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## From Porciones to Colonias: The Power of Place and Community-Based Learning in K-12 Education - A Case Study From the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas

University of Texas--Pan American. Community Historical Archaeology Project with Schools Program (CHAPS)

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**Creator**

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From Porciones to Colonias:  
The Power of Place- and Community-Based  
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A Case Study From the Lower Rio Grande Valley of  
Texas

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The University of Texas—Pan American

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University of Texas at Brownsville

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Dedicated to  
The University of Texas-Pan American—  
As we come to the close of this institution and opening of  
the new University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley,  
we want to remember from where the seed for the CHAPS Program was planted  
and look forward to future growth for years to come.

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## Acknowledgements and Preface

Across Texas and the United States there is a generalized lament about K-12 education. From class size and funding cuts to standardized testing we hear about a generation of students who is barely competent in the “Three R’s” but largely ignorant of their local environment, geography, and history within the sweep of the nation and the world. Within this context we see a shift from commercial agriculture to an increasingly urbanized landscape and a commensurate lessening of familial ties. While many educators point to State coffers overflowing with revenue from oil and gas production and wonder why there is so little support for education. Is there a way we can plot a course which will enrich our knowledge of our communities while enriching the student experience through active learning?

We at the Community Historical Archaeology Project with Schools (CHAPS) Program believe we can through interactive place-based learning which can make education “relevant” because it informs and is in-turn informed by our local cultural and natural environment. Through the efforts of the CHAPS Program students studying the historical sciences of anthropology, biology and geology, not only learn generally about people, plants, animals, and geological processes but then consider local evidence for erosion and accretion associated with changing sea levels, volcanism, and changing river courses. Students learn how dam construction has improved agriculture and flood control while devastating animal and plant habitats and has led to the acceleration in the erosion of Padre Island. In the study of American history they are learning the pivotal position of the region in the expansion of the United States following the Mexican-American War and its role in the American Civil War, the labor movement and now homeland security.

On behalf of my colleagues, past and present, in the CHAPS Program I wish to thank the National Endowment for the Humanities for their support our project titled, “**From *Porciones* to *Colonias*: Curriculum Innovation in the Rio Grande Valley**” (AC-50152-12). Special thanks are extended to Dr. Richard W. Pettit, Program Analyst, Education Division for his support during the project’s duration.

We acknowledge the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects at the University of Texas-Pan American for their help in the preparation of this proposal, and to Interim President Havidán Rodríguez, Dean Dahlia Guerra of the College of Arts and Humanities, Dean Walter Diaz of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences and Administrative Service Officer Mirna Villarreal for their on-going support of the CHAPS Program. Dr. José Dávila-Montes, Associate Professor of Translation and Interpreting at the University of Texas-Brownsville made the masterful translation



of this document. Once again we wish to thank Daniel Cardenas for his creation of the cover art which graces this report. He, Elisa Flores and Dr. Kimberly Selber at Studio Twelve 01 on the University of Texas-Pan American campus have repeatedly helped craft the CHAPS Program's "public persona" with professional artwork and marketing ideas. Finally, we wish to thank the CHAPS Program graduate research assistant Roland Silva for his help in the technical production of this report.

Thanks also to our National Park Service colleagues at Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Park and at Region One Education Service Center who have championed the CHAPS Program. Finally, we wish to thank the teachers who participated in this project and the others who have embraced the CHAPS Program since its inception in 2009. It has been our distinct pleasure to visit your classrooms and interact with thousands of students in their schools, at FESTIBA (Festival of International Books & Arts), at HESTEC (Hispanic Engineering Science and Technology) week, and at the International Archeology Fair during the past five years and we look forward to continued interactions into the future.

Learning is a life-long process. Today's K-12 students are tomorrow's matriculated collegian and the future leaders of our society. We only have this one chance to get it right and we hope this report will provide a framework for our educators.

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December 2014

## Foreword

From *Porciones to Colonias*: The Power of Place- and Community-Based Learning in K-12 Education redefines culturally relevant learning in today's diverse classroom. By integrating an interdisciplinary approach including: anthropology, archeology, biology, geology, and history the CHAPS Program presents an effective method in supporting teachers of the Rio Grande Valley in creating culturally relevant curriculum, while meeting the demands of state and federal mandates.

The history of the Rio Grande Valley is rich and diverse and its' stories are often left untold. A key factor in student success is a relevant education. Students often become unenthusiastic about learning when they cannot find a connection to what is being taught. Students are more readily able to learn new information when they can connect it to something they already know. This case study demonstrates how placed-based education transforms learning in a way in which students grow to understand their relevance in the community, along with how pivotal the Rio Grande Valley has been in state, national, and global history.

The *Porciones to Colonias* initiative proceeds to take local educators on a journey including the history, geography, and archeology of the Rio Grande Valley. Through collaboration with experts in the field and continued learning, this project culminates with lesson activities that effectively integrate place-based education and content curriculum. Local history, geography, archeology and biology serve as a foundation to support new learning. The CHAPS Program of UTPA truly establishes the significance of culturally relevant education in order to create students who are critical thinkers, problem solvers, and contributing community members of the Rio Grande Valley.

Social Studies Program  
Region One ESC  
December 2014

# PART I



# *ONE*

## **From Porciones to Colonias: Discovering “Our Story” in the History of Texas and the United States**

Russell K. Skowronek

“The days that make us happy make us wise.” (John Masefield 1912 poem, Biography)

Everyone in academia experienced the “sage on the stage” who would pull a few pages of handwritten notes out of a battered briefcase and proceed to drone on for an hour about a specific topic, while occasionally writing a term on a blackboard or pointing to a map. No doubt it was accurate and important information which would need to be accurately regurgitated in blue books and other exams but for most it was immediately forgotten following the final reckoning. Those who excelled in these classes kept precise notes and more than likely followed in their professors’ footsteps. Very rarely would these professors deviate from their script and do something unique which would engage the students, their audience.

As educators we know that learning does not solely take place within a classroom with a generic curriculum. Yet, we live in an era when standardized testing within the framework of the STEM fields grabs the headlines in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and other venues from school board meetings to local newspapers. Benchmarks seeking to measure the mastering of such materials are established but these often fail to take into account the great cultural and natural diversity which is the United States. This diversity is the incubator for creativity and learning.

A great teacher understands that learning takes place in many arenas from one-on-one discussions to lecture halls, and in many ways. We can all be lifelong students who learn throughout our lives when we are actively engaged and challenged with compelling and lively presentations. Those who effectively used artifacts, maps, slides, music, and bring discussions to

life with anecdotes and examples enchant a classroom and create active learners and not simply passive listeners. Place-based education which draws on local social and natural phenomena provides a context for learning which bridges the spectrum from humanities to science and uses the skill sets of both to illuminate the human condition. This is the STEAM (with the “A” for arts and humanities) field approach to education and it lies at the very heart of the Community Historical Archaeology Project with Schools (CHAPS) Program. This program is charged with combining locally-focused research, community engagement, and K-17 education to make happy and so, wise learners.

### *The CHAPS Program*

In August of 2009 the Community Historical Archaeology Project with Schools (CHAPS) Program was founded at The University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA) in response to the development activities associated with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which rapidly altered or destroyed aspects of the region’s heritage while alienating the resident populace from their past. The CHAPS Program is seen as a means of actively preserving aspects of the Rio Grande Valley’s history through scholarly research and by educating the populace to the value of its cultural and natural heritage. Specifically, the CHAPS Program was designed to discover and record the natural, cultural and historical resources of South Texas through research and develop them for education, tourism, and community pride. The CHAPS Program is achieving its goal by building partnerships and garnering support across the university and from communities, special interest groups, and local school districts, and parochial schools.

CHAPS Program team members have created a series of innovative K-17 college preparation and completion programs that emphasizes teacher preparation and student academic skill development by exploring human-land relationships in south Texas during the past 10,000 years. The CHAPS Program multidisciplinary team takes an innovative approach to learning by including “in the field” learning skills, which are directly transferrable to academic achievement. This multidisciplinary approach has its roots in archaeology and extends its influence into other academic fields. It sees multidisciplinary (anthropology, archaeology, biology, geology, history, and oral history) field research as the nexus for explaining the panoply of human experience within an integrated educational whole. This is challenging work for students but one which allows them to work as a team and to bring their own experiences and local regional history to bear on questions pertaining to the evolution of the cultural and natural landscape. Through the application of the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Humanities, and Math) fields the CHAPS Program creates educated and historically literate citizens who are aware of their local cultural and natural history and of its importance to the future development of the Rio Grande Valley.

### *Importance of Culturally and Locally Relevant Curriculum*

We might ask why the CHAPS Program is an appropriate means for educating the largely Hispanic population of the Rio Grande Valley. As Alfaro discusses in Chapter 2 the importance of integrating culturally and locally relevant curriculum is highlighted in the cognitive science literature as it pertains to mathematical knowledge. For example, researchers have noted that an individual's ability to learn and understand new concepts is dependent on the individual's ability to "make the connections to their existing knowledge" (Gustein et al. 1997: 711). One network of knowledge that individuals can draw on are cultural and locally relevant personal or family experiences (Gustein et al. 1997; Howard 2001). Gritz's experience (Part III) using oral history with middle school-aged students demonstrates the power of this approach. It is beneficial for concepts to be tied to students' cultural experiences. Indeed, at the college level, course content has been linked to ethnic minority individuals' decision to switch from engineering/science majors to social sciences/humanities majors. As Peter Block observed "Nothing will get better in a community without a deeper sense of connectedness and social fabric in the community." (2009) Specifically, students who strove to integrate their ethnicity and their major switched majors because course content in humanities and social sciences were perceived to allow students to explore their ethnicities (Syed, 2010). Taken together, this research suggests that it is important to include a culturally relevant context into the curriculum. The CHAPS Program's innovative approach using the skill sets associated with fields of anthropology, archeology, biology, geology, and history supports Hispanic students' mastery of STEAM field concepts by highlighting culturally and locally relevant content.

### *Contextualizing the Rio Grande Valley, a land of contradictions*

The area known as the Rio Grande Valley is situated in the southern tip of Texas and is one of the fastest growing areas in the nation. Located some 250 miles south of San Antonio, Texas the Rio Grande Valley truly lays at the end of the road in the United States, yet it also serves as the gateway to Latin America. The Rio Grande was dominated by commercial agricultural and ranching until the 1990s. Today it is rapidly transforming into one of the main entrepôts into the United States for manufactured goods established in the wake of the passage of NAFTA. Thus, it is a land of contrasts and extremes in wealth, education, infrastructure, and housing.

This area is comprised of four counties: Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy, which share similar characteristic in terms of race, poverty, and income. Specifically, the population is predominately Hispanic and low-income. For example, Hidalgo County is 89.8% Hispanic and, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2010) the median income for a household in the county was

\$30,518 making it one of the poorest counties in the nation. This is approximately \$20,000 below the level of the rest of Texas. The economic data further reveals that the rate of persons below the poverty level is 34.8%, compared to 15.8%, statewide. In further review, the education attainment of high school graduates of persons over twenty-five years of age was only 50.5%.

Occupied by Native Peoples for millennia the Rio Grande Valley has a multicultural history dating back to the middle of the eighteenth century when a series of Spanish settlements were founded along the river (Lovett et al. 2014). A mix of indigenous, Spanish, mestizos, and mulattos comprised the early settlers of the region that later became part of greater South Texas. With Mexican independence from Spain in 1821, this river valley was part of Mexico's northern frontier until 1848 when the geo-political boundary was set between the United States and Mexico. Across this border the flow of goods, ideas, and peoples continues into the twenty-first century (Weber, 1992; Montejano, 1987). As a consequence of this rich history and its proximity to Mexico, the predominately Hispanic population varies with regard to generational status such that some individuals have resided in the area for mere days while other families and descendants have resided in the area for multiple generations. Chapters 3 (Hernandez) and 4 (Dorsey and Díaz-Barriga) provides a more nuanced view of the history and contemporary issues which characterize this region. Lesson plans developed by local elementary, middle, and high school teachers demonstrate creative approaches to teaching in the humanities and sciences using place-based education.



## *TWO*

### **The Power of Place-Based Learning**

Edna C. Alfaro

“From Porciones to Colonias: Curriculum Innovation in the Rio Grande Valley” brought together faculty at the largest HSI in the state of Texas, University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA), and public school teachers to create a place-based curriculum. Using the natural landscape and cultural history of one of the most dynamic borderlands in the world as the main classroom laboratory, faculty housed in the CHAPS program (Community Historical Archaeology Project with Schools) helped guide elementary, middle school, and high school teachers to create lessons plans that would result in students who were archaeologically and historically literate citizens. Thus, the CHAPS program sought to impact students and the Rio Grande Valley through our work with local teachers.

UTPA is situated in the lower Rio Grande Valley in an area that is over 91% Hispanic and largely rural, with high levels of poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). Roughly 30% of the individuals in the surrounding community are foreign-born, only 61.2% of persons over twenty-five are high school graduates, 15.6% of adults have a college degree, and 35.0% live below the poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). These demographic characteristics of the Rio Grande Valley lend support for the necessity of this historical educational intervention. Further, understanding the academic outcomes of Hispanic students in rural communities is important given that much of the research to date focuses on ethnic minorities in urban settings despite the fact that rural communities throughout the U.S. are struggling to meet the needs of Hispanic students (Zuniga, Olson, & Winter, 2005). Moreover, working with Hispanic students from low socioeconomic backgrounds is particularly important because socioeconomic status plays an important role in the achievement gap between ethnic minority students and their Anglo counterparts (Sirin, 2005). Together these characteristics put the children in our area at cumulative risk of not achieving academic success; however, research suggests that one way to enable students to overcome these risk factors is by making educational materials relevant to students’ daily lives and their heritage.

Guided by this knowledge the CHAPS program utilized the place-based education framework to help teachers develop curricula that integrates local heritage, culture, and environmental landscapes into lesson plans that meet state standards. The central tenant of place-based education is that educational content should be linked to students' local communities and presented in an interdisciplinary fashion (Smith & Sobel, 2010; The Place-Based Education Evaluation Collaborative, 2003). Situating learning within the context of the local community fosters students' attachment to their communities and positively impacts students' academic outcomes (Place-based Education Evaluation Collaborative, 2010; Smith & Sobel, 2010). Below we discuss the influence of place-based education on academic outcomes and the impact of place-based education on parental involvement and community connections. Within these sections we will discuss the theoretical rationale for the effectiveness of place-based education and highlight why place-based education is particularly important for Latino students.

### *Place-based education and academic outcomes*

The importance of integrating culturally and locally relevant curriculum is highlighted in the cognitive science literature as it pertains to mathematical knowledge. For example, Gustin and colleagues noted that an individual's ability to learn and understand new concepts is dependent on the individual's ability to "make the connections to their existing knowledge" (Gustin, Lipman, Hernandez, & de los Reyes, 1997, p. 711). One network of knowledge that individuals can draw on are cultural experiences and locally relevant experiences (Gustin et al., 1997; Howard, 2001). Thus, it may be beneficial for concepts to be tied to students' cultural experiences. Indeed, at the college level, course content has been linked to ethnic minority individuals' decision to switch from engineering/science majors to social sciences/humanities majors. Specifically, Syed (2010) found that students who strove to integrate their ethnicity and their major switched majors because course content in humanities and social sciences were perceived to allow students to explore their ethnicities. Taken together, this research suggests that it is important to include culturally relevant context into the curriculum.

Indeed, the implementation of place-based curricula has had demonstrated impacts on students' engagement and motivation and students' academic achievement (Place-based Education Evaluation Collaborative, 2010). With regard to student motivation, researchers have consistently revealed that exposure to place-based education results in higher levels of academic motivation. For example, in a study in the Boston area, students reported that they were more enthusiastic to learn after they were exposed to place-based curricula (Duffin and PEER Associates, 2007; Smith & Sobel, 2010). Further, Florida high school students enrolled in place-based education programs demonstrated larger increases in their academic motivation when compared to students who were not enrolled in place-based programs (Athman & Monroe, 2004). These findings were replicated

with predominately Hispanic low-income 6th graders; students enrolled in a program designed to increase students exposure to their local ecology demonstrated higher levels of academic motivation compared to students who were in the control groups (American Institutes of Research, 2005). On a larger scale, place-based education students enrolled in 40 schools throughout the US also demonstrated increased academic motivation (Lieberman & Hoody, 1998). The connection between educational content and academic motivation is in line with the notion that academic motivation is sensitive to context (Goodenow & Grady, 1993; Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002). Further, this work alludes to the potential for utilizing place-based education programs as an avenue to increase academic achievement, academic motivation is a predictor of academic success (Anderson & Keith, 1997; Wentzel, 1998).

When examining the relation between exposure to place-based educational programs and students' academic outcomes, place-based education has been found to be directly related to students' academic achievement. For instance, predominantly African American, low-income 4th graders demonstrated and significant improvements in state standardized scores in English and Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies after the school district provided place-based training in an attempt to increase students' math and science outcomes (Emekauwa, 2004a). Similar increases in standardized scores were found in a study of 40 schools across multiple states (Lieberman & Hoody, 1998). Indeed, some scholars have found that students enrolled in place-based programs at school outperformed their counterparts in non-place-based programs on standardized test 72% of the time (State Education and Environment Roundtable, 2000). Further, improvements in academic outcomes stretch beyond standardized test scores. Students in place-based educational programs also demonstrated increases in grade point averages (Lieberman & Hoody, 1998) and enrollment in college post-graduation (Emekauwa, 2004b), while reporting reductions in drop-out rates (Emekauwa, 2004b) and disciplinary problems (Lieberman & Hoody, 1998). Taken together, these findings highlight the beneficial impact of place-based education on students' academic outcomes.

### *Place-based Education and Connections with Parents and Community*

The benefits of place-based education are not limited to gains in students' behaviors inside the classroom. Place-based education also increases parental involvement and helps build ties to the local community (Place-based Education Evaluation Collaborative, 2010; Smith & Sobel, 2010). The relation between parental involvement and place-based education is particularly important for Latino students as parental involvement has been found to be related to higher academic outcomes (Martinez, DeGarmo, & Eddy, 2004; Valenzuela & Dornbusch, 1994). Further, place-based education enables parents to increase their involvement in their children's academic lives without leaving their homes. For example, through the use of oral histories, students are asked

to interview their parents and grandparents, which involves parents in their children's academic lives. This is an important distinction as research has traditionally focused on parental involvement as it relates to parents attendance at school functions or relies heavily on parents ability to help their children with their homework and parents knowledge of the US educational system (Perreira, Harris, & Lee, 2006). This is a problematic definition when focused on Latino students who come from low-income areas because their parents may not have been educated in the US (which limits their knowledge of the educational system) and they may not be employed in jobs that allow them the flexibility to leave work to attend school functions or volunteer on school campuses (Lee & Bowen, 2006). Thus, place-based education affords parents additional opportunities to become involved in their students' academic lives.

In addition to fostering a connection between parents and students, place-based education programs also increase community connections. Many place-based programs increase students' knowledge about the local community by having students conduct projects in their local areas and interact with community members and leaders. For example, researchers who have sought to combine indigenous knowledge with science activities have integrated community members and tribal elders into school activities (Riggs, 2004). Integrating the community into students' academic lives enables teachers to benefit from the resources that are available in the community (e.g., diversity of backgrounds and facilities; Powers, 2004). Thus, place-based education programs allow communities to serve as resources for students and teachers.

By increasing parental involvement and building ties to the local community, place-based education enables students to acknowledge their community and cultural capital. To understand the importance of capital we can turn to the social capital perspective, which suggests that adolescents are able to benefit from resources (e.g., educational knowledge, material resources) through the relationships they have with their families, teachers, and peers (Coleman, 1988; Valenzuela & Dornbusch, 1994). Thus, in the case of oral-history assignments that require students to interview their parents, parents' experiences (e.g. personal experiences that extend beyond their experience with the education system and number of years spent in schools) are integrated into their children's academic lives and can be categorized as resources that Latino adolescents' can benefit from via their relationships with their parents.

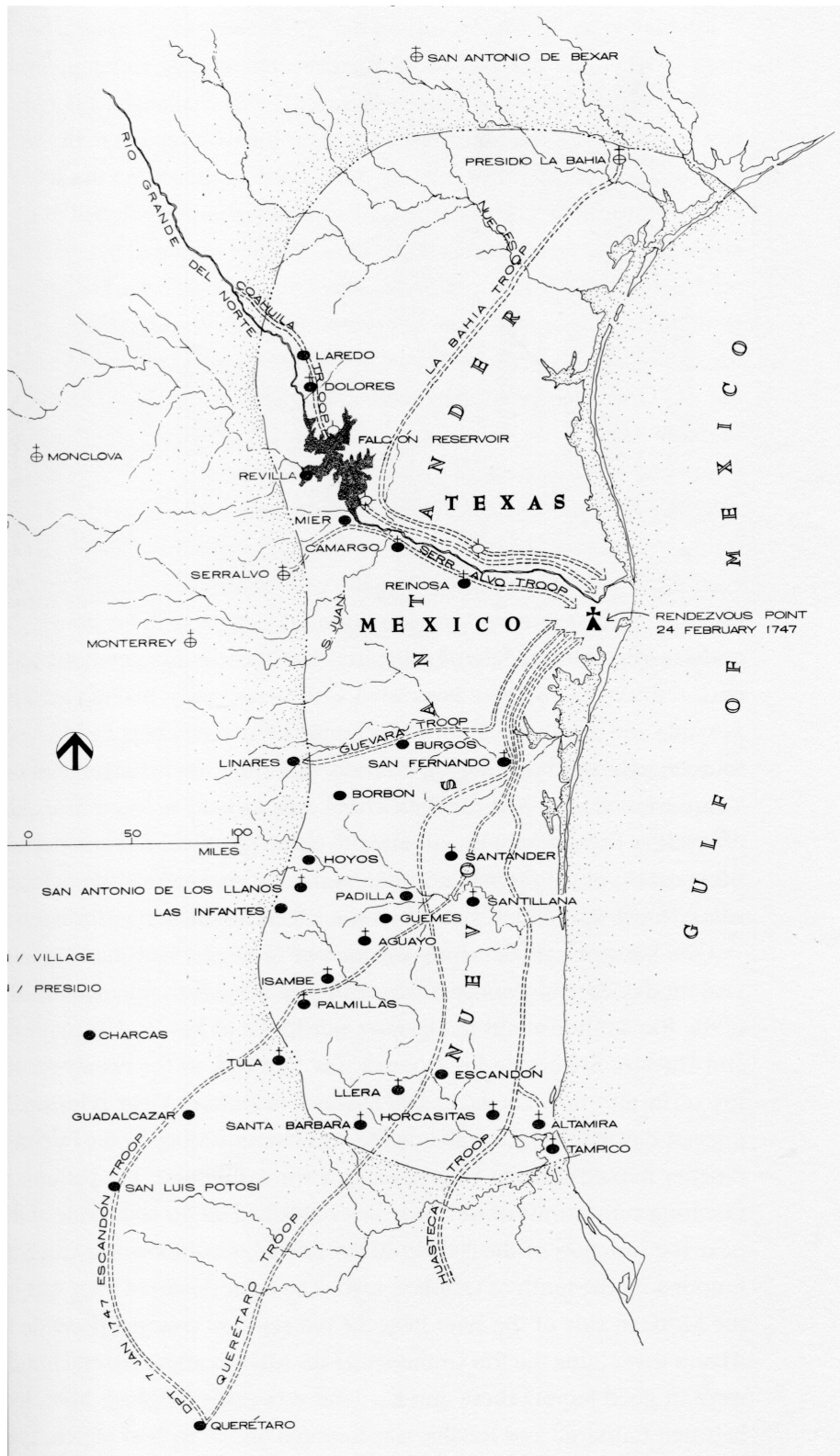
Further, building capital via students' relationships with their parents and their local communities may be especially important for Latino students because previous work has identified the Latino population as familistic in nature with strong relational orientations that emphasizes social relationships inside and outside the family (Cooper, 1999; Shweder, Goodnow, Hatano, LeVine, Markus, & Miller, 1998). This is demonstrated in research findings where Latinos from multiple ethnic origins reported higher levels of familism when compared to White participants

(Sabogal, Marin, Otero-Sabogal, Marin, & Perez-Stable, 1987). Moreover, even professional relationships are characterized by more personal connections among individuals living in Mexican American communities compared to those in Anglo communities (Alegría & Woo, 2009). Given the importance placed on family and community, Latino students may benefit from place-based education programs because they foster parental involvement and connections with the local community. Additionally, acknowledging family and community resources is especially important for students in the Rio Grande Valley given the lack of financial resources that are available.

### *Summer Workshop with Teachers*

Guided by the reasons listed above, CHAPS elected to utilize place-based education to help guide the development of curricula for use in classrooms throughout the Rio Grande Valley. Eleven teachers participated in a summer workshop to help develop lesson plans that focused on local history and concepts. Participants taught in elementary (n=4), middle school (n=5), and high schools (n=2) throughout the Rio Grande Valley. During a two week summer workshop, teachers attended lectures regarding local history (see Chapter 3), attended field trips to local landmarks, conducted land title research, and conducted an oral history with a local community member of their choice. Based on their summer workshops, teachers were given an academic year to create and implement a lesson plan that integrated local history with state educational standards.

