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AGENCY OF MEXICAN/TEJANO UNION RECRUITS DURING THE UNITED STATES CIVIL WAR: AN ARCHIVAL CASE STUDY OF PRIVATE PEDRO GARCIA

A Thesis

by

ANDY NAJERA

Submitted to the Graduate College of
The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

MAY 2021

Major Subject: History

AGENCY OF MEXICAN/TEJANO UNION RECRUITS DURING THE UNITED STATES CIVIL WAR: AN ARCHIVAL CASE STUDY OF PRIVATE PEDRO GARCIA

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MAY 2021

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ABSTRACT

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During the United States Civil War, a Mexican national, Pedro Garcia, and hundreds of others like him came to Brownsville, Texas, looking for ways to strengthen their positions by joining the Union army. Eventually, the Mexican/Tejano recruits deserted in droves while the Union forces executed Pedro Garcia. The purpose of this research is to provide insight into the cultural clash of worldviews between the United States Union army and Rio Grande Borderlanders. This research will also provide awareness of the various methods the Mexican/Tejano used to create agency. This study uses a mixed methodology, such as Border theory as described by Oscar Martínez, Chela Sandoval, and Lisa Flores. This study will use various archival research methods, to analyze and evaluate primary source documents. Previous research has focused on why the Mexican/Tejano failed as soldiers in the Union army; however, this study found that the Mexican/Tejano recruits used well-established devices to secure survival and power for themselves.

DEDICATION

To my beloved wife Zoraida who sacrificial love for me and our children made it possible for me to complete this work. Thank you for your faith in me. To my dear sons Zaid Andres and Zavian Uriah who gave up their time with me so I could spend time with my studies. Also, I want to dedicate this work to my colleagues and my friends George, Diego, Violeta, and Beatriz Adriana who offered me advice and support through this arduous process. Special thanks to Dave and Karina whose friendship continually inspired me to finish. To my parents, brothers, and sisters whose encouragement sustained me. Finally, to my loving sister Monica, who stood by me with love, patience, and knowledge.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since the inception of the United States/Mexican border (1848), people on both sides have tried to use the borderlands for their benefit. Economically, the border has brought opportunities in varied forms to both nations. Ordinarily, edge societies benefit from trade, tourism, investments, and a surplus of low-cost workers. According to the Office of the United States Trade Representative in 2019, Mexico's and the United States' trade was worth over 650 billion dollars.[1] While many people cross the border into the United States legally, others bypass the legal channels of entry to take hold of the economic opportunity denied to them in their own countries. Meanwhile, to keep their businesses profitable, United States corporations are willing to harvest undocumented workers by the thousands, who now have become part of the United States landscape. These "shadow workers" move from job to job with no security or protections from U. S. corporations while they live under the threat of arrest, incarceration, and deportation. The actual number of undocumented workers in the United States is elusive to find. The Pew Research Center estimated in 2017 that there was about "4.9 million undocumented Mexicans"[2] living in the United States. This clandestine migration of Mexican workers into the United States moves steadily

1. Office of the United States. "Mexico." Office of the United States Trade Representative accessed April 25, 2020. https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/americas/mexico.

2. Jordan, Miriam. "8 Million People Are Working Illegally in the U. S. Here's Why That's Unlikely to Change." *The New York Times*, December 11, 2018. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/11/us/undocumented-immigrant-workers.html.

alongside the financial currents of the United States economy. Charles B. Keely, professor and scholar of global migration, and S. U. Tomasi, scholar and expert on migration issues, explain, "Clandestine migration in times of prosperity is viewed as meeting growth needs and less of a threat to institutions than settlement migration. It is in times of recession that it is seen as a threat."[3] Indeed, as the need for cheap labor increases, U. S. corporations reach out to our 'friends' to the south, but when the need for labor decreases, the U. S. quickly disposes of these workers. The cyclical, opportunistic relationship between Mexican workers and U. S. businesses continues to be the norm well into the twenty-first century. Oscar Martínez, a border historian, adds, "Investors on both sides, often acting on different motives and pursuing different objectives, have had opportunities to channel capital into profitable ventures in the neighboring nation."[4] Martínez's point is the flow of migrants into the United States from Mexico to work in United States industries creates new possibilities for stakeholders. Therefore, these new junctures challenge established structures on both sides of the border as demands of workers and owners mingle.

When looking at the relationship between United States corporations and Mexican labor, the United States prominently has held the upper hand in creating the rules for these labor interactions. This uneven relationship between the Mexican workers (the weaker player) and American corporations (the more influential player) has created unique types of spaces for migrants as they struggle to adapt and live-in places that are geo-culturally foreign to them. In the last half-century border scholars and historians have examined how the undocumented

3. Charles Keely and Tomasi Silvano, "The Disposable Worker: Historical and Comparative Perspectives on Clandestine Migration," The Center for Migration Studies of New York (CMS), April 30, 1976, https://cmsny.org/publications/op-the-disposable-worker/.

4. Oscar J. Martínez, Border People: Life and Society in the U. S.-Mexico Borderlands (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1994), 52.

Mexican workers create spaces for themselves along the Mexican American frontier and within individual pockets of the northern United States. These historians specifically examined the Bracero programs of World War I and II and the subsequent rise of undocumented workers flowing into the United States in the 1960s-1980s. Historians such as Manual Gonzales analyze the different tactics U. S. corporations use to exploit Mexican laborers and how these migrants maneuvered and survived under oppressive and unjust conditions while still trying to avoid the United States law enforcement agencies. Additionally, historians have shown how Mexican workers in the United States used different methods, such as labor organizations and strikes, to create agency for themselves. Border historian Lori Flores notes that one powerful "form of bracero resistance was 'skipping out' on one's work contract. The phenomenon of 'skipping' emerged not long after the Bracero Program began in 1942. Braceros skipped for various reasons, 'including dissatisfaction, homesickness, an offer of higher wages by another employer, or the desire to craft an entirely different existence in el Norte.'"[5] In other words, Braceros found agency in their freedom to move from one space to another and understood the free enterprise ideas of voluntary exchange, profit motive, and private property rights.

For the last half-century border scholars have studied the relationship between Anglo power structures and Mexican workers living along the Southern United States. Researchers have traced the arrival of U. S. firms into Mexico during the Profiriato age (1876 -1911) to the influx of migrant workers into the United States during the last century Overall, border and historical scholars have studied how Mexican citizens have struggled to create new lives in the United States under intense social, political oppression. Additionally, much research traces Mexican natives who served in the United States military since World War I to the present day,

5. Lisa A. Flores, *Grounds for Dreaming: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the California Farmworker Movement* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 78.

but little analysis has been done on how Mexican/Tejano soldiers negotiated agency during the Civil War along the United States-Mexican border. Until we understand how these men struggled to establish themselves as members of a community, we will be missing an essential component of the history of the borderlands. I will group the Hispanic community along the Rio Grande as Mexican/Tejanos. The Mexican/Tejano designation term will signify how close culturally Hispanic border residents are but still mark the political divisions between them.

Literature Review

While much study has examined Mexican workers from the 1870s into the twenty-first century, there has been little literature on understanding the Mexican/Tejanos' service in the Union army during the Civil War. United States historians during the early to mid-twentieth century ignored, for the most part, the Mexican and Tejanos' involvement in the Civil War. Historians such as Claude Elliott and Frank H. Smyrl strictly focused on the notable engagements and the significant players that occupied Texas from 1861-1865. Claude Elliott's 1947 article "Union Sentiment in Texas 1861-1865" has little to say about Mexican or Tejano involvement in the Union campaigns in Texas. Elliott observes the leaders of the Unionist movement, such as E.J. Davis, John Hancock, A. J. Hamilton, and John L. Haynes. He perceives Mexicans that served in the Confederate and Union armies as unreliable and unethical. He describes a company of Confederate Mexicans in 1861 as "wholly susceptible to bribery and corruption."[6] Elliott's perspective demonstrates the little value was placed on the Mexican/Tejano recruits' service in either the Union or Confederate cause. Frank H. Smyrl's "Texans in the Union Army, 1861-1865" echoes many of Elliott's ideas adding little to the

6. Claude Elliott, "Union Sentiment in Texas 1861-1865," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 50, no. 4 (1947): 460.

narrative of the First and Second Texas Cavalry. Smyrl remarks how the First and Second Texas Cavalry failed to acquire supplies but never explains how the lack of those supplies affected the Mexican recruits or caused their unit significant problems. Smyrl briefly discusses the problem of desertions among the Texas Union troops and blames the high number of Mexican soldiers abandoning their post for the closeness to their families and the absence of their commander Brig. General E.J. Davis.[7] Smyrl and Elliot do not consider the racist attitudes towards the Mexican/Tejano recruits or language problems that occurred between the officers and enlisted men. Elliott and Smyrl both discuss Captain Adrian J. Vidal, who deserted with over twenty Mexican soldiers, to back up their claims of the unfaithfulness of the Hispanic recruits. However, both historians failed to find the possible rationale for the Mexican/Tejanos' high desertion rates and ignored the fidelity and courage of Confederates, such as Santos Benavides. Additionally, Both Smyrl and Elliot ignore the high Desertion rates that indeed plagued both the Union and Confederate armies during the Civil War. Desertion estimates range over two hundred thousand for the Union army and over one hundred thousand for the Confederate military.[8] Overall, while historians during this period made notable observations, their perspective of history illustrates a top-down view, emphasizing those with rank and power while ignoring the ordinary people, especially those of color.

Subsequently, historical methods shifted during the late 1960s, and historians took innovative approaches to view the past. Scholars began to study minorities and the working

7. Frank H. Smyrl, "Texans in the Union Army, 1861-1865," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 65, no. 2 (1961): 245.

8. Mark Weitz, "Desertion, Cowardice and Punishment - Essential Civil War Curriculum," ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM, last modified April 2012, accessed February 28, 2020, https://www.essentialcivilwarcurriculum.com/desertion,-cowardice-and-punishment.html.

class's impact on society. Historians sifted through diaries and quantitative data to create a voice for those left out or pushed aside from the historical record. Jerry Thompson's 1976 work, *Vaqueros in Blue and Gray,* and his 1986 book, *Mexican Texans in the Union Army,* establish grounds for the Mexican enlistment and desertion. Thompson points out that Mexicans and Tejanos valued little for the Union's ideology but joined the Union army for a better way of life. Thompson writes that problems in the Second Cavalry occurred because the "men had not received the clothing they had been promised and were going around camp almost naked. Furthermore, the second regiment had not been paid."[9] Thompson goes on to discuss more problems that the Second Cavalry—composed mostly of Mexicans—faced, citing official military documents and diaries. Thus, Thompson uses a new lens to view the archival records focusing on the common soldiers; he employs empirical data such as the recruits' birthplaces and desertion dates, causes of death, and previous occupations. Thompson weaves together a narrative that reflects the struggles of the Mexican/Tejano in the Union army.

Recently, historical scholarship has moved into the realm of Borderlands by examining how different races, genders, and ethnicities have interacted along political and geographical boundaries. In his 2013 book, *River of Hope*, Oscar Valerio-Jiménez examines how the people on the edges of the United States and Mexico used the border as a catalyst for economic, social, and political advancement. Valerio-Jiménez surveys how the Rio Grande impacted Mexican/Tejanos during the Civil War and argues that Mexican/Tejano recruits joined the Union army for mainly social reasons and not economic. He insists that the Union Mexicans desired to bring down wealthy Confederates in South Texas and to end the institution of slavery.[10] Valerio-

9. Jerry Don Thompson, *Vaqueros in Blue & Gray* (Austin: Presidial Press, 1976), 90.

10. Omar Santiago Valerio-Jiménez. *River of Hope Forging Identity and Nation in the Rio Grande Borderlands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 251.

Jiménez heavily focuses on the racism Anglo troops from both the Confederates and Union expressed toward ethnic Mexicans. He does little to separate the Union and Confederate forces and Mexican/Tejano identities but focuses on the Anglo racist power structure in its different forms. Valerio-Jiménez adds another dimension to the growing understanding of the struggles that the Mexican/Tejanos faced on the borderlands during the Civil War.

While these works make up the bulk of scholarship about the Mexican experience in the Civil War, there is a significant gap in knowledge, inasmuch as the Mexican/Tejano soldier has not been thoroughly researched and well understood through the lens of Borderlands. Thus, this thesis seeks to answer the following question: how did Mexican soldiers enact agency while under contract with the Union army during the U. S. Civil War? This project will focus on a Mexican national, Pedro García, recruited to serve in the U. S. military (Union) during the Civil War on the U. S.-Mexico border. The United States army placed Private Pedro García on trial and executed him by firing squad in Brownsville, Texas. Each Mexican soldier hired by the United States army certainly had their own unique life experiences; however, by using Private Pedro García's records as a case study, I hope to bring clarity to the life on the border for Mexican migrants during the turbulent 1860s along the Rio Grande border.

This study not only illustrates the United States' ability to control the Mexican laborer through promise and punishment but also analyzes how these Mexican soldiers negotiated identity and space within the borderlands. To achieve my goals, I use archival research methods by relying on journals, letters, and official military correspondence, military law, as well as diary entries of those surrounding García's life, service, and death. The data found is contextualized and then compared to recent scholarship on Mexican migrants to determine recurring issues as well as large-scale or long-term developments that cut across temporal borders.

Methodology

Border Theory

I use a mixed methodology for this project because it is highly interdisciplinary. For one, I am curious about how the various cultures (Mexican, Tex-Mex, American) interacted and struggled with each other along a political and natural boundary; thus, Border Theory is necessary. Since Border theory addresses how people who live on the fringes of societies coexist as well as the challenges and opportunities border residents deal with, I use Oscar Martínez's *Border People* and Manuel Gonzales' *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States.* These are valuable resources to surmise the mind and actions of the Mexican migrant. I utilize Chela Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed* to glean further an understanding of oppression and injustice that the "others" face. Further, I utilize *Border as Method, or the Multiplication of Labor by* Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson. Mezzadra and Neilson's work place the Mexican soldier's experiences along the Rio Grande border in a broader historical, global context. Also, to understand how the oppressed find power under colonial regimes, I rely on Chicana feminist scholars such as Lisa A. Flores, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Adela C. Licona.

I also incorporate a social-historical view methodology that borrows from Marxist theories about class struggle while emphasizing the conflicts of the working class and race with those in economic and political power. Considering that I study how the Union army hired Mexican nationals to fight for them, a social history lens is essential in examining the experiences and agency of Mexican recruits while under Anglo control.

Labor Under Capitalism and Peonage

To understand the Northern concept of disposable labor and recruitment policies of these workers in the antebellum period, one should consider Brian P. Luskey's *Men is Cheap* and *Capitalism by Gaslight* also edited by Luskey. One of Luskey's crucial arguments is the use of questionable business practices during the antebellum period that eventually crept into Northern recruitment procedures during the Civil War. Luskey notes, "During the war, these offices served the military and domestic necessities of the Union army and northern households. Employers schemed as often as brokers did to accrue the benefits that the labor market. Labor brokers helped mobilize soldiers for battle."[11] Luskey argues that the recruitment of men was vital to the Union's war efforts, but it was also a way that mediators profited from the poor immigrants of the North. According to Luskey, dishonest recruitment methods were not a new practice in the early phase of the Civil War but were perfected during the two decades prior during the rise of capitalism and industrialization. For example, Brenden O' Malley writes in *Capitalism by Gaslight* that during the 1840s- 1850s, "Most runners appear to have been Irish or German immigrants themselves who used exaggerated promises and other modes of verbal persuasion in native tongues to convince the newcomers to engage their services."[12] O'Malley's point is that certain entities used established immigrants to entice newly arriving migrants to spend their money or hook them into individual inns or establishments. O'Malley observes that state governments made it difficult for runners to gather unsuspecting immigrants as they 'came off

11. Brian P. Luskey, *Men Is Cheap: Exposing the Frauds of Free Labor in Civil War America* (UNC Press Books, 2020), 19.

12. Brenden O'Malley, "Lickspittles and Land Sharks: The Immigrant Exploitation Business in Antebellum New York.," in *Capitalism by Gaslight: Illuminating the Economy of Nineteenth-Century America*, ed. Brian P. Luskey and Wendy A. Woloson: 108.

the boat,' so businesses established themselves on the other side of the Atlantic to exploit unsuspecting immigrants before they boarded their vessels.[13] Along the same lines Luskey notes, "Arguably, people operating within these markets had to possess greater amounts of commercial acumen because they had to know the rules and systems in both legal and illegal spheres, all the while being cognizant of and being able to elude (or collude with) the authorities."[14] Luskey and O'Malley's point is that in a capitalistic economy where the profit motive is the vital motivating force, those in power often skirted between legal and illegal means to achieve their ends. In the end, the Union participated in a type of shadow recruitment looking for a cheap labor source to fill their ranks. Luskey's work thus provides the necessary basis to understand key ideas that the Union army employed along the border.

