biculturation" that eroded traditional Tejano culture in the Valley, while Armando Alonzo has suggested instead that Tejanos retained most of their cultural traditions into the twentieth century.[105] A look at the nineteenth-century demographic history of the Valley suggests that, while the overall culture of the Valley may have remained strongly Tejano throughout the nineteenth century, an amazing degree of cultural variety and complexity have yet to be recovered before we fully understand the region's past.

The University of Texas – Pan American

Figure 1. Population Growth in South Texas, 1850-2010 (Source: The County Information Program, Texas Association of Counties). This table demonstrates Hidalgo's population surge during the twentieth century as well as its population lag during the nineteenth century.

Year	Cameron	Hidalgo	Starr
1850	8,541	0	0
1860	6,028	1,192	2,406
1870	10,999	2,387	4,154
1880	14,959	4,347	8,304
1890	14,424	6,534	10,749
1900	16,095	6,837	11,469
1910	27,145	13,728	13,151
1920	36,662	38,110	11,089
1930	77,540	77,004	11,409
1940	83,202	106,059	13,312
1950	125,170	160,446	13,948
1960	151,098	180,904	17,137
1970	140,368	181,535	17,707
1980	209,727	283,229	27,266
1990	260,120	383,545	40,518
2000	335,227	569,463	53,597
2010	406,220	774,769	60,968

Figure 2. Immigration Relative to Total Population. Based on calculations made by the author from his reading of census reports between 1850 and 1900, this table demonstrates the overall percentages of individuals born outside of Texas or Mexico in the lower Rio Grande Valley during the nineteenth-century.

1850	8,541	1131	13.24%
1860	9,626	1214	12.61%
1870	17,540	1824	10.40%
1880	27,610	1785	06.47%
1890	31,707	N/A	N/A
1900	34,401	738	02.15%

Figure 3. 1850-1900 U.S. Census Summary Data for the lower Rio Grande Valley (Cameron, Starr, and Hidalgo Counties). The data summarized was collected by the author from his reading of the 1850-1900 census reports for the relevant counties. (Note that the 1850 census for the Rio Grande Valley – a single document without distinction based on individual locality – includes Cameron, Starr, and Webb Counties, as well as the counties later formed from these (including Hidalgo). Because this article focuses on the lower Valley, Webb County was not included in the post-1860 calculations.)

1850-1900 U.S. Census RGV Summary Data						
Location of Birth	**1850**	**1860**	**1870**	**1880**	**1890**	**1900**
Alabama	33	56	54	57	N/A	45
Arkansas	5	3	9	6	N/A	7
California	0	0	2	3	N/A	5
Colorado	0	0	0	0	N/A	1
Connecticut	31	24	17	20	N/A	3
Delaware	0	1	3	8	N/A	0
District of Columbia	5	5	8	10	N/A	10

Florida	20	12	20	17	N/A	10
Georgia	15	12	12	15	N/A	41
Idaho	0	0	0	0	N/A	0
Illinois	4	4	22	19	N/A	7
Indiana	7	4	5	21	N/A	7
Iowa	0	0	4	3	N/A	2
Kansas	0	0	3	5	N/A	3
Kentucky	36	29	17	48	N/A	25
Louisiana	49	40	188	161	N/A	77
Maine	29	18	25	14	N/A	4
Maryland	36	29	17	48	N/A	28
Massachusetts	21	25	43	46	N/A	2
Michigan	3	2	5	18	N/A	2
Minnesota	0	1	3	19	N/A	1
Mississippi	14	7	8	13	N/A	8
Missouri	6	13	19	22	N/A	14
Montana	0	0	0	0	N/A	0
Nebraska	0	0	0	2	N/A	3
Nevada	0	0	0	0	N/A	0
New Hampshire	3	6	6	6	N/A	3
New Jersey	8	7	20	20	N/A	3
New Mexico	2	2	1	8	N/A	10
New York	107	83	147	149	N/A	35
North Carolina	17	4	3	20	N/A	12
North Dakota	0	0	0	0	N/A	1
Ohio	25	32	32	76	N/A	18
Oklahoma	0	0	0	0	N/A	4
Oregon	0	0	0	2	N/A	0
Pennsylvania	62	43	88	82	N/A	16

Rhode Island	3	6	14	8	N/A	3
South Carolina	22	13	17	17	N/A	25
South Dakota	0	0	0	0	N/A	0
Tennessee	33	16	19	64	N/A	53
Utah	0	0	0	1	N/A	2
Vermont	8	6	5	9	N/A	1
Virginia	45	45	50	61	N/A	48
Washington	0	0	0	1	N/A	0
West Virginia	0	0	2	4	N/A	2
Wisconsin	0	6	8	5	N/A	2
Wyoming	0	0	0	0	N/A	2
Africa	0	0	1	0	N/A	0
Algiers	0	0	2	0	N/A	0
Arabia	0	0	1	0	N/A	0
Argentina	0	0	0	0	N/A	0
At Sea, foreign	0	0	1	0	N/A	0
Austria	0	12	8	12	N/A	1
Bahamas	0	1	1	0	N/A	0
Belgium	0	0	5	3	N/A	2
Bermuda	0	0	1	0	N/A	0
Brazil	0	1	0	0	N/A	0
Canada (including N.S., P.E.I., N.B.)	4	13	39	21	N/A	13
Chile	0	0	1	0	N/A	0
China	0	0	0	0	N/A	0
Cuba	1	6	12	10	N/A	5
Denmark	17	2	5	0	N/A	0
England	87	48	68	58	N/A	11

France	67	69	112	86	N/A	37
Germany	103	159	207	160	N/A	43
Holland	2	1	2	0	N/A	0
Hungary	0	2	0	0	N/A	0
Indian Territory	0	0	1	0	N/A	1
Ireland	115	286	315	195	N/A	31
Italy	11	3	15	14	N/A	1
Jamaica	0	2	1	0	N/A	0
Japan	0	0	0	0	N/A	0
Madeira Islands	0	0	1	0	N/A	0
Norway	2	0	8	1	N/A	0
Peru	0	0	0	1	N/A	0
Poland	2	2	1	5	N/A	0
Portugal	2	0	4	0	N/A	0
Russia	0	1	2	0	N/A	0
Scotland	12	14	19	12	N/A	1
Servia	0	0	1	0	N/A	0
Spain	45	28	78	73	N/A	48
Sweden	4	3	2	7	N/A	3
Switzerland	4	12	11	19	N/A	2
Turkey	0	1	0	0	N/A	0
Wales	1	0	2	0	N/A	0
West Indies	1	0	1		N/A	0
Total:	**1131**	**1214**	**1824**	**1785**	**N/A**	**738**

Endnotes

1 See, for instance, Donald E. Chipman, *Spanish Texas, 1519-1821* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992); David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); Armando Alonzo, *Tejano Legacy: Rancheros and*

Settlers in South Texas, 1734-1900 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998).

2 David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 760, 833, 887-895; Colin Woodward, *American Nations: A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America* (New York: Viking Adult, 2011).

3 A caveat is in order concerning places of origin as reflected in census reports. Depending on the information supplied by the person being interviewed, or by the inference of the census taker, recorded places of origin may be inaccurate. For instance, a man reported as born in Connecticut one census might indicate the next that he was born in Rhode Island. The author has relied throughout on the information reported and recorded in the census rather than additional research to determine the accuracy of the reported information. As in any project of this type, there is also a possible margin of error inherent in the process of reading and transcribing primary source census data.

4 Timothy Bowman, "Blood Oranges: Citriculture, Colonialism, and the Making of Anglo-American Identity in the Lower Rio Grande Valley Borderlands during the Twentieth Century" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 2011).

5 Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation*, 1707-1837 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 6.

6 This should not be interpreted in such a way as to minimize the history of contestation and conflict that existed along the border in the nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries; rather, these conclusions promise further to complicate such events by introducing new elements into their analysis.

7 Jane C. Monday and Frances B. Vick, *Petra's Legacy: The South Texas Ranching Empire of Petra Vela and Mifflin Kenedy* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2007), p. 183.

8 John A. Adams, *Conflict And Commerce On The Rio Grande: Laredo, 1755-1955* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), p. 75.

9 1860 Cameron County, TX, Census, HH 542/977.

10 1860 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 984/858; 1870 Hidalgo Co., TX, Census, HH 45/44.

11 1870 Hidalgo Co., TX, Census, HH 109/104, HH 127/122.

12 1870 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 26/21; Florine Pierce Faulk and A. A. Champion, "PIERCE, LEONARD, JR.," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fpi13), accessed August 04, 2013. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

13 Alwyn Barr, "HAYNES, JOHN LEAL," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fhabk), accessed August 04, 2013.Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

14 Elizabeth Pettit Davenport, "FORT BROWN," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qbf07), accessed August 04, 2013. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

15 For a detailed discussion of the origins of this fear, see Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), esp. 35-36, 61-63, 112-119.

16 1860 Hidalgo Co., TX, Census, HH 137/137 and 138/138.

17 Garna L. Christian, "FORT RINGGOLD," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qbf42), accessed August 04, 2013. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

18 See 1860 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 784/680 and following.

19 1860 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 797/693.

20 1860 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 791/67.

21 1860 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 796/692.

22 1870 Starr Co., TX, Census, HH 426/487.

23 See "Fort Brown" and "Fort Ringgold," above.

24 Alicia A. Garza and Christopher Long, "BROWNSVILLE, TX," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hdb04), accessed August 04, 2013. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

25 1860 Cameron Co., TX, Census, Brownsville P.O., Wards 1-3.

26 1860 Hidalgo Co., TX, Census, Edinburg P.O. See also Garna L. Christian, "RIO GRANDE CITY, TX," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hfr05), accessed August 04, 2013. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

27 See Christian, "Rio Grande City." Census reports differ on the place of Davis's birth, listing both Georgia and Kentucky. His family seems to have migrated from Georgia to Kentucky about the time of his birth, thus producing the uncertainty.

28 See 1860 Cameron Co., TX, Census, Ward 1. The author computed the combined values for reported property based on the place of birth of the property owner.

29 1860 Cameron County, Texas, Census, Brownsville, Ward 1; 1860 Starr County, Texas, Census, Rio Grande City.

30 *Ibid*.

31 Marx penned these words about 1843, as part of an intended introduction to Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. Although he never finished that work, they were published in 1844 – while Texas was still an independent republic – in *Deutch-FranzösischeJahrbücher*, a journal he published with Arnold Ruge.

32 Randolph Campbell, *An Empire for Slavery: The Peculiar Institution in Texas, 1821-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), pp. 1-10.

33 Jana E. Pellusch, "BROWNSVILLE, CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/icb02), accessed August 04, 2013. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

34 Daniel Walker Howe, *What God Hath Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 201, 705, and 826.

35 William L. Watson, O.M.I., "OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ixo01), accessed August 04, 2013. Published by the Texas State Historical Association; Jana E. Pellusch, "BROWNSVILLE, CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/icb02), accessed August 04, 2013. Published by the Texas State Historical Association; Sister M. Claude Lane, O.P., "MANUCY, DOMINIC," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fma39), accessed July 14, 2013. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

36 Sister M. Carmelita Casso, I.W.B.S., and Sister M. Claude Lane, O.P., "SISTERS OF THE INCARNATE WORD AND BLESSED SACRAMENT," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ixs06), accessed August 04, 2013. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

37 Ibid.; 1860 Cameron Co., TX, Census, Brownsville Ward 1, HH 6/4.

38 1870 Cameron Co., TX, Census, Brownsville Ward 2, HH 141/136.

39 1880 Cameron Co., TX, Census, Brownsville Ward 2, HH 809/839.

40 1900 Cameron Co., TX, Census, Brownsville, ED 17, "Incarnate Word Convent," HH 290/290. The census also shows a number of priests and monks. See the 1870 Cameron Co., TX, Census, Brownsville, Ward 1, HH 510/483, which shows several monks teaching at a Catholic "college," and Brownsville, Ward 2, HH 268/247, which shows eight "Catholic Clergy" born in France. See also 1860 Cameron Co., TX, Census, Brownsville, Ward 3, HH 689/589, which shows several French natives described as "R.C."

41 Mary H. Ogilvie, "VERDAGUER, PETER," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fve07), accessed July 30, 2013. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

42 Sister M. Carmelita Casso, I.W.B.S., and Sister M. Claude Lane, O.P., "SISTERS OF THE INCARNATE WORD AND BLESSED SACRAMENT," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ixs06), accessed July 30, 2013. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

43 Ibid.;Robert E. Wright, O.M.I., "LA LOMITA MISSION," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/uql07), accessed July 30, 2013. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

44 Much of this information is from Chamberlain's epitaph; see also Bruce S. Cheeseman, "CHAMBERLAIN, HIRAM," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fch05), accessed August 05, 2013.

Published by the Texas State Historical Association.Rankin, a New England Congregationalist, expanded her efforts across the border near Matamoros in 1852. In 1856, she became associated with the American and Foreign Christian Union, an organization geared towards converting Catholics to Protestantism, and went on to open several schools in the vicinity of Monterrey. She is regarded as one of the earliest Protestants to work in Mexico. See: J. Gordon Melton, "Mexico," Encyclopedia of Protestantism (New York: Facts on File, 2005), p. 376; Melinda Rankin, *Twenty Years among the Mexicans: A Narrative of Missionary Labor* (Cincinnati: Central Book Concern, 1881); Seymour V. Connor, "RANKIN, MELINDA," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fra39), accessed August 05, 2013. Published by the Texas State Historical Association; John C. Rayburn, "Melinda Rankin-Crusader of the Rio Grande," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 40 (September 1962).

45 History of Sheam Church, pp. 78-80; see Commission on Archives and History, "Nehemiah Cravens Arrives in Brownsville February 23, 1850," in *Texas Methodist History*, This Week in Texas Methodist History, February 23, 2008, http://txmeth-history.blogspot.com/2008_02_01_archive.html, accessed July 24, 2013. The article notes that "Cravens went to work on church construction. He soon had a 60 x 20 foot structure. Ten feet in the rear were struck off for a preacher's living quarters. The interior walls were covered with canvas instead of wall paper and the exterior was yellow washed with white washed palings."

46 Joseph E. Early, Jr., *A Texas Baptist History Sourcebook: A Companion to McBeth's Texas Baptists* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2004), pp. 23-24.

47 James Milton Carroll, *A History of Texas Baptists* (Dallas: Dallas Standard, 1923), p. 491.

48 Benjamin Franklin Fuller, *History of Texas Baptists* (Louisville: Baptist Book Concern, 1900), pp. 258-259.

49 Benjamin Franklin Riley, *History of the Baptists of Texas: A Concise Narrative of the Baptist Denomination in Texas, from the Earliest Occupation of the Territory to the Close of the Year 1906* (Dallas, TX: Privately Printed, 1907), pp. 93-95, 110. The first black Baptist Church in Texas was organized in 1865; today there are four historically black Baptist churches in the lower Rio Grande Valley. Mt. Zion, in Harlingen, the oldest, was organized in 1926; Rising Star, in Edinburg, the second oldest, was organized in 1938. Given the presence of a substantial African-American and mixed race community in the Valley during the nineteenth century, as evidenced by census records, there may have been a now defunct nineteenth-century black Baptist church in the Valley as well. Jackson's Chapel Methodist Church served a similar function in the Methodist community.

50 Many of these bodies also had newspapers and annual publications that reported about missionary success. News of Powell's activities at Saltillo, Parras, and Patos was published in 1883 in Baptist General Association of Virginia, *Minutes of the Sixtieth Annual Session of the Baptist General Association of Virginia* (Richmond: Dispatch Steam Printing House, 1883), p. 24, as well as in J. G. Walker, ed., *The American*

Baptist Yearbook (Philadelphia: The American Baptist Publication Society, American Baptist Convention, 1898), p. 14.

51 See Campbell, *Empire for Slavery*. Census reports form the primary basis for the identifications presented here. How an individual's race was reported might depend on what the census taker thought he or she observed or what was reported to them by members of the household or their neighbors. Some individuals are shown as "black" on one census, "mulatto" on another, and "white" on another. Some census takers dealt outright with difficulties of categorization, as did the enumerator for Cameron County in 1860 (HH 1107/1108) who labeled two women in the Cantu family as "Indian" but then counted them as white in the overall census statistics, including a notation at the bottom: "2 female Indians counted as white."

52 This, of course, does not mean that the region uniformly supported the Union during the American Civil War. Jerry Thompson and Felix Almaraz discuss extensive support for both sides of the conflict in their *Vaqueros in Blue and Gray* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2000). Allegiances could be complicated among the Anglo population as well, even among those opposed to slavery. Reverend Hiram Chamberlain, pioneering Presbyterian minister, for instance, a New Englander and a non-slaveowner, ultimately fought for the Confederacy, serving as company chaplain. Likewise, Abraham Rutledge, whose wife was a member of the mixed race Jackson family, also fought for the Confederacy.

53 See Alberto Rodríguez, "Border Love on the Rio Grande: African American Men and *Latinas* in the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas (1850-1940)," http://www.blackpast.org/?q=perspectives/border-love-rio-grande-african-american-men-and-latinas-rio-grande-valley-south-texas-1, retrieved July 28, 2013.

54 1870 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 1134/1124.

55 1870 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 1136/1127, 1137/1127.

56 1870 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 1148/1138, 1149/1139, 1150/1140, 1514/1504.

57 See Kevin Mulroy, *Freedom on the Border: The Seminole Maroons in Florida, the Indian Territory, Coahuila, and Texas* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1993) and *The Seminole Freedmen: A History (Race and Culture in the American West)* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007).

58 See 1870 Hidalgo Co., TX, Census, HH 125/109. One Friday Bowleg, a Seminole Indian Scout with connections to both Mexico and Arkansas, with the December 31, 1876, attack on the Seminole Scouts. A dance was being held at Bowleg's house, when Sheriff Crowell and his men attacked the black Seminoles near Brackettsville, Texas. See "The Wild West of the Seminole Negro Indian Scouts (Or the Killing of Adam Paine, Medal of Honor Winner)," http://lestweforget.hamptonu.edu, accessed 31 July 2013. The family of Mollie July, enumerated in Starr County in 1900, may also have had native ancestry. See 1900 Starr Co., TX, Census, ED 141, HH 12/12. July and her five children were all shown as black, as were Ben and Martha July, enumerated in HH 15/15. Mollie's birthplace was uncertain – either Mexico or the U.S., but both of her parents had been born in Indian territory; Ben indicated that

he had been born in Mexico with both parents born in Florida. Martha indicated that she had been born in Mexico with a father born in "Indian Territory" and a mother born in Florida. The family had been in Kinney Co., TX, in 1880, all shown as black. Ben July's father, Sampson, reported that he and both parents had been born in Florida; he was employed as a scout. All of Sampson's children, except for 4-year old son Samuel, had been born in Mexico.

59 1850 Rio Grande Valley Slave Schedule, Cameron, Starr, and Webb Counties. This document is publicly accessible at http://www.familysearch.org.

60 Norman Risjord, "Prince and Fed," in *Representative Americans: The Romantics* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001), provides a concise discussion of life for a refugee along the underground railroad.

61 1850 Cameron, Starr, and Webb Co., TX, Census, HH 181/197, HH 164/174, 523/618, 510/605, 59/59, 176/185, 186/203, 182/198, 183/199, 186/203.

62 Note that while the census indicates his name was Matthew, family members and other documents suggest that it was in fact Nathaniel. Some family members also maintain that Matilda Hicks had previously married John Smith (whose racial origins are unclear), by whom she had several daughters, while other family stories indicate that these three daughters (Nancy, wife of Abraham Rutledge; Emily, wife of Samuel Singleterry; and Maria, wife of [Unknown] McHaney and Claiborne Champion) were daughters of Nathaniel Jackson. Jackson was enumerated in Wilcox Co., AL, in 1850 with twenty-two slaves, apparently members of his family whom he freed upon arrival in Texas.

63 1860 Hidalgo Co., TX, Census, HH 2629/1533.

64 1860 Hidalgo Co., TX, Census, HH 2630/1534.

65 1860 Hidalgo Co., TX, Census, HH 2631/1535.

66 1860 Hidalgo Co., TX, Census, HH 2632/1536, 2633/1537, 2634/1538, 2635/1539.

67 This is a complicated subject. Slave marriages did occur, often sponsored by white owners, but they had no legal validity. Jackson family members may have been married – by a black or white minister – but if the parties did not meet the legal requirements of the states in which the marriage occurred, the marriages would have had no legal force. For a discussion of the parameter of slave marriage before the Civil War, see Brenda Stevenson, "Marriage in Slavery," in Anya Jabour, *Major Problems in the History of American Families and Children* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005), pp. 144-155.

68 Descendants of Abraham Rutledge claim kinship with Edward Rutledge (1749-1800), a signer of the Declaration of Independence from South Carolina.

69 See, for instance, 1870 Hidalgo Co., TX, Census, HH 46/45, HH 48/47, 53/52, 54/53, 56/55. Claborn Champion, 73, originally from Lancaster County, South Carolina, was shown as white. Wife Maria and son James were originally shown as "M" (mulatto), but "W" (white) was superimposed over it. Son John was listed as white.

70 Sylvia is believed to have been manumitted following the death of Morgan Cryer in Clark Co., AR, in 1833. She may have been related to John Hector, shown as "black," a Louisiana native who lived in Cameron County in 1870. Cryer had purchased Sylvia from Silas McDaniel in 1819. See Clark Co., AR, Deed Book A, pp. 24-25.

71 See also the 1870 Hidalgo Co., TX, Census, HH 54/48. William Glover, born about 1811 in North Carolina, "white," appeared with "black" wife Fillis, born about 1820 in South Carolina, and several children, shown variously as "black" and "mulatto." Benjamin Moore, age 14, "mulatto," was also living with the family.

72 1860 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 66/63, 538/473, 539/474, 695/597, 707/608; 1870 Cameron County, TX, Census, HH 183/173, 241/235, 723/722, 732/731, 733/732, 1112/1102.

73 1860 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 219/193.

74 1870 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 1112/1102, 183/173.

75 1870 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 273/276.

76 1870 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 965/840.

77 1860 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 711/612.

78 1860 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 346/300.

79 Charles W. Joyner, *Down By The Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbanna: University of Illinois Press, 1985), pp. 6, 159, 218-222, 330, 335, 337, 341.

80 1870 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 356/340; 1870 Hidalgo Co., TX, Census, HH 8/9.

81 1860 Starr Co., TX, Census, HH 439/439.

82 See also Rodriguez, "Border Love."

83 1850 Cameron Co., TX, Cenesus, 651/759; HH 1870 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 266/269; Frank Wagner, "GLAEVECKE, ADOLPHUS," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fgl17), accessed August 02, 2013. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

84 1850 Cameron, Starr, and Webb Co., TX, Census; 1870 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 682/682, 683/683.

85 1860 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 330/289.

86 1870 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 424/426.

87 1860 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 19/14 (John Hughes), HH 186/163 (Pedro Miniel), HH 310/269 (John Castening), HH 461/400 (A. Werbiski), and HH 520/458 (Charles Anderson).

88 See, for instance, the 1870 Cameron County, TX, Census, HH 392, and the 1870 Hidalgo Co., TX, Census, HH 19/18. For a detailed history of this family, see Mary

Amberson, James A. McAllen, and Margaret H. McAllen, *I Would Rather Sleep in Texas: A History of the Lower Rio Grande Valley & the People of the Santa Anita Land Grant* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 2010).

89 Cynthia E. Orozco, "KENEDY, PETRA VELA DE VIDAL," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fkerl), accessed August 02, 2013. Published by the Texas State Historical Association; 1860 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 101/91; Jane Clements Monday and Frances Brannen Vick, *Petra's Legacy: The South Texas Ranching Empire of Petra Vela and Mifflin Kenedy* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2007).

90 1850 Rio Grande Valley Census, Cameron, Starr, and Webb Counties, HH 1544/1764; 1860 Webb Co., TX, Census, HH 778/201.

91 1870 Hidalgo Co., TX, Census, HH 127.

92 Elliott Young, *Catarino Garza's Revolution on the Texas-Mexico Border* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), pp. 173, 344, 403; Interview with Rolando N. Gonzalez, descendant, 2013.

93 1850 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 3/3; 1860 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 191/168, 51/45; 1860 Hidalgo Co., TX, Census, HH 2750/1567, 2709/1551; 1860 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 984/863, 21/16, 1521/1211; 1870 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 1146/1136, 1140/1130; 1870 Hidalgo Co., TX, Census, HH 53/48, 21/20.

94 1860 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 45/45.

95 1860 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 437/379, 536/471.

96 1860 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 82/76, 345/299.

97 1870 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 287/274.

98 1870 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 804/800.

99 1860 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 659/565.

100 1860 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 39/42.

101 1860 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 129/115.

102 1860 Cameron Co., TX, HH 327/286.

103 1860 Cameron Co., TX, Census, HH 352/305, 374/323.

104 Immigrants from Asia did not appear in the Valley until the twentieth century. The first Chinese families in the Valley were enumerated in Cameron County in 1910. The first Japanese families appeared in Hidalgo County in 1910 and in Starr and Cameron Counties in 1920.

105 Alonzo, Tejano Legacy, p. 143.

Cattle Barons and the Creation of an Empire: A Case Study of the Expansion of the Kenedy Ranch of South Texas

by

Elmer Sierra, William Yaworsky, and Amy Frazier

This article examines the circumstances surrounding the acquisition and expansion of the La Barreta section of the Kenedy Ranch in South Texas. An examination of 19th century archives in the Cameron County Courthouse reveals irregularities in the conveyances of land. These types of irregularities, which amounted to fraud, have for some time been conceived of by historians as having been instrumental in the acquisition of land once owned by Hispanic ranchers into expanding Anglo ranching empires. However, due to incomplete historical records, it has often been difficult to demonstrate that fraud was committed in any given case. Our article illustrates how Anglo ranching interests manipulated the processing of land titles, resulting in Hispanic families being dispossessed of their lands. The case study is of significant interest to the Hispanic population of South Texas, who continue to live with the legal repercussions of these events.

At first glance, the property known as La Barreta does not look like anything special. It is located in present day Kenedy County, Texas, very near the Gulf Coast between the Nueces and Rio Grande Rivers. The county only hosts 416 residents, making it the fourth most sparsely populated county in the nation.[1] Both history and geography combine to produce this relative isolation.[2] Large cattle ranches were important in South Texas history, and their continued existence has kept at bay the forces of urbanization. Most notable are the King and Kenedy ranches, that latter of which covers 235,000 acres.[3] The La Barreta property falls within the boundaries of Kenedy Ranch and shares with it a ranching history. Geologically, the property pertains to the coastal sand plain of southern Texas, a vast wilderness of more than 2 million acres

defined by its underlying substrate of wind-blown Quaternary sand that at points reaches a depth of six feet.[4] Mesquite and oak groves are scattered among open grasslands intersected with sand dunes, marshlands, and tidal flats. La Barreta lies west of the Laguna Madre, a shallow, coastal lagoon protected by Padre Island. Padre Island itself is a recent geological formation dating back only 4,500 years.[5] And while the relentless geological processes created a pleasant tourist destination on the Island, they created something of greater strategic significance in the region: oil. The resources alluded to include 403,501 barrels of oil and 44,987,391 cubic feet of gas worth millions.[6]

In this paper we argue that a portion of the La Barreta property was stolen from its rightful owner, a Hispanic rancher named Remigio Chapa Guerra, through outright fraud perpetrated in 1876, amidst the aftermath of the chaos known as the "Skinning Wars." This process culminated in the enshrinement of the usurpers rights upon the conclusion of *State v. Spohn* (1904), a case we go on to discuss. We begin with an overview of the 19th century land transactions that pertain to the property before analyzing the various legal clashes that occurred. We conclude with a short discussion of the socioeconomic legacy of the land dispute.

In the Beginning

Much of the early history of the La Barreta property has been documented by Galen Greaser, a historian who has done extensive research on behalf of the Texas General Land Office. In this section, we draw on both his research and the original documents associated with the property. Greaser's work shows that La Barreta is well-known from the days when it pertained to the Spanish colony of Nuevo Santander.[7] In 1803, the Spanish crown directed that the land be made available to one José Francisco Ballí, who had recently made a land donation to flood victims in Reynosa and was being compensated for his gift. La Barreta was duly surveyed from February 16-20, 1809, by Antonio Márgil Cano. The survey was certified by Vicente López de Herrera on

March 2, 1809, with nothing in the original survey or related notes mentioning the Laguna Madre as a border. Rather, La Barreta was simply described in terms of an inland property consisting of 25 *sitios* or 110,700 acres.[8]

In addition to the La Barreta grant, Ballí had offered to pay for several brackish parcels east of this tract called Mesquite de Rincón. Vicente López de Herrera determined that it was impractical to survey these parcels, but made a rough estimate that they consisted of four *sitios* with the Laguna Madre forming the eastern border. The request was never sent to Spain, and Ballí never pursued the matter any further.[9] José Francisco Ballí's son and heir, Pedro Ballí, also would sell or exchange four *sitios* (leagues) to Doña Guadalupe Cavazos for a debt that Ballí owed her. Note that these four *sitios* pertain to the original 25-*sitio* tract of land and are separate and distinct from the estimated four sitios of brackish land. Guadalupe Cavazos, in turn, would transfer 1 and 1/3 *sitios* of the property to her son Juan Cavazos, who later sold it, along with the adjacent Mesquite de Rincón, to Remigio Chapa Guerra in 1871.[10]

So, to recapitulate, we have two distinct properties under consideration. They are as follows:

> (1): A 25-*sitio* tract called "La Barreta" was approved for transfer to Jose Francisco Ballí by the Spanish authorities. Four *sitios* would be sold to Guadalupe Cavazos, and 1 1/3 *sitios* of those four *sitios* would eventually be sold to Remigio Chapa.
>
> (2): A second four *sitio* tract to the east of La Barreta known as "Mesquite de Rincón" was also purchased by Remigio Chapa in 1871.

In summary, by 1871 Remigio Chapa owned five *sitios* in total: 1 1/3 *sitios* from the original La Barreta grant and the 4 *sitios* of Mesquite de Rincon.

Mexico had achieved independence in 1821 and had ceded the entire territory north of the Rio Grande to the United States in 1848. Before Texas joined the United States, it approved a law designed to protect against the possibility of fraud in land transactions. The 1840 law, *An Act Concerning Conveyances* requires that along with the seller at least two witnesses must sign the conveyance document for any and all land transactions in Texas.[11] Texas notified its court functionaries of this law, and the list of those notified included Adolphus Glaevecke, who would become Cameron County Clerk.[12] We will return to this later. Meanwhile, during the acquisition of his property, Remigio Chapa Guerra had the required signatures of two witnesses,[13] and the transaction came in the form of a warranty deed, which is generally considered to be a secure form of conveyance.[14]

The Skinning Wars and Subsequent Land Grabs

The Cameron County Tax Roll for 1875 recorded Remigio Chapa as paying taxes for 4,428 acres of land, but paying no taxes for animals.[15] That is because his father-in-law, Rafael Cisneros, was renting the land from Cavazos in order to graze his own animals. This is corroborated by the General Warranty Deed from Juan N. Cavazos to Remigio Chapa (1871)[16] and the Cameron County Tax Roll of 1875.[17]

Sometime in 1874 or 1875 Chapa had a debilitating stroke that left him bedridden in Matamoros.[18] This life-altering event came at a watershed moment in regional history: the onset of the so-called "Skinning Wars." Mexican bandit Juan Cortina had provoked the Anglo population of South Texas enough for them to launch a wave of raids in what would become present-day Kenedy County. Hispanic-owned ranches were burned, their livestock appropriated, and their residents killed or sent fleeing for their lives.[19] One vaquero recalled that "there were many small ranches belonging to Mexicans, but the Americans came in and drove them out... after that they fenced the ranches ... [including] some land that wasn't theirs."[20]

The political taint of Remigio Chapa Guerra's serving as an Alderman in Matamoros under Mayor Juan Cortina may have made Chapa Guerra's property, La Barreta, a particularly inviting target. Cameron County Clerk Adolphus Glaevecke was well aware of the political ties between Juan Cortina and Remigio Chapa Guerra, for he himself was married to Cortina's cousin. At least one of the ranches known to have been sacked –El Peñascal –is located near La Barreta. All of this suggests that Chapa's ranch was in a rather vulnerable position.

This turmoil was likely the cause of the partnership demise between Remigio Chapa Guerra and his father-in-law Rafael Cisneros, for, immediately after the war, in 1876, we still see Chapa paying property taxes, but in that year Cisneros no longer appears on the cattle tax roll.[21] It is impossible to arrive at a conclusion as to why this is so, but speculation is that the vanishing of livestock from the tax roll is an indication that Chapa's ranch was sacked by vigilantes.[22]

In 1876, we identify what we believe to be clearly documented and deliberate fraud in the circumstances surrounding the acquisition of the La Barreta property. The Cameron County Courthouse has on file a quitclaim deed from that year that transfers the property from Remigio Chapa to Robert C. Miller.[23] Elsewhere, the circumstances of this transaction have been examined in detail.[24] To summarize, there were no signed witnesses for the Chapa to Miller document of December 1, 1876. This is in direct violation of the 1840 Texas "An Act of Conveyance" law, to which we alluded earlier. Nor does Remigio Chapa's signature appear on the act of conveyance. Instead, the entire document is handwritten by Adolphus Glaevecke, including, in Glaevecke's handwriting, the name "Remigio Chapa." These facts alone render the document invalid.

Furthermore, the words of conveyance are unusual and the operative words documenting a transfer of funds are elusive. We also note that a man with Remigio Chapa Guerra's background would

almost certainly have included "Guerra" in his signature. Indeed, the English language used in the document might not have been understood by Remigio Chapa. Also, the quitclaim format used in the transfer is typically used among family members and is uncommon among unrelated people.[25] No place of residence for the Grantee (the buyer, Robert C. Miller) is listed, nor was the document notarized by an independent notary. Instead, it was notarized by the Cameron County Clerk, Adolphus Glaevecke, who also wrote, signed, sealed, and filed the deed. This is particularly noteworthy because Adolphus Glaevecke's history of corruption is long and well-documented.[26] Another red flag is the fact that the other deeds[27] we found in the courthouse that were written by Glaevecke and were unrelated to this La Barreta property meet Texas legal requirements (witnesses, etc.,) making the Chapa to Miller transaction stand out all the more like a sore thumb. Finally, it's hard to believe that Remigio Chapa could have appeared before Adolphus Glaevecke in the Cameron County Courthouse in Brownsville given Chapa's reduced medical circumstances.

Miller sold Chapa's land to Robert Savage in 1884.[28] On the same day, Savage sold the property to powerful cattle baron Mifflin Kenedy.[29] However, in 1886 rival claimants appeared. The State of Texas did not recognize the current owners and, instead, issued railroad certificates for the "vacant" land. John Mackay purchased 76 land certificates for 640 acres and promptly issued a trespass to title lawsuit. In *Mackay v. Armstrong et al.*, (1892), Mackay's lawyers argued that it was vacant public land and that that fact made his purchases of certificates legal. The defendants, Kenedy among them, were forced into using secondary evidence since the original *Expediente* of the grant was lost. They used depositions and various other strands of evidence to bolster their case, arguing along the way that the chain of title ran from Francisco Ballí to Guadalupe Cavazos to Robert Miller to Prudencia Hinojosa to James Durst, without mentioning Remigio Chapa or Juan Cavazos.[30] The district court of Nueces ruled in favor of the defendants, only to see the decision overturned by the Texas Supreme Court and sent

back to the lower courts for a new trial. The whole issue was finally decided in favor of Kenedy, Armstrong, and the other defendants, with the taxes that were paid over the years appearing to have been the determining factor in their victory.[31]

In the fall of 1883, Mary J. Durst, et al., brought suit in the District Court of Cameron County against John S. McCampbell (father of J.A. McCampbell, notary of the deed from Miller to Savage) to remove cloud from the title and cancel the deed for reason of fraud. In a complicated series of appeals and trials that followed, James Wells represented the defendants and presented evidence of the chain of title of the La Barreta grant. The defense report, written by Adolphus Glaevecke, shows nineteen titles of land. Supposedly, each numbered title refers to a description of the land and the county court deed location, year, and volume. However, there is an exception: the last title description, No. 19, states that Mifflin Kenedy, by regular chain of title, became the owner of the four leagues by acquiring the land from Guadalupe Cavazos. The 19th statement never mentions Juan N. Cavazos, Remigio Chapa, Robert Miller, and Robert Savage, all of whom were intermediaries between Guadalupe Cavazos and Mifflin Kenedy in the chain of title of the four leagues.[32]

Despite the shaky status of the deeds, an excellent opportunity quickly emerged for Mifflin Kenedy's heirs (he died in the late 1890s) to solidify their holding on the land. In 1901, the 97th Legislature of Texas passed the *Act of Mexican Land Grants –Act to Provide for Testing Validity of*.[33] This act was designed to validate land claims deriving from the Mexican government. Initially, the lawyer for his estate, James Wells, applied for the patent on behalf of the Kenedy family, and was denied. So the Kenedys sued, and the ensuing case, *The State of Texas v. Sarah Spohn*, would have large repercussions for the state. Even though there was no patent on the land, Kenedy's attorney, James Wells, and daughter, Sarah Spohn, convinced the court that her ancestors had indeed purchased it from the Mexicans. James Wells testified that he arranged the purchase of the land from Robert Miller for Kenedy,

omitting any mention of Chapa, Cavazos, or Savage, or their positions in the chain of title.[34] The court ruled in favor of Spohn, and with that ruling, the legal claim to the land was solidified. We were quite curious to analyze this case in detail, but on December 16, 2011, when we requested the case files for *State v. Spohn*, the State of Texas informed us that the entire case file, including all reference materials, was missing.[35]

After their victory in *State v. Spohn* few legal challengers appeared and those that did were easily brushed aside. Yet opportunities for further expansion were present and acted upon. For example, in the 1980s approximately 26,000 acres of presumably-public land came under the control of the Kenedy Foundation. The Foundation relied on "*Luttes Law*," a legal mechanism that defines the mean average of the highest tide over a period of 10 years and that is used as the determining line between private property and the ocean.[36] This led to an interesting situation whereby the Kenedy Foundation extended its property through channel dredging in the Laguna Madre. The lagoon formerly covered much of the area in question, but when the cannel was dredged, the dirt was piled up alongside, creating more above sea-level territory. The Kenedy Foundation had re-surveyed the whole property and came up with a determination of shoreline boundaries that differed from those that prevailed in the 1800s. The Kenedys had always insisted that the property bordered the Laguna Madre and now they were in a position to help define where the Laguna Madre itself was located. Not surprisingly, the new calculations demonstrated that the La Barreta/Mesquite de Rincón property extended into territory traditionally defined as the Laguna Madre. That was now claimed by the foundation as property.[37]

Conclusion

"The most important factors contributing to Tejano land loss included: initial confusion over the status of land grants, competition over the best lands, extensive litigation of land grants after the initial adjudication of 1851-52, sheriffs' sales, fraud and other

illegal seizures of land (and herds), frequent division of Tejano landholdings either by purchase or through inheritance, limited accessibility to capital and credit, and the deterioration of the ranching economy after 1885."[38]

Archival research can be fascinating because it allows us see for ourselves which factor pointed out by Alonso may have played a role in any given case. Regarding La Barreta, we think we have pointed out sufficient reasons to question the validity of the Remigio Chapa to Robert Miller land transaction. Clearly, Cameron County Clerk Adolphus Glaevecke did not follow the letter of the law while drafting this document, for it lacks both witnesses and the seller's signature. Texas, at the time, was a borderland wilderness actively contested by multiple groups, and it should not surprise anyone that occasionally the powerful triumphed over the weak by disregarding the law. According to the historian Armando Alonzo, "these were very large landholders, the economic elite, and they were so powerful that they often resorted to what I would call illegal means of obtaining land from Tejanos...They could basically get whatever they wanted through the use of the courts and the sheriffs and extra-legal means."[39] Historian David Montejano likewise notes that "Mexicans in Texas, especially above the Nueces, lost considerable land through outright confiscation and fraud."[40]

The actions of Adolphus Glaevecke set in motion an expansion of the Kenedy Ranch and further legal contests that define property rights in the region to this day. Today, *The State of Texas v. Sarah Spohn* is the main ruling the Kenedy Foundation has to protect and expand its interests. Two court cases, *Garry Mauro v. Kenedy Foundation* (1995), and *David Dewhurst v. Kenedy Foundation* (1999) that referenced *The State of Texas v. Sarah Spohn* ended in favor of the Kenedy Foundation. The vanishing of all the original records from *State v. Spohn* hampers efforts to get to the truth of the matter. The fact that 106 Texas courthouses (including the Cameron County Courthouse) were destroyed or badly damaged by fires in the years 1848-2001 does not help matters either.[41] Yet it seems

to us that at least some Hispanic families in South Texas were victimized by those who held power in the 19th century. It is our hope that this paper provides a framework for future discussions on this topic.

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Endnotes

1 United States Census. 2010, "Kenedy County." http.//2010.census.gov/2010census/popmap/ipmtxt.php?fl=48.

2 In 1952, Mesquite del Rincon was under consideration to be the testing ground for the world's first nuclear reactor-propelled jet bomber. The Convair WS 125 would have been a weapon with considerable doomsday potential, given that its engine produced a 20 mile radioactive cloud downwind at Dugway Proving Grounds in Utah. For further reading see Stephen I. Schwartz, *Atomic Audit: The Costs and Consequences of U.S. Nuclear Weapons Since 1940* (New York: Brookings Institute Press, 1998).

3 Kenedy Foundation, 2012.

4 Timothy E Fullbright, David Diamond, John Rappole, and Jim Norwine, "The Coastal Sand Plain of South Texas," *Rangelands* 12, no. 6, 1990, pp. 337-40.

5 National Park Service. 2012. http://www.nps.gov/pais/naturescience/geologicformations.htm. Quitclaim deed, Andres Cantu to Benita de la Garza et al., September 14, 1876, Book D: pp. 523-524, Supplemental Deed Record, Cameron County Courthouse, Brownsville, Texas.

6 Defense Exhibit 476, from *Texas Land Board Commissioner v. Kenedy Memorial Foundation*, April 11, 2001. This sum does not include millions of dollars paid by the petroleum industry for bonuses to the Kenedy Memorial Foundation, as documented by Defense Exhibit PAB000007 from *Texas Land Board Commissioner v. Kenedy Memorial Foundation*, April 11, 2001.

7 Texas General Land Office Archives and Records Division, *Guide to Spanish and Mexican Land Grants in South Texas*. (Austin: Texas General Land Office Archives and Records Division, 2003).

8 Texas General Land Office, 2003.

9 The claims to Mesquite de Rincon from 1809 through 1850 are difficult to ascertain because the Brownsville County Courthouse burned down in 1850. There is evidence that it was acquired by Guadalupe Cavazos and then given or sold to her son Juan around the time of his mother's death circa 1850, yet Volumes C and D of the

Deed Record containing recorded deeds from 14 August 1850 to 6 February 1851 were destroyed by fire in 1854. Guadalupe's will was not recorded until 1882, probably probated with the original records likely destroyed in the fire. Juan Cavazos had a copy of the deed and that was his only proof of ownership and sale of the land to Remigio Chapa.

10 General Warranty Deed, Juan N. Cavazos to Remigio Chapa Guerra, September 18, 1871, Book C: pp. 249-250, Supplemental Deed Record, Cameron County Courthouse, Brownsville, Texas, pp. 249-250..

11 Texas, "An Act Concerning Conveyances of Land" February 5, 1840, 157, sec. 16.

12 William Alexander, *The Law of Texas Now in Force Touching Conveying and Registration* (Austin: Joseph A. Nagle, 1877).

13 General Warranty Deed, Juan N. Cavazos to Remigio Chapa Guerra, September 18, 1871, Book C, Supplemental Deed Record, Cameron County Courthouse, Brownsville, Texas, pp. 249-250.

14 "Quitclaim," *Wikipedia.com*, 2011, http://www.wikipedia.com.

15 Cameron County Tax Roll, 1875, Cameron County Courthouse, Brownsville, Texas.

16 General Warranty Deed, Juan N. Cavazos to Remigio Chapa Guerra, September 18, 1871, Book C, Supplemental Deed Record, Cameron County Courthouse, Brownsville, Texas, pp. 249-250.

17 For example, on the Tax Roll, to the right in the ledger for cattle, you will see that Rafael Cisneros paid taxes for 200 head of cattle. As early as 1871, Cisneros had extremely valuable commodities in horses and cattle on the Barreta grant including the Mesquite Rincón area (150 horses, 600 head of cattle, see Scan 0086 document, Cameron County Tax Roll of 1875.

18 We can only cite family level oral history among Chapa's descendents for this assertion.

19 "Nuecestown Raid of 1875," Texas State Historical Association, 2012, http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/jennt.

20 Alicia A. Garza, "Kenedy County" In Handbook of Texas Online, 2012, http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hck04.

21 Cameron County Tax Roll, 1876, Cameron County Courthouse, Brownsville, Texas.

22 During testimony from Armstrong v. Mackay, Tomas Trevino claimed that "Rafael Cisneros went into possession of the same place and lived till 1880. Then Miller came and has his ranch there, and after him Prudencia Hinojosa, who delivered it to James W. Durst." This is mistaken. First, Miller came into possession in 1876, and, by 1880, Cisneros was dead. Second, neither Hinojosa nor Durst ever came into possession of the 1 1/3 leagues of the property variously claimed by Chapa, Miller, Savage and Kenedy.

23 Quitclaim deed, Remigio Chapa Guerra to Robert C. Miller, December 1, 1876, Book D: pp. 559-560, Supplemental Deed Record, Cameron County Courthouse, Brownsville, Texas.

24 Elmer Sierra, William Yaworsky, and Amy Frazier, "Land Grab or Legal Title Transfer? Reviewing the Evidence for Land Title Fraud in 19th Century South Texas." *The Journal of South Texas*, 2011, Vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 76-84.

25 "Quitclaim," *Wikipedia.com*, 2011, http://www.wikipedia.com.

26 Sierra, Yaworsky, and Frazier, *Op. Cit.*, 2011; Also see Comisión Pesqusidora de la de la Frontera del Norte. 1875. *Reports of the Committee of Investigation sent in 1873 by the Mexican Senate to the Frontier of Texas*. (New York: Baker and Bodun, 1875).

27 Quitclaim deed, Juan de Dios Fernandez to H.E. Woodward and Company, June 29, 1876, Book D: pp. 685-686, Supplemental Deed Record, Cameron County Courthouse, Brownsville, Texas; Quitclaim deed, City of Brownsville to Robert Kingsburg et. al, February 10, 1877, Book D: pp. 593-594, Supplemental Deed Record, Cameron County Courthouse, Brownsville, Texas; Quitclaim deed, Ignacio E. Rocha and Harriet Leek to Thomas A. McFarline, April 25, 1876, Book D: p. 462, Supplemental Deed Record, Cameron County Courthouse, Brownsville, Texas; Quitclaim deed, Andres Cantu to Benita de la Garza et. al, September 14, 1876, Book D: pp. 523-524, Supplemental Deed Record, Cameron County Courthouse, Brownsville, Texas; Quitclaim deed, Juan de Dios Fernandez and Pilar Melendez to Jeramiah Galvan, October 12, 1877, Book D: p. 761, Supplemental Deed Record, Cameron County Courthouse, Brownsville, Texas.

28 General Warranty Deed, Robert C. Miller to Robert R. Savage, February 7, 1884, Supplemental Deed Record, Cameron County Courthouse, Brownsville, Texas.

29 Special Warranty Deed, Robert R. Savage to Mifflin Kenedy, February 7, 1884, Supplemental Deed Record, Cameron County Courthouse, Brownsville, Texas.

30 *Mackay v. Armstrong et al.*, 19 S.W. 463, 464–66 Texas Supreme Court (Tex. 1892), page 20.

31 *Mackay v. Armstrong et al.*, 19 S.W. 463, 464–66 Texas Supreme Court (Tex. 1892). What concerns us is that the purchase of property from Remigio Chapa is not mentioned in the testimony. Yet we have ample evidence that Remigio Chapa's role in the chain of title was well-known to the defendants. See James Wells Papers. 1884. *List of Redemption Certificates on "San Juan Carrizitos" Juan N. Cavazos and other Vouchers...; Certificate 13039 of Remigio Chapa, $30.78 paid in taxes*, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

32 Mary J. Durst et al., v. John S. McCampbell, Plaintiffs Exhibit of La Barreta Chain of Title; District Court of Cameron County, 1883, McCampbell v. Durst, 15 Tex. Civ. App. 522, 40 S.W. 315.

33 The 97th Legislature of Texas *Act of Mexican Land Grants –Act to Provide for Testing Validity of* (Austin, TX: Texas Supreme Court, JA Nagel, 1901).

34 The State of Texas v. Spohn, Case no. 18373, James Wells testimony, pages 42-50, 26th District Court, Travis County, Texas, October 6, 1902.

35 Laura K. Saegert, Assistant Director for Archives, Archives and Information Service Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, personal communication to the authors, December 19, 2011..

36 Eddie Fischer and Angela Sunley, "A Line in the Sand: Balancing the Texas Open Beaches Act and Coastal Development," *Proceedings of the Coastal Zone 07*, Portland, Oregon, July 22-26, 2007.

37 Oral Argument– 04/11/01 99-0667 Kenedy Memorial Foundation & Corpus Christi Diocese v. Dewhurst; Luttes v. State, 159 Tex. 500, 324 S.W.2d 167 (1958).

38 Alonso, Armando Alonso, *Tejano Legacy: Rancheros and Settlers in South Texas, 1734-1900* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998), pp. 279-280.

39 Cited in Sam Howe Verhovek. "Cattle Barons of Texas Yore Accused of Epic Land Grab." *New York Times*, July 14, 1997.

40 David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), p. 50.

41 Bill Morgan, "Old Friends: Great Texas Courthouses." 2012, http://oldtexasfriends.com/odd.htm.

A History of the Brownsville Police Department in the Nineteenth Century

by

Noel Otu

The early history of the Brownsville police system cannot be fully understood from early settlers and criminological reasoning (as in the "march of progress" theory) or from merchants' economic interests or strategies of power (the economic/conflict perspective), but only in the context of value, culture, and ideology as defined by David Rothman's social context model.[1] Rothman argued that social, political, and economic institutions cannot be understood apart from the society in which they flourish. In contrast, the march of progress theory views the various stages of historical development in criminal justice as humanitarian reforms designed to lessen suffering and to benefit the offenders. The economic theory, for its part, rather than viewing the stages of criminal justice development as a chain of progressive reforms, interprets them as social controls set up by members of the ruling classes to repress the poor, seen as dangerous and threatening. The offender is seen, not as in need of control, but as victimized by laws established by rulers of the system.[2] Both the march of progress and the economic theories view criminal justice as pushed by humanitarian motives and the ruling class's response to the threat of the poor over-running their limits. According to Rothman, both of these interpretations are simple and narrow. While the march of progress interpretation fails to look beyond the language of the founders, the economic perspective ignores it completely. Economic theory would make every spokesman and leader of the Brownsville Police Force a tool, conscious or not, of the economic system. Rothman describes America's development of the criminal justice system in the Jacksonian period as "first and foremost a vigorous attempt to promote the stability of the society at a moment when traditional ideas and practices seemed outmoded and ineffective." In short,

the criminal justice system represents an effort to ensure the cohesion of the community in new and changing circumstances.[3]

The Founding of the Brownsville Police Department

Organized policing is a fairly recent development. The London Metropolitan Police force – the world's first organized police force, used as a standard of comparison throughout this article – was not established until 1829, and the advent of organized policing in Brownsville, Texas, only two decades later, seems remarkable.

American forces occupied the area where Brownsville was to be founded in 1846. Political considerations were of major importance in the establishment of a Brownsville police system, which was designed to protect Brownsville merchants.[4] Before the late 1850s, conditions along the border were very unstable.[5] Concern with protection of life and property was the norm. The police system in Brownsville developed in 1848 under the control of both the mayor and the city council (aldermen). Police functions included, but were not limited to, law enforcement, tax collection, road repairs, and market houses repair.[6] The night watch (lamp lighting) system was used until the city council saw a need for having a marshal and for drafting by-laws for the city aldermen to follow. Policing in the United States followed the English system. The watch, sheriff, and marshal were transplanted and easily accepted in many colonies in the United States. The watch was organized by citizens to patrol the streets and watch for fire and petty thieves. The sheriffs were selected by the governor and were in charge of apprehending criminals, collecting taxes, appearing in courts, keeping prisoners, and also serving subpoenas. Sheriffs had, and still have, jurisdiction in counties. The sheriffs were more interested in tax collection than in other law enforcement responsibilities, since they were on fixed fees depending upon the amount of taxes collected.

However, the night watch system was not enough to maintain order in Brownsville night and day. The people of Brownsville relied upon traditional cultural/religious values to guide the pre-

vailing opinion about right and wrong Although there is no written record to support the contention that there was a night watch in the City of Brownsville before 1850, it is this writer's opinion that there was some form of informal or formal social control mechanism before Brownsville elected Marshal I. J. N. Mitchell in April 1850.[7] After the annexation of Texas in 1845 and the end of Mexican-American War in 1848, Brownsville was not totally lawless.[8] It is this writer's speculation that the U.S. soldiers were the secondary law enforcers. The primary law and orders mechanism was similar to that of England during the early Middle Ages, known as the frankpledge system. Each citizen was responsible for aiding relatives and neighbors who might be victims of crime. According to Charles Reith, this method is referred to as Kin Police.[9] They would not be far from the truth, knowing the regard that the Latino/Hispanic Americans places on family:

> The Latino/Hispanic American family is most clearly characterized by bonds of interdependence, unity, and loyalty, which includes nuclear and extended family members as well as networks of neighbors, friends, and community members. Father's word is the law, and he is not to be questioned. [10]

The City of Brownsville was not well organized before the 1850s, and it was not until April 16, 1850 that Aldermen L. A. Bryan, E. Dougherty and George Dye were appointed to draft the first bylaws for the city council.[11] There were no printed city ordinances in the early 1850s in Brownsville. Nothing in the form of law enforcement mechanism existed before this period.

A well-organized police system began in mid-1850[12] with I. J. N. Mitchell's election as Brownsville's first City Marshal.[13] The marshal was the city's chief law enforcement official. Just like the sheriffs, the marshals performed law enforcement duties at the city level. The election of Marshal Mitchell, replacing the watch system, is the beginning of official city law enforcement personnel in the City of Brownsville. The city marshal was to take orders from

the city mayor and the councilmen. The marshal in Brownsville is traditionally characterized as the earliest feature or symbol of American government in its territory. In April 1850, the primary responsibility of the marshal was to get people to clear and clean the streets. Occupants and owners of buildings were directly involved in the cleaning of their streets. Monitoring vagrancy was another responsibility of the marshal.[14] In accordance with the fact that a police force had never existed in Brownsville before this time, there was no jail until April 27,1850. Alderman George Dye made a motion for the Committee on Public Buildings to prepare a suitable house, to be known as the guardhouse of the City of Brownsville, in which to confine persons arrested for breaches of the city ordinances (i.e., a jail).[15] During the 1850s, Brownsville did not find a suitable building within the city, and hence negotiated with Cameron County to create a portion within its jail facility for Brownsville prisoners.[16]

Marshal Robert Shears followed I. J. N. Mitchell. The main aims of having a marshal (law enforcer) during the early 1850s were to keep the street clean, remove vagrants, collect taxes (market), and turn on street lanterns. Policing was mainly the job of the marshal. Special watchmen were hired in 1857 after the resignation of Marshal Robert Shears: Joseph Trevino, Jasper Glavaecke, and Fred Cameron, at $1.50 per night.[17] Policing (by the watch system) in this period was concerned with the lawlessness and continued resentment in Mexico of the Americans' invasion by war and the creation of the border between the two countries.[18] William Neale, a long-time resident of Matamoros and Brownsville, classified Brownsville in 1857 as an "arsenal where the revolutionists of Mexico obtained considerable supplies of arms and munitions of war."[19] According to Rothman's theory of social context, the hiring of night watches "was an effort to insure the cohesion of the community in new and changing circumstances."[20] On June 5, 1858 a petition written by J. Marks and others was presented to the city council requesting the creation of a Board of Police appointed by the merchants of Brownsville to act under municipal authority.[21]

After the election of Marshal I. J. N. Mitchell, the City of Brownsville started writing a city ordinance. The ordinance was written in English and Spanish, but published in English. Marshal Mitchell was the most important law enforcement official in the early 1850s, Brownsville being small and rural. The city marshal was in charge of patroling the city cemetery, picking up vagrants, arresting people for breaches of city ordinances, ordering people to clean the streets, picking up and selling stray animals, and maintaining street lamps. On July 6, 1850, a committee was set up to investigate the conduct of Marshall Mitchell, and, immediately following the investigation, the Marshal's bill was audited. Early policing in the City of Brownsville was mainly the job of the marshal. The marshal was at the mercy of the citizens.[22] In the eyes of Brownsville indigents, a "bad" marshal must be fired and not allowed to live in the community afterwards. On July 13, 1850, a committee investigating Marshal I. J. N. Mitchell recommended to the city council that he be ordered to leave Brownsville within 48 hours from 8:00 p.m. of same day.[23] England in the Middle Ages became a law kingdom before becoming a police kingdom. Similarly, Brownsville was not well organized before the departure of the first marshal. It was only after Marshal Mitchell's era that the office of city attorney was created on August 10, 1850. J. Cummings, Esq. was confirmed as the first City Attorney of Brownsville on September 25, 1850.

At this time, the title "chief of police" replaced that of "marshal" as the head of law enforcement in Brownsville. On July 16, 1850, R.C. Tremble was nominated as the new chief of police, but was rejected by the city council. Jefferson Barthelow was nominated in his place, becoming Brownsville's first chief of police. Bartholomew had to work with 14 companies of police per month rather than six companies per month like his predecessor. His salary as the chief of police was $800.00 dollars per year. However, it was not long before the City of Brownsville went back to having a city marshal as the head of law enforcement. On January 11, 1851, the ordinance creating the office of chief of police was

repealed, and the duties of that office were given to the city marshal. The office of the market master was also abolished, and the marshal had to perform the duties of the market master in addition to his other duties.

Considering the complexity of organized policing in history, one must be right to argue that the City of Brownsville was growing in population, but without the characteristics usually associated with modernity, such as literacy, urbanization, industrialization, affluence, and technology. Brownsville did have public police, but not organized policing, during the early 1850s. The system was struggling to improve upon "kin policing" and was inevitably changing guards and titles frequently.

A Paid Uniformed Police Force

According to Schwartz and Miller, there has to be some social complexity that occurs before organized policing is developed, such as monetization and urbanization.[24] Social complexity is one of the factors for the creation of modern policing, but not the only factor. Other organizing efforts of the police may follow violation of rules and apprehension of the violators. This is the case with the development of organized public police in Brownsville. On February 7, 1853, the Fourth Legislature of Texas reincorporated the City of Brownsville.[25] Following the incorporation, the Army Post Headquarters building, the hospital, the quartermaster office, the guardhouse, and the post settler store were constructed.[26] With this development, it was no longer safe to continue with unorganized policing.