Lesson plans were designed to parallel the National Endowment for Humanities' EDSITEment ([edsitement.neh.gov/](http://edsitement.neh.gov/)) framework for lesson plans. Specifically, teachers were asked to create a lesson plan that included the following curriculum components: (1) brief introduction to the lesson plan, (2) guiding questions, (3) lesson objectives, (4) detailed background information on the historical topic, (5) preparation instructions, (6) lesson activities, (7) means of assessment, (8) skills that will be targeted, which also referenced state standards, and (9) additional resources (e.g., links, lists of reading) that students or future teachers may wish to reference. Based on this framework, a 5th grade science teacher created a lesson on the history of the Rio Grande Valley (Part III-Aguilar), which she later integrated into lessons on soil erosion and material properties. Our 7th grade teachers focused on social studies and language arts concepts to provide a better understanding of memoir, corridos, life during a previous historical time, the Mexican War, and border communities (Part III-Huff). Teachers also utilized oral history assignments to help foster students' understanding of the history of the Rio Grande Valley (Part III-Gritz). Finally, our middle and high school social studies teachers developed lesson plans designed to enable students to connect their family history to early colonization of the Rio Grande Valley and gain a better understanding of civil rights in the Rio Grande Valley (Part III-Bounous). The chapters that follow discuss the history of the Rio Grande Valley and methods to preserve our history. The book concludes with examples of the full lessons that were created by teachers who attended the "From Porciones to Colonias: Curriculum Innovation in the Rio Grande Valley" workshop.



Map courtesy of W. Eugene George author of *Lost Architecture of the Rio Grande Borderlands*

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# *THREE*

## **Brief History of the Rio Grande Valley**

Sonia Hernandez

The historical origins of the Rio Grande Valley are steeped in indigenous, Spanish and other European cultures, Mexican, and Mexican American traditions and culture. Its permanent settlement origins date back to 1749 with the founding of Spanish villas or towns grouped as Nuevo Santander (Valerio-Jiménez, 2013; Greaser & De la Teja, 1992). Spanish was the language spoken by the first permanent European settlers in North America soon after Spaniards such as Juan Ponce de León arrived in the territory of the contemporary United States in 1513.

The Spanish settled the area and began the process of granting porciones to residents as a way to protect their newly claimed territory. The long-strip porciones extended towards the river and the large, mostly squared-shaped porciones went to settlers willing to reside further north, away from the river, in what is now northern Hidalgo County. Due to water shortages and a heavy reliance on agriculture, the porciones were divided into long strips, most of which reached the Rio Grande. The land grants were assigned a number and in some cases were named after a Catholic saint. Awarded to colonists braving the frontier, the grants later became part of the villas or towns such as Guerrero, Laredo, and Reynosa (Hill, 1926 & Osante). With many of the families of settlers coming from present-day Queretaro, Coahuila, and Nuevo León, the tradition of ranching continued in Nuevo Santander. Life was tough on the settlers, yet with time families came to learn to survive off the land. Nuevo Santander inhabitants maintained ties with residents from central New Spain and those in other frontier settlements such as Bexar.

The Spanish period soon ended with disgruntled criollos leading the struggle for independence. With mestizo and indigenous support, independence was finally achieved in 1821 after a ten year civil war. The frontier region would come to serve as a safe haven for revolutionaries and future Texas leaders such as Ignacio Zaragoza who would also play a role in the fight for Mexican independence.

The Mexican period was short-lived only lasting fifteen years. Nuevo Santander, now part of el norte Mexicano witnessed an influx of Euro-American settlers encouraged to move to places such as Tejas and California to populate the Mexican frontier. (De León) By the mid-1830s, these newly arrived settlers (over forty percent from the slave-holding states in the U.S. South), began to bypass certain Mexican laws. Settlers, who began to identify themselves as Texians, different than those who identified as Tejanos, did not learn Spanish, failed to pay taxes, and built and attended Protestant churches and did not obey Catholicism. Further, their children began to attend other schools and not the Mexican and/or Catholic schools as mandated by the Mexican government. By 1835, there was plenty of support from both Euro-Americans and Tejanos for the movement to separate from Mexico. The region's inhabitants, comprised of indigenous peoples, criollos, mestizos, and afro-mestizos soon became residents of Texas in 1836.

The establishment of the geo-political boundary between the United States and Mexico in 1848 marked the beginning of several important transformations in the history of South Texas and Northern Mexico. This shared borderland became a key socio-cultural link between the two nations. Finally on February 2, 1848 the region between the río Nueces and the río Bravo—which was known as the ‘disputed territory,’ was annexed to the United States (Montejano, 1992 & Valerio-Jiménez, 2013). The consequences of war were felt throughout the Valley and was reflected in armed movements throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century. Perhaps most representative of such post-war racial tensions is the uprising of Juan Nepomuceno Cortina. The charismatic Cortina was born in Camargo, Tamaulipas in 1824. He came from a landed ranchero family and in the 1850s was involved with the South Texas Democratic Party. In the summer of 1859 Cortina witnessed an Anglo American marshal “pistol-whipping” a peon in Brownsville, Texas. He defended the peon, shot and wounded the marshal, and left the town. He then returned in September and released several Mexican prisoners whom he felt had been jailed without any wrongdoing. What followed was what historians have labeled a race war. Fighting broke out between the Cortinistas, supporters of Cortina, and Anglo authorities, including the Texas Rangers. As was quite common at the time in Texas and the rest of the southwest and Deep South, lynching remained a grave concern for Mexican Americans. Anyone suspected of sympathizing with the Cortina cause faced violence and often times, death. Cortina’s emergence as a defender of Mexican-descent people in south Texas represented the mounting tensions between Anglos and Mexicans in the Texas-Mexico border region. The Cortina War reflected the frustrations of the residents of the border. Conditions for Mexican Americans had not improved and by the early twentieth century lynching continued, Mexican children still attended segregated ‘Mexican schools’, land loss had worsened, and political representation remained limited.

In many ways, the Cortina incident represented significant transformations taking place in the Valley. The beginning of the eventual shift from ranching to commercial agriculture, the arrival of non-Mexican origin immigrants, and land speculators all signaled the onset of a new era. By the first decades of the twentieth century, the Rio Grande Valley experienced industrial



development and urbanization thanks to the technological innovation, mainly in the area of transportation (railroads) and irrigation that led to the region's development as a garden spot for commercial agriculture. The mid-1920s would result in levels of agricultural production never before seen in the area. By 1925, the Rio Grande Valley led in agricultural production—mainly citrus growing—in the entire state and in a span of fifteen years, led in national production (“Farm Labor,” USDA, 1967). Today, the agricultural industry is valued at \$820 million in 2012 (Texas AgriLife Extension Service, 2012). In this way, the "Magic" of the Rio Grande Valley was that a citrus and cotton industry could flourish year round. The magic of the Valley was only possible, however, with the backbreaking work provided by the thousands of Mexican origin men, women, and children, which provided the bulk of the labor (Montejano, 1987; De León, 2009).

The making of the magical Valley would briefly come to a halt with the massive ethnic Mexican deportation campaigns in the 1930s. Mexican Americans in the Valley and elsewhere struggled to secure good paying jobs, access to equal education, and political representation. Living conditions in the Valley, in places such as Hidalgo County, were substandard. Mexican Americans lived in colonias or barrios had limited access to potable water and sewage systems. As, Pauline R. Kibbe noted in her *Latin Americans In Texas*, Mexican Americans were subjected to such living conditions despite providing the necessary labor for thousands of fruit and vegetable farms. Sadly, even as late as 2005, Hidalgo County was ranked the poorest county in the nation with a median household income of \$24,501 (Kibbe, 1946).

The Rio Grande Valley and its residents also experienced and contributed to World War II. Valley men and women answered the call of duty and served in the Air Force, Navy, regular army, WAACS, WAVES, and did their part in the home front. To address the labor shortages caused by the war, the United States and Mexico signed a labor agreement to bring Mexicans to the United States to perform labor. Between 1942 to 1964 over four million Mexicans signed contracts to work in the United States. The majority of braceros, as these laborers became known due to their manual work (brazo is an arm), were employed as field hands in farms throughout the nation. Given Texas' long history of labor abuse, the Mexican government stipulated that it be prohibited from participating in the Bracero program. However, there were Valley farmers who hired undocumented Mexicans not formally recognized as braceros yet performed the same kind of work. (Guajardo, forthcoming 2014).

While the educational needs of this labor force was poorly met for decades, it was not until local institutions of higher learning such as Pan American University, and later, University of Texas-Pan American and University of Texas at Brownsville that opportunities began to open up for the predominantly Mexican-origin population (“Bordering the Future,” accessed 2013). Thanks to the G.I. Bill educational benefits and to the global, national, and local civil rights struggles of the

1960's, these institutions began to open up to the masses (Montejano, 1987). By the 1970s, organizations such as the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO), La Raza Unida Party, and others would bring some social and political change to south Texas. The push for participatory democracy and the quest for racial and ethnic, and educational equality produced some results. Educational opportunities, political change in the local leadership, and some progress made in the area of labor legislation signaled yet another chapter in the history of the Rio Grande Valley (Bacha-Garza, 2013)

Given this rich history, among the main priorities of the CHAPS program is to allow students and community members to conduct research to better understand and appreciate the development of the Rio Grande Valley within the greater context of United States history. Of particular importance to recovering this rich history is the study of *porciones*.

The Rio Grande Valley is home to individuals whose ancestors were awarded large land grants by the Spanish crown during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Many of our students and participating CHAPS teachers are in fact descendants of founding families. As early as the Fall of 2006, students were given the opportunity to excavate the history of their own families and the plots of land in which they resided. With partners such as the land title division of the Hidalgo County Courthouse, local families, and faculty with expertise in the topic, CHAPS had the opportunity to learn about the research methods needed to undertake historical research, learn about their place in the community, and adapt this to the classroom. Participants were able to trace their history back to the original land grants.

It is the recovery of this history that builds on the goal and mission of CHAPS to “create archeologically and historically literate citizens who are aware of their local cultural and natural history and of its importance to the future of the Rio Grande Valley.” The *porción* leg of CHAPS uses a place-based approach to learning—participants conduct research in their communities to recover the history of one of the last regions to be colonized by the United States. It is precisely the natural and cultural relevancy of this curriculum that makes CHAPS unique and a pedagogical jewel to be adopted in borderlands communities and beyond.

Notes:

Los Caminos del Rio Heritage Project and the Texas Historical Commission, *A Shared Experience: The History, Architecture and Historic Designations of the Lower Rio Grande Heritage Corridor*, second edition (Austin: Texas Historical Commission, 1994);

Patricia Osante, *Orígenes del Nuevo Santander, 1748-1772* (Cd. Victoria).

Lawrence Francis Hill, *José de Escandón and the Founding of Nuevo Santander* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1926); Osante.

## *FOUR*

### **An Introduction to the Cultural Anthropology and Preservation of the Rio Grande Valley**

Margaret Dorsey and Miguel Díaz-Barriga

Anthropology is the study of human behavior and culture, and anthropologists in the United States divide their research into four subfields of study: physical anthropology; archaeology; linguistic anthropology; and cultural anthropology. North American anthropology draws its impetus from the foundational work of Franz Boas, a professor at Columbia University who lived along the Arctic Circle on Baffin Island, Canada for one year in the late nineteenth century where he kept copious notes of the language, life ways and customs of the Inuit. The following year, Boas collaborated with several museums conducting fieldwork along the North Pacific Coast setting the tone for anthropologists working closely with native peoples taking extensive field-notes about their world and worldviews as well as collaborating with museums to educate the public about these very issues. Following Boas's example, anthropologists have conducted ethnographic research on cultures throughout the world and have, through museums, archival collections, and publications, created a rich record of humanity's diverse belief systems, forms of social organization, and political dynamics. The Border Studies Archive, with its focus on the U.S. Mexico border in general and the Rio Grande Valley in particular, represents one such documentation and preservation initiative.

The Border Studies Archive (BSA), a part of the University Library, houses collections focused on the folklore, histories and lives of people living along the U.S.-Mexican border in South Texas. The BSA's collections include aural, material and visual documentation related to (1) Border Music, (2) construction of the Border Wall and Border Security more generally, (3) Latinas and Politics, (4) Spanish Land Grants, (5) Traditional Mexican American Folklore and (6) Visual Border Studies. The BSA seeks to enable scholarly research on two levels. First, it provides a scholarly resource in the traditional meaning of archive: it houses and makes available original primary source materials for the purposes of writing theses, books and journal articles. It also

functions as a scholarly resource in that the BSA provides a supportive space for the scholarly collection of material in the transborder region with Mexican-origin populations. Meeting this goal often translates into collaborative projects with academics in other programs and institutions. The BSA also houses a collection of ethnographic research on the Rio Grande Valley, thus providing scholars with access to key publications, and showcasing the rich history of anthropological research on the region.

### *Cultural Anthropology in the Rio Grande Valley*

Socio-cultural anthropologists and folklorists have a rich tradition of conducting ethnographic fieldwork in the lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. In the 1920's and 1930's, Jovita Mireles González conducted ethnographic fieldwork on Mexican American folklore and culture in the region, and this research served as a source for numerous publications in the early twentieth century, including essays in *Publications of the Texas Folklore Society* and her master's thesis, "Social Life in Cameron, Starr and Zapata Counties." She wrote an, until recently, unpublished ethnographic monograph based on her extended ethnographic research titled, *Dew on the Thorn*, as well as a coauthored a novel titled, *Caballero*. Prestigious institutions funded Mireles González's fieldwork in the Rio Grande Valley, and she twice served as President of the Texas Folklore Society.

The most recognized folklorist who conducted field-based research in the Rio Grande Valley is Américo Paredes. Paredes collected the songs, stories, jokes and more generally the folkways and culture of the borderlands. *With His Pistol in His Hand*, his most famous scholarly book turned into a movie, explains the history the borderlands through the *corrido* (generally glossed as a border ballad) of Gregorio Cortez. The song and the book overturn popular misconceptions about Texas Rangers, Mexican American men and borderlands history. For social scientists and students interested in conducting ethnographic fieldwork, his prescient article titled "On Ethnographic Fieldwork Among Minority Groups," is required reading. Mainstream anthropology showed a blindness to Paredes' legacy and contribution to the discipline, both in terms of content, theory and methodology; however, the 1990's saw a late recognition of the impact of his work on the cannon with the publication of Gupta and Ferguson's article in *American Ethnologist* and subsequent anthology.

Jovita González and Américo Paredes set the stage for a series anthropologists to conduct ethnographic fieldwork in the Rio Grande Valley, including scholars at UTPA who have worked closely with their students to collect data on the folklore, cultural and life ways of the people living in the Rio Grande Valley for the past forty years. For 27 years, Anthropologist Mark Glazer worked closely with his students at UTPA who collected the jokes, recipes, stories and remedies from residents of the Rio Grande Valley. This research culminated with publication of *Flour From Another Sack & other Proverbs, Folk Beliefs, Tales, Riddles & Recipes: A Collection of Folklore from the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas* (Glazer 2006). The materials collected by Dr. Glazer

and his students now form a collection at the BSA exceeding 100,000 files and valued at \$1 million. Anthropologist Robert Trotter also worked closely with students at UTPA studying *curanderismo* (folk healing). Their project culminated in the ethnographic monograph, *Curanderismo*. In the 1990's, Sociologist Chad Richardson also worked closely with students at UTPA to document the experiences of service workers in the region and published *Batos, Bolillos, Pochos and Pelados* based on their collaborative research.

Paredes's legacy of using music as a vehicle to tell the history and social experience of Mexicanos in the RGV, not often found in the history books, continues to inspire ethnographers and ethnomusicologists. In the Rio Grande Valley, Manuel Peña conducted fieldwork on conjunto music and published a classic Marxian-inspired monograph titled, *The Texas-Mexican Conjunto: A History of a Working-class Music* (University of Texas Press 1985?). Margaret Dorsey's ethnographic fieldwork carried out in the Rio Grande Valley on the relationship between music, politics and marketing came to fruition with the publication of an ethnographic monograph titled, *Pachangas* (University of Texas Press 2006). More recently and following in the rich tradition of studying music, culture and society in the Rio Grande Valley and Mexico, Cathy Ragland published *Musica Nortena: Mexican Migrants Creating a Nation Between Nations* (Temple University Press 2009).

In the past twenty years, sociologists and anthropologists have published a corpus of ethnography focused on immigration and border security. David Spener conducted extended ethnographic research in and around Raymondville on migration, which culminated in the ethnographic monograph titled, *Clandestine Crossings: Migrants and Coyotes on the Texas-Mexico Border* (Cornell University Press, 2009). Robert Lee Maril conducted ethnographic fieldwork with the border patrol over the course of two years, including September 11, and published, *Patrolling Chaos: The U.S. Border Patrol in Deep South Texas*, an exploration of the lives of border patrol agents and their work in the Border Patrol's Rio Grande Valley sector. Santiago Guerra, an anthropologist from the Rio Grande Valley returned home to conduct fieldwork in Starr County, and is finalizing his book-length publication, *Narcos and Narcs: Drug Trafficking and Policing in the South Texas-Mexico Borderlands*, on smuggling. Anthropologist Laura Kym Neck conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Cameron County on the border wall. This research culminated in the publication of her dissertation titled, *Fighting the Wall: Understanding the Impact of Immigration and Border Security on Local Borderland Identity in Brownsville, TX*. Anthropologist Cecilia Balli also lived in Brownsville studying the border wall's construction and that research will form the basis for non-academic publications on that issue (personal communication 2010). Miguel Díaz-Barriga and Margaret Dorsey conducted ethnographic research on the border wall's construction in Hidalgo, Starr and Cameron Counties for two years (2008-2010), ran a blog while they were in the field titled "A Nation Divided," and have subsequently published a series of articles on border security based on that fieldwork and are finalizing an ethnographic monograph on the border wall and border security more generally titled, *Militarization on the Edge*.

Economic development and health care are other contemporary topics of ethnographic research in the RGV. In 2008-2009, Seth Pipkin conducted fieldwork in the Rio Grande Valley on international trade and the success, and lack thereof, of local communities to attract commerce. His dissertation (MIT) provides a useful explanation as to why Brownsville and McAllen grew unevenly, in spite of Brownsville having economic advantages. Celina Callahan-Kampoor, a doctoral candidate at the University of California-Santa Cruz lived in the Rio Grande Valley from 2012-2014 ethnographically studying diabetes and is in the process of completing her dissertation. Medical Anthropologist Jill Fleuriet, another native of the RGV, specializes in the reproductive health and healthcare among immigrant women from Mexico and Hispanic women living in the borderlands of South Texas. Medical Anthropologists Ann Millard and Margaret Graham conduct research in the Rio Grande Valley on border health, early diabetes prevention, reproductive health, and farmworker health and, among their many publications based on research in the RGV, have a book manuscript under contract on maternal and child health.

### *Student Learning and Community Engagement*

Anthropology, with its focus on ethnography, fosters student learning through community engagement. The Border Studies Archive engages UTPA students not only in utilizing the collection, but also in expanding the holdings of the collection from their own scholarly endeavors. The BSA's collection began from the work of students in Anthropologist Mark Glazer's Mexican American Folklore course. Dr. Glazer's students collected folklore from their own families and deposited those stories in the Traditional Mexican American Folklore Collection in the Archive. Students at UTPA who enroll in Mexican American Folklore utilize this collection and continue to expand it by adding the folklore of their own families. Students at the graduate level have also contributed to the archive. Orquidea Morales is a wonderful example. Ms. Morales graduated from UTPA with a Master's of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies and a Graduate Certificate in Mexican American Studies from The University of Texas-Pan American in May 2011. Ms. Morales will continue her education with a full fellowship to the Ph.D. program in American Culture at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Before leaving UTPA, she donated her Master's thesis on La Llorona and video materials to the Archive, once again expanding the collection with exceptional work from our students.

Another example of anthropology fostering student learning through community engagement was made apparent in a recent keynote address by the noted Mexican-American Studies scholar Dr. Aida Hurtado. A 1978 University of Texas-Pan American graduate, Dr. Hurtado notes that her participation in an ethnographic project on *curanderismo* (folk healing) in the Rio Grande Valley, directed by Dr. Robert Trotter, was a key element of her academic success. The project, which included interviews with community members and observation of healing practices, provided both mentoring for undergraduate students and an opportunity to produce research that was relevant for the community, particularly doctors. The BSA, through a

TexTreasures Grant, provided by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, preserved and digitally archived Dr. Trotter's research materials with the dual goal of preserving this historical record of *curanderismo* practices and documenting its impact on student learning.

Finally, one of the four subfields of anthropology, archeology, is at the heart of another major initiative at UTPA with which the BSA collaborates, the Community Historical Archaeology Project with Schools (CHAPS). In a joint effort with the CHAPS Program, the BSA has organized student workshops and assisted students in collecting oral histories for the class, "Rediscovering the Rio Grande Valley." This collaboration has led to a number of publications that feature the writings and contributions of UTPA students. In another collaboration, the Border Studies Archive assisted CHAPS in organizing the conference, "From Porciones to Colonias: Curriculum Innovation in the Rio Grande Valley." This curriculum development conference, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), showcased Rio Grande Valley K-12 teachers of US history, Texas History, Science, Social Studies and English and the lesson plans they developed to build a culturally relevant curriculum. Focusing on place-based learning to make lessons memorable, these lesson plans are designed to enable students to recall information as it relates to their shared culture and community.

If you refer to the BSA's website, [http://portal.utpa.edu/utpa\\_main/lib\\_home/archive\\_home](http://portal.utpa.edu/utpa_main/lib_home/archive_home), you will find this material under our Spanish Land Grants Collection, which began as collaboration with the CHAPS team. This collection began with Dr. Sonia Hernandez's work who oversaw student research on *porciones* or Spanish land grants. This research begins with life histories of local families and traces their land acquisition to first European contact in the borderlands. Following the course of approximately 300 years of change, this documentation and these histories specify the shifts that large tracts of property underwent. The collection provides an overview of historical developments as they relate to land ownership by highlighting research on land title deeds/abstracts, maps of *porciones* and present-day *colonias* or unincorporated subdivisions, census records and published genealogical (or family) trees of the various families who owned *porciones*.

The *porciones* project is a perfect example of how the CHAPS Program and the BSA coordinate on projects that highlight the multicultural history of families and their land in the Rio Grande Valley. Students conduct land title research in the Hidalgo County Courthouse and collect family oral interviews. They trace land and family histories back to the original land grants awarded by the King of Spain in the 18th century when this region was claimed and settled by Spain and organized as the province of Nuevo Santander. Despite the importance of *porciones* as key components of South Texas early life and as a reminder of the Spanish legacy in this region, the history of the grants and its inhabitants has been, until recently, largely ignored. Given the location of the University of Texas-Pan American, in the heart of South Texas, this project to recover the history of the *porciones* is of immense value to the community.

## *Preservation*

Currently, aside from museums and historical markers, no proactive approach exists cultural preservation in the region. The BSA, founded in 2009 with Dr. Margaret Dorsey as Curator, seeks to fill this void conducting interviews and collecting folklore in the Rio Grande Valley but also preserving these materials at the highest archival standards. The community has responded to the BSA by participating in interviews and donating materials, including historical documents, films, and even music collections. A few examples: Stefanie Herweck and Scott Nicol, environmentalists and anti-border wall activists, have donated to the Border Wall and Border Security Collection, over 1800 photographs and 1,000-plus government documents, correspondence with local, state, and national elected officials, and 43 objects of ephemera. This collection contains some of the most extensive research available on border security, focusing on the sociological and ecological ramifications of the border wall's construction along the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo. Cathy Ragland donated over 150 hours of ethnographic interviews and other audio recordings with local, regional, and transnational musicians, which forms the basis of *Musica Nortena: Mexican Migrants Creating a Nation Between Nations*. Alejandro Madrid donated 65 hours of recorded material to the Border Music Collection, 50 hours of ethnographic interviews and 15 hours of live performance. This material formed the basis of the award-winning book, *Nor-tec Rifa!: Electronic Dance Music from Tijuana to the World*.

One of the main tasks of the BSA is to take these materials, often recorded in an analog format, and format them for the purposes of preservation and accessibility. The Border Studies Archive is currently in the process of converting analog audio and video recordings, such as Texas Conjunto Music Hall of Fame and Museum donation to Border Music Collection of 302 locally recorded and locally pressed records, record press plates and other record company ephemera dating from the 1950's to the 1980's to digital files. Digital audio recordings are the standard for long-term preservation of audio recordings, regardless of their original format. While there is no widely accepted best practice for analog video preservation, archives are applying the techniques used for analog audio recordings to analog video recordings.

Most recently, the National Endowment of the Humanities awarded the Border Studies Archive in collaboration with the Museum of South Texas History, a grant to assess our audio and visual collections. This professional assessment will form the basis for the next phase of preservation of the history and culture of the Rio Grande Valley.

## *Conclusion*

The CHAPS Program and the BSA missions draw impetus from a larger anthropological effort that both documents—through fieldwork, interviews, photographs as well as audio and visual recordings—and preserves the cultures of the Rio Grande Valley.

Notes: Many scholars point to John Gregory Bourke, a military man who took rigorous notes of the habits of people in the borderlands in the late nineteenth century and published in the *Journal of American Folklore* and *American Anthropologist*, as one of the first ethnographers of the area but his research that lead to those publications occurred in the upper Rio Grande Valley, which extends from El Paso, Texas to Taos, New Mexico. After publishing those articles and six books, Bourke served a two-year tour of duty in the lower Rio Grande Valley, primarily based in Starr County and from that experience published a controversial essay in the popular magazine, *Scribners*.

The Border Studies Archive at the University of Texas-Pan American has a filmed version of Dr. Hurtado's talk on file.



## PART II



*FIVE*

**From Porciones to Colonias:  
Curriculum Development in K-12 Education—  
Methodology and Program Development**

Edna C. Alfaro, Margaret Dorsey, Sonia Hernandez  
and Russell K. Skowronek

The 2012 National Endowment for the Humanities- sponsored “From Porciones to Colonias: Inserting the “Hispanic” in a Hispanic Serving Institution through Curriculum Innovation” brought together faculty at the largest Hispanic Serving Institution in Texas, the University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA), and public school teachers to create place-based curriculum. Using the natural landscape and cultural history of one of the most dynamic borderlands in the world as the main classroom laboratory, faculty housed in the CHAPS program (Community Historical Archaeology Project with Schools) challenged elementary, middle, and high school teachers in the sciences, social sciences and humanities to create in their students historically literate citizens who are aware of their local cultural and natural history. The following briefly encapsulates the conducted activities.