Furthermore, Andrés Reséndez explains the role peonage played in northern Mexico. Reséndez describes how peonage system worked and the impact it had on northern Mexican communities. Reséndez writes "In the parts of the northern States which border on the United States, the peon, knowing that he has worked out his debts, flees from his master to Texas or to the other bordering States; or his sons escape to the United States and finding employment, make money and pay the father's debts."[15] Reséndez and Luskey's work provide the push-pull factors that faced many of the Mexican recruits along Rio Grande border during the United States Civil War.

13. O'Malley, "Lickspittles," 116.

14. Brian P. Luskey, "Introduction," in *Capitalism by Gaslight: Illuminating the Economy of Nineteenth-Century America,* ed. Brian P. Luskey and Wendy A. Woloson: 13.

15. Andrés Reséndez, "North American Peonage," *Journal of the Civil War Era 7,* no. 4 (December 2017): 598, doi:10.1353/cwe.2017.0084.

Third Space

This study is vital in understanding how Mexican migrant workers maneuvered along the border during the Civil War so to understand how Pedro García found agency and purpose, I consider Third Space Theory found within Chicana Feminist scholarship. Third Space is an idea explained by scholars such as Henri Lefebvre, Edward Soja, and of course Homi K. Bhabha. For Bhabha, the Third Space is where a colonizing force creates a colony that mimics or imitates the colonizer to produce a hybridized version of the colony, yet not a full copy.[16] Bhabha explains that the colonized, in essence, create a pseudo version of themselves in the colony yet not bequeathing the colony with the same power and authority as the colonizer. Bhabha explores other related ideas in Third Space termed "double vision" and "ambivalence," where the colonizer sees the colony with eyes of respect but at the same time with disdain.[17] Chicana writers such as Gloria Anzaldúa and Chela Sandoval have expanded Bhabha's ideas. Anzaldua and Sandoval focus on the transitional spaces where previously colonized citizen-subjects dwell, such as geographical and imaginary borderlands. These Chicana feminists also acknowledge that these areas of conflict offer an opportunity for colonized people to develop and transform hegemonic labels about themselves through what Flores describes as a "rhetoric of difference"[18] or what Licona had previously termed "(b)orderland."[19] These borderland rhetorics are displayed

16. Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," *October* 28 (1984): 131, https://doi.org/10.2307/778467.

17. Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man," 129-32.

18. Lisa A. Flores, "Creating Discursive Space through a Rhetoric of Difference: Chicana Feminists Craft a Homeland," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 82, no. 2 (1996): 143.

19. Adela Licona, "(B)Orderlands' Rhetorics and Representations: The Transformative Potential of Feminist Third-Space Scholarship and Zines," *NWSA Journal* 17 (July 1, 2005): 104–29, https://doi.org/10.1353/nwsa.2005.0032.

when an individual or group constructs their own spaces based on non-binary and materially lived experiences. Essentially, Flores argues that a rhetoric of difference happens in and is continued by a Third Space, which may be an actual or intangible site whereby people are entitled to "identify themselves as different from the dominant culture and thus are able to establish self- or group-autonomy because they name themselves."[20] Aligning Bhabha's and Chicana feminists' theories of Third Space creates a framework to study Pedro García and observe the colonial pressures on him while analyzing Pedro García's reaction and transformation.

Archival Research Methods

A necessary part of any historical research is locating and sifting through primary sources, usually in archival collections or depositories. Researchers gather documents, photos, and objects and then examine these artifacts with specific lenses so that they can give a sound meaning to past events. The right method of analyzing archive material depends on the historian's aim, goals, and argument. I especially lean on feminist rhetorical archival methods knowing that sole exegesis of primary texts and close readings of monographs are insufficient to give credence to my thesis. These progressive methods (feminist rhetorical archival) have allowed for a unique and more critical approach to investigate archival materials. For example, Feminist rhetorician Cheryl Glenn, in her 1995 article "Remapping Rhetorical Terrain," claims that researchers must examine not only the archival evidence but also make a note of what is not on the official record. In Glenn's view, researchers need to fill gaps and venture into the dark

20. Candace Zepeda, "Chicana Feminism," in *Decolonizing Rhetoric and Composition Studies: New Latinx Keywords for Theory and Pedagogy*, ed. Iris D. Ruiz and Raúl Sánchez (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 142.

areas of history to shed light on subjects that have been forgotten or deliberately covered.[21] Some critics may critique my use of archival methods here by claiming that there are not enough primary documents directly linking to Pedro García; however, Glenn argues that historians must "continue to explore and chart those murky regions on the edges of our maps, particularly those regions occupied by women and other disenfranchised groups." [22] Glenn's point is that researchers must not stop where past historians' investigations ended but press into the uncharted spaces. Furthermore, Glenn challenges researchers to look at the records with a different view so that further perceptions take place. According to Glenn, "we need to see what is familiar in a different way in many different ways, as well as to see beyond the familiar to the unfamiliar, to the unseen."[23] Moreover, Richard Leo Enos, a rhetoric historian, continues this idea in his article "Recovering the Lost Art of Researching the History of Rhetoric" and laments that students of late rely too much on "armchair" historians who do not move past the archive texts. He argues that researchers will do well to examine the unwritten elements that affect the texts, such as the cultures and attitudes of the time. Enos argues for a more prolific method to conduct research that moves past the historical texts and into the ethos of the times.[24]

Along the same lines, Elizabeth Birmingham, in her article "I See Dead People," persuades researchers to befriend their subjects and hear the stories they tell even if it runs

21. Cheryl Glenn, "Remapping Rhetorical Territory," in *Landmark Essays on Archival Research*, ed. Lynée Lewis Gaillet, Diana Eidson, and Don Gammill (New York and London: Routledge, 2016), 64.

22. Glenn, "Remapping," 67.

23. Glenn, "Remapping," 66.

24. Richard Enos, "Recovering the Lost Art of Researching the History of Rhetoric," in *Landmark Essays on Archival Research*, ed. Lynée Lewis Gaillet, Diana Eidson, and Don Gammill, (New York and London: Routledge, 2016), 123.

contrary to current research**.** Birmingham insists that researchers must question scholarship because historians in the past have, at times, swept aside the stories of those considered "others." In short, Birmingham insists that "the researcher's sixth sense is not the ability to see the dead but our potential to help the dead who do not know they are dead finish their stories, and we do this at the moment in which we realize that their stories are ours."[25] Adding to Birmingham, South African Historian and former Deputy Director of the South African National Archives, Verne Harris maintains that "the archive is fundamental spectral and filled with ghosts that demand our attention."[26] He argues that historians need to heed the voices of those who have been "ghosted by (past) power structures."[27] Furthermore, we must resurrect their stories so that a more authentic historical narrative can take place. Harris echoes Birmingham in saying historians need to break down established power structures, whether they be political or academic, to discover and reveal past histories that have been made silent.

In short, by utilizing feminist and revisionists archival methods, I can conduct a broader and more in-depth analysis that goes deeper than the current understanding of Mexican/Anglo dynamics during the Civil War. Ultimately these methods allow me to find Pedro García's voice through the already established historical narratives. My aim is to bring the marginalized into the center and the blurred into focus. Using a plurality of methods pinpoints where different methodological ideas such as Third Space, labor/class, and Border theories intersect and evolve.

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25. Elizabeth Birmingham, "I See Dead People," in *Landmark Essays on Archival Research*, ed. Lynée Lewis Gaillet, Diana Eidson, and Don Gammill, (New York and London: Routledge, 2016), 169.

26. UCLA Ed & IS. "Kenneth Karmiole Lecture in Archival Studies 2015: Verne Harris," accessed April 24, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LuDrOIs6So8&list=PLvaDm2xI65RheemiP7y-jsqCwdTAKw5ku&index=2&t=2098s.

27. UCLA Ed & IS, "Kenneth Karmiole."

Analysis

Studying archival resources is a lengthy and arduous process, especially when there are limited resources. I investigate the bibliographies of the few monographs that were in existence. Once I obtain the primary documents, I put the archival resources in their respective and immediate context. Since dynamics and policies during wartime can change quickly, placing the documents in their context provides the impetus for their creation. Next, observing the author and audience gives an excellent insight into the biases the writer contains as well as those communicated to. I examine not only the written word but also things possibly left out of the records since truly little documentation came from the Mexican recruits or those sympathetic to them.

Limitations

The main limitations of my study are the availability of primary sources from the Mexican soldiers' perspective. Mexican soldiers' viewpoints in their own words about their experiences are incredibly scant since most were considered illiterate, and Anglo literary sources such as diaries and official correspondence are usually tainted with colonial attitudes, thus minimizing the Mexican narrative. The lack of primary sources from the Mexican positions means that current researchers have limited information about how these people felt about the spaces they occupied. For example, knowing Pedro García's perceptions in his own words is impossible since, as far as we know, he did not keep a diary or leave a written record, so interpreting his actions, analyzing the unsaid, or evaluating information left out of records is of considerable significance when conducting research. I concede that understanding the perspectives of the Mexican recruits is limited but necessary because this work fills a gaping

hole in finding how García and others try to find agency under extreme oppression along the border during the nineteenth century.

Definitions

- AWOL - an acronym for Absent with Out Leave. Soldiers may not leave their posts without first notifying superior officers. Soldiers not found at their posts may be subject to punishment.
- Anglo- The definition of Anglos for my research are those who are white with European ancestry who live within the United Sates. Although, during the Civil War Anglos held diverse views on politics and economics, for the most part Anglo philosophies about race and the role people of color played within the American system were consistent.
- Commuter workers - Martinez describes these as people who are "permanent residents of the Mexican frontier..."[28] and dependent upon the United States for labor opportunities especially during the twentieth century.
- Desertion - Civil War Historian Mark Weitz defines desertion "as leaving the military with the intent not to return."[29] Ella Lonn provides different reasons for high desertion rates taking place. Lonn argues soldiers broke with their units for grounds ranging from lack of pay and supplies to inadequate Union leadership.[30] According to the United States Military code, the act of desertion

28. Oscar J. Martínez, *Border People: Life and Society in the U. S.-Mexico Borderlands* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1994), 81.

29. Mark Weitz, "Desertion, Cowardice, and Punishment - Essential Civil War Curriculum," Essential Civil War Curriculum, April 2012, https://www.essentialcivilwarcurriculum.com/desertion,-cowardice-and-punishment.html.

30. Ella Lonn, *Desertion During the Civil War,* (New York: The American Historical Association, 1928), 7.

is punishable by death.[31]. Historian Robert Alotta notes, "out of the 200,000 Union deserters, about 80,000 were captured, and less than 1% faced execution."[32] The total amount of men executed for desertion in the Union army was 159 in total. Many men who were found guilty of desertion were pardoned by Lincoln throughout the war. P.S. Ruckman, Jr and David Kincaid give an example of Lincoln's graciousness to deserters when letters from those who were found guilty came into his possession. They write that Lincoln pardoned sixty-two soldiers who were to be executed for desertion in a "single act".[33] Alotta notes that the definition of desertion during the Civil War was left up a unit's officers.[34]

- Enganchadores - The literal translation is "people who hook others." During the Union campaign in the Rio Grande Valley from November 1863 to June 1864, the Union used fellow Texan and Rio Grande Valley native John L Haynes to recruit along the border. Leo Pierce Jr., the US counsel in Matamoros, Mexico, helped fill the First and Second Texas Cavalry units and Tejanos such as Antonio Abad Dias and Eungino Guzman crossed in Mexico to find willing Mexicans looking for better economic stability.[35] Enganchadores promised men bonuses and supplies, which, for the most part, never came. However, the hiring of Spanish speaking Mexicans and

31. S. V. Benét, *A Treatise on Military Law and the Practice of Courts-Martial* (New York: Cornell University Library, 1864), 39.

32. Robert I. Alotta, *Civil War Justice: Union Army Executions under Lincoln* (Shippensburg: White Mane Pub. Co., 1989), 188.

33. Ruckman, P. S., and David Kincaid. "The Forgotten Side of Lincoln's Clemency Policy." University of Illinois-Chicago, Chicago, IL, 1994. https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.455.4380&rep=rep1&type=pdf.

34. Alotta, *Civil War Justice: Union Army Executions under Lincoln,* 16.

35. Jerry D. Thompson, *Mexican Texans in the Union Army* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1986), 10–15.

Tejanos later came into question because The United States Army Regulations of 1861 forbids the recruitment of any person "who is unable to speak the English language."[36]

- Interdependent borderlands - Border Scholar Oscar J. Martínez defines interdependent borderlands as two nations "symbiotically linked."[37] Furthermore, add that usually, one of the border nations is more vigorous and dominates this relationship.
- Mexican-Texan/Tejano - a person of Mexican descent, born in Texas. Some notable Mexican Texans during the Civil War were Santos Benavides and Adrian Vidal. Tejanos fought for both the Union and Confederacy during the war.
- Migrant - a person who moves to obtain work, whether in their own country or outside it.
- National Borderlanders/Newcomers – Anglos or Mexicans from the United States or interior Mexico who arrive at the southern border with little or no knowledge of the language or culture. These newcomers do not engage with the region's native inhabitants and feel discomfort surrounded by a different culture within their nation.[38]
- Third Space - a place where those who are considered "others" find agency. It is also a space where colonial powers use different means to control their colony. This term is often used in Chicana Feminism theories.[39]

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36. United States, *Revised United States Army Regulations of 1861, with an Appendix Containing the Changed and Laws Affecting Army Regulations and Articles of War to June 25, 1863* (Washington: Govt. Print. Off., 1863), 160, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001628146.

37. Martínez, *Border People*, 9.

38. Martínez, *Border People*, 120-123.

39. Adela Licona, "(B)Orderlands' Rhetorics and Representations: The Transformative Potential of Feminist Third-Space Scholarship and Zines," *NWSA Journal* 17 (July 1, 2005): 104–29.

- Transnational Borderlanders - Martínez explains these people who have strong bonds with their bordering countries. He views Transnational Borderlanders as people who struggle to conquer barriers that may conflict with their connection to the adjacent nation and seek to take advantage of opportunities that the border provides for them.[40]

40. Martínez, *Border People*, 60.

CHAPTER II

DEVELOPMENT OF THE RIO GRANDE BORDERLANDS

For most of history, geography has shaped societal patterns and provided a compelling impetus for the development of economic systems. Geographic characteristics such as climate, soil patterns, rivers, and lakes play a critical role in developing a region's way of life. As a result, people have struggled to gain authority over their surroundings to create spheres of power for themselves. In contrast, those who did not own the factors of production or who were deemed "others" needed to find spaces of empowerment for their survival. Geographer Edward Soja terms these areas Third Spaces or "lived spaces."[41] In Soja's view, Third Spaces are "other spaces in which we live, in which our individual biographies are played out, in which social relations develop and change, in which history is made."[42] In other words, Third Spaces are where social interactions take place and ideas take life. Consequently, these spaces can shrink or expand according to the liberality of those in power. So, viewing the history of the Rio Grande Valley as a perpetual frontier with its geographic elements and constant mingling of diverse cultures opens the door to examine how the physical area cultivated agency and cultural hybridity among its ever-changing inhabitants. In Frederick Jackson Turner's landmark thesis,

41. CCAchannel. "Edward Soja: Seeking Spatial Justice and the Right to the City," November 4, 2015. Video, 1:37:37. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wo14EQNfJRI&t=1026s.

42. Christian Borch, "Interview with Edward W. Soja: Thirdspace, Post metropolis, and Social Theory," *Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory* 3, no. 1 (2002): 113–120. https://doi.org/10.1080/1600910X.2002.9672816.

"The Significance of the Frontier in American History," he describes the frontier's transformative power on European colonists. Turner writes of settlers on the American boundary:

> that before long, he has gone to planting Indian corn and plowing with a sharp stick; he shouts the war cry and takes the scalp in orthodox Indian fashion. In short, at the frontier, the environment is at first too strong for the man. He must accept the conditions which it furnishes, or perish, and so he fits himself into the Indian clearings and follows the Indian trails. Little by little, he transforms the wilderness, but the outcome is not old Europe, not simply the development of Germanic germs, any more than the first phenomenon was a case of reversion to the Germanic mark. The fact is that here is a new product.[43]

Turner's point is that the frontier and its geographic peculiarities mold its inhabitants into a new product. It follows then that geography plays a fundamental role in framing people's lives and directly impacts the choices they make. Additionally, since settlements around the southern Rio Grande Valley involve interacting with the environment and encountering other inhabitants, struggles inevitably occur. These interactions usually bring forth new identities and new cultural patterns for the migrant and native occupants alike. Omar Valerio-Jiménez observes the historical Rio Grande border as a unique platform in viewing the changing social, political, and economic dynamics. Valerio-Jiménez notes, "By fashioning shifting and multiple identities, border residents followed patterns common to people situated along the international boundaries, where the twin processes of state centralization and national homogenization are disrupted."[44] Borderlands are unique spaces where there is an increase in cultural diversity due to the constant flow between the two regions. Therefore, to understand the culturally prevailing views of South

43. Fredrick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of History (1891)," in *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" and Other Essays* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 33-4.

44. Omar Santiago Valerio-Jiménez, *River of Hope Forging Identity and Nation in the Rio Grande Borderlands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 5.

Texas and northern Mexico and how these elements impacted Pvt. Pedro García, a comprehensive historical study of the area is essential.