On March 20, 1854, the city council subcommittee on police was authorized to rent a private building to be used as jail at the cost of $6.00 per month.[27] The city hired, among others, Marshals J. Andrew and L.W. Willsie and Assistant Marshal Antonio Saluzán. The office of city marshal changed hands frequently due to urbanization. Hence, there was a need for a well-established organized policing. Brownsville was growing at a pace in which the marshal, assistant marshal and a few other untrained night and day watch-

men were not adequate to handle law enforcement. Similarly in England, urbanization and industrialization made the parish constables ineffective in controlling crime. One writer describes the situation as follows:

> The deterioration and demise of the parish constable system illustrated the central flaw in all systems of obligatory avocational police. As the work becomes more difficult, demanding, or time-consuming, obligatory avocational policing takes on the characteristics of forced labor, unpaid, and it has to compete with earning a living. Motivated only by the threat of punishment, it became unwilling and resistant. Offering no one any reason to learn or cultivate the skills necessary to do it well, it becomes undependable, uneconomic, and of poor quality. In short, the more we expect police to do, the less we can expect obligatory avocational police to do it.[28]

During the eras of Marshals R. Shears, W. Gholson, J. Dougherty, and Thomas Melvin, the Brownsville merchants discovered that they needed better protection. On June 5, 1858, a petition was presented to the city council. J. Marks and others petitioned to create a board of police appointed by the merchants of Brownsville.[29] At this time, vagrancy and theft were major problems. These types of crimes and the general dissatisfaction by merchants led to a feeling of lack of social control. Alderman Pearborogh presented the ordinance in 1858 that created the first (though poorly salaried) police force in Brownsville.[30] The transition from a one marshal (kin police) and some watchmen to a poorly salaried police institution went well, with minor problems like lateness, absenteeism and general inefficiency.

During the Civil War, "Governor Runnels asked General David Twiggs, U.S. Army Commander in Texas, for additional protection for Brownsville. The governor was joined by the Texas leg-

islature and other officials in requesting protection."[31] Until 1866, U.S. Soldiers ran Brownsville day and night instead of the police force. Alderman Adolphus Glaevecke, chairman of the police committee, stated that, "owning to the discipline of the troops the city police force could be reduced to three policemen per ward."[32] The police force was reduced to only eight members for the night and one policeman and the city marshal during the day. Also, the dismissal of Marshal Roberts made law and order in the City of Brownsville less important. Marshal E. Drowe did not last very long after taking over the post from P. Busara, who was the acting marshal after R. Shears was dismissed on May 5, 1866. Marshal E. Drowe presented his resignation to the Brownsville City Council on May 23, 1866, citing a better job opportunity.[33] However, the military was not trained to function as a civil police force. This same situation had occurred in England during Oliver Cromwell's unsuccessful experiment with using the military as a police force between 1655 and 1657. In Brownsville, too, the military did not do well in enforcing the laws. There was disorder in the community during this period, from vagrancy to increasing theft.

The end of the Civil War brought a breakdown in social control and public health:

> Brownsville was occupied by a large number of troops under the command of General Brown. Civilian buildings and homes were used by the occupation troops for billets and storage. Most of the Brownsville residents elected to stay in Matamoros until they determined their status with the United States government.[34]

It was difficult to live in Brownsville during this period. The same situation had occurred in England during the mid-1700s, due to the growth of industry in Europe and England, which had generated a rapid population increase followed by lawlessness and disorder in the cities.[35] The English landowners had been concerned with the decrease in protection from criminals. According to Richardson,

the English people resorted to asking citizens to voluntarily assist the constables and sought to employ more law-abiding citizens as constables.[36] Although the measures taken by the English people did succeed in controlling the situation, it was a short-term success. The main answer to the problem was to replace constables with better-trained police constables and policemen.

In the post 1860s era, the Brownsville police system was cleaned up. John Price became Brownsville's city marshal and chief of police by July 1866, and was given the additional responsibility of inspecting rides. The marshal was suspended for weeks and reinstated as a short-term solution to the city's lawlessness. On July 14,1870, the city council's required honorable discharge from the Army or Navy for people wishing to become police officers or city marshal. This seems to have been the first time the city council ever stipulated any requirement for becoming a police officer. On July 18, 1870, Cruise Carson was appointed city marshal and chief of police. More authority was now given to the chief of police/marshal. The day and night policemen were separated from each other, and the marshal requested additional night policemen on September 6, 1870. The marshal was authorized to hire and fire police officers at his discretion, reporting to the city council.[37] Records show that the marshal did suspend many officers for disobedience. The police force was reduced to four night and three day officers. The reason given for the reductions was to cut costs.

The rich were dissatisfied with the conduct of the city marshal, and on April 24, 1871, citizens filed a petition for his removal due to official misconduct.[38] After Marshal Carson was relieved of duty, Walter Taylor was appointed temporary acting marshal. On May 15, 1871, the entire Brownsville police force was discharged.[39] Similarly, in England due to fear of crime and community, disorder in the late 1700s had necessitated the creation of a more systematic response to London's disorder and lawlessness.[40] Sir Henry Fielding had created the Bow Street Runners to replace the constable-watch system in London in about 1750.[41]

Although there was a marshal in Brownsville since 1850, officers were not paid adequate salaries, and were not wearing uniforms and badges until 1872.[42] On May 15, 1871, H. S. Rock was elected Brownsville's marshal and chief of police. Joseph P. O'Shaughnessy was elected lieutenant of police to replace Lieutenant F. D. Fuller. The Brownsville Police Department was reorganized along the lines of day and night policing functions. The day police officers were the chief of police, a lieutenant, and a day officer, while there were three night officers. All police officers were on temporary appointment and were paid a monthly salary as follows:

Police Chief/City Marshal	$75.00
Police Lieutenant	$60.00
Police Officer/day	$50.00
Police Officer/night	$45.00

The transition from one system to another was marked by politics.[43] When the London Metropolitan Police Act of 1829 had created a uniformed, paid, and full-time police force, to gain acceptance for the new Metropolitan Police Robert Peel selected men who were tall, even-tempered, and reserved; chose a uniform that was unassuming (navy blue rather than military red); and insisted that officers be restrained and polite, maintain appropriate discipline, and not carry guns. Thus, the City of Brownsville had a run-in with the governor of Texas in 1871, when Governor E. J. Davis commissioned Cruise Carson Esq. as Brownsville's marshal and chief of police. Cruise Carson was a former city marshal who had been removed due to official misconduct. The City of Brownsville rejected Mr. Cruise Carson and stated that the governor had no legal right to appoint him. In his letter of June 1871, Governor Davis stated that Cruise Carson did not "fraudulently leave his job as the marshal/chief of police," but instead went to Austin because he was summoned by the high court to do so. On July 3, 1871, Cruise Carson became Brownsville's marshal and chief of police the second time.[44]

In November 1872, the Brownsville police officers had uniforms and badges. The uniform and badge was the outward symbol of a police officer's legal status. It is symbolic of the authority vested in the individual by the governing body.[45] It was not long before both the marshal and the lieutenant resigned their positions. On November 18, 1872, F. Siebert took over the position of city marshal/police chief left vacant by the resignation of Cruise Carson, and F. Campbell also took over the position of lieutenant of police after the resignation of F. D. Fuller. The new marshal lasted for about one year. On April 28, 1873, Marshal F. Siebert informed the city of his resignation effective May 1, 1873.

This time period saw the creation of the volunteer organization of the protection Hook and Ladder Company No. 1 (fire fighters) in 1875.[46] The influx of foreigners impacted the city law and order system. For example, George Brulay, a native of Paris, France, established a large area of farmland south of Brownsville and planted sugar cane, as well as constructing the first sugar mill and irrigation system in Brownsville.[47] It is known that urbanization and industrialization, coupled with insecurity, always influences the police. Brownsville's situation repeated that of England between 1750s and 1820s, leading to a frequent changing of the guard in a search for the best marshal.

After Marshal Siebert's resignation, Police Lieutenant Francis Campbell took over as Marshal/Chief of Police. On January 6, 1874, J. J. Smith was confirmed as the police lieutenant, replacing Thomas Melloin, who was suspended and later fired. The following month, about February 2, 1874, Melloin was reappointed, but the city mayor vetoed his reappointment. In June 1874, the police chief filed charges against the police lieutenant. In response, the lieutenant filed counter charges against the police chief. As a result, the Brownsville police chief was dismissed and the police lieutenant was acquitted of all charges on June 17, 1874.[48] The Brownsville City Council was not impressed by the turmoil in the police department, and decided to abolish the office of lieutenant of police.

When J. J. Smith became acting chief of police and marshal, he was able to keep Brownsville prisoners in custody, and was paid by the city for doing so. It was not until early 1876 that the position of lieutenant of police was reinstituted in the Brownsville Police Department. Political forces in the City of Brownsville prevented the independence of the police department, which remained controlled and manipulated by the city council. The resignation of Roft H. Powers as police lieutenant on April 10, 1876 was an indication of power play politics. The following month, G. W. Miller was elected police lieutenant, Roft H. Powers petitioning unsuccessfully to retrieve that position.

The Brownsville Police Department was expected to protect the interests of the rich. It is not uncommon to see changes in policing style, personnel distribution or general strategy when a crime problem touches the rich and powerful. The police system concentrates on the capture of thieves when armed robbers make traveling dangerous for the rich.[49] According to John S. Dempsey, a classic case of protecting the rich occurred in England.

> Asserting a burglar or footpad (street robber), for example, was worth the same as catching a highwayman, but catching a deserter from the Army brought a much smaller reward. In some areas, homeowners joined together and offered supplementary rewards for the apprehension of a highwayman or footpad in their area. In addition, whenever there was a serious crime wave, parliament awarded a special reward for thief-takers (police) to arrest particular felons.[50]

The stationing of police officers in the ferry to stop the use of obscene languages is a case in point. On June 20, 1876, the city council requested that a policeman be stationed on the ferry between Brownsville and Matamoros to prevent pilfering and the use of obscene language. Most poor people do not take offense at using or hearing obscene language.

On May 13, 1878, the city council agreed that all permanent appointments on the police force should be made by the city council in regular session, and that no excuse whatever would permit a police officer to be absent from his duty except sickness or by virtue of an approved written permission by the mayor or the committee on police.[51] On October 21, 1878, the mayor of Brownsville declared a quarantine against Matamoros because passengers with yellow fever had arrived in Matamoros from the Port of New Orleans.[52] The move increased the duties of the police, who had to enforce the mayor's orders. Although the health of the citizens of Brownsville was important to the city council and police department, it was not important enough to protect the cemetery. The committee on police recommended the abolition of the posting of policeman at the city cemetery on May 24, 1880.

On June 26, 1882, all police officers were dismissed and new officers hired. By decision of the city council on September 18, 1882, it was the responsibility of this new force to send a substitute if a policeman were absent from duty. This is a clear indication that police training was not present at this time. It was also the duty of Brownsville police officers to light lamps in the city. Police officer salaries were increased. Their salaries, effective January 1, 1883, were as follows:

Police Lieutenant	$ 50.00 per month
Policemen	$ 30.00 per month

There seems to have been no review of the city marshal's salary. During this period, the U.S. Army, stationed at Fort Brown, coexisted with the city police, and the enforcement of laws was not difficult. The presence of the Army was a deterrent to criminal behavior. Marshal James H. Klahn's duty in September 24, 1883, in addition to law enforcement duties, included hauling earth and filling potholes in the streets. On June 11, 1888, the Brownsville City Council's Committee on Police recommended the creation of police reservists. They nicknamed the position "supernumerar-

ies." The aim was to have people on stand-by. In case there was a vacancy in the police department, then a reservist would fill it.[53]

During this period, it was the responsibility of Marshal/Police Chief Joseph Webb in April 1890 to collect fines, jail fees, and rent for city lots and to buy materials for the building of roads and bridges. On December 1, 1890, at the council meeting, Marshal Joseph Webb tendered his resignation as city marshal. Former Sheriff of Cameron County S. A. Brito was appointed the City Marshal/Police Chief by the city council on December 1, 1890. It is clear at this point that the City of Brownsville Police Department was heading towards having experienced personnel. According to records, Mr. S. A. Brito had more political connections in the city than any other applicant. He was the most highly recommended for the position of marshal. Marshal Santiago Brito was the first police official to be killed in the line of duty in the history of Brownsville Police Department.[54]

An Attempt to Reform the Brownsville Police Department

On April 13, 1891, the city created the first written policy and procedures (rules and regulations) governing the Brownsville Police Department.[55] They read as follows:

> An ordinance prescribing rules and regulations for the government of the Police Force of the City of Brownsville.
>
> Police rules and regulations
>
> Rule 1. The police force of the city shall consist of the city marshal, lieutenant of police and, patrolmen.
>
> Qualifications
>
> Rule 2. No person shall be appointed on the police force, unless he has been a resident if the city.

Punishment

Rules 3. Any member of the police force may be punished at the discretion of the mayor.

Duties of Police Marshal

Rules 4. The Marshals shall, either in person or by the Lieutenant of police, attend at the Mayor's court while in session, and shall promptly and faithfully execute all writs and processes issued from said court. He shall be the Chief Police Officer of the City under the Mayor.

Patrolmen

Rule 5. To preserve the peace, prevent crime, and arrest offenders being the most important object in view, the patrolmen's exertions must be constantly used to accomplish this end.

Rule 6. A patrolman must patrol his beat unless otherwise directed and must by his vigilance render it extremely difficult for any one to commit crime on his post.

Rule 7. Patrolmen must if possible fix in their minds such impressions as will enable them to recognize persons whom they frequently meet in the streets at night.

Rule 8. Patrolmen shall report to their Chief all persons known as/or suspected of being offenders against the laws.

Rule 9. When any person charges another with the commission of a crime and insists that the person charged shall be taken into custody, the policeman may require the accuser to make the necessary affidavit to sustain the charges.

Rule 10. Patrolmen shall be civil and polite to all person, give such information as may be required and direct strangers and -- females, children and aged and infirm persons across crowded streets.

Rule 11. A patrolmen must recollect that in making an arrest he is not justified in doing more than is absolutely necessary.

Rule 12. Whenever an arrest is made the party arrested shall in the presence of the policeman who made the arrest and at least one other officer be thoroughly searched.

Rule 13. Patrolmen will receive from the City Marshal such general and particular verbal instruction.

Rule 14. No patrolman shall while on duty except in the immediate performance thereof enter any place where any kind of intoxicating drinks are sold or furnished.

General Rules

Rule 1. Each member of the police force shall devote his time and attention to the business of the department.

Rule 2. Punctual attendance, prompt obedience to orders and conformity to the rules of the department will be rightly enforced.

Rule 3. Each member in his conduct and department must be quiet, civil and orderly.

Rule 4. No liquor or intoxicating drink shall upon as pretext be introduced into the City Jail, except when ordered by a physician on a written prescription.

Rule 5. No members shall communicate to any person information which may enable persons to escape from arrest or punishment.

Rule 6. Patrolmen when on duty shall wear their badge conspicuously on the outside of their outermost garment over their left breast.

Rule 7. Every member of the police force is required to beat the City Hall punctually at such time as the Chief may direct to answer roll-call.

Rule 8. All persons who may be arrested during the time the Mayor's court is in session, shall be immediately taken to said court.

Rule 9. All officers detailed on duty will come to the muster prepared to go on duty upon their respective beats, on leaving the City Hall.

Rule 10. All members of the police force will be deemed to be always on general duty.

Rule 11. Members of the force are required to report their places or residence.

Rule 12. When two officers are assigned to duty or the same beat or on no account shall both of them leave their beats at the same time.

Rule 13. When there is but one officer on a beat he shall remain until he return, in charge of both beats.

Rule 14. When any papers are placed in the hands of an officer for execution he shall execute the same as prescribed by law.

Rule 15. Every officer will make the tour of his beat at least once each day and notice carefully whether any violations of City Ordinances are occurring

therein and will promptly report all nuisances existing on their respective beats.

The introduction of written policy and procedures represented the beginning of reform in the Brownsville Police Department, as all over the United States. There was a broad "progressive" reform effort from the 1890s to the 1920s. The progressives' views in the United States were centered on three areas: The responsibilities of the police should be narrowed, police departments should be centralized, and personnel standards should be upgraded.[56] This reform is similar to the policy and procedures of the Brownsville Police Department at the time. There are also similarities here to what happened in England in 1829. Sir Robert Peel developed seven principles that guided the Metropolitan Police. There is no doubt that the transfer of this system to the United States was the cornerstone of the Brownsville Police Department's policies and procedures. The London Metropolitan Police, nicknamed Bobbies (for Robert "Bobby" Peel) were the first organized police force in history. The Peelian Principles were as follows:

1. The police should be organized along military lines.
2. It is essential that the proper persons be hired and trained.
3. The police should be hired on probationary basis and should be fired if they do not meet standards during their probationary period.
4. The police should be under the control of the civil government.
5. The police should be organized and deployed by time and area.
6. Police headquarters and leadership should be centrally located.
7. It is essential that police maintain records.[57]

These comparisons demonstrate how the London Metropolitan Police influenced the United States Police Department in general and the Brownsville Police Department in particular. In the wake of reform in the Brownsville Police Department, Mr. M. Y. Dominguez was appointed to the post of police lieutenant after the death of former Lieutenant Victor Lerma on December 3, 1894. The progressive period continued in the Brownsville Police Department. On August 5, 1895 the city had both regular and alternate policemen. Each alderman (8 aldermen) had a responsibility of nominating one regular policeman and one alternate policeman. It is understandable at this juncture that it was the duty of the aldermen to check the background of the individuals that they nominated. Valentine Tamayo, become Brownsville City Marshal in May 1896, ran the department through his reelection in March 28, 1898 until his resignation on July 3, 1899. L. C. Bates was appointed Brownsville City Marshal on July 3, 1899 at the city council meeting to replace Tamayo.[58]

Brownsville's first mounted police officer was Joaquin Trevino, appointed on October 2, 1899. Officer Trevino and a police lieutenant were the only two mounted officers, paid and extra ($15.00) fifteen dollars per month to help them support their horses. The City of Brownsville was a small city, and such changes in the police department came very slowly. During the 1800s, the police department showed a great effort considering to the size of the city. It must be noted that until this period there were no female police officers or female marshals in the City of Brownsville.

Developments over the Past Century

A second reform effort in the Brownsville Police Department came with the emergency of the 1900s. Professionalism started by giving attention to quality in the performance of police duties. In Brownsville Police Department before this period, police input was higher than output. On July 2, 1900 the city marshal requested a salary increase of $30.00 in U.S. currency. It was necessary for the Brownsville Police Department to reform in order to meet

the demanding law and order needs of the citizens. In 1904, the St. Louis Brownsville and Mexico Railway reached Brownsville. Railways brought in more merchants and goods, calling for additional police protection. Merchants were the first group to demand organized policing in Brownsville. During the early 1900s, Marshal Bates was marshal/police chief at a salary of $75.00 per month, while the police lieutenant's salary was $40.00. Before September 1910, the Brownsville police chief/marshal was paid more money per month than the city mayor. Chief of Police Joe Crixell was paid $75 per month, while the mayor was paid $50 per month.

A few additional statistics might be noted. The completion of the first international car bridge linking Brownsville and Matamoros in 1910, bringing about a boom in Brownsville's population, brought an increased need for policing. In the late 1940s, Celia R. Lord was hired as the first female sworn officer of the department. The Brownsville Police Department has subsequently had as police chiefs (among others): Mr. Genaro Padion, Joe L. Crixell (reelected), William Linton, John Armstrong, Andres Vegas, Victor Rodriguez, Ben Reyna and Carlos L. Garcia.[59] The Brownsville Police System has grown from one marshal in the 1950s to about 237 sworn officers, with some (less than 10 percent) females and with Chief Carlos Garcia at the head. Subsequent events that affected the Brownsville Police Department have included the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack in New York City and the Mexican drug gangs' problem of 2005. As stated in their website: "The Brownsville Police, incorporated in 1848, continues the implementation of commercial oriented policing strategies necessary for meeting today's challenge."[60]

The University of Texas at Brownsville

Endnotes

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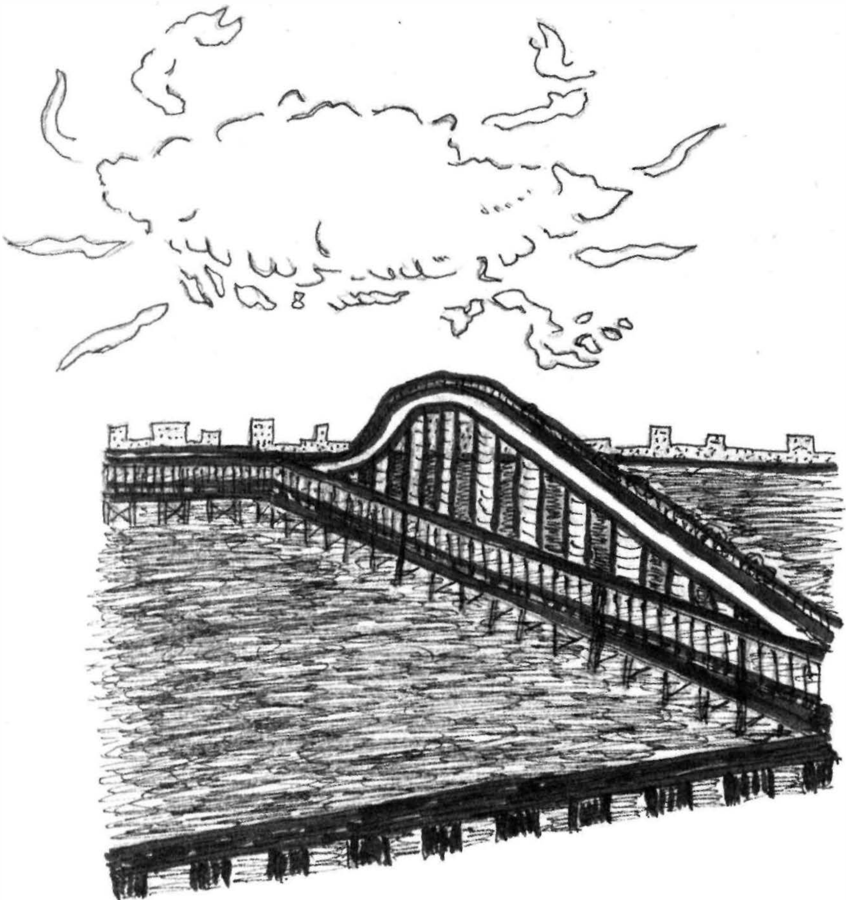
TWENTIETH AND TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY HISTORY



Rios Boots

by

Ruby Cisneros Casteel

"It is very hard indeed to write a story about Abraham Rios, Raymondville boot supplier to Hollywood and Texas cowboys. Rios is so well known that everybody writes about him. In fact, practically everybody guilty of writing a feature article in Texas touches on Rios' factory."[1]

It is true that the introduction of the railroad enticed land developers to market the Rio Grande Valley to northerners in the hope that they would relocate and make the Valley their home. However, it was Abraham Rios who brought acclaim to Raymondville and put it on the map in a favorable manner.

Broken-hearted after a failed marriage, Abraham Ríos Ayala returned from Montemorelos to his hometown of General Terán, Nuevo Leon, Mexico. En route, his truck burned, together with all his belongings. His parents, Aurelio and Maria Salome Rios, saddened by their eldest child Abraham's misfortunes, encouraged him to establish his own business in Texas. He accordingly left for San Benito, Texas, where his uncle Samuel Ríos Anzaldúa had established a shoe shop. Abraham's father, Aurelio, manufactured leather goods in General Terán, and all of his uncles, Zeferino, Filiberto (enlisted in the Mexican Military), Samuel, and Ezequiel (a Methodist pastor) worked leather. His grandfather, Miguel Ríos Anzaldúa had also been a cobbler.

Guillermo Ríos Ayala, Abraham's youngest brother, says that their father, Aurelio, traveled with his father, Miguel, to General Teran from Reynosa to purchase leather goods from a tannery owned by Urbano and Librada García. Librada Ayala García had raised her niece María Salomé Ayala. It was on a trip to General Teran to purchase leather goods from Urbano García when Aurelio met and proposed to his future bride, María Salomé.[2] The Garcías

didn't approve of their niece marrying Aurelio because "el tenía las tres Ps" ("he had the three P's); he was poor, *prieto* ("dark"), and Protestant.[3] After being convinced that she was truly in love with Aurelio, her aunt and uncle relented, and the young couple married in the mid 1890's. Guillermo says that García taught Aurelio to tan and cure leather and generally to sharpen his leather-working craftsmanship. Aurelio eventually opened his own shop in General Terán. There was much unrest in Mexico, and the Mexican army and revolutionaries, as well as just regular citizens who all depended on horse and buggies for transportation, needed saddles, shoes, boots, and leather goods. Aurelio's business prospered. His brothers had all moved to General Terán, and most of their families were raised there.[4]

Abraham Ríos was born, on March 30, 1897, as the eldest of eighteen children. All the children in the family were expected to get an education, read the Bible, and go to church. Additionally, the males had to learn to craft leather. He was expected to take over his father's business in Mexico, since he was the eldest, but he later confessed that he had bigger ideas.[5]

While visiting his uncle Samuel at his San Benito Shoe Shop in Texas, Abraham used his time to learn the area; he traveled to Raymondville and decided to set up his shop there. Guillermo says that their father gave Abraham enough money to purchase real estate, establish a shop, and to begin the production of leather goods. In 1925, Abraham set up shop on Sixth Street in the S.L. Gill building, where he reamained for sixteen years.[6] He also purchased Lot No. Twenty (20), Block No. Four (4) of the town of Raymondville for $10.00 from George R. and Mabel J. Lochrie. He established his residency at the property location, at 440 Yturria Street.[7] He married Elvira García of San Benito, on February 14, 1927, in Raymondville.[8]

It didn't take long for word of mouth to spread regarding Abraham's fine craftsmanship. The first newspaper clipping located about Abraham Rios may have been one that appeared in

1931. It indicated that a well-known but unnamed man had been searching for a pair of cowboy boots in Brownsville, and, worn from his journey, after tirelessly searching the entire town, a clerk finally told him that he could find a bootmaker in Raymondville.[9]

Abraham's first pair of boots, in 1925, sold for $12.50. Abraham gave credit to word of mouth as advertisement for his success. Elvira convinced her husband to make a custom pair of boots for Willacy County Judge Samuel Lamar Gill, the first judge after Willacy County was reorganized in 1921.[10] Gill reportedly loved the $18.00 pair of boots, but said that they didn't fit him.[11] The boots were carefully reshaped to fit the Judge, who subsequently convinced Mayor Charlie Johnson to purchase a pair for himself as well. Mayor Johnson then convinced Sheriff Frank Teller to follow suit, and, soon thereafter, the talk got around town to the ranches and even to western movie stars.[12] Simultaneously, Abraham began making boots for the foremen of the King Ranch. The King Ranch cowboys who favored the boots are credited primarily for helping to create his fame because of the comfort and the durability of the custom made boots. The cowmen found that both the appearance and the fit suited them, with the boots' endurance another plus.[13] Soon, prominent businessmen, movie stars, rodeo stars, and dignitaries either came to the shop in Raymondville or placed their orders. The local newspaper often ran articles and pictures of the celebrities who came to the shop.

After sixteen years at the S.L. Gill building, on Sunday, April 26, 1941, Rios moved to a new location on Hidalgo and 8th Street in Raymondville. Reportedly, the original name of the business was Raymondville Boot Shop, and perhaps it was when the move was made that the name was changed to Rios Boot Company. A giant, cut-out boot sign with the name Rios was placed up high, close to the roof top, making it visible from a few blocks away. The building was formerly occupied by the Riscoe Motor Parts; it was remodeled for the boot shop, and new, more modern machines were installed for the manufacturing of boots and shoes. "First there were the seven sewing machines used for putting fancy stitches in

the boots that are proudly worn by most everyone of importance south of the Brazos. Then came the new machinery such as you see in every city shoe repair shop –automatic machines that stitch soles while you wait barefooted and read a newspaper. Fancy leathers from calves, crocodiles, alligators and lizards were moved to the new place." More importantly, large files of school tablets, Big Red Chief Tablets, were moved.

The Big Red Chief Tablets also included the designs that Abraham scribbled on them. The back of the shop had two rows of sewing machines. He had his own table where he made the designs and cut the patterns. He trained his employees to interpret the designs and stitch the pieces. Usually the women did the tight rows of stitching, and the men worked on sewing the tops, bottoms, the soles and heels. Big Red Chief Tablets contained the measurements of clients. Each foot imprint was penciled, and the measurements were printed on the sheet indicating measurements around the front of the toes, instep, heels, and calves. Each foot was carefully measured before production began on a boot. Other details were included, such as height of the tops, type of heel, shape of toe and the stitching, thread color, and design, along with the leather type and color. Abraham guaranteed the fit, and customer satisfaction was an early trademark. Later, the Big Red Chief Tablets were replaced with legal-size file manila folders. Abraham would take the measurements of the client's feet. The manila folder was placed on the floor, and the customer, wearing only comfortable socks that he/she would be wearing with the boots, would stand on the folder. Abraham would outline the customer's left foot and right foot carefully on the folder. He then took measurements with a cloth tape. He carefully took three measurements around each foot, around the widest points of the forefoot, around the arch of the foot, and around the heel to the front of the talus. He made notes on the folder about the clients, and on the back of the folder while the client was seated, he retraced the client's feet.

In 1937, a man by the name of Tom Coleman ordered a pair of boots from Abraham. When Abraham asked him for a deposit,

Coleman became enraged. Coleman left, but returned later, assaulted Rios, and cut him badly. The local residents reportedly found the incident disgusting because of the respect and regard they had for Abraham's talent and character. He was considered a successful businessman who employed a number of men locally in the manufacturing of boots, and his business had brought fame to Raymondville.[14] A daughter of Tom Mix, an action western movie star, purchased a pair of boots for her father prior to his death in 1940. Also world champion trick rider Barbara Inez Barnes (Tad) Lucas reportedly wore a pair of Rios Boots when she appeared in rodeo contests in London in 1933. Abraham Rios had put Raymondville on the map with his craftsmanship.[15]

By 1947, the cobbler was grossing $90,000. Boot prices ranged from $40.00 to $65.00. A pair of children's boots could be purchased for $20.00. He had files for 6,000 customers who were repeat customers, and some ordered several pairs at a time. Continued word of mouth expanded his business. He took custom orders from Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, Monte Hale, Jimmy Walker, Allan Lane, and many other rodeo opera singers. The boots were beautiful, durable, and comfortable, especially for the cowboys. The bulk of his orders were from King Ranch cowboys; Texas Rangers like Frank Hamer, Zano Smith, Captain Tom Hickman, and Ed Gooding; and many Texas sheriffs. Although Texas Ranger Zano Smith's home town of San Angelo was also famous for its boot maker, he preferred to order his boots from Rios of Raymondville.[16]

Rios was constantly changing his designs and even the style of boots. Once a lady customer requested a horned toad design, something Abraham had never seen before. Nonetheless, he was able to satisfy her when she provided a picture. Rios created his own designs. His designs were unique and, in some cases, showy; he was known to have the smallest box-toe of any cowboy boot, a style that was popular early on when he started. He was also known for the use of multi-colored threads and leathers and for using inlays to create designs. Most of Rios' early designs had emblems, decorations, and elaborate detailed designs. He also made

other leather goods such as sandals, key chains, belts, holsters, and saddles, but his specialty was always boots.

Rios even made a pair of boots for President Dwight D. Eisenhower, showing the White House brightly lit. A newspaper article reports, "Abe Rios, Raymondville boot maker, got an official-looking letter from the White House this week. The letter read: "Dear Mr. Rios, Representative Lloyd Bentsen presented me with a beautiful pair of cowboy boots while I was at Sharyland and told me that you made them. I am delighted by them and send this note to congratulate you on your unusual workmanship. I don't know that I have seen a finer, more handsome pair of boots. With best wishes, Sincerely, Dwight D. Eisenhower."[17]

The Rios Boot Shop on Hidalgo Street, in 1950, had a "show room" with displays of leather, boots, and a couple of saddles. The rear of the shop was where he worked. He had a stand-up table, where he created his designs. He stood at his table facing his employees, much like a conductor facing his orchestra: rows of employees behind humming sewing machines.

To help him keep up with the demand of the production of boots and also to help his family, Abraham brought several of his cousins and nephews from Mexico and taught his son Abraham Rios, Jr., his style of bootmaking. On December 23, 2003, Fernando del Valle of the *Valley Morning Star* wrote an article entitled "Old West Craft." Del Valle's article says that cowboy boots put the Valley on the map. Del Valle mentions several Valley bootmakers throughout the Valley, many whom originally worked for Abraham and then went on to establish their own shops in other Valley towns. Armando Duarte Rios, nephew of Abraham Rios, of Armando's Boot Shop in Raymondville, says, "They started at a good school. Many people who worked for my uncle later went on their own, as I have, and started their own businesses."[18] Other shoe or boot shops in Raymondville included a shop owned by Enrique "Henry" Rios, son of Samuel Rios Anzaldúa and first cousin to Abraham; El Vaquero Boots by Ignacio "Nacho" Martínez, a for-

mer employee of Rios Boots; Torres Brothers Boot Company by brothers Raul and Frank Torres; and Armando's Boot Company by Armando Duarte Rios, son of Enriquetta Duarte Rios, sister to Abraham. Rios of Mercedes was started by one of Abraham's cousins, Zeferino Rios Jr.

In a 1981 book entitled *Texas Boots*, published by Penguin Book, author Sharon Delano writes that, deep in the southern tip of Texas, the name Rios means pretty much what Lucchese does farther north. Abraham Rios died in 1979, and his widow provided the information that was used in the book, indicating that Abraham had been making boots in Raymondville since 1925.

During the fame of the television series "Bonanza," when the Mercedes Stock Show hired movie stars for special appearances, Dan Blocker, known as Hoss Cartwright, came to the shop for his custom-made boots, and, reportedly, sat on and broke a chair at the shop. Newspaper clippings include pictures of President Ronald Reagan in Harlingen showing off a pair of Rios Boots; Prince Charles of England wearing a pair of Polo Boots made by Rios; a thank you letter from Prince Phillip for his Rios Boots; and a picture of boots shipped to King Hussein of Jordan. Other names on a newspaper clipping include Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, John Hodiak, Zachary Scott, Allen Lane, Bill Elliott, Monte Hale, Ann Baxter, Ruth Mix, Senator Lloyd M. Bensten, Glenn McCarthy, Mrs. Robert Kleberg, Robert Armstrong, and Sally Rand. There is also a newspaper clipping of a pair of boots made for Olympic Champion Bobby Morrow from Raymondville.

Abraham was a civic minded person and a Christian. During an interview, he is quoted as saying that his parents named their children biblical names. He was only 5'7" and weighed about 150 lbs. He was a mild-mannered and even-tempered man. He was a member of the Bethel Methodist Church, where every Sunday, he could be spotted on the second pew to the left of the altar. He was active in the local Rotary Club and a sustaining member of the Boy Scouts of America, among other activities. His success af-

forded him luxuries, including a beach home at Port Mansfield –a small two bedroom house with one bath, cramped with his grand-kids and numerous nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his son Abraham Rios Jr. Abraham himself died in 1978, and his wife and his nephew Armando Duarte Rios continued to run the shop until the death of Elvira in 1986. Armando went on to open his own boot shop, known as Armando's Boot Company, currently located on Seventh Street in Raymondville. The Rios Boot Shop closed and was sold at auction. Today the building houses a restaurant and a gift store. Since 1999, Willacy County has celebrated "Wild in Willacy Boot Fest," with many activities, including a boot-cake decorating event. Locals still remember how vibrant Raymondville was and how Rios put the town on the map.

Endnotes

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El Sexenio del General Manuel Ávila Camacho en Matamoros

por

Rosaura Alicia Dávila

Matamoros en los años de 1940 a 1946 tuvo al frente del Ayuntamiento a cuatro presidentes municipales: Francisco Zárate, Antonio de León, Ladislao Cárdenas, y Ramiro T. Hernández. A fines del año 1939, el "Centro Unificador Matamorense," cuyo presidente era Miguel Elizondo, postulaba para gobernador del estado al Gral. César López de Lara y para Senador a José Villanueva Garza, y, al iniciarse el siguiente año, los ávilacamachistas ante el Partido de la Revolución Mexicana (PRM) eran seis conocidos políticos matamorenses, Matías Gómez, José Ceballos, Jesús María Cavazos, Abelardo Gómez, Pablo Zárate, y Luciano Gutiérrez.

El C. Magdaleno Aguilar, gobernador del Estado de Tamaulipas, visitó la ciudad, a mediados de agosto de 1941, y los políticos y empresarios locales le organizaron una cena en su honor en el "Sevilla Bar."

En 1939, se inició la Segunda Guerra Mundial, y, dos años después, Estados Unidos es atacado por Japón en Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. El 13 de mayo de 1942, el buque tanque petrolero mexicano "Potrero del Llano," que trasladaba petróleo a los Estados Unidos, fue hundido por un submarino alemán cerca de la costa de Florida en el Golfo de México.

Días después, sucedió lo mismo con el "Faja de Oro." México envió una protesta que no fue contestada, dando, como resultado, que el 22 de mayo de 1942 se declarara la guerra a las potencias del Eje (Alemania, Italia y Japón) y envió al Escuadrón 201, llamado también "Águilas Aztecas," que volaron como anexo al grupo 58° de combate de la 5ª Fuerza Aérea de Estados Unidos y participó

en la liberación de la Isla Madre de Luzón, Filipinas durante el verano de 1945.

Realizaron trabajos de observación, bombardeo, y ametrallaron posiciones japonesas y a la artillería en Filipinas y Formosa.

El escuadrón se capacitó en Greensville, Texas, y los fines de semana se les veía en eventos deportivos, los toros, bailes, el cine, y en la plaza principal de Matamoros, en donde causaban conmoción entre las jóvenes locales.

Cumpliendo con el Decreto del Presidente de la República en Matamoros, se organizó el Comité de Defensa Civil con la finalidad de adiestrar militarmente a los matamorenses. Fue nombrado como presidente de dicho organismo el Mayor retirado Mariano B. Marín, quien finalizó su encomienda dos años después.

Se iniciaba el año de 1943, y había tomado posesión como Presidente Municipal Ladislao Cárdenas Jr., cuando se efectuó una reunión en las oficinas del Comité del Partido de la Revolución Mexicana para nombrar la Liga Municipal del Sector Popular, y resultó como Secretario General Antonio de León.

Dos meses después, proponían como precandidatos a la Diputación Federal propietario y suplente al Capitán del Estado Mayor Presidencial Félix Cabañas y como suplente a Antonio de León.

La Convención Distrital se efectuó en mayo, y, ese mismo día, el Lic. Ignacio Torteya, en su calidad de presidente del Comité Municipal del PRM y llevando como lema "Por una Democracia de Trabajadores," envió el acta al C. Senador y Lic. Antonio Villalobos, presidente del Comité Central Ejecutivo del PRM, en donde le comunica el triunfo de ambos candidatos. También la Unión Nacional Sinarquista celebraba reuniones para organizarse y participar con candidatos propios.

La Federación Regional de Trabajadores de Matamoros, ubicada en la calle Matamoros y 8 altos, solicitaba al presidente municipal su intervención para que pusiera fin al incremento de precios en

los artículos de primera necesidad, que afectaban el bolsillo de los trabajadores.

Alberto Terrazas Creel, primer presidente de la Asociación Algodonera Mexicana, cuya filial fundaron en Matamoros los propietarios de las despepitadoras y aceiteras de algodón, era nieto de dos gobernadores del estado de Chihuahua. Realizó su educación superior en la Universidad de Harvard, llegó a la ciudad en 1936 como empleado de la Anderson Clayton que había sido fundada en Houston, y llegó a ser su gerente.

También encabezaba la Compañía Industrial de Matamoros S. A. de C. V.; y junto con la Fábrica de Aceites "La Cruz Blanca," S. A.; "La Algodonera del Golfo," S. A.; "La Atlántica," S. A.; y "La Garibay," S. A., quienes enviaron por escrito una respuesta a las peticiones del Sindicato de Jornaleros y Obreros Industriales de revisión parcial de contratos colectivos.

Sus argumentos para pedirles toda su disposición para no crear conflictos laborales eran que, desde mayo de 1941, se habían firmado los contratos colectivos de trabajo en Cd. Victoria, que hasta ese momento regían las relaciones entre patrones y obreros. Que si era cierto que los precios de los artículos básicos habían aumentado, pero que los salarios mínimos que se fijaron en el contrato eran bastante altos, de manera que sus necesidades estaban cubiertas. Que era inexacto el aumento exorbitante de sus ganancias, consecuencia de que el algodón se cotizó a mayor precio, porque se había pagado a los agricultores 35 % más del precio de la cosecha anterior.

Si, como argumentó el sindicato, se obtuvieron grandes ganancias, no se hubieran visto precisados a clausurar el molino de aceites y la planta despepitadora de algodón y tampoco la Compañía Industrial "Rosita," S.A., y la Compañía Algodonera "Mc. Fadden" se hubieran cerrado. Finalizaban mostrando su disposición de entablar las pláticas que fueran necesarias con los representantes de los trabajadores.

Se abrió el 23 de enero de 1943, la Terraza Cine "Estrella" de F.C. Bres y Cía, ubicada en la calle 7 Morelos y Guerrero, con un capital de dos mil pesos. También funcionaban el cine "Terraza Tropical" en Abasolo 10 y 11, el cine "México" en Abasolo y 8, el cine "Alfa" en Matamoros 8 y 9, y el "Reforma" en Abasolo y Sexta.

La Cámara de Comercio de H. Matamoros informó de las boticas existentes, Farmacia "Moderna," Botica "Nueva," Botica "Central," Botica "Matamoros," Farmacia "Regina," Botica "Calderoni," Farmacia "Juárez," y Botica "Anáhuac."

El 20 de abril de 1943, se reunieron en Monterrey los presidentes Manuel Ávila Camacho de México y Franklin D. Roosevelt de Estados Unidos. Al finalizar, el Presidente de México acompañó al de Estados Unidos a Corpus Christi, Texas; y Ávila Camacho regresó al país por Matamoros, a donde fue acompañado por el Secretario de la Defensa Nacional, Gral. Francisco L. Urquizo, y el de Agricultura, Ing. Marte R. Gómez.

Con el lema "Por la Educación Física del Pueblo", el Comité Pro-Cancha de la Escuela Secundaria Federal de H. Matamoros, presidido por el Profr. Heberto Saldívar C, el secretario, Profr. Abelardo Gómez Loor, y la tesorera Profra. Ofelia González, envió una petición al Presidente Municipal Ladislao Cárdenas y al H. Cabildo para que se sirvieran cubrir los gastos de luz que originaba la cancha de la Escuela Secundaria donde se verificaría el Campeonato local de Volibol, en el que participarían escuelas, academias comerciales, Batallones de la Defensa Civil, y elementos libres, y se turnó al gobierno del Estado quien aprobó la petición.

Por orden del C. Presidente de la República se declaró el 13 de mayo "Día de la Defensa de la Patria" en conmemoración del hundimiento del buque "Potrero del Llano," por lo que el Gral. de Brigada Juan N. Celis Campos envió un oficio al Presidente Municipal para que girara órdenes a fin de que en esa fecha se organizaran actos y ceremonias luctuosas en todas las poblaciones

de la entidad, obteniendo la colaboración de la prensa y la radio, y solicitó un informe por escrito de las actividades realizadas.

La Dirección de Economía Rural de la Secretaría de Agricultura y Fomento otorgó el 14 de junio de 1943 el reconocimiento oficial a la Asociación Ganadera local de Matamoros con el número 1403, quedando conformada su primera directiva como sigue: presidente, Marcial Luna; secretario, Pedro Garza Uribe; y tesorero, Aureliano Salinas.

Los doctores Porfirio y Arnoldo Gutiérrez inauguraron la Clínica y Maternidad Gutiérrez en la calle 12 entre Bravo y Matamoros.

En 1945, se acercaba la renovación de la Presidencia Municipal, y don Ladislao Cárdenas envió una terna de posibles candidatos para el trienio (1946-1948) al Lic. Emilio Portes Gil formada por Ignacio Torteya, Ramiro T. Hernández, y Miguel Treviño. A mediados de agosto, el presidente del Comité municipal del PRM (Partido de la Revolución Mexicana), Lic. Ignacio Torteya, le informó que Hernández había sido seleccionado como el candidato quien resultó ganador en las elecciones de diciembre.

El 1° de septiembre de 1946, se fundó la Escuela Preparatoria Juan José de la Garza, que en sus inicios trabajó en el mismo edificio que ocupaba la Secundaria Federal No 13. Veinte días después, se fundó la Cruz Roja Mexicana en terrenos anexos al entonces Hospital Civil "Dr. Florencio Anaya Ruiz."

Ramiro T. Hernández profesionaliza al cuerpo de bomberos y les dan cursos de capacitación para que desempeñaran mejor su trabajo, dado que la mayoría de las casas de la ciudad eran de madera.

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Crecimiento Industrial y Calidad de Vida en Reynosa, Tamaulipas.

por

Cirila Quintero Ramírez

Este artículo analiza la relación entre crecimiento industrial y la calidad de vida en Reynosa, Tamaulipas. La idea central consiste en mostrar que ambos factores han tenido un desarrollo inversamente proporcional, es decir, el crecimiento industrial que ha experimentado la ciudad, no necesariamente ha desembocado, antes del año 2000, en un mejoramiento de la calidad de vida de los habitantes de Reynosa. El concepto de calidad de vida en este artículo es considerado como un factor integrador que conjunta el bienestar y la satisfacción de necesidades que un individuo experimenta en sus diferentes espacios de vida: el personal, el familiar/comunitario y en su entorno social. Un objetivo secundario de este trabajo sería mostrar que tanto el concepto individual de calidad de vida de los reynosenses se relaciona con sus condiciones de vida concretas.

Algunos apuntes teóricos sobre la calidad de vida

Un primer acercamiento al estudio de calidad de vida permite ver que el concepto guarda una relación cercana con la medición de condiciones de vida, especialmente a través de la satisfacción de necesidades de un individuo, sin embargo, dada la pertenencia de dicho individuo a un contexto más amplio, el concepto de calidad de vida debería ser extendido a un nivel más colectivo, a través de la consideración de condiciones de vida en sus hogares y de la ciudad en la que se desenvuelve. Considerar la calidad de vida como un componente articulador de la complejidad social que se integra en el ser humano, le asigna una mayor riqueza explicativa. En otras palabras, la calidad de vida sería definida como el grado óptimo de la satisfacción de las necesidades humanas.[1]

Desde esta postura, el concepto de calidad de vida, el cuál no tiene una definición única, está vinculado con un intento de relacionar los cambios que se registran en los distintos ámbitos sociales y que conducirían al ser humano a un desarrollo y progreso social. Es decir, la calidad de vida estaría relacionada con el crecimiento de una sociedad y su grado de progreso.[2] En otras palabras, la calidad de vida se referiría a la articulación entre las distintas esferas que integran el bienestar individual y colectivo de una sociedad, como expresa Alguacil:

> ..la calidad de vida viene a significar, a la misma vez, una síntesis y ampliación entre el sujeto individual y el sujeto colectivo, entre el carácter subjetivo y objetivo, entre el análisis microsocial y el macrosocial, entre la escala local y la global, lo que puede permitir la superación de la tradicional ruptura entre la cultura científico-teórica y cultura científico-humanista. Es la lectura de la calidad de vida, como síntesis que nos viene a reseñar la reciprocidad entre elementos y dimensiones, la que nos lleva a pensar en la calidad de vida como una expresión de la complejidad."[3]

De esta manera, el concepto de calidad, entendido como este bienestar integral del ser humano, no sólo se quedaría en el nivel individual, sino que se extendería a una visión más colectiva, en donde se considerará la situación de los hogares, así como las características de la ciudad en la que se desenvuelve el individuo. Esta posición se contrapone un tanto con los enfoques con los que tradicionalmente se analiza la calidad de vida. En donde ésta ha sido estudiada a partir de indicadores vinculados a aspectos cuantitativos relacionados con la satisfacción de necesidades.[4] Es importante mencionar, que no hay acuerdos en torno a cuales variables considerar en estos indicadores, por ejemplo no se considera que la cobertura de necesidades básicas sea suficiente para *medir* o estimar la calidad de vida de un individuo o de una población.

Dado lo anterior, un grupo de estudiosos, entre los que estarían Amartya Sen, John Raws y Manfred Max-Neef, ha expresado que el concepto de calidad de vida –muy vinculado con el desarrollo (humano)- debería ser *medido* en término de oportunidades, libertades y necesidades,[5] sólo considerando conceptos de este tipo, los sectores más desfavorecidos pueden tener acceso a un nivel de bienestar mínimo. La calidad de vida establecería una relación de los individuos con su comunidad, así como con el entorno físico y social que lo rodea.

De esta manera, evaluar la calidad de vida sólo con indicadores como ingreso o cobertura de necesidades fundamentales como lo realiza el Índice de Necesidades Básicas (INB), como serían la alimentación, el vestido, la salud, la vivienda y la educación, basado en la evaluación de hogares, parecería muy parcial, hay que incorporar una contextualización histórica y espacial de los entornos individuales y colectivos. Este enfoque permitiría ver necesidades económicas pero también aspectos sociales, culturales e incluso políticos.[6] Una respuesta a esta perspectiva de integrar aspectos cuantitativos y cualitativos, y su medición en un índice, parecería haberse concretado en el denominado Índice de Desarrollo Humano, propuesto por las Naciones Unidas, en donde se consideran otros aspectos más cualitativos. En ese sentido, habría un avance de los indicadores que *median* sólo los aspectos económicos y sociales (vistos como condiciones materiales de vida) a una visión más cualitativa, que introduce mediciones de aspectos subjetivos, como comportamientos políticos, etc. Otras formas de visualizar esta calidad de vida integral es integrando datos cuantitativos y cualitativos de la región estudiada, así como apuntando condicionantes regionales y contextuales que son necesarias para tener una visualización más compleja y completa.

Dentro de esta idea de conceptuar la calidad de vida como integrador de la satisfacción de necesidades personales, familiares y colectivas, se presenta este trabajo, que pretende mostrar que tanto un crecimiento económico, particularmente industrial, se refleja en la satisfacción de las necesidades individuales y familiares de

un individuo, y su satisfacción de vivir en una ciudad determinada. El estudio está basado en el caso de Reynosa, Tamaulipas.

Las características de la ciudad analizada.

La ciudad de Reynosa es la ciudad tamaulipeca más antigua, fue fundada el 14 de marzo de 1749 por el colonizador José de Escandón. Nuevo Laredo se erigió en 1755 y Matamoros en 1774. El 24 de noviembre de 1926 se le asignó a Reynosa la categoría de Ciudad por decreto gubernamental.[7] Reynosa está ubicada en la parte norte de Tamaulipas colinda al norte con los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica; al sur con el municipio de Méndez; al este con el de Río Bravo y al oeste con el de Díaz Ordaz y el Estado de Nuevo León.

En el aspecto poblacional, Reynosa presenta una evolución parecida a la de otras ciudades fronterizas. Hasta 1930 mantuvo un crecimiento incierto, el primer crecimiento poblacional importante se registró a partir de los años cuarenta derivado de la implementación de dos proyectos federales: la construcción de Distritos de Riego en la región y la instalación del Distrito Noreste de Petróleos Mexicanos.

Una segunda oleada de crecimiento se registró en la decena de 1990 a 2000, cuando la población paso de 282,667 a 420,483 habitantes, es decir experimento una tasa de crecimiento del 32.7%. En el año 2000, Reynosa concentraba el 15.3% de la población total tamaulipeca. La tercera oleada y más importante de crecimiento poblacional se escenifico a principios de este siglo, en donde la población reynosense se incrementó en un 20.2% en sólo cinco años. El cuadro siguiente muestra este crecimiento poblacional:

Cuadro 1
Crecimiento poblacional de Reynosa, 1950-2005

Año	Total	Hombres	Mujeres
1950	69,428	35,984	33,444
1960	134,868	67,932	66,937
1970	150,786	74,575	76,212
1980	211,412	103,407	108,005
1990	282,667	139,778	142,889
2000	420,483	208,769	211,694
2010	608,891	303,853	305,038

Fuente: www.inegi.gob.mx/anuarioestadisticodeReynosa, Versión electrónica, 2003; www.inegi.gob.mx/II Conteo de Población y Vivienda 2005/ Principales resultados por localidad, Reynosa, SEDESOL, S.F, "Datos generales de Reynosa" en <http://cuentame.inegi.org.mx/monografias/informacion/tam/poblacion/default.aspx?tema=me&e=28>, consultado 19 de diciembre de 2012.

Reynosa, evolución industrial y migración. Una relación continúa.

De las ciudades de la frontera, Reynosa es una excepción en cuanto a su economía, la ciudad ha tenido una diversificación laboral, excepcional en la frontera norte, como muestra el cuadro siguiente:

Cuadro 2
Población Económicamente Activa en Reynosa, por sector económico, 1990 y 2000

Año	Primario	Secundario	Terciario	No especificado
1990	5.3	39.8	48.9	6.0
2000	2	47.6	49.3	1.1

Fuente: INEGI, 1991, Tamaulipas. Resultados definitivos. Datos por localidad. XI Censo General de Población y Vivienda, 1990, México: 16; INEGI, XII Censo General de población y vivienda 2000, INEGI, en www.inei.gob.mx, biblioteca digital.

La población previa a la instalación de PEMEX se concentraba en la agricultura, la ganadería, las aduanas, los servicios y el comercio. A pesar de esta diversificación es evidente que a partir de PEMEX y después con la maquiladora, Reynosa adquirió una vocación industrial, dado esta importancia industrial, resulta interesante analizar como ha estado vinculado el crecimiento y mejoramiento laboral de la ciudad y las condiciones de vida de los habitantes de la localidad.

En primer lugar, habría que expresar que el crecimiento industrial de Reynosa ha estado asociado históricamente con un crecimiento poblacional intenso a través de la migración, dada la escasez de un mercado laboral local abundante ha sido necesaria la oferta de mano de obra no local, sin embargo, también muestra como este crecimiento industrial y atracción de población migrante no ha estado vinculado con un mejoramiento laboral, sino en el mejoramiento de unos cuantos y la privación de beneficios laborales y sociales para una parte importante de estos trabajadores, como lo muestra la primera experiencia industrial de Reynosa: el desarrollo de la industria petrolera.

El crecimiento industrial vía petróleo y la marginación de un sector laboral importante.

Reynosa, a diferencia de otras ciudades fronterizas, cuenta con un pasado industrial premaquilador. En 1940, se descubrieron en Reynosa yacimientos importantes de hidrocarburos, así como un gran potencial de gas natural. En un primer momento, la actividad petrolera se circunscribió a la explotación de petróleo. Para ello, se perforaron nuevos pozos; se construyeron estaciones de recolección, así como plantas para su procesamiento y distribución.

Más tarde, a finales de los cuarenta, se inició la explotación de gas natural. Sería esta actividad la que le habría de dar la importancia fundamental a nivel nacional. En 1948, aportaba el 7.4 % de la producción nacional; para 1958, constituía el 37.4 %. No obstante, a partir de finales de los setenta su importancia a nivel nacional ha venido decreciendo, aunque a nivel estatal continua siendo el

principal productor de gas natural, durante el trienio 1987-1989 produjo en promedio el 79.3 % de gas natural estatal.[8]

Los efectos de PEMEX en el desarrollo regional han sido centrales; en 1968 llegó a constituir el 69 % del valor agregado generado por Reynosa. Su impacto también se ha reflejado en la ocupación constante de mayor fuerza de trabajo, en 1980 se estimaba que el 20 % de las unidades domésticas reynosenses dependían de PEMEX. Finalmente, el efecto multiplicador ha sido constante en comercios, servicios e industria de la construcción.[9]

Crecimiento industrial y precariedad laboral.

El primer problema que enfrentó PEMEX al instalarse en territorio reynosense fue la escasez de trabajadores tanto para sus trabajos de construcción como para el propiamente petrolero. Los trabajadores de la época, especialmente los del Sindicato de Jornaleros de Reynosa, recuerdan como PEMEX los intentaba atraer para que laboraran en sus instalaciones. Sin embargo, para los trabajadores reynosenses de la región, en un primer momento, el trabajo petrolero no fue atractivo.[10] Debido a la expansión de las actividades de PEMEX, el mercado laboral se fue acrecentando, casi siempre con población inmigrante que se asentó en Reynosa, atraída por la actividad petrolera. Dentro de los trabajadores petroleros pueden distinguirse dos tipos de trabajadores: los de confianza y los sindicalizados, que por contrato deben guardar un porcentaje determinado, (10%-90%). El personal de confianza se centra en las posiciones administrativas y son nombrados por el Presidente de la República y por el Director General de PEMEX.[11] Por su parte, el personal sindicalizado constituye el grupo mayoritario de los trabajadores de planta. El crecimiento principal de PEMEX-Reynosa se registró de 1970 a 1982, cuando pasó de 2,434 a 3,285 trabajadores sindicalizados, en tanto que los de confianza en el mismo período pasaron de 20 a 6. A partir de 1983, se inició el declive de PEMEX en la localidad disminuyendo a 2,733 trabajadores sindicalizados en 1984 y sólo 6 de confianza.[12] Ahora los trabajadores no siempre fueron permanentes sino que

PEMEX tuvo una recurrencia continua al trabajador transitorio. Los estatutos petroleros mencionan que los trabajadores transitorios deben realizar méritos para conseguir una planta. Entre las distintas tareas, el apoyo al sindical resulta central. Según los dirigentes, el trabajador transitorio tiene que participar en todos los actos, de cualquier índole, que organice el Sindicato en apoyo a la Constitución, de las instituciones, del beneficio social de México y del STPRM'.[13] La expectativa de una futura base laboral, que casi siempre se asigna más por clientelismo que por méritos, ha dado paso a un problema fundamental de PEMEX, no sólo a nivel local, sino a nivel nacional: la dependencia mayor del trabajador transitorio, llegando a su punto máximo en el año de 1976, en donde los porcentajes entre trabajadores de planta y transitorios fueron de 41.4%-58.6%.

El avance industrial parece no haber ido aparejado a un mejoramiento laboral, tanto los trabajadores permanentes como los transitorios se movilizaban constantemente, aunque por distintas circunstancias: mientras los trabajadores de planta protestaban por el descuido de las actividades laborales, por parte de los dirigentes, los transitorios se quejaban por la marginación y explotación de que eran objeto.

El movimiento de protesta de los trabajadores transitorios de la sección 36 de PEMEX, con sede en Reynosa, desembocó en un primer intento organizativo, en abril de 1951, cuando se constituyó un grupo de defensa de trabajadores transitorios de la sección 36, en contra de los dirigentes sindicales, los cuales se habían olvidado de sus promesas, una vez en sus cargos. En ese momento, los trabajadores expresaron:

> ...ya estamos cansados de servir de escalón a otros, quienes al llegar a la directiva, no recuerdan los ofrecimientos que le hicieron... .[14]

No fue sino hasta 1967 cuando, a raíz de la movilización nacional de trabajadores transitorios, los trabajadores reynosenses transitorios rebasaron los límites regionales, al encabezar la marcha

de descontento en el norte. De Reynosa salieron los trabajadores transitorios que fueron engrosando sus filas, con trabajadores de San Luis Potosí, Veracruz, y Puebla, hacia la ciudad de México, en tanto que de Macuspana, Tabasco, partieron los trabajadores del sur, ambos habrían de confluir en la Ciudad de México. Sin embargo, a pesar de las presiones, el STPRM se encargaría de que dicho movimiento no prosperara.