*The Workshop*

The workshop consisted of a series of lectures, films, and presentations, hands-on learning opportunities, and field trips. These were designed to expose the participants to a broad swath of the prehistory and history of the lower Rio Grande valley and to the methodologies and technologies used by scholars in anthropology, archaeology, geography and history. From these activities the participants were expected to develop place-based class plans derived from these activities. A synopsis of the workshop follows.

### *Activity—Oral History*

Dr. Margaret Dorsey directed an Oral History workshop on ethical and technical practices in ethnographic interviewing. This exercise provided participants with hands-on experience conducting interviews, collecting informed consent and deed of gift forms and using the Border Studies Archive's audio and video equipment. Participants saw the documentary film *Border Bandits* which demonstrates the significance of oral narrative in providing the "unwritten" history of the borderlands. The film also gave students a glimpse at the ways in which their audio and video footage could be used to craft a documentary film.

Later, Dorsey led a series of discussions centered on Américo Paredes' seminal work titled, "On Ethnographic Fieldwork Among Minority Groups." This drew the participants' attention to the "performance-based" approach or sociolinguistic approach to ethnography. The group discussed the need to provide interpretation of their interview in their field notes as well as the significance of not taking utterances literally, as Paredes shows many sociologists and a few anthropologists do in his article. This discussion included reminding students of the need to provide explanation of the use of metaphor, joking and other literary devices from the field recording in their field notes or the interview transcription itself.

Participants spent parts of the time at the computer lab working on their field notes and transcription. Approximately 90% of the participants had, prior to this workshop, no experience with ethnography, their success was notable as all of them completed this exercise and deposited their transcriptions and recordings in the Border Studies Archive.

### *Activity—Porción Research and History of the Rio Grande Valley*

NEH workshop participants focused on several themes for the history portion of the workshop. Dr. Sonia Hernandez provided an overview of the history of the Rio Grande Valley beginning with the founding of Nuevo Santander. Selected readings on the land, family, and cultural history of the region were incorporated into the lecture. Participants also discussed these outside readings. Teacher participants then visited the Hidalgo County Courthouse land records department. Land records are an important tool for understanding how property changes through time. The participants conducted land searches and discovered the original title holder of their respective properties. They then traced the history of particular *porciones* (land grants allotted by the King of Spain, ca. 1750) and identified major transformations that took place. Participants researched land title deeds/abstracts as well as maps of *porciones* and their respective present-day *colonias* or subdivisions. The various land transactions as well as the changing property boundaries were located on *porciones* maps given to the teacher participants.

Teacher participants also visited the Lower Rio Grande Valley Special Collections in the University of Texas—Pan American library. Librarian Janette Garcia provided an overview of the materials related to history of the region. Participants used census records, genealogical documents, newspapers as well as other documents related to their respective properties to complete their final reports. The final reports of the participants included a narrative based on these land transactions as well as a brief discussion of historical events in the area.

### *Activity—Human Geography*

Participants visited the Museum of South Texas History in Edinburg, Texas. This “world class” facility helped connect them to their rich cultural past. The visit, led by Dr. Lisa Adam, a geographer and Curator at the museum, pointed out how environment shaped the human responses to the region and how humans, in-turn, shaped their environment. These human aspects were the chronological time markers for understanding how the Rio Grande River and the natural landscape have changed through time. Participants were given and watched the short film, “La Colonización del Nuevo Santander: 1748-1767,” developed by the museum. There are very few such focused films on the early history of the valley. This will make a welcome addition to the participants’ teaching aids.

### *Activity- Archaeological Insights into Prehistory and History*

Led by Dr. Russell Skowronek this section explored the nature of archaeology, the Native Peoples of Texas with special emphasis on south Texas, and the nature of the Spanish colonial occupation of the area. Participants were provided with and watched the NPS film “Gente de Razón-People of the Mission,” which gave them insights into the survival of Native peoples in the region. Consideration was given to how archaeological sites are formed and found. The workshop included a discussion of cultural and natural site formation processes and how these can play a role in the preservation of sites. Following that a presentation on archaeological reconnaissance—systematic attempt to find and locate spatially sites. It was noted that there are both conspicuous and inconspicuous sites. The former have not been “lost” while the latter may be found through literature searches, that is the use of documents and maps, by speaking with farmers and collectors (oral history), or through archaeological research including pedestrian surveys or remote sensing. Participants also learned how aerial and satellite imagery have been used by archaeologists to identify archaeological sites. Each participant was provided with a projectile point guide for south Texas developed by the CHAPS Program. Next, they participated in a number of hands-on exercises using a cross-section of artifacts.

### *Activity—Palo Alto Battlefield*

The class visited Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site in Cameron County and the associated sites of Fort Brown and Resaca de La Palma battlefields all associated with the Mexican-American War and dating to May of 1846. There the participants were provided with and watched the orientation film “War on the Rio Grande.” Here the participants saw first-hand how technology plays a role in the interpretation and preservation of this, the site where the Mexican-American War began. NPS Archaeologist, Rolando Garza led the group around the site and discussed the battlefield archaeological investigations which have been conducted using aerial photographs, ground penetrating radar, soil resistivity, metal detectors and the mapping using GPS. Later, NPS Ranger and Interpreter Karen Weaver described opportunities for schools to obtain, free of charge, “traveling trunks” and a visit from the Rangers. This activity stimulated much discussion and was actively integrated into the fifth grade science curriculum developed by Ruby Aguilar.

### *Activity—Case Study of Place-Based Learning—St. Joseph Catholic School*

In a brief program Maria Lagorio Gritz of St. Joseph Catholic School in Edinburg, Texas shared her experiences working with the CHAPS Program. As a Social Studies teacher for grades five through eight she challenged her students to the following questions.

- How did your ancestors get to Texas?
- How did they support themselves financially?
- What tools did they use that we do not use today?

While these are questions that we in the field of humanities have considered, the reality is that most middle school students have yet to ponder the answers to these questions. In doing so, they as a classroom community engaged in the process of documenting history and capturing the fleeting voices of the Rio Grande Valley.

The short-term goals of her project were many. She hoped to develop historical perspective, to compare and contrast students’ and subjects’ lives, to discover potential archaeological sites, to improve students’ interviewing and writing skills, and to link oral histories to curriculum. In the long-term, she hoped to enhance archaeological interest, encourage the pursuit of history-related studies, spread awareness of the CHAPS Program, and develop an in-depth archaeological knowledge of the Rio Grande Valley. Most of all, she wanted to give the students the opportunity to get to know their ancestors on a deeper level, to appreciate the sacrifices made for future generations, and to feel a personal connection to the past that may fuel an interest in an historical career in the future. Five classes of student, totaling about ninety-five students, conducted interviews of older family members.

The students' post-interview reflections showed that many of the goals we had outlined in the beginning had been accomplished. In these reflections, her students reported an increased interest in the past, a sense of continuity throughout time despite generational differences, and an altered attitude toward the subject of their interviews. One student stated, "It made me realize that my grandparents worked hard all through their life and that hard work does pay off."

### *Activity- Pedagogical Innovation, Identification of Environment and Community Resources, Creating Classroom Resources*

The teacher workshop was guided by two important curriculum goals. (1) A place-based curriculum approach was utilized in order to expose participating teachers to the local community and environmental resources. (2) Through exposure to the historical content covered in the proposed workshop, we sought to foster an increased representation of Hispanics in the curriculum. To aid in the creation of place-based lesson plans, teachers attended a workshop that described the objectives of place-based education (e.g., unites curriculum with local experiences, views the local community as a resource, and connects schools with communities), provided examples of place-based curriculums, and described the effectiveness of place-based learning. For example, in addition to fostering academic success of students, place-based curriculum workshops have been shown to be significantly and positively related to teachers' confidence levels (Meichtry & Smith, 2007).

After discussing place-based curriculum, teachers were presented with information about adolescent development and the important task of identity formation and exploration by Dr. Edna Alfaro. Combined with the assigned reading, this part of the workshop provided an overview of the impact that representing the Hispanic culture and people in the curriculum has on Hispanic students.

At the conclusion of this workshop teachers were given the opportunity to create their lesson plans and test them during the 2012-2013 academic year. Each lesson plan contained the following sections, which were adapted from the Edsitement website: 1. Brief Introduction to Lesson Plan, 2. Guiding Questions, 3. Learning Objectives, 4. Detailed Background, 5. Preparation Instructions, 6. Lesson Activities, 7. Assessment, 8. Skills that Will be Targeted, 9. Resources (links for students, lists of readings, media).

### *Going beyond the Workshop*

In March of 2013 the teacher participants shared their lesson plans and their classroom

observations of their students at a symposium titled, “From *Porciones* to *Colonias*, Place-based learning in K-12 Curriculum.” This was part of the larger campus activities associated with FESTIBA (Festival of International Books & Arts).

Following the symposium the members of the CHAPS Program met with the Social Studies Coordinator for Social Studies –Project PASST Director, from the office of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment with Region One. “Region One Educational Service Center is part of a state-wide system of 20 regional education service centers created by the 59th Texas Legislature to assist school districts across the state in improving student performance in each region of the system; enable school districts to operate more efficiently and economically; and implement initiatives assigned by the legislature of commissioner. Located in South Texas on the United States/Mexico border, Region One ESC serves 37 school districts and 10 charter school systems in the seven county areas of Cameron County, Hidalgo County, Jim Hogg County, Starr County, Webb County, Willacy County, and Zapata County.”

At this and a subsequent meeting with Region One Social Studies Coordinators it was noted that teachers were challenged in formulating engaging curriculum due to a lack of source materials. This in turn led to low student recall during testing. They learned that the teachers who were involved the NEH workshop “From *Porciones* to *Colonias*” using place-based learning model approach created their own resources by using their students to produce primary sources by conducting oral history interviews with family elders and collecting old photographs, artifacts and documents, and then recording their findings into a source that was accessible to other students and teachers. They saw that when a student takes ownership of producing primary sources such as a family history, land tenure chronology, music, and songs referring to local circumstances, a “*corrido*” for example, the same students tend to recall and remember information more readily because of their personal involvement in creating valuable local resources.

As the reader will find these teachers and their students is in fact living proof of Masfield’s observation “the days that make us happy make us wise.”



## SIX

### Results and Conclusions

Roseann Bacha-Garza

The “*Porciones to Colonias: Curriculum Innovation in the Rio Grande Valley*” was a progressive and developmental project which had many moving parts. As described in the introduction, the professors of the University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA)’s CHAPS (Community Historical Archaeology Project with Schools) Program put together a comprehensive project that spanned several disciplines. With the completion of the two-week intensive workshop of June 2012, multiple subject matters with respect to local and regional Rio Grande Valley borderlands were proven to be intertwined through culture and heritage. Prehistoric and historic Native American possession of land and Spanish colonial settlements were presented by Russell Skowronek. This subject segued into Sonia Hernandez’s presentations about legal land tenure beginning with the assignment of royal Spanish land grants of the 1760s. Her discussion continued with the land development boom in conjunction with the arrival of the railroad, townsite development and commercial agriculture at the turn of the twentieth century, along with the further subdivision of land as farms gave way to modern roadways and urban development and culminating with modern-day property deeds. Margaret Dorsey’s exposed the participants to UTPA’s Border Studies Archive and gave them the hands-on experience of conducting oral history interviews by using professional-grade audio and video recording devices. Her anthropological approach included focus discussions on cultural and folkloric research conducted by authors pertinent to the Rio Grande Valley region such as Mark Glazer, Jovita González, Américo Paredes and John Gregory Bourke. The progression of human occupation of the Rio Grande Valley can be researched at the Border Studies Archive which houses a wealth of primary source information. Music, food, and medicinal remedies are just a few of the topics unique to the region which can be experienced at the Border Studies Archive by sight, sound and touch through various resources. This documentation and recording of the region’s unique history provides easy access to a wealth of resources for students and the community members alike. At the end of the workshop Edna

Alfaro further emphasized the importance of availability of region-specific resources when developing place- and community-based curriculum with the Educational Psychology perspective. The place-based learning model was the crux of the project and all workshop participants became well aware the model's direct relation to them. Her challenge to the K-12 grade level teacher participants was to take what they've learned about local anthropology, archaeology, and history while at our workshop and create lesson plans, using place-based and community-based aspects of Rio Grande Valley culture and heritage. The teachers accepted our challenge and by the last day of our workshop, they all presented their lesson plans.

At the close of the intensive workshop, each teacher was tasked to take their lesson plan back to their school and implement it in their classrooms during the coming 2012-2013 academic year. The teachers were also encouraged to invite us to their schools and into their classrooms, not only to present to their students, but to meet with their principals and to inspire them to include this place-based learning approach on a broader level. We were invited to visit with Claudia Tijerina's second grade dual language class and with Ruby Aguilar's fifth grade science class. The opportunity to connect with the children proved helpful to the teachers as they were implementing their lesson plans. The children saw us as 'experts in the field' which further validated the lessons that respective teachers were trying to teach. Although others may not have invited us into their classrooms, several of the participants found success with the lesson plans they developed for their students during our workshop. Others found it necessary to start over again and create a completely new lesson plan.

The teachers were then invited to present their findings at a conference held at the University of Texas-Pan American during FESTIBA (Festival of International Books and Arts) week. This conference took place on March 23, 2013. A meeting with the teachers was held prior to the start of the conference. During this meeting Margaret Dorsey asked the teachers to provide input with regard to the implementation of their lesson plans in their classrooms. The findings were as follows:

Claudia Tijerina – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Dual Language Teacher from Graciela Garcia Elementary School in Pharr reported that her lesson plan has been adopted into the Inter Baccalaureate “planner” and she will send the final lesson plan to us once it is ready.

Anne Marie Huff – 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies Teacher from IDEA College Preparatory Academy San Juan said that culturally and regionally relevant information is important to include in her classroom. She noted that engagement ‘out of the water’ (or outside the classroom) is a great way to get the kids who previously did not care about their environment involved in learning.

Jose Hernandez – 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies Teacher from Mary Hoge Middle School in Weslaco reported that he likes the infusion of music while teaching his students. Music helps to get the students to remember when they create songs to locally relevant events. He also capitalizes on local events to help inspire learning of local and regional history, e.g., when bones were found in Pharr and were determined to be 500 years old – he was able to make a good connection with his students to the Indians of Texas.

Yanet Olesini – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Humanities teacher at De Leon Middle School in McAllen reported that she really had to squeeze in the lesson plan that she developed with our program. Although she wished she had more time, she received better quality assignments from her students as a result of implementing her special CHAPS lesson plan with her student.

Sonia Hernandez explained our plan to produce an edited volume report as the final project for this National Endowment for the Humanities grant. The teachers were asked to suggest publication venues so that we can reach all local area teachers and make them aware of this edited volume once it is published. Some of the teachers suggested that we contact the public relations person at each school district in the Valley. They also suggested that we ask the schools to announce it in the weekly fliers that they send to all teachers. It was also suggested that we reach teachers via “project share” on facebook social media.

The conference commenced with an opening greeting from Russell Skowronek followed by a brief overview of the CHAPS Program. He then segued into the award of the NEH grant. Next, Edna Alfaro gave a brief overview of the “Bridging the Cultures” grant that was awarded to us from the NEH and the workshop activities completed by the participating teachers. She outlined the importance of Place-Based Learning and its relevance to classroom learning in the Rio Grande Valley. She highlighted some of the positive aspects of Place-Based Learning and how the use of this approach enables the students to view their communities as a resource. The students develop the ability to acknowledge that their community has a vast wealth of capital with opportunities to learn outside the classroom. Students then foster an attachment to their community. Her work with the teachers in this program helped them to develop their 9-component lesson plans that are directly related to the Rio Grande Valley.

Lesson plan presentations and classroom result reports began with our two teachers from the high school level. Janine Bounous, a 10<sup>th</sup> Grade World History teacher at Donna High School presented her lesson plan with her guiding questions and learning objectives. Her class period is during a 90 minute block schedule. She only had one week to implement her lesson plan and she felt that she could use more time. Her students were assigned to make a tourism brochure of a local

city in the Rio Grande Valley. She said that the kids loved the project and the only real problem she encountered was that there was a lack of time to complete the assignment in order to cover the information well. Julie Bounous, an 11<sup>th</sup> Grade U.S. History teacher at PSJA North High School in Pharr used an actual Civil Rights event that happened in Pharr in 1971 called the Pharr Riot. Her goal was to get the students to see the relevance to their community and history and then to tie local civil rights leaders such as Antonio Orendain (Texas Farm Workers Union), Raul Yzaguirre (National Council of La Raza), Hector P. Garcia (American GI Forum), and Cesar Chavez (United Farm Workers Union). As an activity for her students, she had them create protest signs. She brought some of the signs with her to show us her students' work.

After a short break, the Middle School portion of our program began. First, Yanet Olesini, 8<sup>th</sup> grade Humanities teacher at De Leon Middle School in McAllen spoke. She told the group that this is the 2<sup>nd</sup> year that De Leon Middle School was participating in the Inter Baccalaureate program with the IB unit of study. Her goal with her CHAPS lesson plan was to incorporate Rio Grande Valley history within her westward expansion section of history lessons. She wanted to show her students how national events do inspire local events via change, expansion and power. She incorporated the work she did at the CHAPS Program 2012 NEH workshop summer into her lesson plan. She showed the audience samples of her students' work (incorporated into her power point presentation) as well as noted that one student who chose to do a short documentary video along with a written script has posted it on YouTube. She highlighted how the national boundary changed between the United States and Mexico and therefore it was an international event. She showed the importance of the border and trade with Europe. She highlighted the border region as a training ground for future U.S. Presidents such as Taylor, Polk, Grant and high ranking military men such as Robert E. Lee. She reported that her students were very engaged in learning this lesson.

Our next middle school presentation was from Courtney Wai who is a 7<sup>th</sup> Grade English/ Language Arts teacher at IDEA College Preparatory Academy Mission. She created her lesson plan to connect to her students' communities. One of her guiding questions was "what is the power of words?" She wants her students to feel empowered because there is no wrong answer when she asks questions of them where they have to pull from personal (local) experiences. She activated her students' prior knowledge and connected it with a personal narrative. The idea of power of a community narrative helps with cultural understanding. Wai found that when the students incorporated their community and "spoke" in their own personal narrative the stories were more powerfully told. The use of family stories is a reflection of a community. She incorporated the importance of community in confronting racism. She felt that as a result, her students built powerful connections by drawing from their own prior knowledge.

Anne Marie Huff, a 7<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies teacher at IDEA College Preparatory Academy in San Juan developed a lesson plan whose objective was to take the South Texas Tejano experience and from it have the students create their own (musical) *corridos*. Huff spent two days on the lesson in her classroom but she felt that four days would be more adequate. She uses the “5E Lesson Plan” approach. That is that the students learn as they: engage, explore, explain, elaborate and evaluate. She was able to lead the students to connect experiences of everyday people to major events in history. She feels that there is a gap in the assigned history books/ curriculum between the period of time when the Indians inhabited the area and the Civil Rights movement. She felt that her lesson plan would be a good start to connect the two periods – Mexican American resistance to institutionalized racism. She challenged her students with the question: “Am I creating history, too, in my everyday life?” She promotes the idea that history is not only learned in the classroom but throughout life. She used a resource called “artsedge.com” to help develop a handout for her students titled “What is a *corrido*?” She believes that the higher classroom investment with culturally relevant lessons will help to start a healing process for some students.

Our final presenter for the middle school age group was Jose Hernandez. Jose is a 7<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies teacher at Mary Hoge Middle School in Weslaco and is over 60 years of age. He is quite old-fashioned and pulls from his past experiences to teach his students. He enjoys art and music and utilizes those two disciplines when teaching in the classroom. He uses popular melodies and creates specialized lyrics tied to locally relevant events. He writes songs with his students as an enrichment activity. He has his students create a special folder out of a brown paper grocery store bag. The students design and decorate their folders relevant to what they are studying in Jose’s 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Texas Studies class. Jose did not create a power point presentation for the conference nor does he have a specific lesson plan for implementation. He played a song on a tape recorder that he created as a result of his general lesson for his students. This recording will be transferred to a digital source so that we can store it with other CHAPS Program recorded items.

Following a short break, Roseann Bacha-Garza moderated the third group of teachers who represented the elementary school level. Two teachers presented at this level and we were honored to have one of their principals in the audience. Mrs. Yolanda Castillo, Principal of Graciela Garcia Elementary School was there in support of her colleague Mrs. Claudia Tijerina – 2<sup>nd</sup> grade dual language teacher. Claudia began this session by explaining to the audience how the I.B. program has 6 ‘planners’ and her lesson plan fit into the ‘planner’ entitled “Where are we in place and time?” It is a 5-6 week long project but well worth it. She was able to get her 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students to connect to the past by asking them to interview their grandparents. During this lesson her students go back in blocks of time, such as millions of years ago, thousands of years ago, hundreds of years ago, decades ago, etc. She brought examples of her students’ work to show to our

audience. These included dioramas about Indian lifeways and wars, Pleistocene epoch habitats featuring animals such as mammoths. Each of her students also created a ‘foldable’ story-teller that began in the Cretaceous Period with mosasaurs and moved to the Pleistocene Epoch and mammoths, to the Coahuiltecan peoples of the eighteenth century and ultimately to nineteenth century steamboats on the Rio Grande River.

Last, was Ruby Aguilar, a 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Science teacher at Rio Hondo Intermediate School. Ruby stressed how important that it is for the students to recall information on high stakes tests months after they learn from implemented lesson plans. She felt that Place-Based Learning was a method to make her students successful by using the local community as the primary resource for learning. She utilizes a resource called “Discovery Education” streaming to import videos to show her students. She used the trunk of special items and information from the Palo Alto Battlefield (National Park Service). She placed a mystery object in front of her students and discussed the physical characteristics of the object along with discussing the physical properties of matter. The first mystery object was a metal lantern. The second object was uniforms that soldiers wore that were made from cotton and wool. This example gave her a good opportunity to make connections to Rio Grande Valley history as farmers in this region raised sheep and grew cotton crops. She expressed that the only thing students take with them when they leave a classroom is their memories and a pencil. She creates her lesson plans on an “AEIOU” system to help create lasting memories: Adjective, Emotion, Interesting “Oh” factor (surprising info) and “Um” factor – questions about what you’ve learned and want to learn more about.

Members of the conference audience included UTPA students, local area K-12 teachers and administrators. One UTPA student commented that he could see a common theme projected by the teachers and their presentations which was to ensure that the students gain a personal connection to the subject matter being taught. Once that is established, then he/she can achieve greater success as that/those student(s) will put forth more effort during the learning process. “Project Share” was suggested again as an avenue through which we could share the lesson plans developed by our teachers. All of the lesson plans and corresponding power point presentations developed by these teachers are housed on the CHAPS Program website at [www.utpa.edu/chaps](http://www.utpa.edu/chaps). This edited volume report contains each lesson plan and power point presentation produced for this grant and will be distributed to Region One Education Service Center (ESC). Region One ESC services school districts spanning from Laredo to Brownsville. We met with Linda Graves from Region One ESC’s Office of Curriculum Instruction and Assessment and suggested that we distribute this edited volume report through their system. There are thirty seven independent school districts (ISDs) throughout seven counties that are covered by the Region One system. One hundred twenty copies of this volume were printed and distributed to the teachers, their schools and cooperating school districts with the remainder given to Region One for wider distribution.

The Rio Grande Valley of Texas is situated along the U.S.-Mexico border with the Rio Grande itself functioning as the natural boundary between the two countries. The cultural and natural environment along the Rio Grande [river] itself presents a wide variety of teaching opportunities options when developing place-based lesson plans and curriculum. As the majority of the population is Hispanic, the use of generalized instructional approaches as are present in mandated curriculum standards, adopted textbooks and high-stakes standardized tests creates challenges to teaching Rio Grande Valley students. When information is not relatable to the student demographic population and their surroundings within the Rio Grande Valley, mandated instruction tools often obstruct these students' retention of lesson data. Climate, physical landscape, dual-language majority and socio-economic issues play a key role in relevance of relatable data found in curriculum which in turn causes lessons to be either memorable or not memorable. The exposure of students to culturally relevant elements during instruction facilitates interest in learning and retainable lessons that gives the student confidence when tested and hence sparks an interest in learning more.

The goal of the *Porciones to Colonias* project is to assist local area K-12 educators to develop curriculum that is more interesting, more relevant and more useful to the students in Rio Grande Valley classrooms. By using the place-based or community-based learning model, teachers are encouraged to create more of a student-centered and multicultural curriculum.

The Rio Grande Valley of Texas has a rich, historical heritage that spans beyond the Spanish colonial settlers of two hundred sixty years ago. Historic and prehistoric Native American peoples have left evidence behind through which we can study their settlement patterns that dates back thousands of years. This preservation of data and its interpretation into the classroom helps to create a positive sense of ethnic identity and fosters feelings of community pride. We hope to prove with further research that memorable lesson plans not only inspire students to want to learn more and matriculate into advanced educational institutions, but will also intrigue students to ask more questions and create their own avenues of research by utilizing relatable data through the region's cultural heritage to their everyday lives. Perhaps the final result will be increased test scores on high stakes tests.





## PART III



# **Linking History and Science in the Classroom Through Place-Based Learning**

Ruby Aguilar

5th Grade Science Teacher

Rio Hondo Intermediate School, Rio Hondo, Texas

## *Our River...Our Home...Our History*

### 1. Rio Grande Valley History Lesson

#### 2. Guiding Questions

What is the history of the Rio Grande Valley?

Who lived here before me?

Which countries have ruled over the Valley?

#### 3. Learning objectives:

To create framework in which to activate prior knowledge by linking Science TEKS to the local history and environment.