Native Control of the Rio Grande Delta: Early History-1521

The native occupation goes back to 10,000 B.C.[45] According to Martín Salinas, the areas north and south of the Rio Grande contained various native groups, which in recent estimation number them around twenty-six distinct tribes, thirteen north of the river and thirteen south of the river.[46] The early Spanish explorers erroneously grouped native populations into one general group, thus creating a significant gap in understanding the cultural distinctions between the South Texas Indians that still plagues anthropologists and historians today. However, recent research has begun to find differences among the natives of the Rio Grande delta region, namely, language. Although these groups did share similar modes of using the environment to survive, their dress and individual beliefs differed. By the late eighteenth century, during the colonization of the Rio Grande Valley, the region's leading native groups were the Comecrudos, Como se llamen, and the Cotonames.[47] What appears most noteworthy is that the river acted as a natural barrier between Native tribes, and each tribe functioned independently. According to historian Roberto M. Salmon and Juanita E. Garza, native groups despised change and "remained

45. U. S. National Park Service. "Natives - Padre Island - National Seashore," accessed June 5, 2020. https://www.nps.gov/pais/learn/historyculture/natives.htm.

46. Martín Salinas, *Indians of the Rio Grande Delta: Their Role in the History of Southern Texas and Northeastern Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 29.

47. Salinas, *Indians of the Rio Grande Delta,* 37–41.

economically independent and dissolved into isolated camps whenever convenience dictated."[48] In other words, native groups remained culturally stagnant in a type of first space where individuals had little social or political maneuverability. Nevertheless, the socio-political boundaries became erased when Escandón and the Spanish arrived during the mid-eighteenth century. As a result, the native inhabitants of the Rio Grande delta had two options: forge new identities to survive into the nineteenth century or retreat into isolation.

The Spanish 1748-1821

In the mid-eighteenth-century José de Escandón, the Spanish colonizer, arrived on the Rio Grande. With Escandón's appearance, a new cultural dynamic entered the region. The new Spanish communities forever changed the environment of the land. Most of the new communities of Nuevo Santander settled along the southern banks of the Rio Grande to protect themselves from native attacks from the north, except for the towns of Dolores and Laredo. Even though the colony lay just north of the center of the Spanish empire, the colony's geography and its remoteness from civilization created a type of frontier lifestyle for the settlers. Moreover, a thick brush covered this "uninhabitable"[49] strip of land from the Rio Grande north to the Nueces River, and to the south of the Nuevo Santander lay an unforgiving desert, thus leaving Escandón's territory isolated. Furthermore, because of the region's harsh geography, colonists began to quickly evolve into something unique, a Spanish and native mixture.

48. Roberto Salmon and Juanita Garza, "The Coahuiltecan Legacy of South Texas" in Studies *in Brownsville History*, ed. Antonio Zavaleta, Anthony K. Knopp, and Milo. Kearney. (Brownsville: Pan American University at Brownsville, 1986), 40.

49. Christopher Miller, "From the Seno Mexicano Frontier to the Nueces Strip Borderland," in *The Civil War on the Rio Grande, 1846-1876*, ed. Roseann Bacha-Garza et al. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2019), 32, https://muse.jhu.edu/book/66860/.

Ultimately the Spanish adopted native techniques of hunting and planting for the survival of their colony. The colonies' transformation reflects Soja and Jackson Turner's ideas about the frontier when describing the environment's transformative power over its residents. Soja states that this socio-spatial dialectic occurs when "people try to shape their environment, [but] at the same time, our environment is shaping us."[50] Although the river was used as a defense to protect the colonists from indigenous attacks, it became more than that. The river shifted into an adhesive that connected the isolated communities and provided agency to the inhabitants.

Accordingly, the isolation of the Nuevo Santander led to a type of political autonomy for the colonists. Hence the new settlers did not rely on Spanish authorities for relief when dilemmas or emergencies occurred. The lack of tight government control due to the isolation of the frontier surrounding the Rio Grande communities provided a stimulus for the growth of self-government on local levels that significantly diverged from more centralized areas of the Spanish empire. Herbert Bolton, a scholar of Latin American history and the southwestern United States history, acknowledges the emergence of frontier self-rule in Texas during the mid-eighteenth century. Bolton states:

> The government of New Spain was highly centralized in theory, but the effects of the centralization were greatly lessened by the fact of distance. Through the right of petition, which was freely exercised, the local leaders in the frontier province of Texas often exerted a high degree of initiative in government, and, on the other hand, through protest and delay, they could and frequently did defeat mandates of the higher authorities.[51]

50. CCAchannel. "Edward Soja: Seeking Spatial Justice and the Right to the City," November 4, 2015. Video, 1:37:37. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wo14EQNfJRI&t=1026s.

51. Herbert Eugene Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century: Studies in Spanish Colonial History and Administration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1915), 9–10.

Bolton and his mentor Fredrick Jackson Turner explain that edge-populated regions create democratic institutions out of necessity—for their colonies' survival. Likewise, Turner writes, "As has been indicated, the frontier is productive of individualism. Complex society is precipitated by the wilderness into a primitive organization based on the family. The tendency is anti-social. It produces antipathy to control, and particularly to any direct control."[52] These self-governing institutions can be encouraged by the central authorities through deliberate or from outright neglect. Either way, colonies on edge regions tend to lean towards an independent mindset more than centralized areas.

However, the Nuevo Santander colonies' development and leadership fell under the watchful eye of Escandón and his handpicked captains. Escandón wanted to keep the centralized Spanish government at arm's length and maintain direct control over his newly established colonies. Miller suggests that Escandón's tactics helped create an air of sovereignty in Nuevo Santander and states, "As a result, from the very beginning, the region failed to develop any meaningful ties with the bureaucracy and authorities outside the province. This institutional autonomy established a pattern of independence and self-reliance that would have an impact on the character of the region for a long time to come."[53]

Furthermore, a more progressive political change took place after the Tienda De Cuervo's inspection of 1757. As a result of the inspection, Escandón removed himself under pressure from the central government, and consequently, colonists were given the right to own

52. Turner Jackson Fredrick, "The Significance of History," 53.

53. Miller, "From the Seno Mexicano Frontier to the Nueces Strip Borderland."27.

property and elect city leaders.[54] In short, the colony set a precedent for being a space of a politically independent people.

At the outset of the Nuevo Santander, agriculture and ranching were the primary subsistence methods. The northern banks or the river gave ranchers ample space for grazing large herds of livestock while large scale farming was difficult due to the dry climate. Spanish inspector Captain Tienda de Cuervo determined the colonies' economic strength would come from ranching and found little value in farms. Cuervo writes in his 1757 report, "I conclude that the advantages and the growth which this Settlement may have must be based upon the breeding of, inasmuch as it is a country as well adapted to that purpose as any in the whole Colony; but so far as crops are concerned, I am of the opinion that they promise little benefit."[55] As Ranching communities grew across the southern Rio Grande, beef and cowhides were traded for much-needed products lacking in Nuevo Santander. Accordingly, during the early nineteenth century, foreign trade became the leading economic force in the region. As a result, towns such as Refugio, which later became Matamoros, and ports to the east, such as present-day Point Isabel and Bagdad, grew into significant illegal trade destinations.

Although the Spanish crown held to the economic belief of mercantilism and only allowed foreign trade at the port city of Veracruz during this period, smugglers along the Spanish frontier nevertheless disregarded the Spanish mercantilist practices and traded freely with foreign powers. This illicit trade brought in revenue and growth to Nuevo Santander, especially the town of Matamoros. The Spanish crown did little to curb the illegal importation of goods and imitated

54. Miller, "From the Seno Mexicano Frontier to the Nueces Strip Borderland.", 27.

55. Robert Carlton Clark, "Louis Jucereau De Saint - Denis and the Re-Establishment of the Tejas Missions," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* (Texas State Historical Association, 1903), 190.

the British colony policy of salutary neglect. The Spanish government's lack of care or lack of effort to rule their frontier colonies allowed edge towns to operate around trade laws. Kearney and Knopp emphasize the importance of illegal trade to Matamoros's economic well-being saying:

> The wealth from such trade was desperately needed to allow the border towns to grow and gain strength for repulsing the wild Indians. With Matamoros and San Diego, with their ports, and Paso del Norte, with its control of the major pass over the Rocky Mountains—which were best situated then as now to prosper from international trade. Such towns saw the early establishment of illegal commerce with its attitude of "C*uando sabes no dirás, Cuando ves no juzgarás, si Quieres Vivir en Paz*" ("Your tattling will cease, and judging others decrease if you want to have peace").[56]

As a result of the lack of Spanish enforcement over trade laws, Matamoros's population increased by 1900% in its first ten years of existence.[57] In sum, Matamoros and the surrounding areas created spaces for cultural interaction and economic independence that was unlike other areas of the Spanish empire. These Rio Grande communities transformed their economic horizons by utilizing their geographic spaces and independent mindset.

During the rise of European exploration and colonization, national identity blended extensively into one's cultural identity. For example, Roman Catholic beliefs became entrenched in Spanish worldviews, and along the same lines, Calvinistic doctrines seeped into English colonies across North America. Furthermore, the Spanish carried with them European ideas about class and social rankings that became more defined and more rigid as the colonization of the Americas took place. Nevertheless, along the river, a different narrative took place. Many of the Spanish colonizers who settled the Rio Grande were not fully Spanish according to the social

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56. Milo Kearney, *Border Cuates: A History of the U. S.-Mexican Twin Cities* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1995), 26–28.

57. Kearny, *Border Cuates,* 29.

hierarchy of the time but were a mix of European, African, and Native populations. Bolton explains the blended races of settlers streaming into the Rio Grande region and writes:

> In December 1748, Escandón was able to leave Queretaro with a colony comprising more than thirty-two hundred soldiers and settlers, while others joined him on the way or met him on the frontier. The colonists, a mixture of Spaniards, half-castes, and civilized Indians, carried their household goods, and drove before them great herds of horses, cattle, burros, sheep, and goats. The caravan must have resembled those of the Oregon and California migrations of a later date and other people.[58]

Bolton alludes to an essential idea that the cultural foundation of Nuevo Santander was not created by a "pure"[59] Spanish race but a diverse population that had experienced seven generations of cultural hybridity. Starting with Hernan Cortez and his conquistadors, a racial blending began to occur in the heart of the Americas. Native women carried in their wombs a new people who eventually would be a cultural bridge between the new and old world. It follows then that the new Mexican race began to transform their societies' cultural and symbolic traditions into something new and started to interpret the world through a new hybrid lens.

For example, the veneration of the Virgin de Guadalupe united elements of native and Spanish spirituality into an object. The symbol of the Virgin and her bronze skin became a cultural icon that broke down class structures across the Spanish territories. Although the Roman Catholic Church frowned upon racial blending in general, interracial marriages continued throughout the Americas, especially on the frontier. Race in the Spanish colonial holdings was not as distinct as other European regions such as Africa, India, or Asia. Admittedly, Escandón did not share a liberal view of the Spanish caste system and withheld land grants and positions of powers from those on a lower social class rung. Armando Alonso, the author of *Tejano Legacy*,

58. Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*, 58.

59. Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*, 58.

argues that Escandón fought to keep power in the upper class. Alonzo states, "Escandón favored '*peninsulares*' instead of *criollos* and others of mixed ancestry. On another occasion, Escandón submitted to the viceroy the names of local *vecinos* 'of the lowest social class' to serve as officials for the towns and leaders of the troops, lamenting they were the only ones available to choose from."[60] Whereas Escandón and his captains held political power in the form of land ownership early on, it did not last long; many colonists demanded private property and sent word to the Spanish government.[61] Consequently, in 1767, the central government removed Escandón and gave out *porciones*, or portions, of land to the colonists.

Moreover, the colonists of mixed heritage elected the surveyors who drew up the land grants. Some of the *porciones* crossed over into the northern regions of what is modern-day South Texas, thus legally uniting both halves of the Rio Grande. In short, the colonists along the Rio Grande saw themselves as individuals deserving of rights and property and established themselves as a class of people who did not identify on ethnicity but landowning and financial power.

During the second half of the 18th century, Nuevo Santander shifted into a vibrant space where political, economic, and social empowerment spread among its members. At the onset, the Rio Grande borderlands became a region lacking established wealth accumulation and sharp race divisions among the landholders; thus, the frontier provided the colonists power to break out of fixed societal norms and created a progressive subculture under New Spain. Nevertheless, the land of Nuevo Santander was not a Tabula Rasa, where cultural expansion occurred only within the colonists, but the Natives were undoubtedly changed as well, admittedly for the worse.

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60. Armando Alonzo, *Tejano Legacy: Rancheros and Settlers in South Texas, 1734-1900* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998), 48–50.

61. Alonzo, *Tejano Legacy*, 49.

Sandro Mezzadra, author of *The Border as a Method*, writes that borders "are sites in which the turbulence and conflictual intensity of global capitalist dynamics are particularly apparent."[62] Mezzadra is undoubtedly right, and the Spanish conquest illustrates how the Spanish exploited the native population as a form of cheap labor and forcibly colonized the region. Although an actual political border did not exist, the region functioned as a type of border where natives and the Spanish lives intersected on the frontier land only separated by a river. For hundreds of years, the native population had already established themselves over the region. However, when the Spanish inundated the country with their culture, the natives found themselves in a precarious situation because they were not able to halt the Spanish colonization.

Ultimately the Spanish forcibly spread their language, customs, and Roman Catholic religion to the native inhabitants. A chief goal of the Spanish conquest of the Americas was the conversion and subjugation of the native populations, and Escandón's colonization efforts were no different, albeit not to the extent of Cortez and the first Conquistadors in 1517. Naturally, with the arrival of Escandón, dynamics along the river changed. Spanish settlements such as Camargo, San Fernando, Refugio, and Reynosa, built south of the river, recruited natives from different tribes and supplied them with a Christian upbringing and a stable food supply. Besides viewing the Natives as damned souls who needed saving, the Spanish also saw the Natives as a cheap workforce.

The Spanish used different techniques to control their Indigenous workers, including threats of violence with "firearms, restraining them with leather leashes, and depriving them of clothing or withholding pay."[63] As a result, the natives were systematically removed from their

62. Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson, *The Border as Method, or the Multiplication of Labor* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 16.

63. Valerio-Jiménez, *River of Hope*, 37.

hunting and gathering lands to make way for the ranchlands of Nuevo Santander. The natives had two options: to be acclimatized in the Spanish empire as laborers and spouses or fall back into the frontier and await extinction. Many chose the former. Consequently, a binary dynamic took shape, but it shifted into a landholder/peon relationship. This relationship would continue for years until the Mexican Revolution of the early 20th century.

The conquest of the Indigenous population through civilization systems was a critical tool in the colonization of the Americas. Bringing Indigenous populations under the Spanish gaze became more prevalent during the 18th-century, especially in the Tejas region, where natives' obstinacy thrived. Franciscan missionaries settled along the Rio Grande and throughout Texas to inject Spanish culture into the natives. As a result, pockets of native tribes slowly converted to Christianity, and their assimilation allowed for their survival and integration into the Nuevo Santander society. The natives' "otherness" played a small role in the societal dynamics than other Western colonial frontiers, mainly because of the cultural and racial mixture that already took place between the Spanish and natives. Since hybridity flourished along the river and the categorizing of race was crucial in the Spanish cultural system, the Spanish powers created a title for every type of racial amalgamation possible. For example, George Van Otten, a human geography professor at Penn State University, states:

> People who were Spanish and Indian were called Mestizo, a child born of a Mestizo man with a Spanish woman was called a Castizo, and a child born to a Castizo woman and a Spaniard was considered a Spaniard. A union between a Spanish woman and a Negro would beget a Mulatto, while the children of a Spanish father and a Mulatto woman would be called Moriscos. If a Spaniard fathered a child with a Morisco, the child would be called an Albino, and the children of a Spaniard and an Albino would be called Torna Atras. This cast (casta) system was ambitious and expansive in that it created a name for almost every possible racial combination.[64]

64. George Van Otten and John Dutton, "New Spain in the Northern Frontier | GEOG 571: Cultural Intelligence," Intelligence Analysis, Cultural Geography, and Homeland Security, 2020, https://www.e-education.psu.edu/geog571/node/284.

While this intricate caste system played a crucial role in Mexico's centralized areas, on the frontiers, the racial class system had little importance, since most settlers were predominantly not pure Spanish. Van Otten argues, "Many of the people who moved into Texas from New Spain were already mixed-blood. Moreover, Blacks from New Spain and Louisiana came to Texas for a better life. Thus, the Spanish caste system broke down in Texas; wealth eventually trumped racial exclusivity relative to one's social mobility."[65] In other words, the people of Tejas, including the southern Tejas region, paid little attention to race in setting up cultural norms for their communities. While race may not have influenced prejudices in Nuevo Santander, ownership of land, labor, and capital—or the lack thereof—became the basis for authority, control, and discrimination. Naturally, the natives held a lower socio-economic and political space; however, there were several ways to change their positions and find inclusivity in the new Spanish colony.