El movimiento de transitorios, a pesar de ser reprimido, en los años setenta, continuó latente en los años ochenta. Por ello, no resultó extraño que, en 1989, después de la detención de Hernández Galicia, saliera a flote el descontento de los trabajadores transitorios. En ese momento, la prensa regional expresó:

> ...(En Reynosa) más de un centenar de trabajadores petroleros transitorios realizaron un mitín-plantón para exigir que se les otorgue la planta definitiva para laborar en PEMEX...El movimiento estuvo encabezado por el dirigente del movimiento de trabajadores petroleros, Enrique Gallegos...[15]

Meses antes, el descontento de los trabajadores transitorios había sido utilizado como advertencia del Presidente Carlos Salinas de Gortari para el dirigente petrolero de la sección uno. Al señalar su intención de terminar con los cacicazgos, y para ello: `vamos a terminar con la explotación de los trabajadores transitorios', aunque en el fondo más que una preocupación real por este tipo de trabajadores era una advertencia contra el caciquismo petrolero.[16] La prensa local, difundió ampliamente cómo habían sido utilizados los trabajadores transitorios en ranchos, centros recreativos, tiendas sindicales, propiedad de la sección uno o de los dirigentes locales, sin retribución alguna, y argumentando su compromiso con el sindicato, de `realizar militancia', para lograr una plaza. Desde esta postura:

> (los trabajadores reynosenses) lo mismo atendían cajas en las tiendas sindicales controladas directamente por la sección uno, que acomodaban mercan-

> cía, arrancaban la hierba del (centro) recreativo, lavaban los vehículos del sindicato, participaban en los actos masivos del grupo dirigente...[17]

Sin embargo, el trabajo de los obreros transitorios no recibió en ningún momento, el reconocimiento de los líderes locales, quienes los trataban sin miramientos:

> ...era lastimoso observar, apostados desde temprana hora, a aquellos que necesitados de apoyo de sus dirigentes y que consideraban que habían realizado suficiente "militancia" esperaban pacientemente hasta que el señor (refiriéndose a Tomás Cano Charles) se dignaba salir, dirigir al interesado dos o tres palabras y alejarse rápidamente seguido por varios vehículos...[18]

La caída de Joaquín Hernández Galicia "La Quina" y la pérdida de importancia de las actividades petroleras en la región agudizaron las precarias condiciones laborales no sólo de los trabajadores transitorios sino permanentes. Además que el despunte de la actividad maquiladora opacaba estos problemas laborales en el sector petrolero.

El crecimiento maquilador. Del desarrollo tardío al crecimiento explosivo.

Reynosa se integra tardíamente al desarrollo maquilador. La existencia de otras actividades económicas importantes como la industria petrolera y los servicios hacían poco atractiva esta actividad. Otros problemas, como la pérdida de 2,000 kilómetros de su territorio, en 1961, para conformar el municipio de Río Bravo, mantenían más preocupados a las autoridades locales al inicio de los sesenta más que el estimulo de esta nueva industria.

Dado estas problemáticas, la introducción total de Reynosa en el panorama maquilador se registrará después de la primera crisis maquiladora de 1974-1975,[19] aunque el período más importante de crecimiento se inició en 1988. Las primeras maquiladoras que se

establecieron fueron inversiones pequeñas, especialmente del rubro textil. En 1977, se estableció Zenith, maquiladora dedicada al ensamble de partes y circuitos para televisión de color, cambiando el panorama reynosense.

La maquila, por primera vez, adquirió un papel importante, en cuanto al empleo de mano de obra, comportamiento que se acentuó a finales de los ochenta.[20] La industria incentivó otros sectores como el comercio y los servicios, especialmente por los salarios pagados, a diferencia de otras fronteras, se estimaba que en Reynosa, a mediados de los ochenta, el 98.2 % de los salarios reynosenses se quedaban en México.[21] Mientras la maquila favoreció otros sectores económicos, su evolución afectó al sector petrolero, las estadísticas muestran que mientras los empleos aumentaban en el sector maquilador en el sector petrolero fueron disminuyendo.

Hasta los años noventa, el perfil de las empresas maquiladoras de Reynosa se diferenciaba de Matamoros, dado que, exceptuando a Zenith, más tarde denominada Delnosa, la mayor parte de sus establecimientos son medianos y pequeños con una capacidad empleadora promedio de 350 personas, eran co-inversiones mexico-estadounidenses y algunas de ellas incluso eran mexicanas, se concentraban especialmente en la rama electrónica.

El crecimiento de la industria maquiladora fue titubeante en un inicio. En 1974, generaba apenas 1,024 empleos, para 1980, contaba con 5,450; el primer gran crecimiento en 1990, cuando alcanzó 22,363 empleos. El crecimiento acelerado se acentuó, a principios de 2002, el gobierno municipal expresaba que contaba con 9 parques que albergaba a 145 maquiladoras que daban empleo a 66,000 trabajadores. Finalmente, las cifras más recientes señalan, que al cerrar el año de 2006, existían en Reynosa 96,105 empleos. Es decir, en solo 4 años, se habían abierto 30,000 nuevos empleos. Reynosa, junto con Ciudad Acuña, fue de las pocas ciudades que incrementó el número de empleos maquiladores. El cuadro 3 muestra este crecimiento acelerado desde 1983.

Cuadro 3
Empleos y Establecimientos en la maquiladora de Reynosa, 1974-2006.

Año	Establecimientos	Personal Ocupado
1983	19	10,660
1984	22	13,867
1985	27	12,761
1986	29	15,887
1987	34	16,948
1988	43	19,785
1989	60	23,938
1990	59	22,363
1991	69	29,056
1992	78	32,233
1993	78	34,258
1994	82	39,375
1995	80	40,051
1996	90	42,437
1997	94	48,882
1998	103	52,741
1999	116	63,593
2000	122	64,877
2001	136	65,468
2002	135	69,593
2003	139	72,492
2004	138	81,361
2005	132	90,616
2006	136	96,105

Fuente: INEGI, 1991, Estadística de la Industria Maquiladora de Exportación 1979-1989: 3-4; INEGI, 1995, Estadística de la Industria Maquiladora de Exportación: 3; INEGI, 2001, Estadística de la Industria Maquiladora de Exportación 1995-2000: 13-18, e INEGI, 2004, Estadísticas Económicas, Industria maquiladora de exportación, Diciembre: 182-183

Dos anotaciones al cuadro: el crecimiento maquiladora con las fechas de reestructuración industrial de México, en donde uno de los sectores más afectados fue el petrolero; el crecimiento se ha manifestado más en la capacidad empleadora de las plantas, 706 en promedio para 2006, que en el número de plantas, lo que lo distingue de maquilas como Tijuana.

Crecimiento maquilador y precariedad laboral.

Entre los factores que han favorecido el crecimiento incluye el apoyo del gobierno estatal, el apoyo de promotores industriales en Mc Allen, así como del Centro Empresarial de la misma ciudad. Una de las mayores ventajas que se ha ofrecido fue la mano de obra barata. Precisamente, una de las críticas mayores al crecimiento maquilador ha sido los bajos salarios pagados en estas industrias. El bajo salario ha sido una constante desde el inicio maquilador de Reynosa. Durante los años 80, los trabajadores de la maquiladora de Zenith se habían movilizado cuando descubrieron que una planta filial de Zenith en Matamoros estaba pagando el doble del salario que ellos percibían. Sin embargo, el movimiento no prosperó, debido al control que los sindicatos tuvieron de los trabajadores.

La política del salario mínimo vigente ha sido fundamental en Reynosa, la mayor parte paga ligeramente por encima del salario mínimo. De acuerdo con el gobierno local, en 2002, un trabajador de la maquila ganaba 70 pesos. El pago de salarios bajos no sólo se registraba en la maquila sino para la mayor parte de reynosenses, como lo muestra el siguiente cuadro:

Cuadro 4
Ingresos en Reynosa, 1990-2000 (%)

Año	No recibe ingresos	Menos de un salario	De 1 a 2 salarios mínimos	Más de 2 y menos de 3	De 3 a 5 salarios	Más de 5 salarios	No ESPE-cificado
1990	1.5	4.6	42.0	19.1	11.0	7.3	4.5
2000	1.6	3.9	39.1	18.8	15.3	15.1	6.2

Fuente: Gob. Del Edo de Tamaulipas, 1995: 62; INEGI, 2001, Tamaulipas, Tomo I, XII Censo de Población y Vivienda 2000, México en <www.inegi.gob.mx/biblioteca> digital.

El cuadro muestra como, en 1990, el 48.1% ganaba no más de 2 salarios, el porcentaje disminuyó a 44.6% para le período del 2000, también resulta interesante como los mayores incrementos se registraron en el rubro de entre 3 y 5 salarios, con una diferencia de 4.3, y el más de 5 salarios, en donde la diferencia fue de 8.2. Lo que parecería estar apuntando hacia una nueva diferenciación salarial entre un gran sector no bien pagado y una elite bien pagada. A continuación se presentan algunos indicadores que muestran estas contradicciones: de crecimiento industrial y condiciones de vida materiales y laborales mínimas.

Calidad de vida en Reynosa: De la expectativa laboral optimista a la crítica de las carencias de la ciudad.

Este apartado describe la percepción de 140,363 habitantes de Reynosa sobre la calidad de vida en Reynosa.[22] Las opiniones presentadas se contextualizan dentro del comportamiento que ha seguido Reynosa en los diferentes rubros desde los años noventa.[23] El análisis intenta abarcar los distintos niveles de la vida de los individuos: el nivel macro, integrado por la ciudad y el empleo, los espacios intermedios, como sería el hogar, y el nivel individual, que se referiría a las percepciones que tiene sobre su familia y su futuro individual. El objetivo es tener en cuenta las distintas es-

feras que integran la vida de un individuo, tratando de hacer una evaluación de la calidad de vida integral de estos individuos.

La ciudad: tierra de oportunidades y problemas de estructura urbana.

La estructura urbana de Reynosa ha estado muy relacionada con la migración al municipio, que ha llegado atraída por la abundancia de empleos, como presentaremos en el siguiente apartado. En este apartado nos referiremos al impacto de la migración en la estructura de la ciudad. De acuerdo a la encuesta aplicada, el 54.3% había nacido en Reynosa 45% era migrante, de éstos el 17.8% arribó a la ciudad en la última década. El 84.2% de los migrantes vivía en Reynosa en el año 2001. Los datos parecen coincidir con el gran crecimiento poblacional que Reynosa experimentó en la década 1990-2000, pero no refleja el importante crecimiento que se ha experimentado del 2000 al 2005.

El crecimiento poblacional acelerado moldeó la estructura urbana de Reynosa, de un trazo regular y de cuadrícula uniforme inicial, elementos como las vías de ferrocarril de Matamoros a Monterrey, a principios de siglo, y la construcción del canal de Riego Anzaldúas conducirían a una traza irregular. La traza actual urbana "se caracteriza por una falta de orden, que es consecuencia del establecimiento de una cantidad de fraccionamientos con diferente orientaciones en sus calles, con manzanas de largo y profundidad muy diversa...en general, la continuidad y regularidad (inicial)...se ha perdido."[24] Este desorden urbano ha sido incrementado por la carencia de un proyecto de ciudad y el crecimiento poblacional acelerado.

La estructura urbana de Reynosa – de acuerdo con Alarcón - también está relacionada con la ocupación espacial de la ciudad, de acuerdo al nivel socioeconómico de la población. De esta manera, podemos encontrar que los tres primeros niveles socioeconómicos se encuentran situados alrededor de sus dos vialidades principales: la que enlaza al centro comercial con la salida a Monterrey y la otra que la conecta con Matamoros. Esta última aloja a población

de niveles socioeconómicos medios y medio altos a sus lados. Alrededor de esta vía, partiendo del cruce internacional, se puede encontrar una pequeña área de nivel socioeconómico alto, que se convierte después en medio, y, a cierta distancia más, nuevamente en medio y alto.

A partir de este último espacio, se inicia una franja alargada ocupada por población de los dos niveles socioeconómicos más bajos, que se extiende hasta la periferia a los lados de la misma vía principal. En la segunda vía, que conecta el centro comercial con la carretera a Monterrey, se presenta un patrón que empieza a ser semejante al descrito y que seguramente se reforzará debido a la existencia de algunos espacios aún desocupados en las proximidades. Una tercera vía, de poca importancia, hasta finales de los noventa, pero que ha acrecentado la importancia, debido al crecimiento maquilador, es la que conecta a Reynosa con Nuevo Laredo, y ha sido ocupado por personal de nivel medio bajo y bajo, la excepción es una pequeña área aislada de nivel medio alto, explicado por la proximidad al centro comercial de la ciudad.[25]

De acuerdo con Alarcón (2000), la dotación de servicios se relaciona con la cercanía del centro de la ciudad, es decir entre más alejada una colonia del centro, más carencias de servicios tendrá. La dotación de servicios también está relacionada con la antigüedad del asentamiento. Sin embargo, tales consideraciones no se cumplen del todo en Reynosa,[26] dado que la ciudad había presentado rezagos en infraestructura y servicios públicos desde décadas anteriores, salvo excepciones como las colonias petroleras, las carencias se acentuarían con el aumento de población en los años noventa.

El crecimiento poblacional, especialmente concretizado con la creación de decenas de fraccionamientos, ha conducido a una acentuación de falta de servicios, originando la imagen de una ciudad *construida a medias*, en donde la cobertura de servicios también está a medias, como mostró la encuesta. En cuanto al alumbrado público, se dice que la mayoría tiene alumbrado público, 36.8%,

aunque un 37.7% dice que pocas calles de su colonia tiene luz, e incluso en un 17.6% de los que tienen alumbrado, éste no funciona. La pavimentación de la ciudad es uno de los mayores problemas, el 39.3% dice que pocas calles de su colonia están pavimentadas, y un 19.1% dice que ninguna. La situación se agudiza en cuanto a banquetas: el 41.2% dice que pocas calles tienen banquetas, el 14.7% dice que ninguna calle tiene banquetas. De manera particular, el 51.3% de los entrevistados dijo que su calle tenía banqueta.

La carencia de otros servicios es más acentuada. Por ejemplo, el servicio de limpieza es casi inexistente. El 82.7% dijo que no cuenta con él. Las mismas carencias tiene la señalización. De acuerdo al 44.2 % de los entrevistados, en su colonia ninguna calle tiene señales de tránsito. La situación se agudiza para los peatones. El 57% dice que no hay ninguna señal para peatones en su colonia. Por tal motivo, los reynosenses consideran la señalización como pobre (45.6%) y muy pobre (32.3%).

Mejor cobertura tiene los teléfonos públicos. El 88.5% dice que tiene teléfono público en su colonia. Pero instalaciones más avanzadas, como rampas para discapacitados, son casi inexistentes en la ciudad. El 81.5% dice que no había ninguna rampa en su colonia. Finalmente, la vigilancia de las colonias es parcial. El 65.7% dice que no tiene vigilancia; de éstos, el 42.8% cuenta con vigilancia de patrullas.

En cuanto a dotación de instalaciones para la salud y la recreación, la cobertura también es a medias. Sólo el 57.4 tiene un centro de salud *cercano*, aunque no tan cercano, dado que al 46.3% le llevaría 30 minutos llegar caminando. A pesar de la cercanía, sólo de vez en cuando, el entrevistado asiste a este centro, dado que no son derechohabientes. A pesar de estas carencias, el reynosense considera que tiene buena salud, 69.6%, e incluso, el 19.3% considera que su salud es muy buena. En el último mes (diciembre), el 33.8% expresó haberse enfermado de las vías respiratorias, especialmente por el clima frío, las enfermedades diarreicas fueron menos frecuentes, sólo el 8.7%.

Las principales carencias en servicios públicos serían: el transporte público: 88.4%, áreas verdes 86.4%, instalaciones deportivas, 88.4% e infraestructura vial, 82.3%. Los problemas centrales de la ciudad serían la pobreza: 30.9%, la cantidad de tráfico, 23.5%, y la inseguridad, 13.4%. En cuanto a la pobreza, el 23% consideró que el problema de indigentes en la calle era muy fuerte, y el 53% consideró que era fuerte. Vinculado con esta pobreza, se podría incluir los vendedores ambulantes, que son considerados un problema muy fuerte 30.8% y fuerte 49.6%.

Los servicios que existen deben ser mejorados. Se reconoce que la ciudad tiene la mayor parte de servicios, pero algunos de ellos son deficientes. Entre los mejores calificados se encuentran los servicios de salud, 45.8%,[27] escuelas 57.7% y mercado 51.1%. Entre los malos estarían limpieza de calles: 49.9%, banquetas, 48.2%, áreas deportivas, 48.8% y los más malos serían los referentes a la limpieza de calles y estado de las banquetas. El transporte público también reportado como malo, 49.5%, y muy malo, el 23.7%. Las malas condiciones se extienden a la señalización vehicular, que se considera que es mala 45.5 y muy mala, 21.3%, lo mismo acontece con la señalización peatonal, 48.5 % mala y 24.2 % muy mala. De acuerdo a lo anterior, los problemas más agudos serían los relacionados con el tráfico y la infraestructura vial. El 91.5 % de los reynosenses consideran que estos problemas son frecuentes.

Las principales carencias que tiene la ciudad para vivir mejor sería: la falta de seguridad, 98.2%, de la tranquilidad, 93.1%, de la falta de limpieza 91.9%, de buenas escuelas, 86%, y asombrosamente, a pesar de la gran cantidad de empleo, un 81% dijo que faltan empleos.

La falta de seguridad y tranquilidad, se manifestó cuando el 64.3% de los entrevistados expresó que en su colonia había muestras de vandalismo, así como pintas de *grafitti*, y el 59% consideraba que en su colonia existían rutas peatonales o cruces peligrosos. Un 47.7% de los reynosenses considera muy difícil tener calles seguras y el 41% considera que esto es difícil. Pese a esta inseguridad,

el ciudadano reynosense no tiene confianza en la policía. El 47.8% de los entrevistados tiene mucha desconfianza de la policía, y el 37% tiene desconfianza del ministerio público. Más aún, consideran que las posibilidades de sufrir una arbitrariedad es alta, el 75.1% considera que se está expuesto a arbitrariedades.

La desconfianza se extiende a su colonia y vecinos. El 86% dice que no confía en vecinos, y muy pocas veces, se hacen favores, 73.7%. La situación se complica cuando el 86.1% no tiene familia en la ciudad; esto lleva a individuos en soledad emocional. También lleva a un individuo ajeno a su ciudad: el 33.7% declaró sólo caminar algunas veces la ciudad, el 33.6% expresó que pocas veces camina, y el 15.3% nunca las camina, especialmente por la falta de seguridad, 44.2%, y el mal estado de las banquetas, 29.8%.

En el mismo orden de ideas, el reynosense no se siente muy responsable de los problemas que enfrenta la ciudad: solo el 6.4% siente que es responsable de los problemas de la ciudad, el 46.4% se siente algo responsable, y el 39.5% poco responsable. Tampoco parece muy interesado en lo que pasa en su ciudad: el 40.9% considera no estar informado lo suficiente de los problemas locales.

Diferentes a otras ciudades en la frontera, la calidad fronteriza no parece ser tan importante para el reynosense. Aunque un porcentaje importante, 37.5%, tiene familia en Estados Unidos, sólo un mínimo porcentaje, el 33%, recibe apoyo económico de estos familiares. La comunicación tampoco es frecuente.

El empleo: abundancia y precariedad laboral.

El potencial de creación de empleos es reconocido por la mayor parte de la población. El 28.6% estimó que hay muchas oportunidades de empleo, y el 43.4% consideró que hay bastantes oportunidades. En ese sentido, se considera que las oportunidades, con respecto a otras ciudades, son mucho mejores 18.6% o mejores 66.3%. Sin embargo, la existencia de empleos no parece ir de la mano con buenos salarios y buenas condiciones laborales.

Los bajos salarios persistentes también se mostraron en la encuesta. El 20.7% tiene un ingreso de 500 a 3,000 pesos por mes, el 10.8% de 3,100 a 5,000, y 16.8% de más de 5 salarios, lo que congruente que hubo con el aumento que hubo en este grupo. Esto podría estar indicando una polarización de dos grupos: uno con condiciones precarias y el otro con mejores ingresos. Sus perspectivas son diferentes. De acuerdo a las declaraciones, el 52.4% de los jefes familias recibiría hasta 3,000 pesos mensuales.

El 22.8% de los entrevistados trabajaba en el sector privado y un 11.2% en el sector gubernamental. El sector ocupacional más importante era los servicios, con el 16.2%, seguido por la industria, 13.4% y el comercio. La mayor parte tiene sus trabajos en otra colonia diferente a la colonia en que vive, 36.9%, y se desempeña como empleado u obrero, 32.6%.

En cuanto a condiciones laborales, en estabilidad, un porcentaje importante se considera muy seguro, 14.5%, o seguro, 43.8%, es decir; el 58.3% se considera seguridad en su empleo, aunque un 11.2% se considera inseguro en su empleo.[28] La seguridad no se relaciona con la estabilidad: el 18.8% tiene cinco años en su empleo y sólo el 10.5 % tiene 10 años, el 5.8% tiene menos de un año en su actividad. Tampoco se relaciona con la planta laboral, sólo el 21.7% dijo tener planta. La ambigüedad laboral también está presente, un 24% de los reynosenses entrevistados dijo no tener un contrato laboral. Aunque tiene seguro y prestaciones mínimas, vacaciones pagadas (25%), aguinaldo (29.5%), un porcentaje importante no participa de las utilidades de sus empresas, el 26.3%.

Así pues, aunque existe abundancia de empleos, las condiciones laborales no son buenas. De acuerdo al 47% de los entrevistas resulta muy difícil encontrar un trabajo bien pagado (y con buenas prestaciones), el 42.4% consideró difícil encontrar este tipo de empleo, interesantemente, y podría referirse a los profesionistas, un 7.8% expresó que es poco difícil encontrar un buen empleo.

La vivienda: suficiencia pero con carencias

El crecimiento industrial de Reynosa ha estado acompañado de un fuerte crecimiento poblacional, como vimos en el apartado primero de esta exposición. El incremento poblacional se ha reflejado en el crecimiento de número de viviendas, como muestra el cuadro siguiente:

Cuadro 5
Viviendas y número de ocupantes en Reynosa, 1990-2000

Año	Total de viviendas	Viviendas particulares habitadas	Ocupantes en viviendas particulares	Promedio de ocupantes por vivienda particulares
1990	62756	62731	261235	4.48
2000	102632	102632	420463	4.09

Fuente: INEGI, Tamaulipas, Resultados Definitivos Datos por Localidad (integración territorial), XI Censo General de Población y Vivienda, 1990: 84

De las viviendas habitadas, en 1990, el 73.3% era vivienda propia,[29] lo que refiere una alta propiedad patrimonial, en 2000, la situación no había variado mucho, dado que el 72% continuaba siendo propia.[30] En cuanto a las características de la vivienda, la encuesta encontró que para finales de 2005, el 95.3% de los entrevistados vivían en casas independientes, y el material principal de paredes y techos era el tabique, 64.3% para las primeras y 27.9% de los segundos, y el 63.9% de los pisos eran de cemento o firme, 63.9%, el 91.9% contaba con un cuarto para cocina. El 53.3 % tiene 2 cuartos para dormir y el 28.3 % un total de 3 cuartos. En cuanto habitantes, el mayor porcentaje se concentra entre 4 ocupantes (25.6%) y cinco ocupantes (21.3%). El reynosense considera que tiene un espacio suficiente para vivir (99.8%), aunque la cuarta parte reconoce que su vivienda presenta problemas de humedad (25.3%) o goteras (21.8%).

En cuanto a las características de los hogares reynosenses, los datos del 2005 mostraron nuevas características de los hogares. En ese año, se declararon un total de 488,763 hogares, de los cuáles 96.5% eran familiares, es decir unidos por lazos de sangre, y de ellos, el 64,4% era nuclear, y el 31.8% era ampliado, es decir el 96% se concentraban en estos grupos. Los lazos familiares siguen siendo el principal factor de unión en los hogares de Reynosa.

En cuanto a la dotación de servicios públicos en sus hogares, los reynosenses consideran que son suficientes, aunque subsisten algunas carencias, especialmente en cuanto a drenaje, como muestra el cuadro siguiente.

Cuadro 6
Viviendas con servicios públicos en Reynosa, 1990.

Año	Viviendas habitadas	Viviendas con agua entubada	Viviendas con drenaje	Vivienda con energía eléctrica.
1990	62,731	54,923	39,984	51,332
2000	101,557	95,520	80,849	97,031

Fuente: INEGI, Tamaulipas, Resultados Definitivos Datos por Localidad (integración territorial), XI Censo General de Población y Vivienda, 1990: 213; para 2000, Cuaderno Estadístico.

El cuadro muestra avances interesantes en mejoramiento de dotación de servicios. Por ejemplo, la dotación de agua pasó del 87.5% de viviendas en 1990, a 94% en el año 2000. Lo mismo aconteció con la luz eléctrica. Aún el servicio con mayor rezago, la dotación de drenaje mejoró sustancialmente. En 1990, sólo el 63.7% de los hogares reynosenses contaba con drenaje. Para el 2000, el 79.6% estaban dotados de drenaje.

Los datos de la encuesta mostraron valores menores para los servicios en la vivienda en comparación con el censo del 2000. De las viviendas encuestadas el 83.8% tenía agua dentro de casa (94.1%

en el municipio), el servicio era casi diario 87.5%; el 94.4 tenía agua (95.5%), aunque el porcentaje de drenaje era superior 83.5% al municipal. Otros servicios como el teléfono tienen una menor cobertura. Sólo el 53.3% tiene teléfono, y, de éstos, el 35% realiza llamadas de larga distancia nacional.

Los mayores bienes con los que cuentan los hogares son televisión (96.9%), refrigerador (96.6%), licuadora (89%), radio (88.4%), lavadora (81.7%).[31] Los bienes con porcentajes más bajos fueron calentador (47.5%) y computadora (23.7%). El clima extremoso podría ser una razón para la ausencia de calentador.

En cuanto a la educación, la educación de los entrevistados era baja. El 31.6% tenía sólo la primaria, el 25.9% tenía secundaria, el 18.7% tenía preparatoria, y sólo el 12.5% tenía estudios profesionales. De los entrevistados, el 44.8% trabajaba, y el 28.2% se dedicaba a quehaceres domésticos. El 60.6% recibía ingresos, y el 39.3% no recibía ingreso alguno.

También, se reportaba tener una cobertura importante de salud. El 80.1% decía tener salud, sobre todo, por parte del IMSS, 53.1%, y el seguro popular, 11.5%, aunque ya explicamos que éste era insuficiente y tenía fuertes carencias. Sobre otros servicios, aunque existen, como la recolección de la basura, el 97.8% dijo tenerlo, pero la frecuencia era muy espaciada: cada tercer día, 30.5%; 2 veces por semana, 29.9%, y semanal, 20.1 %. En síntesis, aunque se cuenta con los servicios, éstos presentan algunos rezagos especialmente en cuanto a calidad y eficiencia.

Las percepciones individuales.

Finalmente, este apartado recupera las percepciones individuales en torno al concepto de calidad de vida de los reynosenses y su percepción de si esto se cumple en su ciudad. El factor más importante para bienestar del reynosense es la salud. El 61% lo marcó como el elemento central. En segundo lugar estaría el empleo, 26%, y en tercer lugar el dinero, 5.1%. Para el bienestar de su familia, el reynosense busca mayormente seguridad, 98.2%, tranqui-

lidad, 93.1%, y limpieza, 91.9. Llama la atención que, de acuerdo a las opiniones anteriores, Reynosa no es segura, ni tranquila, ni es una ciudad limpia.

A pesar de las carencias de la ciudad, los reynosenses se sienten muy satisfechos, 22%, y satisfechos con la ciudad, el 63.2%. La satisfacción se extiende a su vivienda, el 30.6% esta muy satisfecho y el 59% satisfecho. La satisfacción es mayor en su vida familiar, el 50.7% está muy satisfecho, el 47.3 % satisfecho, lo mismo pasa con su vida personal, el 31.5% está muy satisfecho, el 62.1% está satisfecho con su vida.

En el caso del aspecto laboral, pasa algo similar que con la ciudad. A pesar de la precariedad laboral, los reynosenses se sienten satisfechos con la situación laboral de la ciudad, 52.5% de la ciudad, incluso el 5.9% se siente muy satisfecho. La satisfacción se extiende a su situación laboral individual. El 11.3% se siente muy satisfecho, y el 58% satisfecho. Lo mismo acontece con sus condiciones de vida. El 59.7% dice estar satisfecho con su vivienda, el 30.6% muy satisfecho, el 57.1 está satisfecho con su colonia, y el 22.5 muy satisfecho.

Las expectativas en torno al futuro también son muy positivas. El 39% considera que la situación de la ciudad mejorará, el 46. % que seguirá igual. El optimismo se extiende al futuro personal, el 62.9% considera que su situación mejorará, el 33 % que seguirá igual. La situación laboral también tiene un buen futuro para el reynosense, el 40.9% dice que la situación laboral de la ciudad mejorará, el 47.6% que seguirá igual, en el futuro laboral individual, sus expectativas muy positivas, el 64.4 % que mejorará, el 30.9% considera que seguirá igual.

Una conclusión general en este último apartado sería la diferenciación que existe en las percepciones de los individuos en torno a sus condiciones de vida y las condiciones concretas en las que se desenvuelven. Una posible explicación podría ser la existencia el mejoramiento de vida en comparación a sus anteriores espacios de

vida, y la existencia abundante de empleo, aunque éstos no sean de buena calidad, salvo para un pequeño grupo.

Conclusiones

El trabajo presentado permite extractar algunas ideas centrales: primero, la dificultad de que las distintas esferas de la vida de un individuo se desarrollen de manera equitativa, que permitan hablar de un bienestar general del individuo. La importancia de los condicionantes estructurales, como la existencia de abundantes empleos, sin importar la calidad, en la conceptualización de la satisfacción familiar y personal del individuo. Los reynosenses parecen minimizar las carencias de la ciudad, su inseguridad y falta de tranquilidad, dado la cantidad de empleos y el futuro promisorio, en esa materia, de la ciudad. Es decir, estos empleos parecen crearle una sensación de *seguridad* personal y familiar en el corto y mediano plazo. Lo preocupante resulta la vulnerabilidad que la maquila, eje central del empleo y propulsor de las otras actividades, dado su dependencia de factores internacionales más que locales.

Otra conclusión importante sería la continuidad que existe en cuanto a la diferenciación al interior de la ciudad, tanto en cuanto a dotación de servicios públicos como en cuanto a condiciones laborales. En este período, a diferenciación de la época petrolera, la diferenciación no radica ya en la planta laboral, sino en la diferencia de ingresos, el crecimiento asombroso en el grupo de más de 5 salarios, parecería estar anunciando la constitución de una *elite*, integrado por profesionales, gerentes, y promotores industriales de la industria maquiladora, aunque con la persistencia de un amplio grupo de trabajadores mal remunerados.

Tercera conclusión, el documento presenta una característica preocupante, el escaso interés que existe entre los entrevistados para comprometerse con la solución de los problemas de su ciudad, de los cuáles no se consideran responsables, esto lleva a la ausencia de lazos de solidaridad con sus vecinos y su comunidad, lo que resulta preocupante. La preocupación se acentúa cuando los

reynosenses tienen tan poca confianza en las instituciones como los partidos políticos, las autoridades municipales y las fuerzas policiales. La pregunta sería: si el ciudadano no es responsable, si las autoridades no responden, ¿Quién debe ser encargado de la resolución de los problemas de la ciudad? Me parece que la resolución de estos problemas compete a individuos y gobierno, habrá que encontrar formas para que ambos tomen conciencia de sus responsabilidades mutuas.

Finalmente, el documento muestra la diferenciación que existe entre las condiciones reales de vida de los reynosenses y sus percepciones en torno a su satisfacción personal y familiar. Si se considera lo aquí expuesto estaríamos hablando de dos mundos totalmente diferentes: una ciudad con abundantes empleos, pero no bien remunerados; con carencias de servicios públicos, insegura, intranquila, y sucia, con ciudadanos que sienten una gran satisfacción de vivir en esta ciudad y que consideran que su presente y futuro individual y familiar en el corto y mediano plazo son por demás favorable. Uno no alcanza a comprender estas diferenciaciones y los puntos de encuentro entre ambos mundos, sino se recurre a contrastarlo con situaciones de vida, laborales, individuales y familiares que hayan experimentado los individuos entrevistados, en donde las condiciones de vida pudieron haber sido más precarias a las experimentadas actualmente. En otras palabras, en Reynosa estaríamos en una ciudad con una percepción de mejoramiento de calidad de vida que parece descansar más en factores económicos que en el mejoramiento de condiciones sociales y laborales.[32]

El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, Oficina Regional en Matamoros.

Notas

1 Julio Alguacil Gómez, Julio, *Calidad de vida y modelo de ciudad* (Madrid: Instituto Juan de Herrera, 2000), p. 2.

2 El progreso sería entendido como la búsqueda no acabada de la humanidad para superar las condiciones de pobreza, de inseguridad, la discriminación y la dependen-

cia, citado por Pedro Delgado Delgado, Tulia Salcedo, 2003. "Aspectos conceptuales sobre los indicadores de calidad de vida," snp, en <http://www.webpondo.org/files_oct_dic_03/AspectosConceptuales.pdf>

3 Julio Alguacil, 2000, p. 2.

4 De acuerdo a Delgado, el primero en utilizar estos indicadores fue el Gobierno sueco, quien en 1968, solicitó a un grupo de sociólogos un informe acerca del nivel de vida de sus habitantes, se integraron las áreas de: salud y acceso al cuidado de la misma; empleo y condiciones de trabajo; recursos económicos, educación y capacitaciones; familia e integración social; vivienda, seguridad de la vida y de la propiedad; recreación y cultura y recursos políticos, Delgado, 2003, p. 26.

5 Delgado, 2003, p. 4.

6 Un indicador cercano a esta idea parecería ser el Indice de Desarrollo Humano (IDH) creado por el Programa de Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, en donde se agregan diferentes características de privación para obtener una medida sobre el grado de pobreza y se consideran factores como la longevidad, los conocimientos, la participación política, el acceso al trabajo, que le daría un sentido más cualitativo a esta definición. Delgado, 2003, p. 5.

7 *Los municipios de Tamaulipas*, 1988.

8 INEGI, *Anuario Estadístico de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, 1988-1989*, México, 1990, p. 602.

9 Mario Margulis y Rodolfo Tuirán, 1986, *Desarrollo y población en la frontera Norte, el caso de Reynosa* (México, D.F.: El Colegio de México), pp. 82-85.

10 E.M.R, septiembre de 1992.

11 Angelina Alonso y Roberto López, *El Sindicato de Trabajadores Petroleros y sus relaciones con PEMEX y el estado 1970-1985* (El Colegio de México,1986), p. 55.

12 Alonso, 1986.

13 Alonso/López, p.5.

14 *El Mañana*, diario reynosense, revisión sistemática 1949-1971, 5/IV/51.

15 *El Bravo*, periódico matamorense, 21 de enero 1989.

16 *El Bravo*, enero 1989.

17 *El Bravo*, enero 1989.

18 *El Bravo* enero 1989.

19 Aunque la primera maquiladora se había instalado en territorio reynosense en 1965.

20 Reynosa es atractiva sobretodo por su mano de obra barata, suceptible de negociación sindical; carencia de conflictos sindicales; servicios a bajo precio, agua (.0099 dólares por galón), electricidad (.055 dólares por kilowatt/hora), y gas natural (0.152 por litro, "negociable con PEMEX"), (Líneas fronterizas, ago/oct, 1990).

21 Margulis y Tuirán, 1986, p. 60.

22 Las percepciones fueron derivadas de los cuestionarios de la "Encuesta sobre Calidad de vida, Competitividad y violencia social," aplicada en 26 ciudades, a solicitud de SEDESOL. Para caso de Reynosa, se levantaron 140,368 cuestionarios, entre diciembre de 2005 y enero de 2006.

23 La encuesta se aplico a 140,368 personas de las cuales el 48.3% eran jefe de familia, el 32.4% era esposa del jefe de familia, el 13.6% era hijo y el 2.4% otro, el 49.1% fueron hombres y el 50.9% eran mujeres, la mayor parte entre 3 y 40 años.

24 Eduardo Alarcón, *Estructura Urbana en Ciudades Fronterizas. Nuevo Laredo-Laredo, Reynosa-Mc Allen, Matamoros-Brownsville* (Matamoros: El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, 2000), p. 99.

25 Alarcón, 2000, pp. 13-114.

26 De acuerdo con Alarcón (2000), a finales de los años noventa, sólo el 45% de las AGEBs de Reynosa tenía infraestructura de nivel 1 y 2.

27 Contradictoriamente el 38.5% de los entrevistados dijo que era muy difícil encontrar buena atención médica y el 41.5% dijo que esto era difícil. La dificultad esta relacionado con la escasez de clínicas del Seguro Social. Reynosa sólo cuenta con dos clínicas, y la gran cantidad de trabajadores que demandan atención médica, el 53% de los entrevistados, dependía de la atención médica del IMSS.

28 El trabajador reynosense considera que para estar seguros en el empleo habría que tener un negocio propio, 59.7%; tener empleo en la maquiladoras, 15.6% o en una oficina de gobierno, 11.4%.

29 INEGI *Estadística de la Industria Maquiladora de Exportación*, 1990, p. 213.

30 Gobierno del Estado de Tamaulipas/INEGI/H. Ayuntamiento Constitucional de Reynosa, 1996, *Reynosa. Estado de Tamaulipas. Cuaderno Estadístico Municipal*, Edición 1995.

31 Un porcentaje importante tenía auto (62.2%), la cercanía con la frontera y la accesibilidad de precio son los factores explicativos de esta adquisición.

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An Experiment Assessing Attitudes on Immigrants & Immigration among U.S. College Students: A Comparison of Students in the Rio Grande Valley to Those in Northeastern Pennsylvania

by

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Ethnicity can play a powerful role in influencing policy opinion, whether by triggering an emotional response to a specific racial or ethnic group, or through a sense of linked fate and group solidarity. In this work, we build on existing research that has examined polling data[1] and experimental evidence[2] to assess public opinion on immigration. We investigate attitudes toward immigrants and immigration among the most recent additions to U.S. voter rolls –college students –by conducting a survey experiment at two public universities, one in the northeastern United States, where presumably border issues such as immigration are less salient, the other at a Hispanic-Serving Institution in the southwestern United States near the U.S.-Mexican border, where immigration issues are a part of daily life. The purpose of our research is to assess whether college students' opinions are influenced by information concerning immigration in the United States as well as the salience of immigration and identity to the respondents. Our results will help inform how these factors are likely to shape immigration attitudes going forward.

Introduction

The conventional wisdom is that the 2012 election served as the awakening of "The Sleeping Giant," as Latinos turned out to vote in record numbers. President Barack Obama carried 71% of the Latino vote, altering the political landscape in ways that might foster the conditions necessary to achieve Comprehensive

Immigration Reform (CIR). Despite the results of the 2012 election and the 2010 Census showing a 43% increase in the Latino population nationwide,[3] CIR remains controversial. A recent bipartisan framework proposed by six United States senators and passed by the United States Senate has been met with a great deal of criticism on both sides of the aisle and faces an uncertain future in the U.S. House of Representatives. Democrats complained that a path to citizenship for the approximately 11 million undocumented immigrants in the United States was predicated on U.S. borders being secured without a clear definition of what that entailed. Alternatively, some Republicans argued any proposal that offered a path to citizenship to undocumented immigrants, regardless of the fines or waiting periods which applicants would have to endure, amounted to amnesty and could not be endorsed. Therefore, despite the increased electoral clout of Latinos based on record turnout at the polls, CIR remains a complex issue mired in considerable disagreement among the nation's major political parties. This puzzle motivates the study of the determinants of public opinion on immigrants and immigration that could be driving the behavior of Congress.

Immigration has been a salient national issue for over a decade. While many Americans hope for a quick resolution, one possibility for change in the direction and tone of the debate is the generational replacement of U.S. voters. On a host of social and moral issues such as marijuana legalization and abortion, we see that younger voters hold significantly different views than their more senior counterparts.[4] We believe the same pattern may be true of immigration. In this work, we examine how knowledge about illegal immigration influences the attitudes of college students through the use of a survey experiment that manipulates perceptions of the social distance or closeness between Latinos and undocumented immigrants. Our respondents come from two universities, one in Northeastern Pennsylvania and the other in Deep South Texas. Our methodology and data sources allow us to

assess how racial/ethnic identity and geographical context influence college students' opinions about immigrants and immigration.

These two regions present an interesting dichotomy. Northeastern Pennsylvania has seen a significant influx of African-Americans and Hispanics from the New York metropolitan area over the last 20 years. Therefore, ethno-racial differences in demographic composition are increasingly salient. However, in the Rio Grande Valley of Deep South Texas, where over 85% of residents are Hispanic, ethnicity is not salient; given the region's proximity to the border, immigration is the more prominent issue. Further, while some areas of Pennsylvania, for example the city of Hazleton, have highlighted their immigration concerns, and passed anti-undocumented immigrant legislation in response, these instances have been isolated. So we argue that, for most students in the Pennsylvania sub-sample, immigration is not a significant concern in this area of the country.

Public Opinion and Immigration

The literature on attitudes toward illegal immigration is extensive. Two important works that speak to our research design are articles by Branton and Dunaway (2009)[5] and Dunaway *et al.* (2010),[6] which examine media coverage of immigration in both border areas and non-border areas and how coverage may impact opinions on immigration respectively. Branton and Dunaway (2009) find that newspapers in closer proximity to the California-Mexico border were more likely to publish articles on immigration and the problems associated with it. Following up on this work, Dunaway *et al.* (2010) confirm the relationship between border proximity and greater coverage of immigration using national Gallup poll data, but also find that respondents in border states are more likely to identify immigration as a "Most Important Problem." Our work builds off of these results. As we assess the preferred policy choices of our respondents, we examine whether the differences in regional salience over immigration issues that Dunaway *et al.* has shown to exist will impact college students' policy preferences.

The potential influence of perceived economic threat on attitudes towards immigration has received considerable attention. The notion that individuals who view immigrants as a threat to their economic well-being, either through labor competition or as a drain on social services, would be less likely to support increased immigration seems intuitive. In this vain, Hainmueller and Hiscox (2010)[7] use a survey experiment to ascertain whether attitudes toward high-skilled and low-skilled immigrants systematically differ based on citizens' socio-economic standing. Contrary to prevailing theory, they find both highly skilled and low-skilled natives prefer immigration of high skilled immigrants and regardless of economic station (*i.e.* wealthy and non-wealthy), natives oppose low-skilled immigration.

In another work assessing the threat hypothesis, Brader, *et al.* (2008)[8] conduct an experiment that finds greater opposition to immigration among whites when mock news stories discussing the costs of immigration are paired with images of Latino immigrants, compared to when the articles present the immigrants as European. The authors find that "group cues influence opinion and political action by triggering emotions –in particular, anxiety –not simply by changing beliefs about the severity of the immigration problem."[9]

In our survey, we employ a control that provides students with no ethno-centric discussion of immigration and then four different pieces of data related to Latino immigration and Latino birth rates. Based on the findings of Brader, *et al.* we should expect to find that the priming of immigration as a Latino issue could drive respondents to support more restrictionist immigration policies, as it could trigger emotions of threat or anxiety. However, our work provides an alternative assessment of this possibility as images could be more powerful than words and thus blunt the triggering of these emotions.

Given the polarizing nature of the immigration debate, evidenced by the on-going battle over the issue in Washington, partisanship

should influence how our respondents react to the primed information and their overall opinions on the issue of immigration. For example, in a study on partisan perceptual bias, Jerit and Barabas (2012, 682) find that, "[w]hen individual-level motivation is absent (*i.e.*, on topics that do not have any partisan implications), greater amounts of news coverage generally translate into higher levels of political knowledge. However, when a topic has implications for one of the two parties, increasing the level of media coverage heightens partisan perceptual bias."[10] While this work does not examine immigration specifically, it relates to our work because it is possible that the information provided by the treatments in our experiment could resonate strongly with subjects who are more receptive to it. As partisanship may serve as a lens through which all political stimuli is evaluated we assess the impact of partisanship on immigration policy opinions in addition to how the effects of partisanship may be mitigated by location.

Another key theoretical concept in this work is that of linked fate. Our respondents in Texas are overwhelmingly Latino, specifically of Mexican origin, and as we provide students with information that frames immigration as a Latino issue, respondents' level of identification with their ethnic group may reduce their opposition to liberal immigration reform. If students believe their own social and economic well-being is tied to that of their fellow Latinos/as, the perception that undocumented immigrants are overwhelmingly Latino –without corresponding information that Latino undocumented immigrants are a minority of the total Hispanic population –might encourage them to extend their sense of group attachment to this subgroup. While our Texas respondents are predominately Latino, making an assessment of the linked fate theory feasible, almost 20% of the population in the Northeastern Pennsylvania county where the survey was administered is Latino, and 16% of the student population is identified by the university as "diversity enrollment." As such, we should also be able to assess both the prevalence and susceptibility of linked fate among minority stu-

dents, and potential contextual differences between those living in majority-minority versus racially diverse communities.

Moreover, Latino is a pan-ethnic identifier encompassing individuals of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Dominican descent, among others. Therefore, while the concept of linked fate has been found to still be a significant factor in African American politics, despite growing economic stratification in the African-American community (Dawson 1994)[11], some scholars question whether this will apply to Latinos. Sanchez and Masuoka (2010)[12] examine this exact question using Latino National Survey data and find that linked fate is present among Latinos although it does not work in the same manner as Dawson found with African-Americans. Specifically, they find that linked fate based on national-origin to be more pronounced than linked fate with Latinos as a whole. However, and most relevant to this research, Sanchez and Masuoka find "that Latinos with higher educational levels are more likely to believe that their individual fate is tied to that of other Latinos (524)." As recent census data finds that 62.9% of Latinos have at least graduated high school compared to 100% of our respondents, we should find strong evidence of linked fate influencing our respondents opinions related to immigration policy. Latino participants at the Pennsylvania institution are more likely to be of non-Mexican heritage than our Texas respondents, and we do not prime respondents with national-origin specific information.

Finally, this study also considers the effect of geography on non-Hispanic white respondents. We have already discussed how differences in the salience of immigration issues could impact respondents living on the U.S.-Mexico border, but for the Northeastern Pennsylvania respondents, another factor which could influence their opinions is the racial and ethnic make-up of their home communities. The Pennsylvania sample will be primarily Caucasian. Ha (2010)[13] finds that for non-Hispanic whites, living close to Hispanics is likely to yield negative stereotypes of immigrants, although proximity to Asians yields positive attitudes. This study

also found that positive attitudes towards immigrants were more likely in neighborhoods (as defined by census tracts) rather than larger metropolitan areas. As we do not ask respondents for information on their hometowns, it is difficult for us to properly assess how neighborhood demographic composition could affect our results. However, as the Pennsylvania university attracts students from both the New York-New Jersey and Philadelphia metropolitan areas (in addition to the growing local Hispanic population in the immediate region surrounding the university), the possibility exists that some subset of our non-Hispanic white respondents could be predisposed to harboring negative stereotypes towards immigrants.

Data and Hypotheses

A 39-question survey instrument was distributed to students at two universities, one in Deep South Texas, the other in Northeastern Pennsylvania. 175 students completed the survey at the university in South Texas and 204 students completed the survey at the Pennsylvania institution. All 39-questions were the same in each survey, but respondents were presented with one of five treatment conditions to assess how the priming of issues related to immigrants and immigration would influence student responses' to the survey questions. While our work could be criticized as comprising of a sample of convenience, as Mutz (2011, 3) explains, the type of population based experiment we are conducting does not necessitate a national random sample:

> [P]opulation based experiments need not (and often have not) relied on nationally representative population samples. The population of interest might be members of a particular ethnic group, parents of children under the age of 18, those who watch television news, or some other group, but the key is that convenience samples are abandoned in favor of samples representing the target population of interest. The advantage of population-based sur-

> vey experiments is that theories can be tested on samples that are representative of the population to which they are said to apply.[14]

In total, five different versions of the survey or treatments were distributed, each with an opening vignette about immigrants and immigration (Please see appendix for the complete version of each vignette). The control version of the survey contained information about the number of legal and illegal immigrants, without mentioning Latinos. The first experiment contained two versions of the vignette where in addition to the control paragraph respondents were told that "1 out of 5 Hispanics are illegal immigrants" or that "4 out of 5 illegal immigrants are Hispanic."[15] These were identified as scripts number one and two, respectively. The second experiment also contained two versions of the survey where in addition to the control version paragraph, the birth rate among Hispanics was discussed and respondents were told "...340,000 U.S.-born children were born to undocumented Hispanics," (script number three) or that "...700,000 U.S.-born children were born to U.S.-born and/or legal resident Hispanics" (script number four).[16]

From there the survey questioned respondents about their perceptions on the prevalence of illegal immigration, their policy positions on the issue and whether they believe there is anti-immigrant sentiment in the United States today. In this chapter, the dependent variable of interest is the respondents' policy on immigration reform. The survey also questioned respondents about their own ethnicity and cultural identity (including language usage), and included a series of demographic questions related to the respondent's religion, socioeconomic status and political ideology which serve as independent variables in our analysis.

The opening vignettes may, of course, appear obtrusive and create a concern among students that they be politically correct in answering the survey questions. However, while we provide them with information about Latinos and immigration, the questions posed

after the introductory vignette refer to immigrants and immigration in general; we do not at first ask questions about Latinos. We feel the obtrusiveness of the primed information is further reduced by introducing the survey as a simple study of public policy opinions and not specifically about immigration. As well, students are not informed of the experimental design and the different versions of the vignettes. This should then minimize the concern over providing socially desirable answers and promote honest responses, because the questions do not pertain to a specific racial or ethnic group. However, if we do find an impact on immigration opinions based on the treatment condition, this could be due to respondents conflating Latinos with immigrants. Therefore, the survey design as constructed is essentially testing for "new racism" operationalized as whether the respondents conflate Latinos with immigrants simply because we mention Latinos and immigrants in the same passage in the introduction to the survey.

To explain further, existing research (see Short and Magaña 2002)[17] has demonstrated that people will use non-ethnic rationales to discriminate against racial or ethnic groups. In our case, priming students with information regarding illegal immigration or the birth rate may provide the non-ethnic rationale for respondents to harbor negative attitudes towards Latinos by conflating them with all immigrants.

While college students are an important group to analyze due to generational replacement, as discussed earlier, they can also provide results than can be generalized to the study of adults concerning the concepts of linked fate and how priming can impact opinions on immigration. Other research, including Druckman and Kim (2010),[18] find that college students do not differ significantly from non-student samples on many key variables. The most common variables where differences existed were media use, religious attendance, and political information/knowledge. However, none of these variables play a primary role in our analysis.

Our work here does not frame the issue of immigration for the survey respondents. Instead we prime them with information about immigration in both generalized and ethno-centric formats. Building then on our earlier discussion of linked fate, this work will assess whether the use of ethno-centric rhetoric will impact opinions of immigrants and immigration policy. The survey as designed allows us to assess multiple hypotheses related to the impact of ethnocentric information priming, issue salience and geographic location as discussed earlier. These hypotheses include:

> H1: Respondents (regardless of race/ethnicity and partisanship) living in areas where immigration is less salient will be less likely to support policies that allow for a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants and will voice greater support for restrictionist (i.e. deportation) immigration policies. Respondents (regardless of race/ethnicity) living in areas where immigration is a highly salient issue will be more likely to support policies that allow for a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants and voice less support for restrictionist immigration policies.

> H2: Respondents who are informed of the proportion of illegal immigrants who are Latinos (script #2) will also be more likely to support restrictionist immigration policies, whereas respondents who are informed of the percentage of Latinos who are illegal immigrants (script #1) will be less likely to support restrictionist immigration policies.

> H3: Respondents who are informed on the number of births each year to Hispanics who are legal residents or citizens (script #4) will be less likely to support restrictionist immigration policies and more likely to support a path to citizenship for undocumented Hispanics. However, we posit that

respondents who are informed on the number of births each year to undocumented Hispanics (script #3) will be more likely to support restrictionist immigration policies and oppose policies that create a path to citizenship.

H4: Respondents who most strongly identify as a member of their ethnic group and believe that their success is tied to that of other members of their racial/ethnic group (i.e. linked fate) will be the most likely to support immigration policies that lead to a path to citizenship.

Results

Given the multiple experiments and our four hypotheses to make this chapter more parsimonious, we used cross-tabulations to analyze our data. As well, given the small sample sizes of some of the treatment conditions (some less than 40), more advanced regression analyses would not yield worthwhile results from the data. In assessing our results, we find both opportunities and challenges in looking at the data.

First and foremost, our samples closely mirror the enrollments of the universities where the experiment took place. At the Pennsylvania institution, 81.4% of the 204 respondents were Caucasian, while 7.4% and 7.8% were Latino and African-American respectively. At the Texas institution, Latinos were slightly oversampled with over 99% of the 175 respondents (only one respondent did not identify as Latino) in the sample identifying themselves as Latino, compared to 91% of undergraduates at the university as a whole. Therefore, while our sample makes it difficult to make comparisons between the institutions based on race and ethnicity, any impact of our experimental conditions we feel is validated based on the overall accuracy of our sample.

Before examining the impact of our treatment conditions, we will begin by looking at the student opinions of immigration policy

regardless of which experimental condition they experienced. These results can be seen in Table 1. Here we see – as expected – that students in different regional contexts have different immigration policy preferences. Among Latino students in the Texas university, almost 80% support a path to naturalized citizenship[19], however only 22.4% of that group support immediate naturalized citizenship for undocumented immigrants. The results for the Pennsylvania sample are more varied. In the Pennsylvania sample, we see that among Caucasian students more than half of the respondents do not support any law that provides a path to naturalized citizenship, with more than a third of the sample supporting the deportation of undocumented immigrants either by law or through creating conditions for undocumented immigrants which would encourage self-deportation.

At the same time, however, more than 60% of the Caucasian sample respondents appear to recognize the economic benefits of undocumented immigration, as almost 50% of the sample supported a guest worker program, with another 12% supporting immediate legalization. Although a significantly smaller proportion of the sample, we again find interesting results comparing responses from Latinos and African-Americans in the sample. Here we see greater support for a path to citizenship among African-Americans than among Latinos. Again, while the sample size here is too small for these findings to achieve statistical significance, it is an interesting phenomenon that future work should examine. Overall, then, these findings demonstrate support for our first hypothesis in that there is greater support for restrictionist immigration policies in Pennsylvania, where immigration is less salient, and greater support for policies that create a path to citizenship in Texas, where immigration is more salient. This finding is in line with previous research that explicitly points to the importance of context in defining or shaping political preferences and behavior (García Bedolla 2005).[20] However, contrary to our hypothesis, it does appear that these findings are also impacted by race/ethnicity, at least in Pennsylvania, where there is greater support for restric-

tionist policies among Caucasians than African Americans. This finding reinforces the results by a Pew study that found African Americans express relatively positive opinions of immigrants even as they view them as competitors for scarce job opportunities.[21]

Tables

Table 1 - Student Opinions on Immigration Policy Disaggregated by Race/Ethnicity and Location

	Immediate Deportation	Encourage Self-Deportation	Guest Worker Program w/o Path to Citizenship	Guest Worker Program with a Path to Citizenship	Immediate Legalization of Non-Criminal Undocumented Immigrants	Other	Total N
TX-Latino	5.7%	1.1%	13.2%	57.5%	22.4%	0%	174
PA-Caucasian	22.9%	13.3%	21.1%	28.3%	12.7%	1.8%	166
PA-Latino	13.3%	0%	20%	20%	40%	6.7%	15
PA-African-American	0%	6.3%	12.5%	62.5%	12.5%	6.3%	16

As discussed in the literature review, we also inquired about students' partisanship. The results in Table 2 show how partisanship (regardless of experimental treatment condition) impacted opinions on immigration policy. The results comport with what we would expect, as 81% of Texas Democrats supported policies that would create a path to citizenship. There were only 20 Republican respondents in the Texas sample, but among this group 60% also

supported a path to citizenship. This would support the idea that border proximity yields more support for less restrictionist immigration policies. This is further supported by the Pennsylvania data, as only 21% of Republicans and 50% of Democrats in the sample supported a path to citizenship. In both location samples, those who labeled themselves as "middle of the road" shared similar issues positions to the Democrats in the sample on immigration reform. Quite simply this shows that even when accounting for partisanship, location is a key factor in opinions regarding immigration reform and supports our first hypothesis.

Table 2 - Student Opinions on Immigration Policy Disaggregated by Partisanship and Location

	Immediate Deportation	Encourage Self-Deportation	Guest Worker Program w/o Path to Citizenship	Guest Worker Program with Path to Citizenship	Immediate Legalization of Non-Criminal Undocumented Immigrants	Other	Total N
TX-Dems	3.6%	2.4%	13.1%	50%	31%	0%	84
TX-GOP	25%	0%	15%	55%	5%	0%	20
TX-Moderates	3.2%	1.6%	14.3%	65.1%	15.9%	0%	63
PA-Dems	18.6%	8.2%	19.6%	35.1%	14.4%	4.1%	97
PA-GOP	34.1%	19.5%	19.5%	17.1%	7.3%	2.4%	41

PA-Moderates	19.1%	11.8%	19.1%	32.4%	17.6%	0%	68

As we move to the results of our treatment conditions we see modest impacts in our two experiments. In experiment one, (see Tables 3 and 4) where students were either told that "1 out of 5 Hispanics are illegal immigrants" (script 1) or "4 out of 5 illegal immigrants are Hispanics," (script 2) we see that among respondents in both Texas and Pennsylvania there is slightly greater support for policies that yield a path to citizenship than among respondents who received the second condition that showed that most illegal immigrants are Hispanic. Further, focusing specifically on the Pennsylvania sample, we see that respondents in this second condition for experiment one were far more likely to support immediate deportation (a restrictionist policy) than those in condition one as only 9.3% of Pennsylvania respondents in condition one supported immediate deportation but 25% of respondents in condition two supported immediate deportation.

As the first script sends the message that most Hispanics are law-abiding citizens, given only 20% of the group is here with documentation, we believe this may create the sentiment that the problem is less significant than respondents may have already believed and thus does not require restrictionist policies such as deportation. In another question, we asked respondents to state the percentage of Hispanics they believed to be undocumented, and the question yielded a mean of 40.37%, demonstrating respondents believed there to be twice as many undocumented Hispanics as there actually are in the United States. The second script given in experiment one has an opposite effect in that it probably reinforces the existing belief that Hispanics are the main cause of undocumented immigration and thus may create the desire to punish this group of undocumented immigrants; hence the greater support for immediate deportation at least among respondents in Pennsylvania. This finding supports our second hypothesis.