To develop the students civic pride through an understanding of the history of their community

To develop the students self-identity through an understanding of the people who settled their community

To increase student academic success by increasing family involvement

#### 4. Detailed Background of the Topic

Script for PowerPoint: (\* denotes slide)

\*Title Slide: ***Our River...Our Home...Our History***

\*For thousands of years, the water of the Rio Grande has been a source of life for plants, animals, and people.

\*Until about 1750, the people who relied on the water of the Rio Grande Valley were Native Americans like the **Coahuiltecans**. Then things changed.

\*In 1750, the Rio Grande Valley was not a part of the United States. Why is that? Well, one reason is that the United States did not exist as a nation until the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776.

\*In 1750, the 13 original states were still British colonies which were ruled by the King of England. So what country did the Rio Grande Valley belong to?

\*The Rio Grande Valley and all of the country of Mexico belonged to Spain.

\*Spain controlled land from Alaska down to Texas and through Mexico down to through South America. The Spanish king wanted to make sure that Spain's lands in North America would always belong to Spain.

\*He decided to send settlers to build homes and towns along the Rio Grande. The king selected a strong leader to carry out these plans.

\*His name was **José de Escandón**. For more than 25 years, José de Escandón had worked with

Spanish settlers in Mexico. Now, Escandón asked successful farmers and ranchers in northern Mexico to move to land along the Rio Grande. He promised them free land and reduced taxes if they agreed to settle the new frontier.

\*500 families accepted his offer.

\*Escandón was a good organizer. He surveyed the land and named it *Nuevo Santander*.

\*Escandón set up 14 settlements which were called *Las Villas Del Norte*. The *villas* included: Camargo, Reynosa, Mier, Revilla (now called Guerrero), Laredo, and Dolores. Each *villa* was led by a *capitan* who was under the authority of Escandón. One of the settlers' first tasks was to build homes called *jacales*.

\*In present day Starr County, stone was available.

\*So the settlers made their homes out of stone. Some stone *jacales* can still be seen today.

\*In what is now Hidalgo and Cameron Counties, stone was not available.

\*So the *jacales* were made of wood and mud. These *jacales* have decomposed and cannot be seen today.

\*In addition to building their homes, the settlers needed food. They raised cattle for meat and for their leather hides. They used the fat, called tallow, to make candles.

\*At first, the settlers also raised sheep for wool and for meat; however, they soon realized that there was not enough grass in the area to raise sheep so they had to switch to only raising cattle.

\*The settlers also planted fields of cotton, corn, beans, and squash.

\*They worked to dig blocks of salt out of the salt lakes in the area.

\*Their hard work paid off, and in about 1760 the settlers celebrated when they received documents from the King of Spain giving them the land they were promised. After the settlers of Nuevo Santander received their *porciones* of land, they continued to be citizens of Spain for about another 50 years.

\*Then, in 1810, Mexico began fighting Spain for independence.

\*In 1821, Mexico, won its independence from Spain.

\*All of Texas had also been part of Spain. So when Mexico won its independence from Spain, all of Texas became part of Mexico.

\*In time, settlers in Texas decided they wanted to be free. They did not want to be ruled by Mexico. On March 2, 1836, Texas declared its independence from Mexico and later won its freedom.

\*Texas did not belong to Mexico anymore. Texas was now its own country. Its first president was Sam Houston. After a few years, Texans decided they did not want to be a free nation. They wanted to belong to the United States.

\*In 1845, Texas became a state in the United States.

\*VIDEO segment: Discovery Education Streaming

\*Let's stop and look back at all the changes that had taken place in the Rio Grande Valley up to this point. First, Texas belonged to Spain and then Mexico. Later, Texas became an independent country. In 1845, Texas decided to join the United States.

\*Now, let's see what happens to the Valley once Texas became a state of the United States. When Texas became a state, the border between Texas and Mexico was not the Rio Grande like it is today. Back then, the Texas border was at the Nueces River (by present day Corpus Christi). Texas land had always ended at the Nueces River. All the maps showed the border was supposed to be at the Nueces River, but some people in the United States did not like that. They wanted more land. They wanted the border between Texas and Mexico to be at the Rio Grande.

\*Leaders in the United States decided to fight to get more land from Mexico. In 1846, the United States declared war on Mexico. They fought for two years.

\*VIDEO segment: Discovery Education Streaming

\*Finally, Mexico surrendered the land north of the Rio Grande, including Texas, California, Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico. The border between the United States and Mexico was now set at the Rio Grande.

\*When the U.S.-Mexico border was set at the Rio Grande, the *villas* of Nuevo Santander were split between two countries. The *villas* south of the river were in Mexico; the *villas* north of the river were in the United States. Even though many changes had taken place, the people of Nuevo Santander kept busy farming and ranching on their land.

\*During the war, Americans from outside Texas saw the opportunity to make money in South Texas. They moved to our area to start new businesses. For many years, one very successful business was transporting cargo on the Rio Grande using steamboats.

\*Some businessmen came to buy and sell land. In the 1920s, these businessmen invited American farmers to come see the rich farm land. The farmers liked the warm weather. Since there was no snow, crops could be grown all year. They began calling the area by a new name: The Magic Valley.

\*Now, we call our home the Rio Grande Valley. Over the centuries, many changes have come, but one thing remains the same: the river.

\*Today, the Rio Grande is still a source of life for plants, animals, and people.

## 5. Preparation Instructions for Teachers

PowerPoint: *Our River, Our Home, Our History:*

Preview the PowerPoint. It is fully narrated.

There are two Discovery Education Streaming videos embedded into the PowerPoint. If you have access to Discovery Education Streaming, insert links into the PowerPoint so the video will start by clicking on the PowerPoint slide. A complete citation for the video segment is found at the end of the PowerPoint presentation in the credits.

If you do not have access to Discovery Education Streaming, either find another video source or delete the slide. The history of the Valley is only supplemented by the video; it is not crucial to the presentation.

## 6. Lesson Activities

Brainstorm to find out what students know about Valley history

Watch the PowerPoint

Complete A-E-I-O-U Notes based on PowerPoint

Instructional Hints:

Preview video to familiarize yourself with the content and to determine points at which to pause video

Give each student a copy of the A-E-I-O-U Video Notes

Review the table and give examples of appropriate responses

Inform the students that they should NOT write during the video

Explain that you will be pausing the video every 1 – 2 minutes and will give them time (approximately 60 seconds) to write down their thoughts

At conclusion of video, allow students to Turn & Talk in pairs

Reflection writing activity

Students will write a one paragraph note to a family member using the writing prompt:

**Today, I learned something about Valley history that I did not know before. I learned that...**

Students will glue the A-E-I-O-U Presentation Notes into their Science Journal so it can be used as a reference throughout the year as history is woven into their Science TEKS

CLOZE – go back to Brainstorming notes to analyze previous comments and add new information

## 7. Assessment

Reflection writing activity will be the assessment of learning

## 8. List of Skills that are Targeted

Understanding of a sequence of events

# A - E - I - O - U Presentation Notes

*"Our River, Our Home, Our History"*

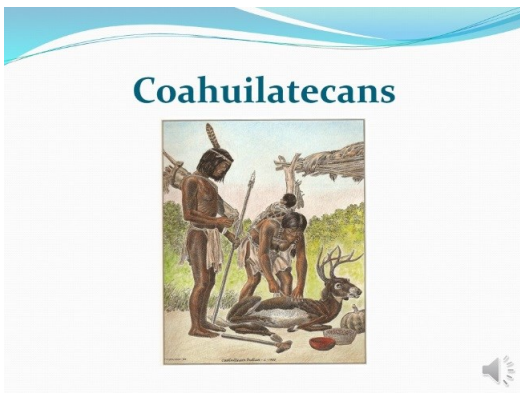
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>A</b> Adjective: One or two words that describe something you saw or learned</p>	
<p><b>E</b> Emotion: Describe how a part of the video made you feel</p>	
<p><b>I</b> Interesting: Write about something you found interesting</p>	
<p><b>O</b> Oh!: Describe something that made you say "Oh!"</p>	
<p><b>U</b> Um?: Write a <u>question</u> about something you learned or want to know more about</p>	



# OUR RIVER... OUR HOME... OUR HISTORY

A Timeline  
of the History  
of the  
Rio Grande Valley



## 1750 – Rio Grande Valley is Not Part of U.S.

- 13 colonies ruled by of England
- Texas ruled by Spain

## 1750 – Rio Grande Valley is Not Part of U.S.

- 13 colonies ruled by of England
- Texas ruled by Spain



## Spanish Lands in 1750

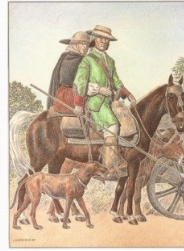
- All the land in brown belonged to Spain
- From Alaska to California and across Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, and Florida
- All of Mexico and Central America



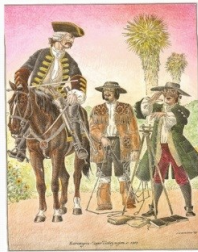
## Jose de Escandon



## 500 Families Join Escandon

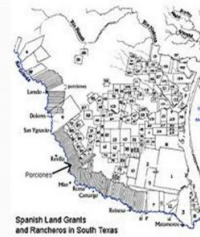


## Surveying Nuevo Santander



## Las Villas Del Norte

- Camargo
- Reynosa
- Mier
- Revilla
- Laredo
- Dolores



## Stone Jacales

**Starr  
County**



## Jacal – home of settlers

- Starr County:  
Rio Grande City  
Roma
- Has stone
- Stone jacales can still be seen



## Wood Jacales

**Hidalgo &  
Cameron  
Counties**



## Jacal – home of settlers

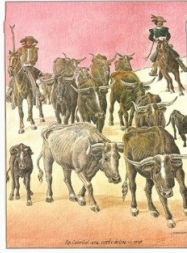
- Hidalgo County  
(Mission & McAllen)  
& all the way down to  
Cameron County  
(Brownsville & Rio Hondo)
- Do not have stone
- Jacales were made of  
wood and mud



## Raising Cattle

Cattle:

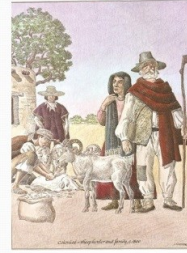
- Meat
- Hides
- Tallow - candles



## Raising Sheep

Sheep:

- Meat
- Wool

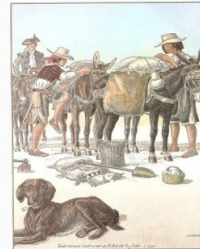


## Raising Crops

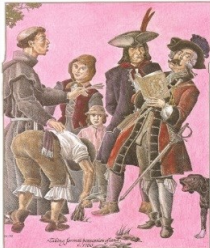
- Cotton
- Corn
- Beans
- Squash



## Collecting Salt



## Spanish Land Grants (porciones)



## Mexico Wants Independence from Spain

- 1810



## Mexico Wins Independence from Spain

- 1821



## Texas Now a Part of Mexico

- 1821

- All land in red belongs to Mexico



## Texas Wins Independence From Mexico

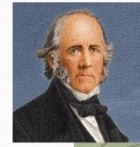
•1836



## Texas is a Nation

•1836

•Sam Houston  
First President



## Texas Joins United States

•1845



## Review of Texas History

- 1700s Texas is settled by Spain
- 1821 Mexico wins independence from Spain
- 1836 Texas wins independence from Mexico
- 1845 Texas joins the United States

## Video Review: American Geography Close-Ups: Southwestern States

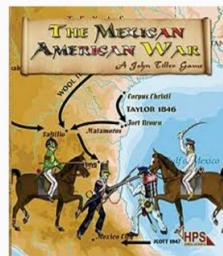


## Disputed Land



## Mexican-American War

•1846-1848



## Land Mexico Lost

• Mexico lost all the land in pink and light blue



## Video Review: U.S. Expansionism Mexican American War



## Texas and U.S. after War



## Steamboats on Rio Grande

• 1846-  
1906



## Land Agents Buy and Sell Land in Magic Valley

• 1920



## Rio Grande Valley



## Rio Grande River



## Credits

- Borderlands: the Heritage of the Lower Rio Grande Through the Art of Jose Cisneros, Cisneros, Jose, 1998
- American Geography Close-Ups: Southwestern States: Volume 01 Ancient Lights, 2006 . Full Video. Discovery Education. Web. 16 March 2013. <<http://www.discoveryeducation.com/>>.
- United States Expansionism 100% Educational Videos, 2001 . Full Video. Discovery Education. Web. 16 March 2013. <<http://www.discoveryeducation.com/>>.



Claudia Tijerina presents her students dioramas and foldables during the conference.

**Introducing Texas History to Second Graders From Prehistory to  
1860s**

Claudia Tijerina

2nd Grade Dual Language Teacher

Graciela Garcia Elementary School, Pharr, Texas

## **Lesson Plan**

**Theme: Where we are in place and time**

**Topic: South Texas History: From Prehistory to 1860's**

**Grade: 2nd**

**Teacher: Claudia Tijerina**

### **Introduction**

In this lesson, students will gain an understanding of the valley history and recognizing that the past is part of their culture. They will also be able to see that their own personal past is different than their family's past by conducting interviews to family members. Students will research on their own culture to make connections to their family's past.

Once they understand that history is made up of many people's stories of the past, students will explore how we know about events that occurred prior to our own births. Students will then research the history and events that are important in the development of the Rio Grande Valley. They will construct a timeline based on events from the local history so that it can give them a visual representation of the continuity of time.

### **Guiding Questions**

- What is our family's past, and why is it important?
- How does culture influence our lives?
- How do we learn about events in the past?
- How do past events make our present in the Rio Grande Valley?

### **Learning Objectives**

- 2.3A, B Understand how various sources provide information about the past and present
- 2.7A Understand how physical characteristics of places and regions affect people's activities and settlement patterns
- 2.2A create and interpret timelines for events in the past and the present
- 2.6B locate places of significance in a map, including the local community and Texas



## Background

How did the Rio Grande Valley become what it is today? In 1749 the Nuevo Santander was founded. It was Spain who came into this land and gave it a name basing it on Santander, España. Around this time, the Spanish crowns sent soldiers, civilians and members of religious groups to take part in *entradas*, which were used to explore and settle the lands mid-way. By the end of 1790, the population in Nuevo Santander was of about 20,000 people, including Hispanics, which were mainly concentrated in the north of Nuevo Santander.

The king of Spain began to grant land of this Nuevo Santander. This land, or *porciones*, were long and narrow, this was mainly because they needed to have access to the river. The king would give out land to people who had served the crown, for example to the military or civilians. He would also give land to prominent families, which included Spaniard, Criollos, and Mestizos. Later on, this land was passed on from the patriarch to whoever he could designate, for example: a family member, Matriarch, or the widow.

Between 1821 and 1848 there was a brief Mexican period. During this time, the Spanish-Mexican vision was that of defense purposes in Nuevo Santander, while the Anglo-American vision was that of commercial. It was in 1848 that the Rio Grande was set as a boundry between the United States and Mexico. This was a period of conquest, colonization and cooperation.

The battle of Palo Alto occurred before war had been declared between the United States and Mexico. The battle took place on May 8, 1846, the U.S. Congress declared war on May 13. It was the first major engagement of the Mexican War, was fought north of Brownsville on May 8, 1846, between American forces under Gen. Zachary Taylor and Mexican troops commanded by Gen. Mariano Arista. The battle was fought for the territory on the north side of the Rio Grande River. After the war, the U.S. declared victory.

On the Rio Grande, the great boom in steam navigation came during the war with Mexico in 1846 (Mexican-American War). The war had demonstrated the practicalities of steamboat navigation on the Rio Grande, and several businessmen established themselves quickly in the trade. Steam navigation, at least on a small scale, would endure on the Rio Grande for sixty years, longer than on any other major Texas waterway.

By 1850, most of the people were ranchers. At this time, there were about 25,000 Mexican and Mexican American in Texas. Which out of that population, 5500 were concentrated in Laredo and over the Rio Grande Valley. Most owners of livestock were Tejanos or Mexican Immigrants. Women were also ranchers.

Around the late 1800's and early 1900's there was a great development in the Rio Grande Valley. The irrigation for crops was introduced and the railroad was built. This brought in, and attracted people to the valley, from farmers to workers in the fields. But during this time, also many people lost their land, mainly those who could not keep up with all the changes going on. It was during this time that the valley was called the "Magic Valley" and it was basically to attract settlers and investors.

It was around this time, that people who owned *porciones* started selling parts of them, or separating them. The land started getting a higher value and people bought them, basically for farming. This land was then worked mainly by *brazeros* or immigrants. Usually, the immigrants came from many parts of Mexico and South America to work the land. The owners would sometimes provide these workers with a temporary place to stay with their families while working for them. Most of these workers would come and look for work at the farms, stay while there was work, and then leave until the season of planting came again. Some owners of these lands then started either subdividing or selling the land, until most of them were left with very little or none at all, they would just keep the land where they had their houses on.

Now a days, the Rio Grande Valley is big economic region. It is home to many ethnicities, including Anglos, Hispanics, and African-American, along with others. Jobs and education are just some of the important things that the valley offers.

### **Preparation**

Review the suggested activities, then download and duplicate maps, timelines, handouts (for lapbooks, etc.), and any online materials you will need. If desired, you can bookmark specific web pages so that students can access relevant online materials directly; print out required pages and duplicate copies as necessary for student viewing. Have colored paper or construction paper ready to make foldables (suggested but not required) for the various activities on the lesson plan.

### **Lesson Activities**

#### *Activity 1: Interviews*

*Duration: 1 week*

Explain that the past means things that have already happened. Ask someone to tell an event from yesterday's history. Next, ask students to relate events from last year. Once all students seem to understand the meaning of "the past," ask for a few students to tell an event from when they were babies. Do they remember these events? If not, how do they know about them?

Refer back to the events from yesterday that have been listed. Just as the class has a history, each family also has an important history made up of events from the past. Have students brainstorm some events in their families' histories. Examples might include births, deaths, marriages, immigrations, graduations, vacations, bar/bat mitzvahs, adoptions, moves, opening of a family business, etc. Be sure to reinforce that every family is different, and therefore, every family will have different events in its past that make up its history.

Tell students that they will be conducting an interview to one of their family members. It will be either a grandparent or their own parents. In the interview they will annotate how their grandparents/parents lived when they were small and as they were growing up. It will include, where they lived, any games they played, what did they use to eat, where they went to school, etc. This interview will be recorded on a little book (foldable) that they will create. They can include pictures in this book (suggested but not required).

### *Activity 2: My own culture*

*Duration: 1 week*

Before students learn about the history of the Rio Grande, they need to first identify themselves by describing their own culture. By doing this, they will be able to make connections to the culture of the valley.

Students will create a foldable where they will describe something about their culture. This can be religion, celebrations, traditions, etc. It will be a take home project and be finished in the classroom to be presented.

### *Activity 3: Local history*

*Duration: 3 weeks*

Students will learn about the history of the Rio Grande Valley from prehistory to 1860's. Students will learn by reading articles, doing research, and watching some videos.

Students will create a timeline of these important events (Prehistory –mosasaur, mammoth, Coahuiltecan, Palo Alto Battle, Steam boats in the Rio Grande River).

### *Activity 4: Palo Alto Battle*

Teachers, grade level, will schedule an appointment to have the park rangers of the Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park to come and make a presentation at the school about the battle at Palo Alto as the beginning of the Mexican-American War and explain the history on how this battle influenced the territory of what is now Texas.

Students will get a hands-on experience on what really happened on the battlefield. Park rangers will interact with them and provide various activities to check for student understanding.

### **Assessment**

*Formative:* Students will create foldables for interviews and culture. Students will be tested with weekly multiple choice tests for the history that will be covered to check for understanding. They will also create a lapbook where they will organize all the information gathered from interviews, culture and history.

*Summative:* After having done the interviews, reflected on their own culture and learned about the local history, students will choose one event and connect it to how that event may contribute to their own culture. They will write a composition and create a diorama of that event.

## **Skills**

- Critical thinking
- Gathering, classifying and interpreting written, oral and visual information
- Historical analysis
- Interpretation
- Interview skills
- Literary analysis
- Making inferences and drawing conclusions
- Synthesis

## **Resources**

### *Books:*

“Primary Source Accounts of the Mexican-American War” by James M. Deen

“The Mexican American War” by Matthew Kachur, Jon Sterngass

### *Links:*

Nuevo Santander history –

<http://vsalgs.org/stnemealogy/tamaul.html>

<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/article/usnue>

The Mexican-American War

<http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/subjects/mexicanwar.htm>

Steamboats

<http://riverboatdaves.com/areas/riogrande-2.html>

Early Ranching In South Texas

<http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/st-plains/images/ne14.html>

### *Presentations:*

Dr. Sonia Hernandez History Power Point Presentation

# Introducing Texas History to Second Graders From Prehistory to 1860's

By: Claudia Tijerina

## TEKS

- 2.3a,b - understand how various sources provide information about the past and present
- 2.7a - understand how physical characteristics of places and regions affect people's activities and settlement patterns
- 2.2a - create and interpret timelines for events in the past and the present
- 2.6b - locate places of significance in a map, including the local community and Texas

Theme:  
Where we are in place and time

Students will gain an understanding of the valley history and recognize that the past is part of their culture.

## Guiding Questions

- What is our family's past, and why is it important?
- How does culture influence our lives?
- How do we learn about events in the past?
- How do past events make our present in the Rio Grande Valley?

In order for the students to understand the meaning of the past and make a connection, students made an interview to a member of their family, this being their grandparents or parents. These are some of the questions they used for the interview:

### Week 1: Interview

1. What places did you use to go when you were a child?
2. What were your favorite candies when you were a child?
3. How were the birthday parties back then?
4. What toys did you use to play with?

## Interview Samples



## Week 2: My own culture

- Students were required to identify their own culture, by creating a small collage of all the celebrations and traditions in their families. These included holidays and special dates.



## Weeks 3, 4, 5: Prehistory to 1860's

- Students learned about the history of the Rio Grande Valley from prehistory to 1860's. Students read articles, worked on research, and watched videos.
- A lapbook with foldables was created to include some of the different time periods that occurred here in South Texas, these were: Mosasaurs, Mammoths, Coahuiltecan, Palo Alto Battle, and Steamboats in the Rio Grande River.
- Students had the opportunity to visit the Museum of South Texas History to increase their understanding of history.
- Students also were excited with the visit from Dr. Russ in our classroom who explained and taught them about the Coahuiltecan indians.

## Samples



## Week 6: Final Product

- Students reflected on their own local history as an assessment. They also had the opportunity to select an event that connected and show them how that event contributed to their own culture. They wrote a composition and created a diorama of that event.

## Presentations of Dioramas



**Resistance through Folk Forms: Corridos and the Tejano Experience  
during the Texas Boom & Bust Period**

Anne-Marie Ramirez Huff

7th grade Texas History Teacher

IDEA College Preparatory Academy, San Juan, Texas

March 2013

**OBJECTIVE – SWBAT** explain the South Texas Tejano experience during Texas's "boom and bust" period by analyzing and creating their own corridos.

**ASSESSMENT –** By the end of the class period, my students will be able to:

- Explain that history is not always written down in history books, but created in everyday situations and forms of creative expression.
- Create their very own corrido that reflects their own life.
- Answer the question: in what ways do we record history in our everyday lives?

Connection to unit/course/Big Goal (why is this objective important?):	Key Points:	
<p>This objective is important because it connects the everyday experiences of people to major events and eras in history. In this lesson, it specifically connects the "boom and bust" period to how it affected race relations between Mexican-Americans and Anglo-Americans at the time.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> In this lesson plan, it is assumed that the students have already been taught about the systematic land loss of Mexican-Americans in the Rio Grande Valley during Texas's "boom and bust" period, as well as their relationship with the Texas Rangers, or "los rinches." It is necessary for students to learn this knowledge in order for the lesson to have its full impact.</p> <p>The perfect time to fit this into the boom and bust unit is after students learn about the cattle industry and/or oil industry. After examining the "necessary" teaching from the curriculum, you can take a step back and begin to analyze "the other side of the story" during Texas's booming period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>WHO</b> writes corridos?</li> <li>• <b>WHAT</b> is a corrido?</li> <li>• <b>WHEN</b> can corridos be written?</li> <li>• <b>HOW</b> is a corrido a historical source?</li> <li>• <b>WHY</b> are corridos important historical sources, whether they are passed on by writing or oral tradition?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Materials/Setup:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez" from Americo Paredes's <i>With His Pistol in His Hand</i></li> <li>• copy of "What is a Corrido?" from <a href="http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/">http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/</a></li> <li>• Corrido song samples and/or music videos at the discretion of the teacher</li> <li>• Other optional handouts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Agenda &amp; Length:</b></p> <p><b>Day 1</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage (5)</li> <li>2. Explore (20)</li> <li>3. Explain (10)</li> <li>4. Elaborate (20)</li> <li>5. Evaluate (5)</li> </ol> <p><b>Day 2</b></p> <p>Continuation of "Elaboration" and "Evaluation" portion.</p> <p><i>*Timing is flexible but recommended –</i></p>	<p><b>Homework:</b></p> <p><b>Day 1:</b></p> <p>Brainstorm at least three ideas you could write your corrido about.</p> <p><b>Day 2:</b></p> <p>Finish completing your corridos.</p> <p><b>Reminders:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The rubric you use to grade their corridos is variable based on your content area and focus. Do you want to focus on the technicalities of a corrido or the content?</li> <li>• Timing is flexible and ideally this corrido</li> </ul>



	<i>Explore and Elaborate should be the biggest sections</i>	<i>writing project would be at least three days. At the middle school level, it is very difficult to write creative pieces, much less follow a strict format.</i>
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**ENGAGE: KEY POINTS PREVIEWED** - Capture students' attention, activate prior knowledge, and stimulate student thinking so that they are prepared for today's lesson and have sufficient context around which to construct new knowledge.

Link to the essential question:

*What prior knowledge must be brought up to get them ready to explore the new concepts of today's objective?*

DO NOW

Instructions: Answer the following questions in your notebook and be prepared to discuss them.