The most significant way that natives integrated into the colony was through marriage. Because of the lack of women on the frontier, Spanish men found wives among native populations. These marriages helped to legitimize natives with a kind of dignity and allowed them to occupy a more prominent place on the socio-economic ladder. For the most part, native women married out of force, not out of love, restricting their already restrained lives. Nevertheless, these mixed marriages on the Spanish frontier brought forth ever-changing identities among the colonists. Each succeeding generation reinterpreted the previous norms of their Spanish culture and Native heritage, neglecting some and reinforcing others.

Bhabha notes that even today, the reinterpretation of ideas of culture and art along the Mexican/U. S. border are continuously under intense cultural examination by its inhabitants.

65. Van Otten and Dutton, "New Spain in the Northern Frontier."

Bhabha writes, "The borderline work of culture demands an encounter with 'newness' that is not part of the continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. Such art does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent 'in-between' space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present. The 'past-present' becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia, of living."[66] This act of constant cultural renewal along the Rio Grande is a fundamental idea that provides elements of a Third Space setting where one cultural system does not have a complete power to dominate others, and its residents have access, albeit sometimes limited "to live and move and have [their] being" between the different shades of society.

Strictly viewing the Third Space agency in Nuevo Santander, marriage was an advantageous institution to the native, but for those who did not have the ability or opportunity to marry the only alternative to find a place in colonial society was in the form of cheap, unskilled labor. South Texas historian and author Beatriz Eugenia de la Garza observes that the Rio Grande frontier allowed people of mixed races to create agency for themselves and rise above racial barriers. In her book *From the Republic of the Rio Grande, A Personal History of the Place and the People*, de la Garza maintains, "That a child born not only of poor parents but also as a member of a casta, as the people of mixed race were known, could rise during his lifetime to both wealth and military honor is an example of the egalitarian spirit that could be found in the Villas del Norte and evidence of social mobility in what was supposed to be a stratified society."[67] Those natives who did not marry into Spanish homes worked as household servants,

66. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2012), 43.

67. Beatriz de la Garza, *From the Republic of the Rio Grande: A Personal History of the Place and the People* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013), 38–39.

but most native men "labored as shepherds, cowboys, cartman."[68] Others worked in a type of indentured servitude to "pay off their debts."[69] According to Valerio-Jiménez, because of labor shortages in settlements along the river, the natives gained the right to choose better working conditions by "switching employers and negotiating contracts."[70]

Another way native tribe gained acceptance was fighting alongside the Spanish against other native groups such as the Apache and Comanche.[71] Natives siding with their colonizers in warfare helped the colonized Indigenous find a position in the Spanish colony's society. Native warfare against the Spanish enemies helped bring a masculinity to the natives absent in the Spanish perceptions. Native men continually had to prove their value and loyalty to the Spanish, and combat allowed natives to showcase ideas of what was considered masculine such as bravery, physical strength, skill with weapons, and commitment to the Spanish cause. Karl Jacoby, author of *Shadows at Dawn,* writes, "A familiar strategy from past Spanish conquests: enlisting one Indigenous group to fight the other. In the aftermath of the 1695 Pima Revolt, the Spanish insisted these Indians attack the Apache to demonstrate their loyalty to the Crown. As Kino's frequent companion Lieutenant Juan Mateo Manje put it, "if they [the Pima] were loyal friends of the Spaniards, they would . . . make a campaign against the avowed murderers throughout the province."[72]

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68. Valerio-Jiménez, *River of Hope*, 28.

69. Valerio-Jiménez, *River of Hope*, 35.

70. Valerio-Jiménez, *River of Hope*, 37.

71. Valerio-Jiménez, *River of Hope*, 34.

72. Karl Jacoby, *Shadow at Dawn: An Apache Massacre and the Violence of History* (New York: Penguin Group, 2008), 71.

Furthermore, *In Apache Adaptation to Hispanic Rule* by Matthew Babcock, he details how the Spanish rulers saw natives as reliable allies in their war against their enemies. Babcock writes, "Spanish officials praised their agility, physical stamina, and knowledge of Apache Territory and that their assistance was the "backbone"[73] of the Spanish victory over the Apache in New Mexico in 1786-1787. Hence native groups that allied with the Spanish used warfare as an element to create spaces of respect and dignity in ways that European colonizers understood, much in the same way women imitated European dress and values to fit in. By contrast, some native tribes had been at war with different Apache tribes before the Spanish colonization; now warfare under Spanish rule brought a more complex significance than before. Natives were not only fighting for land and property but dignity, respect, and acceptance in their Spanish colonizer's eyes. Foucault's assertion that 'where there is power, there will be resistance' is undoubtedly correct.[74] Therefore, some native servants "challenged their employers"[75] by stealing household items and selling them to traveling merchants or by refusing to work or fleeing. The natives' ability to steal and flee from their Spanish settlers is evidence of their ability to circumvent perceived or actual oppression. These different modes of resistance show that natives were concerned about justice, values, and power.

Although the natives had little agency in their dealings with the Spanish, they did find ways to establish a Third Space within the colonizer's dominion and create new identities for themselves. It is interesting to note that although natives lacked political power, they found ways to increase their social status in marriage and use labor to construct places of value. The natives'

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73. Matthew Babcock, *Apache Adaptation to Hispanic Rule* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), 112.

74. Mezzadra and Neilson, *Border as Method*, 12.

75. Valerio-Jiménez, *River of Hope*, 37.

freedom to move within the colony and seek better opportunities makes the Rio Grande region a unique condition from other colonial regions. In comparison to colonial India and Africa during the 19th and 20th centuries, native populations had little control in their dealings with colonial dominance because of the deep racial and cultural divides. European colonies in Africa and India enforced and emphasized a strict adherence to racial divisions while at the same time their beliefs into their colonies. However, since Spanish colonizers integrated with native populations for hundreds of years, the cultural/ racial divide was not as intense, which allowed a type of restricted freedom among the non-pure Spanish population. The ambivalence that Bhabha and French philosopher and author Frantz Fanon discuss between the colonized and the colonizer are not at play as overtly in the Spanish Americas and even less in the Spanish frontier spaces because of the consistent dilution of Spanish customs and the Spanish racial makeup with natives and their traditions. Still, even though race and skin color did not cause sharp distinctions, other devices caused social ruptures in border societies such as landholdings and wealth. That is not to say that racial caste systems did not play a role in social standings but determining what race or caste of a person was complicated by the nineteenth century in Nuevo Santander. Omar Valerio-Jiménez describes this problem by speaking of four children from the same parents who were baptized in five years by two different priests. The first child was baptized as an Español, the next child as a mestizo, the third child as an Español, and finally the last child as a mulatto.[76] To be sure, those who claimed to be pure Spanish usually had a higher degree of status than a mestizo or mulatto, but as the different castes mingled over time, determining race became a difficult task to ascertain and was not as crucial as wealth accumulation.

76. Valerio-Jiménez, *River of Hope*, 58.

Studying native behavior towards the Spanish provides an understanding of how one culture interacts when approached by another dominating civilization. The Spanish colonizing efforts laid the foundations of ideas about race and social standings and set precedents about economic fixtures such as ranching, trading, and farming. Nevertheless, we cannot discount the geography nor the natives' traditions and their beliefs about the Spanish. The mixing, melding, and rejections of pieces of colonist/natives' worldviews laid the cornerstone for forming new cultural formations.

Mexico 1810-1848

A political rupture occurred in 1810 within the Spanish colony of Mexico. A Roman Catholic creole priest, Father Miguel Hidalgo rallied tens of thousands of peons to revolt against the Spanish establishment of *peninsulares* and creoles. The crux of Hidalgo's revolt was economic freedom for the Indigenous and mestizo castes. Mexican War of Independence lasted over a decade, and over the next two decades, political instability followed. Much of central Mexico felt the turbulence of the radical political and economic changes of the early 19th century. However, some historians like Milo Kearny acknowledge that there was a lack of revolutionary fervor among most of the population in the Rio Grande's settlements. Kearny states that the geographic isolation of the region's inhabitants was a factor, but more importantly, the towns along the border needed Spanish protection from the Apache and Comanche tribes of the north. Kearny writes, "The reason for Laredo's loyalty seems to have been its dependence, exposed as it was on the Indian frontier," and further explains that trading cities crushed "dissident elements, the three towns already profiting from illegal trade under the Spanish Crown (Matamoros, Paso del Norte, and San Diego) held loyal, rather than rock the boat of contraband

wares."[77] The frontier cities and their leadership understandably cared more about their own economic and physical interest than Father Hidalgo's revolution. The citizens' lack of effort along the border against the Spanish speaks volumes on how centralized agitations did little to affect the frontier region. Spain eventually rewarded Matamoros for their lack of support for the revolution, recognizing it as an official port city, leading Matamoros to its inevitable growth and an influx of transient and fixed populations into the region.[78] In 1821, the Spanish hold over Mexico was broken, and the new nation of Mexico formed. The next decades saw the Matamoros sector grow exponentially under the new Mexican republic. Kearny writes:

> Matamoros grew from 2,320 residents in 1820 to 7,000 by 1829 to 16,372 in 1837. In 1824 the United States established its consular post in the town. Foreigners soon dominated such lines of work as medical practice, silversmithing, jewelry trade, carriage making, millinery, carpentry, and mechanics. Besides Anglo Americans (mainly Yankees) and Franco Louisianans, there were Englishmen, Irishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, Castilians.[79]

The introduction of new people from different parts of the world into Rio Grande settlements eventually led to the creation of new types of cultural hybridity. Nevertheless, political turmoil once again threatened the stability of the Mexican government. In 1835 Anglo settlers in the Texas region revolted against the rise of a more active central government and seceded to form a new nation, the Republic of Texas. Likewise, most of the fighting between Mexico and the citizens of Tejas was well to the north of the Rio Grande just as most of the fighting was south of it during the Mexican battle for independence decades earlier. Similarly, the Texas Revolution affected the Rio Grande frontier on a small scale.

77. Kearney, *Border Cuates*, 32.

78. Kearney, *Border Cuates*, 32.

79. Kearney, *Border Cuates*, 39.

By the late 1830s, the southern side of the river had a robust trading economy. William Neale, an English born resident, and Adolphus Galevecke offers insight into Rio Grande's life during the 1830s. They commented that almost all settlements of lower Texas were on the Matamoros side. Neale states:

> At the time (1838), there was not a habitation of any kind on the present site of Brownsville, and when Gen. Taylor occupied this point in 1846, there were not more than a dozen jacales scattered about this vicinity, among the fields of corn and cotton. Wild horses and cattle roamed over the whole country, and Indians were as thick as blackbirds and quite as saucy.[80]

Adolphus Galevecke came to the Rio Grande Valley in 1836. He points out, "Everything on the border was practically under Mexican rule, but it was hard to say who was the ruler for any length of time, as there was a revolution about every two years, and generally a change of government in consequence."[81] Both Galevecke and Neale support the idea that even after eighty years of settlement, the frontier lifestyle with a self-governing slant was the rule along the southern Rio Grande. However, an exception to this was the burgeoning city of Matamoros.

Nevertheless, when the Mexican government drifted towards a more centrist regime from a federal form of government, political agents along the Rio Grande decided to devise a new nation nestled along the river. The Republic of the Rio Grande lasted about ten months before Mexico quickly reabsorbed it. The authors of the Republic had dreams that the most northern states of Mexico would unite and that their capital would sit at Laredo. De la Garza insists that the towns along the Rio Grande were afraid of losing their general freedom, primarily their economic sovereignty. She writes, "The inhabitants of the old Escandón settlements, the Villas del Norte, were among those who felt aggrieved at the loss of autonomy that the repeal of

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80. W. H Chatfield, *The Twin Cities of the Border, and the Country of the Lower Rio Grande: Brownsville, Texas [and] Matamoros, Mexico* (New Orleans: E.P. Brandao, 1893), 12.

81. W. H Chatfield, *The Twin Cities of the Border*, 23.

the federal constitution represented. They had suffered chronically from the neglectful and overbearing attitude of the central government, which, while leaving them to defend themselves from the marauding Comanche, heaped insult on top of injury by demanding that the norteños support the government troops."[82] However, it is important to note that the Rio Grande Valley, especially Matamoros and Laredo, grew into thriving cities because of minimal government involvement. For example, from 1826 to 1848, the city of Matamoros, previously called Refugio, had grown into a nuclear settlement south of the Rio Grande, while north of the river, settlement patterns were sporadic with a sparse population density. Admittedly, the revolution failed to garner support and failed since much of the population felt that the region was independent enough, and there was no need to break- away from Mexico.

Latin American and border historian Juan Mora-Torres discuss the idea of "*Patria Chica*" (local homeland) when describing the villages along the Rio Grande. Mora-Torres argues that Spanish settlements beside the Rio Grande grew into self-governing bodies with little dependence upon the central government of Spain. This attitude continued with the birth of Mexico and with the formation of the border under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The uniqueness of this arrangement led to the border region forming a lack of nationalist tendencies among the residents. Mora-Torres records, "Neither the Mexican nor the US government had the capacity to protect its boundary. Given the stateless Hobbesian scenario, it was the borderland residents—Indians, fronterizos, and Anglo Americans—rather than the national states who set

82. Beatriz de la Garza, *From the Republic of the Rio Grande: A Personal History of the Place and the People* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013), 11.

the pace in shaping the economic, social, and political character of the US-Mexican borderlands during the first three decades after 1848."[83]

The Rio Grande Valley became a sort of everyman's land situated between the ever-expanding United States and the erratic Mexican Republic. Nonetheless, the US Anglo social concepts of labor and race stayed far north, so too the new government of the Texas Republic, and along the same lines, the political instability of the Mexican state stayed well south. In short, the Rio Grande region provided avenues for economic and social growth for its residents with a robust cultural amalgamation. Economics drove the region, and political issues on the national level were ignored or found little relevance in the general population's spirit. Oscar J. Martinez's *Border People* argues that people living on a border are lethargic when it comes to the political turmoil surrounding them. Martinez states that residents along the border desire to remain neutral or simply to be left alone."[84] Martinez is correct up to a point. There is a fact that cannot be ignored as was the case in the Civil Wars (the United States and Mexican): borderlanders will chose a side that is most beneficial to their immediate needs, always knowing they can switch sides when the opportunity arises.

The United States 1848-1863

The Rio Grande Valley's political isolation soon vanished in the spring of 1846, with the arrival of the United States army on a mission to protect their newly acquired Texas territory and fulfill the political idea of Manifest Destiny. Mexico already lost most of the Texas region to

83. Juan Mora-Torres, *The Making of the Mexican Border: The State, Capitalism, and Society in Nuevo León, 1848-1910* (University of Texas Press, 2010), 23.

84. Oscar J. Martínez, *Border People: Life and Society in the U. S.-Mexico Borderlands* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1994), 13.

Anglo settlers a decade before and was not about to lose the Rio Grande frontier to their aggressive neighbor to the north. General Zachery Taylor and the US army marched down to the river and established Fort Texas across the bustling city of Matamoros. On May 8th and 9th Taylor won two vital victories over General José Mariano Arista's much larger Mexican force. The Mexican army retreated south of the Rio Grande into present-day Mexico. The United States army eventually seized the capital of Mexico, and in 1848 the creation of an official border along the Rio Grande appeared. A political boundary formed where a geographic one had always been. The boundary line became the river, but the frontier continued to exist even though it broke into two halves. Eventually, Anglo newcomers arrived to settle in the recently acquired land along the Rio Grande Valley, and a new era of colonization occurred on the South Texas frontier.

The coming of the North American Anglo into the region brought a new political, economic, and social identity with them. The United States in the 1850s was a nation on the brink of dividing over issues of slavery, race, and state sovereignty. Events such as the Bleeding Kansas Conflict in 1855 and the 1857 landmark Supreme Court case *Dred Scott v. Sanford* further strained the United States. Even though the Dred Scott case dealt with slavery, freedom, and private property and had nothing to do with the Mexican American, the case further strengthened Anglo beliefs of white superiority and non-white inferiority, indirectly weakening any minority or non-white population. Additionally, Western ideas of the color of a person's skin and genetic features became essential in deciding social and political standing. That is, the wrong features or color nullified any person from holding authority in Anglo settings. Hence, the Mexican appearance brought nothing but contempt in the Anglo mind. Arnoldo De León, a professor, and author of the book *They Called Them Greasers*, explains the basis for racism against Mexicans and insists that one of the principal reasons for Anglo prejudice was simply

skin color. Anglos perceived darker skin color as an unclean person. According to De Léon, "To whites, dark colors connoted filth, and therefore Mexicans were dirty, putrid people, existing in squalor. Thus 'most shocking state of filth.'"[85] Melinda Rankin, a Protestant missionary who traveled to the small but growing city of Brownsville in 1852, commented when seeing her first Mexican, "The many others have expressed that the sight of a Mexican was enough to disgust one with the whole nation."[86] Along the same lines, Lieutenant McIntyre of the Union army states that the Mexican "is a mixture of three or four distinct races"[87] and then declares that the Mexicans display the worst of each race.