Table 3- Student Opinions on Immigration Policy Disaggregated by Experimental Treatment Condition among Texas College Students

	Immediate Deportation	Encourage Self-Deportation	Guest Worker Program w/o Path to Citizenship	Guest Worker Program w/ Path to Citizenship	Immediate Legalization of Non-Criminal Undocumented Immigrants	Other	N
Control	5.1%	5.1%	12.8%	59%	17.9%	0	39
Script 1	6.5%	0	6.5%	67.7%	19.4%	0	31
Script 2	0	2.6%	18.4%	55.3%	23.7%	0	38
Script 3	2.7%	0	18.9%	51.4%	27.0%	0	37
Script 4	16.7%	0	6.7%	53.3%	23.3%	0	30

In experiment two, our treatment conditions differed based on the information provided about Hispanic birth rates, where the third script told respondents that 340,000 children were born in the U.S. to undocumented Hispanics in 2011, whereas in the fourth script they were told that 700,000 children were born in the U.S. to U.S.-born and/or legal resident Hispanics. Our results here are very interesting. It appears that respondents were swayed not by whether the children were born to undocumented or legal residents/citizens but instead were swayed mostly by the higher numbers. In Texas those respondents who received script four were

almost three times more likely to support immediate deportation than any of the other Texas respondents. Our only explanation for this finding given the script discussed legal residents and citizens was that this group saw the 700,000 number mistakenly believing we were discussing undocumented immigrants and thus supported immediate deportation. However, there was essentially no difference amongst Texas respondents in the second experiment on support for policies that would allow a path to citizenship.

Table 4- Student Opinions on Immigration Policy Disaggregated by Experimental Treatment Condition among Pennsylvania College Students

	Immediate Deportation	Encourage Self-Deportation	Guest Worker Program w/o Path to Citizenship	Guest Worker Program with Path to Citizenship	Immediate Legalization of Non-Criminal Undocumented Immigrants	Other	N
Control	26.7%	13.3%	24.4%	26.7%	6.7%	2.2%	45
Script 1	9.3%	18.6%	9.3%	34.9%	20.9%	7.0%	43
Script 2	25.0%	12.5%	17.5%	27.5%	17.5%	0	40
Script 3	22.0%	4.9%	22.0%	34.1%	14.6%	2.4%	41
Script 4	26.3%	7.9%	26.3%	28.9%	10.5%	0	38

In our Pennsylvania sample, we see similar results from the second experiment. Those who received script three were more likely

to support policies which created a path to citizenship and were less likely to support more restrictionist policies, with the opposite being true for those Pennsylvania students who received script four. Therefore, again, the students appeared to be deceived by the numbers as the higher birth number, even though it was associated with legal residents/citizens, appears to have sparked greater support for restrictionist policies, while the lower birth number, although associated with undocumented immigrants, spurred greater support for citizenship. The only other explanation could be that, in the Pennsylvania sample, the number of births to undocumented parents created sympathy for these newly born American citizens and thus engendered greater support for citizenship; however this was not observed in the Texas sample. These findings refute our third hypothesis that those receiving information about undocumented birth rates will be more likely to oppose citizenship and support deportation. Overall then, our results support the idea that young people's opinions on immigration reform are poorly informed and largely ambivalent as we do see an impact on their opinions based on the information they were provided in the experimental conditions.

This leads us to our last hypothesis, which is the impact of the concept of linked fate. We posited that respondents who strongly identify as a member of a particular ethno-racial group and believed that their personal success was tied to the success of members of their group would be most supportive of immigration policies leading to citizenship for undocumented immigrants. What we found (see Table 5) is that strong racial/ethnic identification is limited in Pennsylvania. Caucasians showed no strong identity, while 62% of African-Americans and 56% of Latinos in Pennsylvania said they somewhat or very strongly identified with their race/ethnicity. In Texas, where again the sample was 99% Latino, 67% of respondents said they somewhat or very strongly identified with their ethnicity.

We then find, as expected, that Latinos in Texas and both Latinos and African-Americans in the Pennsylvania sample said that either

some or a lot of their success has to do with the success of their group. However, the presence of linked fate was much stronger in Texas, where 2/3 of respondents believed this, compared to 56% of both African-Americans and Latinos in Pennsylvania. Despite the presence of linked fate among the African-Americans and Latinos in the sample, we did not find any impact for belief in linked fate on one's position on undocumented immigration, which refutes our fourth and final hypothesis.[22] It could very well be that, since most of our sample already supported immigrant-friendly policy positions, there was relatively little change that could occur in the expected direction. The lack of variance on the variable of interest, therefore, could explain this result.

Table 5 - Student Opinions on Whether Their Personal Success is Impacted by the Success of their Racial/Ethnic Group

	None	A little	Some	A lot	Total N
TX-Latino	12.6%	20.1%	41.4%	25.9%	174
PA-Caucasian	32.7%	22%	36.3%	8.9%	168
PA-Latino	12.5%	31.3%	25%	31.3%	16
PA-African American	37.5%	6.3%	25%	31.3%	16

Conclusion

Much of the scholarship examining public opinion on immigration reform centers on the impact of race and ethnicity or the economic threat hypothesis. Our work opens up new avenues for this research. Our results validate the idea that geographic location and issue salience impact opinions on immigration reform. One of most interesting findings is that issue salience appears to mitigate the impact of partisanship in that a majority of Republicans in Deep South Texas who supported a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants.

As well, our experimental results demonstrate that treatment conditions can influence student opinions on immigration policy. Specifically, those respondents who were told that 4 out of 5 Hispanics are legal residents appeared to be more supportive of allowing undocumented immigrants to achieve legal status. The results of our second experiment were somewhat confounding in that they refuted our hypotheses related to information on birth rates for undocumented Hispanics and Hispanics that were legal residents/U.S. residents. Despite this, we believe the results provide further support for the idea that opinions on immigration reform are not well informed and malleable among young people. This suggests that media coverage, and the priming and framing therein, can be a powerful agent of socialization as young people engage in opinion (re)formation on the issue immigration.

In closing, although we do see variations in opinions on immigration reform due to experimental condition, partisanship and race/ethnicity, we feel the most important finding of this work is the impact of geographic location, which serves as our proxy for issue salience. Given that location mitigates the impact of partisanship in Deep South Texas, this work demonstrates the need for more information to be spread to the non- (southern) border regions of the country, so that a richer and more accurate conception of immigrants and immigration issues can be provided to U.S. residents, which could then help break the log jam which has occurred in the battle over immigration reform.

The University of Texas-Pan American
East Stroudsburg University, East Stroudsburg,
Pennsylvania Stanford University

Appendix

Section 1: "Introduction" Vignette

CONTROL SCRIPT: Introduction: This study is about attitudes on immigration. Immigration is a hot topic in contemporary U.S. politics. Census Bureau data show the foreign-born population,

including both legal and undocumented residents was 39.9 million or approximately 13% of the overall population in the U.S. in 2010. Of these the vast majority, about 27 million, are legal immigrants while a minority, about 12 million, are illegal immigrants.

Experiment #1

SCRIPT #1: Introduction: This study is about attitudes on immigration. Immigration is a hot topic in contemporary U.S. politics. Census Bureau data show the foreign-born population, including both legal and undocumented residents was 39.9 million or approximately 13% of the overall population in the U.S. in 2010. Of these the vast majority, about 27 million, are legal immigrants, while a minority, about 12 million, are illegal immigrants. Many of these individuals are from Latin America. The most recent estimates suggest that approximately 1 out of 5 Hispanics are illegal immigrants.

SCRIPT #2: Introduction: This study is about your attitudes on immigration. Immigration is a hot topic in contemporary U.S. politics. Census Bureau data show the foreign-born population, including both legal and undocumented residents was 39.9 million or approximately 13% of the overall population in the U.S. in 2010. Of these the vast majority, about 27 million, are legal immigrants, while a minority, about 12 million, are illegal immigrants. Many of these individuals are from Latin America. The most recent estimates suggest that approximately 4 out of 5 illegal immigrants are Hispanic.

Experiment #2

SCRIPT #3: Introduction: This study is about attitudes on immigration. Immigration is a hot topic in contemporary U.S. politics. Census Bureau data show the foreign-born population, including both legal and undocumented residents was 39.9 million or approximately 13% of the overall population in the U.S. in 2010. Of these the vast majority, about 27 million, are legal immigrants while a minority, about 12 million, are illegal immigrants.

Much of the national conversation about immigration has been tied to Hispanic population growth. Historically, a substantial portion of Hispanic population growth was attributed to illegal immigration. However, since 2007, birth rates among Hispanics have outpaced immigration rates. In 2011 alone, for example, 340,000 U.S.-born children were born to undocumented Hispanics.

SCRIPT #4: Introduction: This study is about attitudes on immigration. Immigration is a hot topic in contemporary U.S. politics. Census Bureau data show the foreign-born population, including both legal and undocumented residents was 39.9 million or approximately 13% of the overall population in the U.S. in 2010. Of these the vast majority, about 27 million, are legal immigrants while a minority, about 12 million, are illegal immigrants.

Much of the national conversation about immigration has been tied to Hispanic population growth. Historically, a substantial portion of Hispanic population growth was attributed to illegal immigration. However, since 2007 birth rates among Hispanics have outpaced immigration rates. In 2011 alone, for example, 700,000 U.S.-born children were born to U.S.-born and/or legal resident Hispanics.

Endnotes

1 Johanna Dunaway et al., 2010. "Agenda Setting, Public Opinion, and the Issue of Immigration Reform," *Social Science Quarterly*, 91(2): 359-377.

2 Ted Brader et al., 2008. "What Triggers Public Opposition to Immigration? Anxiety, Group Cues, and Immigration Threat," *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(4): 959-978.

3 The U.S. Bureau of the Census. 2011. The Hispanic Population: 2011. U.S. Department of Commerce: Washington, DC.

4 Frank Newport, 2011. "Record-High 50% of Americans Favor Legalizing Marijuana Use." *Gallup Politics*. October 17. Retrieved March 15, 2013 from http://www.gallup.com/poll/150149/record-high-americans-favor-legalizing-marijuana.aspx

Frank Newport,. 2012. "Religion Big factor for Americans Against Same-Sex Marriage." *Gallup Politics*. December 5. Retrieved March 15, 2013 from http://www.gallup.com/poll/159089/religion-major-factor-americans-opposed-sex-marriage.aspx

5 Regina P. Branton and Johanna Dunaway. 2009. "Spatial Proximity to the U.S.-Mexico Border and Newspaper Coverage of Immigration Issues." *Political Research Quarterly*, 62(2): 289-302.

6 Johanna Dunaway et al., 2010. "Agenda Setting, Public Opinion, and the Issue of Immigration Reform," *Social Science Quarterly*, 91(2): 359-377.

7 Jens Hainmueller and Michael J. Hiscox. 2010. "Attitudes toward Highly Skilled and Low-skilled Immigration: Evidence from a Survey Experiment," *American Political Science Review* 104(01): 61.

8 Ted Brader et al. 2008. "What Triggers Public Opposition to Immigration? Anxiety, Group Cues, and Immigration Threat," *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(4): 959-978.

9 Ted Brader et al. 2008. "What Triggers Public Opposition to Immigration? Anxiety, Group Cues, and Immigration Threat." *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(4): 959.

10 Jennifer Jerit and Jason Barabas. 2012. "Partisan Perceptual Bias and the Information Environment." *The Journal of Politics* 74(03): 672-684.

11 Michael Dawson, *Behind the mule: Race and class in African-American politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

12 Gabriel Sanchez and Natalie Masuoka. 2010. "Brown Utility Heuristic? The Presence and Contributing Factors of Latino Linked Fate." *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 32(4): 519-531.

13 Shang E. Ha, 2010. "The Consequences of Multiracial Contexts on Public Attitudes toward Immigration." *Political Research Quarterly*, 63(1): 29-42.

14 Diana C. Mutz, 2011. *Population-Based Survey Experiments* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).

15 Knoll, Redlawsk, and Sanborn (2010) conducted a survey experiment which found that using the terms undocumented or illegal as treatment conditions for opinions regarding immigration did not yield significant opinion differences and that Republicans were more likely to respond to the condition then Democrats. As college students are more likely to identify as Democrats, we do not believe the use of the term illegal will impact our results.

16 Benjamin R. Knoll, David P. Redlawsk, and Howard Sanborn. 2010. "Framing Labels and Immigration Policy Attitudes in the Iowa Caucuses: 'Trying to Out-Tancredo Tancredo'." *Political Behavior* 33(3): 433-454.

17 Robert Short and Lisa Magaña. 2002. "Political rhetoric, immigration attitudes, and contemporary prejudice: a Mexican American dilemma." *The Journal of social psychology* 142(6): 701–12.

18 James N. Druckman, and Cindy. D. Kam. 2011. "Students as experimental participants: A defense of the"narrow data base." In *Handbook of Experimental Political Science*, ed. J. Druckman, D. Green, J. Kuklinski, and A. Lupia (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press).

19 This percentage is computed by combining the "guest worker program with a path to citizenship" response with the "immediate legalization" response as both represent support for undocumented immigrants eventually being allowed to become citizens. For the rest of the chapter support for a path to citizenship is referring to the combination of these two response categories.

20 Lisa García Bedolla, 2005. Fluid Borders: Latino Power, Identity, and Politics in Los Angeles (Berkeley: University of California Press).

21 See the report for more information: http://www.pewresearch.org/2006/04/25/attitudes-toward-immigration-in-black-and-white/.

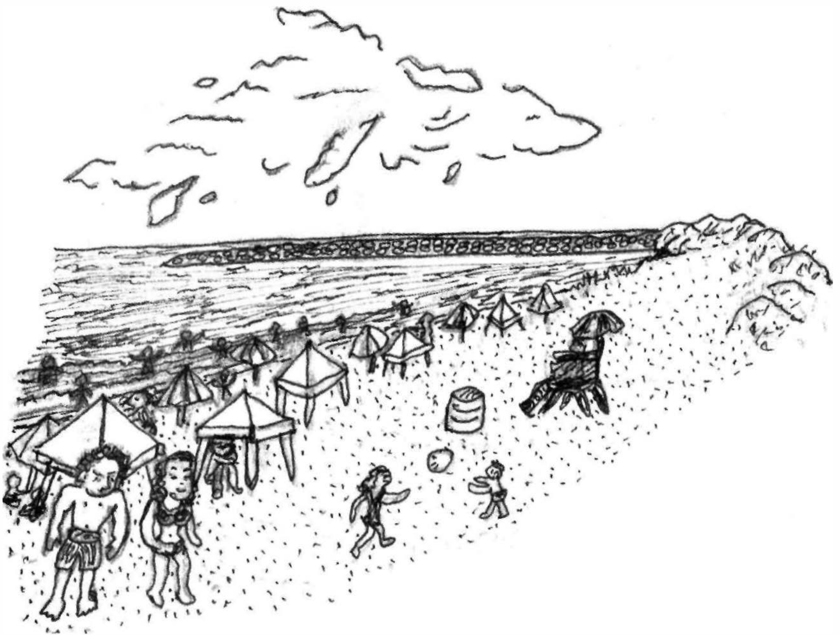
22 There is no table presenting the data related to this hypothesis given the non-finding.

White Pelicans at Dawn

If I am still, very still
- if I freeze -
listening only to the sound of my own breathing,
I can blend into the landscape,
and the white pelicans will swim my way
on the Resaca.
The Leader will dip his head into the water,
and the rest will follow suit
- a dance that began before the beginning of time,
and I am the witness.
Mist floats like dreams on the water.
Green ebony leaves overhead shimmer in the morning stillness.
If I break a twig or make a false move,
they will look up, ruffling tail feathers,
swim away,
and be gone.

Lyon Rathbun

POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND RELIGIOUS HISTORY



The Sheriffs of Cameron County

by

Norman Rozeff

There is no question that the sheriffs of Cameron County have played colorful and, at times, powerful roles in the history of the county. Supposedly apolitical and even-handed in the implementation of the law, they have sometimes been anything but that. While this is not especially unique to Cameron County, the actions of Cameron County sheriffs have a flavor of their own.

In the late 1980s, the Sheriffs' Association of Texas compiled a book listing the chronology of sheriffs in every Texas county.[1] This document provides a wealth of information not readily available elsewhere. The following information and list are derived from the association's book, but the comments in parentheses are those gleaned from other historical sources. They bring the hard, cold statistics to life.

We first learn that:

> Cameron County was created February 12, 1848 from Nueces County and was named for Ewen Cameron, a member of the Mier Expedition who was executed by the Mexicans. The county was organized August 7, 1848 with Santa Rita as the county seat from 1848-1849. Brownsville became the county seat in December 1849.

In the period 1876 to 1988, there were 108 years of office for sheriff in Cameron County. Mexican-American ethnics held the office 26 years, or 24% of the 108 year period. Since 1988, Mexican-Americans have held the office 100% of the time. There have been twenty-seven men and one woman who have served as sheriff, with four of the men having served twice. The information on them is as follows:

Martin M. Stevens was elected the first sheriff on August 7, 1848, and served until August 5, 1850. The 1850 U.S. Census tells us that he was a baker by trade. He had been born in Kentucky around 1809, so was 41 years old. Apparently he was a widower, as a son Andres 2 and a daughter Juana were living with him.[2]

P. Nickel was elected on August 5, 1850, and re-elected on August 2, 1852. He served until August 7, 1854. There is no entry for the August 2, 1852, election, so the assumption is made that he was re-elected. This assumption is based on what has happened in other non-entries of this nature. Amberson in her book *I'd Rather Sleep in Texas*, has his name as Peter Nickel. He was first elected with Brownsville's first mayor, Israel Bigelow. "Considerable controversy surrounded the election with accusations of wrongful voting and investigation of the ballots." After Juan Cortina was defeated at Rio Grande City in December 1859, "Monetary claims began to be filed in county, state, and national level. In Hidalgo County, Peter Nickel testified that over eight hundred dollars, the balance of the entire treasury, had been stolen in December 1859, when the courts had been shuttered during the Cortina raids. He petitioned the commissioners and William B. Thompson, who by then was presiding judge, to buy an iron safe."[3]

E. M. Anderson was elected on August 4, 1854, and served until August 4, 1856.

John Martin was elected on August 4, 1856, and served until August 2, 1858. This may be the same John Martin listed in 1850 as a boatman of 31 years of age. He later was captain of the steamboat *Ranchero*, that was involved in the famous Cortina attack on the river at La Bolsa.[4]

James G. Browne was elected on August 2, 1858 and served until August 6, 1860. James Gillaspie Browne may have had as colorful a character as any sheriff. Born January 1, 1820, in Manchester, England, to Irish parents, he came with them, in 1829, to the Refugio area when the government of Mexico opened this area to settlement by Irish Catholic immigrants. He came to the Valley, in

1846, as the Mexican War commenced and worked as a coach fabricator. Associated with Stephen Powers, the powerful Cameron County lawyer who won numerous land cases, Browne by 1892 would be the largest land owner in the county, with nearly 114,000 acres. Brown secured the Democratic nomination for sheriff when Juan Cortina, with members of his political organization, La Raza Unida, appeared at the Democratic convention and supported him. Browne was by turns a Brownsville merchant, a farmer/stock raiser, and the president and director of the Brownsville to Point Isabel railroad. In 1873, he re-organized the influential Blue Club to support a coterie of Democrat politicians over the decades. Several of his sons would follow him into politics.[5]

Jefferson Barthelow was elected on August 6, 1960 and served until October 20, 1862.While serving, in October of 1863, in the army of the Confederate States of America under Captain Cummings' company stationed in Brownsville, Barthelow was killed by mutinous men led by Adrian J. Vidal. He was one of four killed in the events. Barthelow was hanged near his Santa Rita home.[6]

John B. Stone was elected on October 20, 1862 and re-elected on August 1, 1864. He served until September 27, 1865. The October date leads me to believe that he may have been appointed at that time rather than being elected. There was considerable confusion during the Civil War period as the Union force was to occupy Brownsville from November 5, 1863, to July 28, 1864, before moving its troops to Brazos Island. When the war ended, and Texas came under military rule, the next two sheriffs were appointed, not elected, since some of the rebel citizenry had to be repatriated into the Union.

George Dye was appointed on September 27, 1865, by Governor A. J. Hamilton. He was elected on June 25, 1866, and served until November 17, 1867, when he was removed by General J. J. Reynolds' Special Order # 195. In 1859 Dye had been among 116 community leaders who had petitioned Gov. Runnels for military

assistance to confront Juan Cortina. Dye was mayor of Brownsville in November of 1863, when the retreating Confederate forces under General Bee involved the town in a disastrous conflagration. Dye was an ardent Unionist, but was accepted because his wife and her family were strong secessionists. After the Union occupation of Brownsville, Dye quickly swore an oath of allegiance to the Union. Dye was a merchant and also an auctioneer. He profited when the war ended because, with the loss of the lucrative cotton trade, many merchants began to liquidate their businesses. While he was sheriff, Dye was involved in a famous incident. In October of 1866, a disaffected Confederate soldier, Col. John Young, led a band of about 40 that raided Cameron County ranches for horses and arms. Soon they were being pursued. Young was to die with seven of his men while crossing the river at Rio Grande City. Other members of the gang were surrounded and captured elsewhere. Sheriff Dye placed them in iron cuffs at the county jail. In early 1867, Radical Republicans gained Congressional control and instituted tough Reconstruction measures. In Brownsville, Dye and old-guard leaders were ousted.[7]

Rudolph Krause was appointed sheriff on November 17, 1867, by General J. J. Reynolds' Special Order # 195, and he served until December 3, 1869. Amberson recounts an incident relating to Krause. It involves Confederate hero Rip Ford, who had become editor of the *Brownsville Sentinel* and was very critical of the radical reconstructionists. "Sheriff Rudolph Krause and his deputy, Cruise Carson, found Rip Ford one night at the Miller Hotel playing billiards and began insulting him. He calmly finished his game, then grabbed Krause. In turn, Krause tried to shoot Ford, but only wounded him in the hand before they were separated." The radicals were to remain in power until April 1870. Krause was a lawyer and about 35 years old when he served as sheriff. He and his wife Helena, both Prussian born, had a baby daughter, Louise, at the time.[8]

William Scanlon was elected on December 3, 1869, and served until December 2, 1873. Louisiana-born. His parents were

Ireland-born, as were the parents of his 35-year-old Louisiana-born wife, Annie E.

James G. Browne was elected a second time on December 2, 1873, and served until February 15, 1876.

William Scanlon was elected a second time on February 15, 1876, then was re-elected on November 5, 1878, and served until November 2, 1880. Scanlon was 40 years old when he completed his term. In 1880, the Scanlons had three daughters and three sons at home, ranging from one-year-old to 12, together with 28-year-old sister-in-law Mary E. Duffy.[9]

Santiago A. Brito was elected on November 2, 1880; re-elected on November 7, 1882, on November 4, 1884, on November 2, 1886, and again on November 6, 1888, and served until November 4, 1890. Brito was initially part of the James B. Wells political machine, but broke with Wells, in 1882, over the Democratic Party's choice to run for governor. An *End of Watch* website tells us this about Brito: "Sheriff Santiago A. Brito was assassinated at approximately 2:30 a.m. on August 21, 1892. Sheriff Brito and two of his sons were returning from a *baile* (dance). The sheriff and his sons had been at the dance, located in eastern outskirts of Brownsville. As his open horse-drawn coach approached the Thirteenth Street crossing of the "Town Resaca," the assassin stepped behind the coach and fired two bullets into the back of Sheriff Brito's head."[10] Despite large rewards offered for information relative to the crime, his murderer was never caught. Rumors at the time reported Sheriff Brito's murder was the result of a long-standing grudge. Brito was first elected sheriff on November 2, 1880, and served until November 4, 1890, when he was defeated in a hotly-contested election by Matthew L. Browne. Brito was then appointed Brownsville City Marshal on December 1, 1890. When Sheriff Browne accidentally shot and killed himself on April 11, 1892, the Cameron County Commissioners' Court appointed Brito as sheriff to fill the unexpired term of Browne.

Steven G. Michaud and Hugh Aynesworth, in their book *If You love Me, You Will Do My Will*, posit some explanations for Brito's demise. The story revolves around Mifflin Kenedy's oldest son, Tom. The authors write,

> In 1888, in the course of running for candidate for sheriff of Brownsville, the 34-year-old Tom Kenedy began courting Maria Esparsa, whose estranged husband, Jose, was a Brownsville deputy. According to contemporary sources, Tom's opponent in the race, the incumbent Santiago Brito, inflamed the high-strung Jose Esparsa against Kenedy, hoping to provoke bloodshed. The ploy worked. On the night of April 15, 1888, Tom Kenedy's 35th birthday, Esparsa gunned him down from an ambush on a Brownsville pier. Frank Yturria, a Brownsville businessman, who traces his family back to the early days on the border, says the story he has always heard is that Deputy Esparza fled into Mexico, where two of Mifflin's step-grandsons, Frank and George Putegnat, found and killed him in a gunfight, and brought Esparsa's head back in a sack for the captain. As for Sheriff Brito, he was assassinated four years later. "To this day" explainsYturria, "no one knows exactly who ordered Brito's assasination. But the guy everyone knew did it was Mifflin Kenedy's *pistolero* [or gunsel], Herculano Berber."[11]

Before being elected sheriff, Brito was the owner of *El Democrata*, a Spanish-language newspaper in Brownsville, Texas. He was probably born in the Rio Grande Valley. Brito was married and was the father of 5 children.

Matthew Luke Browne was elected on November 4, 1890, and served until April 2, 1892. As noted above, Browne accidentally killed himself in a gun incident. He was the son of former sher-

iff James G. Browne and a rancher at Rancho del Atascosa. He left behind his wife, Mary Josephine G. Browne. At the time, he owned land in five former Valley land grants, elsewhere in the Valley, and also 200 acres in Live Oak County.[12]

Emilio C. Forto was elected on November 8, 1892; re-elected on November 6, 1894, on November 3, 1896, and on November 8, 1898, and served until November 6, 1900. Forto probably has more written about him than any other Cameron County sheriff. A native of Spain, he came to America at age 17. A young man of obviously above-average intelligence, he soon advanced into the worlds of both business and politics. He held the offices of county commissioner, county judge, justice of the peace, Brownsville city alderman, secretary of the Board of Education, county clerk, banker, farmer, etc. Initiating his political career with the Wells machine, he later broke with Wells to run as an Independent. He served right in the middle of the Bandit War period that created much chaos in the area.

Forto is mentioned in Benjamin Heber Johnson's book *Revolution in Texas*, which deals with the unsettled Border War– Bandit Era of 1911-1917. Here is a quote about Forto concerning the period when events heated up, in July of 1915:

> Even law enforcement officials suspected one another's motives during the first several months of raiding. After the clash at Aniceto Pizana's ranch, for example, Brownsville deputy sheriff Mike Manahan expressed his belief that Emilio Forto was involved with the rash of theft and raids. Manahan owed his appointment to the 1914 victory of the anti-machine Independent slate in Brownsvlle, whereas Forto was a fixture of Jim Wells' machine, having served as sheriff and judge of Cameron County in the 1880s and 1890s. "I have always thought that old man Forto... was giving this band aid, but have not secured much direct information to sustain

this belief," Manahan informed the Department of Justice. "It is significant enough, though, that one of his henchmen...gave the bandits a calf and a goat and otherwise rendered them assistance when they were camped in the vicinity...another henchman of Forto is known to have harbored these bandits." Moreover, Forto had supposedly misled the military authorities. According to Manahan, he hired an automobile and showed an army colonel around the area, convincing him "that there were no organized movements, that it was not uncommon in this country to see a Mexican with a 30/30[rifle] strapped to his saddle, and that whatever exploiting was being done was a matter for the State authorities to handle." It is impossible to know the truth in this matter when tempers were very short. In fact, some criticized Forto for siding with the heavy-handed rangers [*rinches*]. On 3/4/21, the day of his funeral, the paper headline read: "Will Suspend All Businesses for E. C. Forto's Funeral –Schools, Banks, County and Business Houses Will Close This Morning". The next day the *Sentinel* headlined "Largest Funeral in History of the City Marks the Burial of Judge E. C. Forto Friday." It spoke of the hundreds of automobiles and marchers who followed the funeral procession from the church to the cemetery.[13]

Celedonio Garza was elected on November 6, 1900; re-elected on November 4, 1902, on November 8, 1904, on November 6, 1906, and on November 3, 1908, and served until January 1, 1911. As Wells' powers started to diminish, the Democrats became fractionalized. Seeking an alternative to Forto, Mexican-American *políticos* settled on party regular Celedonio Garza to run for sheriff. He had previously served as county treasurer for 14 years.[14] This prosperous merchant also would receive the behind-the-scenes

support of James A. Browne, one of the founders of the Cameron County Blue Club, that is until 1908, when Browne broke with the club. After the infamous Brownsville Raid of 1906 occurred, Sheriff Garza and others tried to keep the accused Black soldiers at Fort Brown from leaving the Valley. With the intercession of Governor Lanham, the battalion departed Brownsville without incident, though tempers were at a fever pitch.

Carl T. Ryan was elected on November 8, 1910; re-elected on November 5, 1912; and served until January 1, 1915. Ryan was 30 years old in 1910, as was his wife, Mittie. Both were Texas-born, as was their one-year-old daughter. This year, he was employed as a constable. The Wells machine supported Ryan for two terms, then, fearing that he would lose control of the county government because Ryan had failed to curb the high incidence of crime in the rural areas, Wells selected W. T. Vann as his choice to run for sheriff. With the Mexican Revolution in full throttle, there was a steady reign of cattle and equipment thefts. Evan Anders tells us, in his *Boss Rule in South Texas*, that, in 1913,

> After consulting with the U. S. Consul in Matamoros, Cameron County Sheriff C.T. Ryan and County Judge E. H. Goodrich called on Governor Colquitt to dispatch the Texas National Guard to prevent any outburst of lawlessness from spilling across the border.[15]

Will T. Vann was elected on November 3, 1914; re-elected on November 7, 1916, on November 5, 1918, and on November 2, 1920, and served until January 1, 1923. Texas-born Vann was 39 when he first assumed office. Vann was the machine candidate who portrayed himself as the "champion of the downtrodden." In a very nasty campaign he painted his opponent, former customs inspector Fred Starck, as corrupt and of having ignored important crimes. Vann won over the Independent by a two-to-one margin. In his book *Revolution in Texas*, Benjamin H. Johnson writes:

> His (Vann's) rhetoric, the size of his victory, and the fraud that the machine employed to ensure it – James Wells sent the county judge into hiding for several weeks to avoid the appointment of Independent election judges –made Vann a hated figure for insurgent Anglo political factions.[16]

On August 3, 1915, Vann, some of his deputies, ten army soldiers, and a handful of Anglo citizens went to the ranch of Aniceto Pizaña to investigate reports, albeit spurious, that he was harboring bandits. What really ensued will never be made clear, as opposing sides told different stories. One soldier was killed. Pizaña fled and, with little choice for protection, joined a Texas-Mexican insurrection group, the *Sediciosas*. When the *Plan de San Diego* was uncovered, this inflamed Anglo passions. Vann claimed that a dying Mexican fighter from the Norias Raid confessed to the frightening aims of the plan, though this is highly unlikely. Vann tried to reduce ranger "instant justice," but to little avail in the years 1915 to 1916. In 1918, however, he arrested three rangers in an effort to "stop their campaign of arbitrary detention and arrest." This eventually led to the rangers being reined in. When state legislator J.T. Canales of Brownsville was threatened, upon exposing ranger actions against *Tejanos*, Vann recommended that he arm himself and that he would be in his right to kill his threatening assailants. This same year, a black employee of the Texas Sugar Company, six miles north of Brownsville, was killed by a night watchman named M. L. West. The black had been seen drinking from a "white only" water fountain in the sugar mill. He had then told others that his life was in jeopardy. West contended that he felt threatened upon encountering Ben Phillips in a pasture when the latter dismounted and reached into his blue jumper. It wasn't until the next day, when Sheriff Vann examined the area, that a small-caliber pistol was found. One might speculate that this was planted or salted evidence, as this would not have been unheard of in Texas at the time.[17]

Vann went on to serve as president of the Sheriffs Association of Texas 1921-1922. However, the fact that Vann was said to be the head of the Ku Klux Klan in the Valley, along with other reasons, likely led political boss James Wells to throw his support behind Sam Robertson in the 1922 campaign.

Sam A. Robertson was elected on November 7, 1922; re-elected on November 4, 1924; and served until January 1, 1927. If ever there was a "straight shooter," it was Sam Robertson. This engineer was responsible for laying out the 1904 railroad route from Robstown to the Valley and for helping to erect the major railroad bridge crossing the Arroyo Colorado at Harlingen. He constructed the major San Benito Canal, helped that town to develop, brought a major sugar mill to San Benito, and organized a railroad system – Sam Robertson's backdoor or Spiderweb railroad, which served Valley farms. Involved in infrastructure, he had performed distinguished service in France in World War I. He bravely and singularly confronted some Ku Klux Klansmen demonstrating in San Benito. He ran for sheriff because he was disgusted with the disgraceful operations of Sheriff Vann.[18]

W. T. "Will" Vann was elected a second time on November 2, 1926, and served until September 15, 1927, when he died. Sheriff Van had also served as Sheriff of Leon County [Texas] from 1903-1914.

Mrs. W. T. Vann was appointed to complete her husband's term on September 20, 1927, and served until January 1, 1929. She is the only lady to serve as sheriff in the history of Cameron County. Texas-born Pauline ("Pinkie") Vann was five years younger than her husband.[19]

William Frank Brown was elected on November 6, 1928 and re-elected on November 4, 1930. He served until January 1, 1935. A native of North Carolina, Brown was about 52 when he was elected. He and his wife, Minnie F., resided in Brownsville in 1930, but no children were evidenced in the census of this year.[20]

J. A. ("Art") Goolsby was elected on November 6, 1934 and re-elected on November 8, 1938. He served until January 1, 1941. Goolsby had come to San Benito with his wife, Cecile Williams Goolsby, before 1920. Here he was employed as a real estate salesman, but, by 1930, had become a power company salesman. With three children by then, he became sheriff at about age 42.[21]

Tom J. Morrison was elected on November 5, 1940 and was re-elected on November 3, 1942 and on November 7, 1944. He served until January 1, 1947. A native of Missouri, he had married his Texas-born wife, Hazel D., in 1925, and had been employed as a Ford salesman. He was about 43 when he assumed the position of sheriff.[22]

Boynton H. Fleming was elected on November 5, 1946, and re-elected on November 2, 1948, November 7, 1950, November 4, 1952, November 6, 1956, November 8, 1960, November 3, 1964, and November 5, 1968. He served until January 1, 1973, when he retired. Sheriff Fleming served a total of twenty-six years – the longest in the history of Cameron County, and he is one of the few sheriffs in Texas history who served over twenty-five years. He graduated from the FBI Academy, in July 1937, and was an FBI agent from 1942 to 1946. He died on October 18, 1977, in a San Benito hospital, at age seventy-two Boynton's parents had come to Texas from Alabama. They purchased farmland in the Santa Rosa area, but, by 1930, Boynton's mother, Flossie, had been widowed, leaving four teenage children. Boynton had married Lily S. from Montana, in 1928, and continued to work on the farm.[23]

Gustav "Gus" O. Krause was elected on November 7, 1972, and served until January 1, 1980. Krausse was born in Brownsville on July 7, 1918, and died there in May of 1987. His parents were George J. and Carrie Krausse. His father, of German birth, had come to the Valley with his parents from Germany before the turn of the 20th Century. His mother was Georgia-born. Gus was the youngest of four siblings. While his father had been a fruit salesman and a piano salesman in past days, he became a justice of

the peace by 1940. Gus at this time was loan company collector.[24] He and his brother George had been star Brownsville baseball players in their youth, and so were well known to the community. Gus would move into law enforcement work and become acting Brownsville police chief by 1948 and be named permanent police chief by May 1953.

Gus Krausse's terms in the sheriff's office were relatively quiet. A law suit involving him, Munoz v. Cameron County, became of interest. Appellants brought this suit, alleging that Sheriff Krausse had a statutory duty to timely execute the arrest warrant under Tex. Rev. Civ. Stat. Ann. art. 6873 (Vernon 1960); that he was within the course and scope of his employment with the county during the pertinent times; and that his negligent failure to arrest Robert G. Martinez proximately caused the death of Eloisa Martinez. Liability of Sheriff Krausse individually and the Cameron County is asserted as a result of Sheriff Krausse's actions. The plaintiffs lost their case, as the court ruled that there was no clear evidence of legislative intent in the matter.[25]

Marshall Rousseau was elected on November 4, 1980, and served until January 1, 1985. Marshall F. Rousseau had been a captain in the Harlingen Police Department and Deputy Sheriff at Port Isabel before being appointed Police Chief on 11/1/58. He then served in that capacity before resigning 1/15/70 to accept President Nixon's nomination of him to be a U. S. Marshall for the Southern District of Texas.[26]

Alex Perez was elected November 6, 1984 and re-elected on November 8, 1988. He served as sheriff until January 1, 1997. Perez was born on March 2, 1936, and, in the late 1980s, had been a lawman for sixteen years. He and his wife, Edna, live in Brownsville. They have two children, Mark Anthony and Michelle. In the early 1970s, Perez had been a route driver for the Butter Crust Bread Company. Then, on 1/1/72 he became owner of the Toddler Inn cafe on Central Avenue in Brownsville. Elected first as a justice of the peace, he later was elected as sheriff and

also served on the State Jail Commission.[27] In 1988, a spring-break student disappeared across the border. The sheriff's department was called upon to investigate. The bodies of a dozen murdered people were uncovered in a mass grave on a ranch outside of Matamoros. The murders were attributed to a satanic cult.[28] In 1994, some Brownsville residents chastised Perez for not meeting with them in a timely manner. Perez noted that the department was thinly manned, with only four deputies, though he had requested more from the county commissioners. In October 1996, Perez's name came up when a DEA agent testifying in Houston stated that drug lord García Abrego claimed that he had met twice with Perez. Perez denied such a claim and noted that Abrego may have wanted to get back at him because the department had seized sixteen new cars from a storage warehouse.[29]

Omar Lucio took office on January 1, 1997, and served until January 1, 2001. A native of San Benito, he had worked for the Harlingen Police Department and had strong credentials in law enforcement. He was a FBI Academy Graduate, a double major in sociology and criminal justice with a degree from Pan American University, and served as police chief in the City of Mercedes. Lucio would be elected again and start serving on 1 January 2005. He quickly made changes in personnel. Lucio would handily win re-elections in 2008 and 2012.[30]

Conrado M. Cantu would serve from 1 January 2001 until 1 January 2005. In October 2000, Cantu, while campaigning, claimed that he had 32 years of law enforcement experience. He later sued the *Brownsville Herald* and two of its employees for a news article he considered defamatory. In June 2005 he lost his case. This same month, he was indicted on federal charges relating to drug trafficking. Cantu was allegedly taking money from drug traffickers in exchange for protection. Cantu, age 49, remained under federal custody. His co-defendants were his 50-year-old former captain, Rumaldo Rodriguez, then a Pct. 1 deputy constable; former jail commissary contract-holder Geronimo "Jerry" Garcia Jr., 33; plumber Reynaldo Uribe, age 41; and restaurant

owner Hector Solis, age 40. As a newspaper put it: "Cantu's rise to the county's top law enforcement post was meteoric by most standards. He had limited experience and less education than the sheriff he unseated in 2000." Cantu is serving a 24-year sentence after pleading guilty in 2005.[31]

The character, objectivity, and work performance of Cameron County sheriffs have ranged extremely over the decades. It is obvious that the county's location in the history of Texas, and, indeed, the Nation had a major role to play. Whether it was Indian depredations, Civil War dislocations, Reconstruction, Border conflicts (especially those related to Juan Cortina), Mexican Revolution spillover, real or imagined World War I threats from within Mexico, major smuggling during the Prohibition Era, simply the machinations of strong political bosses, a border porous to illegal entry, and currently the drug wars south of the river, Cameron County and its voters have seen it all. These alone have presented a major challenge to any office holder, let alone incompetent or unqualified ones. Past experience has shown that voters of the county will need to be knowledgeable and selective in their future choices for county sheriff.

Endnotes

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The Origin of the Belden Trail

by

Anthony Knopp

At a ceremony behind Skinner Elementary School, on March 21, 2013, City of Brownsville officials inaugurated construction of the Belden Trail. The nearly mile-long, ten-feet-wide concrete path from Skinner to the Praxides Orive Jr. (Sunrise) Park would provide residents with enhanced hike-and-bike opportunities in West Brownsville. More recreational amenities designed to improve residents' health has been a major goal of the current City administration, particularly of Commissioner Rose Gowen, a medical doctor. As chairwoman of the Brownsville Community Improvement Corporation (BCIC), Dr. Gowen spearheaded the effort to establish the trail with the commitment of $350,000 in BCIC funds. Additional funding of $151,274 was provided by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission. The Community Development Corporation of Brownsville, in its first direct project with the City, contracted for the actual construction.[1]

Dr. Gowen had invited me to speak at the inaugural ceremony for the trail and to provide an historical perspective. The historical perspective involved both the name and the location of the trail. Samuel A. Belden is most remembered for his role in the establishing of Brownsville in partnership with "the Founder," Charles Stillman. Belden was a member of an influential family in Matamoros years before the U.S.-Mexico War and the creation of Brownsville. His brother, Frederick Belden, had purchased *La Encantada*, part of a Spanish land grant north of the Rio Grande, in 1838. Since Charles Stillman had been a leading merchant in Matamoros for twenty years prior to the war, there can be no doubt that he was well-acquainted with the Belden family, including Samuel, while he resided in Matamoros.[2]

With financial support from New Orleans, Samuel Belden had established a successful commercial house in Matamoros, and thus

was a potential source of capital when Charles Stillman seized the opportunity to acquire property north of the Rio Grande and of Matamoros at the conclusion of the U.S.-Mexico War in 1848. Acting on information as to the permanent location for Fort Brown provided by "silent" partner Major William Chapman, the fort quartermaster, Stillman and Belden bought up claims to 4676 acres adjacent to the new fort site. Their Brownsville Town Company then divided the acreage into lots for sale, a very profitable enterprise in the new boomtown. The legitimacy of the Stillman/Belden land acquisition was disputed, resulting in a legal case that reached all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.[3]

Samuel Belden continued to engage in partnerships with Charles Stillman. Stillman and Belden sought a state railroad patent to preclude competition with Stillman's steamboat transportation monopoly on the Rio Grande. The partners were also leaders of the Red political faction of wealthy merchants which came to dominate the local government. In 1856, however, an explosion and fire in the Brownsville business district destroyed structures belonging to the partners. Stillman had the wealth to recover from his losses, "but his partner Samuel Belden lost his fortune and ended his days as a manager-clerk for Stillman."[4]

The recognition of Samuel A. Belden in the new hike-and-bike trail was only partly due to his partnership with Stillman in the founding of Brownsville. The path of the trail would follow what had once been Belden Street in West Brownsville. The old street names have long been changed to numbers, but Belden Street was sacrificed at the beginning of the twentieth century to the cause of a railroad route into Brownsville from the north.[5] And, by strange coincidence, this railroad would result from a new, little-known, Stillman/Belden partnership.

Stagnation was the story of Brownsville in the late nineteenth century, with little growth in either the economy or the population. The Rio Grande Valley had been by-passed when railroads linking the U.S. and Mexico at the border were constructed; Laredo

and El Paso enjoyed the ensuing economic growth. The beginning of the twentieth century saw new opportunities for economic development in Brownsville and the entire Rio Grande Valley, based on the combination of two critical factors: large-scale irrigation and a railroad route to the north. Irrigation enabled the production of fruits and vegetables on land previously used only for grazing cattle, while the railroad provided the means to transport the produce to commercial markets. These developments would transform the economy of the Rio Grande Valley and bring an influx of land-buying Midwesterners hoping to profit from the new opportunity.

The key was the railroad. Efforts at railroad construction dated from the Civil War, when Union forces had built a short line of a few miles to transport supplies from the Brazos de Santiago port on the Gulf of Mexico toward Brownsville. A railroad from Brazos de Santiago (and Point Isabel) to Brownsville was actually completed by the Rio Grande Railroad Company in 1871 and operated successfully well into the twentieth century.[6]

Meanwhile, the Stillman family had turned its attention and considerable wealth to the railroad business. Upon the death of his father, Charles, in 1871, eldest son James Stillman assumed control of the family financial and mercantile empire, then expanding to take control of the National City Bank of New York City. The Stillman investments were "the most powerful force in the development of the Rio Grande Valley."[7] Together with the other members of the "Big Four" of railroad empires –W.H. Harriman, Jacob Henry Schiff, and William Rockefeller –Stillman came to control most of the railroads in Texas.[8]

After an era of civil war and political chaos in Mexico, General Porfirio Diaz seized power and established a dictatorship that would endure until the Revolution of 1910. Eager for economic development, President Diaz enthusiastically supported railroad construction. James Stillman had supported Diaz's successful revolution in 1876, so it came as no surprise that Stillman, in

1880, received the Mexican government concession to build the railroad from Matamoros to Monterrey. Stillman's partners in this venture included the on-site agent for the Stillman interests in Brownsville, Thomas Carson, who was also Brownsville's mayor, and . . . James Belden.[9] Once again, a Stillman/Belden partnership seemed destined to impact the economic development on the Rio Grande border. A portion of the tracks, from Matamoros along the border to San Miguel, was completed no later than 1891, but the remainder of the connection to Monterrey was not completed until 1905.[10] James Belden, in this case, shared large investments with James Stillman, but his relationship to Samuel A. Belden is unclear, although he was certainly a member of the same family.

The railroad whose right-of-way would provide the route for the Belden Trail arrived in Brownsville in 1904. The St. Louis, Brownsville, and Mexico Railroad was largely the creation of Uriah Lott, who planned the route from Robstown and arranged financing. The City of Brownsville provided a one-hundred-year lease for use of the Belden Street right-of-way.[11] From what is now Skinner Elementary School the route swung southeast, turning north upon reaching Thirteenth Street and terminating at a depot below Levee Street.

The St. Louis, Brownsville, and Mexico Railroad survived less than a decade, falling into bankruptcy by 1913. After ten years of control by the Gulf Coast Lines, the railroad was absorbed into the Missouri Pacific system. In yet another twist of fate, the MoPac was one of the numerous railroads owned by the consortium headed by . . . James Stillman.[12] Thus the Brownsville/Stillman historical relationship continues with the Belden Trail.

The University of Texas at Brownsville

Endnotes

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Mujeres y Violencia en la Frontera "Olvidada"

by

Guadalupe Correa-Cabrera

La "Frontera Chica" tamaulipeca es una región formada por cinco municipios pequeños (Díaz Ordaz, Camargo, Miguel Alemán, Mier y Guerrero) que se mantuvo prácticamente desconocida por el público en general, y ha sido poco estudiada por académicos y analistas hasta hace relativamente muy poco, cuando la violencia en esta región mexicana alcanzó niveles nunca antes vistos. La violencia desmedida en Tamaulipas –y en especial en la denominada Frontera Chica –se deriva principalmente del conflicto entre dos violentos grupos del crimen organizado: el Cártel del Golfo (CDG) y los Zetas, así como de la incursión de las fuerzas armadas en el combate a estas organizaciones criminales. En este contexto, los municipios que forman la Frontera Chica se convierten en foco de atención por el número de víctimas y el éxodo de personas que huyen de esa región, escapando de la violencia extrema que afecta sobre todo a los grupos más vulnerables.

Entre los grupos más vulnerables en una situación como la que vive México en la actualidad se encuentran las mujeres, cuyo papel resulta fundamental en la promoción de seguridad, justicia, y equidad. Siendo la Frontera Chica una de las regiones más peligrosas y violentas del país, sería interesante conocer el papel que han desempeñado las mujeres, tanto en la arena política como en el activismo social, y principalmente en la búsqueda de soluciones a los problemas más graves que enfrenta la región, incluyendo la violación a derechos humanos por parte de las fuerzas federales en su lucha contra el crimen organizado. El presente trabajo, por consiguiente, analiza el papel de las mujeres políticas y activistas en una región que fue olvidada por varias décadas y que ahora registra numerosos asesinatos vinculados al narcotráfico, así como el éxodo masivo de habitantes de algunos poblados de la región hacia el extranjero o a distintas zonas de México.

Con el objeto de ubicar el presente análisis en una parte de la frontera México-Estados Unidos que ha estado relativamente olvidada por analistas, académicos, y medios de comunicación, la primera parte de este artículo muestra una radiografía de la Frontera Chica, explicando las particularidades de cada uno de los municipios que la conforman, y describiendo las características generales de esta región fronteriza.[1] Posteriormente, se hace un recuento de la situación actual en la zona, haciendo especial énfasis en la violencia ocasionada por el crimen organizado. Finalmente, se analiza el papel de las mujeres de la Frontera Chica en la búsqueda de soluciones a los problemas más importantes que experimenta la región. Por medio de observación participante y entrevistas informales se realiza una evaluación de las diferentes formas de activismo y participación política de las mujeres en esta región fronteriza en tiempos extremadamente violentos. Los resultados de la investigación muestran una baja participación de las mujeres activistas en la Frontera Chica, pero una creciente actividad política de las mismas, derivada de avances institucionales en todo el país y de una creciente –aunque "no suficiente" –equidad de género.

UNA RADIOGRAFÍA DE LA FRONTERA CHICA TAMAULIPECA

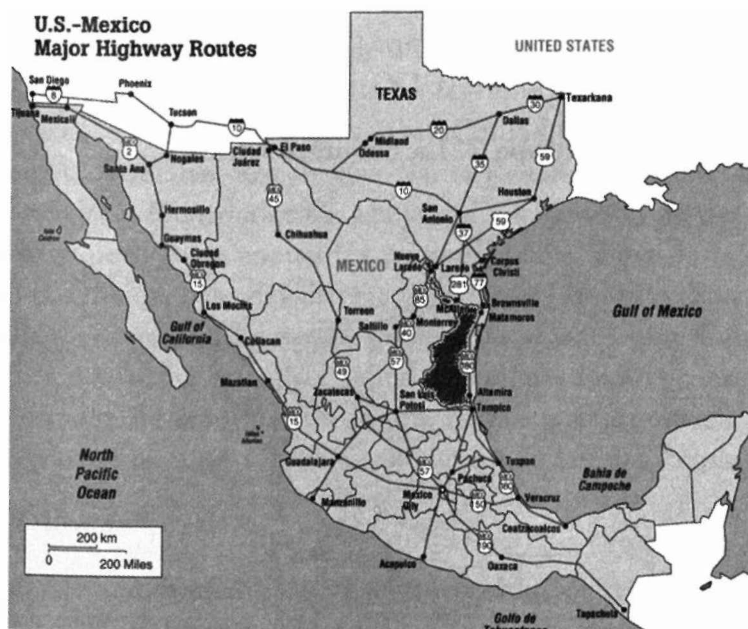
Tamaulipas: Ubicación estratégica

La Frontera Chica se encuentra ubicada en el estado de Tamaulipas, el cual mantiene una posición geográfica estratégica "como punto de entrada y salida de drogas hacia los Estados Unidos". Al mismo tiempo, parece ser una ruta clave para el tráfico de armas hacia el sur del continente americano, y el tráfico de personas hacia los Estados Unidos. Lo anterior se explica debido a que el estado tiene una larga frontera con el vecino país del norte, cuenta con una extensa costa oceánica y, frente a otros estados fronterizos y costeros como Baja California y Sonora, sus ciudades de frontera (Nuevo Laredo, Nueva Ciudad Guerrero, Ciudad Mier, Ciudad Miguel Alemán, Ciudad Camargo, Ciudad de Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, Reynosa, Río Bravo y Matamoros) son los destinos

más cercanos –y, por tanto, menos riesgosos –para los traficantes que operan en los puertos de Quintana Roo, Yucatán, el Golfo de México, así como los puertos más importantes del Pacífico entre Puerto Madero y San Blas (Guerrero, 2010: párr. 1). Además, Tamaulipas es el estado mexicano con más cruces internacionales; cuenta con 17 a lo largo de su frontera con Texas (desde Nuevo Laredo hasta Matamoros).

Por su ubicación, sus vías de comunicación, red carretera, así como por la forma y tamaño de su frontera, el estado de Tamaulipas ha sido, desde hace varias décadas, una zona de tráfico de drogas, armas y personas (ver Mapa 1). Dicho estado se desarrolla a la par de la agricultura y la maquila, pero al mismo tiempo, crece a la sombra del narcotráfico. La Frontera Chica es ejemplo de esta dinámica. Tamaulipas tiene costa y tiene frontera, y es, por lo tanto, un estado idóneo para el tráfico de casi todo, incluyendo a los seres humanos.

Mapa 1.
Tamaulipas: Ubicación estratégica

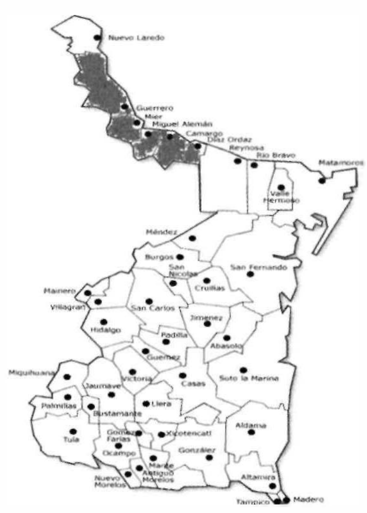


Fuente: Contralora de Cuentas Públicas de Texas, 2001.

Los municipios de la Frontera Chica

La Frontera Chica tamaulipeca –denominada, por muchos, la "Ribereña" –es la región que comprende los municipios más pequeños y menos conocidos de la frontera norte de México. Dichos municipios se localizan entre las ciudades de Reynosa y Nuevo Laredo y colindan con el estado americano de Texas. Díaz Ordaz, Camargo, Miguel Alemán, Mier, y Guerrero son los cinco municipios que conforman la Frontera Chica, y se encuentran comunicados a través de la carretera "Ribereña" que parte desde el centro de Reynosa hasta la entrada a Nuevo Laredo. Esta región fronteriza cuenta con pocos habitantes; si se suman los cinco municipios se tiene una población total de aproximadamente 67,000 personas (INEGI, 2010). La también denominada zona Ribereña se ha convertido recientemente en sinónimo de "guerra". Antes de profundizar en los aspectos particulares del reciente período de inseguridad y violencia en la región, así como en el papel de las mujeres políticas y activistas de la Frontera Chica, es necesario un recuento geoeconómico de la zona con el objeto de caracterizar el papel y el valor estratégico que esos territorios mantienen en un espacio donde luchan dos grupos importantes del crimen organizado: el Cartel del Golfo (CDG) y los Zetas.

Mapa 2. La Frontera Chica



Díaz Ordaz

Este municipio colinda al este con Reynosa y al oeste con Camargo; limita al Norte con Texas y al Sur con el estado de Nuevo León. Según el último Censo de Población y Vivienda (INEGI, 2010), Díaz Ordaz tiene una población de 15,775 habitantes. Su extensión territorial es de 394.86 km², que representa el 0.33 por ciento del total estatal. La cabecera municipal se encuentra en la Ciudad de Gustavo Díaz Ordaz y está integrada por 48 localidades, entre las que destacan: Congregación, Valadeces, Venecia, y Villarreales. Este municipio fronterizo se comunica con el vecino país del norte a través de "ferry" o "chalan". Díaz Ordaz posee suelo fértil para la agricultura. Aquí, la tenencia de la tierra es mayormente ejidal, y su uso es básicamente agrícola y ganadero.[2]

Camargo

Este municipio fronterizo posee una extensión territorial de 937.15 km², que representa el 1.05 por ciento del total de la entidad, y su población es de 14,933 habitantes (INEGI, 2010). Camargo colinda al norte con Texas, al sur con el estado mexicano de Nuevo León, al este con el municipio de Miguel Alemán y al oeste con el de Díaz Ordaz. El municipio está integrado por 105 localidades, de las cuales las más importantes son: Ciudad Camargo (cabecera municipal), Comales, Rancherías, Santa Rosalía, Nuevo Caudillo, San Francisco, Guardados de Abajo, y El Azúcar. El 50 por ciento de su superficie se encuentra cubierta por el agua de la presa Marte R. Gómez, base del sistema de riego del Bajo Río San Juan (distrito de riego 25). La mayor parte de la población de Camargo se dedica a la agricultura y la ganadería; el municipio cuenta también con algo de maquila. En lo que respecta a la tenencia de la tierra, predominan los regímenes de propiedad ejidal y comunal.[3]

Miguel Alemán

Miguel Alemán, Tamaulipas, tiene una población de aproximadamente 27,000 habitantes (INEGI, 2010), y posee una extensión territorial de 660.49 km², que representa el 0.62 por ciento del total

estatal. El municipio colinda al norte con Estados Unidos, al sur con Nuevo León, al este con Camargo, y al oeste con el municipio de Mier y el estado de Nuevo León. Tiene 47 localidades, entre las que se encuentran: Miguel Alemán (cabecera municipal), Los Guerra, Arcabuz, El Nogalito, Los Treviño, El Ranchito, y Los Ángeles. Los principales recursos hidrológicos de Miguel Alemán son el Río Bravo y la Presa Marte R. Gómez –la cual tiene una capacidad de almacenamiento de 2,406 millones de metros cúbicos.[4]

Mier

El municipio de Mier, Tamaulipas cuenta con una superficie de 888.35 km^2 –que representa el 1.3 por ciento del total del estado –y posee una población de 4,762 habitantes (INEGI, 2010). Colinda al norte con el municipio de Guerrero, al sur y oeste con el estado de Nuevo León (incluyendo los municipios de Parás, Agualeguas, General Treviño, y los Aldamas) y al este con Miguel Alemán y el estado americano de Texas. El Municipio está integrado por 43 localidades, entre las que destacan: Ciudad Mier (cabecera municipal), La Barranca, La Loma, y La Reforma. Las principales actividades económicas de Mier son la agricultura, ganadería, y pesca deportiva. El municipio cuenta con la presa derivadora "Las Blancas", en la cual se realizan grandes torneos de pesca, pues aloja a una gran variedad de especies como la lobina negra o robalo, carpa, catán, agujeta, y mojarra.

El 5 de diciembre de 2007, Ciudad Mier fue declarada "Pueblo Mágico". Dicho título fue otorgado por la Secretaría de Turismo de México, pero debido a problemas de inseguridad, le fue retirado en 2010. En noviembre de 2010, una gran parte de la población abandonó Ciudad Mier para refugiarse en el municipio de Miguel Alemán; lo anterior, debido a la violencia extrema generada por los enfrentamientos entre el CDG y los Zetas (Casey y De Córdoba, 2010). En 2011, un número importante de familias que estaban albergadas en Miguel Alemán iniciaron su regreso. Actualmente existe una importante presencia militar en esta ciudad derivada de los hechos antes mencionados y de la construcción de una base

militar a escasos kilómetros de la localidad y cerca de la línea fronteriza.[5]

Guerrero

Este municipio fronterizo colinda al norte con Nuevo Laredo, al sur con Mier, y al oeste con los municipios de Parás y Anáhuac que pertenecen al estado de Nuevo León. Además, este es el único municipio de la frontera norte de México que limita con tres condados del estado de Texas en su lado este (Webb, Zapata y Starr). Su extensión territorial es de 2,406.85 km², y tiene una población de aproximadamente 4,500 habitantes (INEGI, 2010). Guerrero se integra por 70 localidades, siendo las más importantes: Nueva Ciudad Guerrero (cabecera municipal), el ejido San Ignacio, La Lajilla, San Rafael de las Tortillas, El Águila, Santa Teresa, Golondrinas, Las Adjuntas, y San Miguel.