*What questions can I ask to elicit that prior knowledge?*

- How do you learn about history?
- Who can teach you about history?
- How do we learn about history in school?
- What types of histories do we learn in our textbook? Be specific.
- What sources can teach you about the past?

*To what previous content and/or real-life experience can I connect today's objective to capture students' attention and build anticipation for the lesson?*

This should serve as an introduction to the idea that not all history can be found in just history books, internet websites, or in class.

*What misconceptions might students have and what questions can I ask to have them reveal those misconceptions?*

**EXPLORE: KEY POINTS DISCOVERED** - Students make observations, record data, design and execute experiments, create graphs, interpret results, organize their findings, and develop hypotheses or conclusions so that they can construct knowledge independently and critical thinking skills.

Link to the essential question:

*What must students be doing and thinking to discover the key points through their doing instead of my telling?*

**Step 1:**

Provide students with a paper copy of the lyrics to "The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez." We are using the English/Spanish copy of the song from Americo Paredes's *With His Pistol in His Hand*, however you could use any variation of the song if you like (there are many versions of the ballad on YouTube, and you could play a clip of one of these versions if you like).

*How can I set up an experience to allow my students to do and think these things?*

*What questions must I ask to guide their thinking to arrive at the key points?*

In order to provide more structure for students, you may also give them a structured handout for analysis. This analysis sheet could include questions including, but not limited to:

*How are students pushed to develop the explanations or solutions I am looking for?*

- What is the title of the song?
- Who do you think is the author/singer?
- What is the song about?
- What is the perspective (point of view) of the singer?
- Who do you think is the audience for this song?

*How and where are students recording information/data?*

*How will I ensure that all students are not just participating in the activity, but engaging in the thinking required to arrive at the key points?*

- Based on what we have already learned, what do you think is the location and time?
- What is the story about?
- What can this story tell us about social issues and injustices during this time in history?
- What does the song make you wonder about? What are any questions you have about this song?
- What is the rhyme scheme of this song? (assuming they have already learned this in ELA, and you are using the Spanish version)

**NOTE:** It is assumed that students have already been taught about the systematic land loss of Mexican-Americans during Texas's "boom and bust" period and their relationship with Anglo-Americans, specifically with the Texas Rangers. This is a way in which social justice and the idea of historical resistance can be brought into the lesson.

**EXPLAIN: KEY POINTS FORMALIZED** - Solicit student ideas of what they've just done, introduce new material or vocabulary, guide students towards generalizations that explain the results of their explorations, and confirm ideas so that students are clear on what is correct, why it's correct, and what they need to take away.

Link to the essential question

*How will I set students up to create accurate explanations and justify them with evidence?*

**Step 1:**

- After reviewing the EXPLORE questions with the students, focus on the following question: What can this story tell us about social issues and injustices during this time in history?

*How will students share and engage in the findings of their classmates (whole class or smaller groups)?*

**Step 2:**

- Now, read the synopsis of Gregorio Cortez (as a class) provided by <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/> in order for students to acquire a full understanding of the story.
- You could ask them: what are some similarities and differences between the *corrido* and this summary? What new things have we learned from this summary about Gregorio?

*How will students receive information on formal definitions, labels, rules and procedures – and record in a way that makes sense?*

*How will students compare their explanations to formal definitions and rules so that they make sense of their own experience?*

**Step 3:**

- Explain/Remind students that during this time, the many Mexican-Americans did not have access to education, mainstream media, and other forms of written record (in comparison to Anglo-Americans), so they had to record their history in different ways.
- Many Mexican-Americans recorded their history through oral tradition.
- **Oral tradition** is when you pass history, memory, and information through word of mouth, NOT through writing.
- Oral traditions can include family stories, *teatro*, *corridos*, prayers,

*What misunderstandings do I anticipate students still having and how can I correct them?*

*How will I know when students understand? What questions must they be able to answer?*

<p>etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Corrido (n.):</b> is a song that is usually written in Spanish, and tells the audience about a real story in 36 lines.</li> <li>• This is one of the ways in which Mexican-Americans resisted and challenged the discrimination they faced on a daily basis.</li> <li>• All of this can be done through a class discussion accompanied with powerpoint</li> <li>• You can also give some very brief examples of modern-day corridos (i.e. <i>narcocorridos</i>, <i>feminist corridos</i> by Jenni Rivera, corridos about “<i>la migra</i>”).</li> </ul> <p><b>Transition:</b> we are going to be learning about <i>corridos</i> by learning how they are written – and writing our own!</p>	
<p><b>ELABORATE:</b> KEY POINTS USED - Students practice applying ideas to new domains in an increasingly independent way and practice problems for skill objectives so that they reinforce their knowledge, check their understanding while the teacher is present, and can extend ideas beyond just the problem or application in the example.</p>	
<p>Link to essential question:</p>	<p><i>How will students use their new definitions, rules, and skills to investigate or solve problems in a new, yet similar situation?</i></p>
<p><b>STEP 1:</b> Provide students with a copy of “What is a <i>Corrido</i>?” from <a href="http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/">http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/</a></p> <p>You can have students in pairs or groups of four, and to insure 100% of students are reading the handout, you can have one student be in charge of each CFU. This handout should mostly be used as reference when analyzing the <i>corridos</i>.</p> <p><b>Checks for Understanding (CFU)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What language(s) are <i>corridos</i> written in?</li> <li>• How many lines are in a <i>corrido</i>?</li> <li>• What is the traditional <i>corrido</i> usually about?</li> <li>• Do you have any other questions about <i>corridos</i>?</li> <li>• <b>You should use the “What is a <i>Corrido</i>?” handout in this section as reference!!!</b></li> </ul> <p><b>STEP 2:</b> Provide students with other examples of <i>corridos</i> (whether older or current) in order to peak their interest and already get them thinking about what they could write about in their <i>corridos</i>. Remember, before they do this activity, the students should already be aware that they will</p>	<p><i>How will I scaffold my support and include whole class, group, and individual checks for understanding?</i></p> <p><i>How will students demonstrate their knowledge of the new information and ability to apply it in new ways?</i></p> <p><i>How will I ensure that students are able to apply their knowledge in an increasingly independent (and eventually independent) way?</i></p>

be writing their own *corridos*. You can decide as a teacher what *corridos* you'd like your students to examine. I would choose between 3-4 *corridos* for them to practice with in order to familiarize themselves with the structure of *corridos*. They don't even need to necessarily be "strict" *corridos* in form, but songs with social justice themes that connect with our students lives in order to inspire them.

Some artists/subgenres you could choose from:

- Jenni Rivera (deals with issues of feminism)
- Los Tigres del Norte
- La Santa Cecilia
- Los Alacranes
- Narcocorridos (preferably about true events)
- Older ballads that you can find at <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/> or through other research
- It would also be preferable to create your own *corridor* as an example for the students

#### **DAY 1:**

In this lesson, I am providing them with the following songs to analyze independently in order to become more familiar with the technical format of the *corrido*. They will be identifying the rhyming schemes of both songs and other technical aspects.

- "Camelia La Texana" – Los Tigres del Norte
- "El Bandido Generoso" – Chalino Sanchez

#### **DAY 2**

Day 2 starts off with providing more song clips as examples for INSPIRATION. The songs you choose for this day do not necessarily need to be strict *corridos* in terms of their format. I am personally using the following songs to provide the students with ideas:

- "El Mojado" – Ricardo Arjona
- "Somos Mas Americanos" – Los Tigres del Norte
- "Yo Soy Una Mujer" – Jenni Rivera
- "ICE" – La Santa Cecilia
- "Linda Chicana" and "Pocho" – Los Alacranes

**EVALUATE:** KEY POINT ASSESSED - Assess students' current mastery of knowledge, skills, and concepts, and determine students' self-assessed level of comfort and confidence with the objective so that the teacher knows where to remediate or reinforce ideas the next day, and the extent to which each individual has mastered the lesson.

Link to the essential question:

*How will students show mastery of the objective?*

Students will create their own *corridos*.

*If students will be self-evaluating their efforts and abilities, what are the guidelines they will follow?*

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Create your own *corrido* based on a difficult time in your life or a social justice issue that you are passionate about.

Requirements:

- your *corrido* must be a TRUE STORY.
- your *corrido* must follow the rules of a *corrido* (see "Structure" on your "What is a *Corrido*?" handout)
- your *corrido* can be in either English, Spanish, or both.
- your *corrido* can be serious, funny, sad, etc.

Some ideas:

- getting a fair education
- Border Patrol / la migra
- Experience with the criminal justice system
- Family drama
- Family stories
- About your identity (as a man, woman, Mexican, Salvadorian, etc.)
- Justice

## NOTES/CONSIDERATIONS

Create a rubric for CORRIDO evaluation  
Create a format for their CORRIDO writing  
Create a formatted structure for their writing day(s).

*Remediation: What additional explicit instruction or supports will students need so they can accomplish tasks?*

*Catching students up who miss part of the exercises:*

- How will students easily jump in to any part of the lesson cycle?
- What will students need to participate fully?

*Timing and Pacing: If the 5E model goes beyond one day, what is the clear output for each day?*

## Resistance through Folk Forms: Corridos and the Tejano Experience during the Texas Boom & Bust Period

Anne-Marie Ramirez Huff  
7<sup>th</sup> grade Texas History  
IDEA College Prep San Juan

## AGENDA

- I. Lesson Overview & Background Info (5)
- II. Lesson Format & Execution (5)
- III. Student & Lesson Outcomes (5)

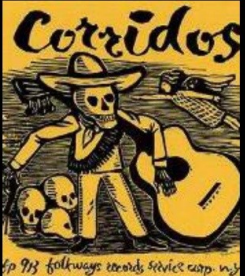
### 5-E Lesson Overview

<b>OBJECTIVE:</b> SWBAT explain the South Texas Tejano experience during Texas's "boom and bust" period by analyzing and creating their own <i>corridos</i> .	<b>BY THE END OF THE LESSON:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain that history is not always written down in history books, but created in everyday situations and forms of creative expression.</li> <li>• Create their very own <i>corrido</i> that reflects their own life.</li> <li>• Answer the question: in what ways do we record history in our everyday lives?</li> </ul>
<b>LESSON LENGTH:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least two days; flexibility depending on your goals, subject matter, and department restrictions.</li> </ul>	


### 5-E Lesson Overview

<b>NOTE:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5-E Lesson:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– stands for Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, Evaluate</li> <li>– "discovery" learning</li> <li>– a more student-centered lesson plan</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>NOTE:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assumed that the students have already been taught about the systematic land loss of Tejanos in the Rio Grande Valley during Texas's "boom and bust" period, as well as their relationship with the Texas Rangers</li> <li>• Fit this into the boom and bust unit after students learn about the cattle and oil industries.</li> <li>• Fit in after examining the "necessary" curriculum</li> </ul>
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### Why is this lesson important?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It connects the experiences of everyday people to major events and eras in history.</li> <li>• Specifically connects the "boom and bust" period to how it affected race relations between Tejanos and Anglo-Americans at the time.</li> <li>• Can be used as a connection while learning about the Civil Rights Movement</li> </ul>	 <p style="font-size: small;">© 1988 folkways records service corp. inc.</p>
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### Lesson Origins & Background Information

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>With His Pistol in His Hand</i> by Americo Paredes</li> <li>• <i>George Washington Gomez</i> by Paredes</li> <li>• <i>Chulas Fronteras del Norte</i> (1976)</li> <li>• <i>Border Bandits</i> (2003)</li> </ul>	
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## "Los Rinches"


"The Ranger did make a name for himself along the Border. The word *RINCHE*, from 'ranger', is an important one in Border folklore. It has been extended to cover not only the Rangers but any other Americans armed and mounted and looking for Mexicans to kill. Possemen and border patrolmen are also *rinches*..."

-Americo Paredes, *With His Pistol in His Hand*



## Resistance through Oral History – specifically, corridos!

- During this time, many Tejanos did not have access to education, mainstream media, and other forms of written records, so they had to record their history in different ways.



## Lesson Format / Agenda

<p>I. Engage (5)          II. Explore (20)          III. Explain (10)          IV. Elaborate (20)          V. Evaluation (5) **</p> <p><small>**Typically, "Evaluation" is five minutes, but in this case, writing the corrido is the evaluation and it will take much longer than five minutes</small></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">I. ENGAGE</p> <p>DO NOW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you learn about history?</li> <li>• Who can teach you about history?</li> <li>• How do we learn about history in school?</li> <li>• What types of histories do we learn in our textbook? Be specific.</li> <li>• Etc.</li> </ul> <p><small>**This should serve as an introduction to the idea that not all history can be found in just history books, internet websites, or in class.</small></p>
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## Lesson Format / Agenda

<p>I. Engage (5)          II. Explore (20)          III. Explain (10)          IV. Elaborate (20)          V. Evaluation (5) **</p> <p><small>**Typically, "Evaluation" is five minutes, but in this case, writing the corrido is the evaluation and it will take much longer than five minutes</small></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">II. Explore (20)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide students with a paper copy of the lyrics to "The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez."</li> <li>• You may use the English/Spanish copy of the song from Americo Paredes's <i>With His Pistol in His Hand</i>, however you could use any variation of the song if you like.</li> <li>• In order to provide more structure for students, you may also give them a structured handout for analysis.</li> </ul>
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## Lesson Format / Agenda

<p>I. Engage (5)          II. Explore (20)          III. Explain (10)          IV. Elaborate (20)          V. Evaluation (5) **</p> <p><small>**Typically, "Evaluation" is five minutes, but in this case, writing the corrido is the evaluation and it will take much longer than five minutes</small></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">II. Explain (10 – 15)</p> <p><b>Step 1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on the questions: What can this story tell us about social issues and injustices during this time in history?</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Now, read the synopsis of Gregorio Cortez (as a class) in order for students to acquire a full understanding of the story.</li> <li>• You could ask them: what are some similarities and differences between the <i>corrido</i> and this summary? What new things have we learned from this summary about Gregorio?</li> </ul>
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## Lesson Format / Agenda

<p>I. Engage (5)          II. Explore (20)          III. Explain (10)          IV. Elaborate (20)          V. Evaluation (5) **</p> <p><small>**Typically, "Evaluation" is five minutes, but in this case, writing the corrido is the evaluation and it will take much longer than five minutes</small></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">II. Explain (10 – 15)</p> <p><b>Step 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain that this is a <b>CORRIDO!</b></li> <li>• Explain that this is also <b>ORAL TRADITION!</b></li> <li>• Transition: we are going to be learning about <i>corridos</i> by learning how they are written – and writing our own!</li> </ul>
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## Lesson Format / Agenda

<p>I. Engage (5)            II. Explore (20)            III. Explain (10)            IV. Elaborate (20)            V. Evaluation (5) **</p> <p>**Typically, "Evaluation" is five minutes, but in this case, writing the corrido is the evaluation and it will take much longer than five minutes</p>	<p>III. Elaborate (20)</p> <p>Step 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have students read "What is a Corrido?" handout.</li> <li>Provide some type of review questions to ensure 100% participation and understanding of the handout.</li> </ul> <p>Step 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide students with other examples of corridos in order for them to become familiar with their structure, as well as to provide inspiration for their own corridos. You could play the song as they read the lyrics, and the fill out a worksheet independently.</li> </ul>
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## Lesson Format / Agenda

<p>I. Engage (5)            II. Explore (20)            III. Explain (10)            IV. Elaborate (20)            V. Evaluation (5) **</p> <p>**Typically, "Evaluation" is five minutes, but in this case, writing the corrido is the evaluation and it will take much longer than five minutes</p>	<p>III. Elaborate (20)</p> <p>Some suggested sources for corridos or inspiration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Los Tigres del Norte</li> <li>Jenni Rivera</li> <li>Chalino Sanchez</li> <li>Los Alegres de Teran</li> <li>Ramon Ayala</li> </ul>
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## Lesson Format / Agenda

<p>I. Engage (5)            II. Explore (20)            III. Explain (10)            IV. Elaborate (20)            V. Evaluation (5) **</p> <p>**Typically, "Evaluation" is five minutes, but in this case, writing the corrido is the evaluation and it will take much longer than five minutes</p>	<p>III. Evaluation (varies)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The rubric you use to grade their corridos is variable based on your content area and focus. Do you want to focus on the technicalities of a corrido or the content?</li> <li>Timing is flexible and ideally this corrido writing project would be at least three days. At the middle school level, it is very difficult to write creative pieces, much less follow a strict format.</li> </ul>
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## Lesson Outcomes

- Higher classroom investment, which can lead to better grades and classroom management
- Awareness of their ethnicity and region
- A developed social conscience
- A deeper, more meaningful relationship with teacher

## Student Outcomes

**Topics of Produced Corridos:**

- Immigration: undocumented family members, "la migra," etc.
- Drugs & Gangs
- Violence in Mexico / longing to return to "Mexico querido"
- Family members & stories
- Womanhood & Respect
- Ethnic Identity: i.e. "Maria not M-u-r-i-uh"
- Customized Trucks
- Stripes Tacos
- Learning to sing corridos

## Questions?

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## **Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in an Era of Testing**

Courtney Wai

7th grade Texas English/Language Arts Teacher  
IDEA College Preparatory Academy, Mission, Texas

## **CHAPS Lesson Plan: Place-based Curriculum**

### **7<sup>th</sup> Grade English Language Arts – Courtney Wai**

#### Brief Introduction to Lesson Plan:

This lesson plan is the culmination of a two week curriculum workshop hosted by the University of Texas – Pan-American in Edinburg, Texas. The objective of the workshop was to use knowledge about South Texas, and in particular, the Rio Grande Valley to create a lesson plan that contains place-based curriculum. In order to achieve this goal, teacher participants attended lectures by Community Historic Archaeology Project with Schools (CHAPS) professors, engaged in college-style seminars, researched land deeds from the 1800s, recorded and transcribed oral histories, and visited various historical sites around the Rio Grande Valley.

These activities all served to enhance teachers’ understanding of the region so that they could incorporate it into their daily class activities. Teachers from across the region, from elementary, middle school, and high school classes, from various disciplines collaborated together to share their understanding of the Rio Grande Valley and write a final lesson plan. This lesson plan is one such product.

#### Detailed background:

This lesson plan is based on the book *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor. The novel is set in rural Mississippi during the Jim Crow era. Given my students’ lack of knowledge about this time period, as a teacher, it helps to spend at least one class period (one hour) previewing the text provide them with enough background information to engage with the novel in a meaningful way.

However, the objective is not based on understanding background information, but rather in the skill of predicting the novel’s plot. The goal of this is to give students a variety of pre-reading strategies that they can use not only to preview novels with unfamiliar settings, but also when encountering difficult texts in other subjects, such as history, social studies, mathematics, or science. Thus, the lesson is based in literacy acquisition that can be used over and over again, rather than just gathering information to understand one novel. Understanding the historical context is merely a product of the direct instruction of literacy standards (therefore, the assessment pertains to *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*).

Although place-based curriculum is not at the center of this lesson (the novel is, after all, set in the 1930s in rural Mississippi), it draws heavily on linking student knowledge and student opinions with the historical context, the genre, and the writing style. The idea is to give students a variety of ways to connect with a text that might seem otherwise unfamiliar in style and context. The place-based curriculum comes from the concept of “activating prior knowledge” and the oral histories that students use when interacting with Box 4 (see Lesson Plan). The oral histories are “entrance tickets” to class—they are assigned the weekend before, and students are required to bring it to class in order to fully participate in the activities. The assignment is as follows:

## “Memoir Unit” Homework: Oral Histories

Interview a relative that is at least 10 years older than you.

Ask them at least 5 of the following questions:

- 1) What is your full name? Why did your parents select this name for you? Did you have a nickname?
- 2) When and where were you born?
- 3) How did your family come to live there?
- 4) Were there other family members in the area? Who?
- 5) What was the house (apartment, farm, etc.) like? How many rooms? Bathrooms? Did it have electricity? Indoor plumbing? Telephones?
- 6) Were there any special items in the house that you remember?
- 7) What was your favorite thing to do for fun (movies, beach, etc.)?
- 8) Did you have family chores? What were they? Which was your least favorite?
- 9) Did you receive an allowance? How much? Did you save your money or spend it?
- 10) What was school like for you as a child? What were your best and worst subjects? Where did you attend grade school? High school? College?
- 11) What school activities and sports did you participate in?
- 12) Do you remember any fads from your youth? Popular hairstyles? Clothes?
- 13) What were your favorite songs and music?
- 14) Did you have any pets? If so, what kind and what were their names?
- 15) What was your religion growing up? What church, if any, did you attend?
- 16) Were you ever mentioned in a newspaper?
- 17) Who were your friends when you were growing up?
- 18) What world events had the most impact on you while you were growing up? Did any of them personally affect your family?
- 19) Describe a typical family dinner. Did you all eat together as a family? Who did the cooking? What were your favorite foods?
- 20) How were holidays (birthdays, Christmas, etc.) celebrated in your family? Did your family have special traditions?
- 21) How is the world today different from what it was like when you were a child?
- 22) Who was the oldest relative you remember as a child? What do you remember about them?
- 23) What do you know about your family surname?
- 24) What stories have come down to you about your parents? Grandparents? More distant ancestors?
- 25) Are there any stories about famous or infamous relatives in your family?
- 26) Are there any physical characteristics that run in your family?
- 27) Are there any special heirlooms, photos, bibles or other memorabilia that have been passed down in your family?

Record this information. You must write at least one page, single-spaced.

This homework assignment became the basis of the place-based curriculum for this lesson plan. Although we will return to their family's oral histories later when students actually write their personal narrative, the goal for the lesson is for students to connect the stories their family members tell them with the idea of "story-telling" and Mildred Taylor's biography, in which she explains her purpose for writing: helping people understand her. This is a key takeaway for the students when understanding the "memoir" unit's theme: the power of words means using your writing or your speeches to change the world. Although the daily life of a relative may initially seem insignificant, the goal is for students to situate their lives within their relative's experiences, and see how the power of the narrative (the power of words) shapes the past, present, and the future. This is why some "preview boxes" instruct students to record their answer on the graphic organizer (these activities align to the objective), while others may require students to discuss bigger themes (these activities align to the guiding questions: understanding greater themes in either the novel or in the unit).

The introduction of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* also takes place during my foundational strategies mini-unit at the beginning of each academic school year; this mini-unit is also embedded into the Memoir Unit. Before I jump into grade-level objectives, I explicitly teach a set of literacy strategies, which my students refer to as "Strategies Good Readers Use." These skills (such as connections, visualizing, metacognition, identifying when understanding breaks down) are comprehension techniques that students can use in other classes, and they help provide an important base for mastering grade-level 7<sup>th</sup> Grade English Language Arts objectives, such as inferencing and literary analysis.

My hope is that any educator that accesses this lesson plan can find a strong set of key points in teaching literacy and a variety of hands-on, engaging pre-reading activities. The text can be changed to fit the students' or the teacher's need, and students in any part of the world can conduct oral histories to tie into the novel. The lesson can be adapted to any grade, and the key points can be used in any subject.

**Unit Objective:**

SWBAT write a personal narrative.

**Guiding Question**

Unit: What is the power of words?

Daily: How do we use what we know to understand what the “power of words” means?

**Daily Objective:**

SWBAT predict the story of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by using pre-reading strategies and activating prior knowledge.

**Assessment**

Exit Slip:

Predict what the story of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* will be (at least 10 sentences).

Grading Rubric

A	B	C	F
Prediction draws heavily on prior knowledge and uses pre-reading strategies. Prediction is clearly rooted in class materials and makes sense. Answer is at least 10 sentences.	Prediction draws on prior knowledge and uses pre-reading strategies. Prediction is rooted in class materials and makes sense. Answer is at least 10 sentences.	Prediction draws somewhat on prior knowledge and uses some pre-reading strategies. Prediction is somewhat rooted in class materials and makes sense for the most part. Answer is at least 7 sentences.	Prediction does not on prior knowledge or does not use pre-reading strategies. Prediction is not rooted in class materials and does not make sense. Answer is insufficient.

## Materials

- PowerPoint
  - ◊ Slide 1: Objective
  - ◊ Slide 2: “What” Key Points
  - ◊ Slide 3: “Why” Key Points
  - ◊ Slide 4: Picture of cover of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*
  - ◊ Slide 5: “How” Key Points
  - ◊ Slide 6: Group Roles
    - ★ On-task Officer: Keeps track of time, makes sure the group is following the directions correctly, passes the box nicely
    - ★ Savvy speaker: Reads directions out loud, speaks for the team at the end
    - ★ Writing wizard: Makes sure to take careful notes and that everybody is writing
    - ★ Compassionate comrade: Makes sure all members are participating in group discussions and empowering each other (tracking the speaker, speaking respectfully)

Timer (Online Timer may be used to project so that students know how much time they have left with each box. Use <http://www.online-stopwatch.com/countdown/>)

- Projector
- Class set of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*
- “Preview boxes”
  - ◊ Box 1 (Setting—location), see Appendix A
    - Jim Crow Laws article
    - Rope
    - Confederate flag picture
    - Picture of segregation
  - ◊ Box 2 (Setting—time period), see Appendix B
    - Map of Mississippi
    - Cotton swabs
    - Mud in Ziploc bag
    - Pictures of Mississippi from the 1930s
  - ◊ Box 3 (Pre-reading guide), see Appendix C
    - Anticipation Guide handout (1 / student)
  - ◊ Box 4 (Activating prior knowledge), see Appendix D
    - Oral history box (instructions about think-pair-share oral histories)
    - 4 copies of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*
  - ◊ Box 5 (Pre-reading strategy), see Appendix E
    - Biography of Mildred Taylor
    - Background of Logan Family series
  - ◊ Box 6 (Pre-reading strategy), see Appendix F
    - Previewing the novel: Look at cover, look at back cover, and read “Author’s Note”
  - ◊ Box 7 (Events—racism)
    - “Textbook” modeled after the classroom text Little Man stomps on in Chapter 1
- Student graphic organizer, see Appendix G
- Exit Slips (see “Assessment” section above)

## Key Points

### What:

- Prediction: Guessing what's going to happen based on what you know and the evidence given
- Pre-reading strategies: Strategies good readers use to predict the text
  - ◊ For example:
    - Interact with text before reading by looking at book covers
    - Look up context of the book
- Activating prior knowledge: Using what you already know to help you understand a text

### How:

1. "Preview" the book by looking at the book's going to be about book features: the cover picture, the title, the "Author's Note," the back cover, reviews, and other book features besides the actual story itself.
2. After you look at these features, activate your prior knowledge and use your pre-reading strategies to answer the following question:
  - What is being said (or portrayed, in the case of a picture) in the text feature?
  - What do you know about this topic?
  - So, what hints are these text features giving you about the story?
3. If you can, look up information about the text using your library or the Internet (luckily for you today, Ms. Wai is going to give you some information!)