Furthermore, it seems much of Anglo-America held deep contempt for Mexicans and thought of them as politically backward and socially barbaric. Events such as the battle of the Alamo and the massacre at Goliad helped create and reinforce stereotypes of Mexicans as a brutal race of people. Additionally, with the United States' complete victory over Mexico in the Mexican American War, the Mexican identity in the Anglo mind further crumbled to that of weak and lazy people not fit to rule over themselves. The hatred for the Mexican was so vast that Melinda Rankin had trouble securing resources for her missionary journey and evangelism in South Texas. Overall, Anglos found scarcely any masculinity in Hispanics and saw them as cowards.

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85. Arnoldo De León, *They Called Them Greasers: Anglo Attitudes toward Mexicans in Texas, 1821–1900* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), 17.

86. Melinda Rankin, *Twenty Years Among the Mexicans: A Narrative of Missionary Labor* (Cincinnati: Chase & Hall, 1875), 36.

87. Benjamin Franklin McIntyre, *Federals on the Frontier: The Diary of Benjamin F. McIntyre, 1862-1864* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1963), 254.

Admittedly, most of these stereotypes were aimed at Mexican adult males while females held a more favorable view.[88] Finally, many Anglos used a person's ability to speak English as loyalty to the United States. Omar S. Valerio-Jiménez notes that a U. S. military general presumed that since many Tejanos used the Spanish language that they were more loyal to Mexico than the nation they lived in.[89] It follows then that the residents along the Rio Grande faced intense racism from Anglo-Americans and their frontier communities. The isolated frontier was challenged by a hostile enterprising force that saw the region as a space of profit and national expansion.

In Brownsville, capitalistic industrialists and entrepreneurs like Charles Stillman, Mifflin Kennedy, Richard King, and others like them came to find fortunes along both sides of the river. Stillman, looking to be closer to his Mexican business interests and exploit the new United States frontier, established Brownsville in 1848. Moreover, with Stillman's arrival, a new cultural component made its way into the southern Texas frontier. With his business-savvy mind, Stillman appropriated Mexican resources such as silver mines south of the river while at the same time creating a trading empire north of the Rio Grande. Kennedy, a Quaker from Pennsylvania, married a Mexican widow named Petra Vidal, a devout Catholic landowner. Their relationship symbolized the region's potential to unite different races in search of power and security. Mifflin Kennedy adopted the children of Petra from her earlier marriage, and Petra bore Mifflin six more. Richard King, a riverboat captain and rancher, carved up South Texas prairies into his cattle kingdom while helping Stillman and Kennedy create a trading monopoly on the

88. León, *They Called Them Greasers*, 22.

89. Valerio-Jiménez, *River of Hope*, 246.

river. King adopted the Spanish hacienda lifestyle and became a type of "patron"[90] to his Mexican ranch hands. For instance, Kennedy and King adopted and adapted to the uniqueness that was the Rio Grande Valley. Individuals like Kennedy and King found ways to assert power despite not stamping out the Rio Grande frontier's cultural hybridity with Anglo exceptionalism. Interestingly, in a note written in the late 1890s, Kennedy recollected to a friend that "for almost fifty years, Captain King and I attempted to Americanize the border, without much success."[91] Apparently, Kennedy asserts that the border and its people could not or would not conform to a single identity. Even with Anglo political and economic control, the borderlanders' society absorbed the Anglo culture into its own. Indeed, the Rio Grande Valley is a culture unto itself, with an ever-shifting identity. Furthermore, the border identity shifts as the various peoples and cultures move and slip back and forth through the river's banks. Martínez observes that a collective border personality is hard to pin where there is an interdependent relationship and reveals why Anglo colonization efforts along the border failed to be successful. In Martínez's view:

> Many borderlanders live and function in several different worlds; the world of their national culture, the world of the border environment, the world of their ethnic group if they are members of a minority population, and the world of the foreign culture on the other side of the boundary. Considerable versatility is required to be an active participant in all these universes, including the ability to be multilingual and multicultural. The murky waters of a mixed ethnic, national population in a by national frontier make it possible for many people to acquire or to claim citizenship in different countries and to exercise rights and privileges accordingly.[92]

Martinez's theory of border culture at an interdependence level is beneficial because it sheds light on borderlanders' access to their geographic and cultural surrounding and presents the

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90. Manuel G. Gonzales and Manuel González Prada, *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 107.

91. Bruce S. Cheeseman, "King, Richard (1824-1885)," June 15, 2010, https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fki19.

92. Martínez, *Border People*, 20.

borderlanders as a multidimensional being with the ability to recast themselves ever so slightly so that they may fit their diverse environments.

Although the arrival of Anglos to South Texas brought different opportunities to the region's residents, not all were pleased with the new Anglo addition. Juan N. Cortina, for example, despised the arrival of Stillman and King for their land-grabbing methods. In 1859 Cortina attacked an Anglo sheriff for what seemed to Cortina an abuse of power against one of his Mexican vaqueros. Shots rang out, the sheriff was wounded, and Cortina rode off with his rescued worker. As a result of Cortina's shootout with the Brownsville sheriff, Cortina became a hero for the poverty-stricken Mexican population on both sides of the river. Support for Cortina grew in the coming months, and Mexicans from both sides of the river swelled into his army. The Cortina attack on Brownsville in 1859 brought the Rio Grande frontier onto the national stage. State and national lawmakers were aghast at how Mexican bandits could hold a United States city hostage. Brownsville residents reacted by setting up a militia made up of Anglo and Mexican residents. The militia attacked Cortina and his men but were driven back by the highly trained Cortinistas. The Brownsville militia did not secure the city, so a small detail of Mexican soldiers came to Brownsville's aid to protect its residents from Cortina. In the end, the United States sent their military to capture Cortina's army, and after some skirmishes along the river, Cortina retreated to Mexico.

The Cortina war proved the racial tension that stemmed from the Anglo incursion on Mexican land. Cortina aimed his wrath at the white land speculators who swindled Mexican landholders out of their legally owned properties. Although authors like Jerry Thompson see Cortina's war as a conflict on a racial level, a point that needs emphasizing is that Cortina also demanded more egalitarian just society along the borderlands. The truth is that the peons, or the

unskilled laborers, had little protection or education on property rights, and Anglos quickly swindled many Mexicans out of their lands. Furthermore, the 1856 Supreme Court case *McKinney v. Saviego* made it more difficult for Mexicans to secure family plots of land on the Texas side. Cortina's 1859 proclamation gives an excellent insight into his feelings about what he saw as economic injustice from the new Anglo settlers. Cortina himself writes, "When the State of Texas began to receive the new organization which its sovereignty required as an integral part of the Union, flocks of vampires, in the guise of men came and scattered themselves in the settlements, without any capital except the corrupt heart and the most perverse intentions."[93] Cortina maintains that the intrusion of settlers into the Rio Grande drained economic life out of the original inhabitant's hearts. Kenneth L. Stewart, a sociologist and historian of Tejano history, agrees with Cortina's proclamation and records the devastating effects the Anglos had on South Texas during the 1850s. Stewart writes, "a sharp decline in trade and transportation, manufacturing and mechanical occupations occurred from 1850- 1860. In this sense, the Mexican settlement (Corpus to Brownsville) region paid a higher price than their counterparts in other parts of the state. The Mexican *obreros* paid a higher toll than did the Anglos' workers."[94] Based on Stewart's work, the unskilled Mexican laborer in South Texas faced economic hardships, and the lack of land ownership further enhanced their predicament. Whites also threatened to displace Mexicans from the established occupations making life even harder for lower-class Mexicans.

93. The West Film Project and WETA, Documents on the Brownsville Uprising of Juan Cortina," accessed August 12, 2020, https://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/resources/archives/four/cortinas.htm.

94. Kenneth L. Stewart and Arnoldo De León, *Not Room Enough: Mexicans, Anglos, and Socio-Economic Change in Texas, 1850-1900* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993), 24–26.

The Cart War of 1855-1857 symbolized the immense persecution faced by Mexican/Tejanos. Hauling supplies from North Texas to the Texas coast was predominantly done by Mexicans. However, Anglo settlers saw this occupation as an opportunity for themselves. So, Anglos began to threaten Mexican workers, and eventually, a group of Whites killed off their Mexican competition.[95] Ultimately, many of the Mexican cart workers were forced out of the transportation business.

These types of events were not isolated incidents but happened all over Texas. Thus, skilled Mexican labor in South Texas was almost nonexistent. The enlistment records of the First and Second Texas Cavalry supply details on Mexican recruits' occupations during the early 1860s. The recruits' enlistment papers indicate that out of close to 600 Mexican/Tejano recruits, 61% were agricultural workers, and 28% worked with livestock. Highly skilled work such as blacksmiths and mason workers made up approximately 1% of all recruits. Not only did many Mexican men find little work in skilled trades, but during the mid-nineteenth century, key agriculture regions in North America suffered from a devastating drought that affected Texas and California. According to Richard Seager and Celine Herweijer, the Civil War drought lasted for about ten years 1855-1865, and the most damaged region was Texas. They write, "in Texas, this was the worst drought to strike in the last 300 years, worse than the Dust Bowl drought."[96] Captain Edward G. Miller, a Union officer who occupied Brownsville in 1863-1864 recorded the impact of the drought in his diary. Miller states, "We had scarcely any rain during these months, and the air was dry and pure. The dust at times was uncomfortable. Very little is done in

95. Weber, David J. "Cart War," June 12, 2010. https://tshaonline.org/handbook /online/articles/jcc01.

96. Jerry D. Thompson, *Mexican Texans in the Union Army* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1986), 39–40.

agriculture for the want of rain, some gardens are made close to the river, but irrigation is expensive."[97] Union soldier Benjamin F. McIntyre describes Brownsville's soil in his diary as "rich and the only thing wanting to render it productive is rain."[98]

Economically, Mexicans on the north side of the river had little to no agency and barely eked out an existence by the time the Civil War reached South Texas. By contrast, Matamoros grew into a thriving city. Rev. P.F. Parisot, a Roman Catholic priest at Brownsville, describes Matamoros as a place where "parties contended for mastery" and the Port of Bagdad as a "cosmopolitan Babylon, a whirlpool of business, pleasure, and sin and declares, a common laborer could easily gain from five to six dollars a day."[99] However, most Tejanos on the northside of the river were well out of reach of wealth and power mainly because of their race, while Mexicans on the south side of the river maneuvered from opportunity to opportunity. To be sure, when discussing the Mexican population along the border during the 1850-1860s because of the complexity of the region, distinct groups formed looking for what was most beneficial for themselves and their groups.

Conclusion

Consequently, borderlanders, no matter their political slant, continue to move back and forth into the most advantageous circles to obtain security and power. From the Spanish arrival through today, the southern Rio Grande region is a space of deep struggle and cultural

97. Richard Seager and Celine Herweijer, "Causes and Consequences of Nineteenth Century Droughts in North America," accessed August 13, 2020, http://ocp.ldeo.columbia.edu/res/div/ocp/drought/nineteenth.shtml.

98. McIntyre, *Federals on the Frontier*, 307.

99. P. F. Parisot, *The Reminiscences of a Texas Missionary* (San Antonio: c1899), 56, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/loc.ark:/13960/t2v410x6v.

germination. Ideas, languages, beliefs, and, of course, people continue to cross back and forth, thus shaping and restructuring the area continually. Likewise, identities are constantly shifting as people adapt and find ways to fit into their surroundings. To a certain extent, many outsiders do not understand the borderlanders' chameleon-like ability to pass so quickly back and forth through cultural and physical barriers. Politically the region continued to be concerned with local matters (*Patria Chica*) and had little care for national concerns and agendas. With the Union invasion into Brownsville, Private Pedro García of the First Texas Cavalry Co E found himself caught navigating between multiple worlds, races, and cultures. García maneuvered between loyalties and duty, family and profession, freedom, and obligation, and finally, what it means to be Anglo and Mexican.

Gloria Anzaldúa, an American borderland scholar who explored ideas in cultural and feminist theory in a border setting, says it best when describing people living on the frontier:

> To live in the borderlands means you are neither Hispania, India negra, Espanola, ni gabacha, [you are] mestiza, mulata, half-breed caught in the crossfire between camps while carrying all five races on your back not knowing which side to turn to, run from; To survive the borderlands you must live sin fronteras, be a crossroads.[100]

100. Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2007), 217.

CHAPTER III

BORDERLANDS: OPPRESSION AND THIRD SPACE

This chapter demonstrates how Pedro García, like many borderlanders, did not rely on national histories or purity of race to form his identity. Instead, he demonstrated agency by choosing military service in a foreign nation to benefit him and his family economically and socially. As such, I show how Pedro García, through seemingly innocuous acts of resistance, created identities for himself. These acts of resistance and creation exemplify a type of Third Space agency that works to find opportunities within the in-betweens of national membership and borders. Chela Sandoval, a Chicana feminist author, maintains that the oppressed ascertain specific ways to counteract their oppressors. Sandoval observes four different ways the wronged have found relief under occupation: first, the demand for equal rights; second, revolutionary methods; third, supremacist ideas; and fourth, separatist concepts.[101] Sandoval explores the differential modes, or third forces, employed by peoples to create resistance and identities while living within persecution. In her book *Methodology of the Oppressed*, Sandoval maintains that this third force or "the differential mode of social movement and consciousness depends on the practitioner's ability to read the current situation of power and self-consciously choosing and

101. Chela Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 80.

adopting the ideological stand best suited to push against its configurations."[102] In other words, people will, at times, use any of the four resistance methods to exercise shades of agency against their aggressors. García, being under economic tyranny in Mexico and racist cruelty in the United States, established spaces of power by exerting autonomy by slipping from one form of opposition to another and at the same time creating new identities for himself. I will not attempt to neatly categorize García's acts of resistance here using Sandoval's perspective; such an endeavor may reduce Pedro García's agency problematically. Instead, in what follows, I show how Pedro García used his positioning in the Rio Grande borderland to exert autonomy and create new identities for himself. Chela Sandoval acknowledges that subjugated inhabitants must discover techniques to think and behave like the ruling society so that they can be accepted. Sandoval explains that "conquered and dominated populations can be incorporated into dominant society, even when this happens negatively by distributing their possibilities onto its binary rationality."[103] Therefore, for Pedro García to survive, he needed to place himself and his ideas in the correct section of the Union's binary rationality. However, the Union's binary beliefs about race, culture, and nation were a set of complex contradictions not easily discerned by foreigners. Pedro García had to weigh every decision, action, and spoken word based on what he knew of northern Anglo perceptions while still considering his native cultural ideas and biases.

Pedro García

García was born around 1838 in Mexico during the turbulent times between the aftermath of the Texas Revolution and the Mexican American War. Pedro lived close to the Rio

102. Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, 78.

103. Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, 169.

Grande, trying to eke out an existence using the border and its resources as others did before. According to Union military documents, by the early 1860's the blue-eyed, fair-skinned García was a farmer married with children.[104] García's prospects for wealth accumulation and political agency were slim due to the civil war between the French Imperialists and the Federal troops of Benito Juárez. This conflict continued to destabilize Mexico and additionally kept the nation from becoming economically sound. Furthermore, García had to contend with the drought that laid waste to much of Texas and northern Mexico, thus pushing farmers into further debt. Although living by the river brought opportunities, Brownsville and the newly acquired U. S. territories offered little economic agency to an illiterate Mexican farmer. Since agricultural laborers depended heavily on rain for their income and provisions and the Civil War drought drastically decimated agricultural fortunes, many chose to believe the promises of a steady income from Spanish-speaking Union recruiters.

By the winter of 1863, Pedro García crossed the United States border and forged a new identity. He abandoned his farm tools for an American-made Burnside carbine rifle, and farmer Pedro García of Mexico transformed into Private Pedro Garsea (the Anglo spelling of his name) of the First Texas Cavalry of Company E.[105] Admittedly it can be assumed that, as hired soldiers, Pedro García and the Mexican/Tejano recruits cared little for the Union's efforts in restoring the Confederate states to the Republic. Thompson shows an example of a lack of loyalty many

104. War Department. The Adjutant General's Office and War Department. Record and Pension Office. 1892-5/11/1904 (Predecessor), *Garsea, Pedro - Age 25, Year: 1864 - First Cavalry*, Series: Carded Records Showing Military Service of Soldiers Who Fought in Volunteer Organizations During the American Civil War, 1890 - 1912, 1890.

105. War Department. The Adjutant General's Office and War Department. Record and Pension Office. 1892-5/11/1904 (Predecessor), *Garsea, Pedro - Age 25, Year 1864*.

Mexicans along the border to the competing national interests that surrounded them. Thompson writes of a young Mexican named Luis Ramirez:

> Luis Ramirez who learned that the Confederate army was recruiting soldiers at Fort Brown. Young and bold, Ramirez rode downriver to Brownsville, sold his horse and saddle, and, although unable to speak English, joined the army. Several days later, he realized he had enlisted in the Union army. Nevertheless, proudly marched off to war.[106]

Thompson's illustration gives credence to the argument that many borderlanders have little allegiance to government powers outside their geographic periphery, yet that is not to say that all borderlanders are not patriotic towards their nation. Still, many who live on the fringes of nations are primarily concerned about using their immediate geographic spaces for economic opportunities and protecting familial bonds than political or national agendas; what Mora-Torres calls the Patria Chica. Additionally, Homi Bhabha depicts people who travel from one nation to another looking to improve their well-being as cosmopolitans. Bhabha describes cosmopolitans as "often failed by capitalism's upward mobility and bereft of those comforts and customs of national belongings. Refugees, peoples of diaspora, and the migrants and exiles represent the spirit of the cosmopolitical community."[107]

Pedro García was a type of migrant displaced by outside forces and looked past his Mexican national identity to find opportunities in the United States. In fact, Pedro García's loyalty did not lie in a particular country or political view, and since not all borderlanders rely on national histories or purity of race to form their identities, he was free to choose what benefitted him and his family the most. After all, Pedro García avoided joining either side in the war, raging in his homeland. He ignored the local Juarez faction and the French imperialist's sympathizers.