Guerrero se ubica sobre la cuenca del Río Bravo –que cruza al municipio de este a oeste –y cuenta con el Río Salado, localizado en la parte central. Además, un 50 por ciento del territorio del municipio se encuentra cubierto por la Presa Falcón. Cabe mencionar que aquí se construyó el Puente Internacional Falcón,[6] que es el único paso de México a Estados Unidos libre de cuota.[7] Una gran extensión de aguas en la presa Falcón tiene robalos verdes o lobinas. La economía municipal se basa principalmente en la pesca, ganadería y agricultura. En lo que respecta a la tenencia de la tierra, la mayor parte de la superficie del municipio es propiedad privada. El llamado turismo cinegético –o la cacería –ha sido también una de las actividades turísticas más importantes en el municipio.[8]

Características generales de la Frontera Chica

En resumen, la Frontera Chica es básicamente una zona agrícola, ganadera, y dedicada al comercio local. El turismo cinegético y la pesca son también actividades económicas importantes en esta región del norte de México. Entonces, la también llamada "Ribereña" es una zona de ingreso medio/medio-bajo que cuenta,

en su mayoría, con ganaderos y agricultores. Asimismo, su cercanía con Estados Unidos y los cuatro puentes internacionales que operan en la región representan para sus habitantes oportunidades comerciales interesantes. No obstante lo anterior, la Frontera Chica no posee la misma importancia a nivel industrial de otras ciudades fronterizas tamaulipecas como Nuevo Laredo, Reynosa, y Matamoros, las cuales fueron cuna del proyecto maquilador en el este de la frontera México-Estados Unidos y son además los principales centros de operación de las organizaciones dedicadas al tráfico de drogas en el estado de Tamaulipas.

El rezago de la Ribereña con respecto a las tres principales ciudades fronterizas tamaulipecas tiene su origen en el surgimiento de la maquila. Durante la primera mitad del siglo pasado existía una mayor homogeneidad en lo que se refiere al desarrollo de los municipios fronterizos tamaulipecos. Lo anterior se explica por el auge algodonero que benefició a gran parte de la región, desde Matamoros hasta Miguel Alemán. Dicho auge dura hasta finales de los cincuenta, principios de los sesenta, y se vincula con la construcción de la Presa Falcón. Así, en la primera mitad del siglo veinte, la agricultura se volvió la actividad más importante en el lado este de la frontera México-Estados Unidos. El auge algodonero representó también beneficios para los trabajadores de la región debido a la fortaleza que mantuvo el sindicato jornalero de Matamoros, el cual logró homogeneizar los salarios desde esta ciudad hasta Miguel Alemán.[9] Pero posteriormente, como señala la Dra. Cirila Quintero, directora regional del Colegio de la Frontera Norte (COLEF)-zona noreste, "la suerte de la Frontera Chica cambia debido a la adopción del modelo maquilador en esta región del país". En este nuevo contexto, "los municipios de la Ribereña quedan fuera del nuevo esquema de desarrollo pues se mantienen como regiones agrícolas, mientras que las tres grandes ciudades de Nuevo Laredo, Reynosa, y Matamoros se incorporan a un modelo de crecimiento económico diferente".[10]

Aún cuando la Frontera Chica no desarrolla un sector industrial importante, la calidad de vida de los habitantes de la zona se man-

tiene a niveles aceptables, lo que se refleja en un ingreso per cápita estable posterior al periodo del auge algodonero. En este contexto, dicha región se vuelve estratégica para el trasiego de drogas hacia los Estados Unidos. Las condiciones geográficas favorecen la actividad de los traficantes de drogas en la región Ribereña, quienes aprovechan las circunstancias del terreno y del Río Bravo. Por aquí se comienzan a cruzar cantidades importantes de droga, y varias casas en diversos poblados y rancherías de la zona (como Valadeces, San Francisco, etc.) se utilizan para almacenar dicha mercancía de consumo ilegal. Esta actividad beneficia a la Ribereña en cierto modo y llega un momento en el cual gran parte de los habitantes de la región se encuentran vinculados con el trasiego de drogas hacia el vecino país del norte. Esto provoca que en una época (entre 1980 y el año 2000) la moneda de circulación fuera el dólar estadounidense. Además, en este periodo, el valor de los productos era más caro en relación con otros municipios tamaulipecos y había mucho circulante. Lo anterior inhibió la diversificación de la economía en la Frontera Chica y pareciera que la mano de obra "se acostumbró al dinero fácil" en lugar de buscar empleo formal. Como señalan algunos: "lo más fácil era cruzar un morral con droga por el río".[11]

Así se explican los orígenes del tráfico de drogas en la Frontera Chica. Los pobladores de la región aprovecharon las circunstancias dadas por terreno y el río –incluyendo las partes bajas del mismo y las islas que se forman y que facilitan el traslado de droga –y por varios años se dedicaron a esta actividad con gran naturalidad y sin llamar la atención por ser pueblos muy pequeños. En los años subsecuentes, llegaban los camiones desde el sur de México con droga a las plazas de la Frontera Chica; y un gran número de pobladores se surtía con mercancía ilegal y la pasaban al otro lado del Río Bravo. Así, los traficantes de la Ribereña trabajaron de manera independiente hasta la década de los noventa cuando el Cartel del Golfo –organización que nace en Matamoros y que domina por varias décadas el negocio del narcotráfico en Tamaulipas –reestructura sus operaciones y empieza a imponer las condicio-

nes de tráfico de drogas en la Frontera Chica. Cambian entonces las reglas del juego y surge la figura de "jefe de plaza" con el objeto de mantener el control del negocio en distintas partes de la frontera y del estado en general desde la ciudad de Matamoros, cuna y plaza principal del CDG.

LA FRONTERA CHICA: UNA REGIÓN VIOLENTA

La violencia en Tamaulipas

El CDG mantuvo el monopolio del tráfico de drogas en la región tamaulipeca por varias décadas. Hacia finales del siglo veinte, el CDG introduce a los Zetas como su brazo armado para asegurar su monopolio en Tamaulipas. El grupo de los Zetas se formó a partir de militares desertores que pertenecieron a grupos de élite del ejército mexicano,[12] y fueron entrenados en el manejo de armamento altamente especializado y labores de contrainsurgencia por asesores extranjeros.[13] Eventualmente, los Zetas dejan de ser el brazo armado del CDG y comienzan a operar de manera independiente. Finalmente, a principios de 2010, se da un rompimiento entre las dos organizaciones que desemboca en una violenta batalla, la cual afecta de forma contundente a la sociedad, la economía y la situación en general del estado, y muy especialmente a la Frontera Chica.

El mayor incremento en la violencia en Tamaulipas se registra a partir de principios de 2010 (25 de enero) con la ruptura definitiva entre las dos organizaciones delictivas. A partir de este momento, el estado de Tamaulipas fue sacudido por una ola de violencia desmedida que costó la vida a más de mil personas en un solo año (1,209 en 2010, según datos oficiales; ver Cuadro 1 y Gráfica 1), así como al candidato del PRI a la gubernatura, Rodolfo Torre Cantú. También destaca el éxodo de más de 300 personas que huyen de Ciudad Mier, desplazadas por la violencia, y que se refugian en un albergue improvisado en la ciudad vecina de Miguel Alemán. Dos ejemplos más de la situación de "terror" que impera en el estado son: el asesinato de 72 migrantes en el municipio de San Fernando en agosto de 2010, y el hallazgo de cerca de 200

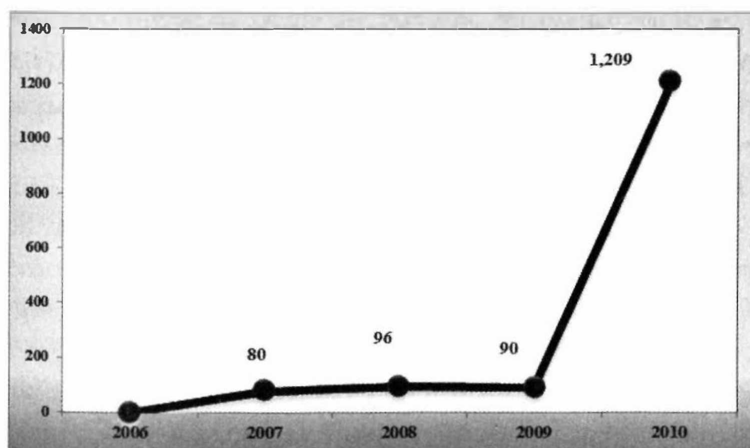
cuerpos enterrados en fosas ("narcofosas") en la misma región en abril de 2011.

Cuadro 1.
Homicidios presuntamente relacionados con el crimen organizado (2006-2010)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
Tamaulipas	0	80	96	90	1,209	1,475
Mexico (total)	62	2,826	6,837	9,614	15,273	34,612

Fuente: Gobierno Federal. Oficina de la Presidencia.
Las cifras para 2006 corresponden únicamente al mes de diciembre.

Gráfica 1.
Homicidios presuntamente relacionados con el crimen organizado (2006-2010)



Fuente: Gobierno Federal. Oficina de la Presidencia.

Aunado a estos acontecimientos sin precedente en la historia reciente de nuestro país, observamos un cada vez mayor número de eventos extremadamente violentos en Tamaulipas, entre los que podemos mencionar: secuestro de camiones de pasajeros en las carreteras del estado, ataques a cuarteles militares, "narco-bloqueos", coches-bomba, granadas arrojadas contra oficinas de gobierno

en diversos municipios, y la fuga de cientos de reos de penales en distintos municipios del estado. Destacan también otros asesinatos políticos, como el del alcalde del municipio de Hidalgo, y el candidato a la alcaldía de Valle Hermoso.

Estos elevados niveles de violencia en Tamaulipas se dan en un contexto de corrupción de funcionarios gubernamentales a todos los niveles; extorsiones a negocios de todo tipo; el surgimiento de un nuevo mercado de estupefacientes en México en el cual se ofrecen todo tipo de drogas a precios más accesibles para los consumidores nacionales; y la utilización de prácticas brutales para generar terror entre miembros de grupos contrarios y de las agencias gubernamentales de seguridad (Nava, 2011). En Tamaulipas todas las decisiones para llevar una vida normal giran alrededor de la violencia. Y el fenómeno de la violencia en este estado fronterizo es particularmente evidente en la Frontera Chica.

La "guerra" por la Frontera Chica

La violencia en la Frontera Chica tamaulipeca se encuentra relacionada, inicialmente, con la transformación del crimen organizado en el estado y toma su mayor expresión a partir de comienzos de 2010 con la ruptura definitiva entre el CDG y los Zetas. A partir de la década de los sesenta, se generaliza el narcotráfico en la Frontera Chica, pero se mantiene la estabilidad y la convivencia pacífica entre los habitantes de la zona. Fue hasta la segunda mitad de los noventa cuando se transforma el crimen organizado en Tamaulipas y el CDG toma el control del trasiego de drogas a través de toda la frontera que tiene este estado con Texas. Así, como señala un habitante de la Ribereña, desde finales del siglo pasado "se pierde el esquema del narco tradicional, del narco amistoso que participaba en política, de aquel que convivía de manera pacífica con el pueblo." Surge entonces la figura de "jefe de plaza" y el CDG, con ayuda de los Zetas, consolidan su poder en toda la región.

Pero la violencia en esta región fronteriza se vuelve extrema hasta hace relativamente muy poco, con la separación –a comienzos de

2010 –entre el CDG y su antes brazo armado, los Zetas, quienes inician una lucha encarnizada por el control de las plazas en una zona estratégica. Los municipios de Díaz Ordaz, Camargo, Miguel Alemán, y Guerrero poseen cruces internacionales; esto representa un incentivo irresistible para dominar la región y controlar una zona de tráfico porosa y poco conocida. Los periodos de extrema violencia que experimenta la Frontera Chica en 2010 y 2011 (incluyendo el éxodo masivo de habitantes –una parte temporal y otra permanente –de Ciudad Mier a la ciudad contigua de Miguel Alemán),[14] son una prueba de la importancia que esta región –relativamente desconocida y que fuera alguna vez pacífica –representa para las organizaciones criminales.

Mientras que la porosa Frontera Chica representa un territorio estratégico para el trasiego de drogas, existe un factor adicional que debe considerarse al examinar esta región en particular. El conflicto entre el cartel del Golfo y los Zetas parecería requerir del establecimiento de zonas de contención (*buffer zones*) o, mejor dicho, áreas donde puede darse el conflicto sin limitaciones, donde la lucha armada se desarrolle libremente sin afectar a ciudades más importantes como Reynosa, Matamoros, o Nuevo Laredo, que constituyen centros neurálgicos de operaciones y de flujo de efectivo para estos grupos criminales. La Frontera Chica hoy no solo sirve como barrera física, campo de batalla o *buffer zone*, también representa, como dice José Nava, un militar retirado estadounidense que vive en Matamoros, "un agujero negro en lo que se refiere a las comunicaciones, donde nada pasa, y si pasa, se reduce a meras conjeturas y exageraciones por parte de la opinión pública." Para los habitantes de la Ribereña, según Nava, "esta región en particular representa una tierra peligrosa, una tierra de nadie, donde el Estado deja de existir, y donde la 'ley del más fuerte', en este caso de los grupos del crimen organizado, se manifiesta de manera contundente."[15]

Así empieza la "guerra" por la Frontera Chica. El CDG se repliega a Reynosa y domina Matamoros; los Zetas toman el control de Nuevo Laredo. En sus respectivas plazas, las dos organizaciones

criminales se fortalecen y de ahí salen a tratar de conquistarse. La Ribereña es el punto de encuentro. Tanto para el CDG como para los Zetas parece muy importante ganar la Frontera Chica, pues, cuando empieza la guerra, se pensaba que quien tomara el control de esta región controlaría toda la frontera tamaulipeca. Sin embargo, esto no ha resultado ser cierto. A la fecha, el CDG mantiene el control territorial de casi toda la Frontera Chica (con excepción del municipio de Guerrero) y no ha podido llegar a Nuevo Laredo; se ha tenido que frenar en Mier. La Frontera Chica continúa siendo hoy un campo de batalla en el cual se enfrentan dos peligrosas bandas del crimen organizado.[16] En este contexto de extrema violencia, los grupos más vulnerables de la sociedad –que incluyen a las mujeres y a los infantes –han resultado especialmente afectados.

ACTIVISMO Y PARTICIPACIÓN POLÍTICA DE LAS MUJERES EN LA FRONTERA CHICA

Dada la vulnerabilidad e importancia de las mujeres en un área de la frontera México-Estados Unidos que ha sido relativamente "olvidada" y que ha sufrido en tiempos recientes los efectos de la violencia extrema por parte del crimen organizado, se vuelve particularmente relevante conocer su papel dentro de la política local y como activistas. Lo anterior, con objeto de atender adecuadamente la problemática que las mujeres de esta región enfrentan como grupo. Como se mencionó anteriormente, la Frontera Chica ha sido olvidada y se ha retrasado relativamente en comparación con otros municipios del norte de México, en lo que se refiere al desarrollo industrial y político. Al mismo tiempo, encontramos en esta zona un cierto rezago en la participación de las mujeres en distintas áreas. En tiempos recientes, las mujeres mexicanas han tenido avances importantes en la política y el activismo a nivel nacional.[17] Sin embargo, este grupo ha enfrentado obstáculos visibles que se acentúan en casos como el de la Frontera Chica. Aquí, la participación política y movilización social de las mujeres son bastante limitadas.

Participación política de las mujeres en la Ribereña

En el presente contexto surgen dos preguntas fundamentales: ¿Hay representación visible de mujeres en la política de los municipios de la Frontera Chica? ¿Qué espacios en política suelen ocupar las mujeres de la Ribereña? De acuerdo con la Dra. Cirila Quintero del COLEF, la Frontera Chica "no se ha distinguido por una actividad política importante de las mujeres." Haciendo una comparación con Reynosa y Matamoros,[18] Quintero menciona el hecho de que "es bastante raro ver una Presidenta Municipal o una diputada emergida de esa localidad." Para ella, "si bien esto podría deberse a una dominación masculina de los cargos políticos en estas localidades más que en otras regiones del país, se sabe poco de por qué las mujeres en estos municipios han sido poco relevantes en el contexto político". En realidad, esta región ha sido poco estudiada, y ha estado marginada de las grandes políticas estatales. Además, no se recuerda a gobernador alguno "que haya incluido a la Frontera Chica como parte primordial de sus programa de gobierno. Por el contrario, se les visita únicamente cuando están próximas las elecciones."[19] En este contexto, el papel de las mujeres en esta zona no ha sido analizado a profundidad.

Sin embargo, la opinión pública tamaulipeca reconoce algunos obstáculos generales que han enfrentado las mujeres políticas y activistas en el estado y en la región Ribereña en particular. No obstante dichas limitaciones, también se reconocen avances importantes de las mujeres en los últimos tiempos, sobre todo en lo que se refiere a su participación en el diseño de políticas públicas y a su desempeño en la administración pública estatal y local. Por ejemplo, Teófila del Carmen Garza Alanís, presidenta del Organismo Nacional de Mujeres Priistas (ONMPRI) en el Municipio de Camargo, mantiene una visión positiva e identifica avances contundentes de las mujeres en su localidad y en la política mexicana en general.[20]

Para Teófila del Carmen, "la mujer siempre ha sido relegada en lo laboral, en lo salarial y en la política. No obstante, activistas,

políticas, profesionistas y amas de casa han luchado y obtenido victorias importantes para promover la equidad de género. Cada vez son más las mujeres que toman decisiones políticas y ejercen un liderazgo visible dentro de la comunidad." La maestra Alanís también identifica victorias recientes en su municipio, tales como "la presencia, por primera vez en la historia de Camargo, de una 'Presidenta' Municipal: María del Carmen Rocha Hernández". Alanís encuentra en el ONMPRI una manera de servir políticamente, y explica cómo, dentro del organismo, las mujeres priistas apoyan candidatos, y movilizan para las elecciones (con la salvedad de que no manejan recursos). Además, reconoce el papel del Instituto de la Mujer, el cual organiza conferencias, promueve la equidad de género, proporciona ayuda a mujeres, apoya a madres solteras, promueve la educación, etc.

Las regidoras[21] Sandra María Rodríguez Estrada, representante del Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) y Diana Masso Quintana del Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) son también positivas con respecto a los avances de la mujer tamaulipeca en la política. Reconocen, asimismo, el progreso de las mujeres políticas en la frontera, porque, como dice Rodríguez Estrada, "estar en la frontera ayuda, pues se recibe la influencia del otro lado (de los Estados Unidos)".[22] De acuerdo con Diana Masso, "se le está dando hoy a la mujer la opción de participar"; también señala que "son cada vez más mujeres las que están en la función pública". Finalmente, se refiere a las cuotas de género en las candidaturas como "una señal de progreso para las mujeres mexicanas que hay que tomar con algo de cuidado" dados los efectos negativos no intencionados de las mismas. Para Masso, "es importante irse por el perfil o la capacidad. El que tiene la capacidad debe representar a la ciudadanía, y muchas mujeres pueden hacerlo, pero en muchos casos las cuotas de género son utilizadas para fines contrarios al desarrollo democrático y la equidad de género".[23]

No todas las mujeres en Tamaulipas, y principalmente aquellas que viven o conocen de cerca la Frontera Chica, son tan optimistas con respecto al papel de la mujer en la política mexicana y el

activismo. De acuerdo con Wendy Guerra, Directora de Enlace Institucional para el Gobierno de la Ciudad de Matamoros, "el proceso de participación política de las mujeres es especialmente difícil, y se enfrentan muchas barreras aún hoy en día. Además, la participación de las mujeres en la política está condicionada a muchos factores que se manifiestan de manera desigual en el territorio nacional, como son el nivel de ingreso, educación, patrones culturales, entre otros".[24]

Por su parte, la Dra. Teresa Elizabeth Cueva Luna, profesora-investigadora de tiempo completo en el COLEF-Matamoros, señala que "la participación política y activismo de las mujeres tamaulipecas, y sobre todo de aquellas que habitan en la Frontera Chica, es limitado. No ha habido un avance suficiente y se han retrasado con respecto a lo que se observa en otras partes del país. En lo político las mujeres han ocupado los espacios subordinados; no hay participación política importante de las mismas en los más altos puestos". Por otra parte, la Dra. Cueva Luna identifica la "presencia de mujeres profesionistas involucradas en el partido que domina la política en Tamaulipas (el PRI)", pero asegura que "forman parte de una estructura clientelar y corporativista". De acuerdo con esta visión, "la participación política de la mujer se basa en una cultura corporativista". En programas de desarrollo social, por ejemplo, "las mujeres líderes participan en la distribución de bienes y operación de los programas. También tienen un papel central en los Centros Comunitarios de Desarrollo (operados por el Sistema para el Desarrollo Integral de la Familia, DIF). La participación comunitaria está corporativizada con el PRI". En este esquema, "las mujeres fungen como operadoras políticas y promotoras del voto para el PRI. Esto aplica para todo el estado, incluyendo a los municipios de la Frontera Chica".[25]

Activismo de mujeres en la Frontera Chica

Como se menciona anteriormente, no obstante los problemas que enfrentan las mujeres de la Frontera Chica en lo que se refiere a su participación en la política local, en fechas recientes se observan

avances importantes. Cabe destacar una mayor equidad de género en los cabildos, candidaturas y representación en los congresos locales. Además, en las "presidencias de las colonias" se registra un mayor número de mujeres que de hombres. Esta creciente participación se debe principalmente al cambio en las reglas del juego político a nivel nacional, y sobre todo al establecimiento de las cuotas de género. Existe aún mucho por hacer con el objeto de alcanzar la equidad y asegurar para este grupo mayores espacios en la vida pública y especialmente en las altas esferas de la política local. Cabe destacar que la participación de la mujer no se restringe simplemente a la política. En tiempos de extrema violencia ocasionada por el crimen organizado, su papel es fundamental en todas las áreas, incluyendo el mercado laboral, la seguridad pública y la movilización social. Con el objeto de ganar espacios en la vida de sus comunidades y obtener mayores logros en materia de seguridad, el activismo de las mujeres se torna crucial. Pero, ¿es visible el activismo de las mujeres en la Frontera Chica? Y en su caso, ¿cuáles son las demandas principales de las mujeres activistas en esta región olvidada y violenta?

Según testimonios de mujeres y hombres que habitan o conocen ampliamente la zona Ribereña y sus principales dinámicas sociales, el activismo de las mujeres de la Frontera Chica no es visible, y algunas(os) lo consideran prácticamente inexistente. No obstante los grandes problemas que se enfrentan en esta región de México –sobre todo en materia de seguridad, crimen organizado, desarrollo económico y desigualdad –no se aprecia un esfuerzo especial de las mujeres por organizarse y luchar por las causas de interés común, por la justicia, la equidad y la seguridad. Como lo manifiesta una habitante de Ciudad Mier: "En la Ribereña las mujeres no se movilizan, muestran poca fuerza, poca solidaridad con ellas mismas, con su grupo. No hay activistas de verdad en la Frontera Chica. Y esto puede deberse a una cuestión cultural ... o a una cuestión de subdesarrollo social".

CONCLUSIÓN: Las "mujeres olvidadas" de la "frontera olvidada"

Los resultados de la presente investigación muestran una baja participación de las mujeres activistas en la Frontera Chica, pero una creciente actividad política de la mujer tamaulipeca en general, derivada de avances institucionales en todo el país y de una creciente –aunque "no suficiente" –equidad de género. En el contexto actual, ¿cuáles son las principales limitaciones que enfrentan las mujeres de esta región fronteriza para organizarse, participar más efectivamente en la política local y desempeñarse como tomadoras de decisiones en tiempos violentos? La cuestión cultural parece ser una de las causas fundamentales que limita el activismo y la participación de las mujeres en casi todas las áreas de la vida pública y del desarrollo de las comunidades de la Frontera Chica. La dominación masculina que tradicionalmente ha existido en las tareas políticas, el mercado laboral y en casi todas las labores productivas se mantiene en lo general hasta nuestros días en una región relativamente olvidada de la frontera México-Estados Unidos.

Otro factor clave que explica las limitaciones a la participación de las mujeres políticas y activistas en esta región del país tiene que ver con cuestiones de desarrollo económico. El problema de la Frontera Chica es que quedó fuera de la maquila y quedó sin actividad económica importante. En este contexto se desarrolla el narcotráfico y posteriormente se da una especie de guerra por el control territorial de la zona, así como el enfrentamiento violento entre el gobierno y las dos organizaciones criminales que operan en el estado. Como dice la Dra. Cirila Quintero del COLEF-Matamoros, "la violencia en esta región de México es producto de una 'frontera olvidada' ... olvidada por el gobierno, fuera de la agenda del gobierno. Desde que la Frontera Chica quedó fuera del proyecto maquilador, se olvidó ... se perdió. La Frontera se olvidó y la inseguridad es resultado de años de olvido."[26] En este contexto, las mujeres de la Ribereña han quedado relegadas y se han olvidado de participar, han olvidado organizarse y luchar por sus causas comunes. Podemos hablar entonces de "mujeres olvidadas" en una "frontera olvidada".[27]

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Notas

1 Las principales ciudades de la Frontera Chica comparten algunas características, pero presentan, al mismo tiempo, contrastes importantes. Por ejemplo dos de ellas tienen más de 200 años de fundación (Ciudad Mier y Ciudad Camargo) y dos son relativamente nuevas (Ciudad Miguel Alemán y Nueva Ciudad Guerrero).

2 Esta información proviene del sitio web del gobierno del estado de Tamaulipas: <http://tamaulipas.gob.mx/tamaulipas/municipios/gustavo-diaz-ordaz/>, consultado el 30 de marzo 2012.

3 Ver <http://tamaulipas.gob.mx/tamaulipas/municipios/camargo/>, consultado el 30 de marzo 2012.

4 Véase sito web del gobierno del estado de Tamaulipas: <http://tamaulipas.gob.mx/tamaulipas/municipios/miguel-aleman/>, consultado el 30 de marzo 2012.

5 Información proveniente del sitio web del gobierno del estado de Tamaulipas: <http://tamaulipas.gob.mx/tamaulipas/municipios/mier/>, y el del gobierno municipal de Mier: <http://www.mier.gob.mx/municipio/hidrografia.htm> (ambos consultados el 30 de marzo 2012).

6 Cabe destacar que el Puente Internacional Falcón no es un puente en realidad, pues no atraviesa la presa de lado a lado sino que es un camino entre la presa y sus compuertas.

7 Esto se otorgó como privilegio por la pérdida de Guerrero Viejo para la construcción de la presa.

8 Información proveniente del sitio web del gobierno del estado de Tamaulipas: <http://tamaulipas.gob.mx/tamaulipas/municipios/guerrero/> (consultado el 30 de marzo 2012).

9 Esta información proviene de la entrevista a la Dra. Cirila Quintero que tuvo lugar en la ciudad de Matamoros, Tamaulipas, el 2 de abril 2012.

10 Reynosa y Matamoros desarrollan el sector maquilador, especialmente Reynosa que continua creciendo incluso durante la crisis de los noventa y en los primeros años del siglo veintiuno. Nuevo Laredo no logra consolidar la maquila pues su polo de desarrollo resulta ser el sector comercial –no tanto la actividad manufacturera –y en particular las aduanas: la vida en Nuevo Laredo gira en torno a la aduana. Río Bravo y Valle Hermoso, municipios ubicados entre Reynosa y Matamoros, no quedaron tan olvidados como los municipios de la Frontera Chica; aquí hay cierto desarrollo. Operan, en cierto modo, como ciudades dormitorio –Río Bravo para algunos que trabajan en Reynosa y Valle Hermoso para otros que lo hacen en Matamoros. Además, en estos municipios hay algo de maquila.

11 Esta información proviene de la entrevista al Lic. Omar Habib Masso Quintana, delegado regional del PRI en la Frontera Chica, que tuvo lugar en la Ciudad de Camargo, Tamaulipas, el 12 de diciembre 2011. El Lic. Masso Quintana es también director municipal del Instituto Tamaulipeco de Capacitación para el Empleo (ITACE) en la ciudad de Matamoros.

12 Entre estos grupos destacan el Grupo Aeromóvil de Fuerzas Especiales (GAFE), Grupo Anfibio de Fuerzas Especiales (GANFE) y la Brigada de Fusileros Paracaidistas (BFP). Se integran posteriormente a la organización algunos miembros de las Maras y Kaibiles (soldados de élite guatemaltecos). Actualmente, los Zetas reclutan a cualquier tipo de persona, sin la necesidad de que posean entrenamiento militar previo.

13 Sobre los orígenes y alcances de los Zetas véase José Reyes, "Las operaciones secretas del cártel del Golfo", *Contralínea*, Sección Portada, México, D.F., 30 de agosto, en <http://contralinea.info/archivo-revista/index.php/2009/08/30/las-operaciones-secretas-del-cartel-del-golfo/>, consultado el 4 de febrero 2011. Los Zetas surgen a finales de los noventa. No se sabe la fecha con exactitud, pero esta agrupación hace su primera aparición pública después de que fuera asesinado Arturo Guzmán Decena (el Z-1) en noviembre de 2002 en la ciudad de Matamoros. Meses después de este suceso, miembros de la organización colocaron una corona fúnebre y cuatro arreglos florales con la leyenda: "Te llevaremos siempre en el corazón: de tu familia ... Los Zetas". Y así conocemos el nombre del brazo armado del CDG.

14 Véase Nicholas Casey y José de Córdoba, 2010, "Northern Mexico's state of anarchy. Residents abandon a border town as vicious drug cartels go to war," *The Wall Street Journal*, Sección América Latina, Nueva York, NY, 20 de noviembre, en... <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704104104575622840256881l>, consultado el 4 de marzo 2012.

15 Entrevista a José Nava; Matamoros, Tamaulipas (10 de marzo 2012).

16 Además, en últimas fechas, esta zona ha sufrido los efectos de la violencia ocasionada por luchas al interior del Cártel del Golfo.

17 Sobre este tema véase Victoria E. Rodríguez, *Women in contemporary Mexican politics* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003). En esta obra, la autora ofrece un análisis comprensivo de la forma en que las mujeres mexicanas han tomado ventaja de nuevas oportunidades para participar en el proceso político a través de elecciones, designaciones en puestos públicos, organizaciones no gubernamentales y activismo social. Aquí también, Victoria Rodríguez analiza los factores que han impulsado la actividad política de las mujeres, entre los que destacan: la movilización social, las crisis económicas recientes, y el proceso de democratización que tuvo como punto crítico la elección de Vicente Fox en el 2000. En su texto, la autora identifica los caminos que las mujeres mexicanas han utilizado para acceder a la vida pública, así como los obstáculos que han enfrentado para participar en la política, sobre todo en las esferas más altas de gobierno.

18 Destacan los casos de Omeheida López (Reynosa) y Guadalupe Flores (Matamoros), quienes fungieron como diputadas federales.

19 Entrevista; Matamoros, Tamaulipas (2 de abril 2012).

20 Entrevista; Camargo, Tamaulipas (12 de diciembre 2011). Teófila del Carmen Garza perteneció al PRI desde su juventud; fue promotora del voto en la comuni-

dad, presidenta del OMPRI anteriormente (durante el periodo 2002-2005), jefa de la oficina fiscal del estado y aspirante a ser presidenta municipal.

21 El regidor es el representante de la ciudadanía en el ayuntamiento; observa que se cumpla con los proyectos; está al pendiente de los reglamentos; atiende las comisiones, y facilita la comunicación entre la ciudadanía y el gobierno municipal. Los regidores, en pocas palabras, son la "voz de la ciudadanía".

22 Entrevista; Matamoros, Tamaulipas (26 de marzo 2012). Sandra Rodríguez fue promotora del voto, candidata suplente a diputada local por el PAN, y actualmente es Presidenta de la comisión del Sistema para el Desarrollo Integral de la Familia (DIF) en el cabildo de Matamoros.

23 Entrevista; Matamoros, Tamaulipas (26 de marzo 2012). Diana es regidora en Matamoros y Presidenta de la comisión de cultura; es también miembro del frente Juvenil Revolucionario del PRI y del ONMPRI.

24 Entrevista; Matamoros, Tamaulipas (26 de marzo 2012). Guerra ha militado en el PRI y ha ocupado diversos puestos públicos, entre los que destaca su participación en el Institutito de la Mujer Tamaulipeca y el archivo general del Congreso del Estado de Tamaulipas.

25 Entrevista; Matamoros, Tamaulipas (2 de abril 2012).

26 Entrevista; Matamoros, Tamaulipas (2 de abril 2012).

27 Véase también: (a) Carlos A. Flores, 2010, "Editorial. Historias de polvo y sangre: Génesis y evolución del tráfico de drogas en el estado de Tamaulipas", *ichantecolotl.blogspot.com*, CIESAS, México, D.F., en <http://ichantecolotl.blogspot.com/2008/07/editorial.html>, consultado el 2 de febrero 2012; (b) Gobierno del Estado de Tamaulipas, 2012, sito web, <http://tamaulipas.gob.mx/tamaulipas/>, consultada el 30 de marzo 2012; (c) Gobierno Municipal de Mier, Tamaulipas, 2012, sitio web, <http://www.mier.gob.mx/municipio/hidrografia.htm>, consultada el 30 de marzo 2012; (d) Francisco Gómez y Alberto Torres, 2011, "Lucha encarnizada por las plazas", *El Universal*, Sección Estados, México, D.F., 12 de julio, en. <http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/estados/81170.html>, consultado el 13 de julio 2011; (e) Eduardo Guerrero, 2010, "La guerra por Tamaulipas", *Nexos en Línea*, México, D.F., 1 de agosto, en <http://www.nexos.com.mx/?P=leerarticulo&Article=248541>, consultado el 12 de septiembre 2010; (f) Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI), 2010, *Censo de población y vivienda 2010*, México, D.F., INEGI; (g) José Nava, 2011, Gagging *the media: the paramilitarization of drug trafficking organizations and its consequences on the freedom of press in the Texas-Tamaulipas border region*. Tesis de Maestría. Brownsville, TX, Universidad de Texas en Brownsville; y (h) Ricardo Ravelo 2009, *Osiel: Vida y tragedia de un capo*, México, D.F., Grijalbo.

Alienation vs. Community at Portway Baptist Church

by

Mimosa Stephenson

One of my favorite themes of literature is alienation versus community, a theme seen poignantly in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter* as the leaders of Puritan Boston force the adulteress Hester Prynne to stand for three hours on the scaffold in the marketplace with three-month-old Pearl in her arms. Hester is the cynosure of all eyes, alienated and excluded from that community of individuals bent on establishing a pre-lapsarian Eden in the wilderness, who instead, as one of their foremost endeavors, set aside ground for a cemetery and a prison. For the Puritans, the church was not only a place to worship but also a meeting place and a school, the central gathering place of the community. Even today, churches, when they flourish, are a group of believers who band together supporting one another in community, especially in the communal activities of weddings and funerals. According to Diana Butler Bass, "Just putting a bunch of people together in a church building doesn't make them a community. Community is about relationships and making connections. That's spiritual work. And it may or may not happen in a church."[1] When Portway Baptist Church was started in a home, in 1953, it provided a gathering place for people with similar beliefs to learn from each other and support one another.[2] Sixty years later, traditional or mainline denominational churches in the United States are in decline. Portway Baptist Church, a Southern Baptist Church, located at 2000 North Minnesota in Brownsville, provides a specific example of the failure of community and the consequent decline.

When I asked Vivian Kearney (a member of the church twenty-five years ago and a poet who thinks in metaphor) what Portway meant to her, she replied that it had been a "port," a safe harbor, a refuge from life's storms. She, as an infant Polish Jew, had sur-

vived the Second World War because her mother (then believed to be her aunt) had left her as a gentile in an orphanage at the beginning of the war and then returned for her, in 1945, before immigrating, first to Paris, and then to Montreal. To Vivian, Portway seemed a small, friendly, country church. She once told me that, as she left the church at noon the morning she was baptized, she saw a double rainbow –as if the storm was over and she were given a promise of a safe port.[3]

However, according to Vivian, the church's name is a compound word, the second noun being "way." Individuals within a church feel they know the right way, and they insist that others walk the path they have chosen. Anyone who errs from the straight and narrow is excluded by gossip, and by vote if necessary. Church leaders wrangle and divide the community into competing factions. Instead of a safe port, the church becomes an angry sea, the high winds of division battering the ships against each other, ultimately isolating rather than joining. Unfortunately, Portway Baptist Church, which began as a port and a thriving community, in its sixty-year history, has filled up with sand bars of dissension until few ships are able to harbor therein.

Portway Baptist Church began as a mission of First Baptist Church but was chartered as a church in its own right in 1957. The church membership record book shows that in the 1957-58 church year (running from September 1-August 31) thirty-eight new members were received by letter and twenty-five individuals were baptized by the church, bringing the membership total to 137. Two years later, 1959-60, seventy-one were added to the church in one year, bringing the total to 201 members. In no year since has the church matched that growth, though the church did well until the mid-nineties. For the 1995-96 year, the book shows no new members, no baptisms, and eight people lettering out of the church. The September 2012 annual report to the state convention claims 496 members on the roll, four baptisms, and six other additions, but there were only fourteen, on average, in attendance in Sunday School. The constitution has recently been

changed so as not to specify a quorum, because it was difficult to hold quarterly business meetings with a quorum of ten. At the height of its prosperity, in 1985, when I first joined, two Sunday morning services were required to seat attendees. Sunday evening service and Wednesday prayer meeting were also reasonably well attended. Now the church opens its doors for services only on Sunday morning. In the summer, about thirty people are in attendance, but in the winter attendance may rise to sixty. Despite many predictions from disgruntled members leaving the church that its days were numbered, the church has survived, but it has not thrived for the last twenty years. A church should exist to comfort and aid needy, hurting souls in this world and to give them hope for the next. This study examines Portway's role in the community and finds that it gives comfort and a sense of belonging to some people but alienates others.

As a church, Portway is a body of believers sharing their faith, their lives, and their concerns, but these believers, who accept that humankind is fallen, also accept certain doctrines and reject others. Dave Shiflett, in his 2005 book *Exodus: Why Americans Are Fleeing Liberal Churches for Conservative Christianity*, succinctly sums up Southern Baptist belief, which would be subscribed to by the members of Portway:

> The Baptist world includes Noah's Ark, Jonah's whale, stone tablets inscribed by the finger of God, a burning bush, an active Devil, and a talking serpent. Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, walked on water, raised the dead, was crucified at the demand of the Sanhedrin, and rose after three days –in bodily form, with a hole in his side. He now sits at His Father's right hand, where both shall judge the quick and the dead.[4]

Adding the Holy Spirit and God's active intervention in people's lives gives a pretty good summary. Members also believe they should read the Bible and pray every day. Sandy Shank says,

"Prayer steps in" when her family confronts serious physical problems: "The devil is allowed to throw things our way to make us fall apart, but God is carrying us on his shoulders."[5] Doris Walker says that the whole church prayed when she had cancer and God touched her body. Two of the women even fasted for her healing, and she has now been cancer-free for twenty-five years.[6] Mollie Cole's suggestion for the church is that the people live close to the Lord and do His will.[7] Vivian Kearney says that she had spiritual experiences in the church that made her realize she needed a relationship with God herself. She learned to pray at Portway and realized there that her whole life is a relationship with God.[8]

The members of Portway believe that they are part of the body of Christ and that they should love and support one another. "A New Comers Booklet" of a neighboring Southern Baptist Church calls the local church "The Home of the Believer": "as believers we are members of the family of faith. God is our Father, Christ is our Older Brother, and all of us are brothers and sisters"[9]. Obviously members of this "family" should make up a close-knit community. Current Portway Pastor Karl Kessler writes, "People . . . that have their hearts changed by the Gospel of Christ and the Word of God are collectively moved to fellowship together . . . for evangelism, education, and exhortation of godliness . . . to do Christian service within the church and . . . in the community."[10] Bass sums up the Christian walk: "For Christians, spiritual community, a living, renewed church, begins with being *in* Christ, the first and primary relationship of a vibrant faith life. The church is, therefore, not an institution, an organization, or a building, but a community of relationships where people's selves are *with* God and *with* one another, bound by love."[11]

Portway's community is blessed with a good preacher, and people overwhelmingly say they come to the church because of the pastor, the Rev. Karl Kessler, who is capable of an exciting delivery, sticks with the Bible, and preaches inerrancy. Though a full-time government teacher at Hanna High School and a part-time bivocational pastor, he makes hospital visits and officiates at wed-

dings and funerals. He displays a good sense of humor and ably entertains children at Vacation Bible School. Adrianna Graef likes it that the pastor in his messages goes step by step, with a clear outline that she can follow, especially since English is her second language and she feels insecure in it.[12] Hermann Graef likes the pastor's "down-to-earth approach to life and religion" and that he "preaches in accordance with the Bible, not reminding too much that I am a sinner."[13] Pei-lin Shi likes the pastor's notes for the sermon found on the back of the program each Sunday;[14] Madeline Seals likes his little jokes;[15] and Brenda Breaks claims that he "puts on a good show and keeps you motivated."[16]

Others come because of the church's location, in a particular community at the corner of Minnesota Avenue and Coffeeport, an area hosting numerous trailer parks, including Four Seasons, Paul's, Breezy Lake, and Rio. Winter Texans from Michigan, Missouri, Wisconsin, North Dakota, Indiana, Arkansas, Minnesota, and even Canada choose the church for convenience. One regular attendee comes from Austria and another from Shanghai. J. W. House no longer drives, but he lives "400 yards" from the church at Four Seasons and rides his three-wheeled bicycle.[17] E. J. Hernandez ended up at the church after she sent her brother to Portway when he was looking for a church within walking distance. Now they have both been baptized into the church.[18]

There is another side to the location issue: Portway is an English-speaking church in a Spanish-speaking neighborhood. Linda Garcia points out the area's roughness. One Sunday evening, twenty-five years ago, Linda Constante, sitting at the back of the church, was accosted by a man with a gun.[19] Windows have been shattered, and air conditioners have been stolen. John Ross says he paid a few hundred dollars to get a young Mexican national out of slavery at the junkyard across the street.[20] Linda Garcia thinks the location a dangerous one because of the many transients coming through the homeless shelter just down the street. Location may bring people from the community in, but it also may keep them away.[21]

Others come because of the church's small size. D'Esther Storm, the church's most active leader, grew up the daughter of a Cajun evangelist in Louisiana, attending her father's small churches, and she likes a small church that has work for her to do. After several years as church treasurer, she now directs the church's Food Pantry, leads the Nursing Home Singers, co-teaches her Sunday School class, and serves on the Board of Trustees.[22] Like Dee, I grew up in small churches and feel more at home in one with endless opportunities for service.

Related to the size is the perceived friendliness of the church. Everyone knows everyone else in this and in every close-knit community, but the members are glad to see a new face. E. J. Hernandez says that people accepted her from "Day One," that she feels as if she has been in the church forever;[23] Mary Lewis likes the "down-to-earth people";[24] Sandy Shank says "everyone is so loving, warm, and accepting";[25] Pei-lin Shi says that she does not feel judged at Portway;[26] and Madeline Seals says she feels at home.[27] Milo Kearney found in the church a "humble and simple spirit, a lack of snobbery, and closeness to God."[28] Ray Colvin says he likes it that he doesn't have to dress up to go to church.[29]

E. J. Hernandez finds studying her Bible alone at home unsatisfactory and enjoys the life-changing fellowship.[30] Hermann Graef likes that Joe Harris "always has a few meaningful words to say" in his brief message before the offering.[31] Bonnie Hickman likes the hymnal,[32] Hermann Graef the piano music,[33] J. W. House the old hymns instead of the rock-and-roll music at his former church,[34] Robert Gregory coming back to his childhood roots.[35] The choir that practiced after prayer meetings on Wednesday evenings has been gone for more than ten years, but the church still sings "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God."

Besides the Sunday morning service, the church has activities that involve the community, although some former ones are gone. Maxine Callaway knows what the church once meant, as she began attending in 1960 when the church met in an old barracks

building but had the full slate of activities expected in a Southern Baptist Church: Women's Missionary Union, Girls Auxiliary, Royal Ambassadors (for boys), and a Brotherhood for men. Maxine still has a picture of a Girls Auxiliary Coronation in 1961. The program lists twenty names of women that helped with the organization.[36] As a former GA, I know that the girls earned their honors by memorizing Scripture, helping in church activities, and serving in the community.

Portway also had a Training Union on Sunday evenings in those days. Participating in Training Union was one of my formative experiences. Every Sunday night, I got up in front of my peers and gave my part. By the time I grew up and became a teacher, it was easy to stand in front of a group. Unfortunately, Training Union is gone and children no longer practice speaking in front of a group. Three or four years ago Portway had an Awana Program meeting on Sunday evening, where the children learned Bible verses and concepts, but that program has fizzled out. The community service that Training Union used to provide is no longer available.

The Rev. Jerry Johnson, who, for many years, was Director of the Rio Grande Valley Baptist Association, tells me that the Sunday School is what builds the church, and it also provides learning activities for children in the community. In Sunday School, besides studying the Bible, members fellowship and share experiences from their daily walk with God.[37] When Pat Trobaugh was pastor at Portway, the church had a van to bring children to Sunday School, and I filled my Suburban. As recorded by the Baptist General Convention of Texas, Portway reported 82 as the average attendance in Sunday School in 1985,[38] the year I joined the church. Last Sunday, June 2, 2013, nine people attended Sunday School.

The few remaining attendees believe Sunday School to be an important part of the their lives. Barbara Becker says she can ask her teacher, Will Stephenson, anything and that he gives good answers.[39] Janice Young likes the friendship in her class. She

told me about the Sunday School lesson the Sunday before, on Romans 14:14-17, a passage about eating: don't order something that will make someone sitting across from you sick, "hurting a person that Jesus died for."[40] Pei-lin Shi likes it that Will goes sentence by sentence, but she also misses Buddy Albright, a loving and gracious retired ex-missionary who could explain every word problem.[41]

The Friendship Class, the ladies class, was one of the strongest arms of the church for a generation, while Doris Walker was teaching it. She kept up with the ladies, saw to it that they were visited in the hospital, helped them in time of need, showered them when they wedded or became pregnant, and prayed for them in class on Sunday. Her contribution to the community is now lost, and her class has shrunk to three or four on Sunday, with the members taking turns reading from the Sunday School quarterly.

The third class is for children of any age, but the ones who actually attend range from five to eleven; between two to nine of them show up each Sunday. The children fill in worksheets, read Bible stories, sing "Jesus Loves Me," learn the books of the Bible, and cut, paste, and fold to make crafts related to their Bible stories. Their teacher hopes they will become godly, responsible adults who serve their community rather than drain its resources. Neither the pastor nor the three male members of the Board of Trustees attend Sunday School. If, as Jerry Johnson says, Sunday School is the program that grows a church, the church is failing the community by not bringing the neighborhood into the Sunday School.

I talked with former pastor Pat Trobaugh (now pastor of Sharon Baptist Church in Chinquapin, North Carolina) and his wife Beverly about Portway and their current church, which cooperates with several local churches to provide a Food Pantry, clothing, and utilities in their rural community. Beverly says that their church is thriving because of the church's "generous hand and loving, open heart."[42] Twenty years ago, Pat started Portway's Food Pantry, associated with the Rio Grande Valley Food Bank

in Pharr. Today, a Board of Directors, led by D'Esther Storm, keeps the Food Pantry going. Food is distributed every Thursday afternoon from two to four o'clock. Each month, the pantry gives food to between 1600 and 1800 people. The feat would be impossible without contributions and labor from non-church members. Several of the surrounding trailer parks give checks to the Food Pantry, sometimes $1,000 or more, and people from many churches and without church affiliations meet each Monday morning to receive, sort, mark, and stow a shipment from Pharr.

John Ross calls the Food Pantry a service to the community and supposes that God sustains the church because he is pleased with service, the most sincere form of worship.[43] Sean Kearney agrees that Portway reaches out and cares for people.[44] Ernestina Hughes began helping six or seven years ago, after her husband died. Tina says that when she was growing up, during the Great Depression, people made little tents with a blanket over a tree limb and came knocking on her grandmother's door. Her grandmother never turned anyone away.[45] Richard (Andy) Anderson wanted something to do, so he regularly helps in the Food Pantry.[46] Glenn Hohl says he started working at the Food Pantry in December because he heard that some help lifting was needed: "Well, it gives me something to do. I feel good afterwards."[47] Barbara Becker says she first started going to a Food Pantry herself when she was pregnant and her husband was off work at John Deere because of a strike and then because of layoffs; "now, it is payback time." She enjoys the camaraderie, playing cards while waiting for the Valley Food Bank truck from McAllen, eating together after packing bags, and serving the clients who come to pick up their food.[48] Nancy Davis insists that God told her "to do something other than sit in front of the computer, and it's a fun, 'awesome group.'"[49] Diana Marsh concludes, "I feel better in myself when I'm doing things for other people." She had worked at the Food Pantry at home in Wisconsin before she came here.[50] Jacqueline Whitehead remembers she always has volunteered and she would miss working in the Food Pantry if she didn't do it: "I feel like I'm contribut-

ing."[51] Janice Young plans around the Food Pantry and says that "it comes first."[52] Not only does the Portway Food Pantry serve the local community, but it also provides a time and place for the workers to band together in fellowship. With the Food Pantry, Portway successfully ministers to the needs of the community.

Another major ministry of the church is the Nursing Home Singers. According to Dee Storm, Beverly Trobaugh started the group's visiting Spanish Meadows on Ruben Torres Boulevard every Tuesday and Valley Grande Manor on Coria Street every Friday because a man she knew who played the mouth organ to entertain at one of the nursing homes got breathless and wanted some relief between songs. Six to twelve people go each week to sing gospel songs, provide a story, and pray in English and Spanish. One of the group's most faithful singers was Mary Farrar, whom Dee found unconscious one Tuesday when she went to pick her up to sing for "the old folks."[53] What better example could there be of community than a ninety-four-year-old woman going twice a week to nursing homes to brighten up the days of people who don't have enough visitors.

My son and daughter-in-law are deaf, so Portway provides a certified sign language interpreter, Melinda Garcia, for them during the Sunday morning service.[54] At times, other deaf people have come to the church for a while, but the deaf ministry has not grown. Still it is important to the deaf community that there is a Baptist church in Brownsville that provides the service.

Every month or two, including on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Valentine's Day, the church has dinner on the grounds after the service on Sunday morning. This potluck brings the members together in fellowship. The pastor provides entertainment of some sort, and the food is good. One of the most interesting things about this social activity is that many people come who don't attend church. Church members bring family members, and volunteer workers in the Food Pantry are invited and attend in numbers so that they become part of the Portway community.

Summer camp played an important part in the lives of the young people in the community when I was growing up, partly because going to camp was the first time some of the children left the Rio Grande Valley. The women from the little church in La Blanca drove carloads of children to Alto Frio Baptist Encampment near Leakey. I think of that experience every time we sing "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus" because Alto Frio is where I learned the chorus. What Melinda Garcia remembers most fondly from the time she was growing up in the deaf church at the Mission Outreach Center on the west side of Brownsville is the summer camp near Mathis. When I joined Portway in the mid-eighties, the young people at Portway also went to camp near Mathis. What my nine- and eleven-year-old grandchildren most wanted to do this summer was go to Baptist summer camp in Weslaco as they did last year with the children from First Baptist Church. The fact that Portway is not currently taking children to Baptist summer camp is a loss to the community.

Vacation Bible School, in the summer, with its stories, games, crafts, singing, and refreshments, is one of the best outreaches of any Baptist church. When I first joined the church, VBS was a grand affair lasting a week with one hundred children marching into the sanctuary and three chosen, happy volunteers carrying the American flag, the Christian flag, and the Bible, to which the children said pledges of allegiance. Sandy Shank still remembers coming in a little van to Portway for VBS in the late sixties and early seventies. She says the Bible study was most important, but she still remembers the crafts, things like painting Plaster of Paris.[55] Lilly Blanchard told me that her father became involved in Portway as a child by attending VBS.[56] Ray Colvin remembers teaching the children to carve canes as a craft in Vacation Bible School.[57] Cathy Garcia talks about all the children that were in the church when she joined, while Pat Trobaugh was pastor from 1986 to 1997. There were mission groups that came in busses to the church and provided puppet shows. These mission groups staged VBS at her house, Mollie Cole's house, and Heather Walker's

house. Cathy says she had twenty-five children at her house, constructing crafts with shells and mirrors in VBS.[58] I remember making doorstops with bricks, padding, and calico in VBS sixty-five years ago at the little Baptist church in La Blanca. The teachers and helpers also enjoy the fellowship as they serve the community together. In the summer of 2012, one family planned and executed a small VBS with the pastor as the only teacher and seventeen children in attendance for the three days of the school. Portway is now failing the community in not delivering the memorable VBS that it provided for half a century.

There is, however, a current hopeful sign for the children. Dala Kessler, E. J. Hernandez, and Maxine Callaway have started taking turns providing Children's Church, so that the elementary children, on Sunday morning, do not need to sit through a sermon that they cannot understand. Instead, they have their own church, where they can talk to each other, read together a Bible story at their age level, work crossword puzzles, solve word-search puzzles, and, sometimes, even do a craft. E. J. says it's exciting to see what different ideas the children come up with.[59] This enjoyable time for children fills a need in the community.

Portway is still changing lives for the better, but, despite all of this continued involvement in the community, something has obviously gone wrong. Several of the people I talked with have ideas about the problem. Doris Walker thinks the problem is that people assume the small church conducts its services in Spanish, and that the church needs a prominent sign saying that it is an English-speaking church.[60] Ray Colvin told me that at seventy-five, he is one of the young ones. He says the church "looks like an old-folks home."[61] That is an exaggeration, because there were six young people between thirteen and twenty-one in the church service last Sunday. Often, there are seven younger ones in Children's Church and three in the nursery on Sunday morning. All the same, Ray is correct; the church is lacking young people who might carry on the work of the church in the next generation.

I recently read Hilary Mantel's Man-Booker-Prize-winning *Wolf Hall*, recreating the story of Thomas Cromwell, who engineered Henry VIII's (and thus England's) defection from the Roman Catholic Church, in 1532. The book ends with the beheading of Sir Thomas More, himself guilty of torturing and burning Protestants, as he insisted all Englishmen must worship God as he did. As Shiflett puts it, "Taken all together, [Christianity] is often a troubling story, full of conflict, persecution, bloodshed, and the occasional bout of international mayhem. Many a sword has been sharpened, while nearby someone whistled a hymn" (182). Though I don't know of any swords at Portway, there has been plentiful wrongdoing and conflict.

Pastors are human, and those at Portway have clearly made some mistakes that were not good for the community. The charismatic young man who pastored at the time I joined the church asked women and girls to help him judge the depth of the water in the baptistery and then suggested that they remove their pants to wring them out; he was abruptly dismissed. Milo Kearney remembers the church hiring a supposedly born-again ex-convict to work with the youth despite the qualms of some members of the congregation. Milo believes the church was right in wanting to reclaim those who had gone astray, but that it went too far in its trust. Several families left the church at this point, and, soon, the new youth minister was said to have behaved inappropriately.[62] The next pastor put great effort and money into starting a mission far east of Brownsville, and chose someone unreliable to lead it. He also led the church to invite a Spanish church to join Portway, a decision that may ultimately prove fatal to the church. The next pastor forced the chairman of the deacons out of the church because he believed in "soul sleep." Each of these examples, stemming from poor judgment, weakened the church in the community.

Some find the church problematic for those with intellectual concerns. Bob Farrar left because he wanted to expand his knowledge.[63] Milo Kearney notes, "There was an element of disapproval of the use of an interlinear Hebrew and Greek Bible, with the resulting

questioning of the translations into English."[64] Sean Kearney observes that the Bible heroes are flawed, like us, and that God should know what people need to read.[65] Certainly, Christianity is paradoxical, as the first shall be last and he that would save his life will lose it, but it is not unreasonable to believe that we all need a heart transplant. The church has failed by giving outsiders the impression that Christianity is not intellectually viable.

Several people, including Pei-lin Shi, noted the church's failure to reach out to the community.[66] Jesse Fortiscue, who started at Portway in 1966, says that we should visit the sick and keep in touch with new members, but we just forget about them.[67] Don Farrar says he left the church in 2001 because it was no longer interested in missions.[68] George Roach, pastor from 1998 to 2001 and now pastor of Highview Baptist Church in Chillicothe, Missouri, says the church, like many others in the nation, turned in rather than out and that the purpose of the church is found in Luke 19:10: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." We need to be showing people an alternative lifestyle: "The church should show people that they can find fulfillment in a relationship with God." The church should help the community find meaning in individual lives.[69]

Another problem in the church, and probably in any small church, with what should be a small group of closely-knit people supporting one another and praying for one another, is gossip. Baptists as a rule don't drink, smoke, or chew (and are critical of those who do), but they do gossip and gluttonize. Wanda Franks says some people are complaining because people who are not members of the church participate in the Food Pantry and attend potluck dinners, even if they do not attend the worship service.[70] This gossip is relatively harmless, but some is cutting and all of it damages the community. Marta Ross mentioned a former church member who "came in like a snake. She had people believing in her, and then she began to throw venom out," saying extremely hurtful things from the distant past. She managed to poison leaders of the church against the church before she left.[71] John Ross says that we need

a mature body of believers who heal those who offend rather than retaliating when offended. Christ healed, and we should try to do that too. Healers are needed by the community, not wounders.[72]

The moral problems that surface in the little church seem never to end. Ray Colvin remembers when a church leader forced his daughter to confess stealing from the church. On another occasion, a mother and step-father forced their pregnant daughter and her partner to come before the church, confess their sin, and then marry. In both cases, the girls soon left the church, in the first case her parents also. Ray says that, after that, the church sort of died.[73] In one nighttime episode, two church members videotaped through a window one of the deacons, his wife, his son, and a friend making four or five trips with a dolly, carrying cartloads of food out of the storeroom of the Food Pantry to load into a pickup. Such issues in a church prompt the community to see all Christians as hypocrites.

The worst of the debacles should have proved a blessing, but, given human nature, what should have worked did not. In 1999, a small Spanish-speaking Baptist group led by a charming, handsome, talented, charismatic pastor asked to use the fellowship hall for its meetings for three months. After the Spanish-speaking church grew rapidly for a few months, the English-speaking pastor asked his church to accept the Spanish speakers as regular members. After the partnership, the two churches combined Sunday Schools (some classes being taught in Spanish and others in English) and held worship services together once a month, the sermon in one language being translated into the other and songs being sung in both languages. On the English side, several Hispanic families with teen-aged children quickly moved their memberships elsewhere. Ray Colvin believes that the younger couples in the church left after the Spanish Church joined with the English church because they were afraid their sons would be attracted by the pretty girls in the Spanish Church. My husband believes it was class prejudice, as those lovely girls on the Spanish side were also poor. Between August 2000 and July 2001, while

my husband, Will, and I were in China, sixty-five people from the English side left the church.