### Why:

- The setting (location, time period) of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* is unfamiliar to most of us. When this happens, sometimes it's hard for us to comprehend, which really stops us from deeply understanding what the author is saying.
- This is when pre-reading strategies and activating prior knowledge is helpful; we can start to use what we know and what we can understand to grasp what's going on in the novel.
- These are also strategies that you can use to get ready to read any other text!

**Introduction to New Material (Explanation of Key Points, model think out loud; 10 minutes)**

Teacher says:

Today's objective is to predict the story of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by using pre-reading strategies and activating prior knowledge. (Point to slide 1)

*Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* is our new class novel. Instead of me introducing the novel, I'm going to let the boxes do the talking (point to boxes at each group).

Before we get started on our fun group activity, though, let's talk about our objective. (Point to slide 2.) Please make sure that you are taking notes on this in your "Strategies Good Readers Use" section of your ELA notebook.

Who can tell me what predict means?

Exemplar student response: Prediction means guessing what's going to happen based on what you know and the evidence given

Teacher says:

Excellent job, [insert student name]!

Now, let's think about the next part of the objective. We're supposed to predict what the novel's going to be about using pre-reading strategies. Let's think about the prefix pre-. What does this prefix mean? Can anybody recall from our word roots exercises?

Exemplar student response: The prefix pre- means "before."

Teacher says:

Great, [insert student name]! So, pre-reading strategies are strategies that good readers use to help them predict the text. For example, you might interact with text before reading by looking at book cover—the front and back, and look up context of the book by using the library or the Internet. (Point to slide 2)

Now, lastly, we're going to talk about the last part of our objective. We already know what it means to predict what the novel's going to be about using pre-reading strategies, but what about the "activating prior knowledge part"? We've already discussed this last week, so who remembers what this means?

Exemplar student response: "Activating prior knowledge" means using what you already know to help you understand a text.

Teacher says:

That's exactly the right answer! So, today we will be using what we already know, strategies that good readers use to help them predict the text to start thinking what's going to happen when we read the text.

(Point to slide 3) This is important because the setting (location, time period) of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* is unfamiliar to most of us. When this happens, sometimes it's hard for us to comprehend, which really stops us from deeply understanding what the author is saying. Pre-reading strategies and activating prior knowledge is helpful; we can start to use what we know and what we can understand to grasp what's going on in the novel. These are also strategies that you can use to get ready to read any other text, including history and science!



(Point to slide 4). Here is how we can do this. Everybody should be taking notes on this in their “Strategies Good Readers Use” section of your ELA notebook.

First, we “preview” the book by looking at the book’s going to be about book features: the cover picture, the title, the “Author’s Note,” the back cover, reviews, and other book features besides the actual story itself.

Then, after we look at these features, activate your prior knowledge and use your pre-reading strategies to answer the following question:

- What is being said (or portrayed, in the case of a picture) in the text feature?
- What do you know about this topic?
- So, what hints are these text features giving you about the story?

(Model think out-loud)

So, I might look at the cover picture. This is the book feature I have chosen, so I write it in my first box on my worksheet. (Point to book cover on slide 5.) Now, I’m just going to start looking at JUST what’s being portrayed. I see a young black girl, with two shorter, black boys. It looks like there’s a fire. I notice they’re barefoot. They look scared. They’re on a porch. It seems dark outside. I’m going to write this in my second box.

Now, I’m going to start asking myself...what do I know about this topic? (Point to slide 4, again)

Well, I know that people who are barefoot usually are poor. I know that people who hug each other like that are usually family. I know that older siblings are usually taller. I know that people are usually scared of fire. I know that people who grip each other that way are scared, too. I’m going to write this in my third box.

So, I’m going to start thinking about what hints these text features are giving me about the story. (Point to slide 4, again.)

Well, I guess the three children are brothers and sister, the girl being the eldest. They’re probably poor and worried that their house is going to be set on fire. I’m going to write this in my fourth box.

**Check for understanding (CFU):** So, I want you all to think-pair-share on how I thought through this process in your own words. You have thirty seconds each. Please high-five your partner, and begin.

Teacher should then cold-call students a low, a medium, and a high student. Teacher should accept any reasonable answer given where student demonstrates that they understand the process.

As an alternative, teachers can have students work in pairs to use another text feature to predict. Teachers should then cold-call pairs and accept any reasonable answer given where student demonstrates that they understand the process.

Teacher says:

The last step says that if you can, you should look up information about the text using your library or the Internet. Today, I’m going to give you this “information” in box form.

## Guided Practice (Group activities with the “preview boxes,” 27 minutes)

### Teacher says:

Today, we will be working in groups on “preview boxes.” These boxes contain articles, tidbits of information, pictures, and items that represent key concepts, ideas, or events in *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*.

Before I give you the instructions, you will decide your group roles. (Teacher explains the following using the last slide.)

- On-task Officer: Keeps track of time, makes sure the group is following the directions correctly, passes the box nicely
- Savvy speaker: Reads directions out loud, speaks for the team at the end
- Writing wizard: Makes sure to take careful notes and that everybody is writing
- Compassionate comrade: Makes sure all members are participating in group discussions and empowering each other (tracking the speaker, speaking respectfully)

You have the next 45 seconds to decide which role each of you has.

(Let students decide in groups. After their time is up, call for attention.)

Please raise your hand if you are the on-task officer. (Check to make sure each group has fulfilled this role.)

Please raise your hand if you are the savvy speaker. (Check to make sure each group has fulfilled this role.)

Please raise your hand if you are the writing wizard. (Check to make sure each group has fulfilled this role.)

Please raise your hand if you are compassionate comrade. (Check to make sure each group has fulfilled this role.)

Please listen carefully, because here are the instructions for your next activity:

- 1) You have 3 minutes to preview each box.
- 2) After the three minutes are over, the On-Task Officer should pass the box. Everybody else should remain seated.
- 3) At each station, you are to fill out the “text feature” and write your thinking in the boxes, just like Ms. Wai did.
- 4) Return all items to the boxes and treat them with respect so all of your classmates can enjoy this activity.

Any questions? (Answer all questions.)

(Teacher should project and start timer.)

(CFU: During this time, teacher circulates to help students, check answers, provoke discussion, clarify questions or misunderstandings.)

## Independent Practice (Exit Slip, 10 minutes)

(Timer goes off.)

Okay, students, please put away all materials back in the preview box.

Now that you’ve worked as a group, it’s time for you to write your own prediction. There is no such thing as a “wrong” prediction.

(Pass out exit slips)

As you notice, in order to get an A on your exit slip today, all you need to do is predict your story based on the preview boxes and your worksheet. I expect at least ten sentences.

Since this is your exit slip, work quietly and independently. You may begin.

(After students are finished, collect exit slips.)

### Closing (Guiding question, 3 minutes)

#### Teacher says:

Great work today, class! Let's tie today's lesson back into the big picture. Our theme for this unit is "The Power of Words."

We know that we're starting our memoir unit, and we've talked about what the power of words means. So, today's question is: how do we use what we know to understand what the "power of words means?"

Accept all reasonable answers.

### Modifications for ELL, Special Education, or special needs students:

- Structured group work (high-low pairing and group roles)
- Graphic organizers to help students organize thinking
- Preferential seating
- Model think out loud
- Explicit teaching of reading strategies applicable to all contents (literacy strategies)
- Frequent teacher check-in (individual CFUs)

### Additional Resources

#### Teacher Resources

- *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* Scholastic Online Study Guide: [http://www.scholastic.com/kids/homework/pdfs/Roll\\_of\\_Thunder.pdf](http://www.scholastic.com/kids/homework/pdfs/Roll_of_Thunder.pdf)
- *When Kids Can't Read, What Teachers Can Do* by Kylene Beers (literacy strategies)

#### Student Resources: A List of Books about the Logan Family

- *The Land*: This novel explains how the Logan family became powerful in a time of institutional racism
- *The Well: David's Story*: Cassie's father narrates this novel
- *Song of Trees*: The prequel to *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*
- *The Friendship*: This takes place around the time that Cassie narrates *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* and chronicles an outburst of racism
- *Let the Circle Be Unbroken*: This novel, which takes place after *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, concludes some of the previous book's events
- *The Road To Memphis*: Cassie, now 17 years old, confronts the changing landscape brought on by World War II
- *Mississippi Bridge*: This novel is narrated by Jeremy Simms, a white character from Taylor's books

## APPENDIX A: Box 1 (Setting—location)

Savvy Speaker, please read the instructions to your group:

- 1) Read the article below
- 2) Look at the pictures
- 3) Fill out your worksheet

Article from Scholastic’s Study Guide on *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*

### **The Jim Crow Laws**

Black people and white people were separated by the Jim Crow Laws. These laws enforced segregation. Segregation kept black people and white people apart. Black kids and white kids could not go to the same schools. People of different races couldn’t travel in the same train cars, either. They could travel in the same buses, but black people had to sit in the back of the bus—until a white person got on. Then a black person had to give up his or her seat for the white person. Parks, cemeteries, and theaters were also marked WHITE or COLORED to prevent any contact between black and white people. The Jim Crow laws were meant to create “separate but equal” places for black and white people. It did not work out this way, however. The places were “separate,” but they were not “equal.”

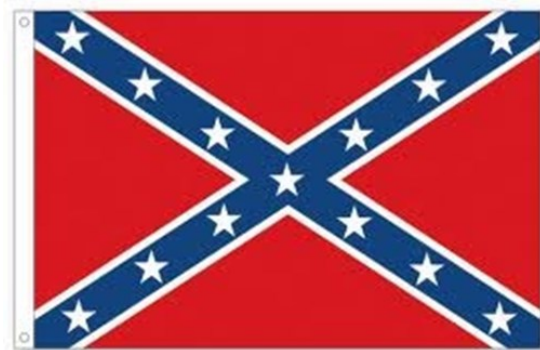
### **The Ku Klux Klan**

In *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, Mildred Taylor also tells about the “night men” who try to kill black people in many ways. They attacked some black people and covered others in tar and feathers. They also set some black people on fire. The “night riders” hanged black people, too. These hangings were called lynchings. “Night riders” was another name for members of the Ku Klux Klan.

Picture of Segregation



Picture of Confederate Flag



**APPENDIX B: Box 2 (Setting—time period)**

Savvy Speaker, please read the instructions to your group:

Look at the pictures

See what these “text features” are hinting to you!

Record it on your worksheet

**Map of Mississippi**



**Pictures of rural Mississippi from the 1930s**



**APPENDIX C: Box 3: Pre-reading guide**

---

Savvy Speaker, please read the instructions to your group:

- 1) Each student should take an Anticipation Guide and fill it out
- 2) Read each statement and write “Yes” in the blank if you believe the statement and could support it or put “No” in the blank if you do not believe the statement and could not support it
- 3) After your group has decided their answers, please discuss in a group
- 4) Remember to use your “accountable talk” sentence starters

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

HR Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Anticipation Guide (Keep until we are finished with the novel!)**

Before Reading	Statement	After Reading
	It's okay to fight violence with violence.	
	You should get revenge if someone has wronged you.	
	You should stand up to discrimination, no matter what.	
	You should respect everybody, regardless of how they treat you.	
	Racism was okay in the past because people didn't know any better.	
	Children should be obedient to their parents even if it means having to do something they don't understand.	
	People can be racist against themselves.	

#### **APPENDIX D: Box 4 (Activating prior knowledge)**

---

Savvy Speaker, please read the instructions to your group:

- 1) Please take out your oral histories that you recorded over the weekend.
- 2) Everybody should pass their oral histories to their right.
- 3) Everybody should read their group member's oral histories.
- 4) After they are done, they should look at *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*.
- 5) Skim the first 2 pages. (The novel is told from the point of view of 12-year-old Cassie Logan.)
- 6) Since we are starting our "memoir" and "personal narrative" unit, discuss the following questions in your group:
  - What is a memoir about?
  - Why write a memoir?
  - How are your oral histories and this novel similar?
  - Are they memoirs? Why or why not?
  - What are some similarities between your oral histories and the novel?
  - What are some differences between your oral histories and the novel?
- 7) Remember to use your "accountable talk" sentence starters

## **APPENDIX E: Box 5 (Pre-reading strategy)**

Savvy Speaker, please read this to your group:

- 1) Read the following biography of Mildred Taylor
- 2) Discuss the following questions:

A. Why did Mildred Taylor write?

B. How does this help us understanding our unit question (what is the power of words)?

Mildred Taylor was born on September 13, 1943, in Jackson, Mississippi. Like the Logan family in *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, the Taylor family had lived in Mississippi since the days of slavery. That was very long ago, before 1865! However, when Mildred was just a tiny baby, her parents decided to make a new life in the North. The Taylors moved to Toledo, Ohio. They had a large family and many friends there. The family was close and loving.

The Taylors often took the long car trip back to Mississippi. “Each trip down reminded us that the South into which we had been born . . . still remained,” Taylor remembers. “On the restrooms of gasoline stations were the signs WHITE ONLY, COLORED NOT ALLOWED. [In the past, black people were often called colored, which many people thought was insulting.] Over water fountains were the signs WHITE ONLY. In restaurant windows, in motel windows, there were always the signs WHITE ONLY, COLORED NOT ALLOWED. Every sign we saw proclaimed our second-class citizenship.” These trips helped shape Taylor’s goal to write about the proud African-American heritage she learned from her family.

Her school experiences also helped her decide to become a writer. When she was ten years old, Mildred Taylor was the only black child in her class. She was upset about the one-sided stories about black Americans in her history books. There was no pride in these stories. When she shared her own facts about black history with the class, however, everyone thought she was making things up. “I couldn’t explain things to them,” she said.

“Even the teacher seemed not to believe me. They all believed what was in the history books,” Taylor said. Since she was shy, Taylor did not say anything else. “So I turned to creating stories for myself, instead,” she recalls. In 1965, Taylor earned her college degree from the University of Toledo. From 1965 to 1967, she taught English and history to children in Africa. Then she studied at the University of Colorado’s journalism school. Taylor worked hard to educate everyone in the university about the African-American experience. All the time, she kept thinking about making her family’s stories her own. In 1975, she wrote a story her father had told her about some trees that had been cut from the family’s land in Mississippi. Taylor’s story, “Song of the Trees,” won first prize in the Council on Interracial Books for Children contest. A council is a group of people who work together on a project. This council’s job was to bring people of different races together. They knew that Taylor’s story could help black and white people understand one another. Taylor expanded the story into a short novel, also called *Song of the Trees*. The New York Times



newspaper named it an Outstanding Book of the Year in 1975. Taylor published *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* in 1976. Her career as a writer had begun.

### **APPENDIX F: Box 6 (Pre-reading strategy)**

Savvy Speaker, please read the instructions to your group:

- 1) Look at the covers and read the “Author’s Note”
- 2) Be sure to fill out your worksheet with what you see/read on any of the text features.

Text features:

- Cover (front, back)
- Text
- Reviews
- Author’s Note
- About the Author (last page)

**APPENDIX G: Student graphic organizer**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

HR Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**IWBAT predict the story of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by using pre-reading strategies and activating prior knowledge.**

Text Feature	What's happening in the text feature?	What do I know about this topic?	So, what hints is the text feature giving me about the novel?
<p><i>From teacher think out loud:</i></p> <p>Cover</p>	<p>I see a young black girl, with two shorter, black boys. It looks like there's a fire. I notice they're barefoot. They look scared. They're on a porch. It seems dark outside.</p>	<p>I know that people who are barefoot usually are poor. I know that people who hug each other like that are usually family. I know that older siblings are usually taller. I know that people are usually scared of fire. I know that people who grip each other that way are scared, too.</p>	<p>I guess the three children are brothers and sister, the girl being the eldest. They're probably poor and worried that their house is going to be set on fire.</p>
<p><i>Exemplar student response for Box 1:</i></p> <p>Rope</p>	<p>There's a rope in the box.</p>	<p>I just read this article and it looks like the Ku Klux Klan used to use rope to hang blacks for no reason.</p>	<p>I think that maybe a major part of the story will be this family meeting the KKK. I hope nobody gets lynched.</p>

<b>Text Feature</b>	<b>What's happening in the text feature?</b>	<b>What do I know about this topic?</b>	<b>So, what hints is the text feature giving me about the novel?</b>

## Context of Lesson Plan

- Courtney Wai, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade English Language Arts Teacher at IDEA College Preparatory Mission
- Community Historical Archaeology Project with Schools (CHAPS) Participant: Summer 2012 – Present
- Focus on culturally relevant pedagogy and connecting students to their communities

SWBAT **predict** the story of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by using pre-reading strategies and activating prior knowledge.

Daily Guiding Question:

How can we use what we know to understand the power of words?

## A note about this lesson...

- Students need a variety of literacy strategies to help them with comprehension, metacognition, recognizing when understanding breaks down, etc.
- Taught during the Foundational Skills mini-unit (focus on strategies) and Memoir / Personal Narrative Unit
- Place-based curriculum is a small part of the lesson, but a larger part of answering the guiding question for the unit: What is the power of words?

## Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in an Era of Testing

- Ultimate measures of student success: test scores (focuses on mastery, not growth)
- Place-based curriculum focuses on:
  - Academic growth
  - Academic and community investment
  - Community awareness
- ELA: Focuses on skills, not content
  - Content can be changed / supplemented
  - Use content (even if not the Valley) as a lens through which students view themselves or their communities

## Assessment (Exit Slip)

Predict what the story of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* will be (at least 10 sentences).

A	B	C	F
Prediction draws heavily on prior knowledge and uses pre-reading strategies. Prediction is clearly rooted in class materials and makes sense. Answer is at least 10 sentences.	Prediction draws on prior knowledge and uses pre-reading strategies. Prediction is rooted in class materials and makes sense. Answer is at least 10 sentences.	Prediction draws somewhat on prior knowledge and uses some pre-reading strategies. Prediction is somewhat rooted in class materials and makes sense for the most part. Answer is at least 7 sentences.	Prediction does not on prior knowledge or does not use pre-reading strategies. Prediction is not rooted in class materials and does not make sense. Answer is insufficient.

## Key Points

What:

- Prediction: Guessing what's going to happen based on what you know and the evidence given
- Pre-reading strategies: Strategies good readers use to predict the text
  - For example:
    - Interact with text before reading by looking at book covers
    - Look up context of the book
- Activating prior knowledge: Using what you already know to help you understand a text

## Key Points

### Why:

- The setting (location, time period) of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* is unfamiliar to most of us. When this happens, sometimes it's hard for us to comprehend, which really stops us from deeply understanding what the author is saying.
- This is when pre-reading strategies and activating prior knowledge is helpful; we can start to use what we know and what we can understand to grasp what's going on in the novel.
- These are also strategies that you can use to get ready to read any other text!

## Introduction to New Material (Model think out loud, 10 minutes)

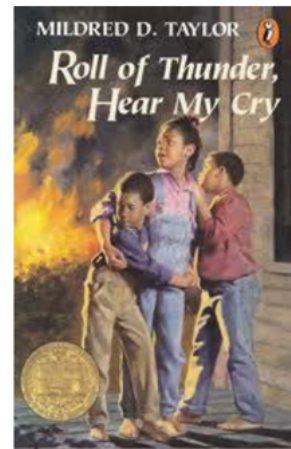
- Direct Instruction of Key Points
- Students take notes
- Teacher does a model think out loud while students fill in graphic organizer
- Pre-reading exercise

Text Feature	What's happening in the text feature?	What do I know about this?	So, what hints is the text feature giving me about the novel?
Cover	I see a young black girl, with two shorter, black boys. It looks like there's a fire. I notice they're barefoot. They look scared. They're on a porch. It seems dark outside.	I know that people who are barefoot usually are poor. I know that people who hug each other like that are usually family. I know that older siblings are usually taller. I know that people are usually scared of fire. I know that people who grip each other that way are scared, too.	I guess the three children are brothers and sister, the girl being the eldest. They're probably poor and worried that their house is going to be set on fire.

## Key Points

### How:

- "Preview" the book by looking at the book's text features
- After you look at these features, activate your prior knowledge and use your pre-reading strategies to answer the following questions:
  1. What is being said (or portrayed, in the case of a picture) in the text feature?
  2. What do you know about this topic?
  3. So, what hints are these text features giving you about the story?



## Guided Practice in groups

- During reading practice
- Students work in groups of 4
- They each have a role
  - On-task Officer: Keeps track of time, makes sure the group is following the directions correctly, passes the box nicely
  - Savvy speaker: Reads directions out loud, speaks for the team at the end
  - Writing wizard: Makes sure to take careful notes and that everybody is writing
  - Compassionate comrade: Makes sure all members are participating in group discussions and empowering each other (tracking the speaker, speaking respectfully)

## Guided Practice: “Preview Boxes”

- 3 minutes / box, then the box gets passed
- 1 box / group
- Box 1 (Setting—location)
  - Jim Crow Laws / KKK article
  - Rope
  - Confederate flag picture
  - Picture of segregation
- Box 2 (Setting—time period)
  - Map of Mississippi
  - Cotton swabs
  - Mud in Ziploc bag
  - Pictures of Mississippi from the 1930s
- Box 3 (Pre-reading guide)
  - Anticipation Guide handout (1 / student)
- Box 4 (Activating prior knowledge)
  - Personal narrative (instructions about think-pair-share oral histories)
  - 4 copies of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*
- Box 5 (Pre-reading strategy)
  - Biography of Mildred Taylor
  - Discussion questions
- Box 6 (Pre-reading strategy)
  - Previewing the novel: Look at cover, look at back cover, and read “Author’s Note”
- Box 7 (Events—racism)
  - “Textbook” modeled after the classroom text *Little Man stomps on* in Chapter 1

## Box 4: Using a personal narrative

- Goal: Students connect their personal narrative to the purpose of Mildred Taylor’s novel
- Connections include:
  - Formal versus informal language (Mainstream US English versus local slang)
  - First person point of view to explain an sidelined version of history
  - Power of the written language in conveying a story
  - Use of family stories in passing down community history
  - Importance of community in confronting racism

## Independent Practice (Exit Slip)

Predict what the story of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* will be (at least 10 sentences).

A	B	C	F
Prediction draws heavily on prior knowledge and uses pre-reading strategies. Prediction is clearly rooted in class materials and makes sense. Answer is at least 10 sentences.	Prediction draws on prior knowledge and uses pre-reading strategies. Prediction is rooted in class materials and makes sense. Answer is at least 10 sentences.	Prediction draws somewhat on prior knowledge and uses some pre-reading strategies. Prediction is somewhat rooted in class materials and makes sense for the most part. Answer is at least 7 sentences.	Prediction does not on prior knowledge or does not use pre-reading strategies. Prediction is not rooted in class materials and does not make sense. Answer is insufficient.

**Effects of the U.S.-Mexican War on the Rio Grande Valley:  
Incorporating Community-Based Into Units of Study**

Yanet Olesini

8th Grade Humanities Teacher

DeLeon Middle School (International Baccalaureate Program), McAllen, Texas

## **Evidence of Manifest Destiny & Westward Expansion In the Lower Rio Grande Valley**

### **Introduction:**

Despite the controversy surrounding the war, it initiated the growth of the communities north of the Rio Grande River that so many South Texans call home today. Industrious individuals supplied the occupying U.S. Troops with food and entertainment. As more and more American merchants came to region, they brought dreams of landownership and wealth. Unfortunately, many residents of the Rio Grande Valley are unaware of the significance of this time period to their current way of life. Too many walk past the battlefields at Palo Alto, Resaca de las Palmas and Fort Texas in Brownsville, and simply see unused land, an empty lot or a driving range. They are completely unaware of the deep, rich history that exists in the Rio Grande Valley, and how its “birth” paralleled the American move west.

### **Guiding Question:**

How does landownership equal power?

In what ways does local history affect U.S and World history?

What were the social, economic, and political changes in the Border after the U.S. - Mexican War?

### **Learning Objectives:**

Students will analyze pre/post war maps of the United States, property records, pre and post war artifacts and photographs, newspaper articles, journal entries and demographic data to evaluate how the newly acquired land affected the status of the United States, and the people of the Border region, politically, socially and economically.

### **TEKS:**

8.6C analyze the relationship between the concept of Manifest Destiny and the growth of the nation.

8.6D explain the causes and effects of the U.S. Mexican War and their impact on the United States

8.6E identify areas that were acquired to form the United States

8.10A locate places and regions of importance in the United States during the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries

8.10C analyze the effects of physical and human geographic factors on major historical and contemporary events in the United States.

8.21A identify different points of view of political parties and interest groups on important historical and contemporary issues.



## **Detailed Background:**

The history of the Rio Grande Valley can be divided into four main periods: Nuevo Santander, Mexican Period, Post War Period, and the Modern Irrigation Era. The Nuevo Santander period began in 1749, when the Spanish Crown assigned Jose de Escandon to oversee the *entradas* along the Rio Grande River. This region became known as Nuevo Santander. The *entradas* were designed to be a protective buffer zone between hostile natives and other European powers seeking to lay claim to the land. The Spanish deliberately populated with Nuevo Santander with soldiers, civilians, and clergy as a way to secure the land.