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106. Thompson, Mexican Texans in the Union Army, 17.

107. Dipesh Chakrabarty et al., Cosmopolitanism (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 10.

Presumably to García, the most significant opportunity came in Brownsville, Texas, in the Union army. García found purpose in his present situation serving and fighting for the Union army. Andrés Reséndez confirms this point in his article, National Identity on a Shifting Border: Texas and New Mexico in the Age of Transition, 1821-1848. Reséndez argues that Mexican nationalist agendas did not truly resonate with Mexicans living along border regions because of the socio-economic complexities. Reséndez writes about nineteenth-century Mexican national projects that "went against the grain of a network of economic, social, and political cross-cultural alliances brought about by the prodigious economic development of the frontier region and its growing integration into the economy of the United States."[108]

It is evident that Pedro García rejected his economic status in Mexico and looked to move horizontally in the geopolitical sense and vertically in the socio-economic sphere. García used his ability to create for himself a new position that was radically different from what he previously existed in, thus demonstrating the resiliency of those living on the frontiers of society. Still, Pedro García needed to learn a new set of rules, linguistic meanings, non-verbal cues, military commands, and political loyalties to navigate the new social spaces along the border successfully.

However, Pedro García was at an enormous disadvantage assigned into the nearly all-Anglo First Texas Cavalry, a far cry from the make-up of the Second Texas Cavalry, where most of the recruits and officers were Hispanic. Out of the 122 soldiers surveyed in García's company during his enlistment, only about 11 were of Mexican descent. Anglos also made up all the officer positions in his company, such as Captain Washington Hammett from Missouri, Lt. Gray

108. Andrés Reséndez, "National Identity on a Shifting Border: Texas and New Mexico in the Age of Transition, 1821-1848," *The Journal of American History (Bloomington, Ind.)* 86, no. 2 (1999): 687, https://doi.org/10.2307/2567051.

from Northeast Texas, and Augustus Otto, a native of Germany. Therefore, as one of the few Mexicans in his company, García was caught under a type of Anglo rule. His choices, actions, and understanding of the Anglo culture determined his existence and well-being. Cherrie Moraga, author, poet, and feminist scholar, provides incredible insight into how minority women survive when confronted by dominant cultures. Moraga describes her life as a type of "guerrilla warfare as a means and method for survival." She then adds, "Our strategy is how we cope, how we measure and weigh what is to be said and when, what is to be done and how, and to whom...daily deciding/risking who it is we can call an ally, call a friend."[109] Pedro García survived his first six months in the United States by resisting his socio-economic status in Mexico and creating and abiding within his new identity in the United States. Assumedly since García had limited nationalistic tendencies, histories, or economic ties to a particular place, he was free to move into spaces where he controlled his future and individuality. Additionally, he rejected his economic status in Mexico and looked to move horizontally in the geopolitical sense and vertically in the socioeconomic sphere. García used his ability to maneuver himself into a new position that was radically different from what he previously existed in, demonstrating the resiliency of those living on the frontiers of society. Furthermore, he demonstrated that cultural and geographical movement for many borderlanders is an essential element in finding agency between peoples. García broke the molds of Mexican class structures by moving across the river and joining the United States army. García followed in the footsteps of those before him who struggled to find acceptance and agency on the Rio Grande frontier decades earlier. García and others like him understood that they had the power to shift identities along the border and move

109. Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, 77.

from one station to another. Sandoval notes that this "shuttling between realities"[110] allows border residents to survive under harsh political and socioeconomic conditions. However, as Pedro broke free of his Mexican identity, he immediately fell under the Anglo gaze under the United States military.

The Union Army

From a military perspective, Brownsville, Texas, was a strategic goal for the Union army. Confederate cotton flowed through the city of Brownsville into Mexico, and since Mexico was a neutral nation, the Union army had little control over Mexican vessels obtaining southern cotton and sending it across the Atlantic. According to the U. S. diplomat at Monterey, M. M. Kimmy, "millions of dollars of cotton were making their way through the Rio Grande River."[111] Kimmy further laments that, "until this trade is cut off, Texas will not feel the blockade, if the Federal forces could only be sent to Fort Brown, it would affect to stop the trade almost entirely."[112]

Union tactician's A. J. Hamilton, E. J. Davis, and John L. Haynes agreed with Kimmy's assessment. Hamilton and company felt that if the Union army stopped the cotton trade by taking control of Brownsville and eventually the rest of South Texas, the noose around the rebels' neck would tighten and the Confederacy would crumble economically, and Texas would be restored to the Union. Author Stephen Townsends in his book *The Yankee Invasion of Texas*, writes, "Hamilton informed Lincoln that a federal force of about 5,000 troops would be sufficient to

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110. Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, 79.

111. Salmon P. Chase, George S. Dension, and Samuel H. Dobson, *Diary and Correspondence of Salmon P. Chase,* n.d., accessed August 26, 2020, http://archive.org/details/diaryandcorrespo00chasrich, 429.

112. Chase, Dension, and Dobson, *Diary and Correspondence of Salmon P. Chase*, 429.

conquer the Lone Star State. Once these soldiers landed at the mouth of the Rio Grande, Texas unionists would flock to them and join them in restoring Union rule in the state."[113] Hamilton's plan to attack and set up camp on the tip of the Rio Grande gives tremendous insight not only into the strategic reasons for attacking Brownsville but also into his confidence that a Union army could hold a town in a Confederate state. A. J. Hamilton understood the pliability of the border culture and was confident that he could use this to his advantage. Since Brownsville was an opportunistic space and loyalties fluctuated, its occupation did not change the status quo of most of the Mexican population. Similarly, Edmund J. Davis and John L. Haynes, both Texas men who fought against secessionism, traveled to Washington, and discussed with President Lincoln and his military advisors their plan to retake Texas.[114] Lincoln seemed to toy with the idea, asking his military advisor Edward Stanton to gather more input. Lincoln writes of his meeting:

> Please see these Texas gentlemen, and talk with them. They think if we could send 2500 or 3000 arms, in a vessel, to the vicinity of the Rio Grande, that they can find the men there who will re-inaugurate the National Authority on the Rio Grande first, and probably on the Nueces also. Perhaps Gen. Halleck's opinion should [sic] be asked.[115]

Consequently, Lincoln authorized the attack on Brownsville and the plan to retake Texas. On the Second of November of 1863, the Union army stood ready to take Brownsville from Confederate control. General Nathaniel Banks, with approximately six thousand union soldiers, landed on the Gulf coast twenty-five miles east of Brownsville. The Confederate army knew that the Union

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113. Stephen A. Townsend, *The Yankee Invasion of Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2006), 8.

114. Jerry D. Thompson, *Mexican Texans in the Union Army* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1986), 14.

115. Roy P. Basler, Marion Dolores Pratt, and Lloyd A. Dunlap, eds., *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 357.

was advancing towards Brownsville in hopes of occupying the young city. Confederate General Hamilton Bee ordered the destruction of military ordinance and thousands of pounds of cotton bales. While destroying the ammunition, an explosion leveled the fort, and panic swept the city. Anarchy ensued as the fort began to burn, and Anglo citizens sympathetic to the Confederate cause flooded into Matamoros leaving behind their property. Looters began pillaging the town until an exiled Mexican General named Jose Maria Cobos stopped the looters and brought the city under control. Cobos peacefully handed the town over to the Union army, and Brownsville was now under military control.[116] Phase one of the Union plan was complete, taking control of the city and ending the cotton trade out of Brownsville.

Enganchadores: Finding Cheap Labor

Attached to the Union's second brigade was the First Texas Cavalry led by E. J. Davis and John L. Haynes. Davis and Haynes set out at once to recruit along the Texas and Mexican border with the help of Leonard Pierce. Pierce worked as an ambassador in the U. S. consulate in Matamoros and was a staunch Unionist. During the winter months the Spanish-speaking Pierce was described as "giving his all"[117] in the recruitment of the Texas refugees in Mexico. Davis and Haynes hoped to get enough men to fill the ranks of the First Texas Cavalry and expected to create a second unit. In fact, Haynes was sure that he could secure enough men in Texas to create a new unit. In August of 1863, Haynes wrote to his commanding officer while stationed in Louisiana that he wished to be discharged from his current unit to help create the Second Texas

116. McAllen, M.M. "Life Lived along the Lower Rio Grande during the Civil War." In *The Civil War on the Rio Grande, 1846-1876*, edited by Roseann Bacha-Garza, Christopher L Miller, Gary W Gallagher, and Russell K Skowronek, College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2019. https://muse.jhu.edu/book/66860/. 89.

117. E. E. Dorsey, "E.E. Dorsey Letter," December 7, 1863, U. S. Consulate Microfilm, UTRGV Special Collections & Archives at Brownsville, Texas.

Cavalry in South Texas. At first, Haynes's commanding officers rejected his request, so in a second letter dated October 2, 1863. Haynes asserts that he was not creating the regiment out of monetary reasons but to restore the Union in Texas and further writes that "loyal refugees from Texas"[118] were waiting for him to return. Davis, Haynes, and Pierce did not receive the numbers they hoped for. Carl Moneyhon in his book *Edmund J. Davis* acknowledges the problems that faced Davis and company:

> [The] extent of Davis's problem was apparent when the first Texans arrived at Brownsville and mustered only 260 men. A typical regiment had at least a thousand. Initially Davis recruited primarily among Union refugees in Mexico and his recruiting parties also worked up the Rio Grande. Word also was sent to refugees who had fled into the interior of Mexico, and by December parties of these men had begun to arrive. While his command strength improved, the numbers remained inadequate for the plan campaigns needed.[119]

In other words, Davis did not have enough Anglo men to constitute a Second Texas unit, let alone to plan an invasion of Texas. Consequently, the only alternative to fulfill Davis and Haynes's aim was to turn to the Mexican/Tejano as a substitute for the lack of Anglo labor. In addition, Haynes and Pierce had a command of the Spanish language, which made them instrumental in recruiting Mexicans. Haynes also used Tejano residents-turned-soldiers, such as second lieutenant Antonio Abad Dias, to help with recruitment. Another concept that cannot be overlooked is the impact that the promise of monetary gain played in the recruitment of men and the formation of units to satisfy economic desires rather than national or political agendas. According to Thompson, even though Haynes was warned by General Banks not to recruit in

118. John L. Haynes, "Page 27 Civil War Service Records (CMSR) - Union - Texas," Fold3, accessed November 29, 2020, http://www.fold3.com:9292/image/260015131.

119. Carl H. Moneyhon, *Edmund J. Davis of Texas Civil War General, Republican Leader, Reconstruction Governor* (Fort Worth: TCU Press, 2010), 62.

Mexico,[120] Haynes ignored Bank's order and spread his net over both sides of the river to find willing souls to take up the Union cause. Haynes and Dias acted as *enganchadores* looking for men whom they could hook into service. They passed out handbills promising recruits "a bounty of $100, $25 upon enlistment, and $75 at the war's conclusion a blue jacket, pants, shirts, underwear, a raincoat, boots, shoes, and $13 a month."[121] With the promise of a stable income and that they would never fight outside Texas, hundreds of economically poor Mexican/Tejano men signed up, providing the means of creating the Second Texas Cavalry unit and filling any vacancies in the First Texas Cavalry. The establishment of the Second Texas Cavalry also meant that John L. Haynes had justification for obtaining the rank of Colonel. Haynes's new rank would increase his pay to approximately $215.00 a month from the usual officer pay of $115.00[122]

Haynes understood the value of obtaining capital and the financial freedom that the rank of Colonel would bring him. Economic historian Brian Luskey makes the point that capitalistic ideas of profit motive and supply and demand were real within the military just as in northern manufacturing communities. Luskey describes in his book *Men is Cheap* the reflections of a union soldier to his mother after being commissioned as an officer and explains the emotions the soldier felt and the economic impetus for those feelings:

> I feel quite like a free man once more, now that I am a commissioned Officer," he told his mother. While he claimed that he had trouble explaining why that was—the only difference seemed to be his two shoulder straps—he relied on his mother's understanding of labor and status to clarify. "[B]efore I had lots of work and very little pay and now I

120. Jerry D. Thompson, *Mexican Texans in the Union Army* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1986), 115.

121. Thompson, *Mexican Texans in the Union Army*, 16.

122. American Battlefield Trust, "Military Pay," last modified December 8, 2008, https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/military-pay.

> have very little work and lots of pay." Indeed, he now had "quite a sum in my pocket, some $85" and a two-month payment of his $105.50 wage on the way. The thing that made him feel free was capital—the money in his pocket. He was about to make the transition that free labor offered mobility from being a worker at wages to being an employer with capital.[123]

Luskey's point is that even soldiers felt the financial freedom that a higher rank brings. Hamilton, Davis, Haynes, and Pierce saw the Rio Grande region as a space full of promise for their military and economic aspirations. Haynes and company employed similar recruitment tactics that northern brokers used to enlist unsuspecting immigrants like Pedro García during the mid-nineteenth century. Northern runners acted as types of *enganchadores* trying to lure their unsuspecting prey into financial bondage. The English translation of *enganchadores* means to "hook into service" usually by unscrupulous means. Runners were usually recent immigrants themselves and were adept at using the newly arriving immigrant's language and customs to hook their victims. Economic historian Brenden P. O'Malley points out in *Capitalism by Gaslight*, "Most runners appear to have been Irish or German immigrants themselves who used exaggerated promises and other modes of verbal persuasion in native tongues to convince newcomers to engage their services."[124] It is interesting to note the emphasis O'Malley places on using language to trap unsuspecting immigrants into services that they did not want. Similarly, Haynes, Pierce, and especially Antonio Abad Dias used their bilingual prowess and knowledge of the area to convince the Mexican and Tejano alike to join the Union cause. Eugene C. Murdock's 1966 article "New York's Civil War Bounty Brokers" provides examples of the

123. Brian P. Luskey, *Men is Cheap: Exposing the Frauds of Free Labor in Civil War America* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2020), 13.

124. Brenden O'Malley, "Lickspittles and Land Sharks: The Immigrant Exploitation Business in Antebellum New York," in *Capitalism by Gaslight: Illuminating the Economy of Nineteenth-Century America,* ed. Brian P. Luskey and Wendy A. Woloson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 99.

lengths Civil War recruiters went in securing men for the war effort. Murdock writes, "If recruits were in short supply, brokers would kidnap boys or seize unwary immigrants and force them into service. This might be done either by threatening violence or by befuddling the victim with drug or drink."[125] So, during the Civil War, northern brokers began to sell men to recruitment stations, and by 1863, the recruitment of soldiers into Union units was big business. Thompson notes that even the quartermaster at Brownsville questioned the authority of Haynes's recruitment practices.[126]

Ultimately in 1865 charges were filed against Colonel Haynes by a Surgeon M. A. Southworth of the First Texas Cavalry for his criminal recruitment tactics. Southworth, with at least 29 others including Tejanos, Mexicans, and Anglos ranging from Privates to a Major, agreed that Colonel Haynes broke laws and threatened Mexican recruits to reenlist. The document declares that Haynes "did enlist for the Second Texas Cavalry…about two hundred Mexicans who were ignorant of the English language without complying with article 926 of The Revised U. S. Army Regulations, and this at near Brownsville, Texas in the months of November 1863 and June of 1864."[127] Article 926 stipulates that it is illegal to "allow any man to be deceived or inveigled into service by false representation but will in person explain the nature of

125. Eugene C. Murdock, "New York's Civil War Bounty Brokers," *The Journal of American History* 53, no. 2 (1966): 259, accessed September 9, 2020, https://academic.oup.com/jah/article-lookup/doi/10.2307/1894199.

126. Jerry D. Thompson, *Mexican Texans in the Union Army*, 25.

127. "Charges against Haynes of Inefficiency and Neglect towards His Regiment," Official Documents- military, 1863-1918 (New Orleans, July 12, 1865), John L. Haynes Papers, Dolph Brisco Center for American History University of Texas Austin.

service."[128] Additionally, Article 929 and 1670 state that recruits must have a "competent knowledge of the English language" and "No volunteer will be mustered into service who is unable to speak the English language."[129] Haynes was also charged with forcing his Mexican soldiers in the Second Texas Cavalry to reenlist into the now consolidated First Texas Unit. Southworth and others assert that Haynes said to the Mexican soldiers that "If they did not re-enlist in the First Texas Cavalry, they should be tried by Court Martial for mutiny and would probably be shot or sent to Tortugas",[130] and it is also alleged that Haynes said that "it was no use for them [Mexicans] to get justice."[131] The record further states that Haynes gave the Mexican soldiers the impression that "they were completely in his power."[132] These types of methods charged by the soldiers of Haynes's unit was already a common practice by the Northern runners, especially towards newly arriving immigrants. It can be inferred that Haynes and others seized these crooked methods and used them on the United States-Mexican border and knowingly broke these articles in his desire to achieve the rank of Colonel. It can also be suggested that Haynes was driven by profit and financial security, and the recruitment and reenlistment of Mexican soldiers gave him the best opportunity to achieve his goals. At the same

128. United States, *Revised United States Army Regulations of 1861, with an Appendix Containing the Changed and Laws Affecting Army Regulations and Articles of War to June 25, 1863* (Washington: Govt. Print. Off., 1863), accessed January 20, 2020, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001628146.