Under the next pastor, the Rev. Dennis Winters, who arrived in the fall of 2001, more chaos ensued. The Spanish department became three times as big as the English department, but the Spanish pastor was found to be philandering with one of his parishioners. His replacement, a gifted young man, who could sing as well as preach in both English and Spanish, before long, divorced his wife, while rumors spread. When the Spanish Department independently voted to dismiss him, the strong English pastor insisted such a vote must come from the entire church. Fifty-nine people abandoned the church in one swoop, leaving the Spanish pastor with half a dozen loyalists. Shortly, the Spanish pastor married the woman of the rumors and had a sign painted naming him and his wife co-pastors. At that point, his half dozen previous followers also deserted him. The people left in the church were over sixty years old and Anglo. What happened with the Spanish church was clearly a failure of community.

After the exodus over the Spanish church, Portway was given a second chance with young people brought into the church by Lydia (Lilly) and Ben Blanchard, but the opportunity was squandered. Youth are the future of any church. Cathy Garcia told me that the active youth group in the church used to make money with yard sales and had big parties with bonfires, hayrides, games, and fireworks for the Fourth of July.[74] Sean Kearney remembers New Year's services with fireworks and singing when he and his sister Kathleen were a part of the youth group.[75] The teenage girls of my childhood church learned management skills in arranging the details for the frequent socials, hayrides, outings to Bentsen State Park, and mulligatawny stew parties. Ray Colvin says at Portway now we have only a handful of children and no one to take the old people's place when they die.[76]

The problem that lost the young people overtly concerned the church's four-bedroom parsonage. The church's current pastor

owns his own home in Rancho Viejo, leaving the parsonage vacant. Ben and Lilly Blanchard and their two teen-aged sons moved into the parsonage while her father, Frank Olvera, a deacon in the church, made repairs. As her father was fixing things, the rent was set low. Soon the church asked the Blanchards to serve as youth pastors and removed the rent as a way of paying for their services. The Blanchards answered the phone, opened doors, brought young people to church, organized activities and trips, and put on Vacation Bible School. Also Lilly decorated beautifully for all events. However, a faction objected to the Blanchards' living in the parsonage rent-free and their being reimbursed for expenses incurred in entertaining their sons and friends. Another side of the story is that some of those young people accepted Jesus as their Savior and were baptized into church membership. In September 2010 the objecting faction managed, on a vote of five to four, to force the Blanchards to vacate the parsonage. Almost all the teenagers in the church exited with the Blanchards.

Lilly Blanchard told me that she had a wonderful time teaching the youth group and loved the idea that her sons' friends got to know Christ. Several of them went to the island for the first time on a youth group outing, and their horizons broadened.[77] But the young people were upset about what happened. The initiating incident occurred when Buddy Albright, then interim pastor, asked the church on a Wednesday night to vote to accept four youth as members, not specifying that they would become members after they were baptized. Ostensibly because Buddy didn't get the words right, one of the members objected. That rejection hurt the four young people, who never returned to be baptized. Shiflett describes what too often happens in a church like Portway: "The backbiting, dark innuendo, and full-throated denunciations that pass so freely between believers can be much less than inspiring, and here we are talking about believers who share pews in the same denominations."[78]

What went wrong at Portway? According to Pastor Kessler: "The church has had its share of problems, disputes, . . . splits

that [have] harmed the reputation of the church and unfavorable testimony of former members."[79] George Roach suggests that people are uncomfortable around "others" unlike themselves.[80] Don Farrar, a former deacon who left about the same time Pastor Roach did, says the church was always called an Anglo church or a Winter Texan church and couldn't adjust.[81] Jerry Johnson told me the problem in work among the Spanish-speaking in the Valley is that no attempt is made to reach those who are financially self-sufficient. Only the very poor and down-and-out have been reached.[82] The obvious answer to Jerry is that those professionals who live on the north side of the border and can lead also speak English and are members of the English-speaking congregation.

The problem is complicated, and there are many factors causing the decline in attendance at Portway. A few people were lost because of moral issues, but several people I talked with addressed the problem of class and racial prejudice. Pat and Beverly Trobaugh told me they tried at Portway to sing one song in Spanish on Sunday morning, but the Mexican-American members of the church objected.[83] Lilly Blanchard says that Rosie Sanchez told her the people at the Food Pantry were prejudiced and didn't want Mexican-Americans around; Lilly had to agree.[84] People I talked with accused two of the male members on the Board of Trustees at the time of the blowup of not liking the fact that all of the youth were Hispanic. The unprejudiced Ray Colvin laments that the church has never healed since the split: "We are basically North Mexico."[85] Ethnic prejudice in the church is shameful, but clearly it existed three years ago.

Another limitation of community for Southern Baptists as a whole is their attitude toward women. According to Bass, "early Christians permitted women to speak, preach, and prophesy in their churches. Their practice went against Roman customs, which did not allow women such public freedoms. Eventually, the church adjusted its practice in relation to Roman gender expectations and surrendered early liberation for cultural conformity."[86] Any group limits the freedom of its members, the rights of the individual versus the rights

of the community. Divorce is common in U. S. society because marriage, with its grouping of two individuals, limits the rights of the two individuals involved. Baptist churches heavily frown on divorce, but statistics show that church attendees divorce at least as much as non-churched people do. One obvious problem with Southern Baptist churches is that they preach that in a marriage the husband should maintain his rights and the wife should lose hers. In its latest revision of the 2000 "Baptist Faith and Message," the Southern Baptist Convention strengthened its statement on women's position in marriage, subscribed to by Portway's Constitution: "A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ."[87] Sean Kearney cites a friend in saying that Baptists forget that Eve's and women's subjection to their husbands in Genesis 3 is a curse, a punishment doled out to them because of Eve's part in the Fall. Since Christ came, we are under a different dispensation, no longer under the curse of the Fall. God does not bless an attitude that denigrates more than half of the community as inferior beings who must perpetually submit.[88]

Portway is not the only church with problems in its community. The Reverend Ryan Pederson, pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Harlingen, told me that all churches in America are declining in membership except Eastern Orthodox, that this is the age of "the nones." In his church, grandparents are bringing their children to church (as they are at Portway). He believes the reason may be that "the church gave some measure of status when the older generation was growing up, but today the opposite is true." There is a generation-and-a-half missing in the church. Younger people organize themselves using technology, blogging, Facebook. Now people with the same political views are moving closer together. They don't want to live with people with different perspectives.[89] Research backs up what Ryan says. The American Religious Identification Survey in 2008 found: "So many Americans claim no religion at all (15%, up from 8% in 1990), that this category now outranks every other major U.S. religious group except Catholics

and Baptists. In a nation that has long been mostly Christian, 'the challenge to Christianity ... does not come from other religions but from a rejection of all forms of organized religion.'"[90] The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, in another survey, in 2012, found that "One-fifth of the U.S. public – and a third of adults under 30 – are religiously unaffiliated today, the highest percentages ever in Pew Research Center polling . . . . Their ranks now include more than 13 million self-described atheists and agnostics (nearly 6% of the U.S. public), as well as nearly 33 million people who say they have no particular religious affiliation (14%)."[91] The Pew study also found an age differential that has relevance to Portway. Thirty-two percent of adults under thirty say they have no religious affiliation, but only 9 percent of adults over sixty-five claim to have no religious affiliation.[92]

Actually, most Texas Baptist churches are doing better than the national trends. Clay Price from the Baptist General Convention of Texas office tells me that, every year, Baptists in Texas start one hundred to two hundred new churches, although most of those are not Anglo churches. Average attendance on Sunday has not changed much in the last twenty years, 177 in about 3,000 churches in 1991 and 188 in 2012.[93] His data indicates that the totals remain nearly the same, but it may not be strange that an Anglo church in Brownsville, which is 91.28 percent Hispanic, is declining.[94]

Not only does Portway not appeal to Hispanics, but it is not in tune with the twenty-first century. The Rev. Dennis Winters, pastor at Portway from 2001-2004, and his wife Mary have been visiting churches in the Houston area, finding bands blasting music (no piano or organ), pastors in jeans (one of them even barefoot), and Scripture verses displayed electronically so that no one needs to bring a Bible. Dennis says there is no mention of sin and no attempt to get anyone to join or to conform to any type of behavior or dress, but the sermon is full of practical help for everyday living. Opportunities are provided for small group meetings during the week and for service within the community.[95] My sister, Ramona Spence, a member of the First Baptist Church of

Lubbock, explained to me how her church has adapted to current times. On Sunday morning she attends an eight-fifteen traditional service with hymns and the pastor in a suit; a nine-thirty university service blasts guitars in a darkened auditorium with shades over the stained-glass windows; an eleven o'clock service mixes the two but maintains the loud music. The church reaches out to the community with Food Pantry, Clothes Closet, and community activities for the children during holidays such as Easter and Halloween.[96] If either of the above is what the community around Portway needs, the elderly people at Portway are not able to provide such a church experience.

Portway is solvent. Its bills are paid, and it has no debts. Five Sunday School rooms are unused, even though the Food Pantry has taken over three rooms for storage. Most of the attendees are old, seventies and eighties predominating. With the small membership, there is likely to be a funeral or two every year. The church, this year, will probably gain a few people whose tremendous problems drive them to the church. A church that cares about people, serves the community, and gives food to hungry people has a place. The future is unknown, but the facilities need to be used to provide succor, encouragement, education in godliness, and fellowship for hurting people. Ray Colvin says it's not how many people we have but how loyal we are to the Lord.[97] John Ross says that we can't measure the value of a church by the number of people that attend on Sunday morning. He points out that Jesus called the religious leaders of his day white-washed sepulchers on the outside because they were not interested in service but in looking important themselves.[98] Portway serves the community with its Food Pantry and the Nursing Home Singers; however, it has alienated members in its treatment of the Spanish church, the Blanchards, and the youth group. Dissension, gossip, and prejudice have harmed relationships within the community.[99]

About 1990, Pastor Pat Trobaugh penned a preface for a Portway pictorial directory picturing Portway's danger but proposing a hopeful future. After quoting Galatians 3:28, "There is neither

Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus," he added:

> Our church is a mosaic, made up of persons from many different races, cultures and nationalities. [Forging] unity in this diversity is a fragile and difficult task. . . . Through faith in Christ we become one. Certainly differences remain but hostility over those differences is laid aside as we celebrate our unity in Jesus Christ. One in Christ, brothers and sisters of different cultures, races and language groups can work together to tear down walls of prejudice, build bridges of understanding and construct relations in church, family and community built on love for one another.

This statement now seems a conditional promise telling what would happen if people laid aside their prejudices, but unfortunately they didn't. The "walls of prejudice" were not torn down, "bridges of understanding" were not built, and sometimes people did not love one another. Let's hope our grandchildren do better.

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CULTURAL HISTORY

Echoes of Ancient Language in the Spanish of South Texas

by

George K. Green

This article was inspired by a phrase recently employed in a committee document of our Modern Languages Department that seemed strikingly inappropriate: "the peculiar dialect of South Texas Spanish." The question of whether or not the Spanish of our region is "peculiar," that is very different from that used in other places, was extensively discussed at several national conferences on Mexican-American Spanish organized by the distinguished linguist Jacob L. Ornstein-Galicia of the University of Texas at El Paso in the 1980's. In fact, at the conference on "Research Needs in Chicano Spanish" at UTEP in a lengthy discussion on June 10, 1985, a group of twenty or more linguists specialized in the study of Mexican-American Spanish unanimously reached the conclusion that there is no important aspect of the Spanish of this region not found in other areas of the Hispanic World. Moreover, these linguists also rejected the word "dialect" as an apt description of the Spanish speech of the region in favor of the term "sociolect": what is spoken here is very similar to popular Spanish, the oral language of the working class, in Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, South America and, most especially, Spain. (In any case, "dialect" is a word with negative connotations best replaced by the expression "language variety," which is neutral.) The noted Spanish dialectologist Vicente García de Diego, in the first chapter of his well known book on dialectology, also makes a clear distinction between "dialect" and "sociolect" in referring to the numerous features of popular Spanish ubiquitous throughout the Hispanic World.[1]

One important feature of popular Spanish in general, and of that of this region in particular, is the presence of several archaic aspects – features distinct from those of today's written language

that hark back to the usage of many centuries ago. These include archaic lexicon, archaic word usage, archaic forms, archaic word variants, and gender differences in accord with the gender used during the Golden Age or in the medieval period.

Of course, in this and other border zones between the United States and Mexico, Spanish is constantly being mixed with English. However, mixing Spanish with another language is neither new nor unusual. In the early Middle Ages, it was often combined with Latin. The Spanish texts of Columbus are sprinkled with Italian words such as "pronto." Today, in Argentina, the widespread mixture of Italian and Spanish is known as *cocoliche*, which sometimes has been used in popular theatrical works presented in public parks. In the northeastern Argentinean province of Misiones on the Brazilian border, mixing Spanish and Portuguese is common. In Spain, on the other hand, language mixture, varying from region to region, involves French in the Pyrenees, Italian in the Balearic Islands, Catalonian in Catalonia, Basque in the Basque Country, Galician and Portuguese in Galicia, and Arabic in Andalusia, Ceuta, and Melilla. Because one of every four Spaniards in Spain speaks a language other than Spanish at home, such language mixture is inevitably widespread. Naturally, with the increase of recent times in regional autonomy, this tends to be a growing phenomenon.

The renowned Argentinean author Jorge Luis Borges once remarked that archaisms are words that the Spanish have forgotten and therefore expect all other Spanish-speakers to forget.[2] Several of these lexical items (now rejected in Spain) are common among Hispanics throughout the Americas, including our region. One clear example is *durazno* (peach), which in Spain has been universally replaced by *melocotón*. Another similar case is the adjective *lindo* (pretty), which is usual in the Spanish literature of the Golden Age; for example, Lope de Vega's theatrical works include one entitled "El lindo Don Diego." Today, in Spain, the common adjective meaning attractive, cute, or pretty is *majo* or the feminine *maja* that is used in English to describe a woman painted by Goya.

Other archaic Spanish words employed in South Texas involve rather more complicated regional differences. An interesting case in point is *alberca* from the Arabic *al birka* ('the water tank' or 'the pond'), which in Mexico and South Texas is the word for swimming pool. In Spain, this noun is still in use; however, it refers principally to open cisterns or water tanks in agricultural areas, as well as ancient open water reservoirs with masonry walls found in some Spanish castles. The latter are sometimes also known as *berquilia*, another Arabic word with the same root. In Trujillo, Extremadura, some 350 miles southwest of Madrid, in the old section of the city on a hill that boasts Roman, Moorish, and medieval buildings, is found *la Alberca*, which functioned as a swimming pool until a large modern *piscina* (the usual peninsular Spanish word for swimming pool) was built a few years ago. *La Alberca* is a somewhat irregular pool, roughly 50-foot square, hollowed out of solid rock, fed by three springs, and next to a large subterranean masonry water reservoir built by the Moors that is still in operation. A tourist guide book describes *la Alberca* as a *natatorio romano* or Roman bath.[3] In the cattle country of central Spain, this word is also the name of moderate-sized metal water tanks that generally serve as watering troughs for large herds of domestic animals but that sometimes double as swimming pools in hot weather. The presence of the word *alberca* in Mexico may well be the result of the relatively large numbers of early colonists from Extremadura in that country; Mexico offers four municipalities named Trujillo, more than any other nation in Latin America.[4] (It might be noted that the *piscina* of standard Spanish usage originally meant 'fish tank'.)

Certain other archaic Arabic nouns, such as *zaga*, which, in medieval times, referred to the rear guard of an army, have taken on a figurative meaning in the Spanish of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The rhetorical phrase *a la zaga* (equivalent to standard Spanish *en fin*) corresponds to the English phrase "in the final analysis" and means "after considering the matter for some time I have come to the conclusion that... ."

Another noteworthy archaic feature of local Spanish is the preservation of a meaning of a word that has been lost in standard Spanish. For example, *almuerzo*, which, today, means 'lunch' in standard Spanish, has preserved its medieval function in our region as a synonym of *desayuno* (breakfast). The adjective *largo* ('long' in standard Spanish) is sometimes employed in our region in the archaic sense of "much" in phrases such as *largo dinero* (considerable money).

Oral Spanish here, also, in some cases, maintains the original medieval form of certain words that have evolved somewhat in standard Spanish: *estoria* rather than *historia* ('history'), *pader* rather than *pared* ('wall'), *viente* rather than *veinte* ('twenty'), *trienta* rather than *treinta* ('thirty'), *aderredor* rather than *alrededor* ('around'), *miraglo* rather than *milagro* ('miracle'), *periglo* rather than *peligro* ('danger'), *murciégalo* rather than *murciélago* ('bat'), and *crebar* rather than *quebrar* ('to break'). In all of these cases, popular Spanish and the local Spanish vernacular remain completely faithful etymologically to the old Latin root.

Another case of vernacular and local Spanish retaining ancient usage relates to the gender of the group of nouns of Greek origen that end in "-ma." Although theirs was a masculine ending in Greek, in medieval and Golden Age Spanish all of these nouns had become feminine, in accord with general Spanish usage in which nouns ending in "a" are generally of this gender. When the Spanish language academy was established in the early 18th century, however, all of these nouns were changed back to their original gender with the exception of two that were forgotten: *trama* ('plot') and *diadema* ('diadem') remain of feminine gender today. In the popular Spanish of our region, nonetheless, this entire group of nouns is feminine: *la drama*, *la panorama*, etc.

Certainly, the very most interesting of all such features of South Texas Spanish must most definitely be the archaic variants. These are words slightly different from the standard form that are employed in addition to that found in the dictionary: *muncho* in addi-

tion to *mucho* and *vido* alongside *vio*, for example. A careful study of both medieval and colonial literary works in the original text has revealed that these variants have existed alongside the standard forms over a period of many centuries. The explanation offered by some linguists of simple *polimorfismo* or just free variation seems quite unsatisfactory.

Although these variants are routinely denounced by the Real Academia Española and by school teachers as *barbarismos* ('uncouth forms'), they nonetheless continue to be employed in the Spanish vernacular of this region. In a 1986 article, it was proposed that these variants are parallel ponderatives with a nuancing function analogous to that of the diminutive, augmentative and pejorative suffixes as well as the verb infixes of standard Spanish.[5] A local Spanish speaker was recently heard to remark, "*Tengo que tener mucha paciencia; pero la situación me preocupa muncho.*" Here the infixed variant has the function of foregrounding the key word in an emotional context, that of worry.

In the *Libro de buen amor*, both the standard form "mucho" and the variant "muncho" are present repeatedly. The standard form is much more common and is found in descriptions, whereas the variant occurs in emotional contexts. When *La Chata* offers to get the *Arcipreste* out of the cold and wet, the standard form is employed: "*Non temas, sy me das algo, que la nieve mucho moje.*" However, the protagonist's complaint in the same section about suffering from the cold contains the vaiant: "*Yo, con el muncho frío...*"[6]

Such pairing of standard forms and archaic variants is also often found with verbs of belief (*creo* and *creyo*) and observation (*vio* and *vido*). The standard form is generally far more common in both medieval literature texts and the regional vernacular. The variant is reserved in both contexts for cases of emphasis. Thus, when someone is reported as having seen a dead body floating in the river, the verb is *vido* ('he was shocked to see'). Similarly, in *El Conde Lucanor*, the standard third person singular of the past tense *vio* is used again and again. However, when a sacrilegious priest is

killed after having been observed to perform an improper observance of the mass for the benefit of a group of Moors, the variant *vido* is utilized...

> E cuando don Lorenzo Suárez esto vido...
> como él era cristiano...
> cortole la cabeza.[7]

Marked variation in the pronunciation of Spanish consonants, which is a usual feature of the phonological system of the language, undoubtedly plays a role in this pairing of standard forms and archaic variants. In syllable-final position and between vowels, consonants tend to be pronounced much less clearly or even disappear. This would explain why a word enunciated far more clearly because of its importance in a specific phrase might have a consonant that is not pronounced at all in another context in which the same word only conveys a routine meaning: *vido – vio, muncho – mucho, ansí – así, veyo – veo*. All of these pairs are found in the text of the *Libro de buen amor*, often on the very same page, and all are employed in the Spanish vernacular of South Texas.

If this analysis is correct, the popular Spanish of the Lower Rio Grande Valley preserves a highly nuanced communication structure that has been lost in standard Spanish.

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Contrabando por amor: Shooting Mexican Movies in the Rio Grande Valley

by

Rogelio Agrasanchez, Jr.

A truck full of illegal Mexicans disappears into the thick of night. Two Border Patrols are trailing behind it. Suddenly, the truck stops at a railroad crossing and a gun battle ensues. The casualties from the brutal encounter are scattered on the ground, coming to view the bodies of several "wetbacks" as well as the uniformed police officers. A musical theme is heard, while the opening titles of the movie begin to fill the screen.

In the 1970s and 1980s, spectators in Mexico and the United States flocked to theaters to watch the thrilling *frontera* adventures that the Mexican movie industry was churning out. Many of these films were shot far away from the bustling urban center of Mexico City. The preferred location was the peaceful Rio Grande Valley of Texas. This area along the international border and near the Gulf Coast provided a setting to over sixty feature-length movies. Between 1975 and 1986, a dozen production companies landed here. In addition to the dramas of illegal aliens, they turned out an array of subjects for the consumption of moviegoers.[1]

Producers had good reasons for making films outside of Mexico. To begin with, they wanted to avoid the pressure of the bureaucracy and labor unions, which required them to hire a large workforce. A movie could be made with only the indispensable union members and in a shorter time if shot north of the Rio Grande. Since the settings (buildings, farms, and natural surroundings) were offered free, an additional reduction in cost was possible. The *frontera* atmosphere needed for this type of films also made producers appreciative of the region. Where else could they find a waterway, bridges connecting two countries and watchful im-

migration officers? Here they had no problem in getting the real stuff: border patrol vehicles, uniforms and guns for the action scenes of *Mojados*, *Las braceras* or *El muro de la tortilla*.

My father, Rogelio Agrasánchez Linage, was one of the first producers from Mexico City who came to the Rio Grande Valley to work. Before getting here, his company, Producciones Fílmicas Agrasánchez, had completed several *lucha libre* and horror films in Mexico and Central America. In May of 1975, his team crossed the International Bridge at Reynosa and immediately started shooting *Nobleza Ranchera*, under the direction of Arturo Martínez. The cast included some of the most popular stars: singer Juan Gabriel, Verónica Castro, Eleazar García "*Chelelo*," and the legendary *abuelita* of Mexican cinema, Doña Sara García. This was a romantic story of ranch life, adorned with many songs made popular by Juan Gabriel. The movie took less than three weeks to shoot, with locations in Weslaco, Mercedes, and Reynosa. I remember that everybody stayed at the Roadway Inn Hotel near Mercedes. The crew, which consisted of 25 people, was paid every week. One Saturday morning, I flew in from Mexico City, transporting the payroll, arriving just in time to calm down the impatient actors, crewmembers, and hotel cashier.

Before the end of the year, *Producciones Agrasánchez* finished three more movies in the Valley. All of them featured Cornelio Reyna, a *ranchera* singer who was selling a lot of records back then. Cornelio was not precisely a glamorous or sophisticated star, but his straightforward lyrics surely struck an emotional chord among audiences. It was no wonder that his name on the marquees of theaters attracted huge crowds. Thus, he appeared, alongside singer Lola Beltrán, in *Me Caíste del Cielo*, a movie in which Cornelio played a fireman. It showed many Weslaco sights, such as streets, cafes, and the Weslaco fire station. City Commissioners and residents gave ample support to this project, offering their businesses and homes for the shooting of some scenes. *El Andariego* and *El Norteño Enamorado* were the other Cornelio Reyna vehicles produced by Agrasánchez in 1975. The seasoned comedian Adalberto Martínez

"*Resortes*" provided the comic relief in *El Andariego*, which was shot in McAllen. This movie included scenes taken at the downtown *Cine El Rey*. My brother Julio César played the role of a youngster in *Me Caíste del Cielo* and *El Norteño Enamorado*.

The Valley began to be populated by other filmmakers from Mexico. Rubén and Pedro Galindo, Jr., descendants of a family of movie pioneers, wasted no time in coming here, in October of 1975. Their company, *Filmadora Chapultepec*, produced *Los Desarraigados*, a story of undocumented workers, that included in its cast Mario Almada, Pedro Infante Jr., and Rosa Gloria Chagoyán. The Galindos shot this movie in Brownsville. On October 26, the local paper publicized a photograph taken during the filming showing actress Blanca Torres and director Rubén Galindo at work. The Galindo family decided to stay in the region to do more films. They were very active, generating more than thirty titles over a period of ten years.

Arturo Martínez, director of *Nobleza Ranchera*, also grasped the potential of the Valley for movie making. As the head of *Producciones Potosí*, he partnered with two local theater impresarios, Miguel and Héctor Benítez, and started filming *Deportados* (1975). Subsequently, Martínez and his associates crafted a very successful thriller: *Contrabando y Traición* (aka *Camelia la Texana*). It starred Ana Luisa Peluffo in the role of a seductive woman who runs a drug smuggling business. Valentín Trujillo played her right-hand man. Locations for the film included Roma, Texas, and other towns in Tamaulipas. The sequel, *Mataron a Camelia la Texana* was also made by Potosí and shot in Mercedes.

Meanwhile, in Mexico City, the film industry saw the rise of three union-backed production companies: Conacine, Conacite I, and Conacite II. The government supported these workers' cooperatives and injected a lot of money in projects that were deemed "prestigious". *Foxtrot*, for example, was an expensive co-production with France and Switzerland, directed by Arturo Ripstein. This drama, about a group of aristocrats who escape the horrors

of war in Europe only to find death on a deserted island, starred Peter O'Toole, Charlotte Rampling, and Max Von Sydow. In the same fashion, films like *Coronación* and *La Pasión Según Berenice* targeted the more educated public. The industry's cooperatives put together a wide variety of films. A few of them gained international recognition, while others, such as *Sobrevivientes de los Andes* were commercially successful. Yet, 75% of profits came from films that dealt with illegal aliens, border mafias, and smuggling, etc.[2]

It was no secret that the Mexican government disliked the blunt commercialism of producers, whom officials perceived as being more interested in their pocket books that in making quality films. In April of 1975, President Luis Echeverría gave a speech calling for producers to leave the industry in the hands of the government. He further instructed his brother Rodolfo Echeverría, who was the head of the Film Bank, to cut off loans to companies unwilling to promote a new cinema. Many filmmakers looked for financing somewhere else, being careful to invest in projects that could turn out a profit fast. Fortunately, they received the support of Spanish-language film distributors in the United States. Azteca Films, Columbia Pictures, and other companies relied on commercial formulas; their films targeted an audience that was for the most part unsophisticated. As a result, they channeled funds to producers who could provide them with movies full of action, romance, and music.

Like other newcomers, my father found the Valley quite attractive, not only because of its suitability for movie making but also because of its unique blend of cultures. Very soon, he settled with the family in the inconspicuous town of Los Fresnos. Our home lay near a Resaca, providing excellent scenery for films like *Mojados*, *El Zorro Blanco*, *Discotec Fin de Semana* and others. Coming to mind is the opening sequence of *Mojados*, taken at night in the back of my house. The narrative has several "wetbacks" furtively crossing the waters and reaching the American side. In an aggressive manner, Border patrolmen tell them to go back to their country. Next, they give them a welcome of bullets. We hear gunshots and see

terrible things. All of the Mexicans are killed except Juan (played by Jorge Rivero), who escapes. The men responsible for the massacre spend the rest of the movie trying to capture him.

Action scenes called for the use of two and, sometimes, three cameras. These were standard 35 mm. Arriflex cameras. That night, they brought in powerful equipment to light up a large extension of land, including the Resaca. The team stayed busy for several hours: setting up the generator, illuminating the place, rehearsing the actors and extras, and, finally, filming the sequence. The following day, they came back to work inside the house, which they converted into the headquarters of a mafia boss. In one scene, Jorge Rivero is in danger and escapes from the house, running through a glass door. Of course, he did not suffer any harm, thanks to the special "sugar" glass used in the scene.

Mojados focuses on the plight of Juan García, a victim of corrupt Border Patrol officers. Juan is on the run; the crooked officers want to eliminate him because he can testify against them. A girl friend counsels him to return to Mexico, but instead he decides to fight back to avenge the deaths of his companions. Juan meets a Chicano newspaper reporter. Together they set out to expose the illegal dealings of high U.S. government officials and agricultural barons. Some of the villains are put in prison. Unfortunately, Juan is gunned down just before he is to appear in court to give his testimony. The movie concludes with the appalling scene of his assassination. As opposed to the usual Hollywood happy ending, there seems to be no hope in the Mexican narrative. Still, audiences appreciated the realism of the film.

Upon its release in 1979, *Mojados* became a box office hit. Long lines were a usual sight outside theaters. In Houston, Texas, the movie played at the Don Gordon Theater, breaking all the records. On a Sunday alone, it made $29,000 dollars. The rewarding results drove my father to make *Las Braceras* and *Braceras y Mojados*, using Valley locations. The story of *Las Braceras* was even more sensational, containing scenes in which two Border patrol-

men rape a young woman. Noé Murayamma and Quintín Bulnes played the crooked officers; Maritza Olivares took the role of the illegal Mexican girl. Advertising for this film made ample use of this shocking image. The posters outside of theaters showed two members of *la migra* stripping off their victim right on the shores of the Rio Grande.

Near the end of shooting for *Las Braceras*, on August 8, 1980, news came that a hurricane was approaching the Texas coast. Allen became the "second-strongest hurricane of the century," and crew-members were so scared that they immediately left the Valley. A few daring actors stayed in the hotel in Brownsville. However, when the winds began to show their strength, movie star Maritza Olivares panicked. She demanded that the company hire a plane to take her out of this nightmare. When the production manager told her it was too late to do anything, she furiously attacked him. The beleaguered man had no choice but to throw her in the pool.

The twenty-five-year-old Maritza Olivares was a popular and attractive actress. She played one of the leads in *Discotec Fin de Semana*, another Agrasánchez production shot in the Valley. The movie's plot revolves around the lives of young people and their passion for dancing. A group of young performers that included Silvia Pasquel, Anaís de Melo, Patricia Rivera and Fernando Sáenz were part of the cast. My brother Alex, a Los Fresnos High School student, came out in the movie too. He portrayed a teen-ager who falls in love with a girl but is too shy to propose to her. Encouraged by friends who insist he looks like John Travolta, he overcomes his timidity and wins the girl's heart.

It is evident that *Discotec Fin de Semana* owed its inspiration to two Hollywood classics: *Saturday Night Fever* and *Grease*, which were released in 1978. The Mexican movie even featured American tunes like "Don't Take Away That Music", "Dance, Dance, Dance", "Boogie Nights" and "Singing in the Rain." Shooting locations for this film included Brownsville (Boccaccio 2000 Discotheque), Los Fresnos (Los Fresnos High School) and Corpus Christi (down-

town streets). It succeeded in blending the scenery of all these sites, making it look like everything happens in the same place. For instance, a nighttime car race between two rivals starts in busy avenues with high-rise buildings and ends in Brownsville's Boccaccio 2000 Disco. To get the background of a big city, the crew went to Corpus Christi to shoot the car race in downtown streets. An experienced stuntman from Los Angeles came specifically to do a car crash sequence. When the movie premiered in Brownsville at the Benítez Cinema, a crowd of youngsters filled the theater. Many came from Matamoros, also lured by the disco craze.

Producers were perennially looking for fresh ideas that could be turned into profitable movies. Border contraband, "wetbacks," and disco music furnished topics of wide appeal. But more exotic subjects could be undertaken. The masked-hero formula, which had proven extremely successful in the past, was again considered. Thus, *Producciones Agrasánchez* brought to Texas the legendary wrestlers Blue Demon, *Mil Máscaras*, and *El Santo*, who joined efforts to investigate weird happenings in *Misterio en las Bermudas*.

South Padre Island provided a perfect setting for this science-fiction story that exploited the universal interest in the Bermuda Triangle. Filming took place in September of 1977. Crewmembers and artists spent three weeks in the Valley working hard six days a week. They stayed at the Padre South Hotel. Two of the wrestlers, Santo and Blue Demon, kept their identity secret all the time. Nobody saw them around without their masks on. *Mil Máscaras*, on the other hand, did not let his public persona interfere with daily life. The imposing athlete preferred to leave the mask in his room when he was not in front of the camera or performing in the arena. Santo would sometimes take a break too. But, of course, nobody noticed. The famous wrestler, it is said, would sneak out of his room wearing no mask, walk down the stairs avoiding the elevator, and use the emergency exit in the back of the hotel. Only then was he free to go shopping, mixing with the crowd at Amigoland Mall.

The Bahia Mar Resort Hotel, with its distinctive architecture that included "spaceship-like" round windows, functioned very well for this type of movie. The scenes shot there depicted a mysterious place in the depths of the ocean where people live in peace and never age. The inhabitants of this place dress in silver costumes and are shown roaming the gardens of this Utopia. The film's director, Gilberto Martínez Solares, probably had a shortage of players because he posed as the ruler of this submerged world. Surely the guards at his side were members of the staff. *Misterio en las Bermudas* has plenty of action; however, its plot lacks coherence and is sometimes puzzling. It crowds in too many events: a foreign intrigue to kidnap an Iranian Princess; a beauty trying to find his scientist father; people living in a submerged city; and, finally, the three wrestlers vanishing in the middle of the ocean. Still, audiences found it enjoyable: it gave them the last opportunity to watch the famous wrestlers on the big screen.

Just as other companies, *Producciones Agrasánchez* used local talent to complement the casting of movies. Rebeca Sexton, a Brownsville resident, appeared as one of the luscious bikini-clad girls in *Misterio en las Bermudas*. Others seen in this film were former immigration officer Don A. Yarbrough and Matamoros Professor Rolando Cabrera, who took the role of a scientist. Included in the cast of *Mojados* were Frank Quintanilla, then a loan officer of Los Fresnos State Bank, and Ralph Cowen, a Brownsville car dealer. My brother David, who was executive producer in all the Agrasánchez productions, portrayed an immigration officer in the same movie. Another brother, René, played a minor character in *El Zorro Blanco* and *La Banda del Polvo Maldito*. Even newspaper reporters and pest control crews were eager to stand in front of the camera ready to do whatever the script required.

Meanwhile, the Galindo's *Filmadora Chapultepec* continued making all kinds of films. Their production strategy put trendy subjects at the top of the list, "from *lloraderas* or 'tearjerkers' (*La Esperanza de los Pobres*), and illegal-alien dramas (*La Noche del Ku-Klux-Klan*) to drug-running adventures (*La Banda del Carro Rojo*) and horror

films (*Cementerio del Terror*)."[3] Rubén Galindo directed most of the movies for Filmadora Chapultepec. In 1981, Pedro Galindo III debuted as director with *La Muerte del Palomo*. Rubén Galindo Jr. also came to the Valley and directed the "splatter" film *Cementerio del Terror*. Being efficient was of utmost importance for the Galindos, who consequently built their own back lot on a ten-acre ranch just outside of Brownsville. They simulated scenery from jungle to desert in that same space. Finally, to save money in hotel expenses they installed mobile homes in their property providing living quarters for crewmembers.

In September of 1976, a Brownsville paper reported on some scenes taken outside the Cameron County Courthouse for *El Llanto de los Pobres*. This Galindo production was described as "a comedy revolving around a person who serves his time in prison and then is released." Cornelio Reyna participated as co-producer and also played the leading role. According to the newspaper, 75 percent of the movie was filmed at the Conquistador Apartments. Other scenes were shot "at the Continental Trailways bus station, Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Ramada Inn, Las Palmas Condominiums and Border Britches, and at the Port Isabel City Jail."[4]

The Galindos used the Cameron County Sheriff's office as a location for *La Muerte del Soplón*. This film was a sequel to *La Banda del Carro Rojo* (1976) and told the story of a drug smuggling gang. It featured Pedro Infante Jr., Patricia Rivera, and *Los Tigres del Norte*. On June 1, 1977, the *Brownsville Herald* publicized a few facts of interest under the heading "Lights! Cameras! Action!" At an interview, Rubén Galindo said that the *Soplón*, "or stool pigeon, is played by Baltazar Guzmán, who in real life is a Matamoros police agent." He also mentioned that Sylvia Claxton Nigg was a 23-year-old Brownsville girl making her debut in this film. The newspaper added: "The cost of filming a movie in Brownsville, with amateur actors and all 'live' locations? About $150,000 said director Galindo".[5]

Calling Pedro Infante, Jr., an "amateur actor" was a rather inaccurate statement. The young artist had already appeared in at least eight movies and did not work for free in any of them. Infante first came to the Valley to perform in *La Banda del Carro Rojo*, a box-office hit of *Filmadora Chapultepec*. He made about twelve movies here, the majority of them being Galindo productions. *La Muerte del Soplón*'s Patricia Rivera could not be considered as amateur either. She had been in a number of films before, sometimes getting credit as co-star.

Starting in 1979, the Galindos filmed a string of melodramas and adventure stories featuring child actors. Some of them were *La Niña de la Mochila Azul, La Esperanza de los Pobres, La Mugrosita* and *La Niña de los Hoyitos*. Pedrito Fernández, María Rebeca, and Adalberto Martínez "*Resortes*" starred in *La Niña de la Mochila Azul.* Pedrito and María Rebeca played two school children living on the Texas coast. "*Resortes*" characterized the girl's uncle (Tío Andrew), an old fisherman who is prey to alcoholism. After some incidents, Andrew reforms and wants to return to fishing for a living. Since nobody in town is willing to lend him a hand, the children join him as his crew. This sentimental story, which benefited from Pedrito Fernández's singing ability, turned out to be one of the most popular films when released.

The exhibition of *La Niña de la Mochila Azul* in the United States represented a benchmark for the producers. The film was released in 1981, a year that saw several Mexican movies generating large profits at the box office. This trend grabbed the attention of some analysts. Joe Leydon, writing for the *Dallas Morning News*, explained the appeal of Mexican motion pictures. Among other things he wrote: "A look at the reported grosses of Mexican movies in Texas theaters offers an indication of just how popular these movies are in the Lone Star state. *La Niña de la Mochila Azul* (*The Girl with the Blue Knapsack*), a film starring teen-age singer-actor Pedrito Fernández, racked up a $192,000 gross in the Texas area. ('Gross' refers to the money received by the distributor; the

amount taken in at theater box offices can be more than twice the amount of the gross...)."[6]

Following the film's success, the Galindos decided to do a follow-up: *La Niña de la Mochila Azul, 2a parte*. This story also had Pedrito, María Rebeca, and "*Resortes*" in the leading roles. Here the children become fascinated by a fantastic tale about a hidden treasure in an island. They candidly set sail to the island where several adventures await them. A "jungle" with wild animals was faked on the property of the Galindos. The script also demanded the sinking of the children's boat. Technicians working for *Filmadora Chapultepec* were in charge of simulating a storm at sea. They built a huge slide from which thousands of gallons of water were poured down to make the effect of violent waves. Making some of the film's scenes represented a challenge for the producers.

But perhaps the biggest trial for the Galindos came when the Immigration and Naturalization Service interrupted one of their movies. In the summer of 1985, authorities detained several people working on the set who did not have the proper visas. The new laws limited the number of crewmembers coming from Mexico. But the Galindos argued that they could not find local film technicians to do the required work. A magazine reported: "To bring in union labor from Hollywood, at a cost of thousands of dollars a week, would be prohibitive [as the Galindos] pay their own people $100 a week plus room and board."[7]

Frankly, some of the personnel that came to the Valley to do films did so illegally. I remember the anecdote of two lads that left their homes in Guatemala to work in one of my father's movies. They tried to get a visa at the Brownsville International Bridge but authorities rejected them. These daring young men waited until dark and swam across the Rio Grande. The following morning they joined the movie as electricians. People like them earned more money here than at home and were happy to work day and night if necessary.

Matamoros and Reynosa also became suitable locations for filmmakers. In 1977, *Producciones Agrasánchez* had several projects

going on in Texas and Tamaulipas. Besides producing *Caballo Prieto Afamado, De Cocula es el Mariachi, Misterio en las Bermudas* and *Mojados* in the Rio Grande Valley, this company shot *Las del Talón* in Reynosa and two more movies in Matamoros: *Que Te Vaya Bonito* and *La Banda del Polvo Maldito.*

Valentín Trujillo and Hilda Aguirre starred in the last film as the romantic couple that is pitted against vicious guys. Trujillo played an undercover police officer searching for a mysterious drug lord. Only after killing the criminal does the officer know it was his own father. Matamoros's *La Prensa* reported on the filming of *La Banda del Polvo Maldito*. But it regretted that movies like this one would focus on "the contraband and narcotics that made Matamoros famous in the past."[8] On the other hand, another local paper congratulated the producers, "who risk their money in a movie, increasing business in purchases and salaries and also providing jobs to people." The same columnist added: "*Polvo Maldito* has a message so that [people] do not to continue messing around with drugs [...] A word of alert to everyone to stay away from the ugly vice of drugs and to combat the evil of this age: drug addiction."[9]

Filmmaking became irresistible for local entrepreneurs. The brothers Miguel and Héctor Benítez enthusiastically embraced the projects of the Mexican movie companies. Some of the films co-produced by the Benítez were *Deportados, La Banda del Polvo Maldito, Caballo Prieto Afamado* and *Contrabando por Amor*. Miguel and Héctor were the most influential exhibitors in the Valley. They had several Spanish-language movie theaters, among them the Alameda (Edinburg), El Capitán (Pharr), El Grande (Harlingen) and the Wes-Mer Drive-in (Mercedes). In the 1980s, this enterprising family opened a duplex theater in Brownsville: the Benítez Cinema I and II.

Rubén Benavides, a very popular radio and T.V. show host in the Valley, loved the movies too. He had been playing assorted roles in some of the films made by Agrasánchez and the Galindos. In 1978 he decided to try his luck producing, directing and co-

starring in *Treinta Segundos Para Morir*. This action movie featured the famous Almada brothers, Mario and Fernando. Benavides and the Almadas played three friends that run a smuggling business and use a Texas nightclub as their headquarters. The story took inspiration on the song "Los Tres Grandes Amigos", a *corrido* by Ramiro Cavazos and José Villalobos. *Los Tigres del Norte*, *Los Cadetes de Linares*, and *Los Clásicos de A. Pulido* performed other songs in the film. Rubén Benavides later participated in *La Coralillo*, where he played a priest. Singer Luciana, Ana Luisa Peluffo, and Pedro Infante Jr. were also cast in this 1980 film, shot in Reynosa. Luciana interpreted a famous cabaret singer called La Coralillo, who is killed by one of her lovers at the end of the story. Ironically, a few months later the same fate befell Luciana. This time, a jealous husband shot her to death.

Several other people came to the Valley to do an occasional film. Besides Rafael Rosales, who entered a partnership to make *El Norteño Enamorado*, Luis Bekris of *Producciones Internacionales de América* shot *Con el Odio en la Piel* in McAllen. Alfonso Rosas Priego also arrived here, bringing with him a crew for the production of *Me Lleva la Tristeza*. The film, directed by Alfredo B. Crevenna, starred singer Beatriz Adriana, Pedro Infante, Jr., and Eric del Castillo. This drama about two Anglos who harass people of Mexican origin included locations in Harlingen and other Valley sites. I recently watched *Me Lleva la Tristeza* on Television and found it representative of the *frontera* genre. Apart from showing several familiar sights, it has an engaging plot mixing romance, songs, and a good share of racial conflict.

More than thirty years after their original release, these films still have an appeal. Beyond their merit as entertainment, they remind us of the myths created around *la frontera*. For endless generations, the border has attracted Mexicans. And there was even a time when they came here to make movies. This story has seldom been documented. Yet it is worthwhile to look back and rediscover how the Rio Grande Valley was turned into a dream factory for millions of people.

Movies Shot in the Rio Grande Valley, Texas, and Mexican Border Cities, 1975-1986:

1. **Nobleza ranchera** (Arturo Martínez, 1975)
Producciones Fílmicas Agrasánchez
Shooting: May 19-30, 1975
Locations: Weslaco, Mercedes, Donna.

2. **Me caíste del cielo** (Federico Curiel, 1975)
Producciones Fílmicas Agrasánchez
Shooting: September 15-October 2, 1975
Locations: Weslaco.

3. **Deportados** (Arturo Martínez, 1975)
Producciones Potosí, Benítez Brothers
Shooting: Starting on September 30, 1975
Locations: Weslaco, McAllen.

4. **El andariego** (Federico Curiel, 1975)
Producciones Fílmicas Agrasánchez
Shooting: October 5-19, 1975
Locations: McAllen.

5. **Los desarraigados** (Rubén Galindo Sr., 1975)
Filmadora Chapultepec
Shooting: October 22-November ?, 1975
Locations: Brownsville, Port Isabel, Padre Island.

6. **El norteño enamorado** (Gilberto Martínez Solares, 1975)
Producciones Fílmicas Agrasánchez
Shooting: October 27-November 14, 1975
Locations: Mercedes, and Querétaro, Mexico.

7. **Contrabando y traición** (Arturo Martínez, 1976)
Producciones Potosí
Shooting: January 1976
Locations: Tamaulipas, Mexico; Roma and Río Grande City.

8. **El Cuatro Dedos** (Alfredo B. Crevenna, 1976)

Películas Latinoamericanas
Shooting: Starting on March 17, 1976
Locations: Ciudad Alemán, Tamps.; Roma.

9. **La banda del carro rojo** (Rubén Galindo Sr., 1976)
Filmadora Chapultepec
Shooting: April 15-May 3, 1976
Locations: Brownsville.

10. **La hija de nadie** (Tito Novaro, 1976)
Producciones del Rey; Arnulfo Delgado
Shooting: May 1976
Locations: Brownsville.

11. **El llanto de los pobres** (Rubén Galindo Sr., 1976)
Filmadora Chapultepec & Cornelio Reyna
Shooting: August 1976
Locations: Brownsville, Harlingen.

12. **Mataron a Camelia la Texana** (Arturo Martínez, 1976)
Producciones Potosí
Shooting: Starting on November 8, 1976
Locations: Mercedes.

13. **Caballo prieto afamado** (Gilberto Martínez Solares, 1976)
Producciones Filmícas Agrasánchez
Shooting: March 24-April 11, 1977
Locations: Los Fresnos.

14. **Alguien tiene que morir** (Alfredo B. Crevenna)
Acuario Films
Shooting: April 1977
Locations: Roma.

15. **De Cocula es el mariachi** (Gilberto Martínez Solares, 1977)
Producciones Fílmicas Agrasánchez
Shooting: April 15-May 2, 1977
Locations: McAllen.

16. **La muerte del soplón** (Rubén Galindo Sr., 1977)
Filmadora Chapultepec
Shooting: May 1977
Locations: Brownsville.

17. **Que te vaya bonito** (Alejandro Galindo, 1977)
Producciones Fílmicas Agrasánchez
Shooting: July 18-August 11, 1977
Locations: Matamoros, Tamps.

18. **La banda del polvo maldito** (Gilberto Martínez Solares, 1977)
Producciones Fílmicas Agrasánchez
Shooting: August 12-September 2, 1977
Locations: Matamoros, Tamps.

19. **Misterio en las Bermudas** (Gilberto Martínez Solares, 1977)
Producciones Fílmicas Agrasánchez
Shooting: September 6-27, 1977
Locations: Port Isabel, South Padre Island.

20. **Los dos amigos** (Rubén Galindo Sr., 1977)
Filmadora Chapultepec
Shooting: Starting on October 17, 1977
Locations: Brownsville.

21. **Las del talón** (Alejandro Galindo, 1977)
Producciones Fílmicas Agrasánchez
Shooting: October 10-November 4, 1977
Locations: Reynosa, Tamps.

22. **El hijo del palenque** (Rubén Galindo Sr., 1977)
Filmadora Chapultepec
Shooting: November 1977
Locations: Brownsville.

23. **Mojados/Wetbacks** (Alejandro Galindo Sr., 1978)
Producciones Fílmicas Agrasánchez
Shooting: November 29, 1977-January 7, 1978
Locations: Brownsville, Los Fresnos.

24. **La noche del Ku Klux Klan** (Rubén Galindo Sr., 1978)
Filmadora Chapultepec
Shooting: March 1978
Locations: Brownsville.

25. **El zorro blanco** (José Luis Urquieta, 1978)
DAL
Shooting: August 1978
Locations: Brownsville, Los Fresnos, South Padre Island.

26. **Discotec fin de semana** (José Luis Urquieta, 1978)
Producciones Fílmicas Agrasánchez
Shooting: September 28-November 1, 1978
Locations: Brownsville, Los Fresnos, Corpus Christi.

27. **Verano salvaje** (Enrique Gómez Vadillo, 1978)
Producciones Acuario/Filmadora Chapultepec
Shooting: Starting on November 8, 1978
Locations: Padre Island.

28. **Contrabando por amor** (Fernando Durán Rojas, 1978)
Producciones Fílmicas Agrasánchez
Shooting: November 23-December 14, 1978
Locations: San Benito, Weslaco, Brownsville.

29. **Treinta segundos para morir** (Rubén Benavides, 1978)
Filmadora Mor Ben
Shooting: N/A
Locations: Brownsville.

30. **La niña de la mochila azul** (Rubén Galindo Sr., 1979)
Filmadora Chapultepec
Shooting: March 12-April 6, 1979
Locations: Brownsville.

31. **El oreja rajada** (Rubén Galindo Sr., 1979)
Filmadora Chapultepec
Shooting: Started on June 20, 1979
Locations: Brownsville.

32. **El preso número 9** (Alfredo B. Crevenna, 1979)
Cineproducciones Internacionales
Shooting: Starting October 15, 1979
Locations: Brownsville, Weslaco.

33. **357 Magnum** (Rubén Galindo Jr., 1979)
Filmadora Chapultepec
Shooting: October 22-November 16, 1979
Locations: Brownsville.

34. **Soy madre soltera** (Rubén Galindo Sr., 1979)
Filmadora Mor Ben
Shooting: N/A
Locations: Texas.

35. **Herencia de muerte** (José Luis Urquieta, 1980)
Películas Latinoamericanas, Reynosa Films
Shooting: N/A
Locations: Reynosa, Tamps.

36. **La coralillo** (Javier Durán, 1980)
Filmadora Mor Ben
Shooting: N/A
Locations: Reynosa, Tamps.

37. **El rey de los albures** (Rafael Portillo, 1980)
International Films
Shooting: Starting on March 24, 1980
Locations: Brownsville.

38. **El muro de la tortilla** (Alfredo B. Crevenna, 1980)
Acuario Films
Shooting: N/A
Locations: Tamaulipas border.

39. **El canto de los humildes** (Federico Curiel, 1980)
Producciones del Rey
Shooting: May 1980
Locations: Brownsville.

40. **Se solicitan mojados** (Rafael Portillo, 1980)
International Films
Shooting: March 22-April 10, 1980
Locations: Brownsville.

41. **Las braceras** (Fernando Durán Rojas, 1980)
Producciones Fílmicas Agrasánchez
Shooting: July 14-August 8, 1980
Locations: Brownsville.

42. **La esperanza de los pobres** (Rubén Galindo Sr., 1980)
Galubi/Filmadora Chapultepec
Shooting: July 14-August 14, 1980
Locations: Brownsville.

43. **El ladrón fenómeno** (Rubén Galindo Sr., 1980)
International Films
Shooting: August 16-September 12, 1980
Locations: Brownsville.

44. **La mugrosita** (Rubén Galindo Sr., 1980)
Galubi/Cameron Films
Shooting: October 20-November 14, 1980
Locations: Brownsville.

45. **La niña de la mochila azul 2** (Rubén Galindo Sr., 1980)
Galubi/International Films
Shooting: November 17-December 10, 1980
Locations: Brownsville

46. **Me lleva la tristeza** (Alfredo B. Crevenna, 1981)
Producciones Rosas Priego
Shooting: February 9-March 7, 1981
Locations: several spots in the RGV; Harlingen.

47. **La muerte del palomo** (Pedro Galindo III, 1981)
International Films
Shooting: June 22-July 24, 1981
Locations: Brownsville (and Texcoco, Mexico).

48. **Sólo para damas** (Fernando Durán Rojas, 1981)
Producciones Fílmicas Agrasánchez
Shooting: October 5-31, 1981
Locations: Brownsville.

49. **Gatilleros del Río Bravo** (Pedro Galindo III, 1981)
Filmadora Chapultepec
Shooting: November 16-December 12, 1981
Locations: Brownsville.

50. **Caballo alazán lucero** (Jaime Fernández, 1981)
Producciones Fílmicas Agrasánchez
Shooting: November 9-December 4, 1981
Locations: Brownsville, Los Fresnos.

51. **La niña de los hoyitos** (Rubén Galindo Sr., 1982)
Galubi/Cameron Films
Shooting: July 12-August 7, 1982
Locations: Brownsville

52. **El padre Trampitas** (Pedro Galindo III, 1982)
International Films
Shooting: April 12-May 7, 1982
Locations: Brownsville.

53. **El superpolicía ochoochenta** (Pedro Galindo III, 1982)
International Films
Shooting: May 10-28, 1982
Locations: Brownsville.

54. **Ando volando bajo** (Rubén Galindo Sr., 1982)
Galubi
Shooting: June 7-July 3, 1982
Locations: Brownsville.

55. **Hombre de acción** (Rubén Galindo Sr., 1982)
Galubi
Shooting: July 1-31, 1982
Locations: Brownsville.

56. **Con el odio en la piel** (Rafael Villaseñor, 1983)
Producciones Internacionales de América
Shooting: July 25-August 27, 1983
Locations: Brownsville.

57. **La muerte del chacal** (Pedro Galindo III, 1983)
Filmadora Chapultepec
Shooting: July 27-August 15, 1983
Locations: Brownsville.

58. **Lobo salvaje** (Rubén Galindo Sr., 1983)
Galubi/Dynamic Productions
Shooting: August 29-September 29, 1983
Locations: Brownsville.

59. **La banda de la sotana negra** (José Loza, 1983)
Producciones Fílmicas Agrasánchez
Shooting: October-November 1983
Locations: Matamoros, Tamps.

60. **Braceras y mojados** (Alfredo B. Crevenna, 1983)
Producciones Fílmicas Agrasánchez
Shooting: November 21-December 9, 1983
Locations: Brownsville.

61. **Siete en la mira** (Pedro Galindo III, 1984)
Producciones Casa Blanca
Shooting: November 1-December 3, 1984
Locations: Brownsville.

62. **Cementerio del terror** (Rubén Galindo Jr., 1984)
Dynamic Films/Torrente
Shooting: N/A
Locations: Brownsville.

63. **Víctimas de la pobreza** (Francisco Guerrero, 1986)
Eco Films/Ulises P. Aguirre
Shooting: N/A

Locations: Brownsville in the RGV; Austin, Dallas in Texas; Mexico City.

Endnotes

1 Rogelio Agrasánchez, Jr. *Más Cine Mexicano. Sensational Movie Posters: 1957-1990* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2007).

2 Emilio García Riera. *Historia de la producción cinematográfica mexicana: 1977-1980* (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 2005).

3 David Theis. "Hollywood on the Rio Grande," *Texas Monthly*, August 1987, pp. 118-120.

4 "Film Crew Works at Courthouse," *Brownsville Herald*, September 3, 1976, p. 12-A.

5 J.E.P. "Lights, Camera, Action", *Brownsville Herald*, June 1, 1977, p. 2-A.

6 Joe Leydon. "Spanish Spoken at movie houses," *Dallas Morning News*, August 9, 1981, p. 1-C.

7 David Theis. *Ibid.*

8 *"La Industria Fílmica Está Proyectando la Ciudad," La Prensa*, Matamoros, Tamps. August 31, 1977.

9 Unidentified newspaper of Matamoros, Tamaulipas, August 1977.

Rapid Ethnographic Assessment of Brownsville-Matamoros Concerning the Development of a Palo Alto National Historic Battlefield Site

by

Antonio Noé Zavaleta-Reid and Rodolfo R. Flores

> This was the first war in which the United States took part outside the continental U.S. It started on this side of the river at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma with a cannonade at Fort Brown. This site is critical to our history for many reasons including the fact that these battles were the only three fought on U.S. soil.
>
> – Bruce Ansel Aiken, United States

The end of colonial rule in northeastern New Spain began the area's 40 years of territorial dispute marked by military intervention, (1810-1850). This tumultuous period culminated in the United States' invasion of sovereign Mexico at the Nueces River followed by a provocation on the Mexican military fort at Matamoros today known as the Casa Mata. By all accounts what was touted as a simple and quick victory for the American armed forces turned into a protracted and bloody war culminating with the Treaty of Guadalupe in 1848. The Treaty established the international boundary with Mexico at the Rio Grande River where Fort Brown was established and the City of Brownsville, Texas, was founded around 1850.

> The *Guerra con los Americanos* was not unjust or otherwise, it was caused by self-interest. The Americans pursued a way to increase their wealth.
>
> – Tomás De León Chavira, México

Historians debate the rationale for the war, but both American and Mexican scholars agree that the growing giant to the north

had by this time set its sights on a concept of Manifest Destiny. The United States would not be denied the religio-political extension of its boundary to the Pacific Ocean on the west and to the Canadian border on the northwest. The Treaty's shifting of landmass at the end of the war was so massive that it swept away approximately one-half of Mexico's land mass.

> It's important to study the war because the final outcome could be the elimination of the bad impression left on a country that was dispossessed of much of its territory, ending the arrogant attitude of a country that caused it and by establishing sincere avenues of friendship.
>
> – Father Monsignor Roberto
> Ramírez Hernández, México

The Mexican border town of Matamoros, Tamaulipas, while not one of the original Escandón settlements, was founded shortly after 1750 (It first went under other names). By the time of the Mexican War, Matamoros had been established and had been steadily growing for approximately 100 years. Five generations of Spaniards, Mexicans, Anglos, French, Germans, and others occupied the town approximately 25 miles from the coast. At that time, Matamoros was a major seaport of entry as well as a hub for overland routes to the interior of México and the capital. Simply stated, Matamoros and its principal families prospered, and their future looked bright.

> It's important to study the war because without remembering our past we cannot see where we are going in the future. Part of this project is to see about the bicultural effect we are going to have with our friends and neighbors. We are going to hurt people's feelings by bringing up old wounds.
>
> – Betty Pace Dodd, United States

As the momentous 19th century closed, Matamoros and Brownsville had had a half century to nurture a prosperous symbiotic relationship bonded by family, blood, and trade. However, just beneath the surface of socio-cultural propriety lay the festering memory of a war that cast brother against brother and symbolized the loss of national and familial patrimony. The bitterness produced by the Mexican War could be set aside by the well-to-do who had mostly made up their losses of land and fortune, while the poor and landless knew no better.

> My grandfather, Steven Powers, was an attorney for General Taylor and he ended up staying here and became Mayor of Brownsville.
>
> – Frances Powers Wagner, United States

The initial battles of the war were fought on the battlefields at Palo Alto and the Resaca de las Palma, both located in the northeastern quadrant of the City of Brownsville, in southern Cameron County, just two miles apart as the crow flies. At the time of the battle, the combat took place on the low prairies and salt flats between the Brazos Santiago Pass and the river. Today, both battlefields are located in urban Brownsville, Texas, and are, for the most part, still undisturbed.

Occasional descendants, amateur historians, and "pot hunters" have walked over the site, pocketing surface artifacts. In the 1950s, when Dr. Longoria (one of the respondents in this study), purchased the grazing land of Palo Alto, as he revealed to us, his farm tractor surfaced dozens of cannon balls, which he gave away to his friends.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the first organized surface surveys were conducted by reputable archaeologists, documenting, for the first time in a little more than 100 years, where the battle-lines lay. Meanwhile, the City of Brownsville prospered, extending its boundaries to include the Resaca de la Palma battlefield, encompassing the circuitous boundary of the actual resaca, the Palo

Verde subdivision, and the Yturria polo field, from east Price Road on the south to Texas State Highway 802 on the north and principally along Coffee Port Road in what is known as the Hudson property.