The Founding Families of Nuevo Santander were familiar with life in the Americas. They came from Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, Queretaro, and San Luis Potosi. They were recruited from among some of the most successful ranching families of New Spain. Each settler received a plot of land on which to settle and make a home. Some families received more land than others based on the number of years the person had served the crown, either in military service or as a civilian.

The next period in Rio Grande Valley History is the Mexican Period from 1821, when Mexico gained independence from Spain, to 1848, the end of the U.S. -Mexican War. This was a time period of social, economic and political changes for the people living along the lower Rio Grande (Rio Bravo) river. The growing Meztizo population blended Native and European cultures to create a truly unique Mexican culture. Anglo Americans began to settle in Texas at the invitation of the Mexican government. However, most of the American settlers remained north of the Nueces River. Eventually, the Americans desired to break free from Mexican rule and rebelled. The differences in philosophies and cultures resulted in the Texas War for Independence. In 1836, Texas won its independence from Mexico, yet the Mexican government did not recognize Texas as a sovereign nation. The boundary for the “rebel” territory was in dispute. The dispute resulted in the U.S.-Mexican War and the Mexican Cession of what is the American Southwest. Overnight, the people of the Rio Grande Valley found themselves living inside the United States, where property laws differed and a lack of English meant severe vulnerability.

After the U.S. -Mexican War there was a sudden change in the surnames of the land owners in the Rio Grande Valley. Hidalgo County property records of the time indicate a land grab by many Anglo Americans. The large Spanish ranches that had remained within the same family for hundreds of years were rapidly chipped away and replaced with Anglo farms, ranches, and housing developments. With each land transfer, power shifted away from the Founding Families of the Rio Grande Valley to eager, young Americans wishing to fulfill their personal Manifest Destiny. These new owners became the founders of communities that became the cities of the RGV. The once powerful Spanish Land Grant families found themselves having to marry into the new Anglo society, or accept a lower social status.

## **Preparation Instructions:**

You will need:

Map showing the U.S. territory before and after the U.S. -Mexican war and another map showing the land ceded by Mexico to the United States.

Copies of property records, deeds, quit claims (etc.), and a land transfer history document to assist students follow the transfer of land throughout the years. This will have to be collected and prepared by the teacher or you can use the one provided. Be sure to white-out personal information except for the names.

Print out of Historical Background of the Rio Grande Valley including printout, or link to, the Palo Alto Battlefield National Park.

2 different colors of sticky notes for Day 2 Warm Up Activity.

Listing and/or links to historical landmarks in the Rio Grande Valley.

Computer with internet access.

## **Lesson Activities:**

**Day 1:** As students enter the room, have them independently think and answer the Guiding Questions. Have students turn to their elbow partner and share their answers with each other. Using a random selection technique, select two or three pairs to share with the class and hold a brief discussion. Deliberately guide conversation to the Spanish Land Grants and the descendants of these grants while displaying a map of the land grants of South Texas.

Pass out background information (history of the Rio Grande Valley) and information from the Palo Alto Battlefield National Park. Have students create their own three column chart with the headings of Social/Political/Economic. As students read and analyze the information, have them discuss and find evidence of social, political, and economic changes.

As a summary/ wrap-up, have students answer the following question: What were the social, economic, and political changes in the Border region ushered in by the Mexican War?

**Day 2:** Divide the class into two groups. Give each student in the first group a stack of one color of sticky notes. Instruct them to write their name on each sticky note. Designate areas of the room that each student in the first group can claim as their own. This is to represent the Royal Spanish Land Grants, with the Teacher acting as the Spanish Crown and the students in the first group the land grantees. Then give the second group of students a different color sticky note stack. Instruct them to randomly “tag” anything they would like to claim as their own while the first group tries to prevent their tags to be taken off. Hold a class discussion on why did the 2<sup>nd</sup> group feel it necessary to claim as much as they could.

Have students work in small groups or in pairs. Introduce the Warranty Deeds and Land Transfer Document. Ask students to study the documents and write down their observations and discoveries. Discuss their findings and ask the guiding question: How does landownership equal power? How does this reflect the American belief of Manifest Destiny?

**Day 3:** Students will do a quick write on a local event that made national or international news and have them write about why they think the story was interesting or important to people living in another part of the country/world.

In a scavenger hunt style, instruct students to research local historical sites and create a timeline with brief descriptions for each historical site they find.

Pass out of class: Answer the guiding question: In what ways does local history affect U.S and World history?

**Day 4:** Introduce project task menu: Students will choose to do one of the following to address the guiding questions:

Create a short documentary with a written script that answers the three guiding questions  
Pretend you are working on a marketing campaign promoting local history. Your campaign can consist of a video commercial, radio commercial, brochure and magazine ad, or webpage that answers all three guiding questions.

Create 3 illustrations or take 3 artistic photographs that visually answer the unit questions.  
Include a written brief caption for each picture/illustration that also answers the guiding questions.

**Students will be given three days to a week to put their projects together.**

**Assessment:**

Completed projects will be presented before the class and evaluated using a peer/self-assessment rubric, teacher grading rubric, and a written reflection.

**Skills Targeted:**

Analyzing primary sources, POV, interpreting data, summarizing, categorizing,

**Resources:**

UTPA CHAPS and the Borders Studies Archive, Museum of South Texas History, Hidalgo County Property Records, Internet, Palo Alto Battlefield National Park, Mrs. Esperanza B. Ayala, textbook

# Effects of the U.S.- Mexican War on the Rio Grande Valley

Incorporating Community Based Instruction  
Into Units of Study

By: Yanet Olesini  
De Leon Middle School  
McAllen ISD

## Key Concepts:

- Change
- Expansion
- Power



***“National events affect  
local events”***

## TEKS Covered

- 8.6C – Analyze the relationship between the concept of Manifest Destiny and the growth of the nation
- 8.6D – Explain the causes and effect of the U.S. – Mexican War and their impact on the United States.
- 8.6E – Identify areas that were acquired to form the United States.

## TEKS Continued

- 8.10 A – Locate places and regions of importance in the United States during the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- 8.10C – Analyze the effects of physical and human geographic factors on major historical and contemporary events in the United States.
- 8.21A – Identify different points of view of political parties and interest groups on important historical and contemporary issues.

## Learning Objective: Student Learning Expectations

- Analyze the impact of Manifest Destiny on local history.
- Explain the role of Rio Grande Valley region during the U.S. – Mexican war.



## Learning Objective: Student Learning Expectations

- Identify the different points of view of local interest groups on Manifest Destiny and the U.S. – Mexican War.
- Analyze how the U.S. - Mexican War shaped regional historical and contemporary power issues.

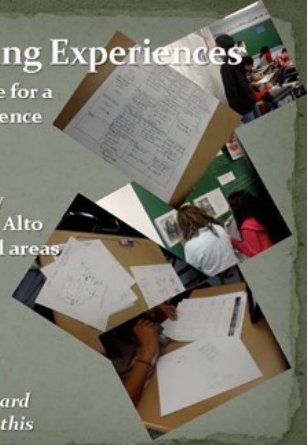
## Inquiry / Guiding Questions

- How does landownership equal power?
- In what ways does local history affect U.S. History?
- What were the social, economic, and political changes in the Border region after the Mexican American War?



## Student Learning Experiences

- Analyse the transfer of title for a given property to cite evidence of U.S. Expansion.
- Analyse the role of Zachary Taylor in the Battle of Palo Alto and identify other regional areas of importance to the time period.



*Note: Students completed the regular curriculum unit of Manifest Destiny and Westward Expansion before beginning this Unit of Study.*

## Manifest Destiny: Creating the Rio Grande Valley



➤ International boundary changed

## Manifest Destiny: Creating the Rio Grande Valley

“Training ground” for many future Presidents and Civil War leaders like Zachary Taylor, Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee



## Manifest Destiny: Creating the Rio Grande Valley

- Innovations in military technology
  - Major Samuel Ringgold's flying artillery



## Manifest Destiny: Creating the Rio Grande Valley

- Catering to U.S. Soldiers spurred the eventual growth of the Rio Grande Valley.



## Assessment: Performance Indicators

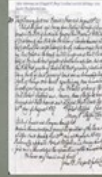
- short documentary and a written (Modification/Adaptation: Elaborate Storyboard)
- Marketing campaign promoting local history and focusing on Manifest Destiny in the Rio Grande Valley.
- Create 3 illustrations that visually answer the unit questions and write a brief caption to go with the illustration.

## Resources and Materials Needed

- Hidalgo County Property Deed Records
  - Warranty Deed Records for a single property
  - (using the deed records for property owned by Mrs. Esmeralda Ayala by permission)
  - Teacher created land transfer document
  - A copy of the oldest recorded deed record in the county.



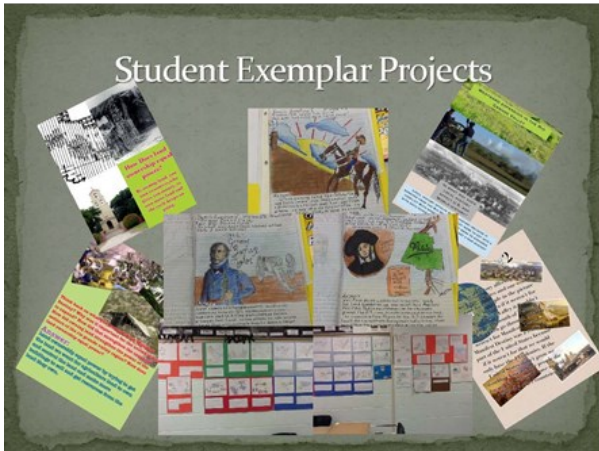
Date	Grantor	Grantee	Notes
7/9/20 05	Esperanza Benites Ayala	Emilia Benites Ayala (Mother to son)	Gift Warranty Deed
12/13/ 1967	Robert Lugo	Padra Ayala Esperanza Ayala	Warranty Deed with Vendor's Lien
4/14/1 966	Mike W. Boyce Margaret Matthews Boyce	Robert Lugo	Warranty Deed
1/1/13 13	Muriel E. Hyman	Mike W. Boyce	Warranty Deed



## Resources and Materials Needed

- UTPA CHAPS/Border Studies
  - History of the Rio Grande Valley
- Cscope Curriculum
- Internet (for research)
- *Borderlands: The Heritage of the Lower Rio Grande Through the Art of Jose Cisneros*
- Mrs. Esperanza B. Ayala (via CHAPS)
- textbook

## Student Exemplar Projects



**What's Your Story? Preserving Oral Histories  
in the Rio Grande Valley**  
Maria C. Gritz

## **Introduction**

When the author moved to the Rio Grande Valley and was charged with the task of teaching Texas History to students in Saint Joseph Catholic School in Edinburg, Texas for two years, she immediately recognized a paradox between the richness of the state’s history as a whole and the information available about the region’s history. With much left to be discovered, the residents of the Rio Grande Valley—students at Saint Joseph, their families, and other community members—were largely untapped sources of information about the region’s past. They lived on land that could contain precious artifacts, they had unheard stories that could shed light on relations between demographic groups in the region, and many had connections to the land where they were raised and to historical events that could give students a lens through which they could view Texas History. With many students struggling to comprehend the relevance of the past in an age of rapidly advancing technology and shortening attention spans, educators of history know that making the material tangible and relatable is key to unlocking a student’s interest in the subject. This lesson, entitled “What’s Your Story? Preserving Oral Histories in the Rio Grande Valley,” serves to help students make personal connections to the region and its history while instilling a sense of active participation in the creation of knowledge as students interview citizens of the Rio Grande Valley and produce an oral history that will be shared with the public for educational purposes beyond the classroom.

## **Key Concepts and TEKS Covered**

As the introduction to Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for Middle School Social Studies states, “to support the teaching of the essential knowledge and skills, the use of a variety of rich primary and secondary source material such as biographies, autobiographies, novels...and artwork is encouraged.” This multi-day lesson plan challenges students to utilize their communication skills to create their own primary source document, an oral history, while also touching upon other TEKS themes such as geography; culture; science, technology, and society; critical thinking skills; and writing skills.

- 4 (b) identify and explain the geographic factors responsible for patterns of population in places and regions; (c) explain ways in which human migration influences the character of places and regions;
- 15 (b) identify and describe common traits that define cultures, (d) analyze the experiences and evaluate the contributions of diverse groups to multicultural societies;
- 19 (a) explain the relationship among religious ideas, philosophical ideas, and cultures;
- 20 (a) give examples of scientific discoveries and technological innovations...that have transcended the boundaries of societies and have shaped the world;
- 21 (d) identify different points of view about an issue or current topic, (e) identify the elements of frame of reference that influenced participants in an event;



- 22 (c) express ideas orally based on research and experiences; (d) create written and visual material such as journal entries, reports, graphic organizers, etc.; (e) use standard grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation.

The standards above quote Grade 6 TEKS, but similar standards are also found in Grades 7 and 8 TEKS and in other states, making this lesson plan suitable for any Middle School Social Studies classroom. It is also important to note that due to the individualized nature of this lesson plan (i.e. different standards will be met depending on the content of the students' oral histories), students may master some standards more than others. The sharing of oral histories is essential to foster student understanding of each standard below, but including these standards in other lesson plans throughout the academic year to ensure mastery is also encouraged

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to...

- Compare and contrast students' and subjects' lives
- Show an increased understanding of the relationship between geography and society
- Describe technological innovations and their impact on daily life
- Improve their interviewing, writing, and presentation skills
- Conduct an interview and compose an oral history
- Reflect upon the experience of creating a primary source document

### Activities and Assessment

This is a multi-day lesson plan during which there will likely be a break between lessons due to the fact that students are assigned to interview older family members or acquaintances. The process of asking for permission, setting a date, interviewing the subject, and typing the notes could take up to two weeks, depending on various factors including the availability of the interviewee. Therefore, after Day 2 of the lesson plan teachers are encouraged to hit pause and proceed with other lesson plans before resuming Day 3 of this lesson plan.

On Day 1, the teacher will review the concepts of primary and secondary source documents, citing examples from prior lessons. Then, he/she will introduce the guest speaker, a representative from the Community Historical Project with Schools (CHAPS), in this case, Dr. Russell Skowronek. As an alternative, teachers can request that the guest speaker call in or play a recording of the guest speaker. By the end of the presentation, students should have a deepened sense of the importance of archaeology, give examples of artifacts in the world around them, and realize that they have a role to play in the creation of history.

On Day 2, the teacher will review the guest speaker’s presentation to activate prior knowledge before introducing the oral history assignment. The teacher will distribute the assignment handout and informed consent form, which gives the University of Texas – Pan American Library permission to share their interviews with the general public for educational purposes. He or she will discuss the assignment with the students and answer any questions they may have about the assignment. (Please see the assignment handout for students in Appendix I.) Then, students will read two examples of oral histories and will write one paragraph explaining what they learned about the history of the Rio Grande Valley from one of the two examples. (Please see two examples of students’ oral histories in Appendices II and III.) The teacher will set due dates for the consent form, draft oral history, and final, typed oral history. Meanwhile, the teacher may proceed to another lesson, with periodic checks that the consent forms and draft oral histories were completed.

On Day 3, the day when the final oral histories will be due, each student will present their interviews to small groups of three or four students. Students will respond to each of their peer’s oral histories by citing a fact and explaining what they learned about the Rio Grande Valley because of it (e.g., “When your grandmother said that there were separate water foundations for Mexicans and white people, I learned that segregation existed in the Rio Grande Valley in the 1960s”). The teacher will circulate and take participation and communication grades. At the end of class, students will write an Exit Ticket reflecting upon their experience with this lesson. They may respond to one or more out of three questions, depending on time: Did the interview change the way you looked at your subject? Did this experience change the way you view yourself, and if so, how? Has this lesson affected your attitude toward Social Studies, Archaeology, and History? (Please see examples of Exit Ticket responses in Student Reflections, below.) Then, the students will be assessed on the basis of their having followed the instructions for the oral history presentation and their efforts to answer the Exit Ticket questions.

### Student Reflections

Did the interview change the way you looked at your subject?

- “It made me realize that my grandparents worked hard all through their life and that hard work does pay off.”
- “When I look at my grandpa, I feel like I know him a lot better.”

Did this experience change the way you view yourself, and if so, how?

- “It made me realize I should be grateful for what my parents do for me because they didn’t have the same opportunities I had.”
- “Now I know where I get some of my personality.”
- “I don’t go outside unless I absolutely have to, but my grandma spent most of her time working

Has the oral history affected your attitude towards Social Studies/archaeology/history?

- “Now that I know more about my dad’s life, I want to know more about my mom’s.”
- “Now I want to go out and discover things about the past...and compare them to what we have today.”
- “It makes me want to go back in time and experience all of that myself.”

Has the oral history affected your attitude towards Social Studies/archaeology/history?

- “Now that I know more about my dad’s life, I want to know more about my mom’s.”
- “Now I want to go out and discover things about the past...and compare them to what we have today.”
- “It makes me want to go back in time and experience all of that myself.”

## **Appendix I: Student Handout**

What’s Your Story? Oral History Assignment

*The word “history” contains the words “story.” You have a story. Every family has a story. Maybe your relatives have told you stories of their childhoods, ancestors, and properties. Now is your chance to take the stories that have been told and write them down – in other words, make **oral** history into **written** history. In doing so, you are saving your family’s stories for generations... and letting them live forever.*

**1st Step:** Choose someone to interview, also known as a subject or interviewee. Try to think of a family member who seems to know a lot about your family history. If you are struggling, consider an older teacher or neighbor. Speak to the teacher and your parents before asking a non-family member.

**2nd Step:** Get your subject’s permission to be interviewed. Have your subject sign the release form, or interview consent form, once they agree to be interviewed. This is due on [date].

**3rd Step:** Prepare. Make a date with your subject. Set aside thirty minutes to one hour for the interview. Have your list of questions to ask ready, as well as a notepad or computer with keyboard and a writing utensil. If you want to use a tape recorder or video camera, ask for your subject’s permission before doing so.

**4th Step:** Interview. Don’t be afraid to ask your own questions, too, as long as you ask the required questions (on back). Take lots of notes! Also, let the interview exceed the time limit if you are gaining interesting material. Be patient with your subject. Ask for explanations to “yes/no” questions. Your notes will be due on [date].

**5th Step:** Type out the interview. Be sure to include the questions you asked and the approximate responses you received. Turn in your finished product in class on [date]. Use the format provided on the back when typing your interview.

outside.”

### Twelve Questions You **MUST** Ask:

1. Where and when were you born?
2. Describe your family: How many brothers and sisters did you have? What were your parents like? How did you all get along?
3. What languages were spoken in your home? Are you bi/multilingual?
4. What stories did you hear about your parents, grandparents, and other ancestors?
5. Did your ancestors immigrate? If so, to/from where, and when?
6. Describe a typical day when you were my age (school, chores, hobbies).
7. If married: How old were you when you got married? How did you meet your spouse? Did you have children?
8. What historical events had a strong influence on your life (such as civil rights, wars, technological inventions, etc.)? How did they affect your life?
9. What types of food did you eat growing up? Did you grow food at home? Who did most of the cooking?
10. Have you moved throughout your life? How has the town you now live in changed over the years?
11. Describe the history of the property you now live on. Have you ever found fossils or arrow heads on it? (If so, provide a Google Earth image of the property and mark the location.) Did your relatives get a land grant from the King of Spain or the Republic Mexico?
12. What kind of technology did you have growing up (air conditioning, running water, electricity, cars, television, etc.)?

*Feel free to add your own questions!*

*Ex.: “What stories about your life do you want to pass down?”*

### **Appendix II: First Example of Oral History**

Student: where and when were you born?

Subject: I was born in 1955 in my grandmother’s house in Abram, TX., which is near Mission, Texas.

Student: How many brothers or sisters did you have? What were your parents like? How did you all get along?

Subject: I have five sisters and two brothers, my mom was a housewife and my father worked on a farm, he worked the land for his employers, who had cattle and also grew wheat and cotton. I got along very well with my brothers and sisters it was seldom that we didn't get along. My parents were very strict and hardworking.

Student: What languages were spoken in your home? Are you bi/multilingual?

Subject: My parents spoke Spanish most of the time, but we spoke Spanish and English. Amongst ourselves we spoke English, but when our mom and dad spoke to us we always answered in Spanish.

Student: What stories did you hear about your parents, grandparents, and other ancestors?

Subject: My mom told us stories about our grandparent's, that they were from Mexico, a small town in the mountains near Monterrey, Nuevo Leon. My father told us that his parents were also from Mexico near San Luis and that they came to the United States to work, and that they would return to Reynosa, Tamaulipas Mexico where they farmed.

Student: Did your ancestors immigrate? If so, to/ from where, and when?

Subject: Yes, my mom's parents came to Mission, Texas in 1920. They would go north every year for a few months to do migrant work and return to Mission where they lived until they passed away. My father's parents came to the U.S.A. in 1910. They lived in a small town called Liberty Hill, Texas near Austin. They lived there for a while and then returned to Reynosa where they bought land and farmed until they passed away. The land is still in the family and one of my uncle's farms on it.

Student: Describe a typical day when you were my age.

Subject: By the time I was 11 years old we moved to the city, Lubbock, TX, and it wasn't the same. We couldn't ride our bikes because of traffic. It was not the same as country life for us. We had a small backyard in Lubbock and we had to walk to school which was five blocks away. We had house duties on weekends when we were home.

Student: How old were you when you got married? How did you meet your spouse? Did you have children?

Subject: I was 24 years old when I married and I met my husband at a dance. We have four children, three daughters and one son.

Student: What historical events had a strong influence on your life? (Such as civil rights, wars, technological inventions, etc.) How did they affect your life?

Subject: When I was young there was segregation and no African American children were allowed at my school. I wondered why they were not allowed in my school. Also the Vietnam War happened, and all I ever heard was more U.S. soldiers got killed. My teachers always told us that the soldiers were fighting against bad people.

Student: What types of food did you eat growing up? Did you grow food at home? Who did most of the cooking?

Subject: My parents were not wealthy and it was hard for my father to make enough money to feed ten mouths, so we mostly ate potatoes, eggs, beans and tortillas, it was seldom that we had meat. We grew our vegetables in our garden in the backyard. My mom always did the cooking.

Student: Have you moved throughout your life? How has the town you now live in changed over the years?

Subject: We did move a couple of times, we lived in Madison, Wisconsin, Casa Grande, Arizona, and then moved to McAllen, TX. McAllen has grown a lot, when I moved here we had El Centro Mall in Pharr, TX. and downtown McAllen stores were quite popular. There were no homes or residential areas past Nolana St. and nothing east of McColl St., it was a rural area.

Student: Describe the history of the property you now live on. Have you ever found a fossil or arrow heads on it? Did your relatives get a land grant from the King of Spain or the Republic of Mexico? (If so, provide a Google Earth image of the and mark the location)

Subject: When we moved here the home we moved into was already there, it was a residential area. We never found any artifacts, the whole house is surrounded by cement so we didn't have space to dig in.

Student: What kind of technology did you have growing up?

Subject: We had a window unit for air conditioning only in the living room area, running water, electricity, a car, and a television.

### **Appendix III: Second Example of Oral History**

Student: Where and when were you born?

Subject: I was born on March 3, 1947 in San Juan, TX.

Student: Describe your family: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

What were parents like? How did you all get along?

Subject: Yes, I have 2 brothers and 6 sisters. My father was very affectionate, loving, and always telling us stories. My mother was an orphan, and was very strict, but she loved us so much.

Student: What languages were spoken in your home? Are you bi/multilingual?

Subject: Spanish, I didn't learn to speak English until I went to school.

Student: What stories did you hear about your parents, grandparents, and other ancestors?

Subject: My dad told me stories about his parents, and about their families.

Student: Did your ancestors immigrate? If so, to/from where, and when?

Subject: No, they did not immigrate.

Student: Describe a typical day when you were my age.

Subject: Around 12 years old, I had to get my clothes on and walk near the canal to the bus stop

to get to school. My chores were helping my mother cook, clean, and help with the animals around my house. My hobbies were basically always feeding the animals (chickens, goats, cows).

Student: If married: How old were you when you got married? How did you meet your spouse? Did you have children?

Subject: I was 20 years old when I got married. I met him in high school. I had 4 children, 3 girls and 1 boy.

Student: What historical events had a strong influence on your life (such as civil rights, wars, technological invention, etc.)? How did they affect your life?

Subject: I experienced civil rights growing up. Because we were Mexican Americans we were not allowed to do certain things. For example, there were separate drinking fountains for Mexican Americans and Whites. I also experienced war, my brother was in the army in Vietnam.

Student: What types of food did you eat growing up? Did you grow food at home? Who did most of the cooking?

Subject: I ate rice, beans, tortillas and fideo. My mother did most of the cooking.

Student: Have you moved throughout your life? How has the town you now live in changed over the years?

Subject: There are a lot more people, tall buildings, and expressways.

Student: Describe the history of the property you now live on. Did your relatives get a land grant from the King of Spain or the Republic of Mexico?

Subject: Yes, we had a land grant from the Republic of Mexico.

Student: What kind of technology did you have growing up (air conditioning, running water, electricity, cars, television, etc.)?

Subject: Yes, I had all those things including, a phone, typewriter, and a refrigerator.

Student: Was it hard raising your kids?

Subject: Yes, it was very hard, but worth it because I now have grandchildren.



Col. José de Escandón de Helguera bronze statue on the campus of the University of Texas-Pan American.