129. United States, *Revised United States Army Regulations of 1861*.

130. "Charges against Haynes of Inefficiency and Neglect towards His Regiment," Official Documents- military, 1863-1918 (New Orleans, July 12, 1865), John L. Haynes Papers, Dolph Brisco Center for American History University of Texas Austin.

131. "Charges against Haynes of Inefficiency and Neglect towards His Regiment" 1865

132. "Charges against Haynes of Inefficiency and Neglect towards His Regiment" 1865

time Pedro García considered the recruiters' monetary promises as truth and a means to better his pecuniary and social standings. Hispanics regarded the Union army as a gateway to reach economic mobility without moving far from home. The U. S. army and Hispanic workers created what Martinez calls an interdependent relationship. Oscar Martínez describes the binary relationship between Mexican workers and the United States firms as a synergetic link between two neighboring nations. In Martínez's words, these relationships are "made possible by relatively stable international relations and by the existence of a favorable economic climate that permits borderlanders on both sides of the line to pursue growth and development of projects."[133] However, Martínez's assumptions about the need for stability on both sides of the border is problematic when considering that both nations' permanency was in question during the frantic years of their Civil Wars. The desperate need of soldiers for the Union army and Pedro García's financial poverty brought both parties together no matter the durability of the nations. As a result, the Mexican population provided the Union army with a large workforce, while the Union army provided to the unskilled Mexican/Tejanos the promise of a steady paycheck during the politically unstable drought-ridden spaces along the river.

The Union army and northern immigrants also used each other to secure the benefits of manpower for the military and a steady income for the immigrant. The Union army employed roughly over 525,000 immigrant troops from Europe.[134] The majority of these immigrants came from Germany and Ireland. For much of the early part of the war, immigrants and native Anglo men mixed into military units; however, some units consisted of the same ethnic background,

133. Martínez, *Border People*, 8.

134. Ryan Keating, "Immigrants in the Union Army - Essential Civil War Curriculum," Essential Civil War Curriculum, June 2014, https://www.essentialcivilwarcurriculum.com/immigrants-in-the-union-army.html.

such as "the Irish Brigade and the mostly German Eleventh Corp."[135] The Union army and northern immigrants employed an awkward dance of promise and expectations. Newly arriving Germans, Irish, English, and Scandinavians filled numerous vacancies in the Union army in hopes of finding acceptance in their new homeland, and the Union military looked for eager men to help fill gaps in their war to reclaim the rebellious confederacy. Susannah J. Ural, editor and contributor of *Civil War Citizens, Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in America's Bloodiest Conflict* writes about the issues minorities faced while serving the Union army. Ural notes that the compact between the Union army and the immigrant was fraught with trouble. Ural writes, "minority-military service can take the theme of 'quid pro quo,' that is, full support of the war effort on part of the minority and its leadership in return for full citizenship rights or other benefits for minority-group members." The trouble with this, he observed, was that all sides did not always agree on what was expected in return for service."[136] These disagreements between immigrants and the military lead to desertions and corporal punishment. Ural focuses on the northern Irish societies and comments that the Irish held flexible views on the Civil War. She writes,

> Every action was grounded in their ties to Ireland and their more tenuous links to America. They saw the war through these lenses and supported the Union cause when it supported their own interests. When that cause came to include emancipation and conscription, however, Irish Catholics largely abandoned the Union war effort, which they believed had abandoned them. [137]

In other words, the Irish focused on their interests collectively before that of the United States, just as the Mexican/ Tejanos of the First and Second Texas Cavalry.

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135. Keating, "Immigrants in the Union Army - Essential Civil War Curriculum.

136. Susannah J. Ural, "Introduction," in *Civil War Citizens: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in America's Bloodiest Conflict*, ed. Susannah J. Ural (NYU Press, 2010). 14.

137. Ural, *Civil War Citizens*, 15.

Pedro García mustered in on December 15, 1863, signing a scribbled X above his misspelled name hoping to secure a piece of capital that was promised by his recruiter. Civil War historian Robert Alotta claims that García never received payment for his five months in the First Texas Cavalry. In his book *Civil War Justice*, Alotta maintains, "There is no record that García had been paid by the army, only that a $100 bounty was due to him at the time of his death."[138] Eventually, the Tejano and Mexican soldiers were not paid what the Union recruiters had promised. In January of 1863, Hispanic troops settled into their new lives as Union soldiers in Brownsville, and discontent spread in their ranks. The month of January brought over twenty desertions among the Mexican/Tejanos. In fact, Union desertions along the Rio Grande were not just an issue with the Mexican/Tejano soldiers; Anglos also looked for ways to escape. An example is the case of Private David Strother of Company E of First Texas Cavalry. Military documents disclose that Strother was "killed in the attempt to desert "[139] on the night of January 25. As a result of the growing desertions, officers refused to give passes into Mexico because it presented such a temptation for Union men to escape the dreariness of military life.[140] The first few months of 1864, the Texas cavalry units suffered from lack of supplies and absence of pay. Thompson and Moneyhon observe in their writings the utter rejection and lack of concern for the Hispanic enlistees as they camped at Brownsville. Thompson writes, "Mexican-Americans often went without food and clothing for months, even to a greater degree than soldiers of other

138. Robert I. Alotta, *Civil War Justice: Union Army Executions under Lincoln* (Shippensburg: White Mane Pub. Co., 1989), 115.

139. "Page 4 Civil War Service Records (CMSR) - Union - Texas," Fold3, February 1864, http://www.fold3.com:9292/image/259945345.

140. McIntyre, *Federals on the Frontier,* 300.

nationalities."[141] Moneyhon adds, "The Union promised Mexican recruits a bounty on enlistments, but the bounty was not paid. As a result, they felt badly treated. Enlistees also lacked supplies: men who had been in the army for two months had not yet received shoes."[142] Even Edmund Davis, the Cavalry commander, found it unusual that pay and supplies had not reached his Mexican soldiers. In a letter to Major-General Ord, dated February 10, 1864, Colonel Davis emphasizes that "there has been a strange neglect in sending for articles of the first necessity."[143] Davis continues to complain about the want of pay for his Mexican soldiers, arguing, "The bounty promised has not been paid, nor have they received any of their monthly pay, and this delay cannot be explained to their satisfaction; accordingly, there is among them an impression that they have been badly treated."[144] As a result, the Mexican/Tejano elements in the First and Second Texas Cavalry deserted. Out of 858 Mexican Americans recruited into the First and Second Texas Cavalry, around 38% deserted. The amount of desertion among the First and Second Texas Cavalry is staggering compared to the percentage of Union (9%) and Confederate (10%) overall.[145] There can be no doubt that desertion immensely impacted both Union and Confederate armies throughout the war and both armies looked for ways to stem the tide of soldiers leaving their ranks without permission.

141. Thompson, *Vaqueros in Blue & Gray*, 6.

142. Moneyhon, *Edmund J. Davis of Texas Civil War*, 45.

143. United States. War Dept et al., *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington: G.P.O, 1880), 288. http://archive.org/details/warofrebellion013401rootrich.

144. United States, *The War of the Rebellion*, 288.

145. Ella Lonn, *Desertion during the Civil War*, (New York, [c1928]), 154, 36. http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.$b61319.

Still the notion of skipping out of contracts was not a new idea for people living along the river. Since people along the borderland are highly transient, moving from one opportunity to another was expected, and the Mexican/Tejano soldier took advantage of his geography and quickly crossed the river to familiar surroundings. Some Mexican/Tejanos walked out of their military contracts individually, but many collectively. For example, Captain Adrian Vidal and over twenty of his men deserted from their unit because of language issues and lack of supplies.[146] Hispanic soldiers dealt with harsh working conditions, lack of pay, racism, and broken promises, so choosing to walk away from their military contracts was in the best interest for many of them and their families. Skipping out or deserting was an indisputable way that Mexican/Tejanos used the border as an instrument to display power and resistance against actual or perceived oppression. However, to the Union army, these collective walkouts led to the loss of labor power. Additionally, for John L. Haynes and Edmund Davis of the First and Second Texas Cavalry, high desertions meant a loss of pay due to not having enough men to sustain a unit. For General Herron, commander of all Union forces at Brownsville, desertions produced disorder and weakness among the military stationed on the Rio Grande. The Union army eventually began to control the Cavalry by keeping them under armed guard and shipping the two units to New Orleans away from their homes.[147] According to border and economic historians Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson, labor control has been a hallmark of capitalistic commerce for centuries. In their book, *Border as Method, or the Multiplication of Labor*, Mezzadra and Neilson maintain that the "principal means by which capital exercises control over labor is by attempting

146. Thompson, *Mexican Texans in the Union Army*, 27.

147. Benjamin Franklin McIntyre, *Federals on the Frontier: The Diary of Benjamin F. McIntyre, 1862-1864* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1963), 338.

to harness and channel its movement and flight. This is true for the slave, the indentured coolie, or the labor migrant who negotiates today's fractured borderscapes."[148] Mezzadra and Neilson's point is that a central theme in capitalism is the struggle between labor and employer over freedom and control, so it was with the Mexican/ Tejano and the Union army. As a result, the Hispanic recruits and the Anglo officers engaged in an intense contest over socioeconomic power in the borderlands.

By February, the Hispanics of the First and Second Texas Cavalry were deserting on average two a day and marked the highest number of desertions for the year of 1864. During this time, Pedro García kept busy tending sick horses. Brigadier General C. P. Stone, chief of staff for the Union's Department of the Gulf, inspected fortification along the Texas coast and was critical of the First and Second Texas Cavalry conditions. In a letter dated February 16, 1864, Stone complains that the post at Brownsville is sound except for the "so called cavalry."[149] Stone also describes the cavalry as lacking in mounts, arms, and pay and finds only 200 horses fit for service. He ultimately laments that approximately 400 horses have already died from being malnourished.[150] Given that the Civil War drought halted the growth of any grazing lands along the Rio Grande frontier—coupled with a lack of supplies—Pedro García had his hands full trying to keep the Cavalry's horses healthy and well fed.

The month of March proved to be a turning point for the First and Second Texas Cavalry. On March 15, a small detachment of the Second Texas Cavalry Company B led by Second Lieutenant Santos Cadena was attacked and defeated by Confederate forces at Santa Rosa, Texas. Cadena eventually asked to be discharged from his command due to language and family

148. Mezzadra and Neilson, *Border as Method*, 22.
149. United States, *The War of the Rebellion*. 309.

150. United States, *The War of the Rebellion*. 309.

issues. The First Texas Cavalry did not fare any better during March. The Union received word that a large amount of cotton was awaiting shipment into Mexico from Laredo. Davis ordered two companies of the First Texas Cavalry to take Laredo. Major Alfred E. Holt led Company A and Pedro García's company E.[151] The Mexican Confederate Colonel Santos Benavides was left to defend his city against the Union invading force. Unknown to the Union army, Benavides was deathly ill and only had around 40 men.[152] Two hundred men of the Union's First Texas Cavalry attacked Santos Benavides' army made up mostly of Mexican/Tejanos. Benavides himself rode out to defend his city and helped fend off the Union assaults. According to Thompson, the Union sent wave upon wave of soldiers, only to meet a stiff wall of gunfire. Ultimately the Union retreated, leaving behind blood-soaked clothing and discarded articles of war.[153] As a result of the failed attacks, the First Texas Cavalry retreated to Fort Ringgold and eventually to Fort Brown.

Union records have little to say about the attack on Laredo, and most of what is known comes from Santos Benavides. The idea that a small band of Hispanics defeated the larger and predominantly Anglo force must have been quite demoralizing for the First Texas Cavalry. Pedro García and the few Mexican/Tejanos in companies A and E had to survive under their fellow soldiers' contempt and disdain. Union men began to question Hispanic loyalties as desertion rose in the coming months.

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151. Jerry Thompson, *Tejano Tiger: Jose de Los Santos Benavides and the Texas-Mexico Borderlands, 1823-1891* (Fort Worth: TCU Press, 2017), 170, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/utrgv-ebooks/detail.action?docID=5115166.

152. Jerry Thompson, "Col. José de Los Santos Benavides and Gen. Juan Nepomuceno Cortina Two Astounding Civil War Tejanos," in *The Civil War on the Rio Grande, 1846-1876*, ed. Roseann Bacha-Garza et al. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2019), 173, https://muse.jhu.edu/book/66860/.

153. Thompson, *Vaqueros in Blue & Gray*, 173.

Nationalism vs. Cosmopolitanism

The Union army saw the border as something to control and use for their advantage in their war against the South and cared little for the native culture. To be sure, Pedro García, a cosmopolitan borderlander, put himself in a precarious situation under the Union army. The connection between García and the Union army could not have been any more problematic for both sides. The dichotomy between nationalism and cosmopolitanism finds little neutral ground because borderland cultures are usually in direct contrast politically and socially to more centralized areas of a country. To be sure, the Union army included immigrants from all over Europe, and many of the immigrants saw the United States as their permanent home. Yet, western European immigrants used military service, language, and color to obtain acceptance within the United States' national citizenship and shed their immigrant skins. Civil War historian Stephen D. Engle describes the Germans, the largest immigrant group in the Union army, faithful to the United States cause and ideals. Engle writes,

> Germans were like other foreign-born enlistees, sensitive to the fact that their newfound freedoms in America were now bound to the successful preservation of the Union. Whether they were from the city or the farm, when the conflict erupted in April 1861, Germans considered the war an opportunity to demonstrate their deep affection for their adopted home and its constitutional freedoms.[154]

While the Germans saw the war as a vehicle to further solidify their national identity, the Mexican/ Tejanos saw the Union army as a channel for economic relief from their poverty. Another large immigrant group that served in the Union was the Irish. The Irish motivations for serving in the Union army differed because of their deeply divided political convictions. Many

154. Stephen D. Engle, "Yankee Dutchmen: Germans, the Union, and the Construction of Wartime Identity," in *Civil War Citizens: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in America's Bloodiest Conflict*, ed. Susannah J. Ural (New York: NYU Press, 2010), 27.

Irish despised Lincoln and his handling of the war. However, historian Susannah J. Ural, specializing in nineteenth century American history, argues the Irish had double attachments between their Native Ireland and their new homeland in America. Ural writes in *Civil War Citizens, Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in America's Bloodiest Conflict,"* Irish volunteers, regardless of geography, had dual loyalties to Ireland and the United States, and it was this shared devotion to both countries that inspired their service."[155] Furthermore, when comparing Mexican/ Tejanos to the Irish service in the Union army, many Mexican/ Tejanos along the border carried a lack of national motivation, while the Irish based their political decisions and service on their national loyalties. Nations routinely employ history and race to construct an exclusive identity to promote and maintain their citizens' loyalty. However, borders spaces such as in the Rio Grande, where race and culture are fluid, and patriotism is weak have little use for nationalist concepts. As a result, the most challenging barrier between the Union army and Pedro García was that of race and culture. Bhabha notes how race and nationalism take on mythical status in certain nations. Bhabha states, "Race represents an archaic ahistorical moment outside the 'modernity' of the imagined community: 'nationalism thinks in historical destinies."[156]

Consider the 1845 article "Annexation" by John O'Sullivan. O'Sullivan's essay pushed forward the idea of American expansionism by persuading the Anglo citizens of the United States that God's will was set on spreading America's hallowed democracy and superior way of life from sea to shining sea. O'Sullivan writes:

155. Susannah J. Ural, "'Ye Sons of Green Erin Assemble,'" in *Civil War Citizens: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in America's Bloodiest Conflict*, ed. Susannah J. Ural (New York: NYU Press, 2010), 110.

156. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 390.

> Our national birth was the beginning of a new history, the formation and progress of an untried political system, which separates us from the past and connects us with the future only; and so far, as regards the entire development of the natural rights of man, in moral, political, and national life, we may confidently assume that our country is destined to be the great nation of futurity."[157]

The essence of O'Sullivan's article is the narrative that the United States, specifically the Anglo Protestant populations, are destined and commissioned by God Himself to spread and overpower all other societies that did not fit into the Anglo-American mold. Oscar Martínez observes that United States nationalists have a low tolerance for others or anything outside the American historical myth. According to Oscar Martínez, "Nationalists have xenophobic tendencies and constantly criticize Mexico for its backwardness and for exporting its problems to the United States (Anglos) are driven by a strong desire to halt the further "dilution" of the dominant Anglo culture."[158] The northern Anglo during Pedro García's time held similar views as described by Oscar Martínez.