> Our battlefields are important because the first battle was fought at Fort Brown that set the tone for the next day at Palo Alto and the following day at Resaca de la Palma. There was a tremendous loss of life and bloodshed by both United States and Mexican forces at these battles and those soldiers need to be honored and remembered. It's important for both countries.
>
> – Walter Edward Plitt III, United States

By the 1970s, when Brownsville developer Alton Gloor and others were constructing housing developments in the area of the battle, a notable mass grave of Mexican soldiers was uncovered near the railroad truss that runs north-south, traversing Price Road near the current Brownsville Independent School District Offices. A team of archaeologists from the University of Texas at Austin's Archaeological Research Laboratories (TARL) excavated the site, which included numerous human remains and artifacts of the Mexican army. These remains were never returned to Mexico for military burial. Today they are stored in dusty boxes at the TARL labs at the Balcones Research Center in Austin, Texas.

> This project will fail if the people of Matamoros are not included.
>
> – Yolanda González de Gómez, United States

In the 1970s, as a result of the community reawakening sparked by the major archaeological find, a number of local historians (including, notably, Yolanda González de Gómez, Walter Plitt, Bruce Aiken) began work on an application to the National Parks Service for the establishment and preservation of a National Historic Battlefield Site at Palo Alto. The application was placed

on the desk of newly-elected Congressman Solomon Ortiz, who immediately recognized its significance as a site in the continued development and recognition of Brownsville history.

> It's important, history is history and we should let bygones be bygones. Let's think about the future and how we can grow and live together, be more united and not look back to both of our country's dark pages.
>
> – Enrique Melguizo Sobrino, México

More than 20 years would pass (1970-1990), before the Congress of the United States would pass, and the President of the United States would sign, the law establishing the National Historic Battlefield Site at Brownsville, and even longer before funding would be appropriated.

> I think that the truth should be portrayed as closely as possible because sometimes there are two versions to history depending on whom it may benefit. General Taylor's crossing the Nueces River into México was a clear act of intervention and not the other way around. When the Republic of Texas separated, the border was established at the Nueces River and all of the land south was México.
>
> – Clemente Rendón de la Garza, México

In the early 1990s, in preparation for the establishment of the National Parks Service (NPS) site, the NPS commissioned a rapid ethnographic survey of the Brownsville-Matamoros community in order to assess the attitude, opinions and disposition of the bi-national community toward the creation of a site commemorating the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma. Since the site would include an interpretive component, it was deemed important to assess the sentiments of the local population before the interpretation could be completed.

> This project is important because there is no substitute for the truth and it should be as fair as possible as the facts are told. It should be a place where families can go and make something happy out of what was something tragic.
>
> – Mary Elizabeth Altman Yturria, United States

Working with the NPS, a bi-national list of significant community opinion leaders and scholars was established, and a bilingual survey instrument was created. The NPS approved both the list of community opinion leaders and the survey instrument questions before surveying commenced.

> This project is important because it underscores the bicultural aspects of our area. Because we are neighbors, it is important to look at the past and learn ways to resolve territorial disputes other than by war.
>
> – State Senator Hector Uribe, United States

A community-based bilingual field investigator, Rodolfo R. Flores, who is familiar with the cross border international community, was first trained and subsequently conducted all surveys in the field. This author, Dr. Antonio Noé Zavaleta-Reid, served as the principal investigator, supervised all activity, and completed this analysis. The survey instrument contained a total of 35 questions, including basic demographic and opinion questions. For the purpose of this paper, the responses to approximately 20 of the responses to the question were analyzed. Survey instrument questions included both objective questions, requiring a yes-no response, and subjective questions, which required the respondent to offer an opinion. Most of the critically important information from the survey may be drawn from the responses to subjective questions. The personal quotes sprinkled throughout this report are actual quotes made at the time of the survey by the respondents indicated.

> When I first came to Brownsville I didn't know anything about the battle of Palo Alto. An elderly couple by the name of Martínez was my patients and lived on the battlefield site. When the old man died, the old lady asked me to buy the land which I did That's how I came to own the Palo Alto battlefield.
>
> – Dr. Vidal Longoria, United States

Results

A total of 73 original surveys were completed during the course of a total of 85 working days. Twenty-six surveys were conducted in Spanish, including 17 males and 9 females. A total of 47 surveys were conducted in English, of 35 males and 12 females. The survey instrument contained 24 questions and all original survey instruments are extant. In addition to the significance of the individuals questioned, many of those selected – very important community leaders – are no longer living, and, therefore, make the publication of this information even more significant. At the time that the survey was conducted, in the 1990s, several of those surveyed were the grandchildren of individuals who lived in Matamoros at the time of the battles, who were landowners and actual descendants of combatants. Their perceptions, opinions, and answers to the questions were based upon the recollection of their relatives alive at the time of the Mexican-American War, and reflect invaluable testimony in this survey.

Due to unforeseeable circumstances at the time the data were collected, a final rapid ethnographic survey report was never furnished to the NPS and the contract was terminated at the request of the author. No federal funds were ever requested or received for the data-collection phase of the study, even though the survey phase was successfully completed. All expenses for data collection were borne by the contractor.

Furthermore, it was always the intention of the contractor to analyze and publish the results in the future. Twenty years have passed, but the results are no less significant than they were in the 1990s.

After 20 years, the analysis was finalized, due to the fact that the author was invited to participate in an archaeology conference to be held in Brownsville, Texas, in 2013, at which time the results of the study would be presented.

Unfortunately, the conference schedule coincided with the 2013 sequester of the Federal Government, in which the U.S. Parks Service was closed, forcing the cancellation of the Brownsville conference and re-scheduling it for a future date and location. Interest in the results of this ethnographic study remains high in the minds of scholars who study the aftermath of the Mexican American War.

This report contains the analysis of the original data, which have never been published or presented. It is important to note that the raw data were loaned to and used in support of a dissertation and book on the war by historian Dr. Michael Van Wagenen.

More than half (56.5 percent) of the 73 individuals surveyed indicated that they were members of the pioneer families of the binational region. Importantly, many of the Mexican interviewees were descendants of families who owned land on the U.S. side of the river at the time of the war.

Interestingly, while 100 percent of U.S. males and females interviewed knew of the battles and their significance to Brownsville, only half (50 percent) of Mexican males and females were aware of the battlefields' locations and proximity to the border, in that they had either relocated to Matamoros as children or as adults. While they were very much aware of the war and its significance to their nation, they did not know how close they lived to its inception.

> This project is good because we need one correct version; each country has its version.
>
> – María Ninfa Cisneros Ruiz, México

Approximately 86 percent of American males surveyed and 67 percent of American females had ancestors who lived in the area at the time of the war or whom came to the area immediately after the war. On the Mexican side, the percentage of males was equivalent to Americans, indicating that they were sons of pioneer families of Matamoros. However, only 33 percent of the Mexican females were daughters of pioneer families who married and relocated into the region.

By comparison, only 24 percent of American males and 58 percent of American females were descendants of original land-grant families. Approximately 30 percent of the Mexican males were from land-grant families while none of the Mexican females were.

Once again, most Mexican female respondents were descendants of families who were not original land owners, even though, in many cases, they could trace their family heritage back to the war in Matamoros.

> Most Mexicans who live on the U.S. side know their Mexican history, but Mexicans living in México hardly know American history.
>
> – Ofelia Lee Mancha, México

When asked if their families retained or maintained historical documents relative to the war era, approximately 50 percent of all respondents indicated that they did. Many families maintain some sort of physical artifact from the war between the U. S. and México.

Following the same trend, approximately 50 percent of all questioned in the U.S. and México indicated that their families have continuously owned land in the area since the time of the war (1845-1848), while not necessarily via land grant.

When respondents were asked if their family land holdings were affected as a result of the establishment of the international boundary at the Rio Grande River, as anticipated, U.S. respondents generally replied that they were not (16 percent males and 1 percent females). Conversely, approximately one third (29 percent) of Mexican males indicated that their family's land holdings were affected by the establishment of the international boundary. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo "guaranteed" the retention of ownership of Mexican land on the north side of the river. Although this fact is evidenced in a major way through the family of this author, whose members were large land owners both above Matamoros-Brownsville and below, the family did not lose its land due to their wealth and political activity (notably that of my great-great-grandfather General Juan Nepomuceno Cortina).

> Interpretation, you say, keep it brief and truthful.
>
> – Alfonso González Garza, México

Both the American and Mexican respondents indicated that they had actual ancestor combatants in the war. Three males and two females responded positively in this category. Interestingly, two of the three U.S. ancestors fought on the Mexican side while one fought on the U.S. side. Two female respondents had ancestors who fought on the U.S. side.

Moving the questioning to more contemporary themes, 85 percent of all respondents (U.S. and Mexican) were aware of the community/government efforts to establish a park site at Palo Alto. The lowest percentage of awareness was the 67 percent of Mexican females. This quadrant of the analysis was understandably not aware of the proximity of either battle or the community efforts to recognize it, since most were raised in the interior of México – far from the border.

This pattern continued in the next set of questions as well. Approximately all of the U.S. and Mexican males were both aware and supportive of the project (above 90 percent approval). U.S.

females responded at a similar level while the positive response of Mexican females was only 66 percent.

> This project is important because it would be a great benefit for the new generation to know their history
>
> – Salvador Castañeda, México

When asked if the two governments should collaborate in the development of an appropriate interpretation of the two battles, the collective response was 90 percent positive. Both Mexican males and females rated slightly above the positive responses of U.S. responses. This is a very significant finding, indicating the Matamoros community's desire for a fair and balanced interpretation of both battles and the outcome of the war.

Interestingly, when all respondents were asked about the need for more local educational emphasis on the battles, all four quadrant responses rated in the high 80 percent. However, no one analytical quadrant reached 90 percent, the lowest response being Mexican females at 78 percent.

All respondents were asked if they thought a battle re-enactment was something good for the community. This question produced the most universally negative results in the survey. Only 27 percent of U.S. males and 50 percent of American females supported the idea out of fear that it would produce "hard feelings" within the bi-national community. It might be assumed, by examining the respondents in the male cohort, that they would tend to be more politically sensitive to dredging up old wounds and that was the case. A greater percentage of Mexican males, 67 percent were in fact supportive of some sort of re-enactment of the battles. While Mexican males were, in fact, supportive of limited and highly-structured re-enactments, Mexican females were not. Only one-in-three of the Mexican females thought that a re-enactment was a good idea.

> Let the people's imagination do the interpretation not the political correctness of the day. Let the drawings and maps made at the time show what happened, point out things that the two official histories can't agree on.
>
> – William Hudson, United States

Finally, all respondents were asked about the upcoming sesquicentennial celebration of the battles and whether or not they should be recognized. Ninety-five and one hundred percent of Americans said yes, while the Mexican responses fell to 88 percent and 78 percent, respectively. Clearly, the historical significance of the outcome of the battles and the war were and are more significant to Brownsville than they are to Matamoros.

> I was on the original committee that began working on this and from the beginning our concept was not that this was where American forces defeated Mexican forces. The historical significance of what took place there, I won't say changed history, but it did affect the direction of history for both the United States and Mexico and in the long term, the world. The U.S. gained such rich territory that allowed it to become a major player on the world scene and whatever we have done since.
>
> – Robert Vezzetti, United States

Analysis

The Rapid Ethnographic Survey of the Matamoros-Brownsville community produced significant but unsurprising results. It was expected that the American men and women surveyed would be highly supportive of the establishment of a National Historic Battlefield Site at Palo Alto, Texas, and they were. Additionally, the bonds that have grown between the two communities over the 170 years since the battles cannot be underestimated. The majority of the Americans questioned (men and women) have deep roots in

the community and were, as such, very concerned about how their Mexican neighbors and family would react to the interpretation of the battles and the aftermath of the Mexican American War (1845-1848).

The Brownsville business and cultural community worked steadily, for more than 20 years, until the National Historic Battlefield Site was established by law, funded, and constructed. In the time since its grand opening, very little, if any, opposition has occurred. As hoped, the site is a welcomed addition to the historical and cultural venues available for tourism in the area.

The survey results of the Mexican cohort unanimously requested that any interpretation at the park be just and fair and consider the feelings of Mexicans. The Mexican respondents supported more education but less incrimination, and an overwhelming number opposed any sort of battle re-enactment. Many of the Mexican quotes are included in this report making it truly ethnographic. They indicate complete regard for their American friends, business partners, and families, and ask that Mexico be respected.

> My maternal great-grandfather, Juan Nepomuceno "Cheno" Cortina Goseacochea, gathered up a group of his vaqueros and participated in both battles. Not being members of either army, they stayed off to the side and mostly watched the two armies slaughter each other. His time would come in the decades after.
>
> – Prax Orive, Jr., United States.

> In the 1980s my cousin Prax Orive, Jr. mentioned to me that we were related to Juan Nepomuceno Cortina Goseacochea, that he was in fact my grandmother's grandfather. I asked him why we don't know that. He responded that there was a time in the early 1900s that the family was so embarrassed by this knowledge and the reaction it caused in the

community that it was better to forget him. Today the family remembers and honors him as a patriot.

– Dr. Tony Zavaleta, United States

The University of Texas at Brownsville

Appendix I: The Survey Instrument

1-Name

2-Place of Birth

3-Age

4-Are you related to a pioneer family?

5-In what year did your family locate in the area?

6-Have you heard of the battles and the war?

7-Have you seen newspaper articles about the battles and the war?

8-Do you know where the first battles of the war were fought?

9-Do you know anything about the outcome of the war?

10-Do you know if you had family in the area at the time of the war?

11-Do you have other living descendants in the area?

12-If your family came to the area after the war what was the purpose?

13-Did your family come to the area as soldiers?

14-Was your family a land grant family?

15-Does your family maintain any old historical documents dating to 1848?

16-Does your family retain any original land grant land in the area?

17- Did your family lose or gain land as a result of the placement of the boundary at the river?

18-Were any of your ancestors actual combatants?

19-Does your family have any mixed marriages?

20-Are you aware of any families and or possessions that were divided as a result of the war?

21-Are you aware that the war established the Rio Grande River at the border?

22-Have you heard of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo?

23- Do you know what it established?

24-Have you heard of government efforts to establish a national historic site at Palo Alto?

25-Do you think this is an important project?

26-Do you have any suggestions on how the government should interpret the outcome of the war?

27-Do you think it would be beneficial for the U.S. and Mexican governments to cooperate for the purposes of historical interpretation?

28-Do you think there should be more local educational emphasis in the war and its outcome?

29-Do you think there should be battle reenactments at the site?

30-Do you remember hearing or reading about a mass grave of Mexican soldiers at the site?

31-Do you think there should be markers for both U.S. and Mexican soldiers who died at the site?

32-Do you remember the names of pioneer families or others that should be contacted?

33-Do you have any personal opinions or emotions about the war?

34- 1996 will the 150th anniversary of the battles do you think they should be commemorated?

Appendix II: Respondents

Mexican Males and Their Date of Birth

1. Tomás De León Chavira	12/29/1909
2. Roberto Ramírez Hernández	8/19/1922
3. Victor Hugo Olivares	9/13/1931
4. José Francisco Islas Gómez	7/28/1937
5. Andrés Cuellar	6/6/1940
6. Antonio Rivera Yzaguirre	3/27/1943
7. Juan José de la Garza	11/27/1943
8. José Antonio Aguirre	1/18/1945
9. Salvador Castañeda	9/9/1946
10. Enrique Melguizo Sobrino	1/10/1946
11. Ramiro González	12/10/1946
12. Alfonso González Garza	1/11/1947
13. Manuel Robledo Treviño	6/12/1948
14. Alfonso Lee Guerra	2/10/1948
15. Ernesto Cárdenas Garza	2/18/1948
16. Clemente Rendón de la Garza	9/14/1951
17. Eduardo Vásquez	5/14/1958

Mexican Females and Their Date of Birth

1. Celia Sobrino de Santiso	12/20/1905
2. Ofelia Lee Mancha	9/23/1909
3. María Cisneros Ruiz	10/19/1918
4. Marta Rita Prince	1/30/1925
5. Magdalena Ríos Ledezma	2/27/1926
6. Rosalia Sánchez Cárdenas	5/27/1929
7. Georgina Rocha Putegnat	3/18/1954
8. Susana Reynoso	1/28/1955
9. Flor Castillo	11/24/1970

U. S. Males and Their Date of Birth

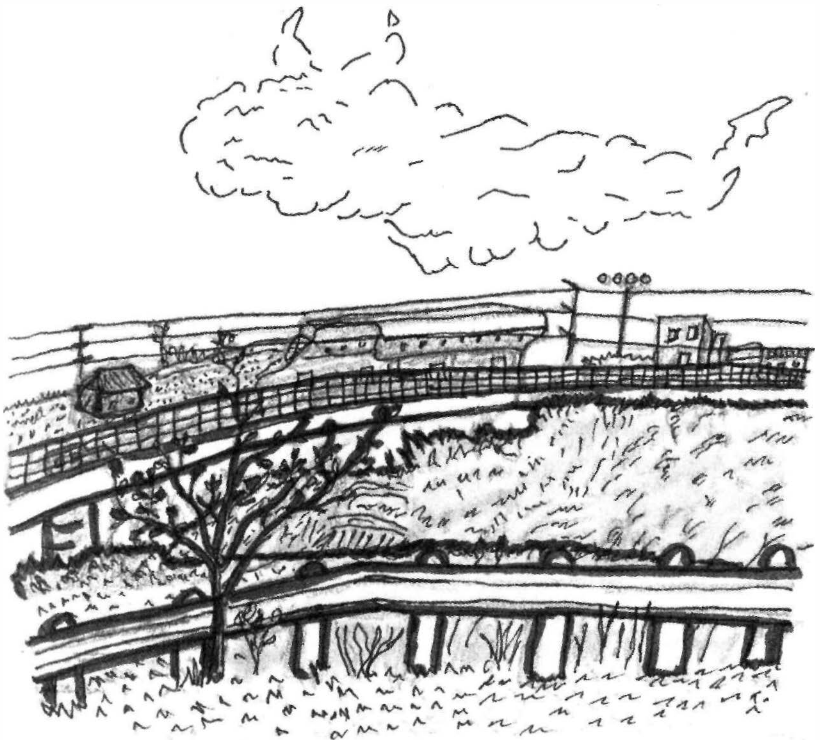
1. Vidal Longoria	12/3/1911
2. Antonio Marquez	3/4/1918
3. Bruce Ansel Aiken	9/5/1921
4. Praxedes Orive, Jr.	11/25/1929
5. Lino Juarez	9/23/1931
6. Donald Clifford	10/11/1932
7. Robert Vezzetti	3/25/1933
8. José Tamez	2/6/1939
9. Rodolfo Ruiz Cardenas	7/21/1940
10. Hector García	12/21/1940
11. Larry Holtzman	1/30/1941
12. Joe Guerra	9/13/1941
13. Walter Plitt	2/22/1941
14. James John	10/11/1942
15. Robert Lackner	11/8/1942
16. Oscar García	7/31/1943
17. Miguel López	5/10/1944
18. Michael Puckett	4/19/1944
19. Antonio Flores	10/31/1944
20. Luke Fruia	1/15/1955
21. Larry Jokl	2/11/1945
22. Hector Uribe	1/17/1946
23. Ralph Cohen	1/5/1947
24. Cipriano Cárdenas	1/11/1947
25. Tony Zavaleta	4/30/1947
26. Larry Brown	10/23/1948
27. David Garza	8/15/1948
28. Oscar Tullos, Jr.	1/1/1948

29. Boyd MacManus	8/17/1949
30. Alberto Herrera	12/6/1951
31. Carlos Cascos	9/18/1952
32. William Hudson	1954
33. Pat Lehman	9/14/1954
34. John Gloor	7/1955
35. Ben Neece	4/1/1955
36. Harry McNair	7/27/1955
37. Lesley Gloor	3/29/1958

U. S. Females and Their Date of Birth

1. Ethel Smith Junco	1908
2. Frances Wagner	1/10/1918
3. María Champion H.	12/18/1922
4. Mary Altman Yturria	5/9/1925
5. Sunshine Van Holsbeke	3/10/1926
6. Betty Pace Dodd	2/17/1928
7. Yolanda González Gómez	11/20/1929
8. Belia Ferráez	12/28/1931
9. Violet Springman	3/5/1934
10. Shirley Dee Green	3/23/1944
11. Evelon Dale	5/13/1951
12. Denise Sáenz Blanchard	7/3/1957

GRAVEYARD HISTORY AND GHOST STORIES



Recuerdo
Cemetery Inscriptions and Memorial Language in Brownsville, Texas

by

Sheila Dooley

Burial customs tell us a great deal about the culture of the communities in which the deceased lived. Anthropologists' interpretations of grave goods and entombment provide vital clues to the religion, social hierarchy, and worldview of both ancient and modern civilizations. In addition to the material remains, the linguistic record found in the inscriptions on tombstones, plaques, and other memorials placed on a gravesite can be especially valuable clues to the culture of a region and the history of its inhabitants.

The linguistic history of a border region is always especially interesting, since languages tend to ignore man-made borders and live their own lives in the mouths of the people crossing those borders. The patterns of human settlement and accompanying linguistic blending along any border can be complex. This is true for Brownsville, Texas, and its sister city in Mexico, Matamoros. Despite the international border between them, the two cities form an interesting dialect area whose local language permeates every aspect of daily life and whose linguistic history is even now being preserved in writing on the gravestone memorials of the cemeteries of Brownsville.

Previous linguistic studies of Texas cemeteries have documented the use of German and English in the cemeteries of the San Antonio and New Braunfels region[1] and the use of Czech and English elsewhere in central Texas.[2] Terry Jordan has documented the cultural traditions characteristic of Texas cemeteries of German, Spanish, and Southern ethnic origin[3], and other studies describe the colorful grave decoration so prominently visible in Spanish cemeteries.[4] However, there has been no investigation specifically focused on Spanish and English language use in Texas cemeteries.

This is a corpus linguistic study of the language found on grave markers in several representative cemeteries in Brownsville, Texas. In a corpus linguistic study, a substantial body of language data is collected, analyzed, and coded for specific features. The data is next examined for statistically significant patterns correlating one or more features. Conclusions may then be drawn about the nature of the relationships underlying observed correlations, and predictions may sometimes be made about subsequent developments. In this study, the corpus of data consists of the inscriptions of 730 grave markers from seven different cemeteries in Brownsville covering a range of approximately 160 years of history. The data was coded for three main features: cemetery, language (Spanish, English, bilingual, or other), and date (equated with the death date).[5] All language on each marker was noted and subjected to additional analysis with respect to vocabulary, syntax, and semantics.

The data shows interesting patterns in the use of Spanish, English, and bilingual language in gravestone inscriptions that may be compared to some of the patterns observed with German and English or Czech and English in the previous studies mentioned above. Because this language has been dated and preserved in stone or metal, it provides a valuable historical corpus of data on the local language community. Although we might expect the language of grave markers to be primarily composed of names, dates, and formal expressions such as Bible verses, this study reveals that the choice of language itself can indicate much more about the language use of individuals and the community in which they live.

Brownsville Cemeteries

There are at least seven publicly accessible cemeteries in Brownsville, Texas, as well as many private family cemeteries. The data for this study comes from the seven cemeteries which are open to public access and which arguably give a representative view of the demographics of the local community. These are: the Old City Cemetery, Buena Vista Cemetery, Rose Lawn Cemetery,

La Palma Cemetery, Guillen Community Cemetery, Santa Rosalia Cemetery, and Brulay Cemetery. These seven cemeteries provide historical data from different periods, with the Old City Cemetery offering the oldest material and Guillen the most recent. The cemeteries differ in character with regard to their location, size, and style of monuments.

The first three cemeteries - Old City, Buena Vista, and Rose Lawn - are large, well-established, and relatively well-regulated. Buena Vista and Rose Lawn are still in active use, but interments in the Old City Cemetery are sporadic. The three cemeteries are embedded into the city plan and contain graves in relatively regular sections and rows separated by marked roadways, paths, or grassy lawns. The Old City Cemetery, also known as the Brownsville City Cemetery, is located in the downtown area in the Mitte Cultural District of the city at 5th and Madison Streets. It is a large and diverse graveyard, encompassing over 30,000 total interments from all periods of its over 160 years of use. Approximately 5,000 grave markers survive in this cemetery,[6] with graves there dating back to 1850. [7] Sale of new plots in the cemetery ceased in the 1980s, but small boxes of ashes may still be interred in existing family plots.[8] The Old City Cemetery was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2010, and its monuments are thus protected.[9] The landscape of this cemetery is somewhat like a historic cityscape, with monuments differing widely in size, shape, and adornment, according to the period of origin. The cemetery slopes down from Madison Street to a resaca with one brick-paved driveway running the length of the cemetery and separating it into roughly two unequal portions. Location of burial in the cemetery reflects the economic status of the deceased and their family. Wealthy citizens lie in the highest ground along Madison Street, on the southwest side of the central driveway. Areas devoted to the members of the Masonic Lodge and the Independent Order of Odd Fellows are located in this wealthier section. On the northeast side of the avenue are more modest monuments, and the lowest ground sloping down to the resaca forms the cemetery's Potter's Field. Obituary records

show that large numbers of citizens were buried in Potter's Field, but no monuments have survived for many of them.[10] Because of its large size, only a proportionally small sample of the total number of grave markers could be included from the Old City Cemetery in this study. It provides important data on inscriptions dating from the 19th century. The other cemeteries in the study were not formally in existence before 1900.

Buena Vista and Rose Lawn, while large and well-established, differ significantly in character from the Old City Cemetery. They are typical of contemporary, managed, perpetual care memorial parks. Their visual landscapes are low, grassy expanses filled with commercially produced stones and bronze plates set into the ground as markers. Both are part of a nationwide network of cemeteries which provide total services for burial, cremation, and memorialization, and this national affiliation predictably affects their overall character. Buena Vista is the older of the two, being formally registered in 1915.[11] Burials were taking place there even before its formal registration, however, so earlier markers can still be found in some sections. Gravemarkers in Buena Vista number approximately 2000.[12] Rose Lawn has only been in use since the 1950s and contains fewer interments.[13] Buena Vista lies adjacent to the frontage road along Highway 77/83 through Brownsville and can be glimpsed from the highway and the frontage road. Large shady trees adorn some sections of the property, witnessing its longer period of use than Rose Lawn. Rose Lawn is located in a slightly more secluded area, but still relatively close to main thoroughfares such as Alton Gloor and FM 802. Restrictions regarding the size and height of grave markers are most pronounced in Rose Lawn, where all markers must remain flush with the lawn.[14] Buena Vista is somewhat less restrictive in the range of monuments which are allowed. Here we find upstanding stones of varying height alongside the in-ground metal plates or granite stones used throughout Rose Lawn. The cost of a burial plot in either of these two cemeteries is comparable and lies within the range of $2500 to $3000, depending on location.[15]

The remaining four cemeteries are privately owned and managed and generally smaller and less well regulated. The cost of a burial in one of these can be 10%-20% of the total cost of a burial in Buena Vista and Rose Lawn.[16] Families are responsible for the maintenance and care of each cemetery. Predictably, gravestone inscriptions and styles in these smaller private cemeteries show slightly more diversity. Within this group, Santa Rosalia and La Palma are larger in size, each containing between 600 and 1,000 graves.[17] La Palma Cemetery is located on what is now a major Brownsville artery called Alton Gloor. Up until about 1995, however, this cemetery would have been located in an essentially rural area. Santa Rosalia is the least accessible cemetery included in this study and is also the most rural in character. It can only be reached by traveling through the Border Wall and following dirt trails usually only traveled by the Border Patrol. There is no signage marking the way to the cemetery, which lies hidden behind a bend in the dirt road, surrounded by fields. It is likely that the only visitors to this place are the families of those who are interred there. Burials are still taking place in La Palma, but Santa Rosalia Cemetery is not being actively used anymore.[18]

Guillen Community Cemetery and the Brulay Cemetery are both smaller cemeteries, but are otherwise very different from each other in character. Brulay is the smallest cemetery in this study, encompassing a total of 71 graves. Brulay Cemetery is named for the historic Brulay Plantation which once was located there, near what is now the Sabal Palms Sanctuary. The cemetery is a modest fenced plot just off the highway at the intersection of Southmost and Indiana Roads.[19] Some graves bear witness to continuing decoration and maintenance, while many others are suffering neglect. Burials are no longer taking place there.[20] Guillen Community Cemetery dates to the 1980s, making it the youngest cemetery in the study. It is currently in active use. Although it is located on the north side of Boca Chica Boulevard, east of Browne Avenue, a private driveway leading back to the cemetery from the main road affords seclusion and creates a rural ambience. Its roughly

300 graves, in spite of their relatively shallow historical range, are a rich source of cultural data on modern Brownsville.

The Brownsville Language Community

Brownsville lies directly on the Mexican border across from the Mexican city of Matamoros and shares close historical and contemporary ties with Mexico. Many Brownsville residents have relatives who live across the border, with whom they interact regularly. Students at the University of Texas in Brownsville often live in Matamoros and commute daily to attend class. The community is primarily Spanish-speaking. According to the 2010 census, 93.2% of the population is of Hispanic or Latino origin and 87.6% of households report that a language other than English is spoken at home. This is in stark contrast to the corresponding 37% and 34% figures for the state of Texas as a whole.[21] Spanish is heard in both private conversations and public transactions daily and is arguably used more frequently than English by the majority of the community, even though Brownsville is nominally an American city with the English infrastructure and educational system of any other American city. Many residents must be regarded as functionally bilingual but not always literate in both languages. In English writing, the bilingual character of the speech community can often be seen in the occurrence of non-standard grammatical features including variant verb forms, inconsistent sentence boundary identification, and non-standard preposition use.[22] While these effects can be observed in longer written texts, there is not much opportunity to observe them in the shorter, more constrained texts of gravestone inscriptions. Nevertheless, even the reduced amount of language found on bilingual gravestones shows evidence of using both English and Spanish in the same context, a phenomenon known as code switching. Code switching in everyday discourse in Brownsville is ubiquitous and seamless: many speakers often use both English and Spanish in their speech with expert ease, and can intuitively switch from speaking English or Spanish to accommodate the listener. Code switching may also correlate with certain

semantic or cultural domains, and this latter type will be discussed in the context of grave marker language in Brownsville.

Grave Marker Syntax and Content

Grave markers may include up to eleven different pieces of linguistic information, giving surprising room for variation in language choices and personal expression. These are, roughly in order of their frequency of occurrence: 1)name, 2) death date, 3) birth date, 4) kinship terms, 5) creative (personalized) epitaph, 6) stylized epitaph, 7) birthplace, 8) place of death, 9) cause of death, 10) occupation, and 11) lodge/religious affiliation. Items 1-5 are the most common and are universally recognized as the prototypical content of a gravestone inscription. Normally markers only include a subset of these possible elements.[23]

Some of these units deserve a closer look because they are themselves composed of separate parts and can be expressed in varying ways which reflect individual language choices. For example, the name of the deceased can include elements that signal ethnicity, familial relationships, occupational status, and (in the case of nicknames) character. Names found on Brownsville grave markers in this study show at least 6 different possibilities of expression:

(1) The First Possibility of Expression: Names

a. Given name and surname: Ida Maltby Combe

b. Initials and surname: A. A. Villareal

c. Language-specific abbreviated name: Ma. de la Soledad, F[çois] Hypolite Querent du Blassin

d. Title: Pvt. Arcadio G. Reyes, Sra. Longina Grimalda, Srita Consuelo Gonzalez

e. Suffix: Gregorio Reyes III, Corpus Esparza Jr., Efren Coronado Sr.

f. Nicknames: Ernest "Mac" McCarthy; "Luisito"; "Chito"

g. Surname omitted: Juanito

Spanish titles such as Sra. (*señora*) and Srita. (*señorita*) and English suffixes such as 'Jr.' and 'Sr.' are minute details which nevertheless contribute to the multilingual character of Brownsville grave markers and express important aspects of an individual's identity. Nicknames are more commonly included on grave markers of the last 20 years and are more often Spanish in origin. They were found in all the cemeteries except Brulay, but were especially plentiful in the Guillen Community Cemetery.

Dates also show several variations in the way they are expressed...

(2) The Second Possibility of Expression: Dates

a. Year only: 1866

b. Month-day-year: 7-18-1943

c. Day-month-year: N. 3 Ago. -38 M. 1 Dic -01 (100-2367, La Palma)24

d. Names of months abbreviated: Feb. 14, 1969

e. Full names of months: Enero 22 1995; July

f. Phrasal syntax: Falleció el 27 de diciembre 1892 (100-2804, Old City Cemetery)

g. Birth and Death Icons: (a star icon) 30 05 1912 (a cross icon) 19 02 1991

Specifically, dates are written in Spanish in the order day-month-year as in (2c), while in English the standard order is month-day-year (2b).[25] If the names of months are spelled out fully, some are clearly identifiable as Spanish rather than English, but in abbreviated spellings only some months are unambiguously identifiable as Spanish (ene. 'January', abr. 'April', ago. 'August', dic. 'December'). Words such as 'born/died' and their Spanish equivalents '*nació/murió*' often precede the dates. For Spanish markers, there is widespread use, instead, of a star icon for birth and a cross icon for death to replace these words, as shown in (2g).

Kinship terms are used abundantly on Brownsville markers. Terms identifying the deceased as a wife, mother, father, or son are

used in both English and Spanish. Often these appear near the top of the grave marker, above the full name. On monuments which memorialize both husband and wife, these terms are often placed below the family name. A range of additional family relationships are often given in special memorial inscriptions built around the word '*recuerdo*' ('memorial'), and these will be discussed in greater detail later.

Religious affiliation in Brownsville cemeteries is most often expressed through visual elements such as images of crosses, rosaries, and Bibles.[26] Larger images such as the Virgin of Guadalupe and the Sacred Heart of Jesus are also quite popular as embellishments and immediately identify Catholic burials. Religious affiliation can also be expressed by the addition of a Bible verse or just the citation. Lodge or society affiliations are almost exclusively expressed through visual elements, for example the Woodmen of the World emblem or the Masonic emblem.

Causes of death are rarely included on Brownsville markers, but do appear on a few older markers found in the Old City Cemetery. These bear witness to victims of yellow fever and cholera, for example.[27]

Epitaphs provide some of the richest linguistic material on grave markers and may express a wide range of meaning. Creative or personalized epitaphs are traditionally regarded as conveying something about the character of the deceased,[28] while stylized epitaphs are standard phrases that can be chosen for use from catalogues of markers and inscriptions produced commercially.[29] Examples (3a-b) show personalized epitaphs which have been composed specifically for particular individuals. Stylized epitaphs are usually short phrases such as the ones given in (3c-d). On modern markers, stylized epitaphs may form an integral part of an artistic element such as a banner, heart, or book included in the visual design of the marker. On the metal markers typical of Rose Lawn and Buena Vista cemeteries, stylized epitaphs and motifs that can be added to a basic marker are referred to as emblems.

(3) The Third Possibility of Expression: Epitaphs

a. Lover of Pets (100-2592, Guillen)

b. She concealed her tears but shared her smiles (S-500, Old City Cemetery)

c. Together Forever

d. In Loving Memory (100-2803, Old City Cemetery)

Spanish inscriptions are somewhat different with regard to epitaphs. Jordan claims that true epitaphs (i.e. texts characterizing the deceased) are absent from Mexican grave marker practice and that any inscriptions that do appear on Hispanic markers are totally predictable. Instead of characterizing the departed loved one, the purpose of such routine phrases is "to convey the most basic biographical information, to affirm the strong family ties that characterize Mexican society, or to request rest and salvation for the deceased."[30] While the inscriptions in Brownsville cemeteries certainly perform the functions listed by Jordan, as illustrated in examples (4) - (7) below, they are hardly as uniform and colorless as the ones he has observed in other regions of Texas.

(4) The Fourth Possibility of Expression

!Madre llena de dolor! Haced que cuando expiremos nuestras almas entreguemos por tus manos al señor

"Mother full of sorrow! Grant that when we expire our souls may be delivered by your hands to the Lord" (S-0585, Buena Vista)

(5) The Fifth Possibility of Expression

Querido hermano [NAME] no estas olvidado ni lo estaras jamás mientras duren la vida y la memoria- siempre te recordamos - tus hermanos – D.E.P.

"Beloved brother [NAME] you are not and will not ever be forgotten as long as we have life and memory – we will always remember you – your brothers – R.I.P." (100-2357, La Palma)

(6) The Sixth Possibility of Expression

Descanse en paz

"Rest in peace" (100-2399, La Palma)[31]

(7) The Seventh Possibility of Expression

Señor tu que conoces la pena que me embarga por la muerte de mi niño [NAME] anímame con el pensamiento de que ya vive feliz junto a tí en la gloria para que su juventud vuelva a florecer junto a tí.

"Lord, you who understands the suffering which overcomes me because of the death of my son [NAME] uplift me with the thought that he now lives happy by your side in glory so that his youth may flourish again beside you"

(S-423, La Palma)

The poignant sorrow expressed in example (7) is particularly intimate and eloquent, but its grief is echoed by many Brownsville markers. Especially in the more recent inscriptions found in the smaller privately-managed cemeteries of Guillen and La Palma, we find quite personal written messages between the living and the dead framed in the vernacular language of the community.

Overall, there seems to be a clear and universal historical pattern of development in how much writing is used on grave markers, regardless of the language used. Many modern memorials may have as few as three linguistic elements artistically placed on the face of the stone: the name of the deceased, the dates of birth and death, and one word/phrase/line as verbal embellishment. The verbal element, if only one word, is usually a kinship term such as 'Mother/Father/Son/Daughter'. As a phrase a kinship term may be accompanied by some endearment such as 'beloved'. Or, we may find a whole line quoted from the Bible (usually from a psalm) or a longer phrase invoking remembrance such as 'Gone But Not Forgotten'. This trend toward shorter, less text-like inscriptions has understandably been attributed both to increasing

costs and the rise of memorial park cemeteries (like Buena Vista and Rose Lawn) filled with smaller markers providing less room for linguistic expression.[32]

In contrast, older memorials, particularly those from the later 19th Century and early 20th Century found in the Old City Cemetery and Buena Vista, are constructed and inscribed in the form of texts showing grammatical structure that is more similar to spoken and written language. These inscriptions are more closely related to sentence-framed texts and show punctuation and capitalization. In addition to the deceased's name and the date of death, the text most often gives the place of birth and sometimes also of death. Birth dates are less frequently included than death dates. Instead, the age of the deceased is more commonly given and is often very specific, sometimes even including months and days as well as years. Rather than simply being listed, names, dates, and ages are incorporated grammatically into the text with the use of appropriate prepositions. The whole inscription often begins with a stylized introduction. Here are three representative examples in three different languages from the older parts of the Old City Cemetery:

(8) The Eighth Possibility of Expression

Icè [sic] repose Les Restes de Feu Gillaume Davérède

Natif d'Aubarede Dep des Hautes Pyrenée France

Decedé A Brownsville Texas le 19 Mars 1873

A l'age de 49 ans et 6 mois.

"Here rest the remains of the late G.D., native of Aubarede, Region of the Pyrenees, France, deceased in Brownsville Texas on March 19, 1873 at the age of 49 years and 6 months"

(S-470, Old City Cemetery)

(9) The Ninth Possibility of Expression

> *Aqui lla asen*[33] *los restos mortales de la Sra Clara Thompson*
>
> *Nació en Matamoros Tras el año de 55 y falleció el dia 7 de Agosto de 1906* R.E.[34] *Sus inconsolables hijos le Dedican este a su memoria*
>
> "Here lie the mortal remains of Señora Clara Thompson, Born in Matamoros
>
> After the year of 55 and deceased the 7th day of August of 1906. Her inconsolable sons dedicate this to her memory" (S-495, Old City Cemetery)

(10) The Tenth Possibility of Expression

> To the memory of Hermann J.F. Burmester born in Hamburg
>
> Buried Feb'y the 7th 1866 Aged 24 yrs (S-507, Old City Cemetery)

From the older, more informative texts such as these we learn of Brownsville citizens who began their lives in France, Spain, England, Ireland, and Scotland. Some who were born in other States likewise have their 'foreign' origins memorialized in stone. Many were surely born in Mexico, and several have this proclaimed on their grave markers, although not as often as those born in European countries or other states. Birthplaces are rarely included on markers after the early 20th Century, although it is certain that many Brownsville residents were still beginning their lives in Mexico at that time. The omission of birthplace from more recent inscriptions in any language may be just a function of the general economic trend toward shorter inscriptions already noted above. Or, it may be aligned with a community's perceptions of a geographical region as separate and somehow 'foreign' to the local community. In her study of Czech-Moravian cemeteries in Texas, Eva Eckert notes that first generation Czech immigrants were especially meticulous about expressing their place of birth

on grave markers.[35] This may be interpreted as a general desire to mark one's identity as an immigrant. It may explain why even northern states were once felt to be very different and distant from Brownsville and were treated similar to European countries in being noted as birthplaces on English language grave markers. The relatively rare inclusion of Mexican birthplaces on Brownsville grave markers, even in the 19th century, bears witness to the community's long-standing perception that Mexico (and Matamoros specifically) is not a 'foreign' place of origin. Grave marker content attests that Brownsville residents with Mexican birthplaces feel no particular need to identify themselves as immigrants.[36] Arguably, grave markers mirror the feeling that Brownsville and Matamoros are two halves of one community rather than two cities in two different countries. People in Brownsville who may have been born in Matamoros have not so much immigrated to another country as moved to a different neighborhood across town.

Gravemarker Languages in Brownsville

Having established some general observations regarding the syntax and semantic content of Brownsville grave markers, we can now turn to an analysis of the use of Spanish and English in expressing that content. The choice of language in which these pieces of information are coded can itself be an expression of an individual's identity and a reflection of their membership in the local language community.

As expected, given the demographics of the community, burial inscriptions in Brownsville are predominantly written in Spanish or English. Some grave markers combine both languages. For the moment these will be classified as bilingual, and their content will be analyzed in greater detail later. Each grave marker included in this study has been classified by language. Table 1 shows the raw totals of markers of each language type for the data collected from each cemetery in the study. The table also shows overall totals and percentages of English, Spanish, and bilingual inscriptions found in the study. For those cemeteries which could be classified as con-

taining a greater concentration of English or Spanish inscriptions, the dominant language cell is shaded and the language percentage for the cemetery is given. For example, Brulay Cemetery is clearly predominantly filled with Spanish inscriptions: 21 of the total 26 markers included in the corpus are in Spanish, making Brulay Cemetery 80% Spanish overall. This is the highest proportion of Spanish used in any of the cemeteries included in the study.

Table 1. Language Use on Brownsville Gravemarkers by Cemetery[37]

Cemetery	English	Spanish	Bilingual	Total markers
Brulay	20%	80%	0	26
La Palma	23%	59.5%	17.5%	74
Rose Lawn	58%	12.5%	29.5%	96
Guillen	25%	50%	25%	52
Buena Vista	50%	36%	13.5%	202
Old City Cemetery	40%	40%	17%	214
Santa Rosalia	27.5%	44%	27.5%	66
Grand Totals	295	291	137	730
Overall Percentages	40.4%	39.8%	18.7%	

Before discussing the language results for the other cemeteries in the table, a few words of explanation are necessary to clarify how inscriptions were classified as Spanish, English, or bilingual. The language status of an inscription is sometimes clear, but at other times it can rest on more subtle distinctions, often in the way dates are expressed as sequences of numbers or abbreviations of months, as illustrated above in examples 2(b-c). Grave markers have been counted as English if all words, including the full names or abbreviations of months, are given in English. The same principle applies for markers classified as Spanish. If there is no epitaph or other distinguishing vocabulary present, markers have been counted as Spanish or English depending on whether

it can be determined that dates are given in the Spanish order or the English order. Bilingual stones are those which show at least one item which is in a different language from the rest of the inscription.

Monolingual Inscriptions

As the overall totals in Table 1 show, monolingual Spanish and English grave markers occur at almost the same rate: 40.4% English and 39.8% Spanish. Interestingly, these are nearly the same percentages found in the Old City Cemetery, suggesting that this location is truly representative of the language use of the community as a whole. Other cemeteries are more Spanish in character due to higher percentages of monolingual Spanish inscriptions. These are Guillen (50%), La Palma (59%), and Brulay (80%). Santa Rosalia, with 43% monolingual Spanish markers, is only slightly more Hispanic in character than the Old City Cemetery or the overall percentage for the entire corpus. All four of these predominantly Spanish cemeteries are more rural in character and not administered by any central or national entity. Conversely, the cemeteries which are more English in character are the urban, perpetual care, memorial park cemeteries which are owned and operated by a national mortuary service provider. This comes as no surprise, perhaps, given that a national administrative framework may be expected to influence the character of the monuments in the cemetery. However, what is more significant is that monolingual English gravemarkers occur only 50% and 59% in these cemeteries, despite the generally reduced size and increased standardization of monuments typical of Rose Lawn and Buena Vista. We might expect the percentage of English inscriptions there to be higher, but Spanish monolingual inscriptions are still occurring to significant degrees in these locations. Rose Lawn (58% English) and Buena Vista (50% English) present an interesting parallel to the two Spanish-dominant cemeteries Guillen (50% Spanish) and La Palma (59% Spanish). La Palma (private) and Buena Vista (corporate) are the older cemeteries and include higher numbers of monolingual Spanish inscriptions, while Guillen and Rose Lawn,

with lower percentages of Spanish markers, are their two younger counterparts. This raises the question of whether a possible historical progression in language choice correlated with individual cemeteries is occurring. The data for Guillen and La Palma is too sparse to serve in a historical analysis, but Rose Lawn and Buena Vista are examined for historical trends before the conclusion of this paper.

Mixed Code Markers

As Table 1 shows, the overall occurrence of bilingual inscriptions is significantly lower than the occurrence of monolingual inscriptions in either Spanish or English. Monolingual Spanish and English inscriptions comprise roughly 80% of the data, and the remaining 20% show a mixture of the two languages to varying degrees. In Table 1 these are referred to as bilingual inscriptions. However, calling them bilingual is somewhat misleading. Bilingual signs or packaging, for example, repeat the exact same information in two (or more) languages. This involves repetition and translation. Repetition and translation is not what we find on grave markers, however. Instead, use of two languages on grave markers can be more accurately described as a mixed code. Some elements of an inscription are expressed in Spanish, while others are in English.

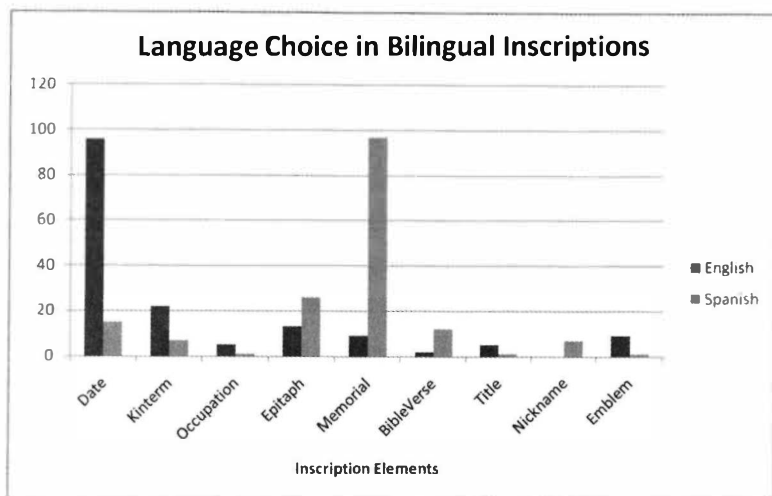
The ways in which bilingual speakers and writers mix the languages they know can be very complex and are governed by different considerations. Most research has been done on the way speakers code switch -- change from one language to another -- in conversation. Code switching of this type certainly occurs in Brownsville speech, as established earlier, and researchers generally regard it as a phenomenon that is governed by the real-time interactive nature of conversation.[38] This makes it different from language mixing in written texts, which are not interactive. Furthermore, what we know of conversational code switching or even mixing languages in written texts can hardly be said to enlighten us about language mixing on artifacts such as grave markers, which are

comprised of both visual and textual elements. Recent studies of multilingualism in specific mediums such as signs, advertisements, and newspapers advocate analysis of these both with respect to linguistic and visual elements.[39] For our purposes, it is helpful to break down the analysis and examine exactly which semantic elements of an inscription appear in the two languages and how they are integrated into the grave marker text as a whole.

The choice of which elements on a mixed code gravestone appear in English and which in some other language is not random. A clear hierarchy of choice in the use of German and English on multilingual gravestones in Texas German cemeteries has been identified by Scott Baird. He has documented the historical development from monolingual German gravestone inscriptions to monolingual English inscriptions. His data shows that when all other elements are written in German on a mixed code gravestone, the dates of birth and death are the elements that are most likely to appear in English. Conversely, if all other elements are written in English, it is the epitaph which is most likely to be German. In other words, dates are the first pieces of information to be anglicized and epitaphs are the last.[40] This is arguably a reflection of the degree of individualization and expressive content inherent in the semantics of these two kinds of information. Dates are inherently impersonal and follow standardized forms. Even in a community such as Brownsville with a majority of Spanish-speaking residents, dates are part of the administrative language of the larger English-speaking national unit. Dates are composed of a small set of words with relatively little semantic content, and thus become easily standardized. In direct contrast, epitaphs are the most personal elements of a gravestone and encompass the greatest linguistic content. While they often include some standardized phrases, their semantic range is at least partially unpredictable, and they provide the greatest opportunity for creative expression. It is not surprising that the epitaph, whose purpose is often to express and evoke deep emotion and individuality, reveals strong language ties.

If we examine the multilingual inscriptions in the Brownsville data more closely, we find that Baird's hierarchy is paralleled for English and Spanish. Figure 1 shows the frequency of use of Spanish and English for expressing the different elements of inscriptions on the 137 mixed code grave markers in the corpus. Dates have been classified as Spanish or English following the same method as explained earlier.

Fig. 1: Language Choice in Mixed Code Inscriptions



* English columns are to the left and Spanish to the right.

As Fig. 1 illustrates, mixed code markers are overwhelmingly more likely to express dates in English, while epitaphs and memorial phrases such as the *recuerdo* phrase are expressed in Spanish. These two grave marker elements are virtually opposite poles of language use and are present on the majority of the mixed code markers. Other elements vary in their appearance, but they, too, show pronounced preferences for language choice. Kinship terms, occupations, titles, and emblems (stylized stock epitaphs) are all twice as likely to be expressed in English. Epitaphs, memorial statements, quoted Bible verses, and nicknames are more likely to be expressed in Spanish.

Does the occurrence of multilingual cemetery inscriptions in roughly 20% of Brownsville's grave markers indicate that the community is becoming anglicized in the same manner as Czech and German speakers shifted to English over time in Texas? This is doubtful. The very high frequency of anglicized dates does not necessarily indicate the beginning of a language shift. The relationship between Spanish-speakers and English-speakers in Brownsville is drastically different from the one which existed between German and English speakers or Czech and English speakers in other areas of Texas. Although significant in number, the German and Czech speakers were members of minority language groups within the larger community of English speakers. There was thus tangible pressure for language shift to occur, with German and Czech being replaced eventually by English. The situation in Brownsville is actually the reverse: with 87% of the population speaking Spanish, monolingual English speakers are the ones who are in the minority and experience pressure to acquire at least some Spanish. Because English is so firmly established in education, media, and administration, it enjoys what is essentially an official protected status in Brownsville. On the other hand, because Spanish is the language of the majority of the population, it has the critical mass to resist language shift and eventual replacement by English. The result is a relatively stable multilingual community where two languages coexist and interact, often (but not necessarily) with widespread bilingualism. This situation of stable coexistence and bilingualism is one type of language diglossia.[41]

Diglossia is characterized by the systematic use of each language for certain semantic or social domains. For example, often one of the two languages of a diglossic community is used for formal, public, and institutionalized domains, while the other language is used for informal, personal functions. Speakers in a diglossic society share intuitions about which language is appropriate for use in particular contexts and for discussing particular subjects. The patterns of language choice illuminated in Figure 1 are suggestive of a diglossic community in which bilingual speakers choose

English to express the more institutional and formal elements of a grave marker: dates, titles, occupations, and kinship terms. These are the elements of grave markers that perform the official 'record keeping' function, listing the vital statistics of the deceased.[42] The more personal elements of a grave marker are expressed instead in Spanish. These more personal elements inhabit the domains of religion, grief and loss, family unity, and celebration of character (for example, nicknames). This is aligned with choices we can observe in language use in other contexts in the community. The local newspaper is printed in English. Teachers at all levels in the educational system conduct class in English, but students and teachers are somewhat more likely to engage in informal conversations in Spanish. Spanish and English are by no means strictly confined to separate domains of use, however. Besides these general contextual alignments, speakers are always free to choose which language to use to accommodate the needs of the moment, depending on whether addressees know English or Spanish. Since the memorial phrase is so clearly the locus of Spanish language use on mixed code grave markers, the next section examines the data on memorial phrases in greater detail.

Recuerdo and Other Memorial Statements

The single most characteristic word appearing in memorial epitaphs in Brownsville cemeteries is the word '*recuerdo*', which can have a range of meanings in Spanish, including 'souvenir, 'memory', and 'memorial'. Inscriptions built around the word '*recuerdo*' are particularly interesting because they are the one piece of information included on a gravestone which identifies the mourners rather than the person who is being memorialized. All the other categories of information which can be found on a gravestone -- name, dates, occupation, kinship terms, birthplace -- identify the deceased. The *recuerdo* phrase always includes kinship terms that identify the mourners and their relationships to the deceased, and grave marker information of this type can provide rich genealogical data that may in fact be missing or entered erroneously in official records.[43] There are several variations for how *recuerdo*

memorials may be phrased, with the main variation being whether the names of the mourners are placed first or last. Examples (11 a-d) show the type which place the *recuerdo* first, followed by the listing of the mourners. Usually the mourners are identified simply by kinship terms, although occasionally individual names are given as, in example, (11d). Besides the terms for nuclear family relationships (spouse, mother, father, parents, brother, sister, son, and daughter) it is not unusual to find nieces (*sobrinas*), nephews (*sobrinos*), grandchildren (*nietos*), and great-grandchildren (*bisnietos*) named. This supports the importance of the extended family unit in the local culture.

(11) The Tenth Possibility of Expression: *Recuerdos*

a. *Recuerdo de sus hijos, esposa, hermanos, y padres*
"Memorial from his sons, wife, brothers, and parents" (100-2415, La Palma)

b. *Un recuerdo de su esposa hijos e hijas*
"A memorial from his wife, sons, and daughters" (S-0690, Buena Vista)

c. *Tu recuerdo viverá siempre en nuestros corazones*
"Your memory will live forever in our hearts" (S-0293, Rose Lawn)

d. *Recuerdo de sus padres, Raul y Lili, hermana y hermanos*
"Memorial from his parents, Raul and Lili, sister, and brothers"(100-2483, Guillen)

The alternative pattern places the mourners first, as in these examples, which necessitates the addition of a verb such as *dedican* 'dedicate' or *conságran* 'consecrate':

(12) The Twelfth Possibility of Expression

a. *Sus padres dedican este recuerdo*
"His parents dedicate this memorial" (100-2215, Brulay)

b. *Sus inconsolables hijos le dedican este recuerdo a su Memoria*
"His inconsolable sons dedicate this memorial to his memory" (100-2799, Old City Cemetery)

On older markers, when inscriptions were longer in general and syntax more sentence-like, it is also possible to find a combination of the two patterns, with deceased, mourners, and a verb all included:

(13) The Thirteenth Possibility of Expression

a. *Un Recuerdo a la Sagrada memorja de nuestra querida madre que le dedican su Hijas*
"A memorial to the sacred memory of our beloved mother which is dedicated to her by her daughters" (100-2790, Old City Cemetery)

b. *Su Esposa Maria de Jesus C. de Saldana y familia le con*ságran este *recuerdo a su grata memoria*
"His wife Maria de Jesus C. de Saldana and family consecrate this memorial to his pleasant memory" (100-2797, Old City Cemetery)

The *recuerdo* phrase has been identified as a standard feature of grave markers in Mexican heritage cemeteries throughout Texas.[44] In Brownsville cemeteries, it seems to serve as a strong linguistic signal of ethnic Hispanic identity for the deceased and their families. Memorial *recuerdo* phrases were found in all the cemeteries in this study, but were fewest in the predominantly English Rose Lawn Cemetery. There only about 10% of the markers studied showed *recuerdo* memorials. However, Rose Lawn was also the cemetery that showed the highest percentage of *recuerdo* memorials used on mixed code markers. The use of *recuerdo* memorials on mixed code markers in Rose Lawn was roughly double the rate for all the other cemeteries. This suggests that the *recuerdo* memorial is a particularly important feature of mixed code markers in an environment of otherwise predominantly English inscriptions.

The functional equivalent of the *recuerdo* phrase in English is the expression 'In memory of (name of the deceased)'. However, the surface similarity of these two English and Spanish phrases is deceptive: The Spanish *recuerdo* phrase gives the names of the mourners left behind who have placed the stone, while in the English "In memory of " phrase, the name included can only be the name of the deceased whose grave is marked by the stone. There is thus a fundamental difference of perspective inherent in the meaning and the syntax of the two inscriptions. In bilingual communities, such overtly similar phrases often serve as points of contact for cross-linguistic influence and can result in blended language structures. In bilingual Brownsville, it is not surprising, therefore, that we should find some evidence of blending involving the English 'in memory of' and the Spanish *recuerdo* memorial phrases. Inscriptions using English words show the syntax and perspective of the Spanish *recuerdo* phrase, naming the mourners rather than the deceased:

(14) The Fourteenth Possibility of Expression –

a. In memory of your beloved family (La Palma)

b. In memories of son daughters and family (La Palma)

c. In memory of her children (Rose Lawn)

This type of cross-linguistic influence -- using all English words with the syntax of Spanish -- has been identified as English-to-Spanish convergence.[45] While only a few examples were found in this study, their existence is nevertheless interesting linguistically. English-to-Spanish convergence suggests that Spanish grammar is affecting English in this construction, which is possible given that the majority of the members of the community are speakers of Spanish, and the memorial phrase is such an important element in the Hispanic grave marker tradition.[46]

Examples of the opposite Spanish-to-English convergence -- using Spanish words with the influence of English grammar -- have not been encountered in this study. Convergence to English was found to be an important signal of the loss of Czech and German in

the grave marker studies done by Baird and Eckert. Eckert found that the Czech language on grave markers progressed through three stages of convergence showing English influence on Czech in terms of inflections (i.e. loss of obligatory grammatical word endings), spelling (which became phonetic), and vocabulary.[47] These changes eventually led to a complete shift to English and loss of Czech. The mixed English and Spanish inscriptions in this study do not show such patterns of English influence. Spanish spelling has not become phonetic,[48] and grammatical word endings in both languages remain intact. Vocabulary has not been significantly affected. Mixing of the two languages is done discretely, with different semantic units of a grave marker encoded either in standard grammatical Spanish or English. The only evidence of influence is the one noted above for the memorial phrases, in which Spanish is exerting influence on English, instead of the reverse. Lack of any widespread evidence of convergence characterizes Brownsville as a stable multilingual community rather than one that is undergoing language shift. Has this always been the case? One final look at the corpus data, this time correlating language use with gravestone dates, reveals an interesting historical trend, albeit one that is more indicative of cemetery history than language change.