Artist: Roberto Garcia, Jr. Photo taken by Roseann Bacha-Garza



## **From Conquistadors to the Rio Grande Valley**

Janine Bounous

10th Grade World History Teacher

Donna High School, Donna, Texas

## Lesson Plan: From Conquistadors to the Rio Grande Valley

### World History

#### Brief Introduction

As far back as the Sixteenth century, the area of the Rio Grande Valley has been explored by Spanish Conquistadors, most notably by Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca. Later on, in the mid Eighteenth century, José de Escandón would establish Nuevo Santander, which would pave the way to what the Rio Grande Valley is today. The Rio Grande Valley is rich with history that few, especially students today, are unaware of. This lesson will provide a fun and eye-opening way for students to be able to connect history of this region from centuries ago to their own family's history.

#### Guiding Questions

How does learning about the early colonization of the Rio Grande Valley connect to your own family's history?

#### Learning Objectives

WH.7A: Analyze the concepts of European expansion from 1450 to 1750.

WH.7B: Explain the impact of Columbian Exchange on the Americas and Europe.

WH.16A: Locate places and regions of historical significance directly related to major eras and turning points in world history.

#### Detailed Background (Notes for the Valley's history lesson)

##### Brief History of the Rio Grande Valley

The history of the Rio Grande Valley is one of the most important, yet sometimes, the most forgotten among its own people. Little do many know, but our history can be traced back to the sixteenth century, with the coming of the famous conquistadors. However, the actual settlement of our area can be traced back to the eighteenth century with the coming of civilians, militia, and clerical figures.

As Spain was expanding their empire, the crown would send the well-known José de Escandón to establish Nuevo Santander in 1749. Escandón would lead the first *entrada*, which was sent by the crown to explore the new and foreign region of the Rio Grande Valley. Soon after, famous cities such as Laredo, Coahuila, and San Luis Potosi, would emerge and become our region's founding cities. By 1790, the Hispanic population in Nuevo Santander would reach approximately 20,000.

The land allotment process was much more sophisticated than you might think. Land would be given out, or divided, to certain families, in *porciones* which were measured by *varas* (1 *vara*=33.3 in). The question of what families would receive the land is easily answered. Prominent wealthy families were, for the most part, grantees. However, some land was also given to a long-time servant of the crown. Usually, the head of the family would then portion out land to his/her family members, breaking up the region even more.

By 1821 Mexico would win its freedom. However, the coming of Anglo-Americans into the region would begin the quick extermination of Hispanic and Mexican land owners. While Hispanics and Mexicans were becoming more organized with their livestock (by creating brands and registering them), Soon after, in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, this occupation for both would decline. Some major reasons for decline in Mexican and Hispanic land owners/ranchers were bad weather, no access to credit, and, most importantly, land loss. Sadly, because of language barriers, loss of warranties, and even intermarriages, these peoples' land was falling to wealthy, Anglo, land owners (all information from presentation by Dr. Sonia Hernandez, The University of Texas-Pan American).

#### Preparation Instructions

Lesson will take a place over a week's time.

Teacher will need certain materials to provide for their students for the multiple projects they will complete including: Drawing paper (white, preferably but construction paper will do), colored pencils/crayons/markers, tag board paper or poster board (depending on the size for their Coat of Arms), scissors and any other materials you would like to provide for your students' Coat of Arms (i.e. glitter, yarn, paint, etc.)

It is best if teacher looks over the *Detailed Background* notes before beginning this lesson. These notes must be given to the students in any manner (I prefer the students actually writing them in their notebooks) and are essential for the success of this lesson.

#### Lesson Activities (One activity period is 90 minutes)

##### Day One (90 minutes):

Begin lesson by giving your own lesson on Spanish Colonization in South Texas.

This will become the building blocks into the Rio Grande Valley's history.

To each student, hand out one sheet of white (or construction) paper and have them draw one line horizontally and one line vertically, creating four even squares (do on BOTH sides of sheet). In each square, have students write a different date: 1550, 1750, 1850, and 1950.

Have students draw what they think they Rio Grande Valley looked like in each century given. Tell them to include people, landscapes, architecture, etc.

On the back side of the sheet of paper, have students write an explanation of why they drew what they drew, for each of the four drawings they created

End lesson with an exit card asking, "If you were a Spanish colonist, centuries ago, what three items would you have brought with you from your home country?"

##### Day Two(90 minutes):

Bell Ringer: "How do you think history of Spanish colonization ties into the Rio Grande Valley's history, and more importantly, your own family's history?"

Allow 10 minutes to answer.

Begin note-taking (as stated above, any way you provide the given notes in *Detailed Background*) of the Rio Grande Valley's history. This will probably take all period long.

When finished (if time allows), introduce the Coat of arms Project (see attached rubric and list of requirements). Explain to students that their last names go farther back than they think! Give students at least 2 days to complete (and let them take it home for homework!)

Exit ticket: “Now that you know the Valley’s history, what three items would you bring from Spain?”

Day Three (90 minutes):

Place students in groups (of 4 or 5) and assign each group a different city in the Rio Grande Valley. (Students should use the internet and find each city’s web page to find information as well as using their notes)

Have students create a brochure for their assigned city.

They must include pictures, both old and new, a brief history of the city, a list of what the city offers, etc.

#### Assessment

Students will write an opinionated essay on:

What they think of their home now that they know its history

Whether or not they believe history books should be changed to provide a longer section or chapter over our history

How they plan to change the way their own family, friends, and communities feel about the Rio Grande Valley

#### Skills that Will be Targeted

Create written, oral, and visual presentations of social studies information

Identify and support with historical evidence a point of view on a social studies issue or event

Use a decision-making process to identify a problem, gather information, list and consider options, consider advantages and disadvantages, chose and implement a solution, and evaluate the effectiveness of the solution

#### Resources

Links for creating a coat of arms:

<http://genblog.myheritage.com/2010/02/create-your-familys-coat-of-ar-1/>

<http://www.storyboardtoys.com/gallery/coat-of-arms-lesson-plan.htm>

Links for Teachers


José de Escandón <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fes01>

Cattle Brands <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/auc01>

Rio Grande Valley <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ryr01>

Printable Worksheets for textbooks <http://www.studenthandouts.com>

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## Lesson Plan: From Conquistadors to the Rio Grande Valley

Ms. Janine Bounous  
10<sup>th</sup> Grade World History

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## Guiding Question for Lesson

- How does learning about the early colonization of the Rio Grande Valley connect to your own family's history?
- How can you connect world history to the Rio Grande Valley history?

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## Learning Objectives

- WH.7.A- Analyze the concepts of European expansion from 1450 to 1750
- WH.7.B- explain the impact of Columbian Exchange on the Americas and Europe
- WH.16.A- Locate places and regions of historical significance directly related to major eras and turning points in world history

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## Preparation Instructions

- Lesson will take place over a week's time (block schedule-90 minute classes)
- Teacher will need basic arts and crafts materials such as markers, drawing paper, construction paper, etc.

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## Brief List of Activities

- Students will be provided with lesson on Spanish colonization in South Texas
- After this lesson, students will draw what they think the Valley looked like in 1550, 1750, 1850, and 1950
- Students will also create a family coat of arms after given notes on the history of the Rio Grande Valley

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## Activities cont.

- In groups, assign students a city in the Valley and have them create a brochure for their assigned city
- Students must include pictures, brief history of the city, a list of what the city offers, etc.

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Juliana Bounous displays a protest sign that one of her students made during her Civil Rights lesson.

# **How the Civil Rights Movement Affected the Rio Grande Valley**

Juliana Bounous

11th Grade U.S. History Teacher

PSJA North High School, Pharr, Texas

# Lesson Plan-How Civil Rights Movement Affected The Rio Grande Valley

## 11th Grade US History

Juliana Bounous

### I. Introduction

#### A. Civil rights are important to everyone and they were slow at reaching the Rio Grande Valley.

With the domination of Anglos running politics, the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s would change not only the South but also The Rio Grande Valley. Cesar Chavez along with Dolores Huerta would lead the United Farm Workers in California and it would ciper on down to the Valley. Tony Orendain would lead the migrant workers here in the Valley and along with that the formation of La Raza Unida Party and the movement to rise and better ourselves would begin a surge in a push for all Hispanics/Latinos/Mexican-Americans to look at our roots.

Where we came from would establish some pride in our heritage and instill a sense to unite and move ahead. This lesson will provide students with a history of the trials and tribulations their own families experienced during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and the 1960s.

### II. Guiding Questions

- A. How did the Civil Rights Movement affect how you live today?
- B. How have Civil Rights affected the Rio Grande Valley?
- C. How have Civil Rights affected your family's history?

### III. Learning Objectives

- A. US 9A—Trace the Historical development of the Civil Rights Movement in the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries, including the 13th, 14th, 15th and 19th amendments—  
Readiness Standard
- B. US.9B-- Describe the roles of political organizations that promoted civil rights including ones from African American, Chicano, American Indian, and other civil rights movements—Supporting Standard
- C. US.9C Identify the roles of significant leaders who supported various rights movements, including Martin Luther King Jr., Cesar Chavez, Rosa Parks, Hector P. Garcia, Dolores Huerta, and Betty Friedan.
- D. US. 9H-- Evaluate changes and events in the United States that have resulted from the civil rights movement, including increased participations of minorities in the political process. Readiness Standard



#### IV. Detailed Background

##### A. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENTS IN THE 19TH, 20TH and 21st CENTURIES :

- Civil Rights – These rights are legal and political rights enjoyed by the inhabitants of a country. The Constitution and Bill of Rights guarantee civil rights to citizens and Resident aliens of the United States, but certain groups of people were denied some rights. Blacks, Native Americans, and women have been denied of their civil rights.
- 19th Century – abolitionists, Civil War, Emancipation, Reconstruction, resistance to the rise of the Ku Klux Klan
- 13th Amendment – Adopted in 1865, eight months after the war ended, and the amendment forbade slavery in the United States.
- 14th Amendment – declared that all persons born in the United States (except Native Americans) were citizens, that all citizens were entitled to equal rights regardless of their race, and their rights were protected by due process of the law. (1868)
- 15th Amendment – one of the three amendments to the U.S. Constitution passed During the era of Reconstruction granted black men the right to vote. (1870)
- 19th Amendment – Gave women the right to vote (1920)
- 20th Century – W.E.B. Dubois economic efforts, birth of the NAACP, desegregation of the Armed Forces and education (*Brown v. Board of Education*), resistance to Jim Crow laws, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Montgomery bus boycott, non-violent protests, Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965
- 21st century – election of first African American President (Barack Obama), and appointment of first Hispanic woman to Supreme Court (Sonia Sotomayor)

##### D. ROLES OF POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROMOTED CIVIL RIGHTS

Political organizations helped organize movements, demonstrations, boycotts, etc. Lobby and advocate reform. Examples of political reform organizations:

- Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC),
- Congress on Racial Equality (CORE)
- Chicano- League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC),
- United Farm Workers Organization Committee (UFWOC),
- La Raza Unida (Mexican-Americans United)
- American Indian – American Indian Movement (AIM)
- Women's civil rights movements – National Organization for Women (NOW)

## E. SIGNIFICANT LEADERS WHO SUPPORTED VARIOUS RIGHTS MOVEMENTS

Martin Luther King, Jr. – Leader of the Civil Rights Movement, preached non-violent approach

Caesar Chavez – Hispanic labor leader and farm worker who worked for reforms and rights of the migrant workers.

Rosa Parks – African American civil rights activist, in Montgomery, Alabama (1955) refused to give up her seat on the city bus for a white man, lead to the Montgomery Bus Boycott

Hector P. Garcia: Mexican American physician and civil rights advocate, Dr. Garcia organized the American G.I. Forum (1948) initially to improve veteran benefits and enhance medical attention. But it soon expanded to address educational and vocational training, housing, public education, poll taxation, voter registration, hospitalization and employment.

Betty Friedan: wrote *The Feminine Mystic*, co-founded NOW (National Organization of Women)

Dolores Huerta- advocate and lobbyist for farm workers' rights

## F. FOUNDING OF NUEVO SANTANDER 1749 (Notes Dr. Sonia Hernandez—UTPA)

- José de Escandón founder of Nuevo Santander

Spanish crown sends soldiers, civilians, numbers of religious orders to take in entradas.

Entradas- composed of with 1750 soldiers

Columns 3 from the south

3 from the west

1 from the north

- Captains of Columns left records

Rivers vital to survival—major rivers—Rio Salado, Rio San Juan, Rio Alamo

- Nuevo Santander made up of 14 settlements South of the Nueces River

Some colonies were Queretaro, San Luis Potosi, Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas

Camargo major river port at that time. Falcon as well.

- Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe de Reynosa founded in 1749

- Laredo would be the first permanent settlement north of the Rio Grande in 1755.

- Rio Grande City about 1753

- By 1790 Hispanic pop north of Nuevo Santander 2510

- In Nuevo Santander about 20,000

- Land was allotted by rivers and here every owner would have access to the Rio Grande River.
- There was certain criteria for allotting land—number of years for service to king, Military service, prominent families, time in settlement, or patriarch gave land to wife or sons and daughters.
- By 1755, Nuevo Santander had 6000 colonists.

#### G. 1821 MEXICAN INDEPENDENCE

- Mexico gains independence from Spain
- Affluent Tejanos will cooperate with Mexicans
- Tejanos will cause problems for new government and soon Mexico will go to war with Tejas.
- Texas becomes independent in 1836.
- Texas will become a state in 1845, and will go to war again in 1846-1848 with Mexico.
- This time the Rio Grande River will be set as the southern boundary between the US and Mexico
- By 1850 there are 25,000 Mexicans/Mexican-Americans in Texas
- Anglos or Non Hispanics begin moving in. 2000 in region North of the Nueces, 2500 South and west of the Nueces
- Main economic activity will be Ranching (cattle, sheep, and goats)
- 1848-1860—most owners of livestock were Tejanos or Mexican immigrants 373 out of 408.
- Women also become ranchers.
- Registering cattle by recording separate brands becomes very important in keeping good relations with —”vecinos” (neighbors)

#### H. POST WAR

- Large ranches will survive economic downturns because of creditors lending them money
- Many Mexican ranchers will lose their land because of lost titles, lack of credit, lack of knowledge or language, and financial assistance.
- Anglo spectators will take advantage of these people and profit greatly from them.

## V. Preparation Instructions

- Notes for civil Rights Movement (given in lesson)
- Notes on the founding of Nuevo Santander (need additional info besides the one given; resources listed at the end of lesson)

## VI. Lesson Activities

Hook: Show students picture of people being water hosed and ask them if they know what is going on. Picture at end of lesson.

While watching power point presentations, Students will take notes on Civil Rights Leaders that had an impact on society in the 1950s and 1960s.

After students have taken notes, students will work civil rights leader biography handout. The teacher can decide how many a student will have to do.

After watching clips of Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta ask students how many of them have worked in the fields or are migrant students. Then follow up and ask them how many of them have parents who worked in the fields? Ask them to go home and ask their parents or grandparents what it was like to work in the fields and if they ever joined in any of the strikes or that took place here in the valley. Make them familiar with our leader here Tony Orendain. Ask how many are familiar with him? Follow up the next morning with questions. Could be used as Exit card.

2nd day—Begin class by asking various students if any of them learned any family history? Have them pair-share then have some students share stories with class. Tell others that their stories will get heard in a later activity.

Next begin giving notes on Nuevo Santander on the History of Rio Grande Valley. Some notes have been provided but additional references and sources have been provided for further reading.

Students will now make a picket sign to let the Anglos who were coming into the area know that they do not want them there. This will relate to yesterday's lesson but can also be tied in to lesson given today. Or a T-Chart comparison of Ideologies between Mexicans and Anglos can be done also.

## VII. Lesson Assessment

Write an essay stating how the civil rights movement affected Mexican-Americans/ Hispanics/Latinos in jobs, schools, and society. Use laws, amendments, famous cases to support your information.

## VIII. Skills that will be targeted

Create written, oral, and visual presentations of social studies information;

Identify and support with historical evidence a point of view on a social studies issue or event

Analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, Identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions;

## IX. Resources

Cesar Chavez\_ Labor Leader & Civil Right Activist.avi

Power point presentation Civil Right Leaders

Notes: Dr. Sonia Hernandez UTPA

Video: Dolores Huerta

Handouts



## Lesson Plan

### How Civil Rights Movements Affected the Rio Grande Valley

Mrs. Julie Bounous  
11<sup>th</sup> Grade US History

## Brief Introduction

- This lesson was designed to teach the students the importance of civil rights in the Rio Grande Valley and to inform the students of the various Civil Rights leaders such as Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta.

## Guiding Questions

- How did the Civil Rights Movement affect how you live today?
- How have Civil Rights affected the Rio Grande Valley?
- How have Civil Rights affected your family's history?

## Learning Objectives (Not all of them)

- US.9.B- Describe the roles of political organizations that promoted civil rights including ones from African American, Chicano, American Indian, and other civil rights movements (Supporting)
- US.9.C- Identify the roles of significant leaders who supported various rights movements, including Martin Luther King Jr., Cesar Chavez, Rosa Parks, Hector P. Garcia, Dolores Huerta, and Betty Friedan (Readiness)

## Lesson Activities

- Students will be shown pictures of various Civil Rights Movements (of all minorities) and short clips of Hispanic activists as well.
- Students will also be taught using multiple powerpoint presentations
- Project: Students will create their own picket signs reflecting their opinions on the Civil Rights Movements based in the Rio Grande Valley

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## Authors'/Participants' Bio's

### Authors

Edna C. Alfaro (Ph.D. Arizona State University) is an assistant professor in the School of Family and Consumer Sciences at Texas State University. Dr. Alfaro utilizes the ecological and academic resilience frameworks to better understand the processes by which environmental, cultural, and familial factors interact with one another and impact Latino adolescents' academic outcomes. Additionally, her work has focused on understanding how the processes associated with Latino adolescents' academic success differ based on the gender. Her long-term research plan includes further investigating how school and family resources buffer the negative effects of poverty and discrimination on academic success both at the high school and undergraduate levels.

Roseann Bacha-Garza earned a Master of Arts degree in August of 2013 with a major in History from the University of Texas-Pan American in Edinburg, Texas. Outlined in her thesis, "San Juan and its Role in the Transformation of the Rio Grande Valley" is the succession of Spanish land grantees, displaced Civil War families, Anglo entrepreneurs and Mexican Revolution refugees and their migration to San Juan at various stages of municipal development. Currently she is the project manager for UTPA's CHAPS (Community Historical Archaeology Project with Schools) Program. In March of 2014, she co-edited the book *The Native American Peoples of South Texas* as part of a grant-sponsored project for the development of traveling trunks for Rio Grande Valley K-12 educators. In February of 2010, the book *Images of America: San Juan* was published; authored by Roseann Bacha-Garza and the San Juan Economic Development Corporation. In May 2012 this book won Preservation Texas's *Heritage Education Award*. She also developed the San Juan Heritage Tourism Trail with a grant sponsored by the Texas Tropical Trails program.

Dr. Miguel Díaz-Barriga is Professor of Anthropology and Chair of the Sociology and Anthropology Department at the University of Texas-Pan American. He specializes in Latin America, Mexican and Chicano/a Culture and Border Studies.

Margaret Dorsey (Indiana University 2002 dual PhD Anthropology; Communication & Culture) is Curator of the Border Studies Archive and Associate Professor of Anthropology at UTPA. She is author of numerous publications on Mexican American folklore and culture. Her present ethnographic research, with Anthropologist Miguel Diaz-Barriga, focuses on the construction of the U.S.-Mexican border "wall" and residents' responses to that project. Dorsey and Diaz-Barriga have published a series of articles related to this research and a book length monograph under contract with University of Texas Press. Dorsey's first ethnographic project culminated in the book, *Pachangas: Borderlands Music, U.S. Politics, and Transnational Marketing*, and Indiana

University plans to publish Dorsey's second book-length project on conjunto music through their innovative EVIA program. Dorsey teaches Anthropology of Borders, Mexican American Folklore and Culture and Theory and Method. In addition, she has been an active member of the CHAPS Program and served as Co-PI on the NEH project and she is the founding Curator of the newly created Border Studies Archive located on the 3rd floor of the library.

Sonia Hernández, a native of the Rio Grande Valley, received the PhD from the University of Houston in Latin American History in 2006. She served as an Assistant and Associate Professor at the University of Texas-Pan American from the fall of 2006 through the spring of 2014. In the fall of 2014 she began an Associate Professor position in Chicana/o/Latino/a and borderlands history at Texas A&M University. She has published in Spanish and English; her most recent book, *Working Women into the Borderlands* (Texas A&M University Press, 2014) received the Sara A. Whaley Book Prize from the National Women's Studies Association and the Jim Parish Book Award for documenting regional and local history from the Webb County Heritage Foundation. Her current book project examines the transnational connections between women from south Texas, Tampico, Buenos Aires, and Barcelona that were rooted in anarcho-syndicalist ideas that at times complemented, clashed with, or reinforced ideas about women's rights during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Russell Skowronek, Ph.D. (PI) is Professor of Anthropology and of History at UTPA where he has taught classes on archaeology, anthropology, and history since 2009. During the summer of 2011 Skowronek attended the National Park Service course titled, "Current Archaeological Prospection Advances for Non-destructive Investigations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." He is the founding director of the Community Historical Archaeology Project with Schools (CHAPS) Program in which he has brought the STEM fields through locally-focused research into K-12 classrooms in four school districts. The CHAPS Program has developed the first "Interdisciplinary" field class incorporating - anthropology, archaeology, biology, geology, and history at UTPA. Prior to joining UTPA he was a tenured professor for eighteen years at Santa Clara University in California. There he created the SCU Archaeology Research Lab which engaged undergraduate students in campus-focused archaeological research as part of their regular curriculum. Skowronek has spent the past three decades studying the Spanish colonial world on both terrestrial and underwater sites across the world. A research associate of the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution he has worked with Drs. Ronald Bishop and M. James Blackman on a major study of Spanish colonial -era ceramics using Instrumental Neutron Activation Analysis. He is the author or editor of dozens of articles and reports and several books including X Marks the Spot, the Archaeology of Piracy (with Charles Ewen-2006), HMS Fowey Lost...And Found! (with George Fischer-2009), Beneath the Ivory Tower, the Archaeology of Academia (with Kenneth Lewis-2010) all with the University Press of Florida, and Situating Mission Santa Clara de Asis: 1776-1851, Documentary and Material Evidence of Life on the Alta California Frontier with the Academy of American Franciscan History (2006).

## Participants

Ruby Aguilar earned her Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of Texas at Austin and her MBA degree from the University of Texas at San Antonio. She teaches 5<sup>th</sup> grade Science to bilingual students at Rio Hondo Intermediate School in Rio Hondo, TX. She entered into the teaching profession later in life after homeschooling her own children and feels that students learn best by doing. Working with the CHAPS Program has given her a new hands-on framework where she has made Earth Science relevant to her students in the classroom.

Janine Bounous earned her Bachelor's degree in English with a minor in History from the University of Texas-Pan American. She teaches AP World History at Donna High School in Donna, TX. Her goals include helping students become better educated in the history of their community, the U.S. and the world. She hopes to help her students gain a deeper appreciation for literature and to communicate more effectively in written and oral language.

Juliana Bounous earned her Bachelor's degree in History and English from the University of Texas–Pan American. She has been a teacher at PSJA North (Pharr-San Juan-Alamo) High School for over thirty years. Currently she is teaching AP U.S. History and is the Department head of the Social Studies Department.

Maria (Lagorio) Gritz graduated from Boston College in 2009 and entered the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) at the University of Notre Dame, earning a Master of Education degree in 2011. As part of this program, she taught Social Studies for two years at St. Joseph Catholic School in Edinburg, Texas. There she and her 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students participated with the CHAPS Program in collecting oral histories and studying local history with the context of U.S. and World History. Today Maria teaches History at a high school in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and continues to implement oral history projects as a way to expose scholars to their own personal links to the past.

Jose Hernandez Jr graduated from Weslaco High in 1969 and received his Bachelor's Degree in 1977 from Pan American University which is now known as UTPA in Edinburg, TX. He has been a 7th Grade Texas History teacher for the last 6 years at Mary Hoge Middle in the Weslaco. There, he and his 7th Grade students 2012-13 participated with the CHAPS program in collecting oral histories and studying local history within the context of U.S. and World History. He has been a former Teacher of the Year nominee and has served on various committees, and as a Biligual Chair. He would like to be known as a life-long learner, an avid reader, a dabbler in songwriting, a novice Texas historian, and the husband of Isabel.

Anne Marie Ramirez Huff is a native Chicana of the Rio Grande Valley of Texas and earned her Bachelor's degree with honors in Anthropology and Latin American Studies from the University of Texas at Austin. She is a member of the Teach for America initiative and has been teaching 7<sup>th</sup> grade Texas History at the IDEA College Preparatory Academy for several years. She has participated in several civil rights and human rights projects in Texas and abroad and has participated in volunteer services that benefit women and children in the region. Her special interests include the politics of cultural identity formation and race relations.

Yanet Olesini earned her Bachelor's degree in Anthropology from the University of Texas-Pan American. She has taught Humanities, History and Social Studies at the middle school level in the McAllen Independent School District for several years. She has a passion for archaeology and anthropology and has utilized what she has learned during her training with the CHAPS Program to implement these skills and enhance her students' overall learning experience in the classroom. One of her goals is to inspire her students to become experts in the humanities and to help make history relevant to them by utilizing relatable aspects of local history and the student's individual roots.

Claudia Tijerina graduated from University of Texas Pan American in 2002 and has been a Second and Third Grade Dual Language / International Baccalaureate Teacher at Graciela Garcia Elementary School for over 10 years. She has been the grade level Chairperson for 3 years in Second Grade. There she and her Second grade students participated with the CHAPS Program in collecting oral histories and studying local history from Prehistory to the 1860s. She has received Teacher of the Year Award in the Pharr- San Juan- Alamo ISD.

Courtney Wai, a native of Hawai'i, earned her BA in Humanities: Interdisciplinary Studies in Culture from Scripps College in 2011. She entered the Teach For America Program and came to the Rio Grande Valley in 2011. Here she taught English Language Arts to 7th Graders in Mission. Courtney currently works with Teach For America.