With the arrival of the Union army, racial hostility was evident towards the Mexican/Tejano border residents. Anglo soldiers used terms such as "greasers" to describe the native Rio Grande Valley population. One Union soldier depicted the Mexican residents as "superstitious, shrewd, avarice, cowardice and (having a) love for display"[159] with nothing grand or ennobling in their nature."[160] General Francis Herron, commander of all the Union occupying forces at Brownsville and Medal of Honor recipient, said of the Mexicans that they "could not be

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157. John O' Sullivan, "Annexation," *The United States Magazine and Democratic Review* 17 (1845): 6.

158. Martínez, *Border People*, 126.

159. McIntyre, *Federals on the Frontier*, 254.

160. McIntyre, *Federals on the Frontier*, 262.

trusted."[161] In times past, the frontier blended stranger and native into a new cultural hybrid population along the Rio Grande, but the Union invaders came with a strong uncompromising nationalistic view on race, politics, and social norms. Furthermore, the Union army saw the borderlands as a land of racial impurity and a space where patriotism, allegiance, and honor were in short supply towards any nation. Captain Edward Gee Miller of the 20th Wisconsin provides an Anglo interpretation of Mexican loyalty along the border and states that Mexicans are willing to "sacrifice honor"[162] than face the threat of death. Miller makes the supposition that Mexicans along the border are a cowardly lot who run at the first sight of danger with little loyalty. These types of racist, misguided attitudes were rampant throughout the ranks of the Union forces occupying Brownsville. Miller and other Anglo soldiers were erroneous in calling the Hispanics cowardly because they did not understand the fragility and flexibility of borderlanders' economic and nationalistic relationships.

Homi Bhabha provides insight into the relationship between different cultures in a colonized setting. Bhabha's work on mimicry sheds light on the intense scrutiny marginalized people face under colonial power. He notes that mimicry is the colonizer's desire for a "reformed recognizable Other as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite."[163] To put it another way, Bhabha explains that colonial powers try to mold the colonized into a model of themselves; however, at the same time, they are never genuinely accepting of the colonized

161. Frederick H. Dyer, *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion* (Des Moines: The Dyer Publishing Co., 1908), 1054, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015026937642.

162. Edward Gee Miller, *Captain Edward Gee Miller of the 20th Wisconsin: His War, 1852-1865* (Fayetteville, Arkansas: Washington County Historical Society, 1960), 22.

163. Homi K. Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," *October* 28 (1984): 126, https://doi.org/10.2307/778467.

conformity into the Anglo culture because once the colonized become equal with the colonizer, the colonizer naturally will lose authority. Bhabha labels this twisted lens of the colonizer as "double vision,"[164] whereas the colonized are "not quite White."[165] Additionally, mimicry allows the colonizer to crown themselves the superior culture and provide the impetus for their colonization efforts. Still, Bhabha does away with any ideas of superior, pure, or static culture and sees colonization as nothing more than one culture exploiting the resources or people of another.[166] So, the Union army, on the one hand, wanted the Mexican/Tejanos to behave like Anglo soldiers, but at the same time the Union saw the Hispanic recruits as degraded images of themselves. Consequently, Pedro García, a cosmopolitan borderlander, changed his identity from a Mexican farmer to a United States soldier partaking in an attack against fellow borderlanders at Laredo.

Pedro García, Trial and Execution

As spring turned into summer, the First Texas Cavalry's problems grew. Officers and soldiers looked for avenues of escape from military life, unfair treatment, and broken promises. By late April, General Francis Herron and Union officers were worried that Colonel Rip Ford's Confederate forces were moving to retake Fort Brown.[167] Pressure began to mount upon the

164. Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man," 129.

165. Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man," 130.

166. Postcolonial Literature, "Lecture 14 – Homi Bhabha and the Concept of Cultural Hybridity," January 31, 2017. Video, 29:48, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bX6KtJVg7YM&list=PLvaDm2xI65Rid797ud9tdWTPwqcss9dwO&index=20.

167. United States. War Dept et al., *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, vol. 34 (Washington: G.P.O, 1880), 332, http://archive.org/details/warofrebellion013401rootrich.

Union occupying armies, and at the same time, the First and Second Texas Cavalries were lowly disintegrating due to constant desertions. In the months of April and May, a total of 88 Mexican/Tejano desertions took place. The inevitable transfer to Louisiana of the First Texas Cavalry also caused many Anglo soldiers to desert. Even officers of the Texas Cavalry wrote letters to their superiors describing their reasons for needing to abandon their duty. Excuses ranged from Captain James Speed's lack of notes[168] and supplies to Captain Riley Wood's troubles at home.[169] Some officers used the death of a loved one as justification for their being unable to serve. In total, six officers looked to make their escape through legal means, and all six were arrested and dishonorably dismissed from military duty. According to the Department of the Gulf Special Order 146, dated June 4, 1864, their division commander determined that the men used "false and improper reasons" to avoid military duty.[170] However, each one of these officers found ways to negate their dismissal by writing letters to specific individuals who had some degree of influence. For example, Brigadier General and Military Governor of Texas A. J. Hamilton received news of Captain Speed's predicament and "the deplorable state of affairs in the First Texas Cavalry."[171] Governor Hamilton asked General Herron if he could reevaluate the officers sentences. Eventually, with outside help, each officer was freed and restored with

168. James Speed, "Page 27 Civil War Service Records (CMSR) - Union - Texas," Fold3, May 10, 1864, accessed November 29, 2020, http://www.fold3.com:9292/image/260015131.

169. Riley Wood, "Page 22 Civil War Service Records (CMSR) - Union - Texas," Fold3, June2, 1864, accessed November 29, 2020, http://www.fold3.com:9292/image/259909336.

170. Nathaniel P Banks, "Page 20 Civil War Service Records (CMSR) - Union - Texas," Fold3, June 4, 1864, http://www.fold3.com:9292/image/259909314.

171. Andrew Jackson Hamilton to Francis Herron, June 7, 1864, Francis Herron papers, New York Historical Society.

honorable distinctions. Additionally, other men in Company E, such as Private Sydney Inglett and William Rollins, were also tried as deserters but fought their charges with letters and eventually finding freedom.[172]

On May 10, 1864, García left his unit without permission and in early June, García made his way towards the Edinburg Ranch. On his way back to his unit he was arrested by Union soldiers and brought back to Fort Brown. Soon after García's arrest Captain Adrian Vidal, commander of the Union Cavalry's Independent Ranger company, and 27 of his Mexican men decided to desert into Mexico with all their equipment.[173]

Furthermore, the commander of all Union forces at Fort Brown, General Herron assumed that Mexican spies had infiltrated his army and reported troop movements to the Confederate forces inching forward towards Brownsville.[174] General Herron's assumptions and Captain Vidal's desertion only added to García's guilt before the Union eyes. Finally, a military court-martial took place soon after and charged García for desertion, Absent With Out Leave (AWOL), and deserting to the enemy. García pleaded innocent to all charges except leaving his post without permission. According to Father P. F. Parisot, who was the "constant companion of the doomed man"[175] García was a

> poor father of a family, a Mexican (and) had been drafted into the ranks and was stationed with his regiment a place called, Como Se Llama, some fifty miles from Brownsville he felt very anxious about his family and asked permission to come down

172. Sydney Inglett, "Page 23 Civil War Service Records (CMSR) - Union - Texas," Fold3, August 6, 1864, http://www.fold3.com:9292/image/260032280.

173. McIntyre, *Federals on the Frontier*, 350.

174. United States. War Dept et al., The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, vol. 34 (Washington: G.P.O, 1880), 332, http://archive.org/details/warofrebellion013401rootrich.

175. McIntyre, *Federals on the Frontier*, 353.

> and provide for his children but his request was refused so he came down one day without permission and after arranging some family affairs was preparing to return to his regiment, when seized as a deserter and sentenced to be shot.[176]

The court found García guilty of the crime of desertion and condemned him to death by firing squad. Surprisingly, the definition of desertion was not set in stone and was left to be determined by the commanding officer, so the meaning of desertion differed throughout the Union army.[177] Pedro García fit almost every category as a candidate to be executed under the Union army. Although not explicitly stated, his race, religion, ethnicity, and actions all cooperated towards his death sentence. Robert Alotta reports that race and ethnicity played a significant factor for those executed. Alotta writes:

> There appear to be elements of ethnic, religious, and racial bias in the subjects for execution. Yet it appears that Roman Catholics suffered greater punishment that persons who professed other faiths. On the other hand, there are indications that ethnicity and race were greater determinators. Of all the men executed, 54.31 percent either were foreign-born or black. The number of foreign-born men executed is thus 28 percent higher than the average for the entire army.[178]

Ultimately, due to institutional racism and lack of compassion Pedro García had little chance of finding pardon or assistance in his time of need. Finally, a few days later, on June 27, the doomed García marched down Brownsville's main street while the Union brass band played a funeral march. The whole city of Brownsville gathered around the town square to witness the execution. Father Parisot, the Roman Catholic priest of the Brownsville Diocese, gave Pedro his last rites and hope of a better life to come. After Pedro prayed, an army officer offered him a blindfold, which he refused. Pedro then kneeled on his coffin facing the large crowd. The Union

176. P. F. Parisot, *The Reminiscences of a Texas Missionary* (San Antonio: c1899.), 108, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/loc.ark:/13960/t2v410x6v

177. Alotta, *Civil War Justice*, 16.

178. Alotta, *Civil War Justice*, 187.

execution squad lined up and aimed their twelve rifles at García's chest. Suddenly with a loud bang, Pedro García fell back over his wooden casket. The army medical doctor walked over to examine Pedro and found him still clinging to life. The military officer in charge of the execution ordered his men to shoot at the mortally wounded García again, but at point-blank range. Two soldiers lined up their rifles at the dying man's corpse and fired their rounds into Private Pedro Garcia's head, thus ending his young life. The commander then had his soldiers march past Pedro's lifeless husk; his smoldering body left as a warning to any Mexican/Tejano who pondered desertion.[179] His execution served as a type of revenge on all the Mexican/Tejanos who skipped out of the Union army. Finally, Pedro García, the farmer, soldier, cosmopolitan borderlander, was buried in an unmarked grave in the city's town square where he remains to this day. Moments before his execution, Pedro was still creating and resisting identities through unwritten and unspoken actions. Communication is an essential element when dealing with two or more cultures that do not share the same tongue. Moreover, minority peoples who can communicate in the dominant culture's language are more apt to slide into the ruling society and be accepted or use their knowledge of a governing language to resist and create identities that the dominant culture will understand. Adela Lincona, a scholar of Mexican American studies, explains that the power of language within a Third Space realm allows minorities to find agency. In her work, (*B)orderlands' Rhetorics and Representations*, Adela Lincona writes, "Third-space subjects put language into play by using disruptive discursive strategies that reflect our lived

179. McIntyre, *Federals on the Frontier,* 354.

experiences as fragmented, partial, real, and imagined, and always in the process of becoming."[180]

Although Pedro García did not have a command over the written language nor did he speak his captors' tongue, his refusal of the blindfold communicated before the crowd that he was not afraid of dying and not guilty of desertion. Pedro's guilt only came in caring for his family. Pedro García used this last act of resistance to set the record straight about the Union's misrepresentation of himself and the Mexican race in general. Captain Miller, whose court found García guilty, remarked that García "met death as a soldier,"[181] and after viewing García's execution, Lieutenant McIntyre noticed that there was "no fear manifested"[182] on the face of Pedro García. The bravery with which García met his death spoke in a way that the Union officers comprehended and respected. It is surprising that in life, García found little dignity in the Union army's eyes, but he finally earned their respect in his death. Both Captain Miller and Lieutenant McIntyre—and most likely many more unnamed soldiers—adjusted their perceptions of the Mexican/Tejanos that day.

Conclusion

Race, religion, language, economic and political ideologies collided on the Rio Grande border during the first half of 1864. However, Pedro García and other Tejano/Mexicans found agency amid their terrible social and economic conditions. García utilized the border spaces to

180. Adela Licona, "(B)Orderlands' Rhetorics and Representations: The Transformative Potential of Feminist Third-Space Scholarship and Zines," *NWSA Journal* 17 (July 1, 2005): 106, https://doi.org/10.1353/nwsa.2005.0032.

181. Edward Gee Miller, *Captain Edward Gee Miller of the 20th Wisconsin: His War, 1852-1865* (Washington County Historical Society), 22.

182. McIntyre, *Federals on the Frontier,* 354.

transform himself from a Mexican farmer to a United States soldier. Although the Union army eventually took García's life and liberty, García still managed to display an act of resistance moments before his death that made those that held power reevaluate their previously held stereotypes about border residents. Pedro García's life displayed the uniqueness of la Frontera by forging his own identity while at the same time breaking out of economic and social labels.

Eventually, Private Pedro Garcia and the execution faded from the cities residents' collective memories to resurface every so often in a blog post or short articles in the local newspaper's back pages. García's story laid buried under seemingly more influential men who impacted the borderlands, such as Juan Cortina, Santos Benavides, and Adrian Vidal. However, it is the everyday people like Pedro Garcia who struggle and push forward through national and stagnant social identities to create a vibrant, ever-evolving cultural tapestry found along the Rio Grande.

Garcia's grave still lies unmarked today somewhere in what is now called Washington Park. The park has become a symbol of the ever-changing cultural identity that makes up Brownsville. At one time, the park contained monuments to Confederate President Jefferson Davis, Father Miguel Hidalgo, the Mexican revolution hero, Jose Marti, the champion of Cuban Independence, and a bandstand celebrating the bicentennial birthday of the United States. Each marker tells the story of people and events that impacted history, and in a way describe the city of Brownsville itself. Not only did Brownsville display Davis, Hidalgo, Marti, and the Bandstand on its public mantle for all to see, but these historical monuments tell a story about the uniqueness of Brownsville’s identity.

Furthermore, Washington Park is also home to a yearly event named Sombrero Fest, an extension of the Charro Day celebrations at the end of every February. For three days, the park

fills with the sounds of Tejano music and Mexican/American food. Washington park draws residents from all over the Rio Grande Valley and northern Mexico to share in the celebration of the cultural bond between Mexico and the United States. Although to outsiders, Washington Square seems like a jumble of nonrelated markers and a place to have a yearly celebration; the park is ultimately a reflection of its ever-changing and transforming residents. Conclusively, it is a space where people and objects meet, blend, and celebrate the region's uniqueness. Although Private Pedro Garcia's grave lies unnoticed in the park, the park itself, with its mixture of monuments and cultural celebrations, represents Garcia's life more than any plaque or marker ever could.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This research aimed to identify the various strategies used by the Mexican/Tejano soldiers during the Civil War to utilize agency along the Rio Grande Valley. Furthermore, this study intended to analyze competing worldviews between the Union army and borderlanders. Based on the analysis of primary source material coupled with a scholarly understanding of Border Studies, it can be concluded that the Mexican/Tejano soldiers on the frontier vigorously sought to create identities through amalgamation and resistance of the dominant cultures. Additionally, it can also be considered that the Union's nationalistic loyalties found little acceptance among the Rio Grande cosmopolitan beliefs, thus creating rifts between both parties.

By employing feminist and revisionist archival methods, I moved past established perceptions of Mexican/Anglo dynamics during the Civil War and discovered a rich untapped field of social history. These techniques allowed me to discover Pedro García's voice through the historical narratives and understand how García found agency while being enlisted in the Union army. Moreover, the Third-Space framework allowed me to comprehend how specific geographic areas help create places of power for certain groups. Additionally, the Third-Space theories of feminist border scholars helped me discern the various ways the Mexican/Tejanos resisted and made identities for themselves. Revisionist archival methods and the Third-Space framework was instrumental in proving my findings. This research clearly illustrates borderlanders as a type of cosmopolitan citizen with little allegiance to the Union's efforts to

nationalize and incorporate national histories. Still, it raises the question of the role national histories in general plays on people who live on society's edges.

To better understand the implications of these results, future historians should consider a more in-depth study of how Mexican/Tejanos collectively and individually utilized their spaces during the border's early formation. United States historians should also collaborate with Mexican archivists and historians to uncover Mexican perceptions of life along the border during these difficult times, so that a fuller and deeper narrative can be created.

The bulk of research done on the Mexican/Tejano's involvement as soldiers for the Union army during the Civil War has centered on failure. Historians either blamed the Mexican/Tejanos for lack of loyalty to the Union cause or blamed the Union's neglect for the high desertion rates among the Hispanic soldiers. My research focused on Mexican/Tejano soldiers enacting agency while under contract with the Union army during the U. S. Civil War. This research emphasized how Hispanics found ways to resist and create identities under extreme oppression. This study added another element lacking in previous research and provided extensive insight into the motivations many Mexican/Tejano men had. Furthermore, this investigation adds to the already comprehensive study of Hispanic resistance and struggles against economic and racial oppression along the United States southwest border. Finally, the memory of Pedro García, who transformed himself from the Mexican farmer to United States soldier, should not fade back into obscurity under an unmarked grave, but be remembered as a person who embodied the spirit of the Rio Grande frontier.

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