Historical Trends: A Look at Three Cemeteries over the Last 160 Years

Grave markers are unique instances of linguistic data in that they are dated by year. We thus have the opportunity to do a historical analysis of the use of Spanish, English, and mixed codes on Brownsville grave markers for the last 160 years. Data from the three oldest and largest cemeteries in the study -- the Old City Cemetery, Buena Vista, and Rose Lawn -- were analyzed for language use by decades, beginning with 1850. The corpus used here does not provide equal amounts of data from each decade, since many of the older gravestones from before the 1900s have been lost, and the data from other decades represents a very small proportion of the whole. We should be cautious about conclusions drawn from this admittedly small set of data. Nevertheless,

exploratory data of this type can be useful in revealing possible trends.[49] Historical analysis of this corpus does suggest distributional patterns of language that are historically correlated and deserve further study.

First, Table 2 below shows the number of tokens of Spanish, English, and mixed code grave markers for each decade from the Old City Cemetery. An observable trend in language use is highlighted in the cells in the tables. The latter half of the 19th century (1850-1900) is characterized by exclusive use of monolingual English, Spanish, French, and German. No truly mixed code markers occur.[50] French and German inscriptions are found in the period of the 1870s and 1880s and have been grouped with English to reflect the contrast with monolingual Spanish. After 1910 and up to 1950, monolingual Spanish markers are significantly more frequent than monolingual English markers. Mixed code markers begin to occur early in the 20th century, but are still few in number. After 1950, the mixed code markers increase and outnumber both monolingual English and Spanish markers. Since the cemetery ceased being used actively for burials in the 1980s, the number of markers of any type is drastically reduced after that period. However, it is interesting that in the few markers dating from the 1980s, the trend has reversed toward monolingual markers in English and Spanish.

Table 2: Language Distribution As Tokens by Decades: Old City Cemetery

	E/(Fr/G)	S	Mixed	Total
1850	1	0	0	1
1860	10	0	0	10
1870	12	2	0	14
1880	5	6	0	11
1890	12	2	0	14
1900	6	4	(1)	11
1910	7	15	2	24

1920	7	13	2	22
1930	4	6	2	12
1940	8	14	3	15
1950	2	7	9	18
1960	3	7	10	20
1970	5	4	10	19
1980	2	3	2	7
1990	1	1	1	3
2000	3	1	0	4
2010	1	0	0	1

Buena Vista Cemetery provides us with about 100 years of data that partially overlaps with the data for the Old Cemetery. It was opened officially in 1915. Table 3 shows the percentages of English, Spanish, and mixed code markers found in Buena Vista by decades beginning with the decade for 1910 and ending with 2000.

Table 3: Language Distribution as Percentages by Decades: Buena Vista Cemetery

	E	S	Mixed	Total
1900	--	--	--	--
1910	48%	45%	7%	27
1920	45%	45%	10%	29
1930	25%	65%	10%	20
1940	33%	61%	5.5%	18
1950	30%	54%	15%	13
1960	46%	27%	27%	11
1970	59%	15%	26%	27
1980	73%	20%	7%	15
1990	69.5%	23%	7.5%	13
2000	55.5%	11%	33.5%	9

As before, in Table 2, shaded cells highlight suggested trends in language use in Buena Vista Cemetery over the last century.

Monolingual English and Spanish are used almost equally in the first years of the cemetery's existence (1910-1920). Comparing the same time period with the data from the Old City Cemetery, we find that this coincides with the sharp increase of monolingual Spanish markers there. The opening of the new Buena Vista Cemetery in 1915 gave Brownsville residents a new choice for where they might bury their loved ones. The choice of a burial place reflects the demographics of a population, including religious affiliation and socioeconomic status.[51] It is conceivable that many of the wealthier citizens of Brownsville (both English and Spanish speaking) at that time chose Buena Vista as the newer, more prestigious resting place. This in turn shifted the Old City Cemetery from its unique position as the only public cemetery of the community to being the 'old' burial ground. It was quite possibly regarded as less prestigious, and burial there was probably less expensive. This pattern seems to have been short-lived, however, possibly due to the widespread economic hardship of the Great Depression. Both cemeteries show predominantly Spanish markers in the 1930s and 1940s. With families suffering great economic hardships during this period, spending money on durable grave markers was probably an expense that many could not afford. We can only estimate the huge numbers of markers that have been lost to the elements from such earlier periods. It is worth recalling that, in the Old City Cemetery, only about 5,000 markers remain from nearly 30,000 total interments.

Mixed code markers have been found for all decades in Buena Vista, but with a peak in occurrence during the 30-year period of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. This is exactly the same period of the highest occurrence of bilingual markers for the Old City Cemetery. It is also the same period in which the third large cemetery in Brownsville, Rose Lawn, began its operation. Once again, the opening of a new cemetery in the community afforded additional choices to consumers and had consequences for the client base of the older cemeteries. For the first two decades of its operation, as shown in Table 4, Rose Lawn appears to have attracted

a strictly monolingual English clientele. As with the opening of Buena Vista in 1915, a new, more expensive cemetery conceivably gave wealthier clients a preferable option. Possibly, the new-fashioned memorial park/perpetual care character of Rose Lawn also appealed more to those who were ready to move on from the more traditional forms of cemetery memorials and who identified with more contemporary ideas. This seems to have been the English-speaking portion of the community. Or, perhaps the stark minimalism of the in-ground markers required by Rose Lawn may have initially constrained consumers to essentially English-only texts of names and dates expressed in English conventions. Mixed code markers were not found for Rose Lawn until 1970, but increased rapidly through the 1980s. This coincides with the end of active use of the Old City Cemetery.

Table 4: Language Distribution As Percentages by Decades: Rose Lawn

	E	S	Mixed	Total
1950	100%	0	0	1
1960	100%	0	0	16
1970	46%	27%	27%	15
1980	31%	12.5%	56.5%	16
1990	41%	18%	41%	17
2000	60%	15%	25%	20
2010	80%	0	20%	5

After 1980 and the virtual closing of the Old City Cemetery, Rose Lawn and Buena Vista experienced further differentiation from each other with respect to language use. In Buena Vista, we see a return to monolingual Spanish and English markers, with English markers gaining additional ground and mixed code usage dropping to very low levels, reminiscent of the earlier part of the 20th century. In Rose Lawn, English remains the dominant language of inscriptions. Mixed code markers drop in usage but remain stronger in presence than in Buena Vista. With the opening of the

millennium, it becomes difficult to distinguish significant patterns. We should be cautious about drawing any conclusions from the most recent data, given that it is based on fewer markers than in the other decades. Nevertheless, it is intriguing that with the new millennium Buena Vista seems to be experiencing its highest level of mixed code markers ever (33.5%), while the mixed code in Rose Lawn continues to decline. Further investigation -- and the passage of time -- is required to confirm whether this trend will persist.

Concluding Remarks

This study has provided a glimpse of one very specific area of language use in the Brownsville language community: grave marker inscriptions. This is a very limited domain of language use, but an extremely valuable one, because it is available as a public record and is dated. This particular study has examined a corpus of 730 grave markers from seven different publicly accessible cemeteries and covering approximately 160 years of history, from 1850 to the present. Admittedly, the data is incomplete, because this corpus represents a tiny portion of the whole collection of existing grave markers in each cemetery, and many grave markers have been completely lost due to the ravages of time and are no longer available for inclusion in a study such as this one. We should certainly be cautious about drawing far-reaching conclusions for these reasons, but examination of this limited corpus has nevertheless been very rewarding.

First, we now have a firm grasp of the semantic content and syntax of typical grave markers of the Brownsville community. While Brownsville markers conform to the prototypical content of names, dates, and memorial epitaphs, close analysis has revealed subtle language choices in the expression of that content, especially on mixed code markers. Specifically, dates and memorial epitaphs constructed around the Spanish word *recuerdo* stand out as elements that follow a clear pattern of language choice. Dates, with their official record-keeping function, are most often expressed in

English, while epitaphs and *recuerdo* memorials, serving more personal and emotional functions, are overwhelmingly Spanish. This suggests an intuitive distinction in domains of use for Spanish and English by members of the Brownsville language community.

Second, we now have data on the distribution of English, Spanish, and mixed code language use on grave markers in the public cemeteries of Brownsville. The data shows differentiation in language use by cemetery, with some more English in character and others more Spanish. Overall, however, the distribution of language use found in this study is for nearly equal rates of monolingual Spanish and English, with both essentially twice as common as the use of mixed code. Earlier grave marker studies of bilingual Texas communities done by Eckert and Baird found that grave marker language mirrored language shifts from the minority languages Czech and German to English, eventually with total replacement by English. This pattern is not indicated for Brownsville. Instead, the data supports a stable co-existence of Spanish and English in Brownsville, with differentiation of the use of the two languages by semantic domain on mixed code markers. The use of monolingual Spanish and English on grave markers far outweighs the use of mixed code.

Third, we have a decade-by-decade look at language use over the course of 160 years for the three largest cemeteries in the community: the Old City Cemetery, Buena Vista, and Rose Lawn. The data here tells us more about the history of the three cemeteries themselves and their places in the community than about language use overall. Again, although the data is limited, observable patterns of language distribution correspond roughly with the dates of opening for Buena Vista and Rose Lawn. All three cemeteries begin their existence with clients choosing to memorialize their loved ones with monolingual inscriptions. Twice, in 1915 with Buena Vista and again in 1950 with Rose Lawn, as a new cemetery is added to the community, the older cemetery's language distribution changes as a portion of the population chooses the newer location for their final resting place. Socio-economic factors

are of great import in these patterns, and further study is required to confirm whether this analysis is correct.

Despite their relative sparseness of language, grave markers can be some of the most revealing texts a community produces. This study certainly left me feeling more intimately acquainted with the people of Brownsville and the local culture. Terry Jordan ends his book *Texas Graveyards: A Cultural Legacy* by lamenting that the funerary monuments of the past are being lost: "As an all-pervading popular culture rises to ascendance, changing our life-styles and preferences, Texans are in the process of squandering this priceless legacy of a simpler age."[52] Jordan implies that the past expressions of Texas regional cemetery culture were richer sources of material culture. This study hopefully shows that the modern grave marker as an artifact has not diminished in its ability to express the unique culture of a local community. The contemporary fashions of memorializing the dead have undeniably changed, but regional variation is still evident and is still a valuable window into local culture.

The University of Texas at Brownsville

Endnotes

1 Scott Baird, "Language Codes in Texas German Graveyards," *Markers* IX (1992), 217-255.

2 Eva Eckert, "Gravestones and the Linguistic Ethnography of Czech-Moravians in Texas," *Markers* XVIII (2001), 146-187.

3 Terry G. Jordan, *Texas Graveyards: A Cultural Legacy* (Austin: University of Texas Press).

4 Lynn Gosnell & Suzanne Gott, "San Fernando Cemetery: Decorations of Love and Loss in a Mexican-American Community," in *Cemeteries and Gravemarkers: Voices of American Culture*, ed. Richard E. Meyer (Logan, Utah: Utah State Univ. Press, 1992), 217 - 236.

5 Gender and artistic features such as style of monument and artistic motifs accompanying each inscription were also noted but are not discussed in this article,

which focuses instead on language. The data may be analyzed with respect to these features later in subsequent study.

6 Interview of David Parsons, Findagrave.com researcher, June 22, 2013. Mr. Parsons has done extensive research and cataloguing of cemetery records and gravemarkers in the Old City Cemetery as well as La Palma, Santa Rosalia, Brulay, and Guillen.

7 Laura B. Martinez, "City's Long History Etched in Cemetery's Aging Markers," *The Brownsville Herald*, January 23, 2013.

8 Interview with Ayla Jaramillo, Old City Cemetery Center, on June 13, 2013.

9 *The Brownsville Herald*, "Cemeteries Get National Citation," June 26, 2010.

10 Interview with David Parsons, June 22, 2013.

11 Interview with Lulu Tovar, Funereria Del Angel, June 13, 2013.

12 This estimation is based on data from Findagrave.com, "Buena Vista Burial Park", which lists 1,991 interments for this cemetery on its website.

13 Interview with Otto Stelling, Rose Lawn Memorial Gardens, June 6, 2013.

14 Interview with Otto Stelling, Rose Lawn Memorial Gardens, June 6, 2013.

15 Interview with Otto Stelling, Rose Lawn Memorial Gardens, June 6, 2013.

16 Interview with David Parsons, June 22, 2013.

17 This estimation is based on data from Findagrave.com, which lists 656 interments for La Palma and 939 interments for Santa Rosalia on its website.

18 Interview with David Parsons, June 22, 2013.

19 Interview with David Parsons, June 22, 2013. This cemetery is also sometimes referred to as Southmost Cemetery, but obituaries published in *The Brownsville Herald* and matching gravemarkers located there refer to interment in Brulay Cemetery. Findagrave researchers prefer to use the historically linked name.

20 Interview with David Parsons, June 22, 2013. According to Mr. Parsons, the most recent gravemarker in the Brulay Cemetery is dated 2006, but it is an anomaly and is considerably younger than all the others.

21 US Census Bureau, Brownsville QuickFacts, *http://quickfacts.census.gov*.

22 John Foreman & Therese Gallegos, "Linguistic Features of Generation 1.5 Hispanic Students on the Texas/Mexico Border," LASSO (Linguistic Association of the Southwest) Annual Conference, Sept. 29-Oct. 2, 2011, South Padre Island, Texas.

23 Baird, "Language Codes," 218; Scott Baird, "Private, Family, Yet Universal," unpublished ms, 2005.

24 The abbreviations "N." and "M." here stand for *nacio* 'born' and *murio* 'died'. Information in parentheses in this example and some others refers to the corpus identification number of the gravemarker and the cemetery where it is located.

25 Some gravemarkers give only names and numerals for the years of birth or death, and this information does not allow for any clear language distinctions. These markers are not included in the totals in Table 1.

26 There is a separate Hebrew Cemetery in Brownsville which is located near the Old City Cemetery but is not included in this study.

27 Historical marker at the entrance to the Old City Cemetery.

28 J. Joseph Edgette, "The Epitaph and Personality Revelation," in *Cemeteries and Gravemarkers: Voices of American Culture*, ed. Richard E. Meyer (Logan, Utah: Utah State Univ. Press, 1992), 87.

29 Scott J. Baird, "Gravemarkers vs. Burial Records: Grieving Families vs. Sleeping Clerks," *Journal of American & Comparative Culture* 25:3-4 (2002), 340.

30 Jordan, *Texas Graveyards*, 85.

31 This equivalent of the English 'Rest in peace' (R.I.P.) appears in other variations and is most often abbreviated: E.P.D. (*En paz descanse*), Q.E.P. D. (*Que en paz descanse*), D.E.P (*Descanse en paz*).

32 Edgette, "The Epitaph and Personality Revelation," 88.

33 For remarks on the aberrant spelling *aquille rase* in this inscription see note 47 below.

34 The translation of *R.E.* is uncertain. This may be an abbreviation for *Recuerd Eterna* roughly 'eternal memorial'.

35 Eckert, "Gravestones and the Linguistic Ethnography of Czech-Moravians in Texas," 158; 160.

36 In his chapter on Mexican graveyards, Terry Jordan speculates that Mexican birthplaces may be routinely absent from gravemarkers due to concerns over illegal immigration (p.87). Immigration status is certainly a concern for many border residents, but belongs to the realm of legal and official identities rather than perceived identities. People often perceive themselves as members of a community in spite of their legal status as members. The purpose of gravemarker language is to express perceived spiritual, familial, and ideological ties between the deceased and the living of the community. Inclusion vs. omission of birthplaces on gravemarkers is arguably more driven by individually perceived identities rather than officially recognized ones.

37 Totals for the Old City Cemetery include 3% composed of other languages such as French and German.

38 For a very accessible overview of the classic research on bilingual code switching see Suzanne Romaine, *Bilingualism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 110-164.

39 Mark Sebba, "Multilingualism in Written Discourse: An Approach to the Analysis of Multilingual Texts," *International Journal of Bilingualism* 17:1 (2012), 97.

40 Baird, "Language Codes," 224.

41 C.F. Ferguson, "Diglossia," *Word* 15 (1959), 325-40. Quoted in Romaine, *Bilingualism*, 31. Ferguson's original definition of diglossia referred to the use of a "high" (formal) variety and a "low" (informal) variety of the same language by a community of speakers. The definition has since been broadened to include systematically differentiated use of two separate languages which may or may not be genetically related.

42 Eckert, "Gravestones and the Linguistic Ethnography of Czech-Moravians in Texas," 165.

43 Baird, "Gravemarkers vs. Burial Records," 344.

44 Jordan, *Texas Graveyards*, 86.

45 Daniel J. Smith, "Spanish/English Bilingual Children in the Southeastern USA: Convergence and Codeswitching," *Bilingual Review* 28:2 (2007), 102.

46 Smith, "Spanish/English Bilingual Children," 105. Smith identifies English-to-Spanish convergence but does not include it in his data analysis, which is instead focused on Spanish-to-English convergence and code switching. This latter type of convergence is associated with communities in which English is the dominant language.

47 Eckert, "Gravestones and the Linguistic Ethnography of Czech-Moravians in Texas," 153-54.

48 Only two gravemarkers in the entire corpus showed spelling anomalies. One in the Old City Cemetery from 1906 begins *Aqui llasen*, which appears to be a phonetic spelling for the standard Spanish gravemarker phrasing *Aqui yacen* 'Here lies'. The other is a marker in the Brulay Cemetery dated 1916 which bears the phonetic spelling *cetiembre* for *septiembre* 'September'. The Brulay marker also has backwards 'J' letters in the inscription, which suggests general literacy issues rather than language interference.

49 The decade-by-decade analysis used here is a variant of a stem-and-leaf configuration used by Baird in "Language Codes," p. 221. Baird further discusses the use of such exploratory statistical methods in endnote 22, p. 252.

50 The one mixed code marker dated 1905 that was found in the study appears to be a replacement of an older marker. Its style and overall condition are anomalous for the date. It is listed in the table as (1) in the cell for 1900.

51 Cornelia Paraskevas, "The Geography of the Cemetery: A Sociolinguistic Approach," *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 39:1 (2006), 145.

52 Jordan, *Texas Graveyards*, 123.

The Geographic Distribution of Ghost Tales in the Rio Grande Valley

by

Milo Kearney and Ninfa Burgos-Kohler

The ghost tales of the Rio Grande Valley are based on general folk beliefs brought to the area from outside – most notably from Mexico. Similar tales are repeated not only at large removes from the Valley, but at different locations within the Valley. However, these facts do not negate the importance of the local geographic setting of many of these reports. This article will note the locations of thirteen Valley accounts of ghosts as cases in point and will attempt to analyze why each type of ghost story has occurred where it has. We will look at these accounts moving from east to west – from the Lower Valley to the Upper Valley.

South Padre Island: "The Sea Gull Maidens"

To lie on the beach at South Padre Island and listen to the mournful cry of the sea gulls invites such a story as follows.

It has been related that the sea gulls at Padre Island are transformed Karankawa Indian maidens who, long ago, drowned themselves in the surf. The story tells that these girls were the new brides of Indian braves who, before they could take their new wives with them, had to prove their bravery with dangerous acts. The fiancées of the braves who died in the process were expected to join their lost husbands in the eternal hunting grounds beyond the waves, by walking into the sea until they died.[1]

South Padre Island: "The Three-Master"

Shipping to and from the north bank of the Rio Grande Valley has congregated at or near Port Isabel, normally coming through the Brazos de Santiago Pass, at the south end of South Padre Island, into the Laguna Madre. This was true from the colonial Spanish galleons to the visits of Jean Lafitte in the early 19th century and

down to the present day. The waters of the Gulf of Mexico off the coast of the pass was thus a natural setting for stories of ghost ships shipwrecked before they made it to port.

One local folk tale tells about an old-fashioned wooden sailing ship with three masts and cannons which was sometimes (on a night with a full moon, fast-moving clouds, and choppy waters) seen by other boats two or three miles off the coast headed for the pass. The ghost ship would sail past, tall, majestic, and white, and then vanish.[2]

Bagdad: "The Black Mare (*La Yegua Negra*)"

Hurricanes are an ever-present threat to the Rio Grande Valley, and especially along the coast. So the account of a ghost connected with a hurricane comes as no surprise in connection with the one-time port of Bagdad, toward the mouth of the river on the southern side.

It is said that the residents of Bagdad were once warned to flee the fury of a breaking hurricane by a local Indian. Despite having been the target of gossip for his frequent trips across the river into Texas (where malicious rumor accused him of kidnapping girls for sale in Mexico), this Indian braved the fury of the storm to ride his black mare from house to house, urging instant departure. During his good Samaritan effort in the wind and the rain, his horse slipped and fell, throwing the Indian off and breaking his back. There he lay dying in the street, nobody daring to brave the storm to carry him to shelter. Nonetheless, in subsequent hurricanes, there have been reports of seeing his ghost racing on his now phantom steed, crying out the alarm. And after the storms, horse's hooves have been reportedly observed coming out of the water of the river.[3]

Bagdad: "The Curse" ("*La Maldición*")

Port towns often carry the reputation of sinful behavior, as the visiting sailors and merchant mariners engage in liquor, gambling,

and commercial sex. As the Mexican port of Bagdad, close to the mouth of the Rio Grande on the south bank, was especially notorious for such behavior, it is no surprise to find the ghost of an old woman negatively affected by it.

The ghost of this woman is occasionally seen, according to reports, bleeding and with her clothes torn, crying for her granddaughter. It is said that in late December of 1865, this woman came to Bagdad seeking to retrieve her fourteen-year-old granddaughter, who had been kidnapped and brought for exploitation to the port. Mocked and rejected, the old woman had been mauled by the *Comandante*'s dogs. Dying, she had cursed the town, which, in fact, was attacked, on 6 January of 1866, by a band of released soldiers and subjected to sacking, rape, and murder.[4]

Palmito Hill: "The Ghosts of Palmito Hill Ranch"

In the area where the Rio Grande Valley approaches the Gulf of Mexico at Boca Chica, silt-and-sand-topped clay dunes form small hills capped with mesquite and ebony trees, along with other vegetation, harboring wild life. Prominent among these is the 30-foot-tall Palmito Hill, which provided a camp site for the early Indians and a strategic military control point, culminating in the two battles of *Rancho Palmito* at the end of the American Civil War. Here, again, geographic setting is closely linked to the type of ghost story.

According to a *Huichol* Indian shaman who visited Palmito Hill, he encountered there many spirits eager to tell their life stories. There are nature spirits or *duendes* who play tricks on visitors, such as stealing from them, and pulling their toes or pinning them down while they are asleep, like the Irish pooka and incubus nightmares. There were natives from the pre-colonial period, who had been killed in a hurricane. He confirmed what a UT-B student had experienced, that a Mayan prince named Kal-Balam had taken ill and died while camped here on a trading expedition north to the Mississippi mound builders. Former workers on the Palmito Hill Ranch, owned through the generations by the family of Dr. Tony

Zavaleta, also are said to haunt the hill, including a peasant girl and a milk maid driving her wagon – the latter ghost seen by Dr. Zavaleta himself. Cannon shots, the neighing of horses, and the voices of soldiers killed in the two Civil War battles fought here are also said to be heard.[5]

The Banks of the Lower Rio Grande River: "*El Perro Negro*"

Tales of buried treasure naturally adhere to both the beaches of South Padre Island and to the banks of the Rio Grande, where pirate ships once came ashore (most notably to the one-time port of Bagdad on the south side of the river). Today, one of the pass-times of beach comers is to walk up and down with Geiger counters in hopes of finding a lost coin or even an entire cache of money. The river banks are also a possible venue for such discoveries.

Accounts are given of a large colonial-style iron treasure chest that has been repeatedly found, in a grotto covered up by soil in the banks of the Rio Grande. The chest is too full of treasure to close, with jewels and gold chains strewn around it. However, the chest has never been retrieved because of being guarded by a large, fierce black dog, with red eyes and long yellow fangs, sitting on its lid. The many human skeletons strewn around the grotto testify to the readiness of the dog to kill to protect the treasure. And, when people return to the spot with reinforcements, they find it recovered by dirt. Nor does renewed digging again reveal the grotto.[6]

Matamoros: "*O Todo O Nada*" and "*La Comadre Muerte*"

The location of a major Catholic Church center in Matamoros and the resulting wealth of the leading clergymen led to some churchmen commanding great wealth through gaining control of land and by lending money at usurious rates, while neglecting their flock.[7] Such a development made Matamoros a natural spot for the following stories.

It is said that on one of the low hills in the countryside outside Matamoros, people have been excited to come across a wagon full of old-fashioned peso coins. As they would grab handfuls of the pesos, they would hear a voice intone, "*O todo o nada*" ("Either all or nothing"). This saying would remind them that a wealthy priest in Matamoros had once left behind in his will a stash of coins with instructions for it to be divided between two brothers, who had then agreed to throw dice to see which could take the entire gift, The winner had then left town with the coins in a wagon, never to be seen again. Happy to have the coins, however they had ended up on the hill, people found that the coins were so heavy that they would fall right through the bottom of their pockets. And when they would leave to fetch a team of horses or mules to pull the wagon, they could never, of course, find the same hillock again.[8]

"*La Comadre Muerte*" tells about a mid-nineteenth-century doctor, who, warned by his wife not to respond to a sick call late on a moon-lit night, heedlessly jumped on his horse, shouting that Death was his *comadre*. But as he rode down a dark street, he encountered the white ghost of a woman gliding along. Reaching down, he grabbed her fleshless throat, only to find himself strangling the living delicate neck of the Mayor's wife, who was returning from a love tryst with Don Rafaelito, the reputedly saintly curate of the parish.[9]

Matamoros: "*Aprendiz de Brujo*"

Matamoros is the most notorious city in the Rio Grande Valley for dealings in witchcraft. The most publicized example was the discovery at the Rancho Santa Elena outside of Matamoros, in May of 1989, of the torture and murder of at least 27 people (including American college student Mark Kilroy) by the witchcraft coven of Adolfo de Jesús Constanzo. Constanzo was paid to work witch-craft protection for them by the Hernández family of drug dealers. Serafín Hernández, thinking himself made invisible by a spell, drove through a roadblock and led police unwittingly to the grisly site.

In his memoire tale, "*Aprendiz de Brujo*" ("*Apprentice Witch*") Manuel F. Rodríguez Brayda told his experience, as a boy of eight, with a reputed witch or *bruja* – his next-door neighbor Doña Gregorita. When Gregorita told Manuel's mother that she was afraid to sleep alone one night, he was sent to sleep in the same room with her. At midnight, pretending to be asleep, Manuel saw Gregorita rub her joints with an ointment, straddle a broom, speak seven mysterious words, fly out the window, assume the form, first of a crow and then of a spider, and disappear out of sight. Manuel claims he then anointed himself, straddled a stick (lacking a broom), and spoke the same seven magic words. But a stick did not have the same powers as a broom, and Manuel got no farther than the roof terrace.[10]

Matamoros: "*Así Paga el Diablo*"

Matamoros, as the largest tourist center on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande, is known for its *mariachis*, especially those who play in restaurants. As such locales are known for their *margaritas*, and some of them for sinful encounters, the setting for the next story comes as no surprise.

In nineteenth century Matamoros, it is told, lived a violinist named Abundio, who earned what little money he had by playing for various occasions. After one night of playing in an *cantina* where he had access to more alcohol than food, as Abundio was stumbling down the street toward his home, he exclaimed, "If the Devil asked me, I'd play for him." And a tall man with wolf-like ears and red eyes, wearing a red-and-black cape, called the violinist to come and play for his dance. Climbing into the man's coach, they drove to a vast hall where absolutely every single resident of Matamoros was waiting. Abundio played the night away, with the man pushing him and the dancers to go ever faster. Then, at the crowing of a rooster, he was driven back to where he had been picked up, and was kicked out of the coach with a counterfeit coin as payment.[11]

Matamoros: "The Dead Man's Bride (*La Novia del Muerto*)

Matamoros' main old city cemetery (*el campo santo*) houses the impressive tombs of many of its former residents – an ideal location for ghost encounters.

One of these ghosts is said to be the specter of an elegant foreign lady who came to the city, late in 1866, to join her *fiancé*, a *Federalista* army officer, only to find that he had been killed in battle and buried in the city cemetery. For ten months, the lady daily mourned at his grave, accompanied by her black servant, and then died in turn.[12] Another claimed encounter is of a ghost car seen driving through the closed entrance gate.[13]

Brownsville: "*Los Dos Niños* (The Two Children)"

The area of Brownsville and Matamoros cover what would naturally have been one city, had it not been for the Mexican-American War. Before that war, families from Matamoros were already beginning to build houses on the north side of the river. That shared identity, now challenged by the Border fence, was reinforced by the construction of the first bridge between the two cities, the Brownsville and Matamoros Bridge (or the "Old Bridge"), in 1910. Between 1846 and 1910, however, the more tenuous connection by ferry accentuated the separation between the two communities.

This adjustment is reflected in twentieth-century accounts of two ghost children seen sitting on the banks of the river at Brownsville, looking mournfully across at Matamoros and moaning, "*Quiero ver mi granpapa*" ("I want to see my Grandpa"). When sympathizers would ask them why they did not cross the bridge, the children would reply that there was no bridge (presumably because they had lived in the previous period) and then would disappear.[14]

Brownsville: "The Water Maidens" and "La Llorona"

Brownsville is graced by many beautiful resacas or ox-bow lakes, created as remnants of the Rio Grande River which have been left

behind through time as the river has, bit by bit, shifted its course southward. They provide an irresistible setting for accounts of contact with a paranormal world.

"The Water Maidens" tells of the spirits of four Indian maidens who would grant the birth of a beautiful daughter to whatever expectant mother would throw to them, into Brownsville's Fort Brown Resaca, a bouquet of flowers collected from the banks. The maidens were believed to be the daughters of the Water God of the aborigines, who used to emerge from the water to play at the side of the resaca and to receive bouquets of flowers from human admirers. It is said that the girls came back to their home under the water after sunset one day, for which they were punished by never being allowed to reappear above the surface of the resaca.[15]

There are various types of stories from Mexico about *la Llorona*, the ghost of a woman who haunts a waterway where she has drowned herself and her children. Perhaps the most famous of these tales concerns a woman who has given a Spanish *conquistador* children, only to be displaced by the arrival of her common-law husband's legitimate Spanish wife. Brownsville's resacas provide a natural setting for such a watery suicide of an abandoned woman.

Rene Torres, from a prominent local family and a member of the Texas Southmost College Board of Trustees, tells how, when he was about ten years old, he and other children would play at night by the extension of what is now the Dean Porter Park Resaca, where it has since been replaced by the Expressway. On various occasions, he heard cries, which the older boys identified as those of a *llorona*, weeping from the Resaca. Rene speculates that the sound might have been the whimpering of a dog, but this was not the general consensus of the kids.[16] The Rio Grande River has its own *llorona*, drowned in its waters, documented at Palmito Hill east of Brownsville, as discussed above.[17]

Brownsville: "The Ghosts of Fort Brown"

As the site of the Rio Grande Valley's main military base, at Fort Brown (now converted into Texas Southmost College), and of the military confrontations that kicked off the Mexican-American War and that raged in the American Civil War, Brownsville is a location for multiple accounts of warrior ghosts.

First Lieutenant William Gorgas, in 1882, discovered the link between mosquitoes and yellow fever, leading to the prevention of the disease.[18] The post infirmary building where he did his studies has been renamed Gorgas Hall in his honor, and reports have been made of seeing the shadow of the doctor by candle light in the office at the left side of the building where Gorgas once carried out his medical studies.[19]

Yolanda Gonzalez, a previous campus library archivist, is only one person who has spoken of such phenomena as books spontaneously falling from the shelves, doors opening and shutting of their own accord, and sounds of talking, squeaks, and groans in the library after closing time. One elderly lady is said to appear and disappear on various parts of the campus at night. One man watched a noisy military drill of ghost soldiers in front of Gorgas Hall.[20]

Ghosts have also been said to have lingered with the tomb markers and with the brass fence posts that once surrounded some of the graves in the military cemetery on the peninsula formed by Fort Brown Resaca, after their bodies were transferred, in 1909, to another graveyard in Alexandria, Louisiana.

What predisposes a house to be haunted? To judge from Hollywood horror movies, spooks prefer a large, decaying, moldy structure, ideally one isolated on the top of a dark hill. The little house on Brownsville's 19 Acacia Drive, in contrast, radiated openness and health. Intense sunlight, pouring through immense windows into every room, warm and brighten every corner of the interior. In back, a cheerful patio invites visitors to lounge on lawn chairs

amidst arbor vitae, aloe vera, and papaya trees. In front, a street curved in a smile invites its residents to step out for a walk: up and down the sidewalks of sub-tropical Palm Boulevard; down a street and around the Dean Porter Park Resaca to the zoo; or just around the corner, hand-in-hand with kiddies, to the play area of McDonalds. This is a more suitable setting for *piñatas* and *empanadas* than for *calaveras* and *pan de muerto*.

And yet, there is that bronze post in the front yard. When Fort Brown's cemetery was removed, the local folks had been allowed to carry away the tomb trappings. Some of its marble tombstones had been used as quoins for the corners of the now-demolished Nebraska Apartments. And the bronze posts that had stood at the corners of the fences around some of the tombstones became adornments for various lawns in the city. We were jokingly warned, before we bought the house, that local folklore suggests that the spirits of the dead soldiers linger at the sites of their plundered graves. But to us, the post was simply a cherished reminder of the town's rich history.

The house did not take long to speak to us. The very first night, while my wife and three-year-old son remained, for one last time, at the Palacio Real Apartments, our previous abode, I moved into the new home with our five-year-old daughter. The front door of the house led into an entry hall, followed by a long room. I had decided, before carrying furniture inside, to knock down the wall separating the hall from the long room, to create one continuous sweep. The work carried me deep into the night. While I was banging away, with my daughter playing nearby, I was surprised to see a fluorescent light go on in the study – a room at the side of a back sitting room, itself behind French doors at the back of the long room.

I went back to investigate, and, finding nothing unusual, I turned the light back off and returned to my demolition work. But, a few minutes later, the light in the study, once again, came on. The third time this happened, I just left it on, but, after a while, it turned off

again of its own accord. Soon after, I completed the removal of the wall, and our daughter and I went into the far back bedroom to go to sleep. We lay down on sleeping bags, and I turned on a radio to play some soothing music quietly to help us fall asleep. But, after a minute or two, the radio stopped playing. I turned it off and on, so that it started again. But, shortly afterwards, it went dead again. So I just shut it off.

In the three or four years that followed, various lights around the house would suddenly go on and off, but – most of all – the light in the study. Various house guests were witnesses to this phenomenon. There were obviously electrical problems in the house, we concluded. This was frustrating, since a professional check of the wiring had been included in the inspection of the house before we bought it. Also, an electrician friend had come by on his own volition, and also found no problems of this nature. Yet, some electrical defect was obviously at fault.

Nevertheless, friends joked about a ghost of the soldier we had unwittingly purchased along with his bronze post in front of the house. Died and buried, presumably far from home, while posted to the border on military duty, the warrior's soul supposedly had not come to terms with having never seen his family again. However, the soldier soon shared renown with another scenario, as our neighbors told us what had happened to the elderly owners of the house next door shortly before we moved in. The old man had died, and his widow, in her grief, had (they said) hanged herself from a branch of a big ebony tree that stood (between our two houses) right outside the window of our study.

Such is the stuff from which ghost stories are concocted, and we merrily passed on the tale to various visitors – especially those who experienced the self-controlling lights. This went on until, one day, the visitor happened to be the minister of Brownsville's First United Methodist Church. "I don't believe this is an electrical problem," this kindly gentleman concluded. "I think your house needs to be exorcized of tormented spirits." We listened as

the clergyman prayed over the house, thanked him, and bade him good-by. I'm not sure what we expected from the experience. But, as the months – and then years – passed, we noted that the problem with the lights had never again recurred. Additionally, the ebony tree outside the study window, from which the widow had hanged herself, died at this point and had to be cut down. A curious coincidence, no doubt.[21]

Many more tales of ghosts on the campus of Texas Southmost College, the former Fort Brown, including of a cavalryman who rides at top speed on his horse on the campus Paseo walkway, and of long-dead soldiers at the building previously used as a morgue, can be read in the three books of collected stories about the Fort Brown ghosts, edited by John Hawthorne, Javier García, and Justin Lawrence.[22]

Brownsville and "*La Curandera*"

As the most Mexicanized of the towns on the north bank of the Rio Grande, Brownsville has more than its share of *curanderas* – women who can apply magic and the manipulation of supernatural forces to affect a person's health and/or wealth. Brownsville *curanderas* (including one located close to the Four Corners intersection of Boca Chica and International Boulevard) advertise their services openly, and a shop of herbs and other *curandera* supplies has stood on Market Square. Therefore, it is only appropriate that a *curandera* should be featured in a local tale.

A former Brownsville *curandera* was known, among other services, for making a man fall in love with a female client (or *vice versa*). She would darken her room, hold a white paper figure of a man over smoke from burning incense, caress the paper doll while singing a chant in an unknown tongue, and then tell her client to hold the figure close to her heart. On one occasion, a young woman wanted to steal the boyfriend of her cousin. The *curandera* warned that to use magic in a love triangle would threaten the life of one of the three persons involved, but the girl insisted. The *curandera* therefore cut out three figures – two white and one black – and

proceeded with the ceremony. Suddenly the form of a man appeared and led the girl away. But it was not her desired lover, but the Angel of Death, and the girl was later found hanged from a tree in her front yard. The *curandera*, it is said, fled from town.[23]

Brownsville and "A Brick-throwing Ghost"

As the one-time home of the wealthiest Valleyites, whose expansive residences, in the nineteenth century, extended along and parallel to Elizabeth Street, directly to the west of downtown, this was a logical location for a supernatural attack on supposedly ill-gotten property from questionable business moves taking advantage of Hispanic vulnerability after the Mexican-American War. The following tale did not fail to attract widespread attention, being reported in headlines in various Texas newspapers, including in *The Democrat* of Brownsville and *The Daily Express* of San Antonio.

On Monday, 25 August 1879, the house of county clerk Adolphus Glaevecke was hit by a barrage of pieces of bricks. After being hit twice, Glaevecke called in the police. The law officers witnessed the intense barrage, but were unable to find where the missiles were coming from. This situation by Thursday had caused Mrs. Glaevecke and the younger of the two Glaevecke daughters to move to their ranch outside the city. The bricks sailed through the doors and windows, injuring the older daughter and a servant and killing the family parrot. Crowds of people, including Mayor Carson and a reporter, came to watch the show. As if observing the biblical commandment to rest on the Sabbath, the rain of brickbats stopped from Saturday night to about ten o'clock Monday morning. It then resumed for a time before ceasing altogether.[24]

Brownsville: "*El Pasto de las Almas*"

As the oldest Christian burial ground on the north bank of the Rio Grande Valley, Brownsville's city graveyard provided the best setting for stories of departed souls who had not received a proper burial. Both in the rush to bury the many victims of a cholera epidemic in 1849 and again in the haste to bury unknown *bandidos*

killed during Juan Cortina's raid of the town on 28 September 1859, corpses were deposited in mass unmarked graves in unsanctified ground just outside the perimeter of the city cemetery. This area was termed the pasture of souls or *el pasto de las almas*.

As far back as 1880, people began reporting seeing, on the eve of November 2 – All Souls' Day, eerie lights emerge from the ground with the graves and flit over the graves. It was concluded that the lights were the souls of those people buried in the unmarked graves. Later, the cemetery and its sanctified land was expanded to include the *pasto de las almas*, and, today, only occasionally do people report seeing such a light in the graveyard.[25]

Brownsville: "The Man with the Shovel"

As the largest town in the Rio Grande Valley, Brownsville more than many of the other Valley towns faced a need to adequately patrol its city streets. Consequently, stories of ghostly help in keeping the streets safe naturally centered here.

This particular ghost, while lacking a policeman's gun and holster, created fear in the hearts of those he met on Brownsville's downtown streets by the fact that he was headless and surrounded by a dim blue light. And, while uttering no words, he signaled his authority by drawing, with a shovel, a line in the street which would supernaturally prevent them from crossing it. For example, he is said to have saved girls from being seduced (as happened in the early 1930s) or abducted from Brownsville to Matamoros by drawing lines as barriers in front of the villains. The spectre also, in 1892 or 1893, stopped a man from being hit by a collapsing roof on Second Street.[26]

Brownsville: "The Chaperone"

As a meeting place for young men and women coming to attend classes, Brownsville's Texas Southmost College must naturally have been the scene of many cases of sexual temptation. The once secluded courtyard behind Gorgas Hall was once a popular venue

for trysts. And this spot is the venue for various stories of amorous couples who were saved from a decision they might regret by seeing a pale, elegant elderly lady in a long nineteenth-century dress sitting close by. The sight repeatedly caused one of the two young people to see in the lady their own grandmother and to back off from their ardent wooing. The rumor has it that the lady is the ghost of a Brownsville girl who had become too intimate with a soldier at Fort Brown, now converted into the college. The soldier had died before they could be married, and so his fiancée has repeatedly returned after her eventual death to prevent others from making the same mistake.[27]

Brownsville: "The Banshee"

People of Irish descent have settled overall in the United States in general, as well as in different parts of the Valley in particular. Nonetheless, the claimed appearance of an Irish banshee – such as follows here – seems especially appropriate in Brownsville, a town that Patrick Shannon, in 1850, tried to claim for his large group of followers and to dub with the name of Shannondale.[28]

The spontaneous turning on and off of the lights at 19 Acacia Drive, told in the above story about "The Ghost of a Soldier Buried at Fort Brown" never recurred after the minister's exorcism. But that is not to say that the little house had no more unexplained phenomena to reveal. Some of its surprises fitted the ordinary fare of spectral *leyendas*, proving nothing one way or the other. But one more peculiar development stood out.

The little house was of a peculiar ground plan. A back wing had been added to the original house, an arrangement perfect for house guests, being set almost totally apart from the original structure. It was linked only by a long narrow hall, and held its own bedroom and bathroom. The neighborhood was beset by burglars, who usually entered from a window of the back bedroom. One night, I was awakened by two thieves who had come in through the window and were stepping over my wife and me in our bed. Then, as so often, I ended up chasing the intruders down the back

alley. At length, I decided to place two latch locks on the bedroom door, so that, if robbers got into the back room, they would find the door out to the rest of the house locked.

With this arrangement in place, I was sitting up late one night, reading in the front of the house, when I heard a furious banging in the back of the house. Going into the back hall, I saw the bedroom door shaking violently at each bang against it from the other side. At this point, the noise awakened my wife, who warned me not to open the door. Alerted by the force of the banging, I agreed, and, instead, called the police.

By the time the officers arrived, the banging had stopped. I unlocked the door, and we went in to assess the damage. To my surprise, everything was in its place, as before. The windows were undamaged and still locked. Puzzled, we walked around the house. Coming to the outside of the back bedroom, we heard a mild banging coming from the back tool shed of our neighbors (of the house on the other side from that mentioned in the previous incident). The neighbors were away, so we investigated, and found an exploded water heater. The force of its pulsating had created the banging and sent out sound waves that had shaken the bedroom door. The supernatural in this case had been explained by sober physics.

Or had it? The next morning, I received a call informing me that, at the very hour of the banging, my father (having been rushed to a hospital emergency room) had died. According to folklore, ancient Irish families like ours could be visited by a noisy banshee at the time of death of the head of the family. But this was another curious coincidence, of course. And there the matter would have rested, had it not been for what happened years later.

One night, later on, I had a dream about my father so intense that my yells and movements awakened my wife. The next morning, my brother telephoned. He told me that he was very bothered by a strong dream about our father that he had had the night before. A few minutes after I hung up the phone, a strange idea occurred

to me. I went to check our family genealogy book, and froze with surprise at what I saw. That was the very night, exactly ten years later, on which our father had died.

The house still stands on sunny Acacia Drive, inviting, relaxed, and smiling. And visited by spirits? You tell me.[29]

Olmito and "The Devil's Rock (*La Piedra del Diablo*)"

Olmito is a town immediately to the west of Brownsville, its location as a residential suburb of the larger town being its main identity. Therefore, it is no surprise that a tale about a supernatural occurrence plays off its proximity to its larger neighbor.

The tale tells how the Devil, furious over the construction of Brownsville's first church, the Catholic Church of the Advent, set out at night from the Upper Valley, carrying a huge rock with which to destroy the holy structure. When he reached Olmito, the sun was about to come up, which would end his powers with the light of day, and he worried that he might not make it to the church on time. Coming across an old woman with two baskets of second-hand shoes, he asked how much farther it was to his goal. Recognizing Old Nick for who he was, the woman cleverly lied that she had worn out all the pairs of shoes in her basket by walking from there. Exasperated, the Devil hurled the rock to the ground and vanished. It is said the rock, seared into a black indentation where the Devil's hot hand had held it, was long to be seen in Olmito, and may still be lying somewhere in its precincts.[30]

Ranchito country outside Matamoros and Brownsville: "*La Abuela*"

The residents of the isolated little ranches in the countryside outside Matamoros and Brownsville once had to cope with the isolation of rural life. It is small wonder that these remote families should be visited by a friendly and helpful ghost, as told in the next two tales.

It is believed that the spirit of a kindly old Indian *abuela* (grandmother) medicine woman, still wearing the Indian garb of yesteryear, has appeared to help folks who were alone and in need out in the countryside. In one instance, she materialized to deliver the baby of a young woman whose husband had left her alone in a farm house on the road west out of Matamoros to fetch a *partera* (mid-wife) from town. In another case, she found a little four-year-old girl named Consuelo Garza lost in the chapparal and brought her back to her parents' little ranch outside of Brownsville.[31]

San Juan: "*El Conserje del Auditorio*"

As the location of the high school that provides instruction for, not one, but three Valley towns (Pharr, San Juan, and Alamo), San Juan is a logical setting for the following story about a high school haunting.

It is reported that Fred, a one-time janitor at Pharr-San Juan-Alamo High School, was changing lights on the auditorium ceiling when he fell from the ladder to his death. Since then, the auditorium lights have, at times, turned on and off of their own accord, objects are moved around, and the ghostly shape of a man is glimpsed. Furthermore, the students are said to have performed badly until they prayed for the rest of Fred's soul and began to dedicate their performances to him.[32]

Elsa: "*Los Angelitos*" and Raymondville: "*La Luz del Perdido*"

As towns located along train routes headed south into and north out of the Valley, Elsa and Raymondville make natural settings for ghosts of people killed in railroad accidents.

It is claimed that since a group of children were killed at a railroad crossing on Texas Highway 88 at Elsa, cars sometimes stall on the tracks there. With the motor dead, the cars are supposedly pushed on to safety by some unseen force. The only evidence of how this happens is given by the marks of childrens' hands in the dirt on the backs of the cars.[33]

Another story tells of a young train conductor living in Raymondville. His duties included signaling to the engineer with his lantern when it was time for the train to start. One night, he was, for some reason, run over by the train. Afterwards, people began to report seeing an unexplained lantern signaling around trains, and the engineers began to give an extra toot of the trains' whistles in memory of the young conductor.[34]

Bluetown: "*A las 3:00 a. m. en Bluetown*"

The Military Highway that follows the river from Brownsville west is much more rural and under-populated than the regions a short distance to the north, following Highway 83. Motorists along this route in the wee hours of the morning would be understandably nervous about getting stuck en route by an automotive breakdown, so it is no wonder that a ghost tale reflects this fear or danger.

It is said that the ghost of a woman who was murdered on this route, in front of the Christo Rey Church, at 3:00 A.M., haunts that highway at this spot, an causes cars to break down if they try to pass at that hour of the morning, and that they remain stuck on the route until another car comes along.[35]

McAllen: "El Diablo en el Baile"

As a center of entertainment for the Upper Valley, McAllen makes a natural setting for a story centered on a dance.

Dolores, a McAllen girl, beautiful but vain and contemptuous, it is said, insisted on going to a local dance hall on the night of Good Friday, despite her mother's protests. At 11:30, a handsome young stranger entered the hall and began dancing with Dolores. He spun her faster and faster, even after the music stopped, while she tried, in vain, to detach herself. At midnight, the students disappeared in a puff of smoke, and Dolores lay dead on the dance hall floor.[36]

La Joya: "*La Lechuza*"

La Joya's small town atmosphere might place a special emphasis on family relationships which might entail emotional difficulties in moving from one spouse to another.

One legend tells how, at a party north of La Joya, a big dark *lechuza* (the ghost of an unhappy woman) appeared and began to whirl around in the main room. The ghost's ex-husband chased her out with a stick, but, later, the guests heard a scream from the next room, and found the *lechuza* chewing into the neck of her ex-husband's new young wife.[37]

Los Sáenz: "*El Reloj de Fantasmo*"

In the following tale, we may perceive the importance of family inheritance in a farming region, and the accompanying hope of hidden wealth that might have been stashed away on the property by departed family members.

A father was walking, one day, with his wife and two daughters, along the road through Los Sáenz, when the police obliged him to come with them, leaving his famiy at the side of the road. With night coming on, the woman asked the owner of a near-by house for lodging. The mean-hearted man, named Gustavo, only allowed the three to spend the night in an abandoned house on his property. During the night, the woman saw the ghost of a portly, whiskered old man, who introduced himself as Rodolfo, the father of Gustavo. The kindly gentleman instructed her to take a box of gold and jewels from under the stairs, and also gave her his gold watch, to help them. The next morning, his son Gustavo claimed the treasure, not believing the woman's story. But, when he saw his father's watch, inscribed with his father's initials, he took fright and let her take both watch and treasure.[38]

Roma: "*La Novia Vestida de Blanco*"

Roma's economic life line hinges on its location straddling Highway 83 running from Brownsville northwest along the north side of the Rio Grande to Laredo and beyond.

It is told how, one dark night, a young couple, preparing for their wedding day, were returning to Roma from Monterrey, where the bride-to-be had bought her wedding dress. Suddenly, the wagon turned over, crushing the man. Out of her mind with grief, the young woman put on her wedding dress and sat down beside the corpse of her now-never-to-be-husband, weeping inconsolably. Since then, people (especially loving couples) claim to have seen her ghost, still in her wedding dress, sobbing beside the road.[39]

Conclusion

So what should be made of this geographic distribution of accounts of ghost appearances in the Valley? If the stories are nothing but imaginative legends, their content would dictate which locations would make sense. However, if the accounts are based in actual supernatural phenomena, the nature of the story would, conversely, be determined by their geographical setting.

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Endnotes

1 Peter Gawenda, "The Indian Maidens," in *Studies in Brownsville History*, edited by Milo Kearney (Brownsville: Pan American University at Brownsville, 1986), p. 64..

2 Peter Gawenda, "The Three-Master," in *Studies in Brownsville History*, edited by Milo Kearney (Brownsville: Pan American University at Brownsville, 1986), p. 88.

3 Peter Gawenda, "The Black Mare (*La Yegua Negra*)," in *Studies in Brownsville History*, edited by Milo Kearney (Brownsville: Pan American University at Brownsville, 1986), pp. 183-185.

4 Peter Gawenda, "The Curse (*La Maldición*)," in *Additional Studies in Rio Grande Valley History*, edited by Milo Kearney, Anthony Knopp, and Antonio Zavaleta (Brownsville: The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College, 2008), pp. 3-4.

5 Antonio N. Zavaleta, "The Ghosts of Historic Palmito Ranch Hill," in *Continuing Studies in Rio Grande Valley History*, edited by Milo Kearney, Anthony Knopp, and Antonio Zavaleta (Brownsville: The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College, 2010), pp. 3-10.

6 Peter Gawenda, "El Perro Negro," in *Studies in Brownsville History*, edited by Milo Kearney (Brownsville: Pan American University at Brownsville, 1986), p. 90.

7 Eliseo Paredes Manzano, *Homenaje a los Fundadores de la Heróica, Leal e Invicta Matamoros en el sesquicentenario de Su Nuevo Nombre* (Matamoros: Impresos Alfa, S. A., 1976), pp. 34-35.

8 Manuel F. Rodríguez Brayda, "*O Todo O Nada,*" in *More Studies in Brownsville History*, edited by Milo Kearney (Brownsville: Pan American University at Brownsville, 1989), pp. 82-84

9 Manuel F. Rodríguez Brayda, "*La Comadre Muerte,*" in *More Studies in Brownsville History*, edited by Milo Kearney (Brownsville: Pan American University at Brownsville, 1989), pp. 169-170.

10 Manuel F. Rodríguez Brayda, "*Aprendiz de Brujo,*" in *More Studies in Brownsville History*, edited by Milo Kearney (Brownsville: Pan American University at Brownsville, 1989), pp. 439-441..

11 Manuel F. Rodríguez Brayda, "*Así Paga el Diablo,*" in *More Studies in Brownsville History*, edited by Milo Kearney (Brownsville: Pan American University at Brownsville, 1989), pp. 86-88.

12 Peter Gawenda, "The Dead Man's Bride (*La Novia del Muerto*)," in *Additional Studies in Rio Grande Valley History*, edited by Milo Kearney, Anthony Knopp, and Antonio Zavaleta (Brownsville: The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College, 2008), pp. 109-110.

13 Peter Gawenda, "The Ghost's Car (*El Coche Fantasma*)," in *Additional Studies in Rio Grande Valley History*, edited by Milo Kearney, Anthony Knopp, and Antonio Zavaleta (Brownsville: The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College, 2008), pp. 231-233.

14 Peter Gawenda, "*Los Dos Niños* (The Two Children)," in *Additional Studies in Rio Grande Valley History*, edited by Milo Kearney, Anthony Knopp, and Antonio Zavaleta (Brownsville: The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College, 2008), pp. 517-519.

15 Peter Gawenda, "The Water Maidens," in *Studies in Brownsville History*, edited by Milo Kearney (Brownsville: Pan American University at Brownsville, 1986), pp. 61-62.

16 Rene Torres' personal recollection, related to Milo Kearney, 4 September 2013.

17 Antonio N. Zavaleta, "The Ghosts of Historic Palmito Ranch Hill," in *Continuing Studies in Rio Grande Valley History*, edited by Milo Kearney, Anthony Knopp, and Antonio Zavaleta (Brownsville: The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College, 2010), pp. 7-8.

18 Milo Kearney and Anthony Knopp, *Boom and Bust: The Historical Cycles of Matamoros and Brownsville* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1991), p. 175.

19 Peter Gawenda, "The Medic," in *Additional Studies in Rio Grande Valley History*, edited by Milo Kearney, Anthony Knopp, and Antonio Zavaleta (Brownsville: The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College, 2008), pp. 425-426.

20 Alan Hollander, "The Fort Brown Ghosts and Other Phantasms," in *More Studies in Brownsville History*, edited by Milo Kearney (Brownsville: Pan American University at Brownsville, 1989), pp. 285-291.

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22 John Hawthorne, Javier R. García, and Justin Lawrence (ed.), *The Ghosts of Fort Brown: An Informal Study of Brownsville Folklore and Parapsychology* (Brownsville: Arnulfo L. Oliveira Literary Society Press, 2003); Javier R. García and John Hawthorne (ed.), *The Ghosts of Fort Brown: Another Informal Study of Brownsville Folklore and Parapsychology* (Brownsville: Arnulfo L. Oliveira Literary Society Press, 2004); and John Hawthorne (ed.), *The Ghosts of Fort Brown and Beyond* (Brownsville: Arnulfo L. Oliveira Literary Society Press, 2006).

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24 Peter Gawenda, "A Brick-throwing Ghost," in *Studies in Brownsville History*, edited by Milo Kearney (Brownsville: Pan American University at Brownsville, 1986), pp. 205-207.

25 Peter Gawenda, "*El Pasto de las Almas*," in *Studies in Brownsville History*, edited by Milo Kearney (Brownsville: Pan American University at Brownsville, 1986), pp. 209-210.

26 Peter Gawenda, "The Man with the Shovel," in *Studies in Brownsville History*, edited by Milo Kearney (Brownsville: Pan American University at Brownsville, 1986), pp. 215-216.

27 Peter Gawenda, "The Chaperone," in *Studies in Matamoros and Brownsville History*, edited by Milo Kearney, Athony Knopp, and Antonio Zavaleta (Brownsville: The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College, 1995), pp. 257-259.

28 Milo Kearney and Anthony Knopp, *Boom and Bust: The Historical Cycles of Matamoros and Brownsville* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1991), page 69.

29 Milo Kearney, personal recollection.

30 Peter Gawenda, "The Devil's Rock (*La Piedra del Diablo*)," in *Studies in Brownsville History*, edited by Milo Kearney (Brownsville: Pan American University at Brownsville, 1986), p. 178.

31 Peter Gawenda, "*La Abuela*," in *Studies in Brownsville History*, edited by Milo Kearney (Brownsville: Pan American University at Brownsville, 1986), pp. 212-214

32 Ninfa Burgos-Kohler gathered this tale about the year 2000 from the following students from her classes she was teaching then at the University of Texas-Pan American: Lulú Pérez, Sandra Benítez, Rosa Isela López, Alma Zamora, Rosalinda Macías, Rebeca Morales, and Francisco Medrano.

33 Ninfa Burgos-Kohler from her students as stated above.

34 Ninfa Burgos-Kohler from her students as stated above.

35 Ninfa Burgos-Kohler from her students as stated above.

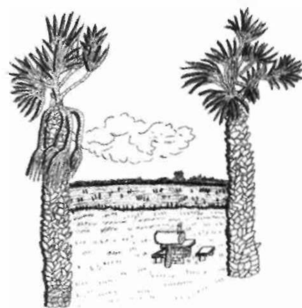
36 Ninfa Burgos-Kohler from her students as stated above.

37 Ninfa Burgos-Kohler from her students as stated above.

38 Ninfa Burgos-Kohler from her students as stated above.

39 Ninfa Burgos-Kohler from her students as stated above.

Behind the Fence of Delta Lake



Swimming between the lines of daybreak,
a gentle nudge of distant wind blows
off of lingering memories
straight across the tall grass soaking its
roots in shallow water.
Swishing sound of leaves accompany
children at play,
inviting an appetite for the foiled wrapped lunch
my mother packed.
Giant pickle jar sits atop the picnic table.
Such an indulgence presents itself out of the blue sky.
Pickles the size of soda cans await my anxiety to devour them.
Red ants carry away the Butterkrust bread crumbs
left from my cheese sandwich.
Behind me, the splashing of body parts spanks the calm waters
of Delta Lake.
Picnic under the swaying trees,
where little sisters play away the day.
Hot Texas sun shines overhead
as crop dusters turn and dip into nearby fields
On the miles between lake and home, the road offers a lullaby
for tired rugrats smelling of the Delta water.
It was at one of these visits that I met the boy
who became my boyfriend.
Billy was from a rival high school,
from a home off of Monte Cristo Road,
a world away from my home (20 miles),
with many orchards between us.
Unforgettable feelings echo from the banks of Delta Lake.
The miles have turned to years
and the years to vibrations
of deep searching for what is left of a memory
of mother, of Delta Lake, and of giant dill pickles.

– Josie Mixon

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